

# Sightings

## The Whale

Exclusive Report By Steve Douglass

As many times as I have been out in desert skulking around some "non existent" air base you would have thought I would have a pretty good track record on seeing secret aircraft. The truth is I have seen more secret aircraft flying over my home town of Amarillo, Texas than I have ever seen in all of my travels.

And they have happened when I least expected it. Usually it would happen when I was out doing something mundane like filling up the car or making a trip to the grocery store for kitty litter.

Ever since I was young lad, I loved looking up into the sky. I used to watch clouds when I was a kid, imagining them to be solid, something I could walk on. Then I discovered airplanes. One of my earliest memories is of watching fire fighting aircraft dropping water on a forest fire in the mountains behind my childhood home. After that anything that flew fascinated me. To this day, whenever I walk outside, I immediately look up into the sky. Maybe that's why I always happen to see these silly airplanes the government doesn't want you to know about.

Well it happened again. On Saturday, September 22, 2001 I saw what I believe is a new black aircraft. I am calling it "The Whale" because that is what it looked like. A big, black flying whale. It happened as was coming out of a nearby strip-mall. I had just rummaged through the local Radio Shack, looking for parts for an antenna I was building for a friend.

As usual, as soon as I was outside, I looked up into the sky. It was a beautiful fall afternoon, just after 6:00 PM . The skies were clear except for a very high and thin layer of clouds.

I caught site of the aircraft immediately. It was big, black and only three or so miles away. You couldn't help but see it. At first I thought it must have been a conventional aircraft, like a C-130 but only seen from an unusual angle. When I reached my car, I tossed into the back seat my packages and grabbed my 7X 50 binoculars ( that I always carry with me) popped of the lens covers and quickly trained them on the aircraft in question . Here's what I saw.

The aircraft flew very slowly by, I'd estimate 150 to 200 m.p.h. if that. It was fairly low, 3,00 0 feet or so. It was all black with no markings or numbers showing of any kind. What struck me as being very unusual was how long the wings were. It reminded me of the wings on U-2/TR-1. The wing span was probably some ten percent longer that the aircraft itself. It had a long T-shaped tail, like that on a C-5 Galaxy. Although I'd estimate it to be about the size of a C-130 Hercules. It could have been bigger. I had no point of reference to measure the aircraft against.



It looked like there was a large split (B-2) style engine inlet on the top ( behind the cockpit) which ran three quarters of the length of the plane. The cockpit was rounded and reminded me for the world of the stealthy [Tacit Blue](#).

Could this aircraft be a derivative? Also like Tacit Blue the aircraft nose ended in an odd-shovel like pointed -shelf. When the aircraft turned away I could see the same type of shelf on the back side protruding behind what looked like a round engine exhaust nozzle. ( [click on the image to download a large jpeg](#))

The aircraft didn't seem to be in any hurry. It flew a couple slow and lazy circles around the west side of Amarillo, ascending higher with each turn. I kicked myself for not having my camera in the car. I could have shot some exquisite photos as it flew slowly passed.

Instead, I grabbed a pen and began sketching what I saw, trying to make it as detailed as possible. I had plenty of time to do so . The sighting lasted for almost twenty minutes.

I turned on the military band scanner that I had in the car and listened intently for the aircraft's call sign. I was sure it had to be communicating with someone, possibly Albuquerque center on 351.700 MHz. I was right. I heard "Diamond 23" saying "We would like a few more orbits west of Amarillo ... center while we straighten out a equipment problem.

After a few more minutes of circling and climbing higher from 5,000 to 15,000 feet (I guesstimate) Diamond 23 radioed center that they would like flight-following to Tinker. As they headed east , Albuquerque center handed them off to Ft. Worth center. The mystery aircraft disappeared into the high thin overcast to the east.

Wow! I had never had such a clear daytime sighting of an unacknowledged aircraft. If only I had my camera with me.

My impressions? If function follows form, the Whale is a stealth transport, capable of flying at very high altitude and delivering special forces paratroopers behind enemy lines virtually undetected. Employing special HALO ( High Altitude Low Opening) parachutes and equipment, Seals, Rangers or other specialized commandos could be inserted without an enemy being aware. Perfect for delivering troops to say ... Afghanistan.

The long wings and T-tail could pose radar signature problems unless they were made from radar absorbing composite materials. Since the Whale has such long wings, my guess is that it needs a very long ( and paved) runways) to take off and land from. I do not believe the Whale is designed for rough or austere filed operations and is probably only based at air bases that meet it's specialized needs. Cross a U-2 with Tacit Blue and a C-130 and you have the Whale!

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