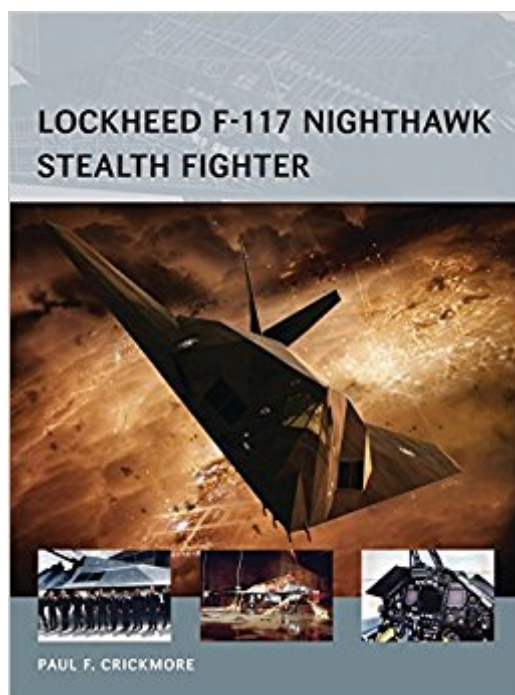


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Lockheed F-117 Nighthawk Stealth Fighter (Air Vanguard)



Synopsis

From its questionable debut over Panama, the shoot-down of a Nighthawk during Operation Allied Force over the former Yugoslavia, to the mind-boggling successes enjoyed by the type in the two Gulf Wars, this is the story of another 'Skunk Works' icon that took aircraft design and operational capabilities to previously unprecedented levels. Even from the earliest days of 'dog-fighting', when pilots attempted to attack their adversaries with the sun on their backs, one adage has held true - "you can't destroy what you can't see". Even with the advent of radar the precept remains valid, however, the "But how?" conundrum had perplexed aircraft design engineers since the Second World War. Although designers and engineers had a number of tools available to help reduce an aircraft's Radar Cross Section (RCS), ranging from its physical shape, to the use of Radar Absorbent Materials (RAM) - as seen in the A-12/SR-71, any reductions achieved by the mid 1970's were at best modest and certainly not enough to gain "an explicit operational advantage". The magnitude of the problem faced is demonstrated by the radar equation "detection range is proportional to the fourth root of the radar cross-section." That is to say, in order to reduce the detection range by a factor of 10 in number, it is necessary to reduce the target aircraft's RCS by a factor of 10,000 or 40 dBs! However utilising the unrivalled talent available within the legendary Lockheed 'Skunk Works' and what was at the time, ground-breaking computer technology, project 'Have Blue' validated the concept of stealth and evolved into the highly classified 'Senior Trend' (F-117A) programme.

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Customer Reviews

During his time as an air traffic controller at the London Air Traffic Control Centre, Paul Crickmore gained a unique introduction into SR-71 operations from RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk. Teaming up with Osprey produced the first detailed book ever to be published on the subject. When additional information became available to him in 1990 following the initial shut down of SR-71 operations, Crickmore produced an even more detailed book, Lockheed SR-71 The Secret Missions Exposed - the standard reference work on the subject. The work was acclaimed by both the aviation press, Ben Rich (late president of the Skunk Works) and the crews that flew the SR-71. He is also the author of the first detailed book about the '117 written in partnership with his wife Alison; published by Motorbooks International in 1999. The author lives in Suffolk, England.

The F-117 was the USAF's first stealth fighter aircraft. Once upon a time, it moved from exotic Area 51 rumor to reality with performances in Operations JUST CAUSE, DESERT STORM, and ALLIED FORCE. The airframe has since been retired, but its technology gave birth to a new generation of stealthy combat aircraft. This is the story of the Nighthawk..."Lockheed F-117 Nighthawk Stealth Fighter" is an Osprey Air Vanguard Series book, well written by Paul Crickmore, with illustrations by Adam Tooby and Henry Morshead. The narrative covers the history of the F-117 from design to development to deployment and finally into retirement. The text is accomplished by an excellent selection of photographs, diagrams and illustrations. The section on technical specifications is written in astonishing detail. The first person accounts of its test and combat flights are unvarnished and fascinating. The section on Bosnia includes an explanation of a shoot-down of one of the F-117's, an indication that its technology was already no longer quite cutting edge. The general reader may find the text a bit thick with jargon; an aviation-oriented audience should find it quite interesting. It is highly recommended to that audience.

For some reason I found this book less of a compelling read than author Paul Crickmore's other books on the A-12 and SR-71 (for which I both gave top marks). Mainly this F-117 book emphasizes more tech-specs, thus seeming to have less of a narrative than the other two books. I can't help but wonder if Mr. Crickmore either wasn't as passionate about this plane, or didn't have as many good resources to tap into.

For the F-117 Stealth Fighter fan this is a great book.

This book's material is good but it has one major drawback. It is very short for the expensive price. You'd be better off buying instead *Area 51 - Black Jets: A History of the Aircraft Developed at Groom Lake, America's Secret Aviation Base* because it has material on F-117A and a lot of information on other black jets from Area 51 for the same price.

This compact book is a real gem, due to the authoritativeness of Paul Crickmore, one of the most appreciated authors concerning the "magic and black" Skunk Works flying machines. The text makes a very thorough and clear analysis of the crucial development phase for this ultra-secret project, treated by the Pentagon for many years to a paranoid level from the confidentiality and secrecy point of view. The NIGHTHAWK is surely one of the most revolutionizing aeroplanes and the author is quite effective in remarking how the design was totally devoted to a phenomenal research of an incredible low radar signature, since the early studies of the HAVE BLUE demonstrator. Then follows the technical chapter, describing all the oddities of this peculiar strike aircraft, and detailing its engines, structure, systems and armament. A real breathless chapter is then the operational description, since the 1989 baptism of fire in the JUST CAUSE operation (the Panama invasion) to the hitting headlines successes in the Iraqi theatre during the 1991 DESERT STORM and the 2003 IRAQI FREEDOM operations. A very detailed and factual paragraph is also devoted to the downing on March 27th 1999 in Yugoslavia of the sky of the airframe Ser. No. 82-0806 by the SAM battery headed by Col. Zoltan Dani. At a very high level is then the iconographic section, courtesy of Adam Tooby and Henry Morshead. Highly recommended

Very informative and interesting. Paul does a great job of covering all of the systems and subsystems that make this plane so incredible.

As you can see: I like all of the OSPREY publications because they are of high quality of printing and a wide variety of military subjects! They are a good mixture of writing and illustrations and very informative yet not too big in size.. I buy a lot of them and still have to read the most.. I appreciate the vast collection as offered by and the easy way of ordering, which is not possible in a regular bookshop over here!

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