



Keith Pruitt

Model Kit Report

Kinetic Models 1/48 Israeli Air Force F-16C Block 40 Barak

A strikingly beautiful model kit of an outstanding air-superiority fighter.

Few aircraft have the unique combination of grace, beauty, and deadly capability of the General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon. With the huge frameless canopy, the large vertical stabilizer rising like a shark's fin, and the underside air intake scoop reminiscent of the renowned P-51 Mustang, the F-16 is an outstanding air-superiority fighter. Armed with an M61 Vulcan cannon, along with bombs or missiles, the basic airframe has evolved into a variety of missions since first becoming operational in 1976.

The F-16 is first and foremost a highly maneuverable dogfighter. The aircraft was designed to be aerodynamically unstable, which actually increases its overall maneuverability, and it does require fly-by-wire computer controls for normal flight. Used by Air Forces in over 25 different countries, the first documented air-to-air combat victory was scored by the Israeli Air Force over the Bekaa Valley in 1981. Israel continues to use several variants of the F-16's to our present day. While most F-16's use a variation of the standard factory two-tone gray camouflage, the Israeli version has an attention grabbing four-color camouflage scheme.

Kinetic Models offers a nicely detailed 1/48 kit of the Israeli Air Force F-16C Block 40 Barak and it is a real treat to build. Throughout assembly, Model Master Paints were used. Like most aircraft model kits, the Israeli F-16 starts with the cockpit. The control columns and consoles are molded separately which makes painting easier. Although Light Ghost Gray is the color indicated in the instructions. Dark Gull Gray enamel was chosen for the cockpit floor and sides since it more closely represents the factory color. Flat Black was selected for the consoles and instrument panel. In addition, the control buttons and

knobs on the consoles were drybrushed with Medium Gray. Insignia Red and Insignia Yellow were added for a touch of color.

The next step involved the assembly of the main landing gear bay which is molded to the bottom of the jet engine intake trunk. These pieces were assembled with Plast-I-Weld and painted Flat White, including the inside of the trunk. The upper fuselage is assembled from front and rear halves, and then the cockpit tub and various other panels were attached. The wingtips have tiny static dischargers on the trailing edge. Note: leaving part of the sprue attached to the wingtips until final assembly protected these from being broken.

The instructions include the option of opening the rear speed brakes, but in this build, to maintain the smooth lines of the aircraft, they were left in the closed position.

Following the instruction manual, we moved to the nose gear bay and interior trunking for the engine intake. After assembling these components and painting them Flat White, the exterior assemblies were attached to the assembled bay. Since the top of this assembly might be a bit awkward to reach during the later painting

stages, this and the fuselage bottom were airbrushed with the underside color, Light Ghost Gray, prior to gluing everything to the fuselage. After adding a small amount of weight behind the cockpit, just to be certain the model sits properly on the tricycle landing gear, the upper and lower fuselage halves were glued together. The instructions now call for the attachment of the main landing gear struts and actuators for the landing gear and gear bay doors. All of the struts, actuators, and wheels were painted and detailed, but were not attached until final assembly. The vertical stabilizer and rudder were assembled and



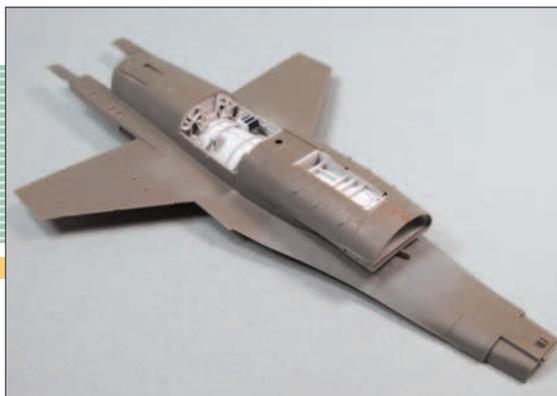
The level of detail tends to target the experienced modeler, but the kit is within the capabilities of the beginner.

attached, along with the ventral strakes. The engine's internal exhaust pipe was assembled and painted then glued into the opening at the rear of the fuselage. The exhaust nozzle was assembled and painted, but not attached until final assembly.

Before the canopy could be installed, the centerline mold seam had to be removed. Using progressively finer grades of Hobby Stix sanding tools, the seam was sanded until smooth but slightly cloudy. Finally, the canopy glass was polished to crystal clarity with Novus Plastic Polish. After the ejection seat was assembled, it and the gun-sight were painted and installed in the cockpit. The canopy was attached with Testors Clear Part Cement, and then masked.

All of the exterior painting was done with an airbrush free-hand. The panel lines were first pre-shaded Flat Black, which shows through the color coats, replicating the paint fading from the desert sun. Ghost Gray was painted on the bottom surfaces of the model and allowed to dry. After masking to protect the bottom and sides from overspray, the lighter color, Sand, was sprayed on the designated areas and allowed to dry. The instructions call for Duck Egg Blue, but Pale Green was used, as it seems to be a better match to the actual camouflage color. The final topside color, Flat Military Brown, filled in the remaining areas. Finally, the radome was painted Neutral Gray.

While the airframe was drying, it was the perfect time to assemble the underwing stores; bombs, missiles, and external fuel tanks. The fuel tanks were painted Light Ghost Gray. The AIM-9 missiles were painted Neutral Gray



Subassemblies, like the nose gear bay and main trunk were painted flat white prior to final assembly.



The builder has the option of gluing the ventral strakes and control surfaces in a variety of positions.



Cross-referencing of readily available full-scale documentation was used to achieve accuracy.



It takes time to obtain a finished model of this caliber, but the satisfaction of the build is well worth the effort.

and tipped with Flat Black to provide a slight difference in color. The electronic pods, AN/AAQ-13 and AN/AAQ-14, were painted with Gunship Gray, which seems to best match reference photographs. The AGM-65 laser-guided bombs have dark green as an optional color, so this was chosen for these weapons for added color variation. The last page of the instructions is an external stores placement diagram which shows the correct combination of items and where each of the tanks or weapons should be placed.

All the subassemblies were given a coat of Clear Gloss to prepare the surface for applying the decals. Once the decals were in place, another light coat of Clear Gloss was used to seal them, and a pinwash of a Flat Black Acryl was used for the panel lines. Finally a coat of Clear Flat evened the overall sheen. The final assembly involved adding the landing gear, underwing stores, exhaust nozzle, and other small parts. Some final touchup was done and the masking was removed from the canopy.

Without a doubt, the Kinetic Models Israeli Air Force F-16C Block 40 Barak builds into a strikingly beautiful model. While the detail level tends to target the experienced modeler, the kit can be considered within the capabilities of a beginner. With the variety of weapons, the detail in the kit, the sleek profile of the aircraft and the colorful camouflage, the Kinetic Models Israeli Air Force F-16C Block 40 Barak brings superiority to the display shelf just as the full-scale aircraft brings it to the air.

Like all Kinetic Models, the F-16 is available exclusively through Stevens International. **HM**