

Scrambled F15's From Otis Air Force Base:

Mach 1.5 or Cruise Speed?

By [Karen De Vries](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#)

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Memory Fresh Up

On September 13th 2001, during his Senate Confirmation Hearing, General Myers, acting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on September 11th stated that no military aircraft was scrambled until after the Pentagon strike, which was at 9.38 AM . [\[1\]](#)

According to a news release from NORAD on September 18th, 2001 , the FAA notified them about the hijacking of the first airliner (flight 111) at 8.40 AM . Subsequently they ordered to scramble two F15's from Otis Air Force Base at 8.46 AM , which were airborne at 8.52 AM . [\[2\]](#)

Major Gen. Larry Arnold from NORAD stated on different occasions that “when the fighters took off, they were flying straight to New York City ” and that they were going at a speed of “about 1.5 Mach”. He also stated that at the time of impact the F-15's were 71 miles away, about 8 minutes out, and going very fast [\[3\]](#) .

Conclusion: The statements of General Myers and Major General Arnold are in contradiction with one another. There is a discrepancy of *46 minutes*.

The F-15A

There are two types of F15's aircrafts at Otis Air Force Base. The F15A, with a crew of one and the F15B with a crew of two. Since the F15B's primary purpose is aircrew training, I think we can safely assume they scrambled the F15A [\[4\]](#) . The F-15A has a **Cruise Speed of 466,79 Mph** and a maximum speed of 1649,75 Mph at an altitude of 36007.2 Feet [\[5\]](#) . It's (ferry) range is 1500 miles with three external fuel tanks. Also, the F-15A is capable of aerial refueling [\[6\]](#) .

The capability to accelerate to supersonic speed from the F-15A depends on different factors, such as the weight of the aircraft at take off (MTW) and the amount of fuel on board. One would hope that, given one of their primary tasks: the interception of suspicious aircrafts ASAP, the F-15's are always standby in optimal condition and being able to take off within minutes, being able to accelerate to mach 1.5 or faster ASAP and having enough fuel aboard to maintain that speed for a longer period of time.

Mach

Mach 1.0 is the speed of sound. The speed of sound is not a constant, but depends on the temperature and air pressure at the different altitudes. A plane flying Mach 1.0 at sea level is flying about **761,6 Mph**, a plane flying Mach 1.0 at 30000 ft is flying **678,5 Mph**, etc. [7] At an altitude of 40.000 feet, mach 1.5 still would be about 989.55 Mph. At 30.000 feet it would be 1017,75 Mph, at 20.000 feet 1060,95 Mph and at 10.000 1102,35 Mph.

Some Calculations

The distance between Otis Air Force Base and the WTC is 153 mile. The two F15's were airborne at 8.52.00 AM. The impact of Flight 175 at the second WTC tower was 9.02.54 AM.

This means they had about 10.54 minutes to intercept Flight 175.

They could have arrived in the area above the WTC within 10 minutes if their average speed had been (15.3 mile per minute x 60 =) 918 miles per hour (71 miles slower than the slowest mach 1.5). However, at the time of impact they were still 71 miles away from the WTC.

This means they have flown (153- 71 miles =) 82 miles in 10.54 minutes, which means their average speed has been $82/10.54 = 7.78$ miles per minute (x 60) = **466,79 Mph**. It seems to be a remarkable coincidence that the average speed these F15's must have flown, calculated on basis of the timeline NORAD released, is **exactly** their official cruise speed.

Arnold also stated that the F-15's were about 8 minutes away at the time of impact of the second plane. $71 \text{ miles}/8 = 8,875$ Mp minute (x 60) = 532,5 per hour. That speed is nowhere near mach 1.5 (about 989 -1100 Mph).

Conclusion: We can be short about the mach-tale. It didn't happen.

Technical reasons?

If there would have been technical reasons, such as altitude, fuel, weight and other air traffic, which made it impossible for them to accelerate to full speed (on time), NORAD should have been able to explain that. I assume that when you work in the air-defense business, you know your time/distance tables and all the variables. I assume that is part of your job. I assume those people know exactly how long it takes to fly from A to B with a certain type of aircraft under different kind of circumstances. I also assume that when they fail to intercept an airplane, they can find the cause and explain it to the public.

Conclusion: since NORAD didn't even bother *to try* to explain, there were no such reasons.

Notification time.

NORAD claims that FAA didn't notify them till **8.40 AM** . According a transcript of the conversation between 2 air traffic controllers published by the British newspaper the Guardian at October 17th 2001 [\[8\]](#) , they became aware of the first hijack at **8.25 AM** . According to that same transcript, they started to notify several air traffic controllers about the hijack **right away**. The 9/11 Commission statement no 17 confirms this:

“Between 8:25 and 8:32 , in accordance with the FAA protocol, Boston Center managers started notifying their chain of command that American 11 had been hijacked” [\[9\]](#) .

Conclusion: the statements of the FAA and NORAD contradict each other. There is a discrepancy of 15 minutes[\[10\]](#) .

Summary:

Why did General Myers initially state that no military aircraft was scrambled until after the Pentagon was hit?

Why did Major Gen Arnold contradict that statement a few days later?

Why did Major Gen Arnold state that they flew at mach 1.5, when it is obvious they didn't?

Why didn't the F-15's accelerate to mach 1.5 or higher?

If there are any plausible reasons why they didn't accelerate to mach 1.5 or higher, why didn't NORAD to this very day bother to explain them?

Why do the statements about the notification time of the FAA and NORAD contradict each other?

By ignoring these (and many other) questions for over three years, NORAD and the Pentagon not only show an unacceptable contempt for the families of the victims and the public, by now they also completely forfeited all credibility.

Notes

[1]

<http://www.attackonamerica.net/genrichardbmyerssenateconfirmationhearing9132001.htm>

<http://911research.wtc7.net/planes/defense/>

<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/inv.hijack.warning/>

[2] <http://www.standdown.net/noradseptember182001pressrelease.htm>

[3]

http://www.9-11commission.gov/archive/hearing2/9-11Commission_Hearing_2003-05-23.htm#panel_one

[4] <http://www.maotis.ang.af.mil/photos.htm>

[5] See table at: <http://www.zap16.com/mil%20fact/f-15.htm>

[6] <http://www.maotis.ang.af.mil/photos.htm>

[7] See table at: <http://home.iae.nl/users/wbergmns/jetmach1.htm>

[8] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/wtccrash/story/0,1300,575518,00.html>

[9] <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5233007/>

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