

## re: A-10 Shot Down By Air Force? [a.c.a51]

From: "Michael J. Poirier"  
Date: Sun, 13 Apr 1997 11:46:41 -0700  
Subject: re: A-10 Shot Down By Air Force? [a.c.a51]

Subject: re: AREA 51: A-10 Shot Down By Air Force?  
Date: Sun, 13 Apr 1997 07:02:44 -0600  
From: Earl Needham <needhame@3lefties.com>

I think "Coyote" might be "speculating". Most of what he wrote just doesn't sound reasonable to me. See below...

> From: "Coyote" <wnoll@worldnet.att.net>  
> Newsgroups: alt.conspiracy.area51  
> Subject: A-10 shot down by Air Force  
> Date: 10 Apr 1997 03:50:43 GMT

> The pilot, Button, was single. He was normally stationed in Texas,  
> which is very close to Oklahoma City, OK.

Yeah, if you consider 600 miles close! He had been stationed at Laughlin AFB in Del Rio, Texas. That's on the Mexican border.

> The A-10 flew almost a direct route towards Vail. I doubt the pilot had  
> the necessary sectional charts with him for that portion of Denver,

All he has to do is grab one (literally) at the ops building on the way to the flight line. Alternatively, he could look in his IFR Supplement for the coordinates.

> Now consider that the airplane, flying at a decent altitude, was  
> painting radar screens all over the southwest! Especially since it did  
> not have its transponder or IFF equipment activated. Don't you think  
> the ATCs at Sky Harbor and Albuquerque were pulling their hair out  
> with this craft?!?!?

No -- it's perfectly legal to fly VFR without a transponder, in any type of airplane. However, there are certain altitude restrictions (can't go over 18,000 feet MSL) and a few places you can't go VFR (Prohibited and Restricted areas).

Plus, if you fly low enough -- like low enough to rattle a truck's windows -- you won't show on ANY radar screen.

> Especially since it was going way too fast for a  
> civilian joy-pilot.

According to <http://aeroweb.brooklyn.cuny.edu/aircraft/a10a.html> the A-10 cruises at 300 Kts, and has a maximum speed of 450 knots. Several of the new homebuilts can cruise near 300 knots. I wouldn't think he'd be flying at full throttle cross country -- he's have run out of fuel long before Vail.

> However, the Air Force has been rather silent  
> about THEIR capability to track! Luke AFB, Yuma MCAS, Davis-Montham  
> AFB would have been tracking him with their own powerful radars (plus  
> any associated with bases in NewMexico like Holloman or White Sands;  
> Colorado; and Wyoming).

Guess who runs many ATC's? The military. We have an Approach Control here at Cannon, we had one at Moody, we had one at MCAS Cherry Point (in my former life, ha!). Those "powerful radars" Coyote referred to are, in fact, ATC radar's with a range of maybe 250 miles. They are not "special

whiz-bang  
see-all" radars. I've talked to controllers in the past, and they tell me they usually keep the skin paint turned off and use the transponder "hit" for controlling traffic.

> They finally  
> scramble either F-15s, F-16s, or FB-111s from either Luke, or bases in  
> Wyoming or Nebraska to intercept.

Don't forget Holloman, which YOU mentioned above! And I could understand F-15's or F-16's, but FB-111's? They've been retired for several years, and were bombers anyway! The F-111F's have also just been retired. And the last base either of them was stationed at was Cannon AFB, New Mexico.

> All aircraft are outfitted with ELTs (Emergency Locator Transmitters)  
> that are quite capable of withstanding crashes, and activate during  
> one emitting a radio beacon that can be picked up by searchers or a  
> satellite. If the A-10 merely crashed, where is the ELT?

ELT's don't always work -- they're not 100% reliable. As a former member of CAP, I've been on several searches with no ELT. One example was a guy doing some LOCAL pleasure flying in north Florida when he disappeared. He was found almost a week later north of Atlanta.

I think most of what Coyote wrote is just guessing. And that's not necessarily bad. Many people are doing that just now, most notably the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and the Colorado Wing of the Civil Air Patrol.

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>From the Radio Amateurs Code:  
Considerate, Loyal, Progressive, Friendly, Balanced, Patriotic

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