

# FLYING TIGERS

## SQUADRON DISPATCHES

*Weekly Newsletter*

LATEST  
EDITION

# STAR OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE



(Edition No.165) There can be few aircraft in the current RAF inventory that are as graceful as the **Lockheed L-1011-500 TriStar** and their relatively small number guarantees that catching a glimpse of one of them is always something of a treat! Purchased in the immediate aftermath of the Falklands War, the RAF Tristar's were bought to bolster the transport and refuelling capabilities of the Royal Air Force, which were exposed as inadequate during this conflict. They purchased 6 former British Airways machines and a further 3 ex-Pan Am Tristars, all of which underwent extensive modifications at Marshalls of Cambridge before beginning their RAF careers. Two of the aircraft are designated **Tristar K1's**, which can operate in the passenger or tanker role and a further four are designated **KC1** and add a cargo carrying capability to their list of attributes. The three former Pan Am aircraft are designated **Tristar C2** (and a solitary C2A), which are purely passenger carrying aircraft. All of these beautiful aircraft serve with RAF No. 216 Squadron and are based at Brize Norton, although the nature of their role dictates that they are often required to operate far from their home base.

The need for the RAF to transport large numbers of troops, over extended distances has been clearly illustrated during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. More importantly, these extended distances often dictate that aircraft need to be refuelled whilst in the air. This critical strategic necessity is carried out by six of the RAF Tristars, which employ a centreline hose and drogue delivery method. Marshall's installed massive under floor fuel tanks which hold the additional fuel which can be given to receiver aircraft of all types, including other *thirsty* Tristars! The fuel delivery process is also enhanced by a rearward facing CCTV system, mounted near the drogue mound, which really must make for some very interesting viewing (if you are in to that sort of thing!) Although these beautiful *old ladies of the sky* are due to be replaced by Airbus A330 *Air tankers*, the constant delays and procrastinations with the FSTA project mean that we may be able to enjoy the sight of our RAF Tristars for some time to come. Although they are very rarely seen at UK Airshows these days, if you are lucky enough to see one of the RAF Tristars, you are always grateful for the opportunity and you are certainly left



looking at one of the most attractive aeroplanes to wear the RAF roundel. With only nine aircraft at their disposal, photographs of the RAF Tristars are much sought after and as they fast approach the end of their service careers, these opportunities should be grabbed with both hands!

We have discussed the recent emergence of 1/200<sup>th</sup> scale model collecting in previous Newsletters, but this will certainly be further enhanced with the release of a stunning **RAF Tristar** in the scale, this week! The [Gemini 200 range](#) can be summed up in just one word – **quality!** These models are truly superb and the release of a former civilian aircraft in military guise is the recipe for certain success. **G2RAF120** is a beautiful **RAF Tristar** in what must be its definitive and most attractive livery and in this larger scale, it really is stunning. Available for the first time on the Flying Tigers website, these highly limited models must be snapped up this weekend, if you wish to embellish your collection with a really magnificent die-cast model. Click on this [GEMINI 200 link](#) to be transported straight to this section!

Our [NEW RELEASES](#) section also contains another Gemini classic, this time in the form of a 1/72<sup>nd</sup> scale **Royal Navy Phantom** – it is so good to have them back! Arriving this week, this magnificent *sell out* model allows us to continue our love affair with the mighty Phantom – more importantly, the British version of the machine. Coming just too late to commemorate 100 years of naval aviation, this beautiful model improves on Gemini's first Navy Phantom release, even though this previous model was something of a die-cast classic! I have to say that as a collector package, the Gemini models are almost unbeatable and I am certain that they are destined to be some of the most cherished models our hobby has created.

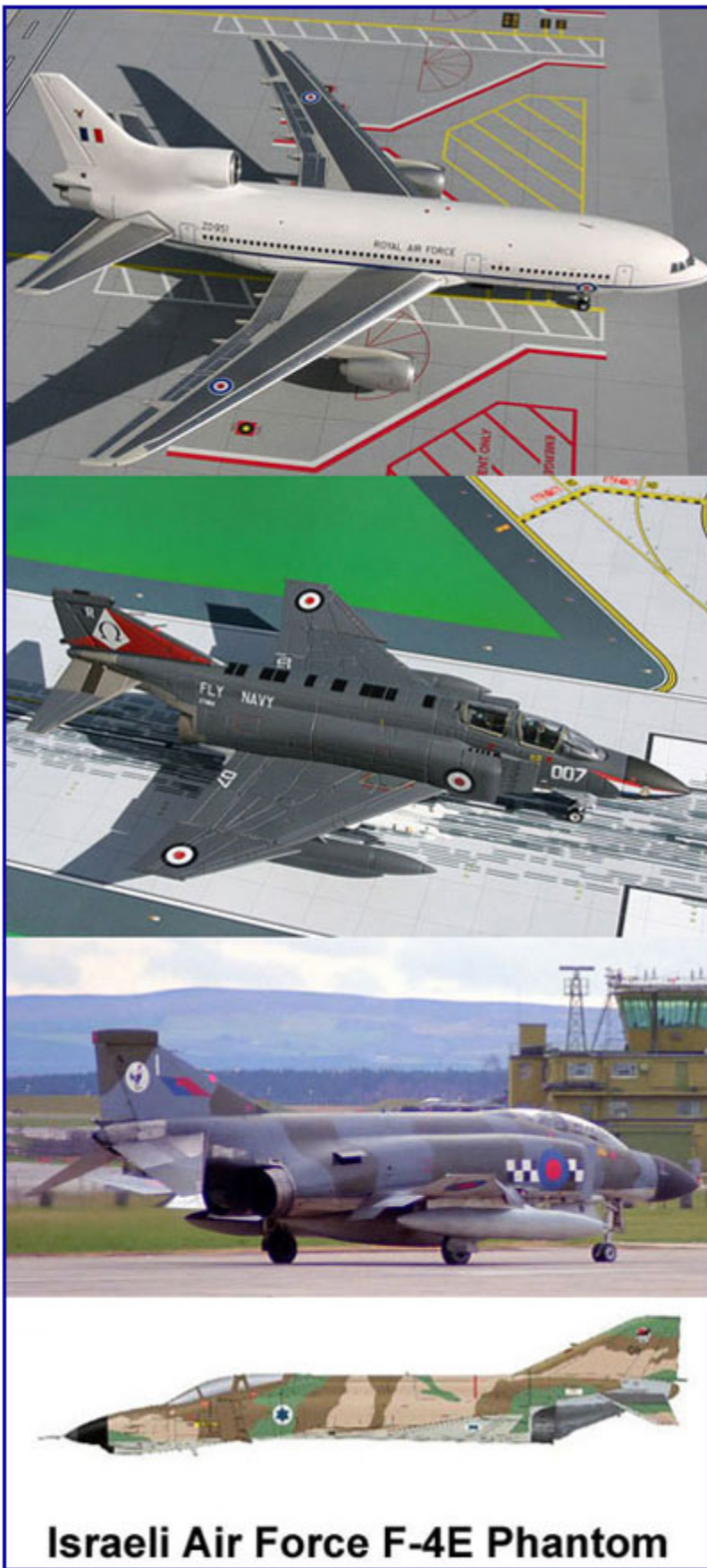
Whilst on the subject of Gemini Phantoms, if you have not already done so, please reserve your **43 Sqn 'Fighting Cocks'** RAF Phantom in our [FUTURE RELEASES](#) section – in the space of one week, we have already allocated 80% of the models that we have been allowed!

Finally for this week, as we have talking Phantoms today, it seemed fitting to include one as our latest [OFFER OF THE WEEK](#) model. The unique Hobbymaster **F-4E Israeli 'Sledgehammer'** is a hugely attractive model and one which we are making available for just **£24.99** whilst current stocks last!

**Thank you for taking the time to read the latest edition of our Newsletter (Edition 165)**

MJC

*Unfortunately due to the downsizing of our Squadron Dispatches Newsletter images for display on standard computer screens, some loss in quality has to be expected. The Flying Tigers Newsletter and all images contained within it are subject to international copyright law and must not be copied, used or distributed under any circumstances without prior permission being obtained from Flying Tigers Ltd. All rights are reserved. Copyright Flying Tigers Ltd MMX*



**Israeli Air Force F-4E Phantom**