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Mikoyan MiG-17: Famous Russian Aircraft

Yefim Gordon, Dmitriy Komissarov

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The Mikoyan Design Bureau's first swept-wing jet fighter, the MiG-15 Fagot, which gained world fame (or notoriety, depending on which side of the Iron Curtain you were on) after the Korean War, served as the basis for a more refined model, the MiG-17 Fresco. No sooner had the MiG-15 entered production and service than the designers decided to increase the wing sweep from 35 degrees to 45 degrees, initially by way of experiment. The resulting aircraft showed higher performance than the MiG-15, exceeding Mach 1 in a shallow dive during a test flight, something the Fagot had been unable to do.

Following its production entry the MiG-17 was constantly improved, with Mikoyan developing a succession of production and experimental versions. Firstly, an afterburning engine was fitted to improve performance. Secondly, the increasingly frequent incursions by NATO reconnaissance aircraft, coupled with the knowledge that the West was developing all-weather fighters, led the Soviet 'fighter makers' to develop a number of radar-equipped interceptors. The all-weather versions of the MiG-17 proved to be the most successful and some of them were cleared for production.

Starting in the mid-1950s, the MiG-17P, MiG-17PF and MiG-17PFU (the latter version was armed with air-to-air missiles) were the most widespread interceptors in the Soviet Air Defence Force for the nearly two decades.

The MiG-17F day fighter was widely exported and saw a good deal of fighting, receiving its baptism of fire in the Middle East where Egyptian Frescos were pitted against Israeli Dassault Mystère IVs. However, the type became really famous after the Vietnam War where it successfully opposed the supersonic McDonnell F-4 Phantom II and other US aircraft.

Being displaced from first-line fighter service by more modern types, the MiG-17 and MiG-17F found use as a fighter-bomber--both at home and abroad. The MiG-17F and MiG-17PF saw service with nearly all Warsaw Pact nations, as well as many Asian and African countries and Cuba.

The book fully describes the MiG-17's development history and charts the type's combat operations in various major wars and local conflicts. A separate chapter also compares the MiG-17 and its foreign counterparts and the book concludes with details of MiG-17 fleets and operators worldwide.

lllustrated with many unique photos, color side views, line and cutaway drawings this latest addition to the Famous Russian Aircraft series forms a details record of the type and will appeal to modelers and historians alike.

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