

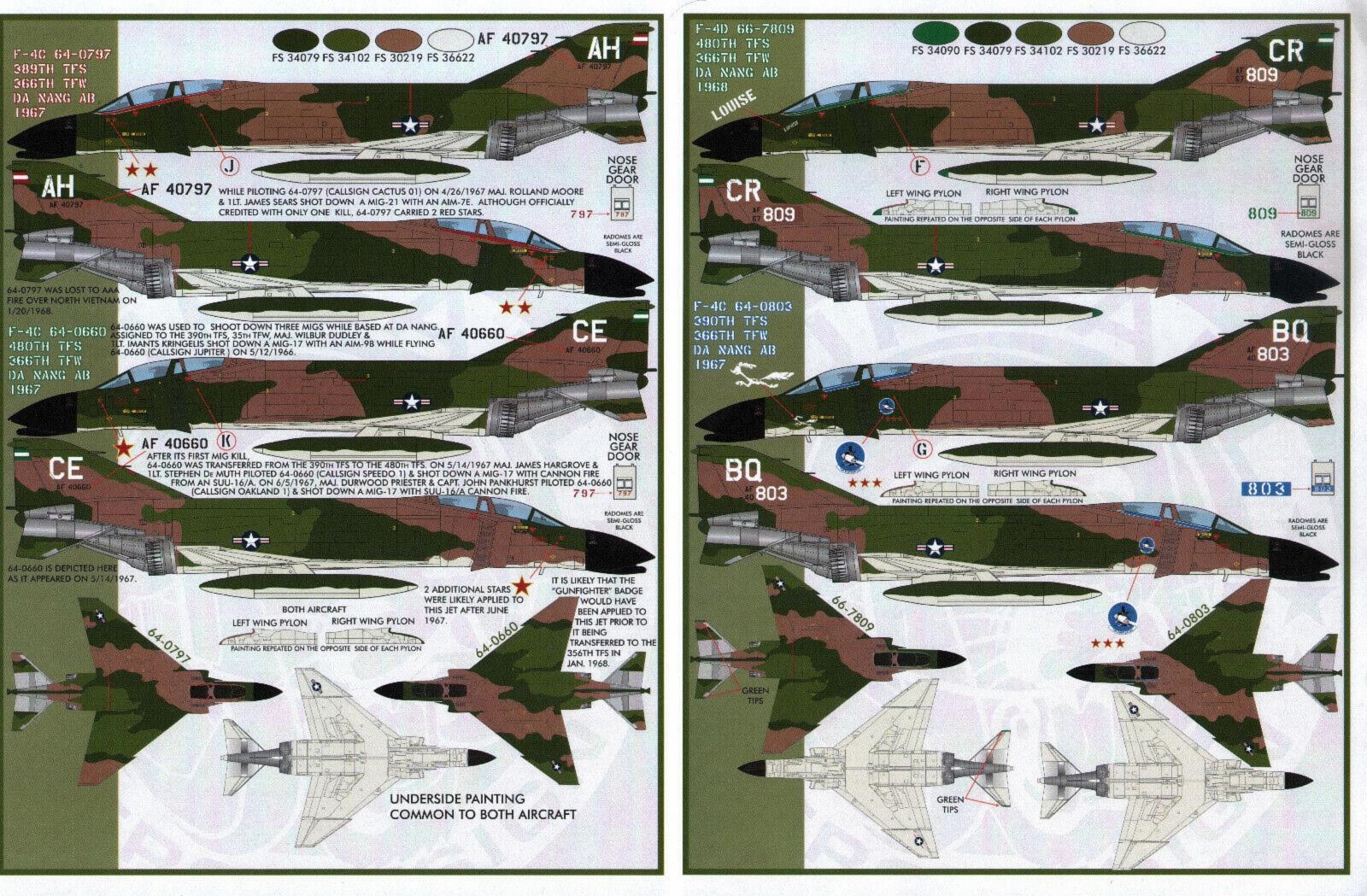
RADOMES ARE SEMI-GLOSS BLACK

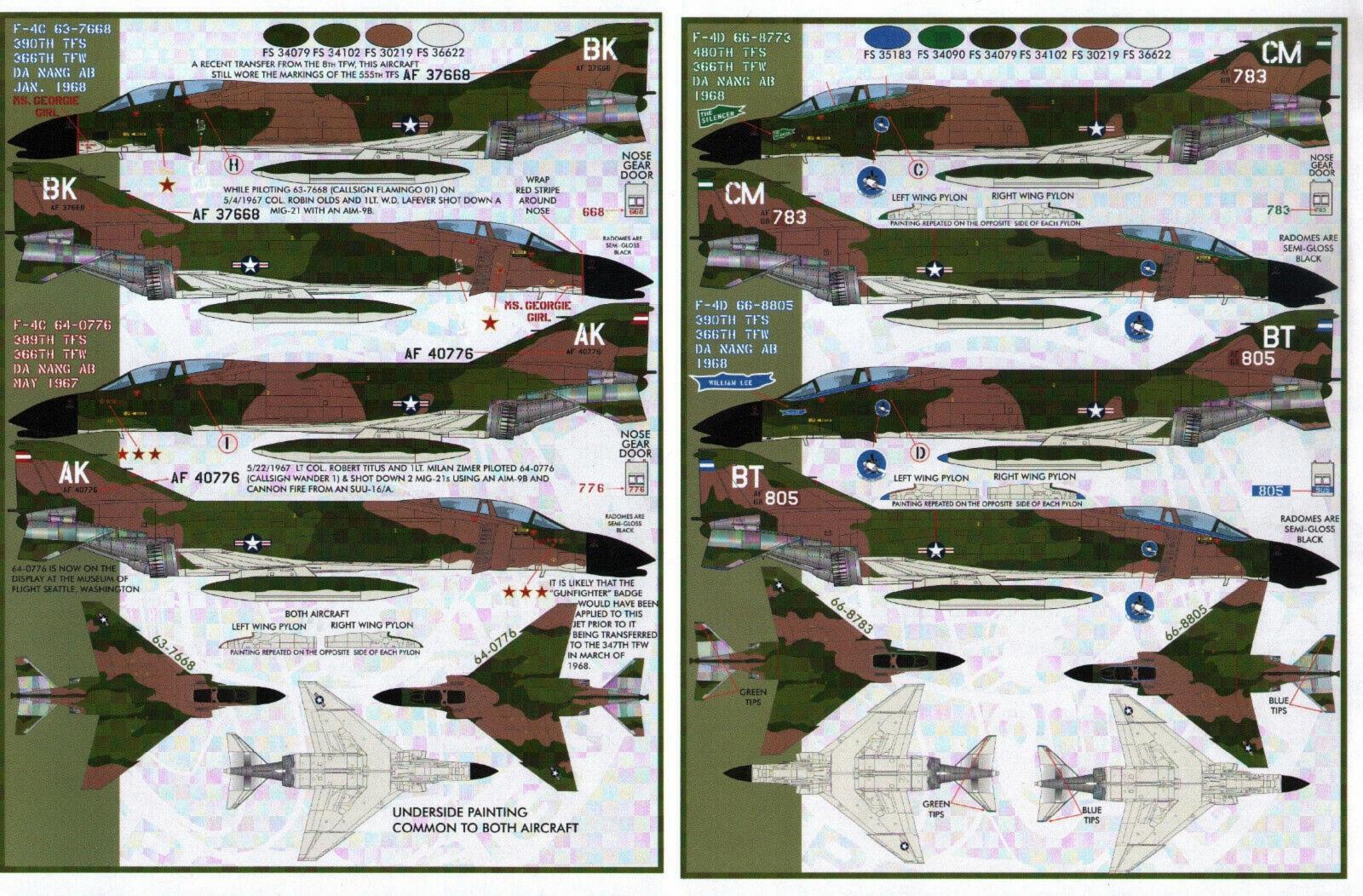
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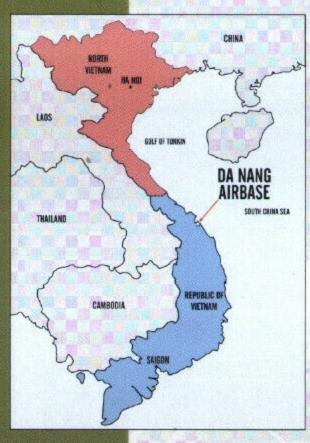
F-4D AIRCRAFT WERE EQUIPPED

WITH ER-142/ALR-53 ANTENNAS

RED TIPS







DA NANG AIRBASE

LOCATED JUST 85 MILES SOUTH OF THE DMZ, DA NANG AIRBASE WAS THE NORTHERN MOST BASE IN SOUTH VIETNAM. BECAUSE OF ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION, DA NANG RAPIDLY BECAME ONE OF THE BUSIEST AIRPORTS IN THE WORLD WITH NEARLY 1500 DAILY TAKE OFFS AND LANDINGS. ORIGINALLY BUILT WITH A SINGLE RUNWAY, A SECOND PARALLEL RUNWAY WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1966 TO ACCOMMODATE THE HUGE VOLUME OF AIR TRAFFIC. THE BASE WOULD FREQUENTLY COME UNDER ATTACK FROM VIET CONG MORTAR AND ROCKET ATTACKS, EARNING THE BASE THE NICKNAME "ROCKET CITY."

366TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING

ON OCTOBER 1, 1966 THE 366TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING TOOK CONTROL OF DA NANG AIRBASE FROM THE 35TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING. THE ASSIGNED F-4 SQUADRONS WERE: 389TH TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON 10-1-1966 THRU 6-15-1969 (F-4C/D) 390TH TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON 10-1-1966 THRU 6-30-1972 (F-4C/D) 480TH TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON 10-1-1966 THRU 4-15-1969 (F-4C/D)

TO FACILITATE AIRCRAFT RECOGNITION IN FLIGHT, EACH SQUADRON WAS ASSIGNED A COLOR WHICH WAS PAINTED ON THE RUDDER. LATER, EACH AIRCRAFT WAS ASSIGNED AN INDIVIDUAL TWO LETTER TAIL CODE WITH THE FIRST LETTER REPRESENTING THE SQUADRON ASSIGNMENT AND THE SECOND LETTER REPRESENTING THE AIRCRAFT. THE COLOR/LETTER COMBINATIONS WERE.

389TH TFS: RED WHITE RED / TAIL CODE STARTING WITH THE LETTER 'A'
390TH TFS: BLUE WHITE BLUE / TAIL CODE STARTING WITH THE LETTER 'B'
480TH TFS: GREEN WHITE GREEN / TAIL CODE STARTING WITH THE LETTER 'C'

EVENTUALLY EACH AIRCRAFT'S ORIGINAL SERIAL NUMBER PAINTED IN 6" BLACK NUMBERS ON THE TAIL WOULD BE REPLACED WITH A MORE VISIBLE
REPRESENTATION. THE NEW METHOD USED THE FISCAL YEAR IN WHICH THE AIRCRAFT WAS AUTHORIZED FOR CONSTRUCTION PAINTED IN 6" BLACK CHARACTERS
ALONG WITH LAST THREE DIGITS OF THE SERIAL NUMBER PAINTED IN 15" WHITE NUMBERS.

THE GUNFIGHTERS

THE 366TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING WAS THE FIRST USAF PHANTOM WING TO EMPLOY THE SUU-16/A GUN POD IN COMBAT. THE SHORT COMINGS OF BOTH THE AIM-3 AND AIM-7 MISSILES AERIAL COMBAT BECAME QUICKLY APPARENT DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT. ADDITIONALLY, THE F-4C/D'S LACK OF AN INTERNAL GUN PLACED THE USAF'S PHANTOM CREWS AT A HUGE DISADVANTAGE IN CLOSE QUARTERS AERIAL COMBAT. TO ADDRESS THIS DEFICIENCY, 366TH TFW COMMANDER COLONEL JONES E. BOLT ORDERED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUU-16/A GUN POD. FIRING 20MM ROUNDS, AND CARRIED ON THE CENTER LINE STATION, THE POD QUICKLY PROVED ITS WORTH. ON MAY 14, 1967 366TH CREWS WOULD DOWN 3 MIGS; DISPATCHING TWO OF THEM WITH THE GUN POD. LATER IN 1967, 366TH CREWS WOULD SCORE TWO MORE GUN KILLS. FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF THE 366TH'S USE OF THE SUU-16/A IN COMBAT, OTHER PHANTOM WINGS WOULD EMPLOY THE POD. LATER, THE IMPROVED GAS- DRIVEN SUU-23/A GUN POD WOULD BE EMPLOYED BY F-4Ds OF THE 366TH AND OTHER WINGS.

THE 366TH ADOPTED THE NICKNAME "THE GUNFIGHTERS" IN MAY OF 1967 FOLLOWING THE WING'S SUCCESSFUL USE OF THE SUU-16/A IN COMBAT. UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE WING'S DCO, COLONEL "BOOTS" BLESSE, THE WING CREATED A "GUNFIGHTER" BADGE THAT FEATURED THE PHANTOM SPOOK CHARACTER CARRYING THE SUU-16/A. THIS BADGE WAS WORN ON MANY OF THE WING'S PHANTOMS WHILE BASED AT DA NANG, AND STILL MAKES AN APPEARANCE ON 366TH FIGHTER WING F-15ES.



