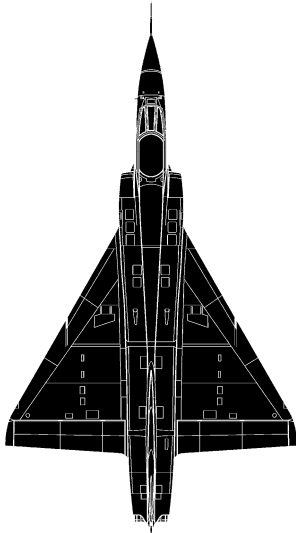


## Mirage III



The Mirage series made France a leader in fighter aircraft. The Dassault delta-wing design has served for more than 50 years, in more than 20 air forces, and in at least 60 variants. The first was the small MD 550 Mystere Delta aircraft. A series of rapid improvements swiftly produced a multirole, radar-equipped Mirage III. Even low-time pilots found it easy to fly.

Of all-metal construction, the tailless three-spar stressed skin delta wings have 60 degrees of sweep back and airbrakes on top and bottom of wing. The tailless design eliminated horizontal stabilizers, and thus the pilot could not use flaps on takeoff or landing. This limitation meant the

fighter required long runs and careful speed control going up or coming down. Maintenance, however, was simple compared to contemporary fighters such as the USAF F-104.

The versatility of the design made possible the production not only of the interceptor version but also ground-attack, trainer, and reconnaissance models. The Mirage IIIE ground-attack type, the first of which flew in 1961, was especially successful. The Mirage III's reputation for combat prowess was greatly enhanced by Israeli success in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, when it flew in both the interceptor and attack profiles.

—Walter J. Boyne

**This aircraft:** Israeli Air Force Mirage III—#745—as it looked in summer 1967 when assigned to IAF No. 117 Squadron, Ramat David AB, Israel.



### In Brief

Designed by Dassault ★ built by Dassault, various foreign licensees ★ first flight Nov. 17, 1956 ★ number built 1,737 (463 by licensees) ★ crew of one or two (trainer) ★ armament two 30 mm cannon. ★ **Specific to Mirage IIIE:** one SNECMA Atar 09C turbojet engine ★ load 8,818 lbs of bombs and/or missiles, including AN52 nuclear bombs ★ max speed 1,460 mph ★ cruise speed 590 mph ★ max range 745 mi ★ weight (loaded) 30,203 lb ★ span 26 ft 11 in ★ length 49 ft 3 in ★ height 13 ft 11 in.

### Famous Fliers

**Aces (all Israeli Air Force):** Amos Amir, Gideon Dror, Giora Epstein, Yehuda Koren, Ya'akov Richter, Giora Romm, Avraham Salmon. **Test pilots:** Ezra Aharon, Jean Coureau, Roland Glavany.

### Interesting Facts

Built without license in Israel as Neshar (Eagle) ★ became first European fighter to achieve Mach 2 (1958) ★ flown in the past by 18 nations, including France, Australia, Egypt, Spain, Israel, South Africa ★ still operated by Argentina and Pakistan ★ featured in late 1960s French TV series "Les Chevaliers du Ciel" (Knights of the Sky) ★ sported canard surfaces called "mustaches" ★ called Cheetah in South Africa and Pantera in Chile ★ in Israeli hands, destroyed 58 Arab fighters in 1967 war and 110 Arab aircraft in 1973 war ★ believed used by Argentina in Falklands War ★ appeared in 1991 Italian action-thriller "Blue Tornado."



DDO photo

**A Royal Australian Air Force Mirage III-D aircraft takes off from RAAF Base Darwin during the joint Australia-New Zealand-United States Exercise Pitch Black in 1984.**