

U.S. MARINES AV-8B HARRIER II

BY DANA BELL

THE MARINE CORPS' first Harriers were Hawker Siddeley-built AV-8As delivered between 1970 and 1976. The

AV-8A and the RAF's Harrier GR.1 had much in common, including the RAF camouflage colors and pattern. The upper surfaces were a disruptive pattern of RAF Dark Green (641) and Dark Sea Grey (638) with undersurfaces in Light Aircraft Grey (627). Apparently, for repainting, the Marines chose dark olive green FS 34064 and dark gray FS 36099 for the upper-surface camouflage, with Light Gull Gray FS 36440 underneath.

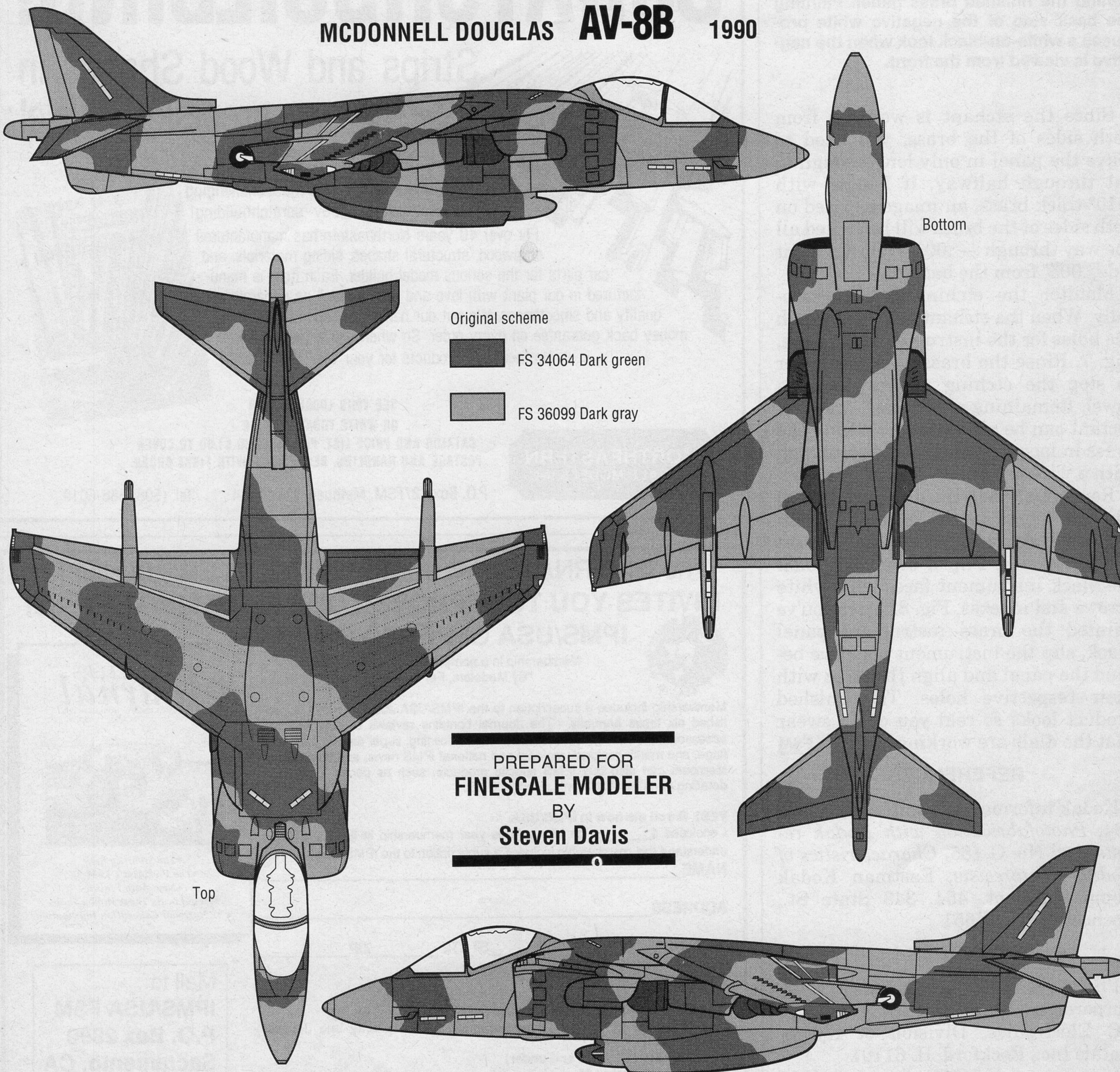
The improved AV-8B Harrier II is a McDonnell Douglas design, produced in the U.S. Two YAV-8Bs (modified from AV-8A airframes) were painted in red, white, black, and gold high-visibility schemes. The first of four Full-Scale Development (FSD) airframes came in standard RAF camouflage; the second came in another high-visibility scheme. The third FSD AV-8B was painted in the RAF pattern, but with Marine Field Green

FS 34095 and Blue Gray FS 35237 upper-surface colors with FS 36440 undersides. This color change was evidently an attempt to economize by using standard Navy/ Marine colors.

The fourth development Harrier II received a countershaded three-tone gray camouflage similar to the Navy's other new TPS schemes. Its colors were FS 36375 Light Ghost Gray on top, FS 36440 on the sides, and FS 36495 light gray on the bottom. Navy planners had high hopes for the camouflage, but the Marines instead applied the FS 34064/36099/36440 scheme to the first 25 production Harrier IIs. After reviewing the AV-8B's tactics, the Corps adopted a wraparound scheme beginning with the 26th airframe, serial number 162081. The camouflage pattern was continued on the undersurfaces, and FS 36440 was eliminated.

A new graded scheme of Gunship Gray

MCDONNELL DOUGLAS AV-8B 1990



FS 36118, Dark Gull Gray FS 36231, and Dark Ghost Gray FS 36320 was approved for new-production Marine Harriers and was first applied in late 1990. This is the first time Gunship Gray FS 36118 has been used in Marine/Navy camouflages, though the color is a standard in U.S. Air Force stocks. The new scheme will likely not be applied to earlier production aircraft.

The original dark green and dark gray Harrier scheme wasn't good camouflage against the sands of the Persian Gulf region, so the Marines were authorized in late 1990 to overpaint the dark green with either FS 36375 Light Ghost Gray or FS 36320 Dark Ghost Gray. Three-toned gray wraparound Harriers, similar to Navy adversary aircraft, appeared in nightly news footage from the first few days of the war, indicating some ad hoc repainting by crews in the field.

FSM

AVAILABLE MODELING PAINTS

Original production scheme:

- FS 34064 — No match. Lighten Xtracolor X153 (FS 14031).
- FS 36099 — Gunze Sangyo (H333, Extra Dark Sea Grey), Polly S Fantasy (501418, Hobgoblin Gray Black)

New gray scheme:

- FS 36118 — Floquil Military (300204) Gunze Sangyo (H305), Humbrol (125), Pactra Authentic (M31), Polly S (500822), Testor Model Master (1723), Xtracolor (X130)
- FS 36231 — Floquil Military (300205), Gunze Sangyo (H317), Humbrol (140), Pactra Acrylic (A38), Polly S (500824), Testor Model Master (1740), Xtracolor (X131)
- FS 36320 — Floquil Military (300208), Gunze Sangyo (H307), Humbrol (128), Pactra Acrylic (A41), Polly S (500837), Testor

