

# Rare Harrier Jump Jets return after 16-year hiatus

*Unique aviation act hovers back to Salinas Airshow*

By **VICTOR CALDERON**  
The Salinas Californian

When the California International Airshow takes to the skies this weekend, those with a long history of Airshow attendance will experience Harrier déjà vu.

One of the rarest military aviation acts, the U.S. Marine Corps Harrier Jump Jet team, will return to Salinas after a 16-year absence to show off the jet's famous vertical landings and hover action.

The Harrier aircraft's combination of tactical mobility, responsiveness, low operating costs and ability to operate from both land and water airbases are particularly well-suited to the special combat and expedition requirements of the Marine Corps.

The team's precision flying unit of Marines performs only four Harrier demonstrations per year on each coast.

"We're very lucky to get them, because they don't do a lot of shows," said Harry Wardwell, the Airshow's executive director.

During the Harrier's "Level III" demonstration this weekend, the jet team will start with a short, 150-foot takeoff roll. Then the jets will execute a high-speed pass at more than 600 mph.

The team will show off the AV-8B Harrier's hovering and



PROVIDED PHOTO

The U.S. Marine Corps Harrier Jump Jet team will perform at the Californian International Airshow Salinas after a 16-year hiatus. The team will show off the Harrier's hovering and vertical landing capabilities.

vertical landing capabilities.

Capt. Ryan Colvert, a Harrier fleet pilot, will perform his first demonstration with the team. He joined the Marine Corps in December 1998.

"I'm pretty excited about it," said Colvert. "It's nice to go somewhere that people don't routinely see the airplane, and you can show a crowd the capabilities of this unique aircraft."

Colvert said he takes pride in working with people he calls

some of the best aviators in the Marine Corps and working with one of the military's most unique jets.

"It's actually a lot of fun," he said, "because no matter how many times you hover or land on some 75-foot-wide strip, you feel like you are somehow cheating the 'rules' of flying airplanes."

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## ABOUT THE HARRIER

Statistics for the USMC Harrier Jump Jet team:

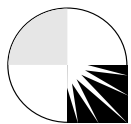
■ Wingtip to wingtip, a Harrier AV-8B jet is about 30 feet wide. From nose to tail, it's 46 feet, and the tip of the tail stands about 12 feet off the ground.

■ A typical jet weighs about 15,000 pounds.

■ The engine generates 23,400 pounds of thrust, or about 35,000 horsepower.

■ The fastest speed for a Harrier jet is 585 knots, or 673 mph.

Source: Harrier fleet pilot Capt. Ryan Colvert



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