

# Northrop 5A, 5E, and Sub-Variants in Iranian Service Since the 1966 Middle East War

The Northrop 5A and 5E, also known as the F-5A and F-5E, were supersonic jet fighters developed by Northrop Corporation in the 1960s. They were designed as lightweight, low-cost fighters for export to allied nations, and were widely used by air forces around the world, including the Iranian Air Force.



## Iranian Tigers at War: Northrop F-5A/B, F-5E/F and Sub-Variants in Iranian Service since 1966 (Middle East@War Book 4) by Babak Taghvaei

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Iran first acquired Northrop 5A fighters in 1966, and they played a significant role in the 1966 Middle East War against Iraq. The Iranian Air Force also operated a number of sub-variants of the 5A and 5E, including the F-5F, F-5N, F-5S, and F-5G.

This article will provide a detailed overview of the Northrop 5A, 5E, and sub-variants in Iranian service, including their historical background,

technical specifications, and combat history. We will also examine the impact of these aircraft on the 1966 Middle East War and the wider Arab-Israeli conflict.

## **Historical Background**

The Northrop 5A was developed in response to a request from the United States Air Force for a lightweight, low-cost fighter that could be used for close air support and air defense missions. The 5A was designed as a single-seat, single-engine aircraft, and was powered by a General Electric J85 turbojet engine. It was armed with two 20mm cannons and could carry a variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons.

The 5A first entered service with the USAF in 1964, and was soon exported to a number of allied nations, including Iran. Iran acquired its first 5As in 1966, and these aircraft quickly became a mainstay of the Iranian Air Force.

The Northrop 5E was a later variant of the 5A, and was introduced in 1972. The 5E featured a number of improvements over the 5A, including a more powerful engine, a new avionics suite, and increased fuel capacity. The 5E was also armed with two 20mm cannons and could carry a variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons.

Iran acquired its first 5Es in 1974, and these aircraft also became a mainstay of the Iranian Air Force. The 5E was used extensively in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, and proved to be a highly effective fighter.

## **Technical Specifications**

The Northrop 5A and 5E were very similar in terms of their technical specifications. The following table provides a comparison of the two

aircraft:

	<b>Northrop 5A</b>	<b>Northrop 5E</b>
Length	47 ft 4 in (14.43 m)	47 ft 4 in (14.43 m)
Wingspan	26 ft 8 in (8.13 m)	26 ft 8 in (8.13 m)
Height	13 ft 4 in (4.06 m)	13 ft 4 in (4.06 m)
Weight (empty)	12,200 lb (5,530 kg)	12,400 lb (5,620 kg)
Weight (max takeoff)	24,000 lb (10,890 kg)	24,500 lb (11,110 kg)
Engine	General Electric J85-GE-13 turbojet	General Electric J85-GE-21 turbojet
Thrust	3,850 lbf (17.1 kN)	4,250 lbf (18.9 kN)
Maximum speed	Mach 1.6	Mach 1.6
Combat radius	500 mi (800 km)	550 mi (890 km)
Armament	Two 20mm cannons, variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons	Two 20mm cannons, variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons

## **Combat History**

The Northrop 5A and 5E saw extensive combat service with the Iranian Air Force, particularly in the 1966 Middle East War and the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War.

## 1966 Middle East War

The 1966 Middle East War was a brief conflict between Israel and a coalition of Arab states, including Iraq

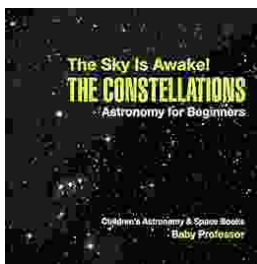


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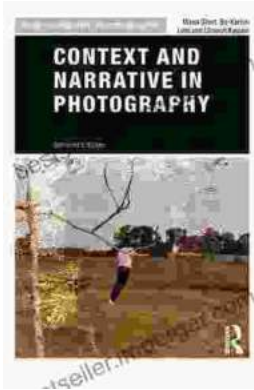
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