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Author's Note

One of the problems in researching military weapons systems is the availability of public information. When you're dealing with a classified program such as the F- 117; the task is even more difficult. Rumors surfaced about a Lockheed Stealth program during mid- 1977. John Andrews (of Testors Corporation) and I heard that something was flying in Nevada with the name Have Blue, which was the code name for the Stealth prototype.

On 5 May 1978, a Las Vegas paper reported the loss of a secret aircraft flown by Lockheed Test Pilot, Bill Park. All that was said was that the aircraft had a problem, he ejected and was severely injured. With that news article, I started digging and since it was a Lockheed program, I knew it was black; that is, highly classified.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, pieces of information kept surfacing. A lot was accurate, but it was like a blind man describing an elephant. The parts were right, but not in the correct order. A former Lockheed pilot stated he saw a drawing which looked like a Douglas F4D Skyray with Packard grills for air intakes.

I have spent a total of fifteen days at the northern fence line of the Tonopah Test Range Facility. Some of the first photographs of the F- 117 to appear in print were either mine or my good friend, Tony Landis, and we have both enjoyed a lot of attention by having the first photos of the Stealth.

Millions of people have had the opportunity to view the F- 117 since its 21 April 1990 public debut and it has been the star attraction at dozens of airshows; although the pilots never talk about its capability. They will say, "It is an all black single seat aircraft, powered by twin General Electric engines. It was built by Lockheed and is flown by the 37th TFW at Tonopah, Nevada. There were fifty-nine built." That is as far as they'll go; any other questions get an, "I'm sorry, it's classified" or "No comment." This book will hopefully answer some of the questions on the F-117.

Dedication:

In memory of two F-117A pilots who lost their lives in service to their country: MAJ Ross E. Mulhare, USAF and MAJ Michael C. Stewart, USAF, both of the 4450th TG.

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Photo Credits

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