On 24 October 1967 CVA-64 USS Constellation positions itself On Line within the Gulf of Tonkin 140 miles off the coast of North Vietnam. This is the Constellation’s final On Line period having departed North Island California six months on 29 April 1967. The Constellation has just returned from in-port replenishment in Subic Bay, Philippines relieving the USS Coral Sea.

A strike against targets outside Hanoi was scheduled for 25 October, but inclement weather delayed the strike taking place until the next day.

On the morning of 26 October 1967, VA-55 Warhorse A-4 Skyhawks launch from the USS Constellation flying Iron Hand, equipped with AGM-45 Shrike missiles. They are assigned to protect the VA-146 Blue Diamonds A-4s from North Vietnamese SA-2 surface to air missiles. VA-146 was tasked with bombing the Barracks, and logistics hub at Van Dien on the south eastern outskirts of Hanoi. Within the logistics hub were a large amount of trucks, maintenance facilities and supplies. Escorting the strike package were four F-4B from VF-143 flying a new type of mission called MIGCAP, an evolution from the troubled TARCAP. The first element of two F-4Bs were to take up station outside of Hanoi while the second element were to take up station further south closer to the coast within Route Package 6B.

In-port, Hong Kong                                                                  19-23 Sep 1967

In-port, Subic Bay                                                                    17-22 Oct 1967

In-port, Subic Bay                                                                    14-15 Nov 1967

the Rescue Control Center Gulf of Tonkin (Navy) call sign Harbor Master;

USS Edson, USS Jouett

North SAR Missile Cruiser

War Chief Radio Call Sign Constellation

https://safe.menlosecurity.com/doc/docview/viewer/docNAF2B423AE9FDd45440c8182ecd3864ce78463bc3ab4d65128398b61a2bd492cf7dd69a4d044c

<https://navy.togetherweserved.com/usn/servlet/tws.webapp.WebApp?cmd=ShadowBoxProfile&type=EventExt&ID=277916>

https://forum.largescaleplanes.com/index.php?/topic/35812-vietnamese-mig-21-markings/

https://www.britmodeller.com/forums/index.php?/topic/235072078-seeking-photos-of-north-vietnamese-mig-21mf%E2%80%99s-in-camouflage/

I have only just picked up on this thread and should say right from the start that the topic is a maze to navigate through. For one reason or another I have, in recent times, conducted a fair bit of research into VPAF MiG-21 operations, particularly those during the Vietnam conflict and with an emphasis on the colour schemes and markings applied to them. As part of this research, I was also invited to complete a review of Roger Boniface's book 'MiGs over North Vietnam' for our newsletter. As has been reported elsewhere, this is an excellent book which sheds new light on a topic that had previously been dominated by evidence from one side only. There is, however, one major problem with the book and that is with regard to the captioning of quite a few of the photographs and Colour Side Profiles (CSPs), which is totally wrong !. So, the statement from one of the co-respondents above about taking CSP captioning with a quote "huge grain of salt" unquote is sound advice. The reference to 'MiG-21F' for a MiG-17 caption is pretty obvious but some of the MiG-21F-13 captions make reference to MiG-21PF, the 'MiG-21PF' profile on Page 62 is labelled at MiG-21PFM yet lacks the prominent brake parachute housing found on the latter and the same mistake is repeated on Page 94, where the profile shows a 'MiG-21PF Red '5020' sans brake parachute housing yet a photo of the same aircraft immediately above the CSP clearly shows said parachute housing. The 'MiG-21MF Red 5040' shown on Page 111 is, in fact, a MiG-21PFM with camouflage optimised for night interception duties. When checking photographs and/or profiles, a useful rule of thumb is to look at the four digit code to determine the variant but, as always, there may be anomalies.

4\*\*\* series for MiG-21F-13 & some -PFLs

50\*\* for MiG-21PFM

61\*\* for MiG-21PFM

51\*\* for MiG-21MF

52\*\* for MiG-21bis

53\*\* for MiG-21bis

To my knowledge, none of the MiG-21MF variants received camouflage during the Vietnam War but some aircraft, of all variants, may have been delivered in camouflage. There is evidence to suggest that MiG-21PFM 'Red 6122' was operated in a three tone upper surface camouflage scheme with light blue lower surfaces, having been rapidly supplied by the Soviet Air Force as an attrition replacement. It would appear that the majority of camouflaged types (both locally, such as '5040') or as described above were MiG-21PFMs, which would make sense since this was the most numerically common variant in VPAF Service during the war. As you will have seen more contemporary (i.e. Post-War) Vietnamese Air Force MiG-21s have been observed in several colour schemes including overall light grey and a three-tone camouflage scheme.

The subject is further complicated by the fact that quite a few of the large variety of references associated with both kit and aftermarket decal sheets also contradict each other, particularly with regard to the presence (or otherwise) of national insignia on the upper and lower surfaces of the wings. My research so far indicates that the application of VPAF insignia to the upper and lower wing surfaces during the war was not an exact science and may have been dictated by time and local circumstances. Some aircraft probably received a full set of national insignia while others, rushed into service almost immediately after delivery, probably only received the VPAF insignia on the fuselage sides. I would recommend that constant referencing and cross-referencing through printed media and the internet will be the only way to determine whether a particular airframe received the 'full set' or not. Care should definitely be taken in making comparisons between wartime markings and those applied Post-War. With the luxury of time and, quite possibly, a legal requirement under international aviation law to properly mark combat aircraft, the Vietnamese will have set out to apply markings to the upper or lower surfaces (or both) of their aircraft but I do not imagine this was foremost in their minds when they were combating the might of the USAF, USN, USMC and US Army during the dark days of the Vietnam War.

My research has not gone to waste....here is the first of my own VPAF projects