

Australian AVON SABRE

Conversion Kit AUSTRALIAN AEROBATIC SCHEMES

BRIEF HISTORY.

The North American F-86 Sabre was manufactured in Australia by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) but modified to suit Royal Australian AF requirements. The major such requirement was for the installation of the Mk.26 Avon engine to give the aircraft more power than its American-built counterpart. The Avon engine required a greater quantity of air which necessitated a deeper intake and therefore a lower nose profile. The only other significant change was the installation of an Aden cannon in each side of the nose replacing the normal six 50 cal guns.

The first flight of the Avon Sabre was on 3 August 1953 and a total of 113 were subsequently built. For 17 years the Sabre formed an integral part of the RAAF's frontline fighter squadrons. It underwent a number of modifications in the early years that increased its fuel capacity and firepower (including the capability to carry Sidewinder missiles on underwing pylons, 500lb bombs and additional underwing tanks). The definitive variant was the Mk.32 which commenced operations in 1960 - all earlier variants were upgraded to this standard.

The Sabre enjoyed a varied operational service with the RAAF including going into action against communist insurgents in Malaya and deployment to Ubon in Thailand during the earlier stages of the Vietnam conflict. The last RAAF operational Sabre sortie was flown on 31 July 1971 and was replaced by the Mirage III (which lasted an identical number of years before being replaced by the F-18 Hornet). Two other countries have operated the Avon Sabre - Indonesia and Malaysia. Between 1969 and 1971 a total of 16 were presented to Malaysia (one of which was eventually returned to Australia and currently flies with the RAAF Museum Flight) and 16 were gifted to Indonesia in 1973.

CONSTRUCTION

This conversion kit has been specifically designed to fit the two best 1/72 F-86 kits on the market - Fujimi's F-86F 'Mig-Killer' (Kit F-19) and Hobbycraft's Canadair Sabre Mk.5 (Kit HC1386) - both kits are nearly identical in detail and parts breakdown. With only the minimum of adjustment, the Tasman fuselage will fit snugly onto either the Fujimi or Hobbycraft wings. The surface detailing on our fuselage parts has been carefully matched to the detailing on the wings. The Tasman fuselage walls are slightly thicker than the Fujimi/Hobbycraft ones so the internal parts from these kits will need a little trimming to fit properly and you will need to add attachment supports.

As the Tasman nose intake is a little deeper it is necessary to split open the front of the intake duct by around a millimetre to match the Tasman nose. The resulting gaps are easily hidden with the use of filler. There are a number of differences in the surface detailing between the standard Sabre and the Avon version (the position of the fuselage breakpoint, panel lines, intakes grills, etc) and all of these have been included on our conversion parts. The Fujimi/Hobbycraft canopies will fit precisely but for those who want the clarity and scale thinness of a vacformed canopy, a Falcon ClearVax canopy has been included.

COLOUR SCHEME AND MARKINGS

RAAF Mk.31 76 SQN WILLIAMTOWN 1962 "RED DIAMONDS" AEROBATIC TEAM 'A94-947'

The RAAF had a number of Sabre aerobatic teams and this boxing provides markings for two of the best-known 76 Sqn teams. 'A94-947' was flown (at the time this decal option represents) by Flying Officer Roser and carries gloss black leading edges to all the flying surfaces, light grey fin tip and semi-matt anti-glare panel. Note that the black covers the windscreen framing but does not extend onto the canopy frames. The Red Diamonds used two different shapes of red/black diamond symbol (under the canopy) - one was a square turned on a corner and the other was a narrower, more squashed diamond. This aircraft carried the square version. The nose is painted red with a thin black stripe (as are the wing tips and tailplane tips) - note that the rear edge of the red goes about a third of a millimetre back beyond the front edge of the cannon panel and the black stripe goes straight over the front of this panel. There is a small white '47' on the red nose located just above the top line of the cannon panel (left off the boxtop illustration in error). The decals for this are located immediately below the black 'A94-947' decal at the top of the sheet (difficult to see until you look closely!). The pilot's name (in white) goes on the bottom rear edge of the port anti-glare panel (this decal is also hard to spot on the sheet - it is immediately below the left 'A94-901' black serial decal). Use the wingwalk decals from the Fujimi/Hobbycraft kit sheet. **NOTE:** it was standard squadron practise for the nose colour to extend into the intake to the same depth as it was shown on the exterior surface - about 2.5mm (eighth inch) in 1/72. This aircraft also carried a smoke pipe along part of the middle of the port fuselage (illustrated on the boxtop) ending in the top right part of the fuselage roundel (the entry point in the roundel has a small aluminium panel about 3" square that covers part of the blue ring and white disk - however this would almost certainly have been painted a short time after the photo we have used as reference so you can ignore this if you like). The best single published photo of this particular aircraft is on page 118 of Kookaburra's excellent "Aircraft of the RAAF 1921-78" by Geoffrey Pentland & Peter Malone. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** these decals are very thin and should be treated with great care as they like nothing better than to curl up upon themselves. To prevent handling damage we strongly recommend that you apply a thin coat of Micro Scale's 'Super Film' to the whole decal sheet. This gives the decal an ultra-thin and extremely tough coating which will withstand quite rough handling. With long decals like the fuselage bands and the 76 Sqn lightning bolt we strongly recommend the following system - after dipping each decal in water for a few seconds and allowing two minutes for the water to soak the decal free, slide one edge of the decal off the backing paper and put that in position on the model (use plenty of Micro Sol decal solution). When you are sure it is in the correct position then hold it there while slowly and gently pulling the decal paper out from underneath the rest of the decal. It should slide gently into position without giving it a chance to curl up or under itself. If you remove the whole decal from the backing paper before applying it to the model then you risk ruining it - you have been warned!

RAAF Mk.32 76 SQN "BLACK PANTHER" WILLIAMTOWN 1965 'A94-352'

A somewhat more aggressive scheme for you! This aircraft features gloss black leading edges to the fin, tailplanes and wings plus semi-matt black anti-glare panel (covering the windscreen framing but not the canopy frames) plus standard light grey fin tip. Unlike the nose on A94-947, neither the red nor the black stripe covers any part of the front of the cannon panels. The wing tips and tailplane tips are also red with black striping. Note the similar smoke pipe fitted to this aircraft (except that it extends the full length of the fuselage and out past the jet pipe) as it is to the Red Diamonds scheme - this must be added using a length of stretched spruce or wire. **NOTE:** that the finflash on our boxtop illustration is slightly too high - refer to our instruction sheet side-view for the correct positioning. Too late to be able to do anything immediately about it, we have discovered that only one of the small '52' decals for the nose has been supplied. We will be adding this number to our next Sabre kit decal sheet (we are planning a total of at least five boxings) but in the meantime you will need to find substitutes in your decal collection - sorry about that, folks! There is an excellent black & white photo of '352' on page 118 of Kookaburra's "Aircraft of the RAAF 1921-78" by Geoffrey Pentland and Peter Malone.

RAAF Mk.32 76 SQN "BLACK PANTHER" WILLIAMTOWN 1961 & 1965 'A94-901'

'901' had a very varied series of colour schemes during its service life including the 'Black Panther' and 'Marksmen' aerobatic teams (this set of serials can be used along with the 'Marksmen' decal option featured on Tasman Decal sheet TD7207 to change A94-915 to A94-901 if you like - both aircraft had identical markings). Two markings options are supplied for '901' - one prior to the formation of the 'Black Panther' team (1961) and one of the two main variations of 'Black Panther' schemes (1965). The other variation is covered with our 'A94-352' option. Both schemes feature gloss black leading edges to all flying surfaces and semi-matt anti-glare panels (extending to cover the windscreen frames) - note that on the 1965 aerobatic scheme that the black strip on the fin leading edge extends further down the fin than usual and connects to the horizontal black striping (top and bottom) of the tail squadron colours. Also note that the top horizontal black stripe angles downward at the rear to follow the line of the light grey fin tip. Both aircraft had red/black wing tips and tailplane tips. The red and black nose does not go over the cannon port panel. On the bottom rear corner of the port anti-glare panel there is a long shallow red panel where pilots names are applied when being flown by a specific pilot (decal not supplied). Space considerations on this decal sheet precluded supplying the full tail markings for the aerobatic '901' scheme but they are relatively simple to reproduce. After the tail has been painted aluminium and the fin tip light grey (black edging is applied last of all), carefully mask off the rectangle that the fin flash will sit in - allowing for a thin border (half a millimetre) around the fin flash that will remain aluminium after the decal is in place (note that the black leading edge cuts across the top corner of this aluminium border). Mask the top and bottom edges using our side-view illustration and paint it red to match the shade on our decal sheet. When it is thoroughly dry then you can add the black edging from your decal spares box. If you have a sheet of solid silver decal then you might find it simpler to add thin strips around the fin flash rather than masking off the area - your choice. The red/black fuselage band meets at an angle on the top centreline of the fuselage (not a single curving line) and stops low on the fuselage level with the trailing edge of the wing (doesn't go onto the belly). We have supplied stripes longer than necessary to allow for any mistakes. The white '76' for the aerobatic option is located on the decal sheet to the right of each red kangaroo and the small white '01' numbers are to the left and right of the '76' tail band decal (a little hard to see on the white backing paper!). There is an excellent colour photo of 'A94-901' in 'Black Panther' markings in Stewart Wilson's "Meteor, Sabre and Mirage in Australian Service" (published by Acospac Publications in Australia) on page 75 and of it in 'Marksmen' colours on page 76.

REFERENCE SOURCES.

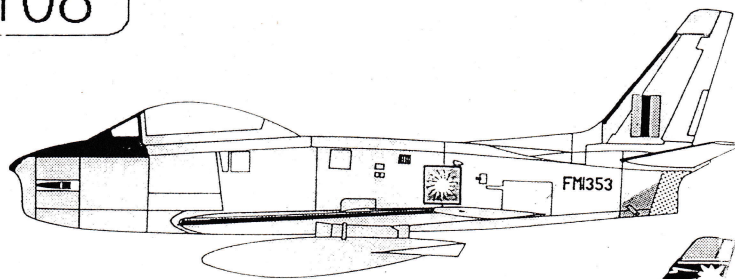
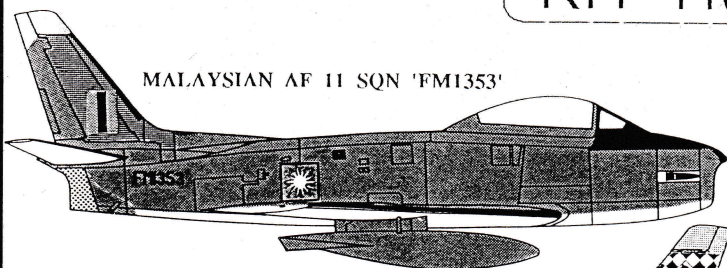
The two most valuable RAAF Sabre references are Stewart Wilson's "Meteor, Sabre and Mirage in Australian Service" by Acospac Publications (plenty of photos and historical info but not as modeller-friendly as perhaps it could have been with photo captions) and IPMS-Australia's 1974 combined issue 1 & 2 of "Modelcraft" magazine. This has a 15-page article of very modeller-friendly material covering most of the major variations of Avon Sabre schemes - a definite 'must-have' for all Avon-Sabre fans (IPMS-Australia, PO Box 1187K, G. P.O., Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia) if you can lay your hands on a copy. Modelcraft's 1974 Nr 4 issue features a 4-page article on the Indonesian Sabre which is excellent with both drawings and photos. Although it has limited Sabre coverage, "Aircraft of the RAAF 1921-78" by Kookaburra Publications was a major reference source for our decal options and is arguably the best publication on the history of the RAAF for modellers. Two of the Aircam series are also highly useful - Nr 20 Vol 2 Commonwealth Sabres and S12 Vol 2 Aerobatic Teams 1950-71. A new publisher in Australia has recently brought out a publication devoted to the RAAF Sabre - Red Roo Publications by Gary Byk. Unfortunately we have not seen a copy yet but have heard glowing reports from Australian modellers.

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM TASMAN:-

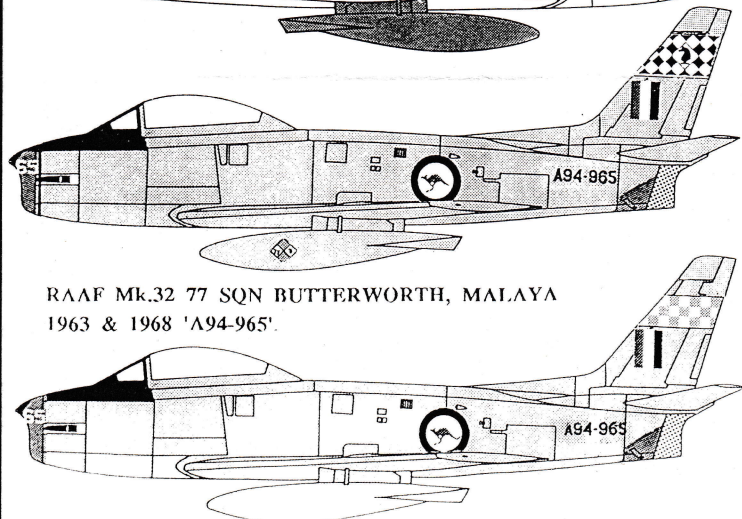
KIT TM108

SOUTH-EAST ASIAN SCHEMES

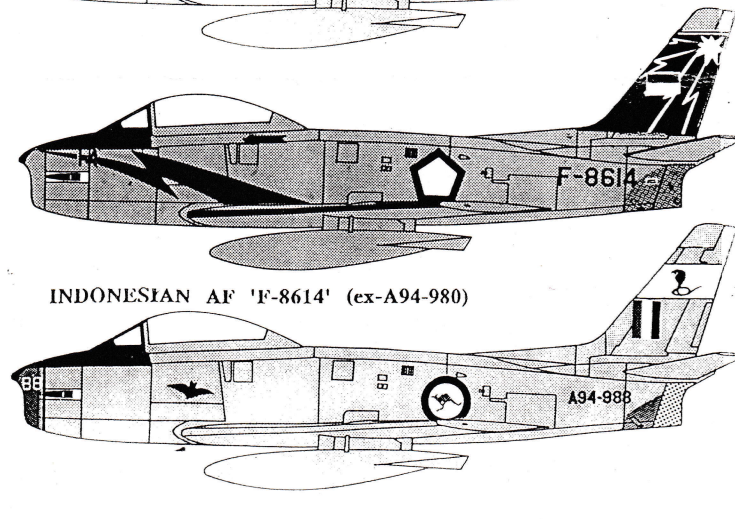
MALAYSIAN AF 11 SQN 'FM1353'



RAAF Mk.32 77 SQN BUTTERWORTH, MALAYA
1963 & 1968 'A94-965'

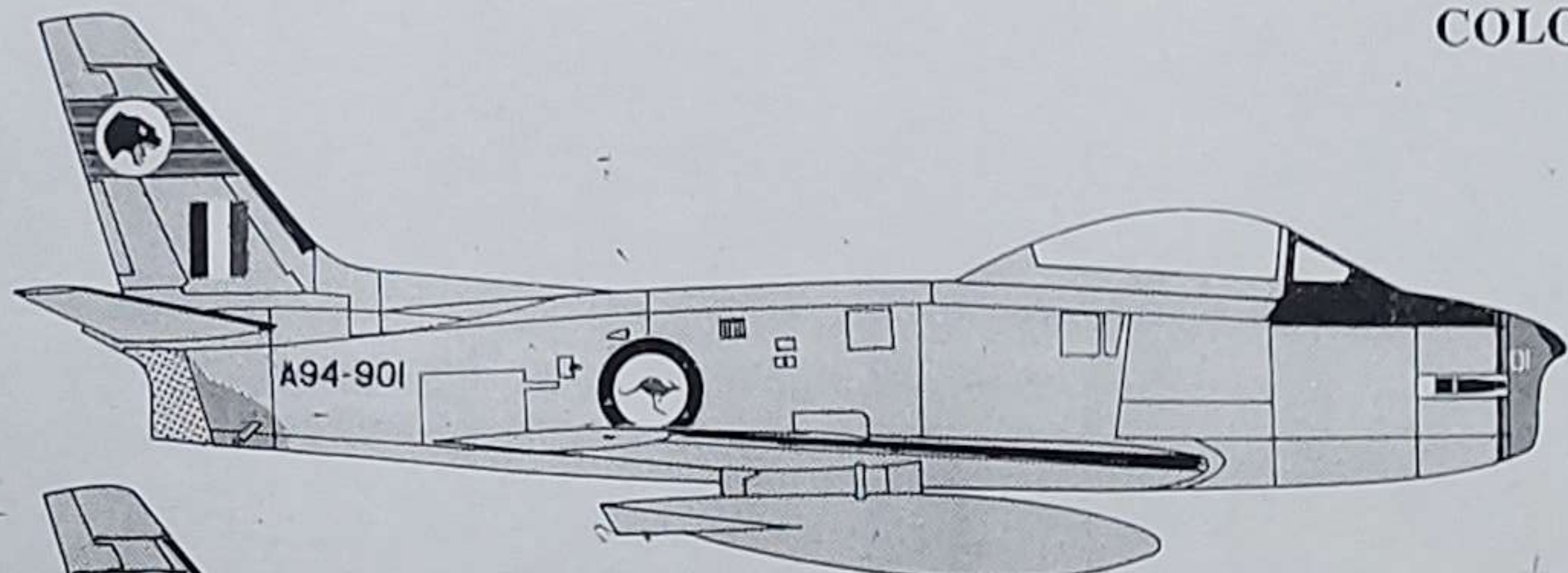


INDONESIAN AF 'F-8614' (ex-A94-980)

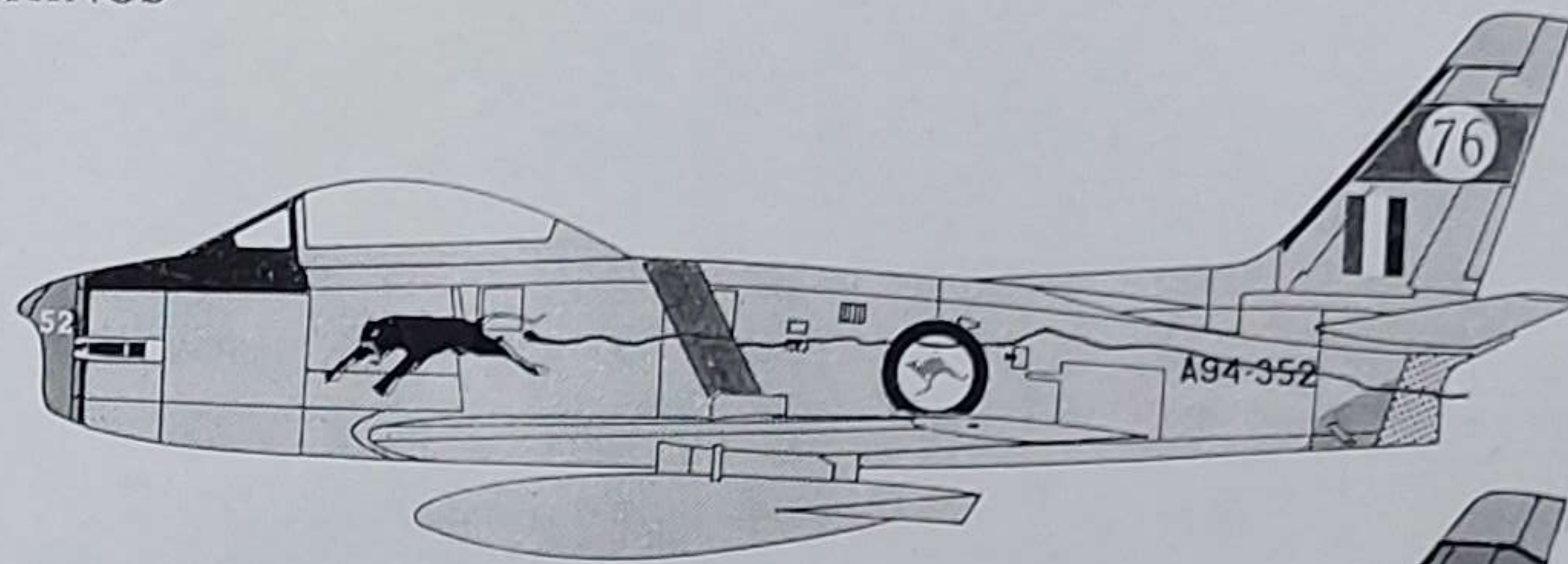


COLOUR SCHEME AND MARKINGS

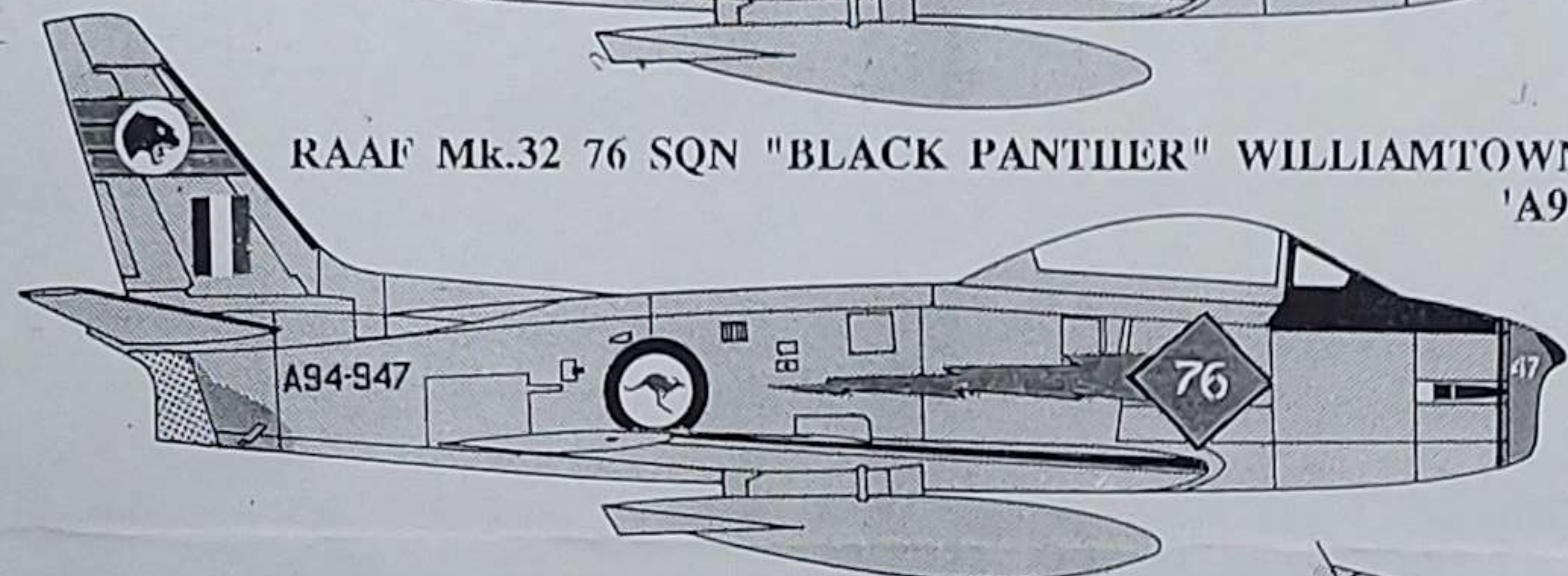
TM107



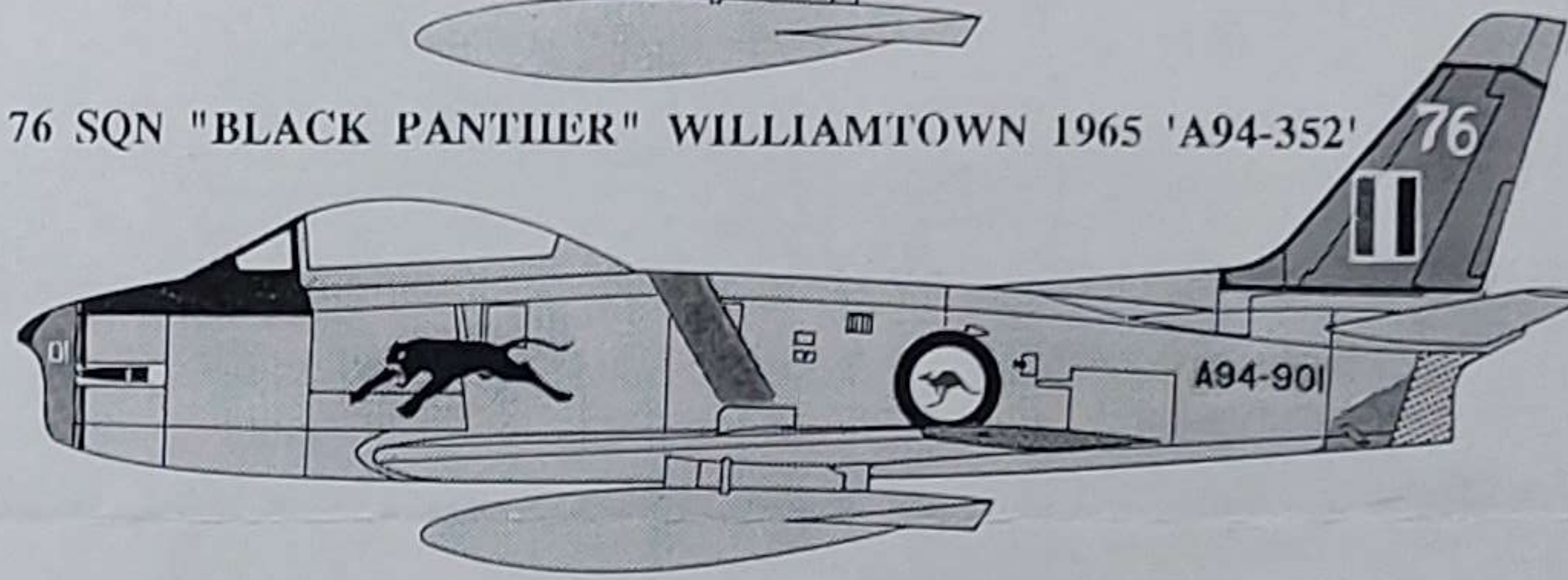
RAAF Mk.32 76 SQN "BLACK PANTHER" WILLIAMTOWN 1961 'A94-901'



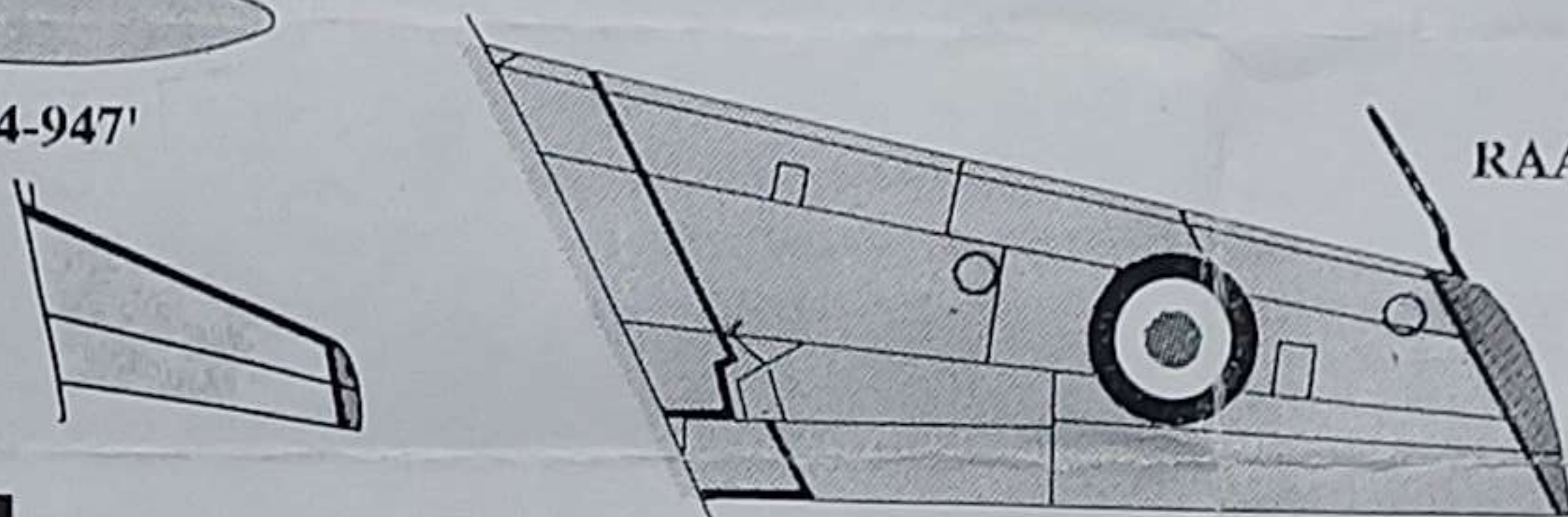
RAAF Mk.32 76 SQN "BLACK PANTHER" WILLIAMTOWN 1965 'A94-352'



"RED DIAMONDS" AEROBATIC TEAM 'A94-947'
RAAF Mk.31 76 SQN WILLIAMTOWN 1962



RAAF Mk.32 76 SQN "BLACK PANTHER" WILLIAMTOWN 1965 'A94-901'

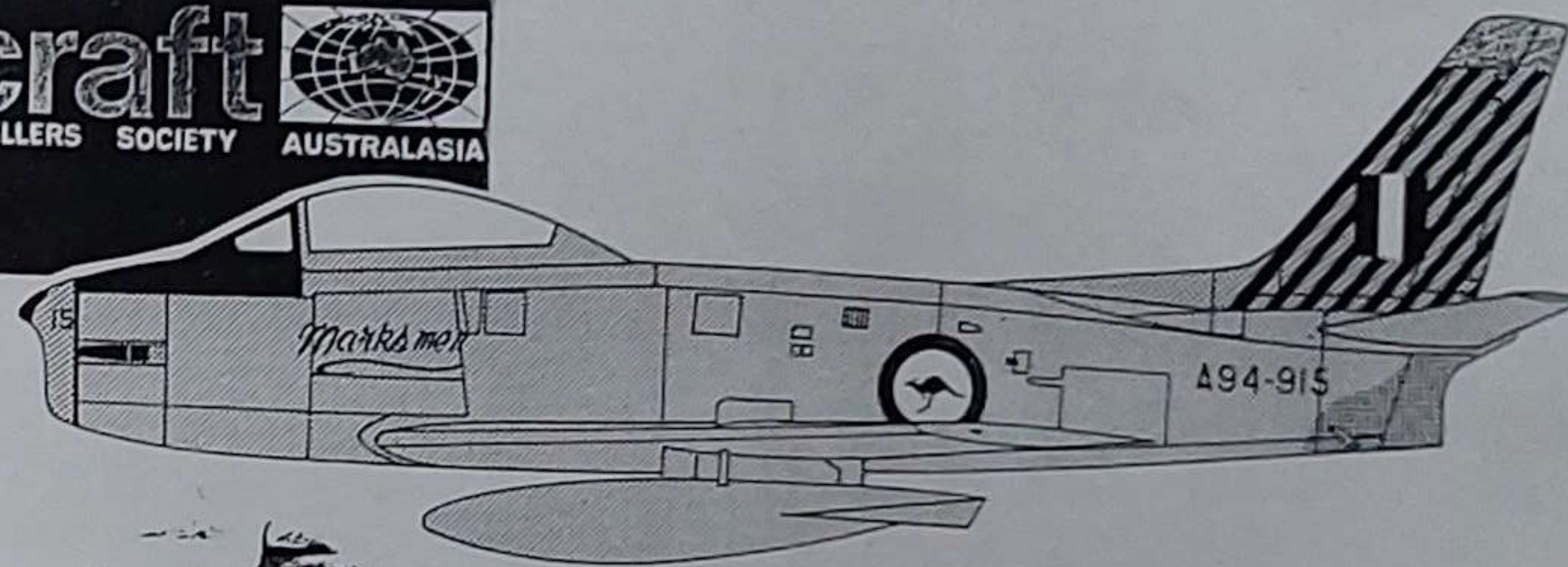
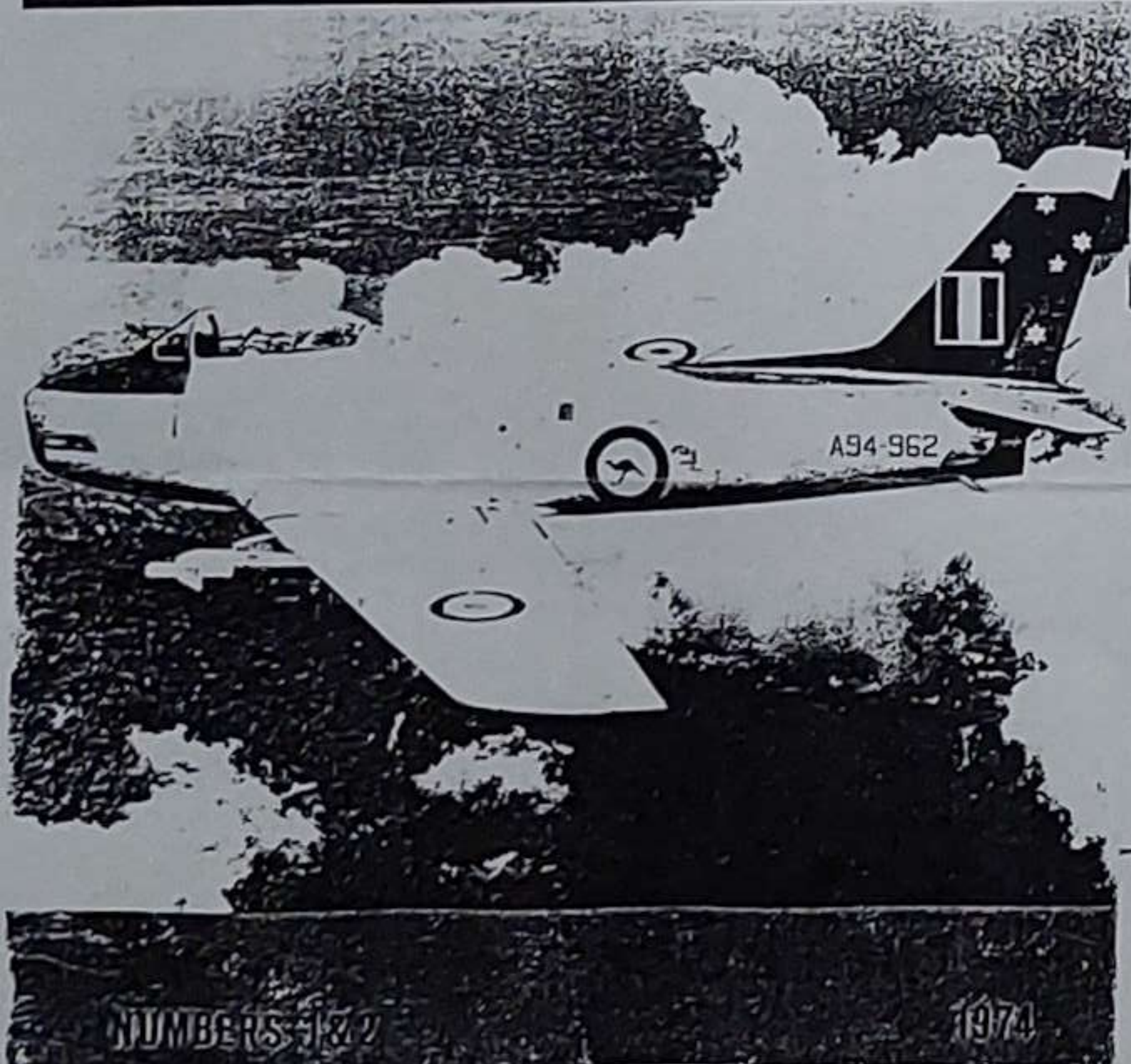


'MARKSMEN' DECAL OPTION AVAILABLE ON
TASMAN DECAL TD7207



**METEOR, SABRE
AND MIRAGE**
IN AUSTRALIAN SERVICE

by Stewart Wilson



RECOUNTING THE EXCITING EXPLOITS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF
THE THREE JET FIGHTERS WHICH SERVED AUSTRALIA FROM THE
KOREAN WAR RIGHT THROUGH TILL THE LATE NINETEEN EIGHTIES