



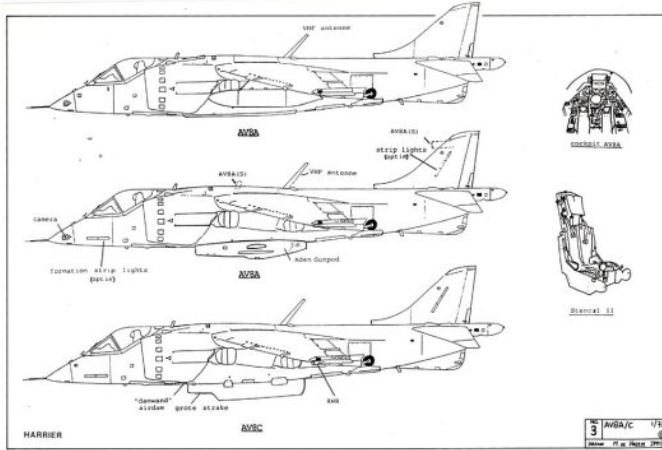
Harrier AV-8A Spain Matador ARMADA (Navy)

Scale 1/32 (but various scales possible for these decals)

HISTORY

The Hawker Siddeley Harrier was developed in the 1960s as the first operational ground attack and reconnaissance aircraft with vertical/short take-off and landing (V/STOL) capabilities. Development started with the Kestrel prototype aircraft and this evolved into the Harrier GR.1 first flown end 1967. The design had a single special Pegasus turbofan engine mounted in the fuselage and four vectoring nozzles. For control at low speed in hovering flight, several small reaction nozzles are also fitted, in the nose, tail and wingtips. The Harrier was first ordered for the British Royal Air Force, with the GR.1.

A version of the GR.1 was exported to the United States as the AV-8A, for use by the US Marine Corps (USMC) in the 1970s. The AV-8A jets were manufactured in the UK by Hawker Siddeley but got fitted by McDonnell Douglas with American systems, another Stencel SEU-3/A ejection seat and Sidewinder capability.



SPAIN NAVY AV-8A

Spain purchased mid 1970s AV-8A and TAV-8A from the USA. Due to the "Gibraltar dispute" with the U.K. the Harriers were manufactured in the U.K as mk.53 and mk.54, sub-assemblies shipped to McDonnell Douglas in the USA and assembled. These had typical American systems and sold to Spain designated AV-8A(S) and TAV-8A(S) with the "S" for Spain. They were called the "Matador" and flown by the "Arma Area la Armada Española". Matadors were operated since 1976 from the aircraft carrier "Dédalo" that had a protective metal sheating at the rear deck. Typically 8 Matadors were on board along with Seaking and Bell helicopters. The remaining Spanish AV-8A jets were sold to the Thailand Navy in 1996.

MODEL KITS

In 1/32 scale only Revell USA released a Harrier way back in 1972 as kit #H194 and in 1982 as kit #4718. The kit has some shapes resembling the Kestrel development aircraft.

[Note: no 1/32 TAV-8A(s) kit is available and it would require conversion with a "Tigger" vacuform set].

The modeller can modify a bit the 1/32 Revell Harrier kit for a better looking AV-8A with mainly these changes:

- The fairing shape in front of the forward nozzle can be made a bit bulkier and "less pointy" with card and putty.
- The number of blow in doors at the bulkier fairing should be 9 (and not 8 as per Kestrel). Also add a small NACA air intake.
- Add for some AV-8A a radar warning fairing at the vertical tail leading edge from card and blend in with putty.
- Change some upper engine panel exhaust grills.
- If using the underwing fuel tanks, remove their tail fins.
- Improve the various details like the cockpit, ejection seat and smaller airframe bits.

A full modelling report showing the improvement and with further tips can be found at my website at:

<https://aircraftinplastic.com/models/harrier-32/harrier-32-1.html>

<https://aircraftinplastic.com/models/harrier-32/harrier-32-2.html>

My YOUTUBE film:

<https://youtu.be/1FEIfk7tkbI>

DECAL APPLICATION

The decal sheet has ONE continuous print film, so each decal needs to be cut out with fine scissors. No other prior decal preparation is needed.

Note that a decal that contains a white section is often split in two sections. To apply the full decal marking, first set the white decal section at correct position and on top of that the coloured section. On the decals sheet you will often see an "arrow" to indicate this way of application (on white surfaces, the white section is optional).

Each cut out decal can be applied as usual after soaking it a short while in water. Decals are EXTREMELY THIN, so slide off from the wet backing sheet on a horizontally held GLOSSY model surface. Do not use tweezers! They will fold doubled!

After all decals have been applied, finish the model with your preferred final gloss, matt or semi-matt varnish coats. This will also protect all the decals.

REFERENCES:

- AV-8 Harrier, Detail & Scale, Part 1 USMC, TAB Books.
- Harrier in action, no. 58, Squadron Signal publications.
- IPMS U.K. "SIG Asian Air Arms newsletter #33" about Thai Harriers.

On internet it is very easy to find photos by searching... AV-8A + Spain + Matador

COLOUR SCHEMES SPAIN NAVY AV-8A

The Spanish Navy AV-8A(S) scheme is Federal Standard FS16440 gull gray with white lower surfaces.

The scheme is almost symmetrical. Note the large AV-8A sprite antenna on the spine as well as the large blade antenna.

The jet has 6 roundels: 2 on fuselage engine fairings and 2 on both upper and lower wing tips.

The AV-8A(S) has probably the standard smaller stencils/ service maintenance markings, apply from the decals sheet of as per kit.

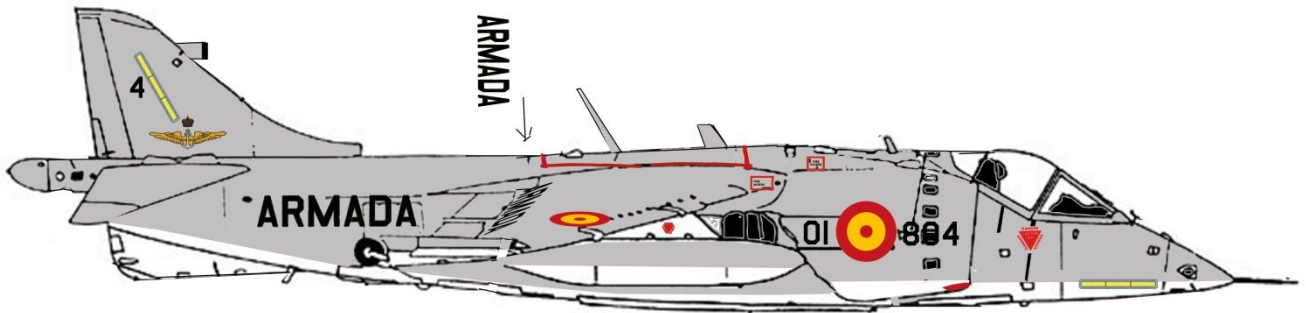
The sheets has several "black codes" so other jets can also be picked.

It is a good idea to study photos as there are small variations in schemes of Spanish AV-8A(S) jets.

Note that many photos show museum jets without the low visibility lights (but probably blanked off on these museum jets).

When setting the low visibility lights, first add the white underlying decals and the yellow ones on top.

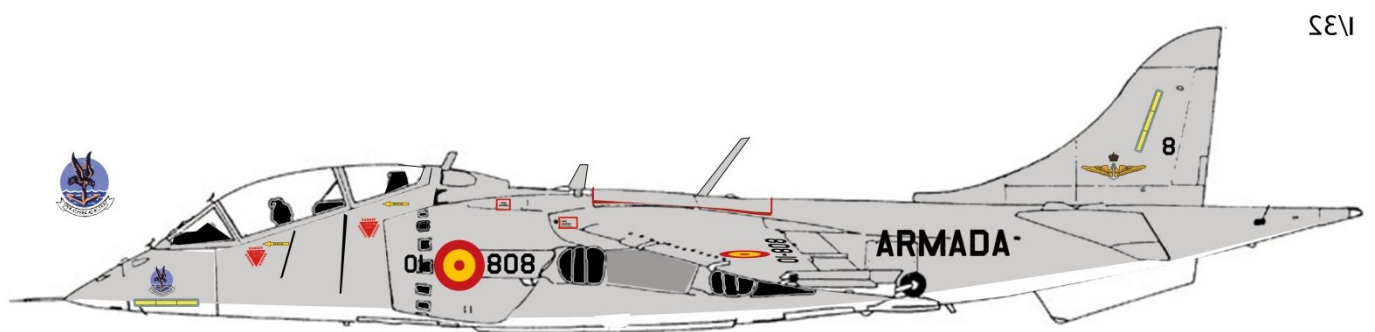
Red small markings below the intakes (decals).



[A] Spain Navy AV-8A(S), US Bur.no 159557, Armada coded 01-804. It has the scheme of FS16440 and lower white surfaces.

The large access hatch in the upper fuselage spine has red outlines and red crosses.

Large ARMADA titles on starboard upper wing and large code on port upper wing. Seen with the low visibility lights panels.



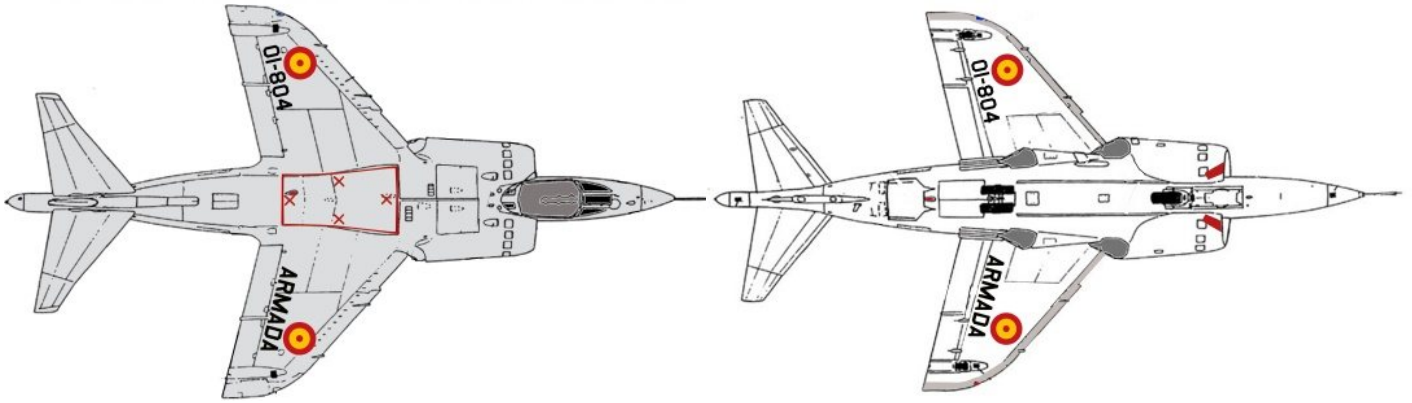
[B] Spain Navy TAV-8A(S), US Bur.no 159564, Armada code 01-808. It has the scheme of FS16440 and lower white surfaces.

The large access hatch in the upper fuselage spine has red outlines and red crosses.

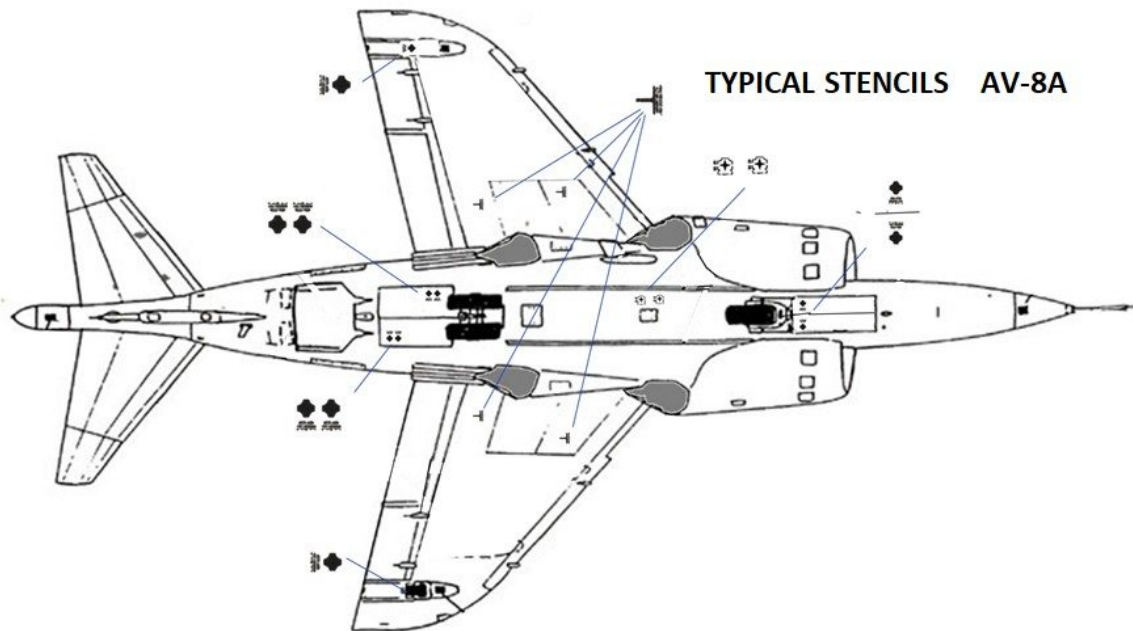
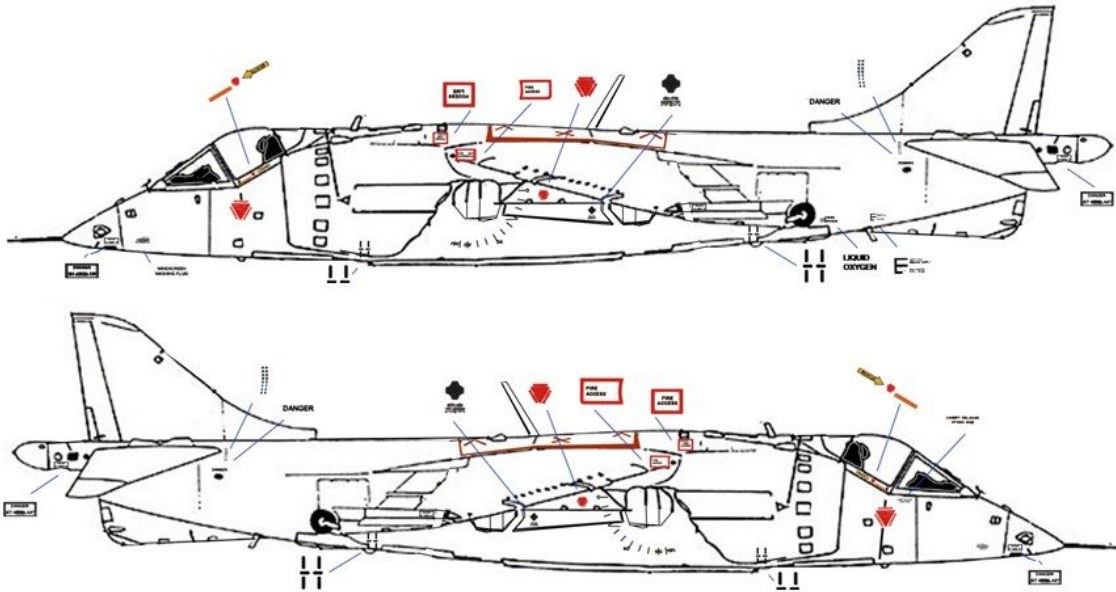
Large ARMADA titles on starboard upper wing and large code on port upper wing. Seen with the low visibility lights panels.

Note:

no 1/32 TAV-8A(s) kit is available and it would require conversion of AV-8A kit with a "Tigger" vacuform set or through scratch building.



AV-8A Spain typical upper and lower views (note red markings below intakes)



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