

The spectacular MiG-15 fighter used a combination of Russian ingenuity and “borrowed” advanced European aviation technology to become one of the most famous aircraft designs of its era. Called the “aircraft-soldier” by Russian pilots, the aircraft was exceptionally strong and dependable. The MiG-15 is still respected for its speed, maneuverability and firepower; advantages that made it a worthy adversary of the North American F-86 during the Korean War.



The Mikoyan and Gurevich (MiG) design team utilized captured German technology when developing the layout of the MiG-15. The plane's 35-degree swept wing, fuselage-mounted engine and clean lines gave the aircraft exceptional performance. Powered by a unlicensed copy of the famous British Nene centrifugal-flow jet engine, the MiG-15 was capable of speeds up to Mach .934. The initial prototype, the I-310, made its first flight in December 1947 and won a fly-off against the Lavochkin La-15. The MiG-15 went into production and entered front line service in 1949.

Shortly after its introduction the MiG-15 entered combat over Korea. Flown by Russian, North Korean and Chinese pilots, the swept-wing MiG fighter terrorized USAF B-29 bombers flying strategic bombing missions over North Korean cities. The MiG-15's speed, maneuverability, and heavy armament (two 23mm and one 37mm cannon) allowed it brush aside escorting fighters and rip through the B-29 formations. B-29 losses to MiGs reached such high levels that the USAF stopped daylight B-29 bombing raids and flew all strikes under the cover of darkness. Although several MiG-15s were brought down by B-29 gunners and other UN aircraft, only the North American F-86 Sabre w

