

# A History of NASIC

NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE INTELLIGENCE CENTER

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, OHIO

## Camouflage Artist to the Stars

*Contributing author Charles Cram*

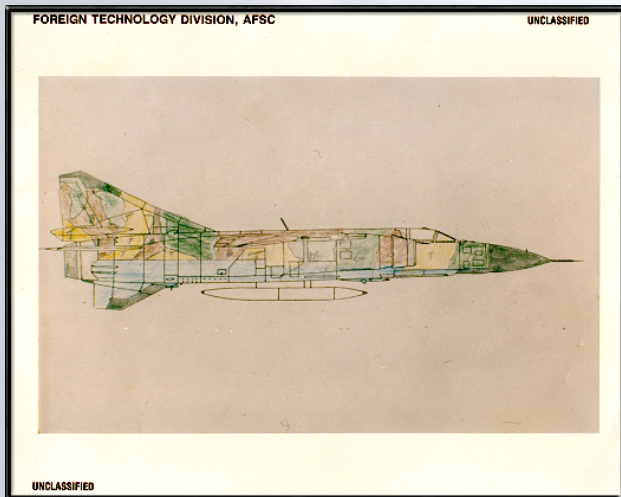
Ever since I built my first model airplane (F-102 Delta Dagger) at my parent's dining room table in Destin, Florida when my father was working at Eglin Air Force Base, I have been an avid scale aircraft modeler. It was scale modeling that piqued my interest in history and aviation, eventually leading to a career working for the Federal Aviation Administration and then the Air Force. Because aircraft of the Eastern Block were of special interest to me, being hired by the Foreign Technology Division (FTD) was a dream come true.

One of my favorite aircraft to model was the MiG-23/MiG-27/FLOGGER series of aircraft. A fairly good kit of this aircraft existed that could be easily be modified into any version of the FLOGGER. What was lacking, at least in Western literature, were good descriptions of the camouflage schemes used on FLOGGER aircraft. Working at FTD gave me access to their excellent library of open-source material and foreign aviation magazines. While building a model of the MiG-23MLD/FLOGGER K, I went to the library and searched its collection of *Russian Aviation* and *Kosmonautica* magazines and was able to compile a composite camouflage scheme representative of that used on most FLOGGER aircraft in Soviet Frontal Aviation units.

In the late 1980's, FTD began receiving requests for Russian camouflage schemes from Aggressor Units in the United Kingdom, Japan, and at Nellis Air Force Base. Although not part of my official duties, I got the reputation around FTD as being "the" expert in aircraft camouflage and markings. So when these requests came into the Aircraft Branch, they would be brought to me. To provide these units with official FTD assessments of camouflage schemes, I had many of my diagrams photographed and cataloged in FTD's photo archives.

Jumping forward several years, in 1998, when the MiG-23MLD was turned over to the US Air Force Museum (now the National museum of the US Air Force), they asked the National Air Intelligence Center (NAIC, formerly FTD) for assistance in putting proper camouflage and markings on this aircraft. I was approached by Rob Young, NAIC Historian, to see if I had any information on FLOGGER camouflage. I pointed to the FLOGGER K model in my display case, and said that was as close as you would be able to get. When he asked if I had any better documentation, I resurrected the camouflage schemes from FTD's photo archives and a letter to one of the Aggressor Units describing this scheme and the colors used.

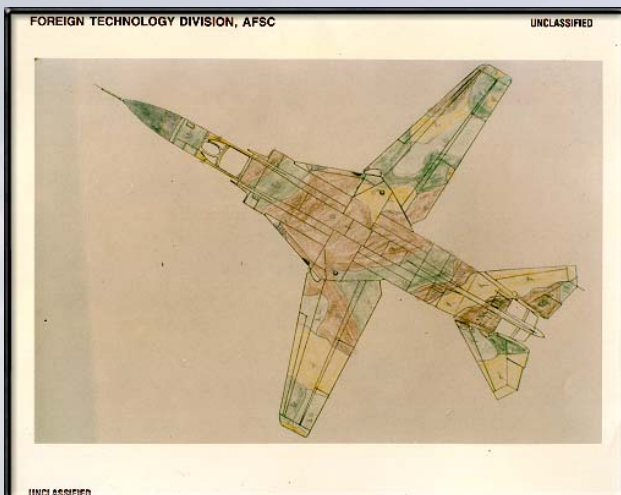
The museum used my camouflage scheme to paint their FLOGGER K; however, the numbering and markings came from research performed by Rob Young and the museum staff on markings on the actual aircraft. A side-by-side comparison of photographs of the museum's FLOGGER and my model shows that the museum closely captured my camouflage scheme. Although I don't necessarily object to the museum copying my artwork, shouldn't I at least be able to sign my name somewhere on this ultimate 1-to-1 scale model of a FLOGGER K?



*Composite Camouflage Scheme (side view)*



*FLOGGER K Model Plane (Photo Credit – Charles Cram)*



*Composite Camouflage Scheme (top view)*



*MiG-23MLD/FLOGGER K (Photo Credit –National Museum of the US Air Force)*