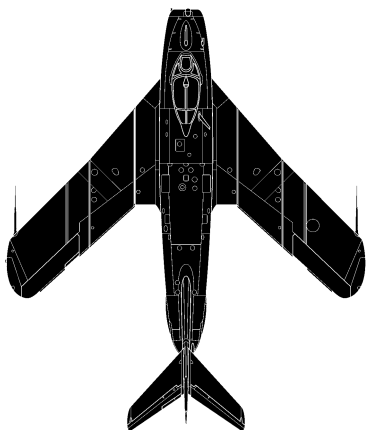


# Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

## MiG-17 Fresco



The MiG-17 Fresco was a rarity—an “interim” aircraft that nonetheless went on to have a long and distinguished career in its own right. This Soviet fighter, a bridge between the MiG-15 and MiG-19, was slower than the US fighters that it faced in Vietnam. Still, it proved to be a formidable foe when used within a comprehensive air defense scheme. It was a general-purpose day fighter, but it also saw much action in the role of fighter-bomber.

The MiG-17’s wings were thinner and longer than those of the MiG-15. They featured a sharper compound sweep of 45 degrees at center and 42 degrees outboard. A larger empennage enabled the MiG-17 to maneuver better at higher altitudes. It was also the first Soviet fighter to use an afterburner. Though the MiG-17 used the basic

Klimov VK-1 engine found on the MiG-15, the sleeker design made it faster by 25 mph. While smaller than the USAF F-86 Sabre, the MiG-17 was a comparable performer. Indeed, the MiG-17 went supersonic in February 1950.

The Soviet Union produced more than 6,000 MiG-17s before it stopped building them in 1958. Poland and China, combined, built another 2,000. The Chengdu (Shenyang) J-5 variant set China on the course to producing its own modern jet fighters. Rarely has a fighter been so popular overseas; the developed Fresco served in more than 40 air forces for some three decades.

—Walter J. Boyne

**This aircraft:** Soviet Air Force MiG-17F—*Bort 547 black*—as it appeared in 1954 when it was assigned to the 234th Proskurovskiy Fighter Aviation Regiment of Guards at Kubinka AB, Russia.



### In Brief

Designed by Mikoyan-Gurevich ★ built in USSR, China, Poland ★ first flight Jan. 13, 1950 ★ crew of one ★ number built, about 8,000 ★ **Specific to MiG-17F:** one Klimov VK-1F turbojet engine ★ armament, one 37 mm cannon, two 23 mm cannon ★ load four 190 mm TRS-190 or two 212 mm ARS 212 rockets, two 250-kg bombs ★ max speed 711 mph ★ cruise speed 535 mph ★ max range 900 mi ★ weight (loaded) 11,733 lb ★ span 31 ft 7 in ★ length 36 ft 5 in ★ height 12 ft 5 in.

### Famous Fliers

**Notables:** S. N. Anokhin, A. N. Chernoburov, Vasilij Ivanov, Ivan Ivashchenko, Petr Kazmin, Wu Keming, K. K. Kokkinaki, G. A. Sedov, A. P. Suprun. **Aces:** Nguyen Van Bay, Le Hai, Luu Huy Chao (all North Vietnamese).

### Interesting Facts

Became USSR’s first missile-armed interceptor ★ shot down USAF RB-50 on July 29, 1953, near Vladivostok ★ in Vietnam, considered by some US pilots as more dangerous than later-model MiG-21 ★ used extensively by Arab air forces in 1956, 1967, 1973 Mideast wars ★ caused death of famous test pilot Ivan Ivashchenko in March 1950 crash ★ suffered “aileron reversal” in early prototypes ★ used engine (VK-1) that was a copy of Rolls Royce Nene ★ carried two external tanks due to fuel inefficiency ★ revealed to public in June 20, 1953, mass fly-by at Tushino ★ used as target drones after onset of obsolescence.



**Have Ferry was the second of two MiG-17s that were tested by USAF in 1969. Both fighters were provided to the US by Israel.**