

Stealth Fighter Association Newsletter



Nighthawks



As you can imagine there has been no news in the press concerning the F-117A since our last newsletter. So, for this newsletter I have gone back in time to the late fall of 1988. You'll find on page three the official list of information that was to be released in a press release along with the photo above. Reprinted with permission of the Las Vegas Review-Journal are a couple of articles that were printed the day of and the day after the F-117 announcement.

I had hoped to print several other articles from November and December 1988, but other news organizations were not as generous as the Review-Journal.

If you have any stories about your time with the F-117 program that you would like to share with the rest of the Association, forward them to me and we'll print them in an upcoming issue of the Newsletter.

Editor—Greg Meland

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President's Corner

Message from the SFA President

It is hard to believe that it has been a year and a half (or more) since the last Stealth Fighter reunion. What a fabulous event it was and we owe another round of applause and appreciation to Dave "Big Dog" Wells and the reunion committee for many hours of tireless effort putting a great event together. The details were planned out and executed in such a way as to make the event truly exceptional. Thanks gang. The past SFA Board of Directors did a great job building our membership rolls and doggedly pursuing a contact list that has continued to grow, solidifying a commitment to keeping the memories alive. Many thanks to Dave Wells, Art Weyermuller, Sherrie Bouche, Mike Harris, Doug Robinson, and David Walker, Jay Tweed and Tammy Ward

The new Board of Directors elected at the last SFA business meeting are:

Bill Lake	President
Scott Ogden	Vice President
Mary Burris	Secretary / Treasurer
John Zink	Board Member
Doug Robinson	Board Member

Greg Meland is our talented and energetic Communications Director and we are blessed to be able to retain the skilled support of David Walker (Art Director) and Tammy Ward (Webmaster) as we continue to promote the



legacy of the Stealth Fighter, despite its transition to inactive service with the USAF.

At the next Board meeting, we will have an open discussion about the future of the SFA without F-117 Nighthawks in active service. We seem to have two realistic options - continue as (an F-117) Stealth Fighter Association, or expand our membership to include today's stealth fighter community, the F-22

Raptor. We would like to hear your views, thoughts and opinions on this topic as well as anything else on your mind (about the SFA). The SFA appreciates, wants, and needs the support of the membership. Please keep in touch, keep our email rosters up-to-date, and let us know your thoughts.

Bill Lake
President, Stealth Fighter Association

SFA Board of Directors 2007-2012

Bill Lake, President
Scott Ogden, Vice President
Mary Burris, Secretary/Treasurer
John Zink, Board Member
Doug Robinson, Board Member

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F-117 News

The following information was distributed to the members of the 4450th Tactical Group a few days before the press release that announced the existence of the F-117A.

The following information, and only this information, will become UNCLASSIFIED effective with the press release. All other information will remain classified IAW the program security guide.

The Aircraft

- Designation: F-117A
- An operational stealth fighter
- Built by Lockheed Corporation, California, Advanced Development Projects (ADP), known as the "Skunk Works"
- Two engines
- Crew: One pilot
- 52 aircraft have been delivered
- Total contracted production is 59

The 4450th Tactical Group

- The F-117A is assigned to the 4450th Tactical Group, Nellis AFB, NV
- The aircraft is based at Tonopah Test Range Airfield (located in the NW corner of the Nellis Range Complex)
- 4450th is an operational tactical fighter organization and conducts normal activities for a tactical fighter unit
 - There have been operational readiness inspections
 - The 4450th and the F-117A have not participated in Red Flag

Tonopah Test Range Airfield

- Base population is approximately 2000
- Personnel are transported via contract air--Key Airlines, in 727 aircraft

Program History

- Program commenced: 1978
- First flight: June 1981
- Initial Operational Capability: October 1983
- Last aircraft delivery is scheduled for FY 90

LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Thursday, November 10, 1988

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Wraps officially off Stealth fighter

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Baring a poorly kept secret, the Pentagon today made public details of a Stealth jet fighter that has been ready for five years to slip behind enemy lines in the event of war.

Dan Howard, the Defense Department's chief spokesman, said the Stealth fighter first flew in June 1981 and was declared operational in October 1983.

The Air Force has ordered 59 of the planes; 52 of them have already been delivered, he said, adding the plane is a single-seat, twin-engine aircraft.

The plane, which in some respects resembles a small space shuttle with swept wings and a V-tail, was unveiled primarily because the Air Force needs to start flying the plane during daylight hours if it is to integrate the fighter squadron's war plans with other units, Howard said.

The plane has been restricted, in the interests of secrecy and national security, to nighttime flying ever since it was declared operational,

Howard said.

The Stealth fighter "is officially known as the F-117A," the spokesman continued.

"It has been operational since October 1983 and is assigned to the 4450th Tactical Group at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. The aircraft is based at the Tonopah Test Range Airfield in Nevada."

Howard and Air Force officials, while releasing a photo of the plane in flight, flatly declined to discuss how much the program cost, the plane's dimensions or general capabilities such as speed, its assigned combat role, the materials from which it was constructed and the major subcontractors.

The plane is built by the Lockheed Corp. at a tightly guarded plant in Burbank, Calif., the Air Force said. Production line workers at the Lockheed plant have gone to court with charges they are being sickened by exposure to dangerous chemicals.

The service also acknowledged that three of the planes have crashed.

USA TODAY • FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1988

Stealth unveiling



AP
THE FIGHTER: The Pentagon acknowledged the existence of the Stealth jet fighter Thursday. It has been in service since June, 1981, and was certified in 1983 for flight in war missions. There are 52 of the F-117As at a base in Nevada. The disclosures were made because of the Air Force's need to fly the plane in daylight and the planned Nov. 22 unveiling of the B-2 Stealth bomber.

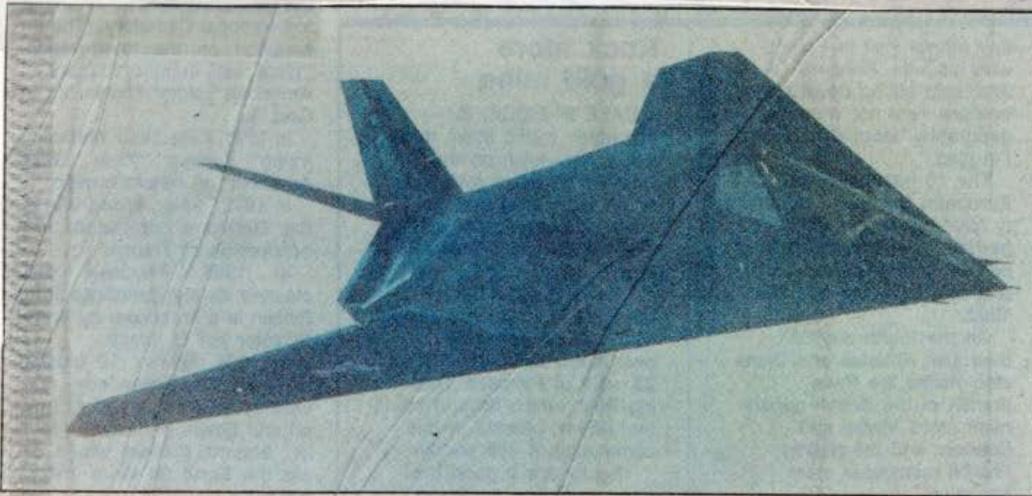
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LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Friday, November 11, 1988

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Stealth fighters soar over Nevada



STEALTH JET FIGHTER - This is a photograph of the Stealth jet fighter released by the Pentagon. The fighter has been operational since 1982 and flying out of the Tonopah Test Range.

Pentagon admits aircraft flies out of Tonopah Test Range

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Air Force has been flying a "Stealth" radar-evading jet fighter for seven years, and now has about 50 of the planes at an isolated base in Nevada, the Pentagon acknowledged Thursday.

Partially lifting a veil of secrecy that has enveloped the plane from its birth, the Pentagon and Air Force released a photograph of the unusual aircraft but declined to discuss its capabilities. The limited disclosures were made now because the Air Force needs to start flying the craft in daylight, a spokesman said.

The Pentagon said the plane had been declared operational and ready for wartime missions in October 1983, but that it first flew in June 1981.

The Stealth fighter "is officially known as the F-117A," said Dan Howard, the Pentagon's chief spokesman.

"It has been operational since October 1983 and is assigned to the 4450th Tactical Group at Nellis Air Force Base. The aircraft is based at the Tonopah Test Range Airfield in Nevada."

The photograph released by the Pentagon depicts a relatively small, swept-wing plane with a flat under-

belly. It somewhat resembles a sting ray — black or dark blue with no exterior markings.

The cockpit is located far forward in a nose that comes to a sharp point, with what appears to be gun barrels or air-speed probes sticking out.

The plane features a "V" tail atop a fuselage that ends in a rectangle, apparently completely encompassing the two engines that power the plane. The air intakes for the engines appear to be fitted tightly into the sides of the fuselage, just below the cockpit.

The swept-back wings would suggest the plane is capable of flying at supersonic speeds, but the

F-117 News

Air Force declined to discuss the matter. Military sources have said the plane is designed for sneak ground attacks and not air-to-air dogfighting.

The Air Force has ordered 59 of the planes and 52 of them have been delivered, Howard said. Three of the planes have crashed and two pilots have been killed, the Air Force added.

To protect its secrecy, the plane has been flown only at night. But the Air Force needs to start flying the plane during daylight if it is to integrate the squadron's war plans with other units, Howard said.

Howard and Air Force officials declined to discuss how much the program cost. Neither would they offer information on the plane's dimensions or general capabilities, the materials from which it was constructed, or the major subcontractors involved.

The plane is built by the Lockheed Corp. at a tightly guarded plant in Burbank, Calif., the Air Force said.

The very first production model of the plane crashed with a Lockheed Corp. pilot at the controls, the Air Force said. That test pilot survived the accident, for

which no date was given.

The second crash occurred on July 11, 1986, near Bakersfield, Calif., and the third on Oct. 14, 1987, at Nellis Air Force Base, the service said. Both pilots were killed.

The Stealth fighter is "a mature system which has enjoyed bipartisan congressional support since its inception (and) can now be fully integrated into operational plans in support of world-wide defense commitments," Howard said.

The spokesman denied the administration was trying to bolster support for Republican defense policies by unveiling the plane.

"In order to move the system further along, they have to start daytime flying," Howard said. "That's what driving it. And I think both sides of the aisle on the Hill understand that ..."

According to military sources,

the planes are kept at a high state of readiness for use as "aerial shock troops," capable of slipping behind enemy lines without being detected on radar and creating confusion with unexpected bombing runs.

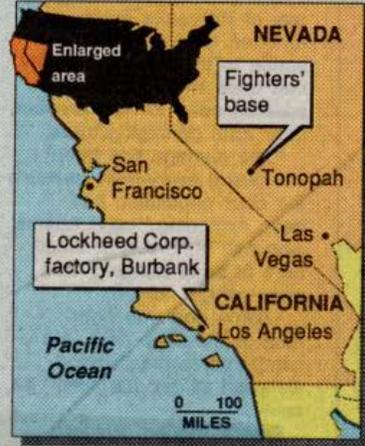
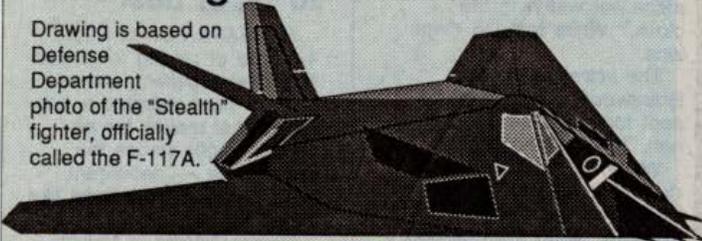
The sources said the decision to unveil the plane was prompted in part by the scheduled Nov. 22 unveiling of the B-2 Stealth bomber. The bomber has been built with more recent and advanced technology than the fighter.

Pentagon officials also had glumly concluded that even if they wanted to keep the program secret, upcoming court fights were likely to shatter security, the sources continued.

Production line workers at the Lockheed plant in Burbank have gone to court with charges they are being sickened by exposure to dangerous chemicals.

Stealth fighter unveiled

Drawing is based on Defense Department photo of the "Stealth" fighter, officially called the F-117A.



F-117A fighter

Few details have been released about the "Stealth" fighter. Information is based on Defense Department revelations and expert opinion.

Crew: 1

Engines: 2 turbofans, 12,500 lbs thrust each

Max. speed: 645 mph

Builder: Lockheed

Number delivered: 52

SOURCES: USNI Military Database, AP, Department of Defense

Knight-Ridder Tribune News / PAUL SOUTAR

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Program Awards



Shingo Prize

Dr Roche Award

1997 Welch Award

1989 Collier Award

Award Stories

F-117 Total System Sustainment Partnership (TSSP) aka TSPR

LM Aero-Palmdale completed its landmark eight year, \$1.8B sustainment contract with the Air Force, providing technical, logistics and management support to the F-117 weapon system. Throughout the contract LM Aero sustained very high Award Fee and Incentive Fee performance, a significant enabler to the 49th Fighter Wing achieving some of the best readiness rates in Air Combat Command.

Join The Stealth Fighter Association

For those folks reading this Newsletter who are not current members of the SFA, membership is open to all personnel currently or previously associated with the F-117 Stealth Fighter Aircraft program.

Additional info is available on the SFA web site, and hard copies of this newsletter are available for mailing to interested folks. Please ask a member or drop a line to:

Stealth Fighter Association
PO Box 151196

Ft Worth, TX 76108-1196

The F-117 Stealth Fighter Association was chartered as a non-profit corporation in the state of Nevada, to organize and coordinate periodic reunions celebrating key events in the history of the F-117 aircraft, by those individuals involved in the creation and operation of the F-117 Stealth Fighter aircraft.

Stealth Fighter Association Mission Statement
The Stealth Fighter Association is an affiliation of individuals brought together by the common bond of association with the world's first stealth fighter, the



Lockheed Martin F-117, produced by the Lockheed Martin Skunk Works for the United States Air Force. Our mission is to preserve the memory of our struggles to attain a stealth combat capability second to none, maintain the legacy of the F-117 "Nighthawk," maintain the bonds of brother and sisterhood between those who contributed to make the awesome combat capability of stealth a reality, and act as a governing board to oversee the planning and execution of periodic reunions at either five or ten year cycles.

Web Site Info

SFA News tells you at a glance what changes have been made recently. Please remember to email us with your current address info in the **Membership Update** section, so that we may keep in touch.

<http://www.f117reunion.org>