

Belcher Bits BD15: Canadair CF-5A /D (CF116)

In the early '60s, the RCAF decided it needed a more affordable fighter than the CF-104 then in service in Europe. After considering many alternatives including the Fiat G-91, Vought A-7 and Douglas A-4, it was decided that Canadair would build the Northrop F-5 Freedom Fighter under license as the CF-116 (but more commonly called the CF-5). A total of 118 were built but half went straight into storage; another 105 were built for the Netherlands as the NF-5. Single seat CF-5As were delivered in the serial range 116701-116789; two seat CF-5Ds in the range 116801-116846.

The CF-5 came into service on Feb 6 1968, five days after the unification of the Canadian Armed Forces. Cutbacks resulted in the type only serving operationally with 433 and 434 Squadrons. By the late '80s, the CF-5 was phased out of a combat role but continued as fighter trainers with 419 Squadron until withdrawn from service in 1995.

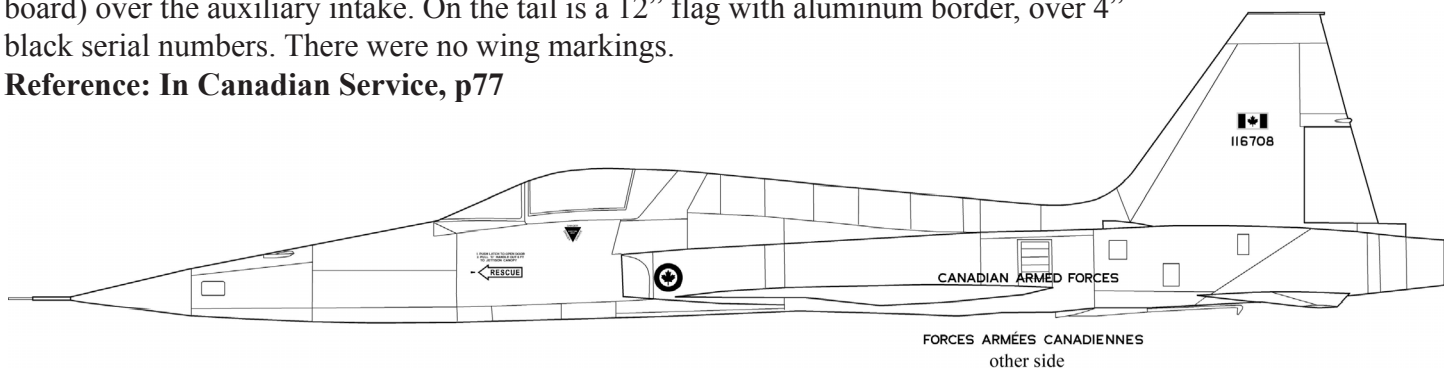
References:

1. **Canadian Armed Forces Aircraft Finish & Markings 1968-1997, Patrick Martin, self published, 1997**
2. **In Canadian Service; Canadair CF-5, Tony Stachiw, Vanwell Publishing, 2003.**
3. **Superbase 18: Cold Lake, Robbie Shaw, Osprey Publishing, 1990**
4. **Canadian Profile Canadair CF5, Bob McIntyre, Sabre Model Supplies Publishing, 1985**
5. **IPMS Canada journal RT; various issues**

1. CF-5A, s/n 116768, 1971

This represents the original scheme for the CF-5A, in immediate post-RCAF 'CAF' era markings. Camouflage was green 503-3101 (FS 34064) and grey 501-302 (FS 36099) over light grey 101-327 (similar to FS 36463) as shown on the colour sheet. Fuselage markings are a 12" roundel on the intake, with 4" black CANADIAN ARMED FORCES on the port side (FORCES ARMEES CANADIENNES on the starboard) over the auxiliary intake. On the tail is a 12" flag with aluminum border, over 4" black serial numbers. There were no wing markings.

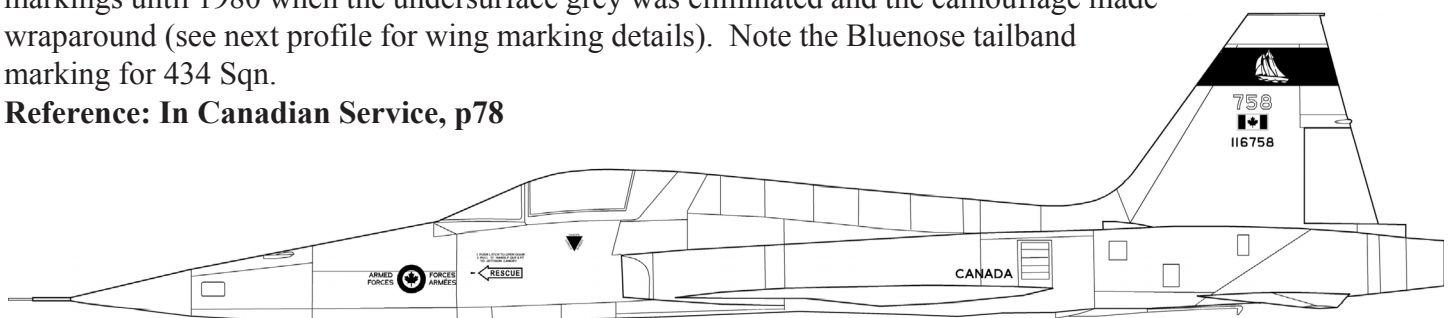
Reference: In Canadian Service, p77



2. CF-5A, s/n 116758, 434 Sqn, 1973

This represents the second scheme for the CF-5A, with 'Symmetric' era markings. No change to camouflage. Fuselage markings are a 12" roundel ident (roundel flanked by ARMED FORCES and FORCES ARMEES), with 4" black CANADA forward of the auxiliary intake. On the tail is a 12" flag with aluminum border, over 4" black serial numbers. Above the flag was the 'last 3' of the serial in 8" white numbers. There were no wing markings until 1980 when the undersurface grey was eliminated and the camouflage made wraparound (see next profile for wing marking details). Note the Bluenose tailband marking for 434 Sqn.

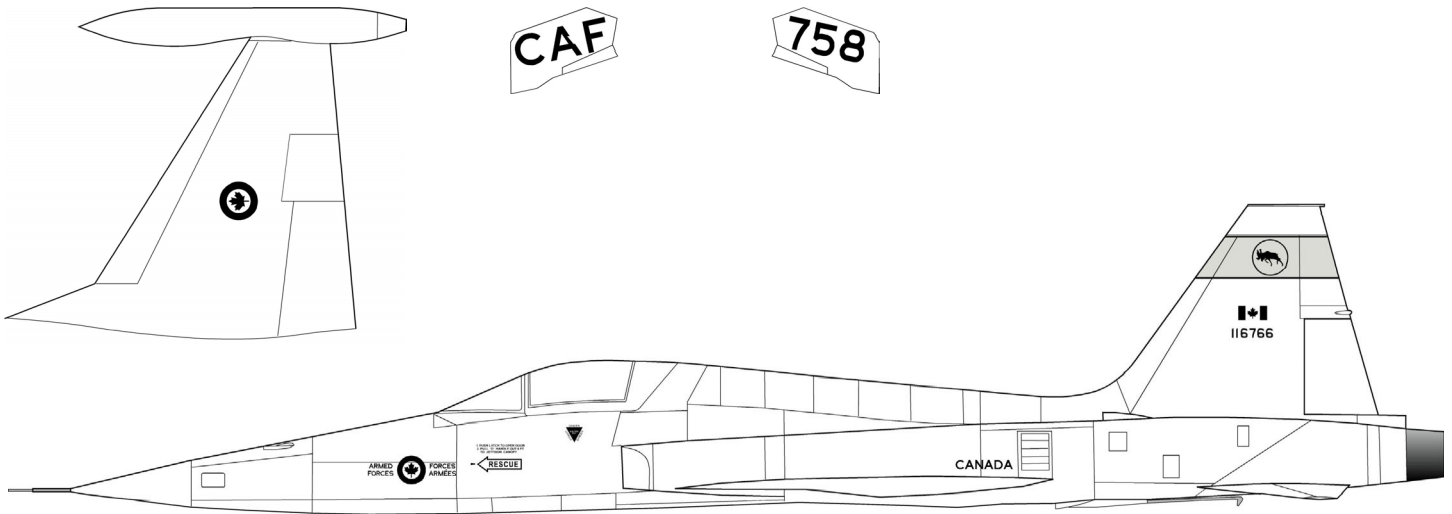
Reference: In Canadian Service, p78



3. CF-5A, s/n 116766, 419 Sqn , 1984

Wraparound camouflage. Fuselage markings are a low vis (white removed) 12” roundel ident, with 4” black CANADA forward of the auxiliary intake. On the tail is a low vis 12” flag over 4” black serial numbers. Wraparound wing markings were 16” roundels on top, CAF (stbd gear door) and last 3 (port) in 12” black letters.

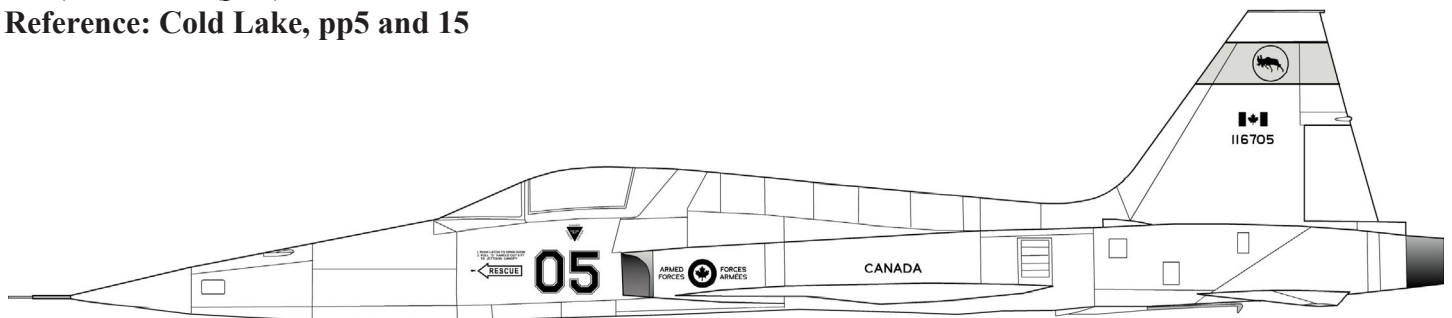
Reference: Cold Lake, p11



4. CF-5A, s/n 116705, 419 Sqn , 1984

The final camouflage was the 'Ghost' scheme, with grey FS 36307, grey FS 36251 and blue grey FS 35237, the pattern being shown on the colour sheet. Fuselage markings are a low vis 12” roundel ident now moved to the intake, with 4” black CANADA forward of the auxiliary intake. On the tail is a low vis 12” flag over 4” black serial numbers. On the forward fuselage, red and yellow 18” aggressor numbers (the last 2 of the serial number) Wing markings were low vis 16” roundels on top, CAF (stbd gear door) and last 3 (port) in 12” black letters.

Reference: Cold Lake, pp5 and 15



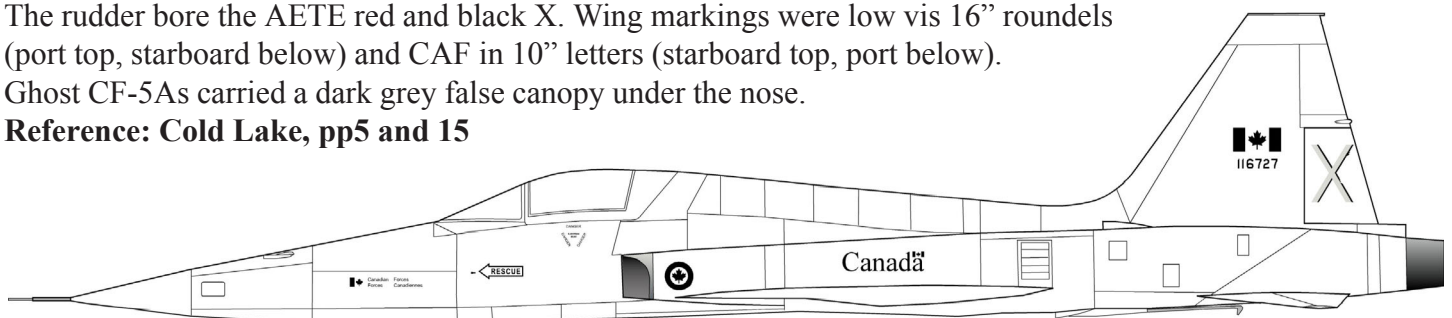
5. CF-5A, s/n 116727, AETE , 1990

The final service scheme for the CF-5A was the 'Ghost' scheme, with light grey FS 36376 Federal Identity Program (FIP) markings. On the nose was a 100mm Signature with a 140mm Canada Wordmark and a 12” roundel on the fuselage side. On the tail was a low vis 20” flag over 4” serial numbers.

The rudder bore the AETE red and black X. Wing markings were low vis 16” roundels (port top, starboard below) and CAF in 10” letters (starboard top, port below).

Ghost CF-5As carried a dark grey false canopy under the nose.

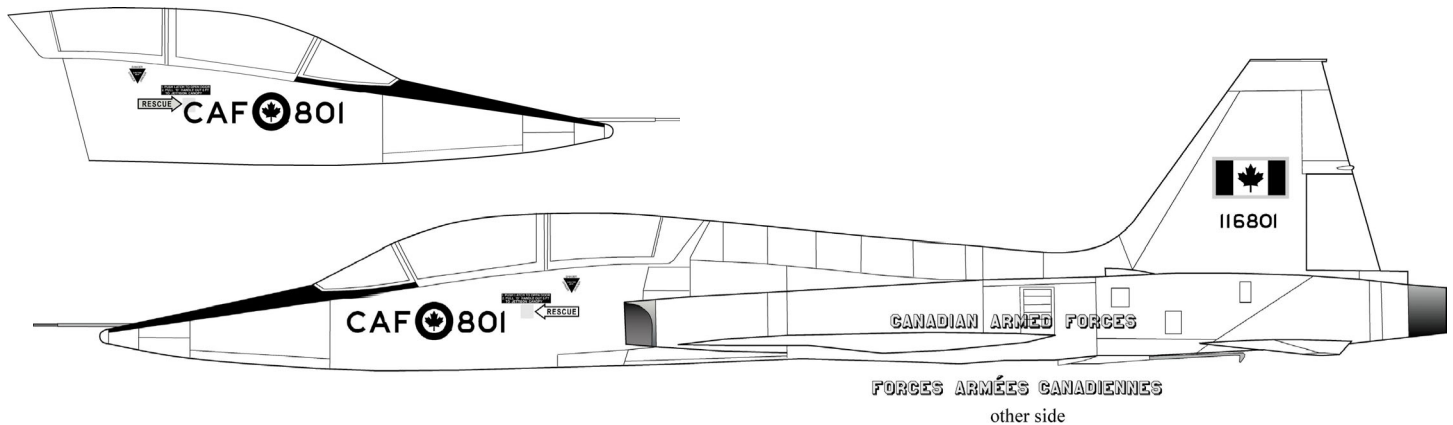
Reference: Cold Lake, pp5 and 15



6. CF-5D, s/n 116801, 1971

This represents the original scheme for the CF-5D, in 'CAF' era markings. The aircraft was overall aluminum lacquer, with black anti-glare panel and red tiptanks. Forward fuselage markings are a 16" roundel flanked by CAF and last 3 in 9" black letters. On the rear fuselage was 6" red shadow letters, CANADIAN ARMED FORCES on the port side and FORCES ARMEES CANADIENNES on the starboard. On the tail is a 29" flag with aluminum border, over 6" black serial numbers. Wing markings were 24" roundels on top (same location as shown on page 2), CAF (stbd gear door) and last 3 (port) in 12" black letters

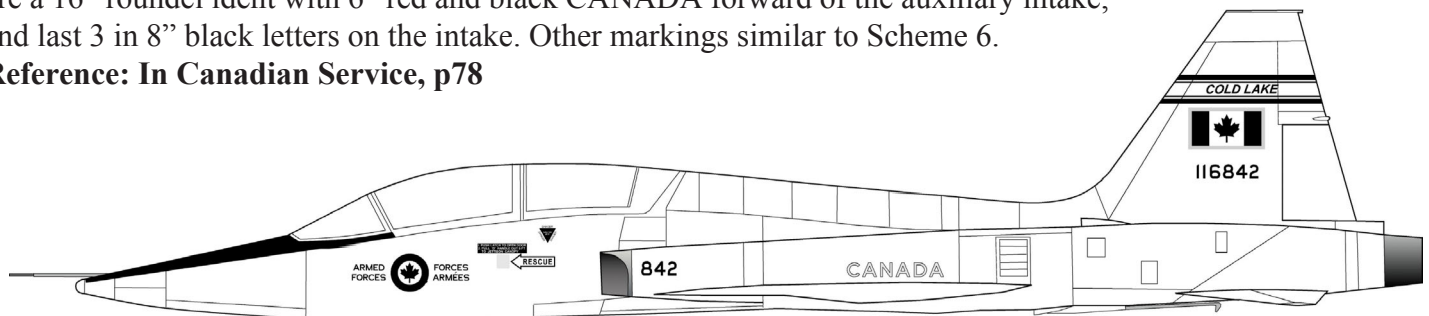
Reference: Canadian Profile, p8



7. CF-5D, s/n 116842, CFB Cold Lake, 1973

The second scheme for the CF-5D, with 'Symmetric' era markings. Fuselage markings are a 16" roundel ident with 6" red and black CANADA forward of the auxiliary intake, and last 3 in 8" black letters on the intake. Other markings similar to Scheme 6.

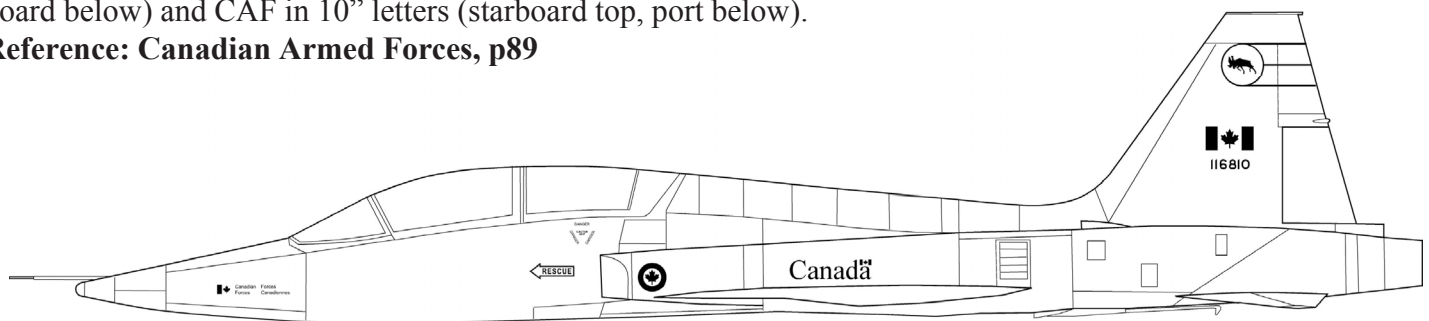
Reference: In Canadian Service, p78



9. CF-5D s/n 116810, 419 Sqn 1988

This represents the final 'standard' CF-5D scheme; 'Ghost' scheme camouflage, with light grey FS 36376 Federal Identity Program (FIP) markings. On the nose was a 100mm Signature with a 140mm Canada Wordmark and a 12" roundel on the fuselage side. On the tail was a low vis 20" flag over 4" serial numbers. The 419 Sqn tail band is also done in low vis grey. Wing markings were low vis 16" roundels (port top, starboard below) and CAF in 10" letters (starboard top, port below).

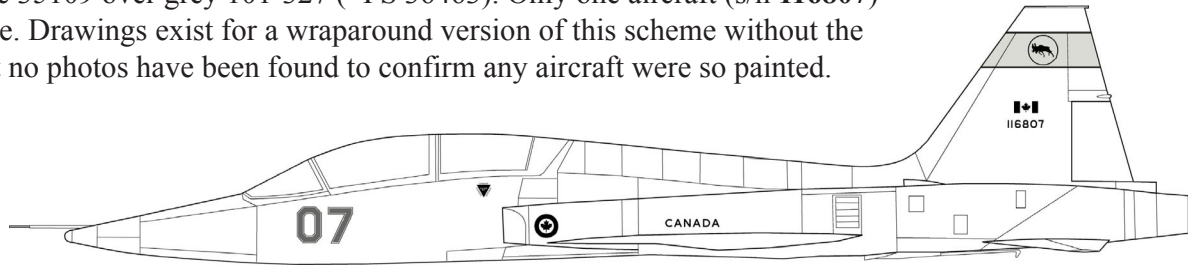
Reference: Canadian Armed Forces, p89



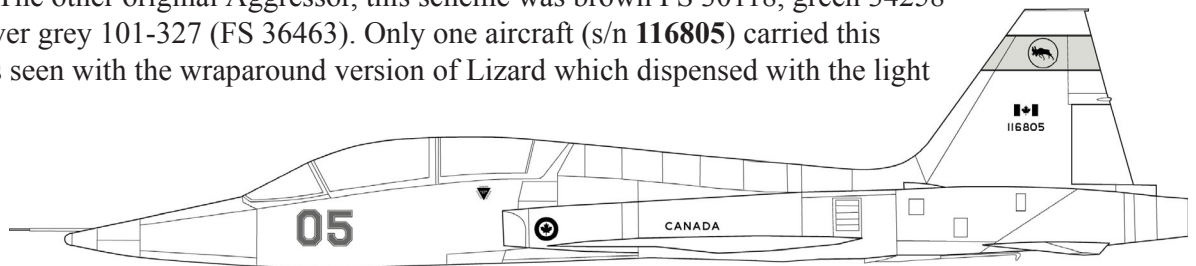
8. CF-5D Aggressor schemes 1977-1986 (illustrated on colour sheet)

CF-5Ds were painted in a variety of Aggressor schemes representing Warsaw Pact aircraft markings. There were five identified paint schemes but the markings applied were generally similar. Typical markings were a 12" full colour roundel on the intake side and a 4" black CANADA on the fuselage side. Normally, these aircraft carried the 419 Sqn banner on the tail. Another common feature was the use of 18" yellow-bordered red numbers representing the last two of the serial number on the nose below the front windscreen. Many CF-5D aggressors carried a black or dark grey false canopy under the nose.

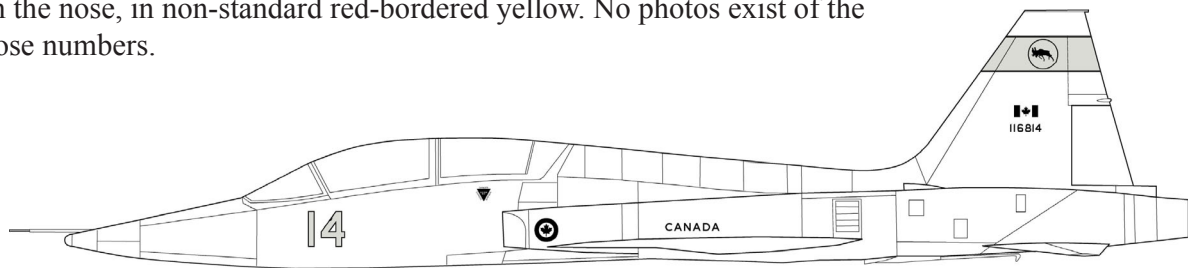
a) **Grape Scheme:** One of the two original Aggressor schemes, the Grape camouflage scheme was blue FS 35414, blue 35164 and blue 35109 over grey 101-327 (~FS 36463). Only one aircraft (s/n **116807**) was apparently done. Drawings exist for a wraparound version of this scheme without the grey undersides but no photos have been found to confirm any aircraft were so painted.



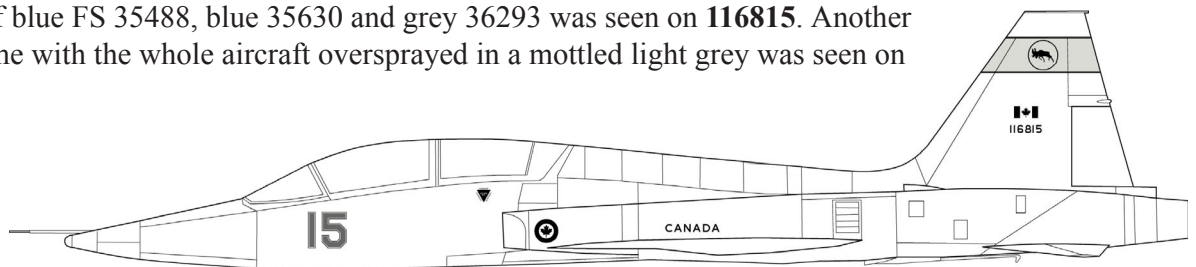
b) **Lizard Scheme:** The other original Aggressor, this scheme was brown FS 30118, green 34258 and yellow 33531 over grey 101-327 (FS 36463). Only one aircraft (s/n **116805**) carried this scheme; **116809** was seen with the wraparound version of Lizard which dispensed with the light grey undersides.



c) **Variegated Scheme:** This is the wraparound green and grey camouflage seen on most CF-5As. Four two-seaters were painted in this scheme; (**116814**, **116816**, **116819** and **114838**). Only 116814 (illustrated above) carried the aggressor number on the nose, in non-standard red-bordered yellow. No photos exist of the other aircraft with nose numbers.



d) **Faux Pas:** This scheme was only seen on two aircraft and even then, they were somewhat different. The wrap-around camouflage of blue FS 35488, blue 35630 and grey 36293 was seen on **116815**. Another version of this scheme with the whole aircraft oversprayed in a mottled light grey was seen on **116806**



e) **Ghost:** This was the last Aggressor scheme used on CF-5Ds, and was eventually adopted for all CF-5s. The colours used were grey FS 36307, grey 36251 and blue 35237. Aircraft seen wearing Aggressor numbers were **116812**, **116819**, **116823** and **116824**. Others (**116811**, **116812**, **116821** and **116845**) have been noted wearing a later variation of this scheme with a low-vis roundel ident on the intake, and low 20" flag on the tail. Ghost CF-5Ds carried a dark grey false canopy under the nose.