

made in Italy

1:48 scale**No 2710**

MB 326K Impala

EN

The Macchi MB-326 was developed during the 50s and it has been conceived as a two-seat trainer to equip the Italian Air Force. MB-326 was powered by an English Bristol Siddley Viper non-afterburning turbojet engine with low air-intakes in the wing roots. Thanks to the effectiveness of the concept, it rapidly obtained a commercial success and it was sold in over ten Countries. Later on, a single-seat ground attack aircraft has been developed starting from the Italian trainer. The Macchi MB-326K, the armed version powered with an higher performance turbojet engine, was able to carry more than 1800 kg. of offensive weapons in its under wing hard points including bombs, rocket launchers and guns in dedicated pods. The MB-326K was also produced under licence by the South African company Atlas Aircraft Corporation with the project name "Impala".

IT

Il Macchi MB-326 venne sviluppato, durante gli anni '50, per equipaggiare i reparti addestrativi dell'Aeronautica Militare Italiana. I primi esemplari del nuovo addestratore biposto ad ala bassa della Macchi vennero consegnati nel 1961 e si dimostrò, da subito, un ottimo aereo. Caratterizzato da due prese d'aria alle radici delle ali venne equipaggiato con il motore a reazione inglese Bristol Siddley Viper. Ottenne inoltre un buon successo commerciale e venne venduto in più di 10 Paesi. Venne successivamente sviluppata, e destinata prevalentemente all'esportazione, una versione armata monoposto da supporto al suolo e da attacco. Nacque quindi l'MB-326 K, con motore potenziato ed in grado di trasportare, nei travetti subalari, 1.800 Kg di armamento offensivo. L'MB-326 K venne inoltre prodotto su licenza dalla Sudafricana Atlas Aircraft Corporation con il nome di progetto "Impala".

DE

Macchi MB-326 wurde während der 50er Jahre entwickelt, um die Lehr-Abteilungen der italienischen Luftwaffe auszustatten. Die ersten Exemplare des neuen zweisitzigen Tiefdecker-Ausbildungsflugzeugs von Macchi wurden 1961 geliefert und erweisen sich sofort als optimale Flugzeuge. Es zeichnete sich durch zwei Lufteinlässe an den Flügelansätzen aus und war mit einem englischem Reaktionsmotor Bristol Siddley Viper ausgestattet. Außerdem erhielt es auch einen kommerziellen Erfolg und wurde in mehr als 10 Ländern verkauft. Danach wurde es hauptsächlich für den Export entwickelt und hergestellt, eine einsitzige bewaffnete Version für den Nachschub am Boden und für den Angriff. Es folgte dann die Version MB-326 K mit einem stärkerem Motor und in der Lage an der Flügelunterseite 1.800 Kg an offensiven Waffen zu transportieren. Die MB-326 K wurde außerdem auf Lizenz von der südafrikanischen Atlas Aircraft Corporation mit dem Projektnamen "Impala" produziert.

FR

Le Macchi MB-326 est un avion d'entraînement conçu en Italie dans les années 50 pour les secteurs de l'Aéronautique Militaire Italienne. Les premiers exemplaires du biplace d'entraînement à aile basse de la Macchi sont livrés en 1961 ; ils prouvent immédiatement qu'il s'agit d'un excellent avion. Caractérisé par deux prises d'air au niveau des racines des ailes, il est équipé d'un moteur à réaction anglais Bristol Siddley Viper. Il a rencontré un succès certain puisqu'il a été vendu dans plus de 10 Pays. Ultérieurement, une version armée monoplace de support au sol, pour l'attaque, fut construite et destinée principalement à l'exportation. C'est ainsi que naquit MB-326 K, avec un moteur plus puissant, pouvant transporter 1800 kg d'armement offensif dans les poutres situées en dessous. Le MB-326 K fut construite sous licence de la société Sud-africaine Atlas Aircraft Corporation sous le nom de projet "Impala".

ES

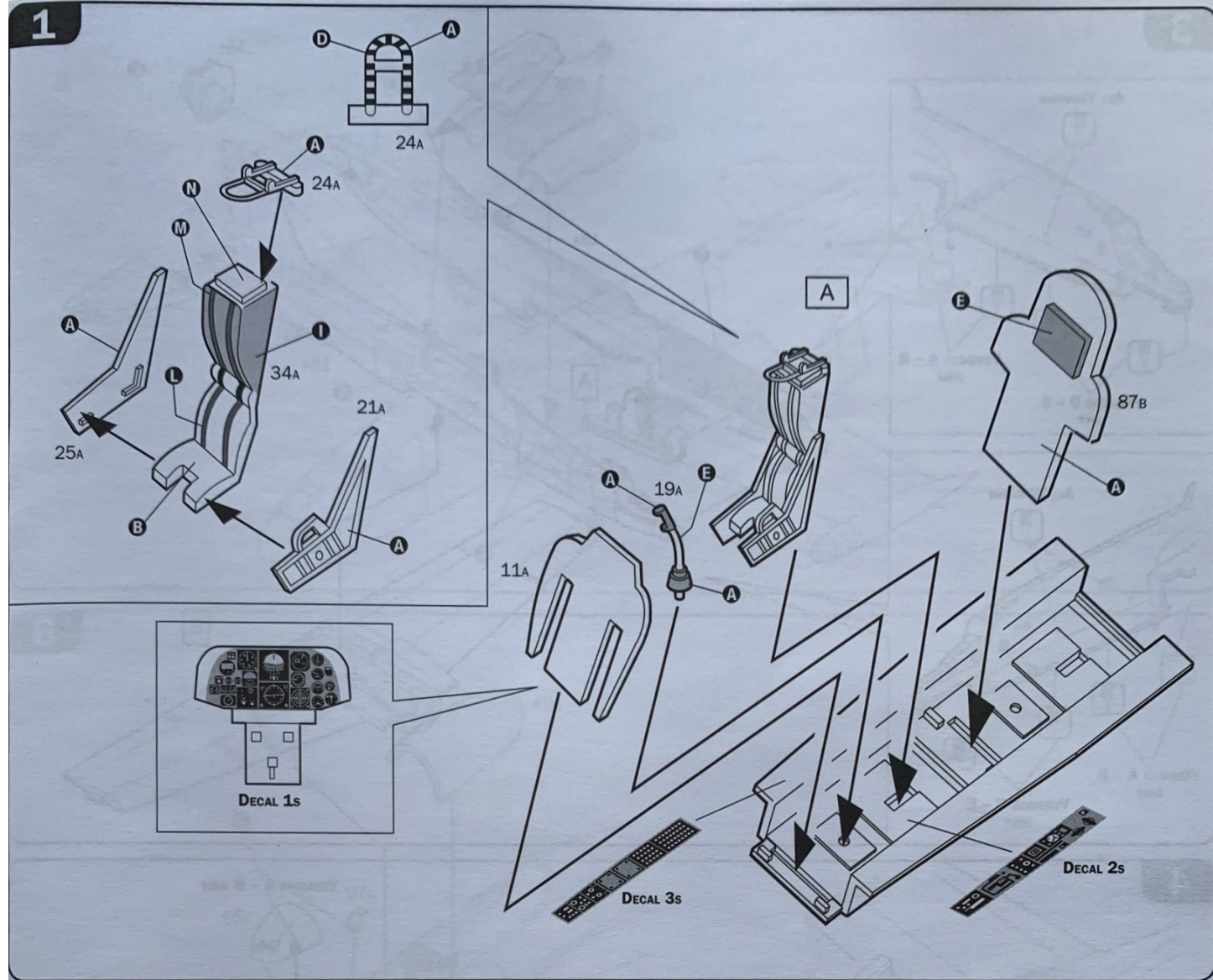
El Macchi MB-326 fue ideado durante los años 50, para dotar a los centros de adiestramiento de la Aeronáutica Militar italiana. Los primeros ejemplares del nuevo adiestrador biplaza con ala baja de la Macchi fueron entregados en 1961 confirmándose en seguida como un excelente avión. Lo caracterizaban las dos tomas de aire en la salida de las alas, además de un motor a reacción inglés de tipo Bristol Siddley Viper. Además obtuvo un gran éxito comercial y fue vendido en más de 10 Países. Más adelante se desarrolló una versión armada monopla de apoyo en tierra y de ataque, destinada en gran parte a la exportación. Fue creado por tanto el MB-326 K, con un motor potenciado capaz de transportar 1.800 Kg de armamento de defensa bajo sus alas. El MB-326 K se fabricó bajo licencia de la empresa Sudafricana Atlas Aircraft Corporation con el nombre de "Impala".

NL

De Macchi MB-326 werd in de jaren 50 ontwikkeld om de oefenafdelingen van de Aeronautica Militare Italiana of de Italiaanse militaire luchtmacht uit te rusten. De eerste exemplaren van de nieuwe two-seater met lage vleugels van Macchi werden geleverd in 1961 en bleken al snel een uitstekende aankoop te zijn. Dit vliegtuig werd gekenmerkt door twee luchtinlaten aan de basis van de vleugels en een Engelse straalmotor Bristol Siddley Viper. Het vliegtuig haalde een bevredigend commercieel succes en werd verkocht in meer dan 10 landen. Vervolgens werd, vooral met het oog op de export, een bewapende eenpersoonsversie ontwikkeld ter ondersteuning aan de grond en voor de aanval. Dit was de MB-326 K met krachtiger motor en in staat om in de liggers onder de vleugels 1.800 kg wapens te transporteren. De MB-326 K werd op licentie geproduceerd door het Zuid-Afrikaanse Atlas Aircraft Corporation, met de projectnaam "Impala".

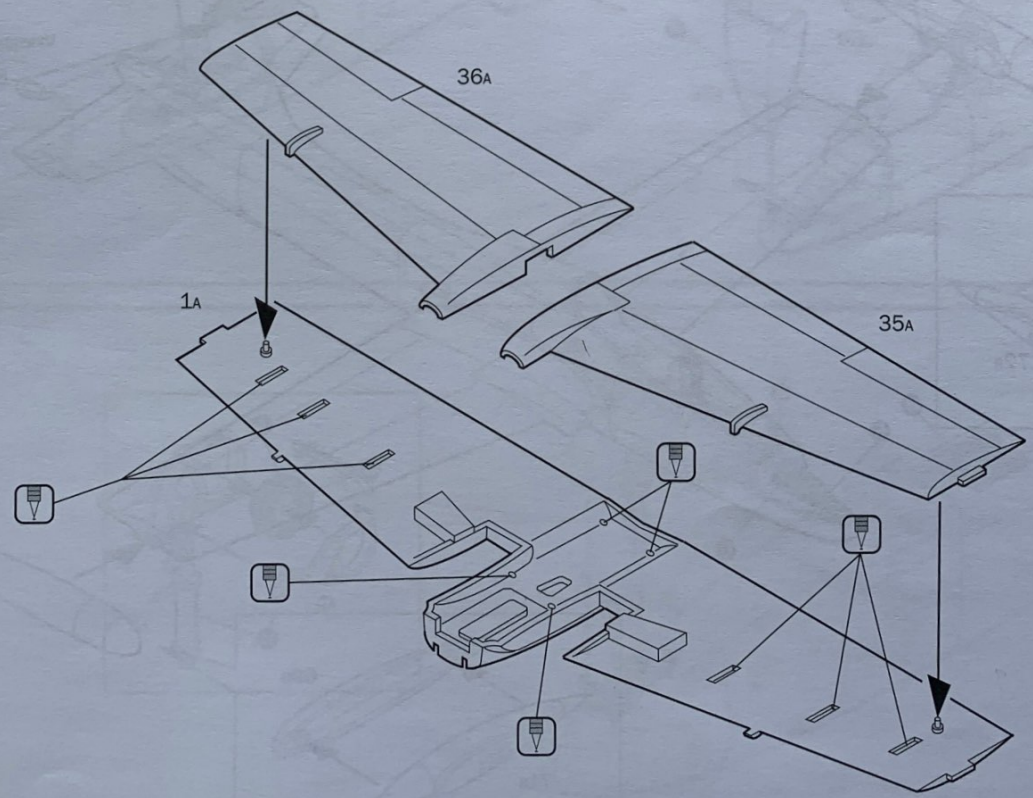
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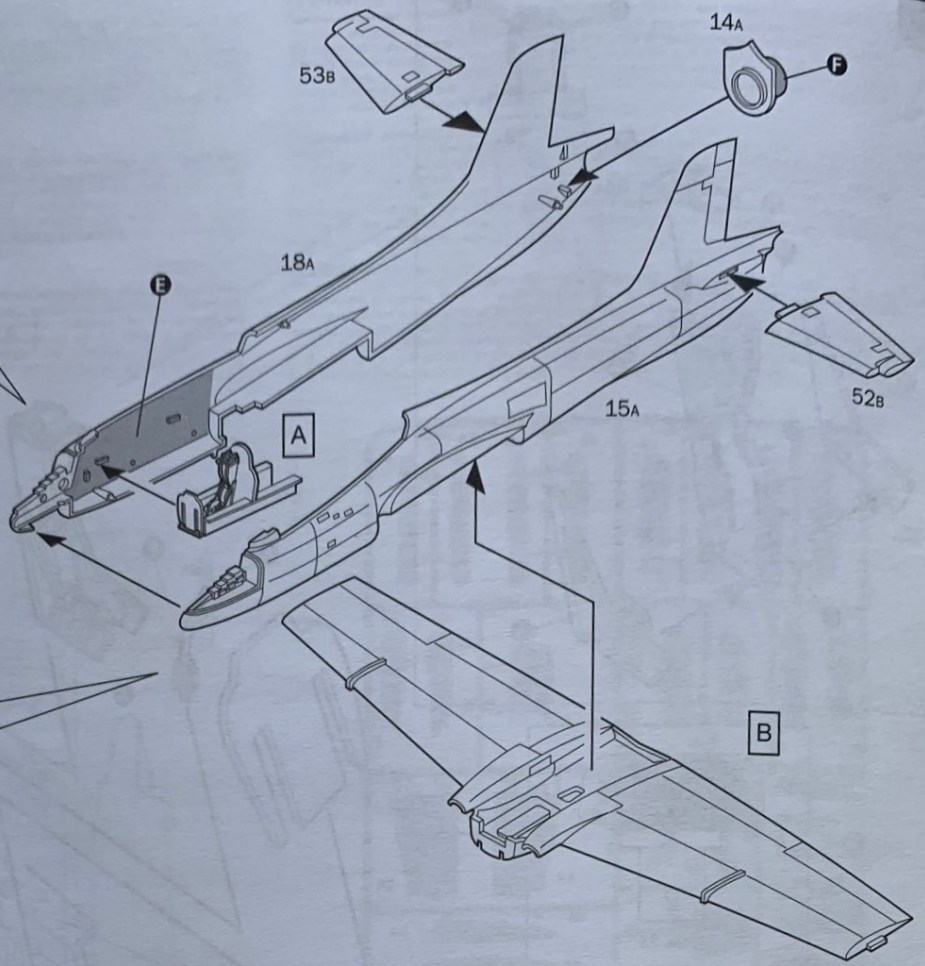
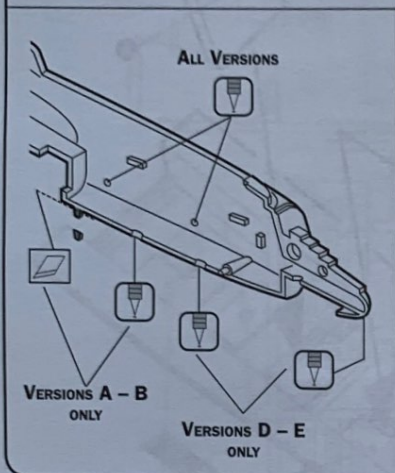
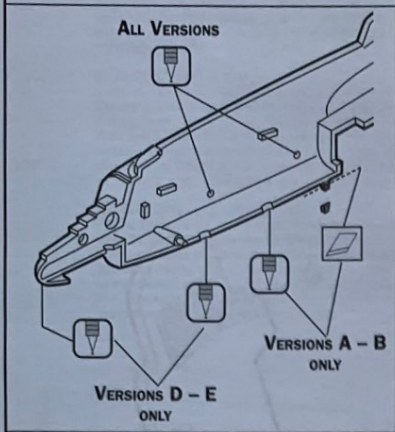


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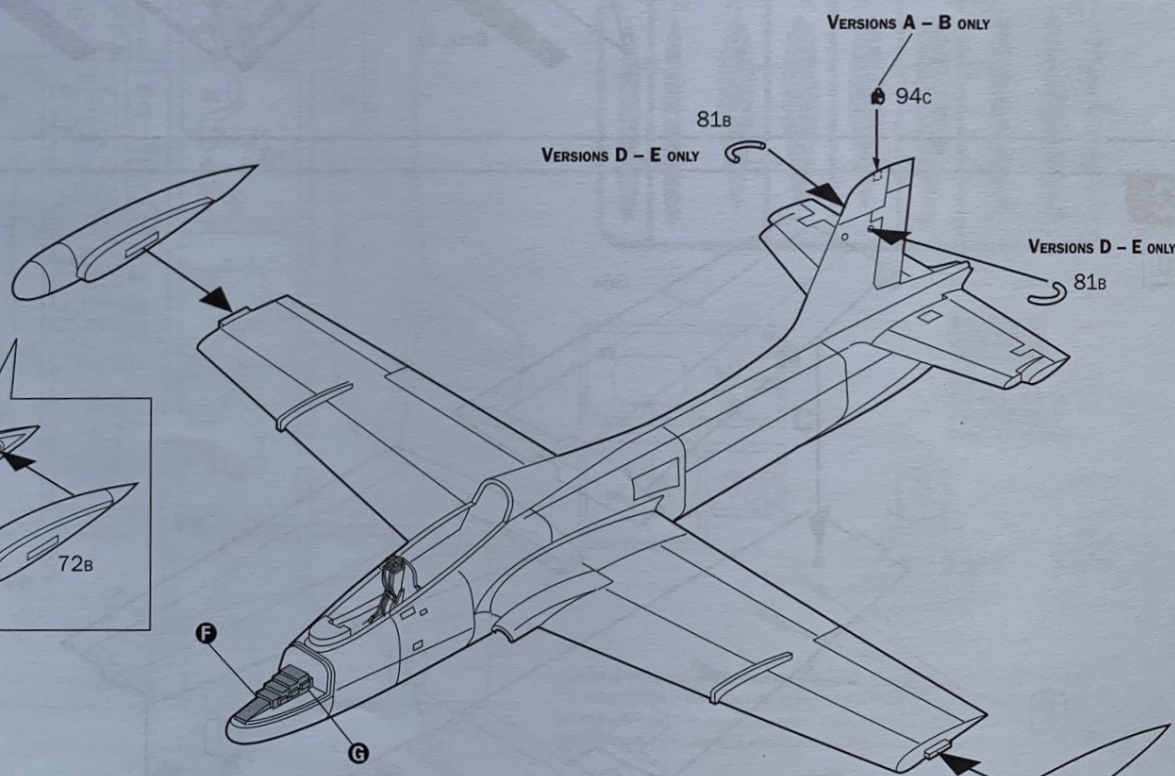
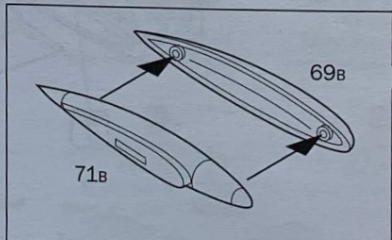
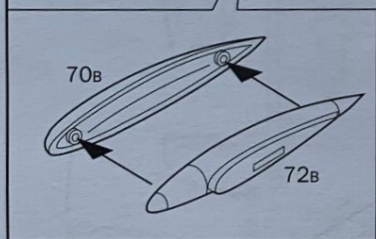
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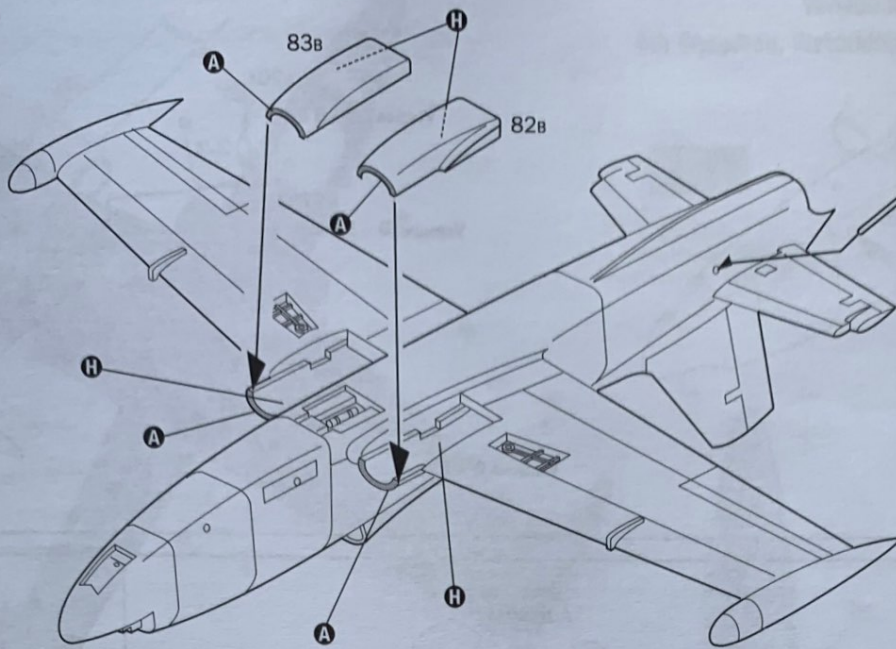


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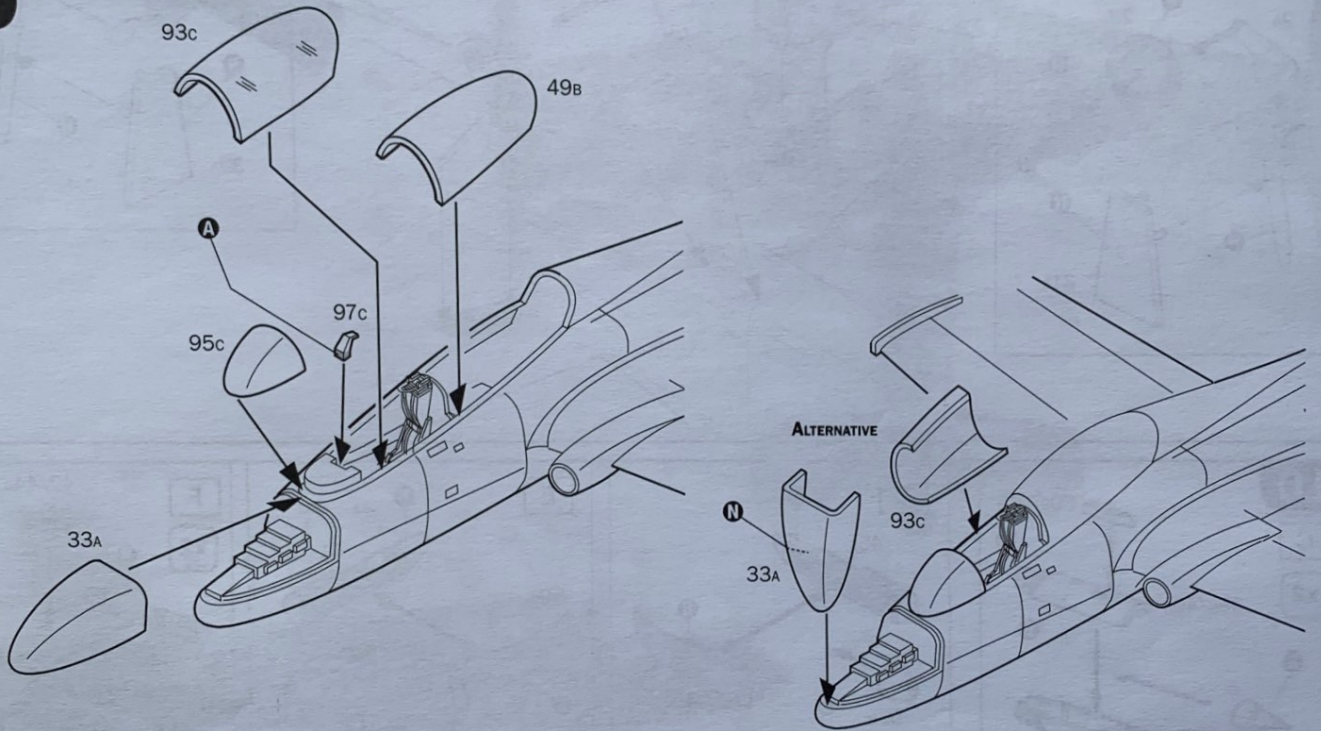


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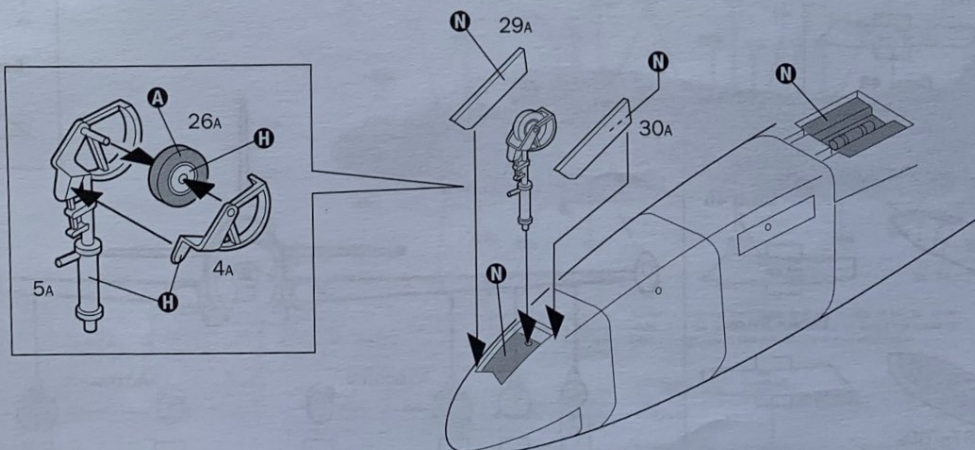
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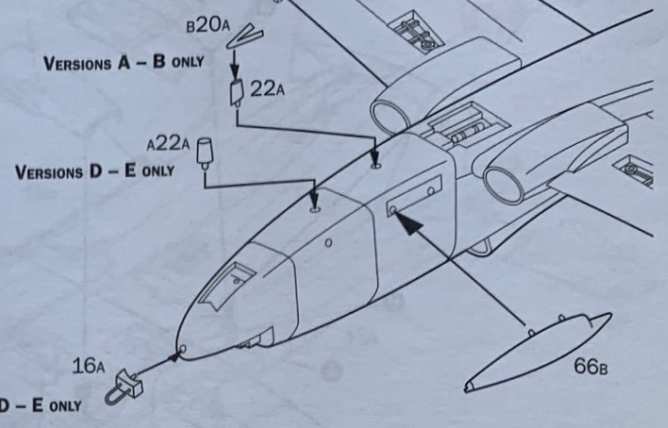
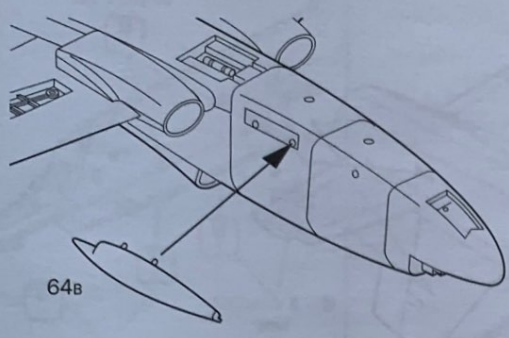
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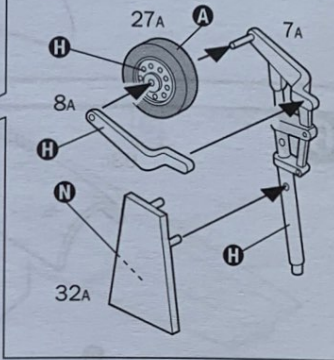
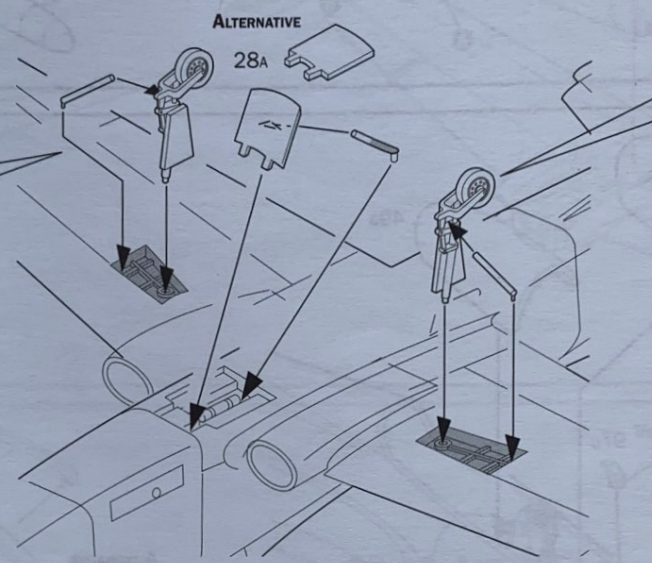
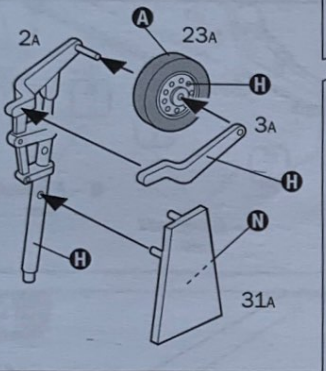
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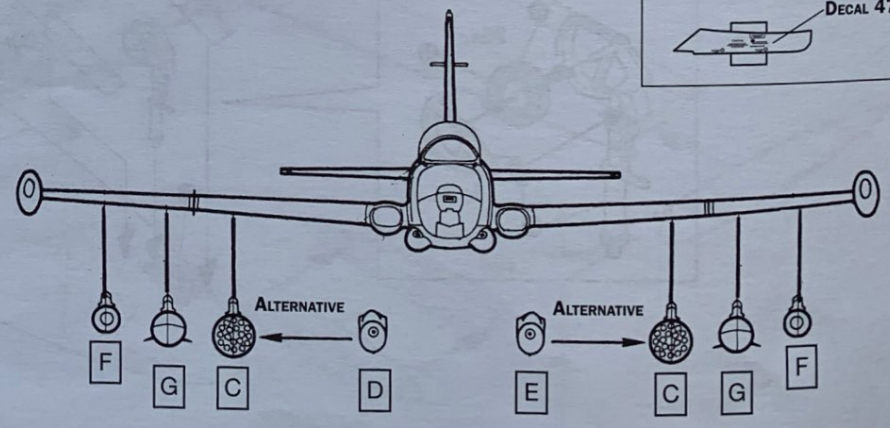
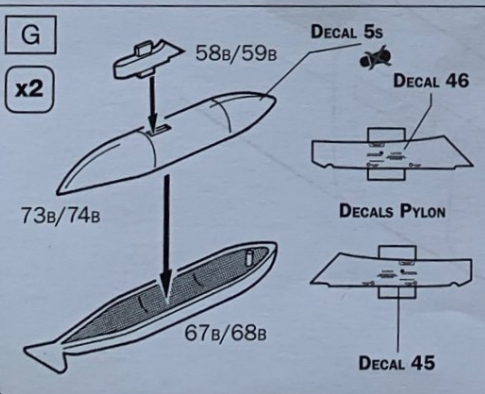
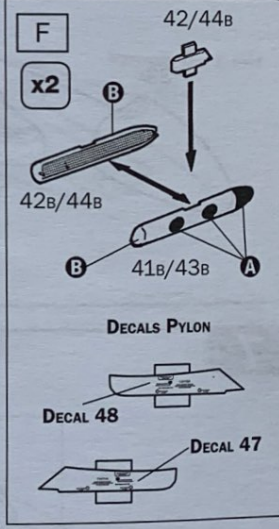
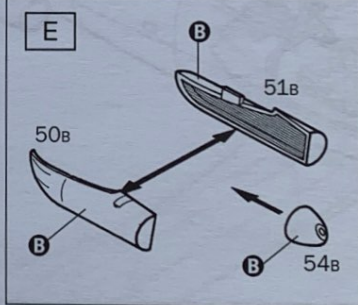
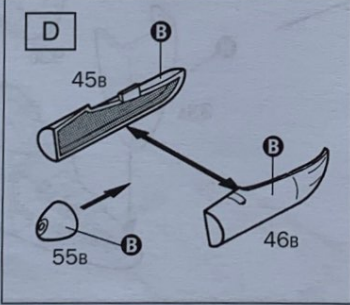
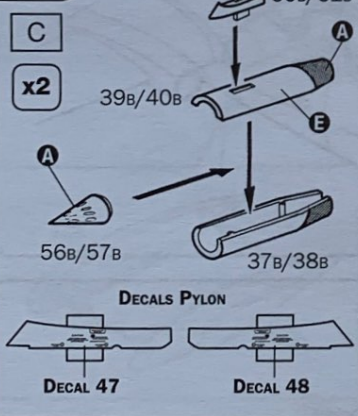
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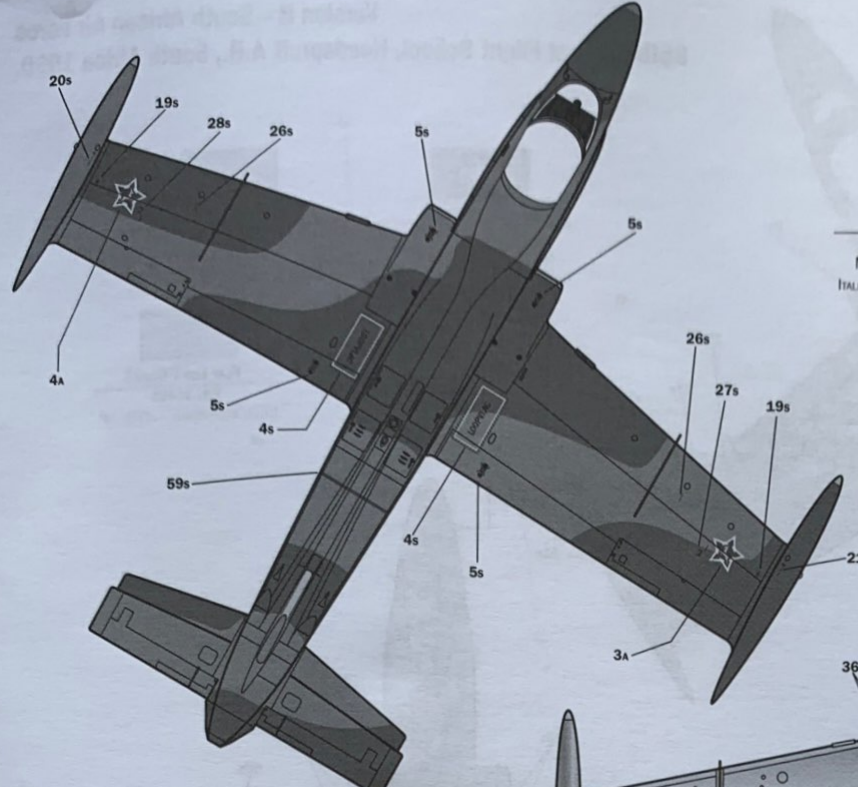
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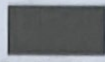



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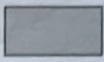


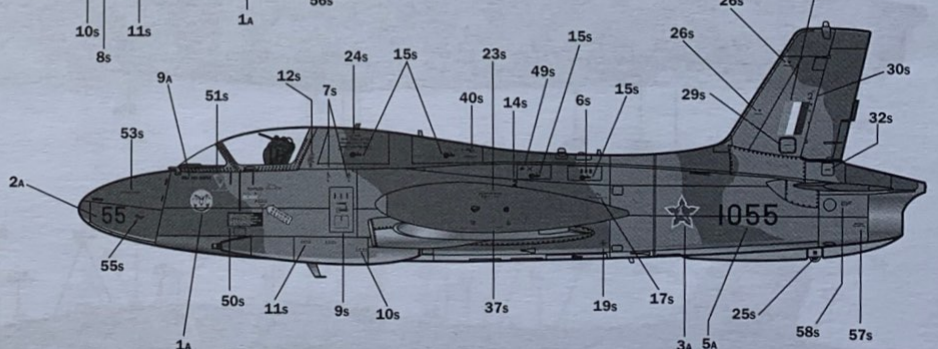
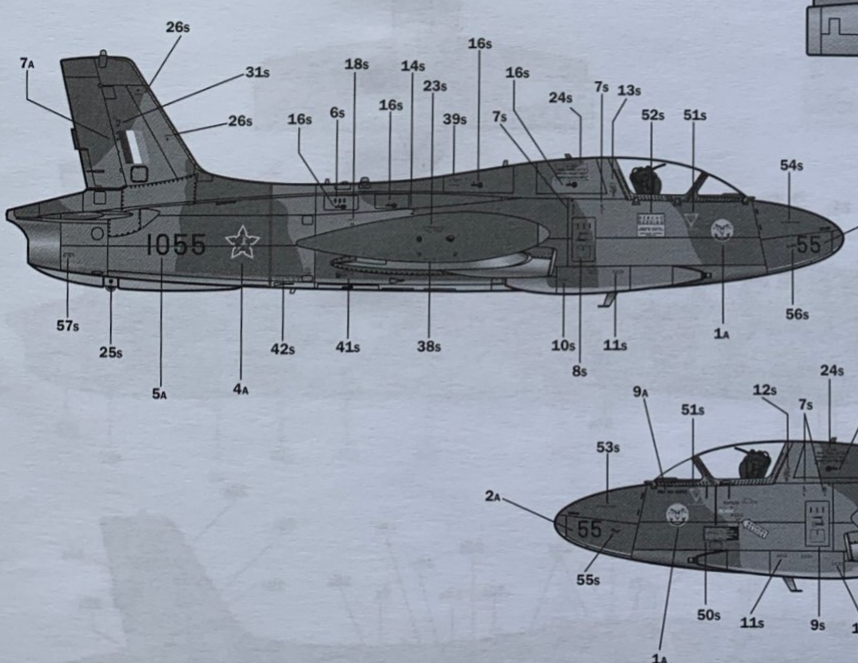
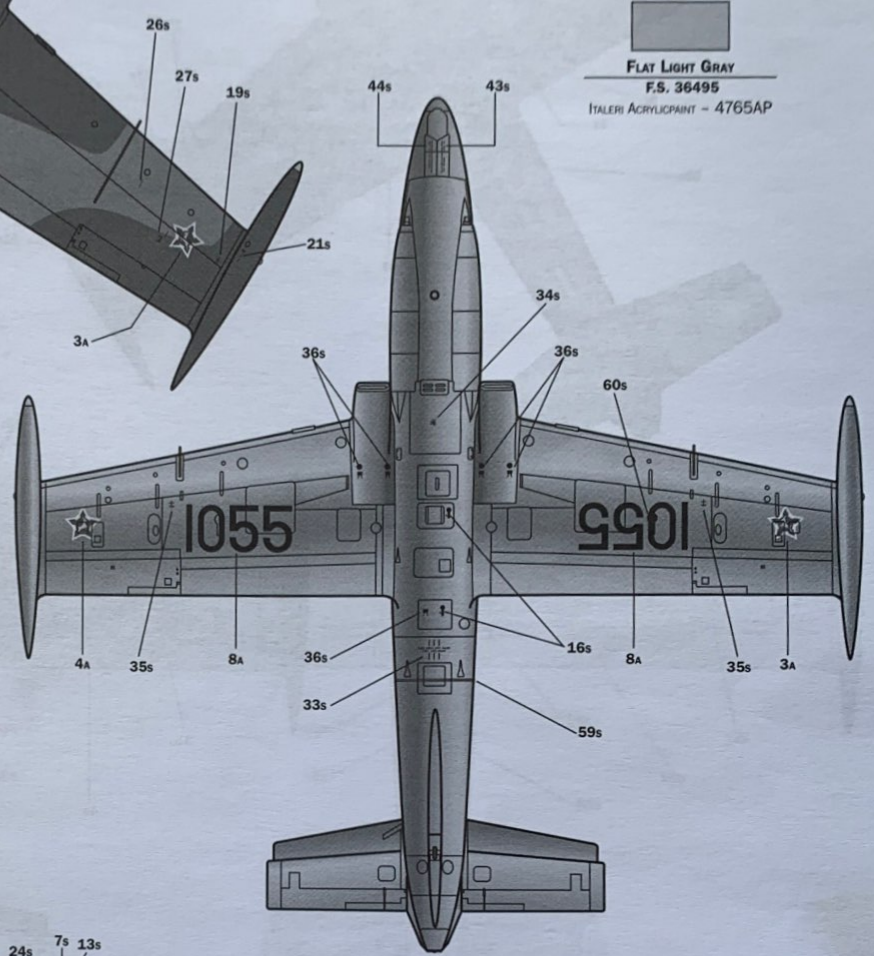
Version A – South African Air Force
4th Squadron, Waterkloof A.B., South Africa 1970.




FLAT DARK GREEN
 F.S. 34079
 MODEL MASTER – 1710
 ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT – 4726AP


FLAT LIGHT BROWN
 F.S. 30219
 ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT – 4643AP


FLAT LIGHT GRAY
 F.S. 36495
 ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT – 4765AP



Istruzioni per l'applicazione delle decalcomanie. Ritagliare le decalcomanie occorrenti dal foglio, immergerle in un bicchiere di acqua pulita per circa 10", metterle in posizione sul modello e farle scivolare dalla carta; per una migliore aderenza comprimerle con una pezuola pulita.



Direction for applying the decals: cut the required decals out of the sheet; dip the into a glass of clean water for about 10"; position the decals on the kit, letting them slide from the paper. For a better adhesion, press them by means of a clean rag.

Påläggning av decal: klipp ut den decal som skall användas och doppa den i ett glas vatten under en 10". Sätt decalen på plats på modellen och låt den sakta glida av pappret. För att den skall sitta ordentligt, tryck till med en torr duk.

Anweisungen für Abziehbilder-Anbringung: Die benötigten Abziehbilder vom Blatt abschneiden, in ein Glas reines Wasser für etwa 10" eintauchen, auf das Modell legen und dann vom Papierbogen abnehmen. Um eine bessere Haftung zu erzielen, die Abziehbilder mit einem reinen Tuch andrücken.

Instruction pour l'application des décalcomanies. Couper les décalcomanies choisies et les plonger environ 10" dans un peu d'eau propre. Les placer sur le modèle en les faisant glisser de leur feuille et presser avec un morceau de chiffon pour éliminer les bulles d'air.

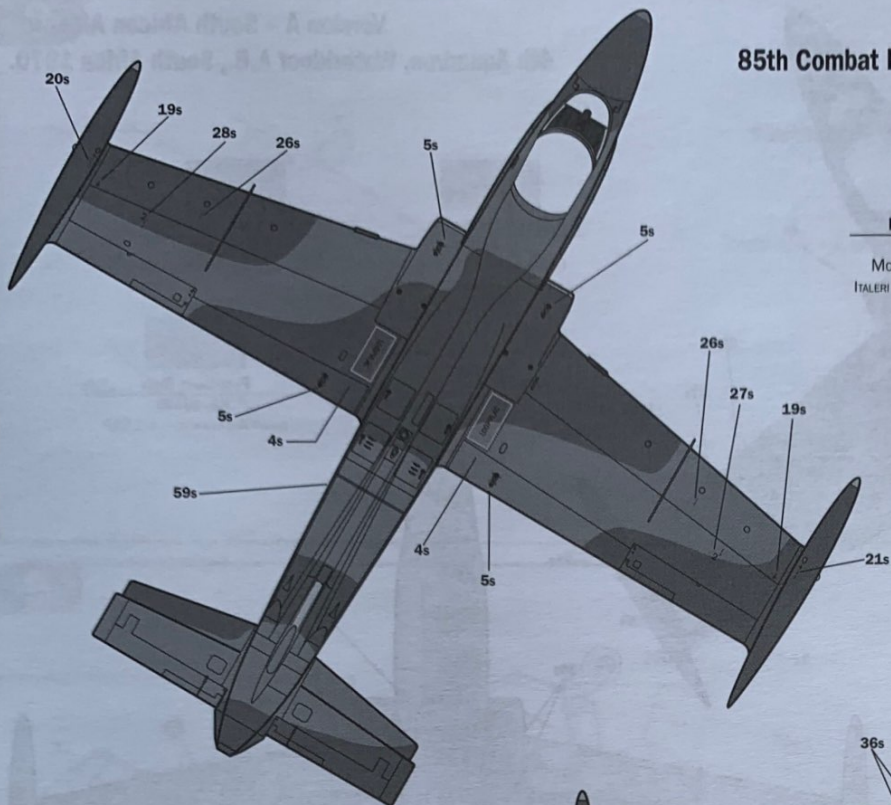
Istrucciones Para la aplicación de las calcomanías: cortar las requeridas, sumergirlas en un recipiente de agua limpia durante 10", colocar las calcomanías sobre el modelo, haciéndolas deslizar sobre el papel. Para una mejor adherencia, presionarlas con un trapito limpio.

Transfers: knip het benodigde deel uit, dempel et ca. 10" onder water, oudt het transfer tegen het model en schuif het vanaf het papier op zijn plaats. Met een schoon doekje aandrukken.

デカール取組方法: 図面から、それぞれのマークを切り取ります。あるまじく10分くらいは、目立たず浸します。マークをモデルに押しつけておき、紙から取り、模型の位置に貼ってください。やわらかな布でマーク上を押しつけて空気を取り除いてください。マーク面には、かわくまで手をふれないでください。

Указания по применению декалей: Отрежьте нужную вам часть декали от общего листа, погрузите ее на 1/2 минуты в чистую воду, затем, выдержав необходимое время на модели, переведите декаль на модель, сдвинув ее с бумажной основы. Для лучшего прилегания проведите декаль чистой тряпочкой.

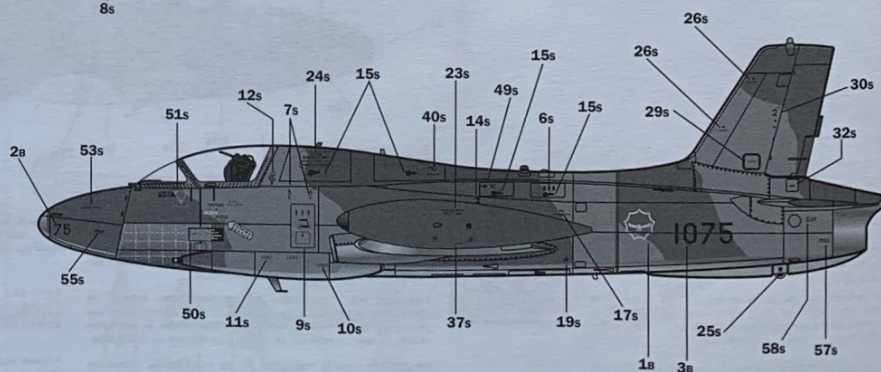
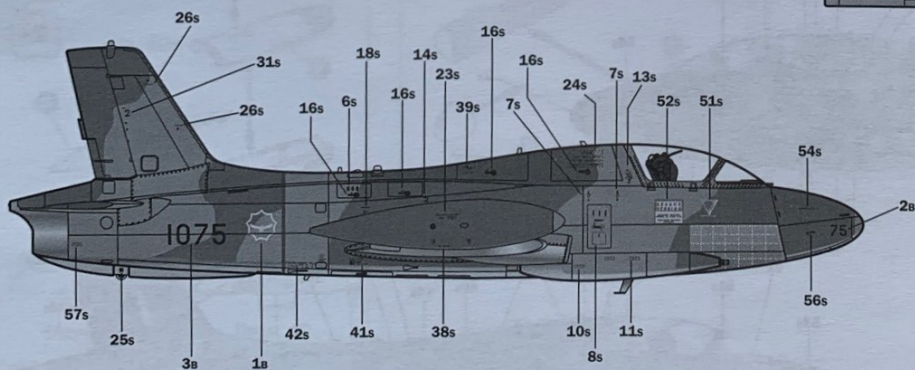
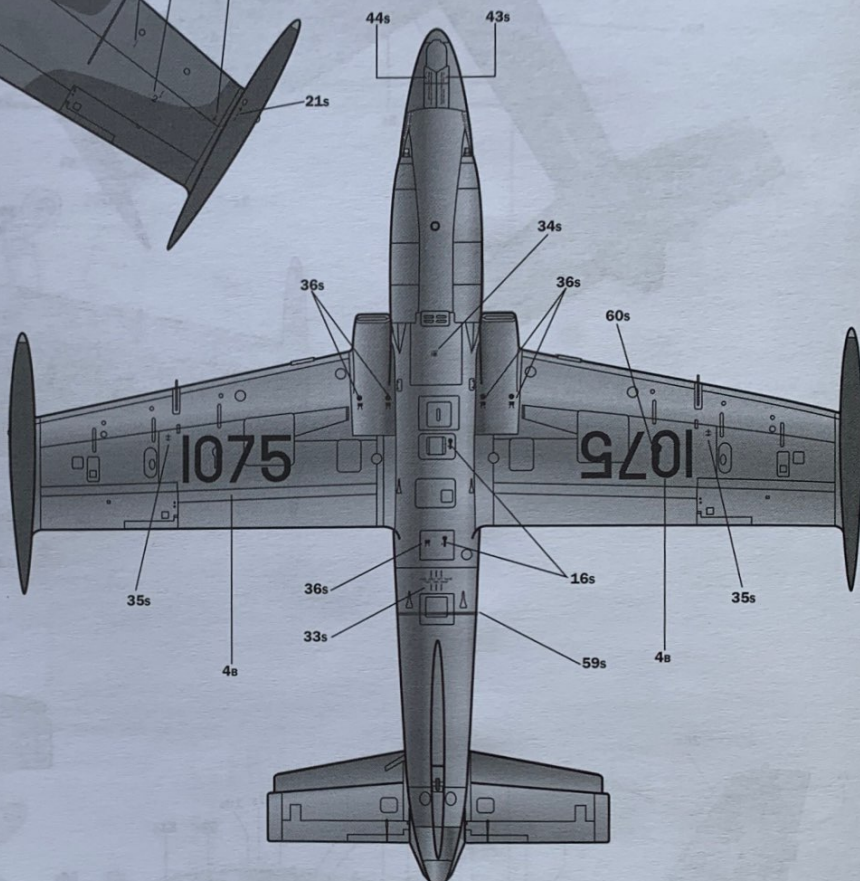
Version B – South African Air Force
85th Combat Flight School, Hoedspruit A.B., South Africa 1990.



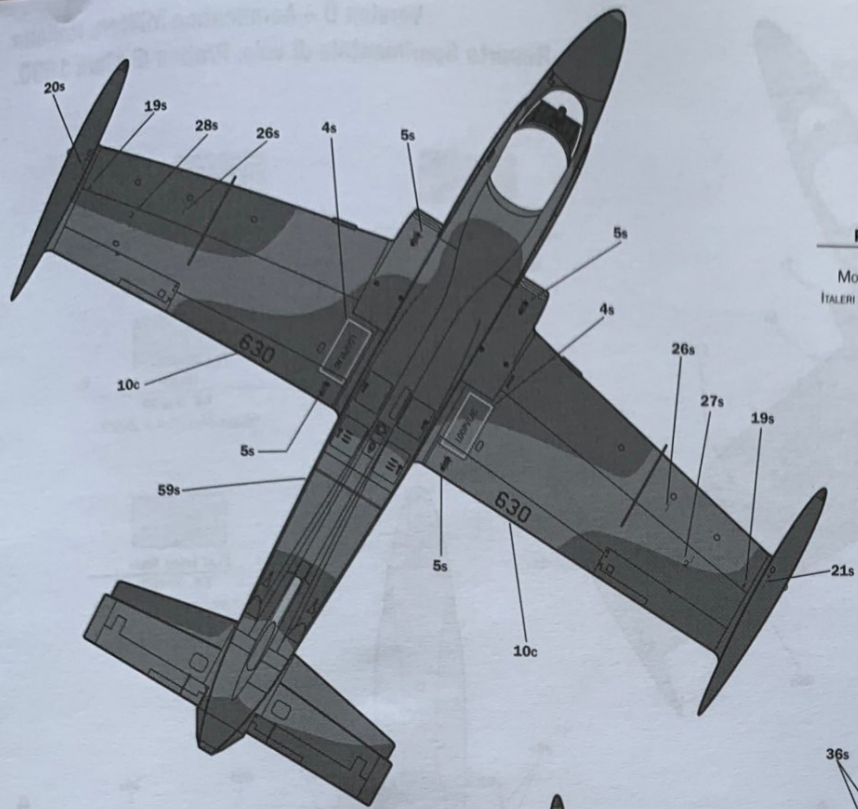
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F.S. 34079
MODEL MASTER – 1710
ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT – 4726AP

FLAT LIGHT BROWN
F.S. 30219
ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT – 4643AP

FLAT LIGHT GRAY
F.S. 36495
ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT – 4765AP



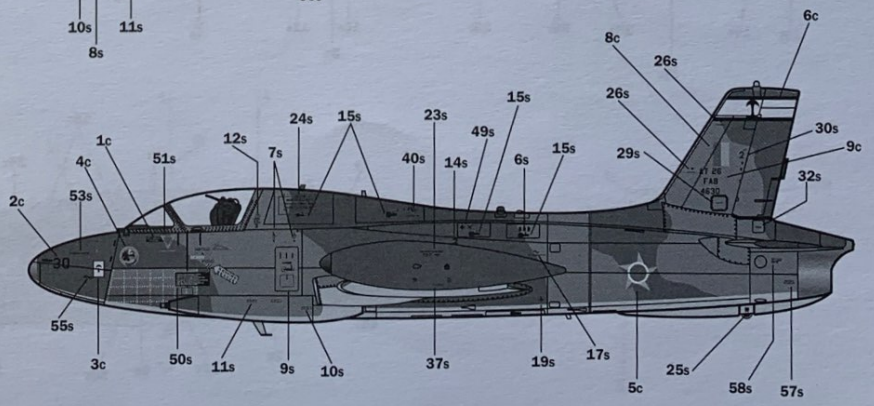
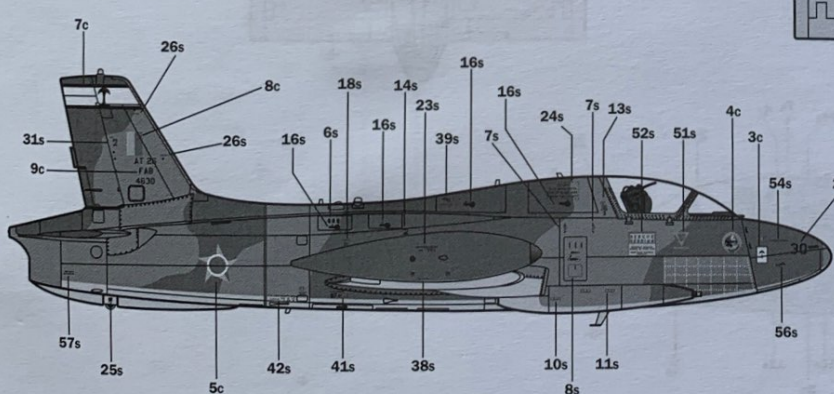
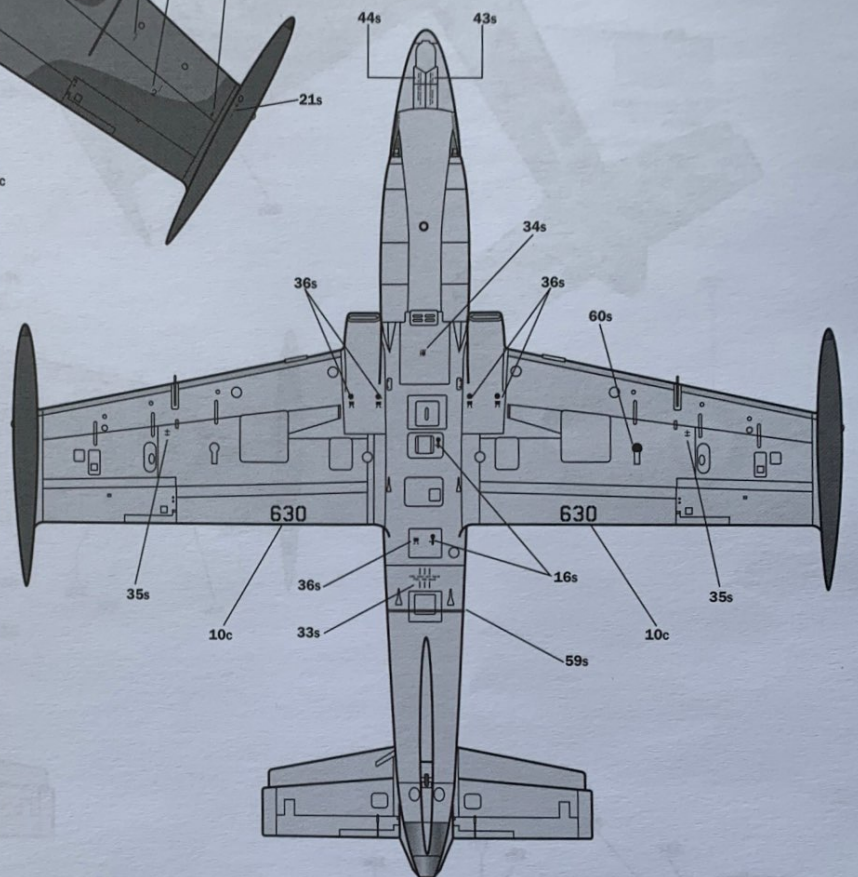
Version C - Força Aerea Brasileira
 Escuadron "Pacau" 1°/4° GAV, Natal 2006



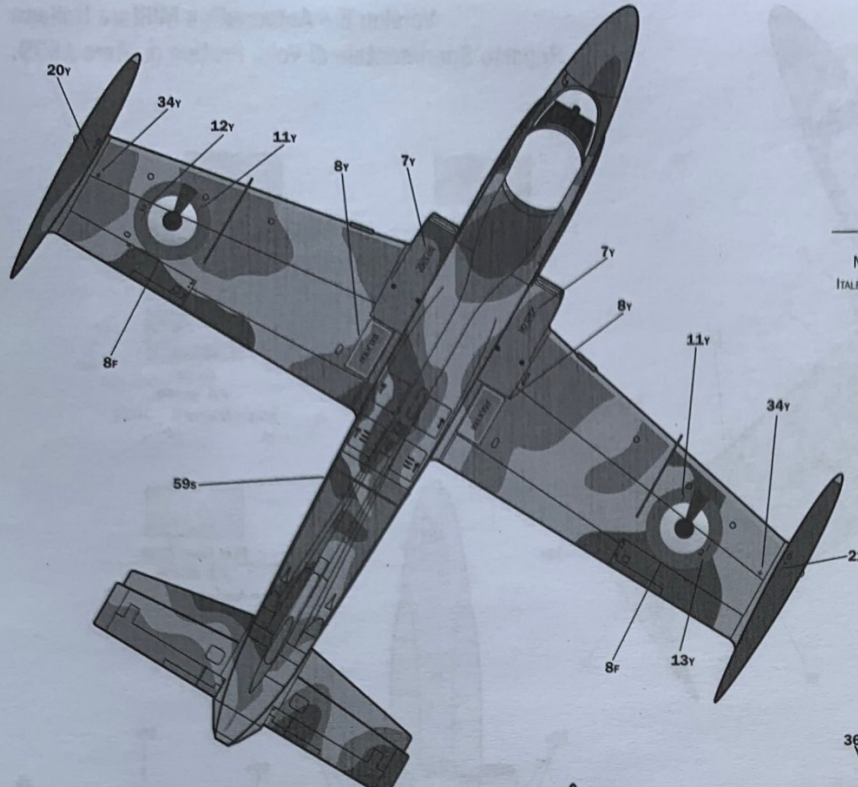
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 F.S. 34079
 MODEL MASTER - 1710
 ITALERI ACRYLCPAINT - 4726AP

FLAT LIGHT BROWN
 F.S. 30219
 ITALERI ACRYLCPAINT - 4643AP

FLAT LIGHT GRAY
 F.S. 36495
 ITALERI ACRYLCPAINT - 4765AP



Version F - United Arab Emirates Air Force
Police Air Wing, Dubai 1977.

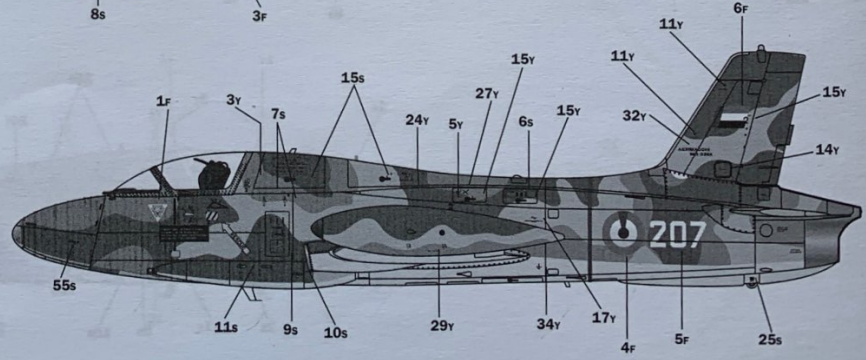
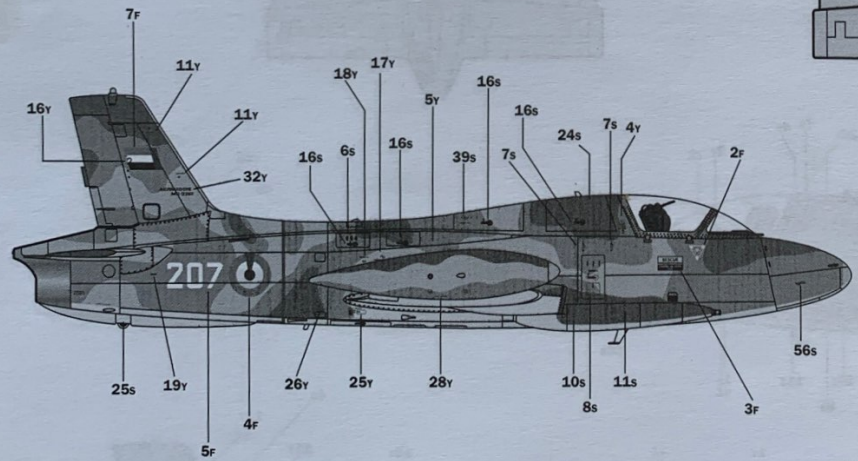
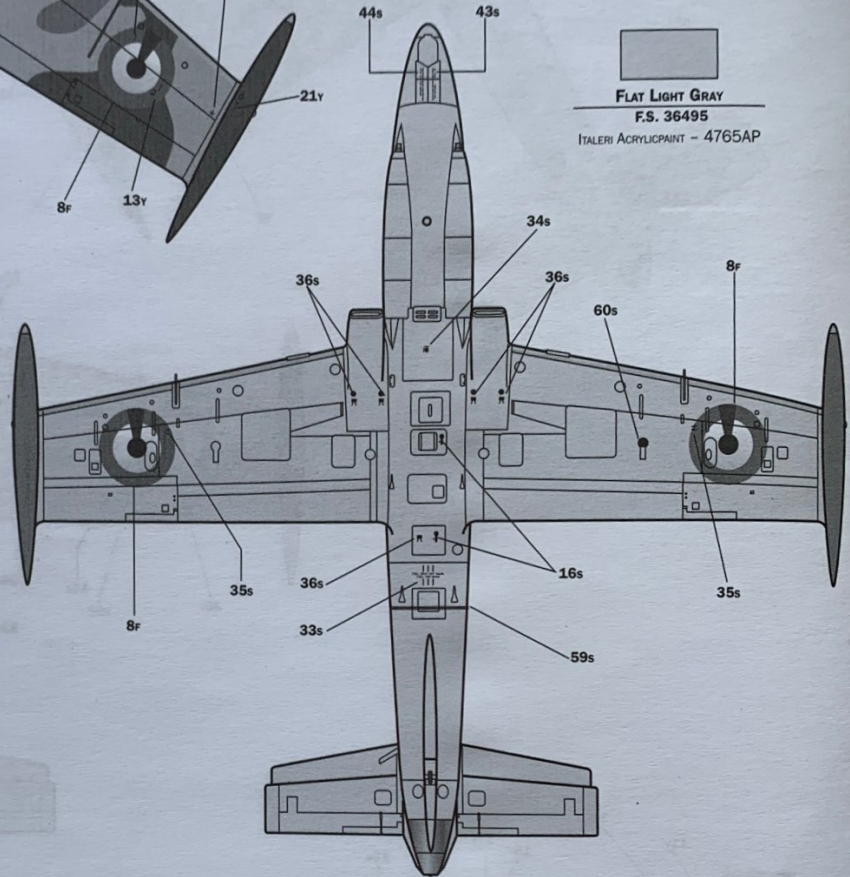


FLAT DARK GREEN
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MODEL MASTER - 1710
ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT - 4726AP

FLAT LIGHT BROWN
F.S. 30219
ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT - 4643AP

GREEN
F.S. 34258
MODEL MASTER II - 2029

FLAT LIGHT GRAY
F.S. 36495
ITALERI ACRYLICPAINT - 4765AP



AERMACCHI 326

AERMACCHI'S FIRST JET T-BIRD



With more than 700 MB.326s of all versions sold (either direct or through licence manufacture), Aeronautica Macchi has amassed an extensive background of experience in the field of basic-advanced training and light strike aircraft, which progressed to the MB.339 and more recently in the development of the M.346. It was a continuous process of evolution that enabled a classic trainer design to remain abreast of contemporary handling and performance requirements.

Initial design of the *Aeronautica Macchi* (Aermacchi for short) MB.326 trainer and ground attack aircraft started as far back as 1954, when Dr Ing. Ermanno Bazzocchi, Aermacchi's general manager, proposed the Company's development of a basic jet trainer. Dr Bazzocchi's enlightened philosophy in aiming the MB.326 for the highest possible performance, allied to a cockpit equipped to contemporary combat aircraft standards, proved a decisive factor in the sales battles of the 1960s. At a cost of \$250,000 ex-works, the basic trainer version was extremely competitive.

Fully aware of the competition, the Italian team set out to combine in a highly refined yet essentially simple aircraft: the best features of the French Fouga Magister, equipped with cockpit pressurisation but no ejection seats and which suffered structural limitations and the British Jet Provost, which was equipped with ejection seats but was unpressurised and was penalised by its aerodynamic configuration. The result constituted a considerable advance in structural aircraft design as the MB.326 encompassed the wide range of characteristics required for ab-initio through advanced training.

The extremely broad performance spectrum was allied to a robust, simple and conventional airframe with fail-safe and safe-life design criteria throughout and stressed for flight load factor of +8g and -4g; a simple, sturdy single-spool turbojet known for its acceptance of mishandling; roomy air-conditioned and pressurised cockpits fitted with automatic ejection seats, and emphasis on high utilisation with minimal servicing and maintenance.

Designated MB.326, the new design established aesthetic standards for training aircraft that remained valid for a long period of time. A development contract for a static test specimen and two flying prototypes was awarded, and the first MB.326 (I-MAKI), powered by a Viper 8 engine, performed its maiden flight on 10 December 1957 with *Comandante* Guido Carestiatto, Aermacchi's chief test pilot, at the controls. The second prototype, which joined the flight test programme during 1958, was powered by a Viper II of 2,500lb/st, the Viper variant selected by the *Aeronautica Militare Italiana* (AMI) to power the trainers ordered.

The MB.326 made its public debut in June 1959, when the second prototype was demonstrated at the Paris Salon by *Comandante* Carestiatto with an impressive public display showing off the manoeuvrability of the little Italian jet. However, the MB.326 aroused only modest interest among the numerous observers present; only the Australians decided to try out the aircraft and in July Air Commodore D.W. Kingswell and Sqd Ldr I. Hawes made several proving flights at the manufacturer's Venegono airfield. Both Australian pilots with very greatly impressed.

During 1960-61 several MB.326s were evaluated by the *Reparto Sperimentale di Volo* (RSV - Experimental Test Establishment) under the direction of *Colonello* Colagiovanni. The flight test period confirmed that the aircraft was fully suitable for the AMI's requirements providing the ideal solution to the problems long debated during ATAF meetings. In particular the extreme ease of handling guaranteed that flying schools would turn out pilots with the capabilities sought by the AMI.

A pre-production batch of 15 MB.326s was ordered for the AMI, and the first of these flew on 5 October 1960. By February 1962 a further 35 were ordered and the first course on this type began on 22 March 1962 with the 214^a Gruppo of the *Scuola di Volo Basico Iniziale Aviogetti* (SVBIA - Basic Jet Flying School) at Lecce-Galatina, some 30 miles south of Brindisi, taking over the task previously performed by T-6 Texans. Thus

Italy followed France, Britain and West Germany in using jet aircraft for ab-initio pilot training.

By that time the first group of 20 students had completed their course, the instructors had found the new aircraft an ideal platform for instructional work. Particularly appealing was its high safety factor, while stalling characteristics were gentle, touchdown speed modest and trim changes negligible when wheels and flaps were extended. Performance was extremely lively with stick forces light and response crisp throughout. Particularly impressive was its manoeuvrability at altitude which surpassed that of most contemporary fighters. The success of the new trainer resulted in a further 50 examples being ordered for the AMI for the conversion of the remaining two elements of the Lecce school, the 212^a and 213^a Gruppi.

In February 1963 the Alitalia Flying School started all-through jet training for commercial pilots, using four MB.326s equipped with airline-type electronic and navigation equipment. Designated MB.326Ds, the four aircraft were soon achieving a very high utilisation of what was basically a military design, averaging around 100 flying hours a month over two years and on several occasions individual machines flying over 200 hours in one month. Serviceability was of a very high order right from the start. Three of the aircraft were later acquired by the AMI following Alitalia's decision to send cadets to the SVBIA for training. Two MB.326Ds were eventually converted into drones.

Further procurement of MB.326s by the AMI was limited to the two prototypes of the MB.326G (of which more later) and a few examples of the MB.326E. Although the more powerful, combat-capable MB.326G did not find favour with the AMI, in 1973 the service decided to supplement its existing MB.326 fleet with a better equipped model embodying some of the features of the MB.326G. Designated MB.326E, the new variant retained the lowered powered Viper II for fleet commonality, but was fitted with a similar wing to that of the MB.326GB, incorporating six stores hardpoints, a fixed weapons sight and gun camera and new avionics includ-

ing miniaturised TACAN and UHF. Six new-built MB.326Es were delivered to the AMI, and six of the existing MB.326s were rebuilt to 'E' standard.

By 1 October 1981, the official introduction date of the replacement MB.339, the MB.326 had flown some 400,000 hours with the SVBIA. Other miscellaneous units used the MB.326s, including the *Squadriglie Collegamenti* (Liaison Flights), where it replaced the T-33A. The total number of MB.326s of all marks procured by the AMI was 128 (not including those acquired from Alitalia).

EXPORT SUCCESS

As delivered to the AMI, the MB.326 was a pure pilot trainer with no provision for armament. Aermacchi had proposed an armed version, the MB.326A, for the weapons training role, but the Italian service had no requirement for such an aircraft. Conscious of the potential inherent in the basic design, the manufacturer looked at the export market with the MB.326B, a dual-role model combining the training mission with close support. Six wing hardpoints were introduced, capable of lifting a wide variety of military stores carried by NATO tactical fighters of the day. Trials proved the MB.326 to be a very stable weapons platform and this, coupled with an extremely competitive price, soon attracted international acceptance.

The Tunisian Government ordered eight MB.326s becoming the first jet equipment for its fledgling air arm, and deliveries commenced in mid-1965. Ghana followed suit with an order for seven aircraft and deliveries also commenced in 1965. Two more aircraft were acquired later to make up for attrition. The Ghanaian aircraft were designated MB.326Fs and were similar to the Tunisian MB.326Bs except for avionics. With a reputation now established as a high-performance aircraft with almost vice-less flying qualities and a simple and robust airframe, the MB.326 proved attractive to the governments of Australia and South Africa, with both countries negotiating and finalising manufacturing licences for the type during the course of 1965.

The Australian version, designated MB.326H, differed from that supplied to the AMI in having added avionics, including TACAN, UHF, ADF, etc, and provision for a complete armament fit. The initial contract placed on behalf of the RAAF was for 75 aircraft, of which the first 12 came from Aermacchi's assembly line and the remaining 63 were to be built by Commonwealth Aircraft with Hawker de Havilland as major sub-contractor. Imported components and assemblies were used to build the first 18 of the licence-built aircraft. The RAAF initially employed the MB.326H purely for the basic phase of its training syllabus, retaining the CA.27 Sabre for the advance phase. However, in 1970, after three years of service, the RAAF decided to use the MB.326H for the entire basic and

advanced phases. A further 12 MB.326Hs were added to the original RAAF contract (bringing the total to 87) and a batch of 10 was ordered for the Royal Australian Navy.

In 1977 Commonwealth Aircraft completed a feasibility study concerning the updating of the RAAF's MB.326 fleet. At that time, the total cost was estimated at just over Aust \$25 million, or 10-12 per cent of the cost of a completely new jet trainer programme. As a result of this study, the Australian government shelved plans for early procurement of an MB.326 replacement, and by the mid-1980s the RAAF's fleet was cycled through the LOTEX (Life-of-Type-Extension) which extended the type's service life for a further ten years. About a dozen MB.326s were processed at any one time, the LOTEX modifications requiring some 15 weeks. Replacement wing, fuselage and tail components where necessary were produced on the original jigs and tools used in the licence-manufacturing programme, and improvements were introduced to the cockpit and avionics systems.

An interesting chapter in the RAAF's MB.326 story was the re-establishment of No.76 Squadron – a Mirage unit disbanded in August 1973 – as a day fighter unit equipped with the MB.326H, operating from Williamtown AFB. This move followed a decision taken in 1988 that a pilot's 'wings' were to be awarded on the Pilatus PC-9 when sufficient aircraft of that type became available for advanced training. The MB.326H would then be withdrawn from the advanced syllabus, and No.76 Squadron could provide an introductory course for prospective F-III navigators, F/A-18 and F-III pilots and a day fighter continuation training course. Other RAAF units to fly the MB.326 were Nos.25, 77, 79 Squadrons, No.2 Flying Training School, No.2 Operational Conversion Unit, No.5 Operational Training Unit, The Central Flying School and, of course, The Roulettes Aerobatic Team.

The South African Air Force (SAAF) initially required the MB.326 for the basic phase of its flying training syllabus, but also desired employing the more aggressive capabilities of the aircraft for weapons training and associated tasks. The South African model was designated MB.326M by the parent company and given the name Impala by the SAAF. An initial batch of 40 were supplied by Aermacchi, these lacking provision for armament and being assigned primarily for flying training. Using a prototype MB.326M retained in Italy, Aermacchi developed an armed version for operational use with various armament configurations. This version was subsequently

built by Atlas Aircraft Corporation in South Africa. Initially Italian manufactured parts were used, but these were progressively supplanted by locally-made components. Total of MB.326Ms operated by the SAAF was 151, among which were those flown by the Silver Falcons Aerobatic Team.

MORE POWERFUL VERSIONS

The parent company had rolled out its 100th MB.326 in December 1965, and up to then all aircraft had been powered by the Viper II 200 Series engine, as were to be all production aircraft for a further two years. However, well before the 100th machine had left the assembly line, Aermacchi in concert with Bristol Siddeley had proposed an uprated version of the aircraft powered by the Viper

20, which offered a 36 per cent increase in thrust. The MB.326 had proven highly manoeuvrable when carrying stores at high speeds, and it had been determined that with the increased power external stores could be almost doubled to a maximum of 4,000lb. With some local strengthening to cope

with the improved performance and increased all-up weight, the MB.326 proved to be highly attractive as a light strike aircraft.

Thus, a second phase in the development of the MB.326 was launched and work began on the new dual-role version, one with more emphasis on combat potential. The new model was designated MB.326G, and was intended to combine the light attack mission with basic-advanced flying training and weapons training. Powered by the Viper 20 Mk 540 engine of 3,360lb/st (like the Viper II, it was also-Piaggio-built), the export model became the MB.326GB and the first customer was the Argentine Navy which, late in 1968, ordered a batch of six, later supplemented by a further two ordered in 1972. The service also procured twelve MB.326 Xavantes (Embraer-built MB.326GCs) from Brazil in the early 1980s. Serviceability, following the Falklands War and Britain's embargo on the supply of spares suffered immensely. The government of Zaire also chose the MB.326GB, ordering a total of 17. Neighbouring Zambia followed with an initial batch of six MB.326GBs in 1969, followed by a second batch of six in 1972 and a final batch of six in 1973.

The biggest customer for the uprated MB.326 was to be the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) which, following an agreement signed in May 1970 between Aermacchi and Embraer for the licence assembly of the aircraft, placed an initial order for 112 MB.326GCs, which earned the service name Xavante. The first Embraer-assembled Xavante flew on 3 September

1971, with the 100th aircraft being completed on 6 September 1976, by which time a further 40 had been ordered by the FAB. Total production totalled 182 which included six MB.326GGs exported to Togo.

ENTER THE SINGLE-SEATER

The availability of the 4,000lb/st Viper 600 Series encouraged Aermacchi to develop the MB.326 design a stage further, a single-seat light attack and operational training aircraft. Fatigue requirements imposed by the ground attack role necessitated strengthening certain areas; servo-boosted ailerons were introduced and two electrically-operated DEFA 553 cannons were installed in the lower fuselage walls, the elimination of the second cockpit providing space for their 125-round ammunition tanks which, located on rails, could slide in and out, as well as for additional fuel and avionics transferred from the nose.

The single-seat version was initially known as the MB-336, and a two-seat version with the Viper 600 Series engine was simultaneously investigated by Aermacchi. However due to the fact that the basic configuration remained unchanged, coupled with the excellent international reputation enjoyed by the MB.326, the new single- and two-seat models became the MB.326K and MB.326L respectively. The decision to proceed with the MB.326K was taken in June 1969, and the prototype, powered by a Viper 540, made its first flight from Venegono on 22 August 1970 piloted by Comandante Carestato. The second prototype joined the programme the following year, and flew from the outset with the definitive Viper 632-43, demonstrating excellent performance and outstanding low-level manoeuvrability.

In 1974 Dubai placed an order for three single-seat MB.326KDs and a two-seat MB.326LD for its para-military Police Air Wing. The aircraft were to form Dubai's initial contribution to the Air Force of the United Arab Emirates. These were later augmented by an additional two MB.326KDs and one MB.326LD.

Late in 1972 the Chairman of the South Africa Armaments Board, Prof. H.J. Samuels, announced that an "advanced subsonic aircraft" would soon be assembled in South Africa for the SAAF, and that the first model would come off the assembly line late in 1973 or early 1974. He was referring to the MB.326K, which had impressed the Pretoria government with its potential for the close support and counter-insurgency roles. An order was placed with Aermacchi and agreement reached for a follow-on manufacturing licence for this variant. Manufacture of the two-seat MB.326M by Atlas Aircraft was phased out during 1975 and the parent company delivered seven MB.326KCs beginning in late 1974, followed by 15 in knocked-down form for assembly by Atlas. Known as Impala IIs, these aircraft were delivered with the lower powered Viper 540 pending the availability of the more powerful Viper 632-43 with which they were eventually re-engined. The type served with Nos.4, 5, 8 and 40 Squadrons of the SAAF.

Atlas received further orders in 1976 when Tunisia ordered eight MB.326KT single-seaters and four MB.326LT two-seaters to replace its ageing F-86F Sabres. These aircraft joined eight MB.326B trainers that had been acquired in 1965. Also in 1976, Ghana placed a contract with Aermacchi for six MB.326KB single-seaters for use primarily in the light attack role, becoming the first combat aircraft to be taken into the Ghana Air Force inventory. Last but not least, the Force Aérienne Zairoise placed an order for eight MB.326Ks in 1978 to supplement the 17 MB.326GBs previously delivered.

Production by the parent company ended in 1978, giving way to the equally-successful MB.339. As if to assert its position in the training aircraft manufacturing field for many years to come, Aermacchi (now Alenia-Aermacchi) has been developing the M.346 Master with firm orders already placed by the AMI while great interest has been displayed by United Arab Emirates and Singapore.

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HISTORICAL FEATURE

FOKKER D.XXI



Embraer EMB.326GB, 4-A-102, 1^a Escuadrilla de Ataque, Aviación Naval Argentina. Grey FS.38231 upper surfaces with Light Grey FS.38492 undersides; blue/white/blue rudder and elevators, with the Argentinian 'Sun' superimposed on the former. Markings are 'reversed', i.e. darker grey on light grey areas and vice versa; unit badge and rank pennant on nose. Black anti-dazzle panel and 'lion's head' on fin

Aermacchi MB.326GB Pelicano, A-4-105, '105', 1^a Escuadrilla de Ataque, Aviación Naval Argentina. Dark Sand and Dark Green upper surfaces with Light Blue Grey FS.36473 undersides; all lettering in black. Black anchor markings in four wing positions



Embraer MB.326GB Xavante, FAB-1004, Fuerza Aerea Paraguaya. Tan FS.30219/Green FS.34012/Dark Green FS.34079 upper surfaces with Light Grey FS.36622 undersides; all lettering in black. National markings in six positions

Atlas MB.326 Impala Mk I, 480/80, No.4 Squadron South African Air Force, Waterkloof AFB, 1974. Aluminium overall with Dayglo Orange nose, outer face of wing tip tanks, air intakes and rear fuselage band; all lettering in black. National markings in six positions; '480' repeated below wings; inboard of national markings. Unit badge on nose

MB.326H, 480/80, No.4 Squadron South African Air Force, Waterkloof AFB, 1974. Aluminium overall with Dayglo Orange nose, outer face of wing tip tanks, air intakes and rear fuselage band; all lettering in black. National markings in six positions; '480' repeated below wings; inboard of national markings. Unit badge on nose



Below: Atlas Impala Mk 1, '602', No.7 Squadron South African Air Force, Malan Airport (Cape Town), 1994. Dark Sand and Dark Green upper surfaces with Light Blue Grey FS.36473 undersides; all lettering in black. National markings in six positions; unit badge on nose

3rd from Top: AerMacchi CA-30, A7-050/50, No.79 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force, Pearce AFB, 1998. Dark Sea Grey overall with black anti-dazzle panel, wing and fin leading edges; yellow trim to nose, vertical tail surfaces, wings and tailplane. Black Skull marking on fin; codes in white on fuselage sides and on top of fin. National markings in six positions

Bottom of Page: AerMacchi CA-30, A7-057, No.76 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force, Williamtown, mid-1998. Dark Sea Grey and Dark Green upper surfaces with Light Grey undersides; black anti-dazzle panel and front of wing tip tanks. Serial on fuselage sides and code on top of fin in white. National markings in six positions; unit badge, with the addition of No.25 Squadron's 'duck' added as a zap on the fin within a white circle over a red and black vertical tail surfaces. Nose zap consists of two F/A-18 Hornet 'kills' on nose



Below: AerMacchi CA-30 (MB.325H), A7-079/79, Royal Australian Air Force Aerobatic Team 'Routettes'. BS.381C/557 Light Orange/White general finish with undersides in Aluminium; black anti-dazzle panel, lettering and inboard face of wing tip tanks. Australian flag on fuselage sides; national markings in six positions. 'R' on fin is red



2nd from top: AT-26A (MB 326C Impala II) 4635, 1^o/4^a G.Av., Esq. Pacau, Natal AFB, Força Aérea Brasileira, 2007. Tan FS.30219/Green FS.34012/Dark Green FS.34079 upper surfaces with Light Grey FS.36622 undersides; all lettering in black. National markings on fuselage sides; white/red stripe along top of vertical tail surfaces with an 'Ace of Diamonds' superimposed. 'Ace of Diamonds' card on nose, with the unit badge carried further aft. '635' repeated in black above wing flaps

Below: AT-26 (Atlas Impala I) 4614, 2^o/5^a G.Av (Joker Squadron), Força Aérea Brasileira, Natal AB, 2004. Tan FS.30219/Green FS.34012/Dark Green FS.34079 upper surfaces with Light Grey FS.36622 undersides; all lettering in black. National markings on fuselage sides; blue stripe edged in black with white/black motif on vertical tail surfaces. Unit badge on nose; '14' repeated in black on nose, '614' repeated above wing flaps



Above: AerMacchi MB.326C, MM.54390, 'RS-33', Reparto Sperimentale Volo (RSV), Aeronautica Militare Italiana, March 1990. Tan FS.30219/Green FS.34012/Dark Green FS.34079 upper surfaces with Light Grey FS.36622 undersides; Serial in black, code on nose in light blue, outlined in black. National markings in six positions

Right: Atlas Impala Mk II, 1075, 05 Combat Flight School, South African Air Force, Hoedspruit AFB, 2005. Dark Sand and Dark Green upper surfaces with Light Blue Grey FS.36473 undersides; all lettering in black. Low viz national markings in light grey.