

Tornado over the Tigris

Recollection of a Fast Jet Pilot

Pen and Sword
Michael Napier
£25.00

ISBN: 1473834139

There are plenty of books on the shelves about fighter aces, famous bomber squadrons or legendary missions, but why not a book on a 'typical' pilot? Without taking any credit away from the author, who retired from the RAF as one of the Tornado Flight Commanders at RAF Bruggen, this is a book on the 'average' RAF fighter pilot who had a remarkable career.

Napier was capable of flying fast jets extremely well, and these skills took him to the front

line in the last years of the Cold War, and on to missions over Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War.

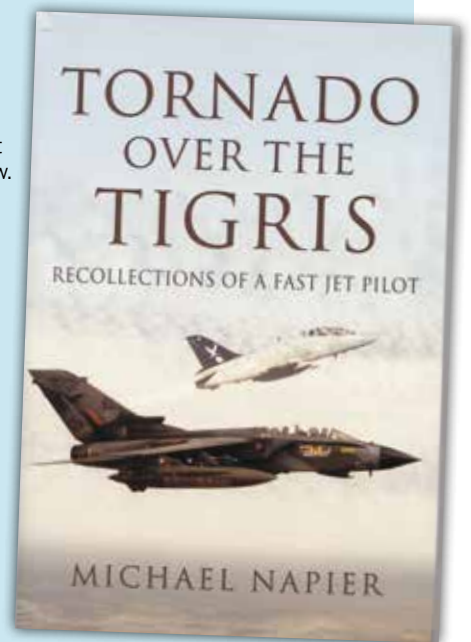
Packed with the typical candid crew-room stories and banter that come with any RAF squadron, the book gives the reader an insight to the daily life of an RAF Tornado GR1 pilot. Exercises, detachments, sorties cancelled by weather and the inevitable admin' work that comes with flying is all explained in a way that comes across as if it's a chat over a coffee, not words on a page. There's still plenty of technical detail within the text, but it does not distract from the easy flow of the story.

I had to read one account a couple of times to ensure it was authentic. It concerned the accidental 'kills' of a pair wild horses during a strafing pass. They had wandered on to the bombing range at Decimomannu,

Sardinia, mid-way through Tornado's gunnery practice. The 'guilty' GR1 from 14 Squadron was suitably marked with two horse silhouettes on its nose a short time later by RAF ground crew.

As Napier continued his flying career, a spell as an instructor flying Hawks at RAF Chivenor appeared almost as dangerous as flying combat missions in the Gulf War on occasions. But he takes it all in his stride and views every incident as being 'simply part of the job' for those lucky enough to earn their living from a fast jet cockpit.

A large collection of memories that takes the reader around the world as a passenger in the front seat of Tornado. More please Michael Napier! *Glenn Sands*



Russia's Warplanes Volume 1

Harpia Publishing
Piotr Butowski

£34.99

ISBN: 978-0-9854554-5-3

Harpia Publishing's latest title addresses the changes that have taken place within Russia's military aviation over the last decade, bringing the reader up to date with the new aircraft designations, units, upgrades and weapons in service.

Butowski also looks beyond the current operational types by providing a wealth of new information on aircraft projected to be in service with

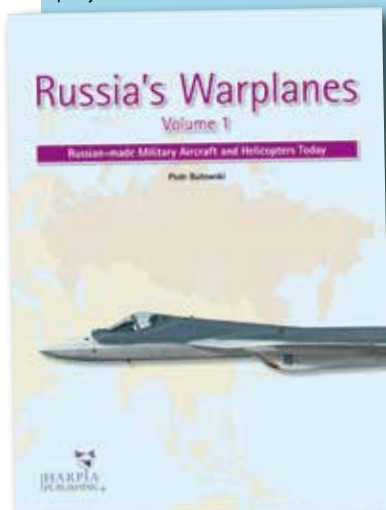
Russia and its client states in the near future. So extensive is the text that it's little wonder that this is only volume one of the Russia series.

The author has taken the clever step of breaking the development of each aircraft into chapters and then into sub-sections. These contain a brief historical introduction of the type, a list of the various avionics upgrades that have occurred, projected plans for the aircraft and nations that are flying or, in some cases, due to order the latest version.

Detailed and thorough, the text is littered with acronyms and Russian designations. This is apparent to the reader in the sections that deal with Russia's special missions aircraft. This eccentric collection of converted prop-driven airliners, such as the Il-22 *Coot B* operate alongside the latest generation of airliners like the Il-80 *Maxdome*. The latter's interior has been stripped of seating and packed with eavesdropping sensors and analysing equipment.

The access that Butowski has been granted by the Russian military is evident by the depth of detail, so I doubt this book will be bettered for the foreseeable future.

A stunning piece of work and one highly recommended to any serious observer of the modern military aviation scene. *Glenn Sands*



Iranian Tigers at War

Middle East @ War
Volume 4

Helion Publishing

Babak Taghvaei

£16.99

ISBN: 978-1-910294-13-0

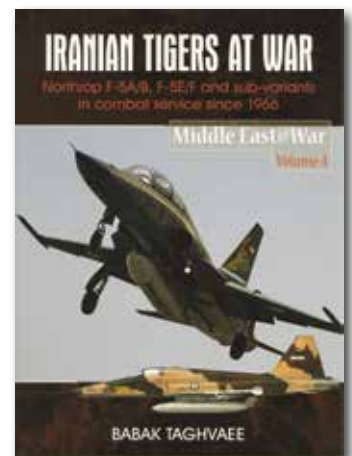
The Northrop F-5 is viewed by aviation defence analysts as the cheap lightweight fighter that was 'really' only good enough for second line duties within NATO. But for nations around the world, that didn't have the 'big American bucks' to spend on the top-of-the-line F-4s, F-15s or F-16s, the F-5 was the only Western option. Surprisingly, one such operator was the Iranian Air Force, which acquired its first examples back in the mid-1960s. Iranian Air Force specialist and regular AFM contributor Babak Taghvaei explains the entire story of the F-5 in service with what was the Imperial Iranian Air Force (later renamed the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) in 1979).

In chronological order, the author provides detailed accounts of the F-5's combat operations and the long-range strikes against some of the most heavily defended targets in Iraq. Hundreds of close-air

supports strikes followed, flown along the oil-rich borderlands in the Shatt al-Arab region. The little-known reconnaissance sorties by IRIAF's RF-5As are revealed here for the first time in print.

Accompanying the text are maps and detailed colour side profiles illustrating the various squadron markings, camouflage and weapon loads with which the F-5s fly.

But, the story doesn't stop there. The Iranian's converted a small number to the old-looking twin-tailed Saeghe and this recent project is explained and illustrated with superb images. Speaking as one with a passion for Iranian military aviation, I can highly recommend this new book. *Glenn Sands*



These titles are available from: The Aviation Bookshop, 31-33 Vale Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1BS, United Kingdom.
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Su-34 FULLBACK - RUSSIA'S STAR OVER SYRIA

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