



## Platinum Nighthawk Speech

### Commemoration of the First Flight of the F-117A

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It is a real treat to be here with all of you on this very special occasion—the anniversary of the first flight of a very special aircraft and the men and women who made it so.

As I look out across this audience, I can't help but be filled with admiration and respect. I see those who dreamed of a stealthy aircraft, those from industry who designed and built it, those who tested it, flew it and maintained it in combat, and those who continue to maintain and fly it today.

I see some of those combat pilots out there whom in the run up to the Gulf war said to themselves "I sure hope this stealth stuff really works." By the 16th of January 1991, there was a certain degree of confidence. The stealth stuff had worked during Just Cause in Panama. And, like athletes in training for the big event, we had walked the Iraqi border with the aircraft, but until the first night of the war - that was just practice.

Everybody waited that first night, trying to look confident, but since you flew "stealthed up" once you left the tankers, nobody would have contact for the next couple of hours until the antennae came back out to contact the tanker for the trip home.

There were some discreet sighs of relief as noses were counted as everybody checked back in from those first missions. In the big game, that stealth stuff worked—it really worked!

Later in the war, the stealth team was given targets in Kuwait, and even though it took a little longer, you felt safer flying through Iraqi airspace stealthed up, not talking to anybody rather than trying to coordinate with ATC agencies and AWACS to go the short route. Given the choice, you put on the "cloaking device" and went wherever you wanted or needed to go.

It was an awesome advantage, still unique in all the world, and unfortunately still very much underappreciated, and I'll talk about why a little later in my remarks.

Now, I've never flown the black jet, but I sure feel like it's been a big part of my life...and it has. I don't think a week has gone by since the Gulf War that I have not told a story about the F-117 and how it introduced stealth into the calculus of defense and as a result changed the face of warfare forever!

Let me share with you a short anecdote about how the F-117 became not just an integral part of the air campaign in Desert Storm, but the linchpin of the revolution in military affairs...

Most of you know the story of the small group of planners that during the early days of August 1990 gathered in the basement of the Pentagon to design an offensive air campaign so I won't go into a lot of detail...but as part of this effort one of the first things we wanted to accomplish was to negate Saddam's air defense system.

The intel folks told us at the time that there were 2 critical command and control nodes—the Air Defense Operations Center in Baghdad and the Sector Operations Center down at Tallil in southeast Iraq—that if destroyed would shut down the Iraqi integrated air defense system.

These buildings were hardened structures, 37 feet of aggregate steel and concrete on the top, and then there are two command bunkers down at the bottom in the basement of each. The weapons experts told us that it would take a combination of 8 GBU 27s and GBU 10s, one on top of another, to dig down on each side of the building, to reach and destroy the command bunkers.

I hesitate to do math in public, but we had sixteen F-117s available for planning at that time, and with each carrying two weapons meant each building required a total of sixteen weapons, eight on each side. Doing the math, you end up having to use 32 weapons to destroy these command bunkers at the bottom of these buildings.

Was it worth using all those precious assets to take out just two sites? If it means that you can shut down their ability to see you, then you bet. So, essentially, that's how we put together the original attack plan. The original attack plan that was known as the Instant Thunder that was briefed to General Schwarzkopf on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August of 1990 shows four F117s allocated to target one half of each of these facilities. So that's sixteen F-117s targeted on two sector operations centers, or an 8 to 1 aircraft to target ratio.

Now jumping ahead two weeks, I found myself in the Gulf at the end of August furiously working on a Master Attack Plan that could be turned into an Air Tasking Order. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, General Glosson and I flew down to Manama, Bahrain to brief Admiral Mauz, who was the NAVCENT commander on the air campaign plan. On the trip I took a document with me that had been prepared by European Command that explained the air defense system in Iraq. We were so busy doing planning in Riyadh, just didn't have a chance to do much reading. So I thought I would do some research on this trip. Now those of you who know Gen Glosson know that he likes to talk a lot so I didn't get much reading done on the trip down.

However, after the brief was over we headed back to Riyadh, and right after take off the airplane fills up with smoke. It was the first time I had been in an airplane and those little yellow oxygen masks fell down. They had an electrical fire in the cockpit. So, we returned to Manama and as we were waiting for another jet to pick us up I finally had some time to read.

What we discovered was that there weren't just two-sector operations center in Iraq, there were four, with a possible fifth one in Kuwait and, oh by the way, associated with each one of those Air Defense Centers are three to five integrated operations centers

that could pick up the load of any of the sector operations centers because it was a networked system.

Now as you might imagine, this seriously affected our plan for taking out the Iraqi IADS. So we fly back to Riyadh, and the next day as we were trying to figure out how we were going to crack this nut. The thought hit me that a 2000-pound bomb could go off in the other end of the Royal Saudi Air Force headquarters where we were located—It's a big building—and although we, the planners, wouldn't be killed or hurt, we sure as heck weren't going to continue our discussion while drinking a cup of coffee...we were going to get the hell out of there.

If you recall, during the summer of 1990 the 117 had just come out of the black and its capabilities were not well known by those outside the program. As it turned out Colonel Al Whitley, who was the 37th wing commander at the time was up visiting with Gen Horner and the CENTAF headquarters. So I went up to him and asked, "Colonel Whitley, how accurate is this thing really?" He said, "Well, Dave, to date out of 35 live drops we got "shacks" on 33 or 34." I said, "Thanks very much, that's all I need to know."

Because of that precision I went back to the planning cell—the black hole—and instead of putting 16 weapons on each one of those facilities, I put two on the critical ones and only one on the others.

**Our measure of merit became not destruction, but rather the effect of keeping the facility inoperative. Now by the time the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1991 rolled around we ended up with 30 117s targeted against 49 targets, or at a 3 to 5 aircraft to target ratio. That's less than twice the original number of aircraft we had available for planning 5 months earlier, but attacking 25 times the target base.**

It was the technology of precision in conjunction with an effects-based planning approach that let us dramatically expand target coverage—but it was this combination **along** with the impact of **stealth** that let us achieve a **truly** revolutionary change in the concept of operations that was so successful in the Gulf War—what's become known as parallel warfare.

Stealth allowed us to dramatically reduce—and in the Gulf War in most circumstances—***eliminate altogether***, the massive force packaging that's required for non-stealthy aircraft to reach targets anywhere in theater. Let me remind you of just how much leverage stealth brought us—and why it became the linchpin of the RMA

The first non-stealthy attack of the Gulf War air campaign was against Shaaba Airfield, just north of Basrah. There were three aim points associated with that target. The attack package consisted of eight bomb droppers: four Navy A-6s, and four Saudi Tornados. Five Marine Corps EA-6Bs jammed Iraqi acquisition radars; 17 Navy F/A-18s to take out one element of the surface to air missile threat; four Air Force F-4G Wild Weasels were used to take out another specific element of the air defense threat; three drones that were used to tickle the air defense threat so we could take them out with those other systems; and then four F/A-18s to provide MIG CAP. That's 41 aircraft—eight dropping bombs on three aim points on one target. At approximately the same time we have 20 F-

117s, all 20 dropping bombs on 38 aim points against 28 different targets. That's less than half the aircraft hitting 1200% the target base.

**It was the combination of stealth, precision, and an effects-based approach to planning that let us attack on a single day in January 1991 more targets than were struck by the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force in the years 1942 and 1943 combined over Europe.** That was a preview of things to come.

Over the entire air campaign, the F-117 flew fewer than 2% of the total sorties yet attacked over 40% of the fixed target base. The impact of stealth in conjunction with precision allowed us to go from a standard of multiple aircraft per target to multiple targets per aircraft.

But that was then, and this is now. We were all younger, with darker hair and slimmer waistlines — a lot slimmer waistlines. It's always more enjoyable to revel in the past than face the uncertainties of the future. But, let me pull back from recalling the successes of the past to tell you about the hard realities of the present.

My primary role in the Quadrennial Defense Review or QDR, could be viewed as making sure that we have enough steel in the tip of the sword, and that the tip is firmly attached to a strong shaft. My secondary role is to make doubly sure we don't get the sword stuck in our back.

The QDR occurs every four years and it's not unlike an Operational Readiness Inspection, or a Red Flag with each of the Services competing. Given the dramatic and proven capabilities demonstrated by aerospace power in general, and the Air Force in particular, over the past decade, you'd think we'd win hands down, and be given a greater share of the resources available for defense. But the grip of what I call institutional inertia resident in the other services makes it very hard to move away from their old ways and concepts for conducting warfare.

You have honored me by giving me a chance to speak with you today about the Air Force, the Defense Industry, and the noble work we do together in defending our great country. We can most surely say that the interests of the Air Force and the interests of our nation are one in the same.

I make that point because tonight our Air Force is under attack—no, I don't mean physical assault—I mean the insidious kind of attack by more subtle means and with more lasting consequences, but it becomes more evident around QDR time.

Hour by hour, there are those who demean the capabilities of aerospace power. Day by day, they undermine the credibility—proven time and time again in combat, not just in theory—that aerospace power is the power of the future. Week by week, they spend their time trying to recreate history, unencumbered by fact, and unbothered with the truth.

Month by month and then year by year, these naysayers deny what the whole world knows to be true—that American aerospace power is the most effective guar-an-tor of peace and freedom.

Our detractors aren't far from our shores—in fact, I work with some of them every day in the Pentagon—they are a dedicated group of *generally* good-intentioned men and women who defend what was and deny what inevitably will be.

Let me share with you an extract from Army Field Manual 3-0 “Operations”. It's dated 14 June 2001. I'm not making this up. The paragraph is entitled: “*Desert Storm—A Decisive Offensive Operation.*”

On 24 February 1991, after a 38-day major **shaping** operation by the US Central Command air component with land component support, [Army] forces began one of the most decisive land combat operations of modern warfare. [Army] forces quickly penetrated Iraqi defenses, rapidly seizing their objectives.

The shock effect of armor and well-trained infantry-coupled with overwhelming fire support and responsive combat support and CSS-shattered the Iraqi army.

Coalition ground forces destroyed 3,800 of 4,200 tanks, over half the personnel carriers, and nearly all of the 3,000 artillery pieces belonging to the Iraqi Army. Ground forces captured over 60,000 prisoners. **After 100 hours of combat, only 7 of 43 Iraqi divisions remained combat effective. The [Army] had crushed the fourth largest army in the world and liberated Kuwait.**”

100 hours of combat? How about a 1000... They just don't get it. Maybe they *never* will. Anyone who relies on this to understand what really happened and why will be dangerously misinformed. Since the manual is supposed to provide operational guidance and be a key tool of professional education in the science and art of war, the distorted view of the war it provides could put US personnel into future danger.

As history presses on we need to correct this misleading characterization of what really happened, because the challenges for next generations will be just as great, just as filled with danger, and just as lethal.

So how will we meet these future challenges? By capitalizing on the advantages provided by aerospace power—the kind of asymmetric advantages that you were pathfinders in securing for our Nation. I offer four brief thoughts on the current state of the great aerospace power debate.

**FIRST**—Our Sister Services recognize the change in the nature of warfare occurring as a result of the coming of age of aerospace power capabilities. They understand what it means when we talk about using aerospace power to create a “New American Way of War.”

It means a smaller market share for their tired, expensive, and bloody warfighting concepts. As that great patriot, Gen Chuck Link put it... the old military strategy meant “trying to put the highest number of America's sons and daughters in range of enemy fires in as short a time as possible.” Think about it...

Today, the capabilities of modern aerospace power allow us not to have to do that. We can control the activities in a hostile country without having to occupy it on the ground—that's what we do every day in northern and southern Iraq.

We can directly achieve our political objectives with the application of precision force like we did in Bosnia in the summer of 95 forcing the recalcitrant parties to the bargaining table or getting Milosevich to remove his forces from Kosovo in 1999 without putting any U.S. boots on the ground.

Yes, because they are aware of what airpower can do, the resistance to change by our sister services is quite dramatic. The day before yesterday I sat in a QDR session where an Army 3-star general argued to eliminate from consideration a question that asked if increasing precision capability had an impact on force size—his rationale was that there should be no study of any alternative that might imply use of force could be effective without the inclusion of ground forces!

**SECOND** there is the issue of the importance of “forward presence.” Our naval brethren would have us believe that this mission is solely the domain of the United States Navy. This myth is effectively foisted on an unwitting public by our friends afloat.

The unlucky recipient of a precision guided munition does not know or care if the weapon came from near or far, or from what kind of platform, or from what kind of base. For military, political, and economic reasons the capability to rapidly project force has immense advantages compared to slowly moving it into position at 20 miles per hour.

If you can get people to focus on how to best achieve influence, you can get them to think about new ways to do the traditional mission of forward presence.

**THIRD**—There is the widespread perception that jointness is “good,” and the Services are “bad.” It is a shrine at which all must worship—joint political correctness. We need to get the decision-makers to understand that jointness is not “little league rules” where everyone must play. Jointness is using the right force, at the right place, at the right time. It is NOT the use of every service, everywhere, all the time, as some would have you believe.

Jointness has become a buzzword. In fact, it has become an excuse for some to justify playing in a particular situation.

**FOUR**—Not only is there a tendency to push the capabilities of airpower demonstrated in the Gulf War and the air war over Serbia into the past, but there is an ongoing, conscientious effort to make believe that airpower's role in those wars was inconsequential—as you heard in my reading of the Army new operations manual.

Sure, we need ground forces—in the Gulf we needed them to round up the Iraqi prisoners defeated by airpower. Army historians talk about how their M1A1 tanks moved 100km in a day... I like to remind my Army friends that so did French news reporters in Jeep Cherokees... Iraqis were surrendering to drones, A-10s, and helicopters for goodness sakes.

You know what happened in the Gulf War and because, so few others do, you need to articulate it...for instance: That 55 - 65 % of enemy armor was destroyed by a joint air campaign before the first soldier or Marine crossed the line.

How many of you know that our vaunted and supposed “power projection” machines—aircraft carriers—generated an average of only 14 strike sorties per deck per day for the

first two weeks of the war, and 25 strike sorties per day over the entire campaign—that's not power projection folks—nor is it cost-effective in terms of dollars, personnel exposed, manpower per generated sortie, or anything else.

The manifestation of the revolution in military affairs that you hear so much about today, is embedded in aerospace power, is what allowed us succeed so overwhelmingly in the conflicts of the 1990's and is what in large measure is due to the F-117 community that you represent here today. Unfortunately, those who see that capability as a threat rather than an opportunity continue to resist change.

The really sad part of all this is not that the *Air Force* is being restrained from exploiting its true potential..., but that our **Nation's security** is being inhibited as a result.

Now, these are some pretty strong words—but I hope that in some sense they motivate you... motivate you to do what Hoyt Vandenburg, our second Chief of Staff, urged during one of his last appearances when he said:

“...You should understand airpower, and you must preach the doctrine. You will be places where you are going to meet people who do not understand air power, and you are *going to have to educate*. You have got to go out and preach the doctrine of airpower and never give an inch on it.”

When I look out across this vista of remarkable men and women, I am awestruck by the patriotic spirit that presses you forward to accomplish so much. When I think of you, I recall the majestic words of the prophet Isaiah. When the Lord asked “Whom shall we send and who will go for us?” Isaiah answered...” here I am, send me.”

Every day, *you* answer the call of our country in similar fashion.

I conclude these remarks as I began - by saying how much you have honored me with this invitation. I am proud to serve our Nation beside you. I am proud simply to get to know you, and to marvel at what you have done in the past, and what I know you will do in the future. Thank you, very much, and happy anniversary!

