

US NAVY PHANTOM MiG KILLERS



VF-92 Silver Kings



Silver Kite 211 LT Curt "Dozo" Dosé and LCDR Jim "Routeslip" McDevitt MiG-21 10 May 1972



VF-31 Tomcatters



Bandwagon 106 LCDR Sam Flynn and LT(JG) Bill Johns MiG-21 21 June 1972

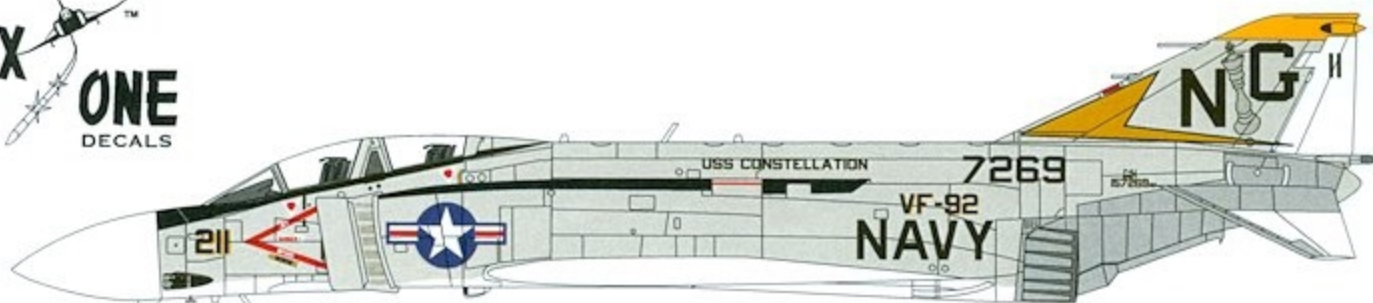


VF-103 Sluggers

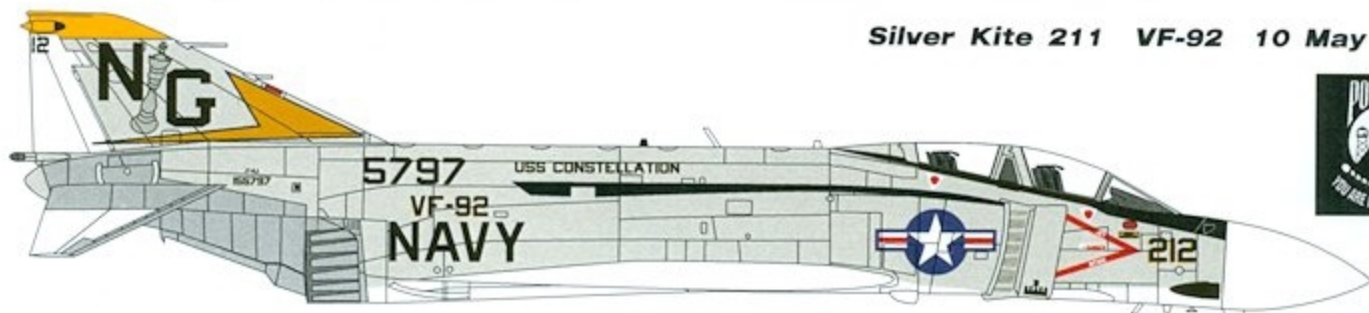


Clubleaf 206 LCDR Gene Tucker and LT Bruce Edens MiG-21 10 August 1972

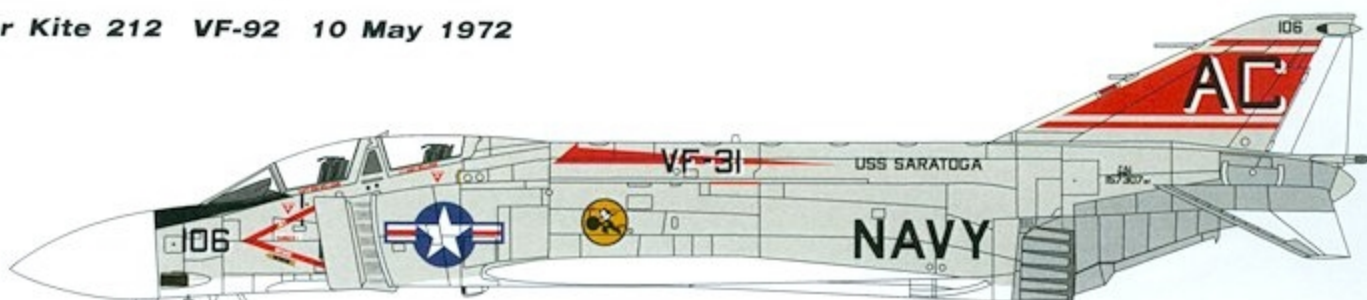
This decal depicts aircraft from three US Navy F-4J Phantom squadrons as they were flown over North Viet Nam during the Linebacker operations of 1972. Three of the aircraft provided are in the markings of actual MiG killer Phantoms. Since none of these were the personal aircraft of the aircrews flying them, additional markings depicting two of the victorious aircrews' personal aircraft which displayed the kill markings are also offered. This practice of double marking has resulted in several standard references misidentifying the actual MiG-killing aircraft. The information presented here is based on extensive research and direct correspondence with some of the aircrew involved. This sheet updates Fox One Decal #48-001, the changes being based on information received in the six years since it was first issued.



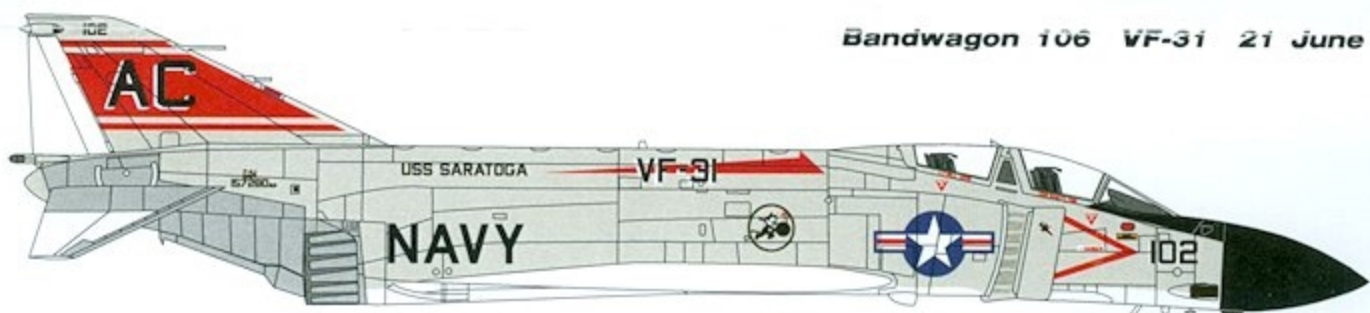
Silver Kite 211 VF-92 10 May 1972



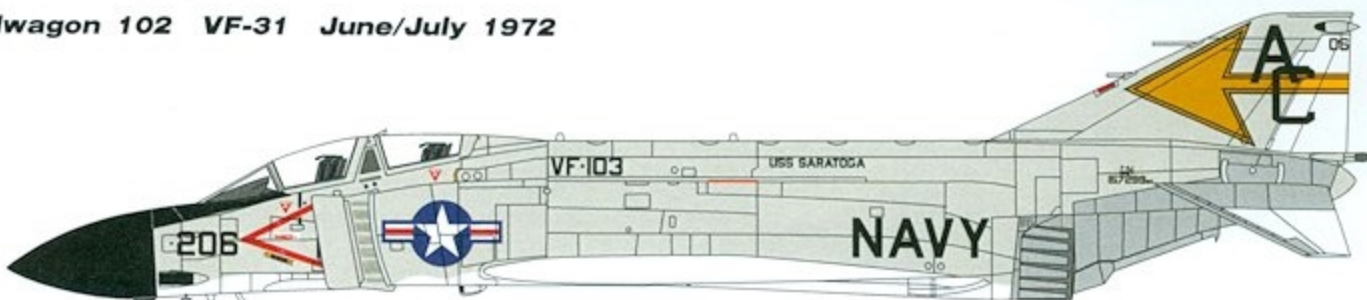
Silver Kite 212 VF-92 10 May 1972



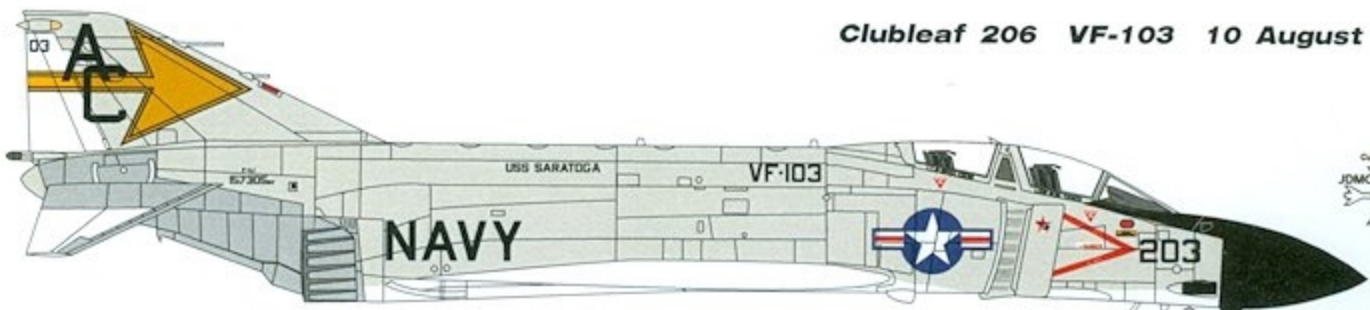
Bandwagon 106 VF-31 21 June 1972



Bandwagon 102 VF-31 June/July 1972



Clubleaf 206 VF-103 10 August 1972



Clubleaf 203 VF-103 August/September 1972

Detailed Mission Summaries and Modeling Information

Silverkite 211 10 May 1972

F-4J BuNo157269, VF-92, CVW-9, CVA-64 USS Constellation

Mission Summary: LT Curt Dosé and his RIO LCDR Jim McDevitt were tasked as Target CAP near Hanoi as part of an Alpha Strike on the morning of May 10. Flying as wingman to Austin Hawkins, Dosé spotted two MiGs on the Kep runway with two more on the taxiway. As the first MiGs began their takeoff roll, Dosé called lead and initiated a port turn, winding up at the MiGs' six as they lifted off. Flying supersonic at 30 feet over the runway, the two Phantoms closed fast. The MiGs jettisoned their tanks and began an easy port turn. Dosé and Hawkins followed, staying supersonic at treetop level. During the chase the aircraft were so low that Dosé recalls having to lift the wing to clear trees and several Sidewinders hit hilltops as they snaked towards the MiGs. After the two Phantoms fired six missiles at the two bandits without a hit, Dosé's third Sidewinder finally flew up the number two MiG's tailpipe and exploded. Effectively out of Sidewinders, Dosé turned onto the lead MiG and rolled his Phantom to fire a Sparrow across its nose hoping to scare the pilot into easing his turn and in turn give Hawkins a better shot. While inverted, he checked six and saw the two MiGs, which had been on the taxiway coming up fast behind. Dosé called Hawkins to break and they rolled out, passing the two MiGs head-on. One MiG turned in behind Hawkins and fired an Atoll. The Phantoms broke and the missile missed. Turning east, the Phantoms egressed at 1,000 feet at Mach 1.2. On returning to *Constellation*, Dosé performed a victory roll. The MiGs encountered were MiG-21MF *Fishbed-J*, the first known contact with this new version. The MiGs were still marked with the red stars of the Soviet Union.

Aircraft Configuration: *Silverkite 211* carried four AIM-7E-2 Sparrows and four AIM-9D Sidewinder missiles plus a centerline tank. The outboard wing pylons were empty. Dosé kept his centerline tank with him throughout the engagement and returned with it, his four Sparrow missiles, and the left outboard Sidewinder that had malfunctioned during the mission and would not fire.

Silverkite 212 10 May 1972

F-4J BuNo 155797, VF-92, CVW-9, CVA-64 USS Constellation

Mission Summary: The *Silver Kings'* Executive Officer CDR Harry Blackburn and his RIO LT Steve Rudloff were taking part in USS *Constellation's* second Alpha Strike of the day, tasked as Target Cap for the attack aircraft. During the flight Rudloff turned to check their wingman when he saw 10-15 flak bursts between the two Phantoms. Both Phantoms took hits, but 212 more severely and Rudloff called the other plane to inspect them. During his transmission the vertical stabilizer was blown away, taking their UHF radio antenna with it. The plane had been hit just as CDR Blackburn had started an evasive maneuver. The instruments in front of Rudloff sparked, caught fire and started smoking. Glancing in his rear-view mirror he saw the entire back half of the jet in flames. Then something in front of him exploded in a brilliant white flash that caused him to go blind. Rudloff and Blackburn ejected, and Rudloff could only hope his parachute had fully opened as he dangled beneath it still unable to see as he floated to the ground for the next eight minutes. He heard bullets whizzing by him as he neared the ground. When he hit the ground he hurt his ankle badly and fell on his stomach. He heard gunfire all around and with no hope of escape he stayed there waiting for the inevitable which came almost instantly. He was stripped of his equipment, and two ropes were tied around him, one around his waist and the other around his neck. The rope around his waist was tugged in the direction they wanted him to go and the one around his neck was given an occasional backward jerk. He limped off with his captors for about 20 minutes until they reached a village where he was taken to a house and tied to a chair. Over the next several hours his sight slowly returned as angry villagers sometimes beat him. Finally a truck arrived and he was blindfolded and pushed into it. He was taken to several villages where he was exhibited to the angry inhabitants. He was eventually taken to a military compound where interrogation started immediately and lasted for a few hours. In the evening he was taken to a jeep and driven away toward the Hoa Lo Prison (aka the Hanoi Hilton) where "interrogations" started again and would last for another 27 hours. In the very next cell to his Harry Blackburn was also being interrogated and at some point during the night he was killed during the process. Steve Rudloff was a POW for 322 days. Harry Blackburn's remains were returned in April 1986.

Aircraft Configuration: On its May 10th Mission *Silverkite 212* was flying Target CAP, presumably with the same configuration as 211. It would have carried 4 AIM-7E-2 Sparrows, 4 AIM-9D Sidewinders, centerline fuel tank and empty outboard pylons.

Markings Notes: VF-92 *Silver King* Phantoms carried FS13538 Orange Yellow fin caps and wing tips. The yellow wing tips had FS17038 Black borders (decal stripes provided) along their inboard edges with the forward portion around the nav light painted black. There was no black edging along the fin cap on this cruise, as there had been in the past. Air conditioning inlets, canopy rails, and walkways were also painted black. Aircrew names were painted on the canopy rails on both sides. *Silverkite 211* carried the names of LT Mike Bolier and is RIO LTJG Mike "Okie" Stansel. *Silverkite 212* carried the names of LT Bruce Rowe (KIA attempting to land a battle-damaged F-4 with one good engine) and LTJG Dan Spence. The plane captain's last name was placed inside black crowns on the inlet ramps, but we were unable to determine them. Some, but not all, VF-92 fuel tanks, sidewinder rails and TERs had orange yellow tips. The orange yellow shadow shading was always located below and to the rear on the VF-92 squadron and Modex lettering.

Bandwagon 106 21 June 1972

BuNo 157307, VF-31, CVW-3, CV-60 USS Saratoga

Mission Summary: The *Tomcatters'* Executive Officer, CDR Sam Flynn, and his RIO LTJG Bill John were leading a flight of four Phantoms on 21 June. After dodging four SA-2 missiles, Flynn's flight was vectored towards three MiG-21s observed heading for Sara's main strike group. The MiGs spotted the Phantoms first and rolled in on them. Before they knew what was happening, Flynn's flight found itself in a dogfight. The Phantom pilots elected to take their chances fighting with their centerline tanks rather than slowing down to the recommended 350kts to jettison them. Early on, one of the MiGs suddenly broke off, climbed to 20,000 feet and stood off, watching the dogfight and never re-engaging. In the melee that followed, Flynn downed one of the two remaining MiGs with his third Sidewinder. After the surviving MiG pilot had enough and broke off the fight, the victorious Phantoms retired eastwards and returned to *Saratoga*.

Aircraft Configuration: *Bandwagon 106* was armed with four AIM-7E-2 Sparrow and four AIM-9D Sidewinder missiles plus a centerline tank for the 21 June 1972 mission. The outboard pylons carried empty Triple Ejector Racks (TERs). Neither the tank nor the TERs were jettisoned during the engagement. VF-31 had a single external rear-view mirror above the rear canopy.

Markings Notes: The vertical tails of VF-31 Phantoms had a corrugard leading edge. Black rectangles were painted on the air conditioning inlets for the catapult crew to write the aircraft weight. Sidewinder rail tips were painted red. Note that the white shadow shading was below and aft of the black letters/numbers on both sides of the aircraft. *Bandwagon 106* carried the names of CAPT Ron Williams, a USAF exchange pilot, and RIO LT Gary Sullivan in red along the canopy rails on both sides of the aircraft. *Bandwagon 106* had a white radome. Walkways were FS36231 Dark Gull Gray with black outlines and were located on the wings only. *Bandwagon 102*, BuNo 157280, was the VF-31 assigned to Flynn and John and featured their names on the canopy rails. After returning from the mission Bill John brush painted kill markings on both inlet ramps. *Bandwagon 102* had a black radome and no yellow circle under Felix the Cat.

Clubleaf 206 10 August 1972

F-4J BuNo 157299, VF-103, CVW-3, CV-60 USS Saratoga

Mission Summary: LCDR Gene Tucker and his RIO LT Bruce Edens of VF-103 *Sluggers* had one of the few night kills of the Viet Nam war. *Clubleaf 206* was assigned to sit five-minute night alert aboard *Saratoga*. They were ordered to launch at sunset when contact was made with a MiG near Vinh. The F-4 headed toward the MiG but contact was lost. They were ordered to assume a CAP station and a KA-6D arrived to top them off. After refueling, *Clubleaf 206* was vectored again towards a bogey near Vinh. There was a great deal of chasing and attaining then losing radar contact. Finally after acquiring his target Tucker accelerated, then punched off his tank and TERs. When in range and locked on, he fired his two Sparrows, producing a large fireball as one and then the other missile hit.

Aircraft Configuration: *Clubleaf 206* was configured with a centerline tank, two AIM-7E-2 Sparrows in the aft fuselage wells, two AIM-9D Sidewinder missiles, one on each outboard rail on the wing stations plus empty TERs on the outboard wing pylons. VF-103 had a single external rear-view mirror above the rear canopy.

Markings Notes: A MiG kill marking was applied to the left and right inlet ramps of Tucker and Edens' assigned F-4J, *Clubleaf 203*, BuNo 157305. Note that the White AIM-7 in the marking always points forward. Their names were on the canopy rails on both sides of the airplane. I was unable to find out the crew names on *Clubleaf 206*. In order to build *Clubleaf 203*, you must cut off the "6" from the "206" and replace it with the separate "3". Some VF-103 fuel tanks had Yellow tips. VF-103 also used black rectangles on the a/c scoops for aircraft weight.

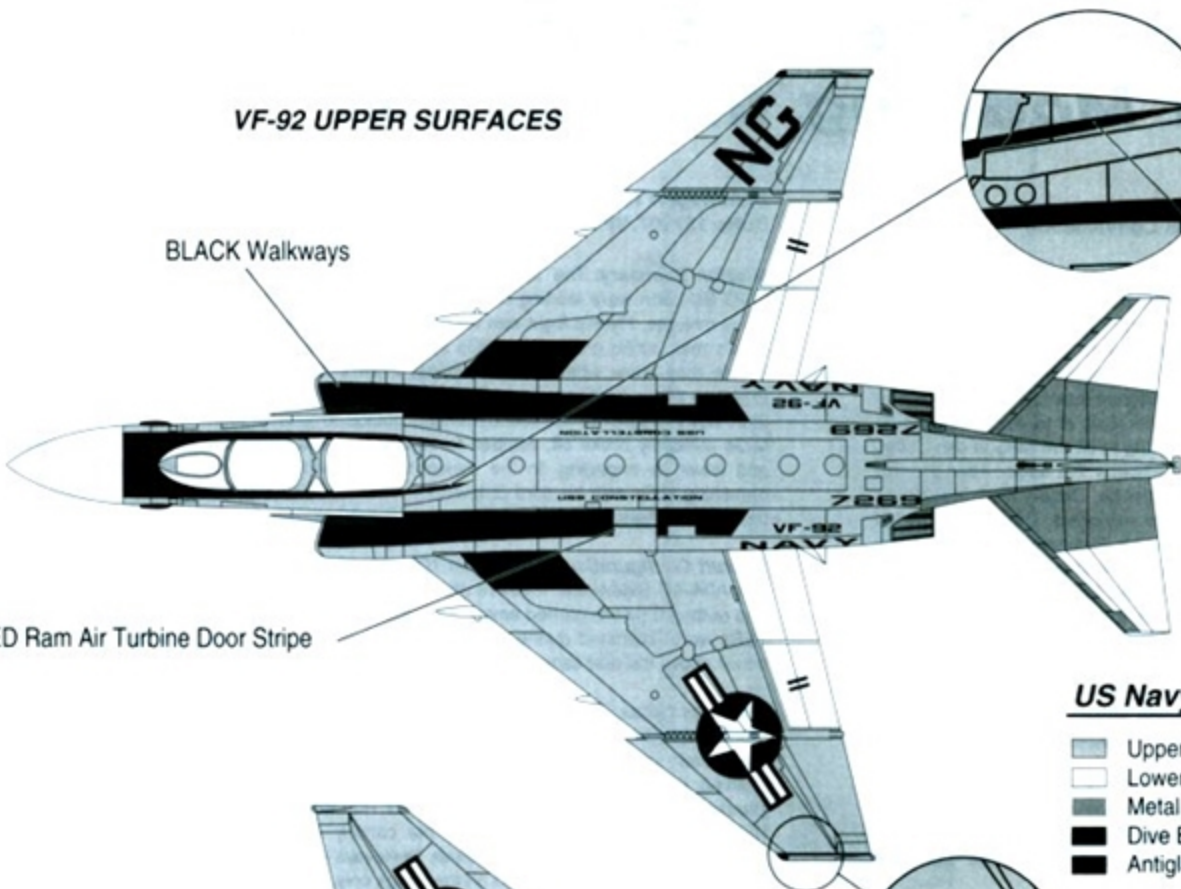
Acknowledgements:

CDR Curtis Dosé USN (Ret), CAPT Lonny McClung USN (ret), and Jim Mathwick all formerly of VF-92, CAPT Sam Flynn USN (ret), formerly of VF-31, CAPT Gene Tucker USN (ret), formerly of VF-103, CDR Peter Mersky USN, Hill Goodspeed of NAM Pensacola, Phil Edwards of the Smithsonian's NASM, CDR Jan Jacobs USN (ret) of the Tailhook Society, Joe Michaels of JEM Aviation Slides and Jack Morris.

References:

USN Phantoms in Combat, Lou Drendel, 1988
One Day in a Long War, Jeff Ethell & Alfred Price, 1989
"MiG Killers over Kep," War Zone: Vietnam, Warplane Vol. 2/14, Jan 1990
Colors & Markings of US Navy Phantoms Parts 1 & 2, Bert Kinzey & Ray Leader, 1990
"Navy Phantoms in Vietnam," R.F. Dorr, Wings of Fame No. 1, 1996
"VF-31 Tomcatters," Peter Mersky, Wings of Fame No. 2, 1996
Gray Ghosts, Peter E. Davies, 2000
Private Photo Collections
Correspondence and interviews with aircrew members.

VF-92 UPPER SURFACES



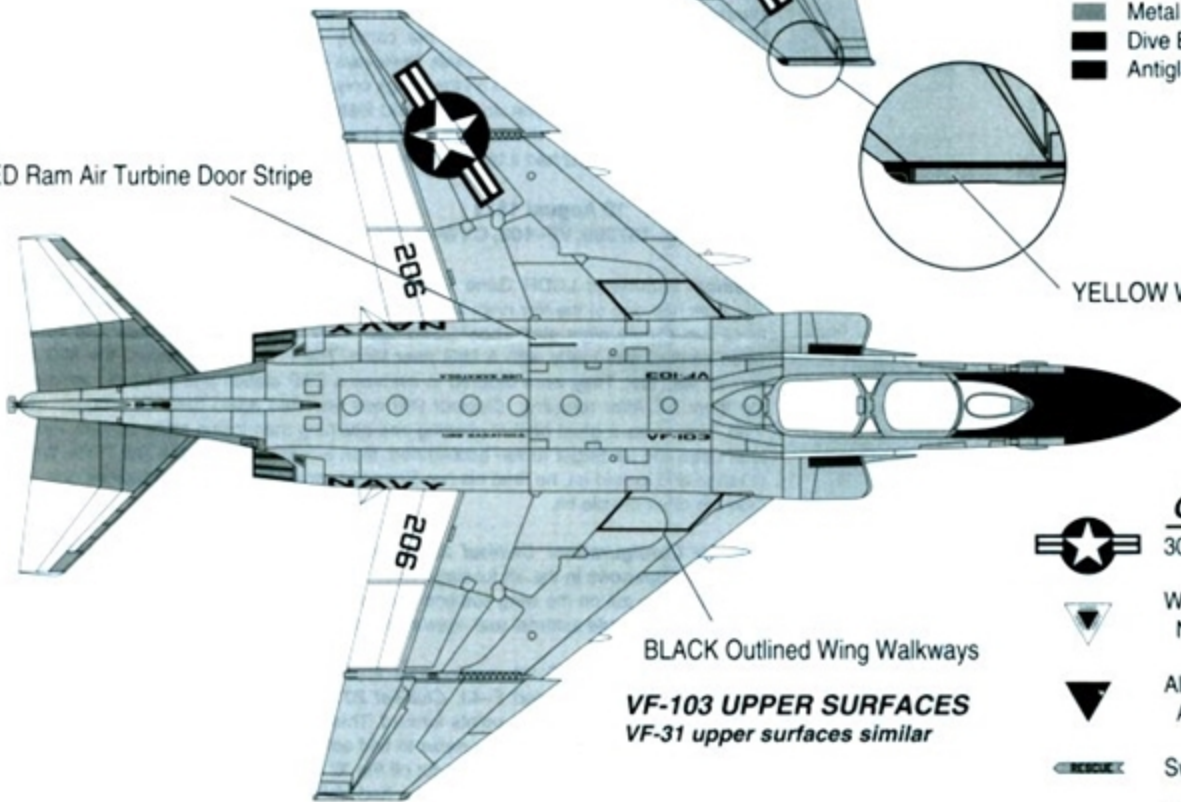
Apply BLACK Trim decals behind RIO's canopy both sides

RED Ram Air Turbine Door Stripe

US Navy Phantom Paint Scheme

-  Upper Surfaces: Matt Gull Gray FS36440
-  Lower Surfaces, Wheel Wells: Gloss White FS17875
-  Metal Areas
-  Dive Brake Interiors, Edges: Gloss Red FS11136
-  Antiglare Panel, VF-92 Walkways: Flat Black FS37038

RED Ram Air Turbine Door Stripe



YELLOW Wingtips w/BLACK Stripe and Tip (VF-92 only)

VF-103 UPPER SURFACES
VF-31 upper surfaces similar

General Markings Notes

-  30" Stars on Fuselage, 45" on Wings
-  White/Red Ejection Seat Warning Triangles on NG211/212
-  All-Red Ejection Seat Warning Triangles on AC102/106 and AC203/206
-  Swallow-Tailed style Rescue Arrows
-  Fuel Tanks and TERs were White but sometimes had tips painted in Squadron Colors



NG211



NG212



AC102



AC203

Inlet Ramps



NG211



AC102/106



AC203/206

Air Conditioner Inlets

VF-92



VF-31



VF-103



Nose Gear Doors