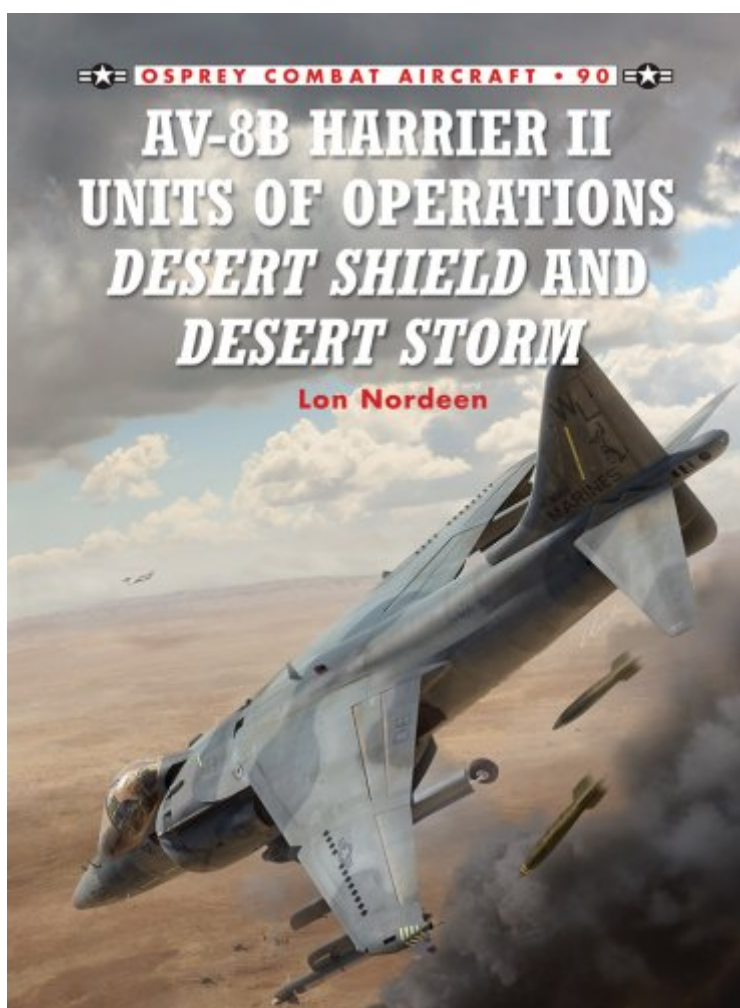


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# AV-8B Harrier II Units Of Operations Desert Shield And Desert Storm (Combat Aircraft)



## Synopsis

The AV-8B is the only tactical aircraft that can deploy with Marine forces on amphibious assault ships and provide air cover and close air support separate from large deck aircraft carriers. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, a coalition of nations launched Operation Desert Shield in order to defend Saudi Arabia, and the Harrier II was among the first tactical air assets to be deployed to the region. During Operation Desert Storm, the five units flying the AV-8B in-theatre became some of the top tactical squadrons of choice by air mission planners because of the pilots' skill as well as the plane's vertical take-off ability. The previously untold story of the AV-8B in this conflict is vividly brought to life by the author through first-hand accounts and period photography sourced from those that were there and official archives. This will be the first of three volumes on USMC Harrier IIs in combat, with follow-on titles covering the jet's operations in Iraq in 2003-2008 and Afghanistan in 2001-2009.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Came promptly and as described.

I was there as a Hornet pilot and knew/know and flew with many of the gentlemen featured in this excellent book. I feel qualified to say that it reads absolutely true and right. Indeed, the photo of a chart of Kuwait with markings and annotations brought back a rush of recollections. The text includes a very good combination of history, technical data and personal accounts. The color plates, photographs and diagrams are very well done. Although it's no secret that I'm not the biggest Harrier fan in the world, I certainly like and admire my comrades who operate and maintain it. And I'm impressed at how the author, Lon Nordeen, got this book right.

Though it will never win a prize for aerodynamic streamlining, the McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier is one effective ground-attack aircraft. Marine Corps Harrier squadrons were amongst the first Allied air units to deploy against Iraq in 1990 and ran up an exemplary combat once hostilities broke out. Noted aviation author Lon Nordeen chronicles the Harrier's combat exploits in this 2011 Osprey release, #90 in their 'Osprey Combat Aircraft' series. Norden follows five USMC Harrier squadrons - VMA-311, -542, -331, -513 and -231 - as they deployed to the war zone from bases around the world, typically scrambling to bring the unit up to strength, prepare their aircraft, etc. The 'Tomcats' of VMA-311 were the first of the gyrene Harrier units to deploy, the other units arriving in the coming weeks. Most flew from land bases; the exceptions being VMA-331 and a det from -513. Once in combat, the five squadrons excelled in CAS. Five USMC Harriers were lost in combat with two pilots KIA. Thanks to in-depth research and many first-person reminiscences by Marine AV-8B pilots, Nordeen's book gives the reader a vivid 'in-the-cockpit' look at Harrier combat ops. Granted the accounts are top-heavy with acronyms but that's part-and-parcel of an accurate picture of Harrier pilots at war. The many color and b&w photographs and Jim Laurier's nicely-done color profile complete a nicely-done package. In short, AV-8B HARRIER II UNITS OF OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM is a gripping, authoritative account of the ground-attack war as seen by USMC Harrier drivers. The first of three projected volumes, it certainly sets the bar for the succeeding volumes. Recommended.

AV-8B Harrier II Units of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 came as a surprise to many but the response was creation of a coalition of nations which sent military forces into the region to deter further aggression. Following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Iran-Iraq War and naval conflict in the Arabian Gulf, US defense planners had created the Central Command and prepared for operations in the Middle East. The Marine Corps, US Navy and

other US forces had trained to deploy to the region to meet contingencies and prepositioned ships were located close to the battle zone with Marine Corps weapons and equipment. Marine Corps aviation forces were among the first to deploy to the region to help halt Iraqi aggression and included several AV-8B Harrier II squadrons. The Marine Corps has long been a proponent of tight air-ground teamwork and the AV-8B Harrier II was designed to provide close air support for the front line Marines. Due to its unique V/STOL operational characteristics, more than three AV-8B squadrons operated from King Abdul Aziz Naval air station, an austere airfield in northern Saudi Arabia which was the closest to the battle zone. Another squadron and a third of AV-8Bs flew from the assault ships USS Nassau and USS Tarawa to support the option of an amphibious attack into Kuwait or Iraq. I was honored to deploy to the region to support Operation Desert Shield as the Deputy Commander, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. From this position I saw firsthand the significant contribution made by the AV-8B squadrons to the military success of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Lon Nordeen has done an excellent job discussing the background to the AV-8B, its role in the Marine air ground team and technical aspects of the Harrier II's V/STOL and attack characteristics. The story of the AV-8B in Desert Shield and Desert Storm is covered in detail, squadron by squadron, including firsthand accounts by the wing commander, squadron commanding officers and many pilots who flew the AV-8B in the conflict. This small volume is a very good analysis of the AV-8B's contribution to the Desert Shield/Desert Storm air campaigns and includes period photography, maps and extensive color and marking details in the color plates. General Richard D Hearney, USMC (Ret.)

Lon Nordeen once again establishes his expertise in this excellent book on the often controversial McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II. The Harrier II was a tremendous advance over its predecessor, but still faced the reliability and maintainability issues inherent in its mission. Yet the AV-8B has worked well for the Marines from the start. It suits perfectly the Marine concept of a tightly knit infantry/aviation team, providing the exacting close-air support required. The AV-8B starred in both Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The Marine units operating it were almost immediately in high demand because of their effective work. Nordeen, as always, writes well, backing up his long experience with intensive research. The book is filled with excellent photos, many of them seen for the first time. And as with Nordeen's previous books, this work will be cited as a reference by other authors covering the subject. This, the first of three books on the AV-8B planned by Nordeen, sets the standard for the future.

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