

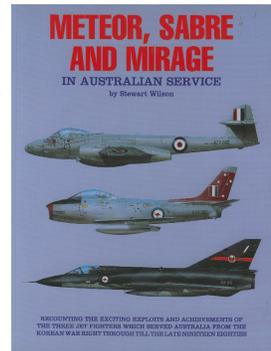
# Dassault Mirage III

My mum used to say; 'If you can't find something nice to say it's best to say nothing'. On the other hand, in the most recent issue of his journal, Frank Morgan exhorts us to give feedback to the people who give Australian modellers the materials we need to make replicas of what we see in our skies. I tossed a coin and it came down heads. Sorry, Mum.

If one is dense enough to want to make a series of RAAF Mirage III models one might need a bit of assistance in going about it. It is often useful to know a bit of history about the subjects being modelled and to learn from the experiences of others some of the problems to be faced and some of the solutions to those problems in making these models.

Stewart Wilson, Meteor, Sabre and Mirage in Australian Service, Aerospace Publications, Weston Creek, 1989. To begin with Mum's suggestion, the good thing about this book is that it is better than nothing. This book is one of a series of similar title that Wilson churned out, all to the same format and all written in obvious haste. (The way the three type histories in each volume differ in format makes it clear that Wilson gathered together the most easily obtainable material for his work). For the modeller there are plenty of photos and quite a few side view drawings - of ordinary quality. Before I got into the history business I might have considered this a useful if not excellent book; but now that I have an idea of how decent history is put together and presented I can only recommend this book as being useful in giving an introduction to the topic of RAAF Mirage IIIs. But if you can't find a copy I'd say you're not missing much.

Gary Byk, The Modeller's Guide to the RAAF Mirage III/D, Red Roo Models Publications, 1996. It was only after I'd made the first couple of Mirage III models that I discovered there were quite a few things about RAAF Mirages I didn't know. The most galling was a simple point. I spent hours staring at as many photos of Mirages as I could find but I could not work out how far back the wings the gloss leading edges went on the camouflaged versions. I became obsessed about this and looked in all kinds of obscure places for this tidbit of information, but with no success. Then I saw advertisements for this book and quickly ordered a copy because, I assumed, it would solve my problem and perhaps give me a few clues on other problems too. Back to my Mum's reminder. If I should seem crabby about this book it is only because I'd developed quite a respect for Gary Byk's work over the years and, in reality, for those who have not already been forced to do a lot of research for themselves this would be a very useful book. There are potted histories of the aeroplane, the units that flew it, many well captioned pictures and some good painting guide drawings. There is also a lot of material on various details of the aeroplane that would suit a modeller wishing to create a highly detailed replica that were of little interest to me. However, there was not a hint of information on the one topic that I really wanted help about in this book - the fact that the leading edges of camouflaged Mirages were gloss is only mentioned in passing and no detail given about how wide they were. I was not impressed, surely this is a key bit of information for anyone making a RAAF Mirage III. There were other little omissions that also annoyed me. In the section about the quality of the various kits available the Frog/Novo/Eastern Express kit isn't mentioned.



THE MODELLER'S  
GUIDE TO THE  
RAAF MIRAGE III/D



Gary Byk

A RED ROO MODELS PUBLICATION  
NUMBER ONE IN A PROFILE SERIES ON FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN AIRCRAFT

It may have its problems but it seems to be the only 1/72 Mirage III kit readily available on shop shelves these days. There is a very interesting section setting out the various colour schemes RAAF Mirages flew in. but after having looked at a lot of photos I'm not sure I'd draw all the conclusions this book does. Equally annoying. there are generic sections about things like decals and using various modelling techniques that have been written about many times in other places. Not that I'm objecting to them being reiterated for new modellers, I just object having to pay good money for this information when I'm after information about modelling Mirage IIIs. I could go on; crab, crabby crab, but I'll only raise my blood pressure to no pod end. In summary, not for me but others might find it useful.

As an addendum; there is apparently a new book out that covers Mirage IIIOs in great detail. I've read good things about it but so far I haven't seen a copy. But I'm not sure that I want to. After having made six of my planned series of Mirage IIIOs, I'm not sure I want all my mistakes pointed out to me in glaring glossy colour.

### **The models**

At this point in the project I ran out of old Frog kits. However I managed to pick up a couple of reissues of the Frog kit on eBay. One was in a Novo box. which is where the kit first appeared in its Russian guise. The second was a Chematic kit that probably comes from Poland. The kits in these guises lacked some of the crispness of the Frog kits but the parts are identical and so construction is the same for these kits as for the earlier ones.

### **A3-42, No 2 OCU, during Operation Pitch Black 1984**

Red Roo Models have been doing a lot to provide modellers with gap filling models and decal sheets. Their Mirage IIIO kit is very nice and only the cost (and the fact that I'd already collected four Frog kits) stopped me using their kits for this project. They have also released several sheets for RAAF Mirages in 1:48 and now they are releasing them in 1:72 as well. Their first release was for 20CU and it is an excellent decal sheet with instructions that are even better, if that is possible. The sheet gives you the options of standard silver, grey and green and two tone grey versions, as well as an unusual green and earth scheme that was apparently flown in 1984. I wasn't able to find any photographs of this Mirage but I'm a trusting soul. More to the point, I wanted every Mirage I made to be in a different scheme and this variation allowed me to do that.

Construction followed the usual pattern; by now I was used to all the little quirks this kit has. The camouflage pattern is exactly the same as the standard grey and green Mirages with the earth brown replacing the grey. The end result looks good, and novel.

### **A3-60, 75 Squadron, Butterworth, September 1987**

I picked up a very nice sheet of decals for various Mirages including obscure South American Mirage 5s, a nice Armee de l'Air Mirage IIIC and a two tone grey 75 Squadron Mirage. To make this version a little bit different again, by the late 1980s some RAAF Mirages were flying with supersonic tanks acquired from Israel and Matra Magic missiles. I cannibalised the tanks from an as-yet unbuilt Hasegawa Kifr and the Matra Magic rails came from the little bag of Plane Bits Mirage IIIO resin parts. The Matra Magics came from the spares box. The trouble with the Hasegawa tanks was that they were wasp-waisted while the RAAF tanks weren't; but that's what filler is for. The trouble with the Plane Bits missile rails was in joining them to the kit launch rails. I'm going to have to find a supply of those beta blockers that billiards players use to stop their hands from shaking...

Some of the markings almost disappear against the blue-grey upper surface colours. tending to make the model a little drab. Even so, it looks good alongside the other models.