

*By all accounts, Cherry Point was a tremendous success. The airplanes are back home and in the hangar - - - and the paycheck has cleared.*



Thursday, we flew 13 wounded warriors, plus some local press in the L-39. All were very satisfied customers. Jared Brumbaugh of National Public Radio videoed his entire flight and has posted his diary on You Tube. Check it out, if you're curious what it's like to fly in the L-39 jet.

Friday's airshow was cut short due to rain and we did not fly. It's a good thing, too. On preflight, our mechanics discovered one of our two main batteries had a cracked case. We located a new battery in Dallas, Texas and had it shipped overnight to the hotel. By 11:00 am Saturday, the aircraft had the new battery installed and was ready for flight.

For our performance, we were scheduled to race the jet-powered pickup truck with the SHAR. After the race, we would do our Harrier performance demo. Jeremy Fields was driving the jet truck called “ Super Shockwave.” If you’ve never seen a jet truck, it’s an amazing display, especially at night. Smoke, flame, noise all in a pickup truck. It’s a nearly perfect Man’s truck. If it had breasts on the dash board, it might be perfect...

The jet truck originally cancelled his event, due to a wet runway, as it rained all morning. Like the Harrier, the brakes are very effective at stopping a rotating wheel, however the wheels won’t stop the vehicle. On a wet runway, the problem is compounded – no braking action at all, coupled with several thousand pounds of thrust. So, we fueled our airplane accordingly, not planning to race the truck.



However, the winds dried the runway much quicker than expected. By the afternoon, Jeremy changed his mind and decided to run. The race was on. But we were fueled expecting NOT to race. There was no time to get 100 extra gallons of jet fuel.

To compound the low fuel issue, I also had a momentary hydraulic light illuminate, just after my takeoff. This time, it was the HYD 2 system, which is a

backup system, and not the primary system. As you will recall, on our second flight we had a complete HYD 1 failure. The consequences of a HYD 2 failure are minor, in comparison. I briefly considered terminating the race and demo, but the abnormality mysteriously fixed itself. Sometimes, those things happen. A momentary light, then all is well. Pilots refer to these as “night abnormalities in the daytime” since they most often occur at night and over water.

With all conditions and pressures were normal, I continued.

I lined up for the race run and lowered my landing gear. I intended to race gear down, with my feet on the brakes. This is just a jet truck, after all, and it's his time in the spotlight. He's supposed to win. Apparently, I caught Jeremy completely by surprise. (Payback for him telling me he wasn't going to race) He couldn't see me through all the smoke and flames he generated. So, I snuck up on him, as we say. I easily beat him to the end of the runway, with my gear down. Neither of us had enough fuel for another run. Oh well, I won.

Then I started the Harrier demo, but now a bit low on fuel and had to cut short some aerobatic maneuvers. I still had enough fuel to complete the mandatory hovers and pedal turns, and of course, the bow to the crowd.

After the flight, the cause of the HYD 2 light was determined to be trapped air in the hydraulic system that had eventually worked its way through to the accumulator. It takes continued exercising of the hydraulic systems to work it all free. No problem at all.

But the flight on Saturday is only part of the story....

After the Saturday show, Joe Anderson climbed in the cockpit for his first refresher flight, after 9 years. As I've said before in the updates, Joe has over 2,400 hours in Harriers. He was a test pilot for the YAV-8B prototype and knows this airplane very well, except for a mere handful of switches. He's pretty good with the left side switches, not so much on the right side of the cockpit, but good enough. I admit the crew chiefs and I were a bit nervous about handing our “baby” over to another pilot, but Joe is one of the best and the plane was in great hands. If you've ever handed over the keys to the family Chevy to your teenage son, you know how we felt. Just bring it back in the same condition you got it - no dents and no stains in the back seat.

Joe had the entire pattern to himself to get the feel of the airplane. Every contingency was briefed. Even though we now have much more confidence in the airplane, on our first flight – we lost the radios. On the second flight – we had a hydraulic failure, so EVERYTHING that could go wrong was covered. Everything.

We had perfect weather for the flight. Cherry Point is the absolute best place for this flight to happen, given its long, concrete runways, VSTOL landing pads and people who know and understand Harriers. It's the largest Harrier base in the world, and Joe had the entire pattern to himself.

After three trips around the pattern for slow landings, Joe went to the VSTOL pad for a hover and landing. Despite the few years since his last flight, he looked like he never left the cockpit. You can see the joy on his face after the flight. He also confirmed this airplane is an absolute ROCKET SHIP! Couple that acceleration and speed with the capability to land in your back yard, and one can see why pilots LOVE this airplane!



One of our sponsors for this airshow was "Smiletrain." You'll see their logo on the vertical fin of the airplane. Smiletrain, is one of our favorite charities. These fine doctors and nurses travel the entire world to give life-changing cleft pallet surgeries to children who could not afford them. Imagine being shunned by the community, because of a disfiguring birth defect. ( I had a good joke to insert here, but was over ruled) These unfortunate children are social outcasts. But Smiletrain can fix all that. With a simple surgery, these children can have

virtually a new life, socially and physically. Please help us support this valuable charity by visiting their website at [Smiletrain.com](http://Smiletrain.com). A donation of \$250.00 can provide one surgery. Please support them, if you can.

### **UPDATE to the UPDATE.**

As usual, it's taken me so long to get out an Update that there's already more to report.

On Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, Joe took his checkride for the SHAR, and of course, passed with flying colors.

We now have TWO qualified civilian pilots in the SHAR! Congratulations, Joe!

Joe Anderson also claims the record as...

**THE OLDEST, CURRENTLY FLYING HARRIER PILOT IN THE WORLD.** If there's anyone older than 62 still, actively flying Harriers, let us know. Otherwise, he has the record.

Nothing against our elder pilots, but he did fly the entire pattern with his turn signal on...

Must have been one of the switches he had difficulty locating.

Here's how he described the return to flight....

*" Had a big day yesterday. The buildup was long in coming. I first flew a Harrier in Beaufort, South Carolina on September 20, 1973. I continued flying the AV-8A and AV-8B until my last flight as a Marine on May 1, 2000.*

*Reconnecting with Art gave me the unexpected opportunity to keep going. I started with some simulator time to refresh old skills and convince myself (and the aircraft owners) that I still had the requisite motor skills to be successful and safe. The answer won't always be yes, but it is right now. After the MCAS Cherry Point air show, I jumped in Art's SHAR and beat up the 8,000 foot runway and V/STOL pad (concrete landing squares).*

*Yesterday was my FAA check at St Mary's County Airport (2W6). If you check your aeronautical charts, you'll see it is a non-towered 4,000 foot x 75 foot civilian asphalt strip. The airplane had 2500 lbs of fuel and 300 lbs of water. (We use the water to increase available thrust through turbine cooling and increased mass flow). Do the math- 15,800 lbs of weight propelled by 21,600 lbs of thrust. (hint: thrust wins).*

*The airplane was a rocket that absolutely pinned me back in the seat on takeoff. The air conditioning, which was previously as hot as the airplane, was fixed and*

*hugely welcome. The SHAR performed smoothly and the touch and go's watered my eyes from the acceleration. Touchdown for the full stops are 90-100 knots and very controllable but tracking a light loaded SHAR requires concentration. I couldn't be more delighted to be Art's backup throughout the air show season."*

*Joe Anderson*



As you can read, Joe's extremely excited about being back in the saddle again. The photos speak volumes, and he's still grinning!

Many doubted we would even get the airplane in the air, much less now have TWO Certified pilots. We're just getting warmed up.

We're off to our next airshow, which is Gary, Indiana on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of July.

See you there!

Art Nalls