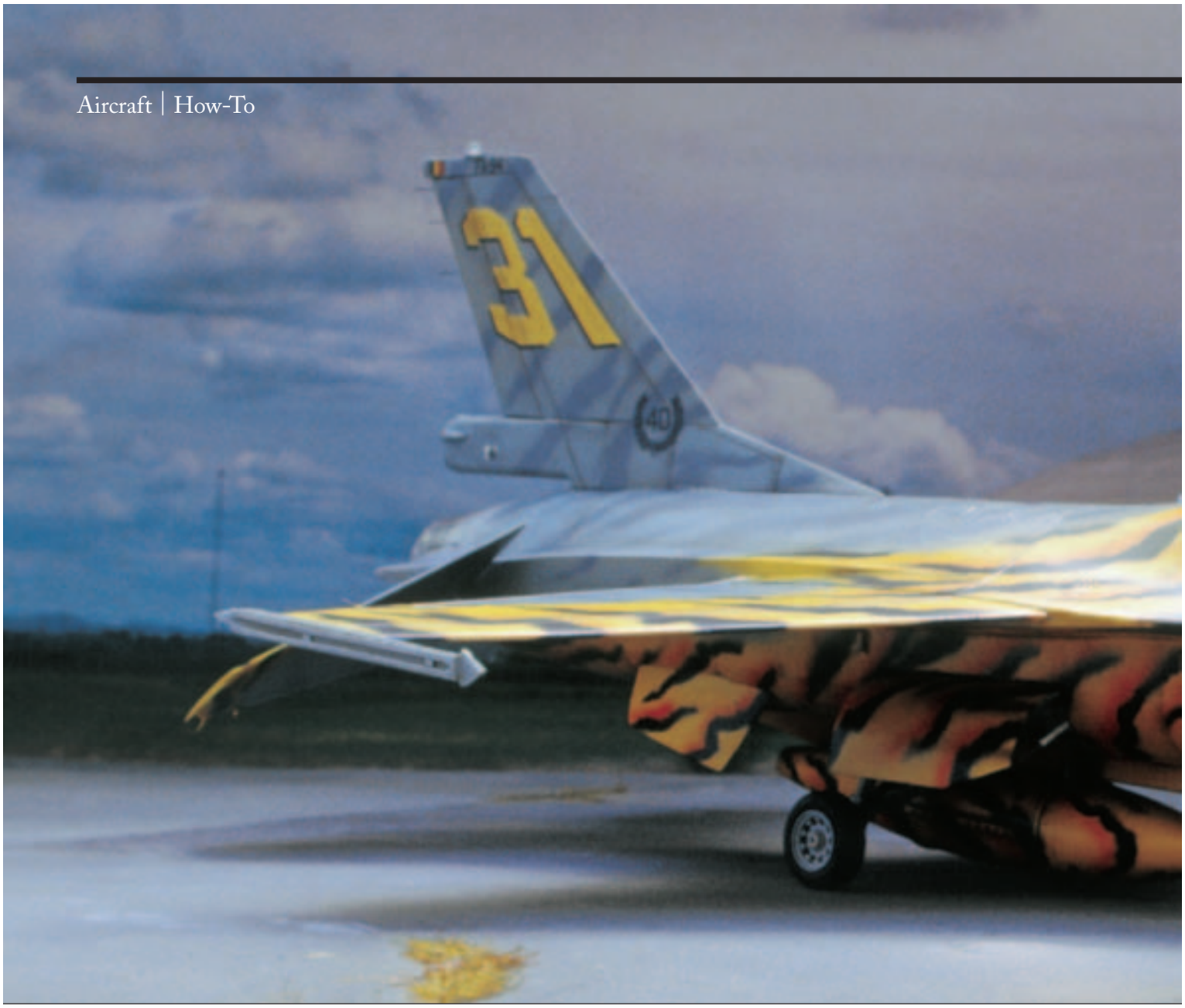


Painting stripes

Here's your chance to "earn your stripes" by painting an F-16 in the color scheme used by the Belgian Air Force in the 1991 NATO Tiger Meet at Kleine Brogel Air Base, Belgium. However, if you don't want to paint your stripes as I did, you can use the decals in the project kit, Fujimi's 1/72 scale F-16A (No. 35123).

Although the basic kit is good, it did need a few minor modifications. I reworked the engine duct area with epoxy putty, modified the cockpit frame and fuselage to show the canopy open, and scratchbuilt a seat and gunsight.

Other "tweaks" included repositioning the stabilator, correcting the rudder shape, and detailing the missiles and ventral tank. At this point, I decided to paint the subassemblies and add decals, then finish assembling the model.

I applied a gloss white base coat, followed by yellow and gray, sealed with a clear coat. And since I chose to paint the tiger stripes, rather than use the kit decals or DACO Products' aftermarket set, I needed some guidelines to get the stripe pattern just right .

I used DACO's three-views as reference to draw the stripe pattern on the



Fujimi's Belgian Air Force F-16A, ready to roar in 1991 NATO Tiger Meet markings.

Detailing a Tiger Meet F-16A

Story and photos by Ricardo Dacoba

model with an HB drafting pencil. I actually marked only the center of each stripe and airbrushed the rest of the pattern freehand.

Following a light sanding and touchup with a brush, I sprayed another coat of clear gloss as a base for the decals. Several light coats of clear satin were next, sanded between coats. Just before the final coat of satin, I sprayed the model with a thin coat of dark brown for a weathered look. A final coat of clear satin completed the finish, and the model was ready for final assembly.

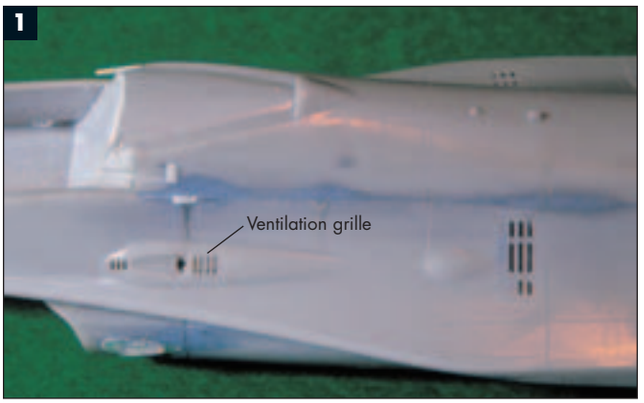
I'm quite pleased with the completed model, and it was a lot of fun to paint such a spectacular color scheme instead of just applying decals. It made a good model even better! **FSM**

REFERENCES

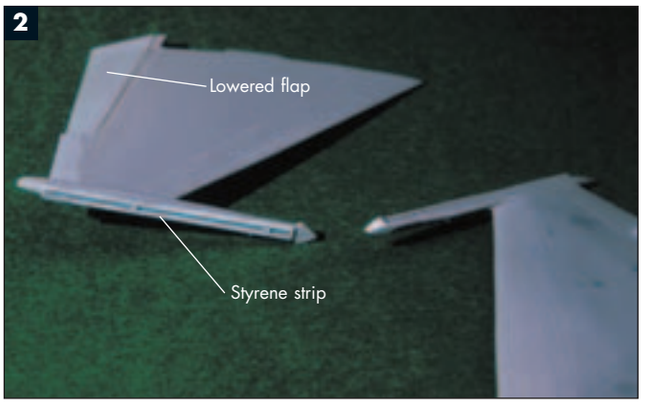
www.natotigers.org

Aircraft Photo File/Lock On No. 2, General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon Verlinden Publications, O'Fallon, Missouri, 1984

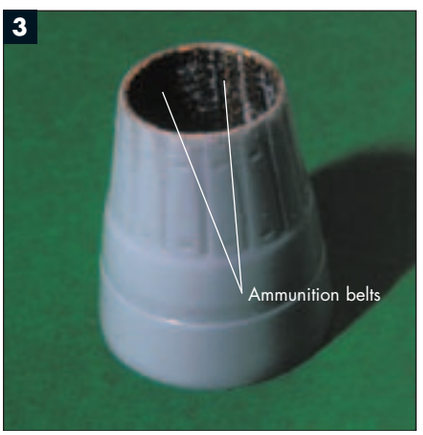
Eye on the Tigers Danny Coremans, DACO Publications, Antwerp, Belgium, 2002 http://ultra.glo.be/daco



The cannon ventilation grille area was thinned with a motor tool, and final cuts were made with a hobby knife.



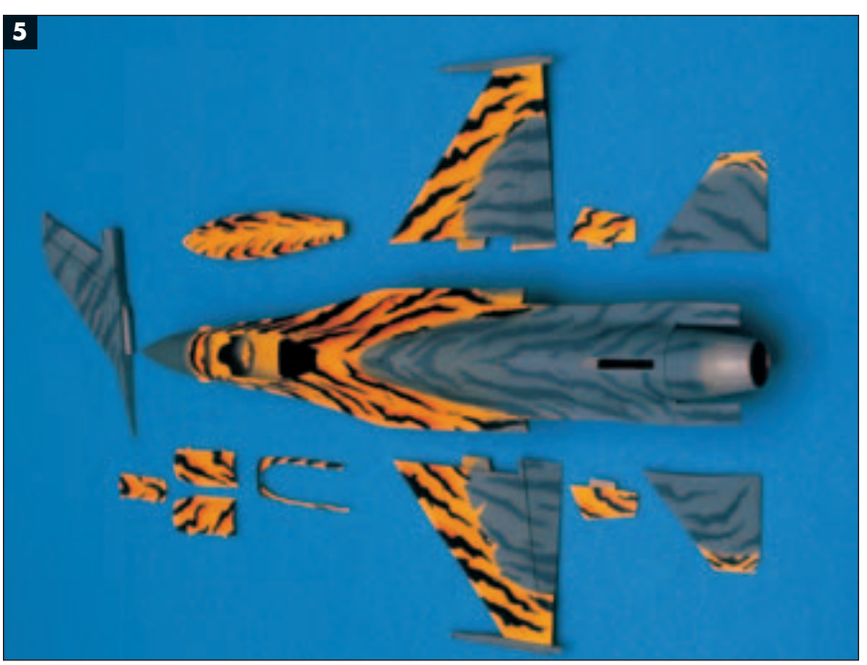
Ricardo lowered the flaps and detailed the wingtips and Sidewinder missile pylons with styrene strips.



The interior of the exhaust nozzle is detailed with photoetched ammunition belts from a 1/48 scale ProModeler B-24.



Ricardo painted the tiger stripes with a cartographer's airbrush and an artist's paintbrush instead of using kit or aftermarket decals.



The painted model is ready for decals. The colors are Tamiya acrylics, and the glossy and satin clear coats are Testor's Visions. Since Visions is no longer available, try Model Master Acryl instead.



Meet Ricardo Dacoba

Ricardo is 33 years old and lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He has been a modeler for 27 years and describes himself as an airbrush professional who paints and details radio control aircraft. Ricardo also builds models for clients and markets a line of resin accessories.



Ricardo positioned the decals with tweezers, then brushed on a coat of Tamiya X20A acrylic thinner. The thinner wrinkles the decal at the onset and subsequently "molds" it to the surface of the model.

The Tigers meet

The Tiger Meet concept originated with the 79th Tactical Fighter Squadron at RAF Woodbridge, England. The 79th had firm ties with the RAF No. 74 squadron, based at Coltishall, England. They searched for more squadrons with a tiger emblem, and found the E.C.1/12 Cambresis in France. Conscious of the common pride in their tiger badge, they decided to organize a meeting of pilots and ground crews.

The first NATO Tiger Meet was held at RAF Woodbridge in 1961 and has become a regular European competition involving simulated missions, air shows, and nonflying activities.

Limited overseas participation in recent NATO Tiger Meets led to creation of the Tiger Meet of the Americas in 2001 for teams from the United States, Canada, and South America.



After applying the decals, Ricardo sprayed on light coats of satin clear, sanding carefully between coats, until the decal backing was imperceptible.



To show the canopy open, the frame was carefully cut from the fuselage and attached to the clear portion. The removed fuselage section was replaced with styrene sheet.



Ricardo says painting is the fun part of model building, and he clearly enjoyed himself with this colorful F-16A.