

## Missile In the Cliff

This story was printed numerous times in safety mail outs of the U.S. Air Force about 20 years ago I have retold it the best I can remember.

Commuters Ned Neverlate and Albert Alwaysleavesearly were on their early morning commute to work when they noticed a hole in the side of a cliff. It was about 20 feet up and looked about the same size as a small plane would make.

Being good citizens and more than a little bit curious, they reported it to the local air force base but were told they have no missing aircraft. They tried the FAA but were told all their planes were accounted for and that it might be a crashed UFO as they horse laughed and hung up.

Frustrated but undeterred, they called the local state police office. They responded with State Troopers Harris Havaniceda and Tom Twomilesover. Tom said the plane must have been really hauling it. But Harris noted that there were no holes for the wings and no wings were on the ground below. It most certainly must have been a missile. However, no agency admitted to having a missing missile. (Would you admit it, if your missile was missing?)

To find out what was in the hole they called in the county heavy equipment and began to dig out the "missile". What they found created even more questions. They found an extremely foreshortened red car with a very squished male driver (pilot?) inside.

Their investigation eventually led them back to the air force base. There, they found that an Airman Dufus had a beautiful red Corvette. Dufus was very proud of his car and told everybody who would listen how fast it would run. **Ominously, both Dufus and the Corvette were missing!**

Unfortunately, Airman Dufus had access to the base's JATO (Jet Assisted Take Off) bottles. JATO bottles are attached to very heavily loaded aircraft to help them get airborne. They are jettisoned once they have burned out. Dufus had stolen two bottles and bolted them to the back of his Corvette.

As the troopers continued their investigation they found a long stretch of straight highway about a mile from the cliff face. Apparently this was the spot which Airman Dufus picked to check out the maximum speed of his Corvette. This would surely give him bragging rights over ever car owner on the base (perhaps even the world).

The troopers found two spots of soot where the JATO bottles had fired. This was followed by strips of rubber where Dufus had locked up the brakes as the bottles accelerated him down the highway. These were followed by gouges in the pavement from the bare rims. Then nothing, as the Corvette became airborne, rolled upside down and continued to accelerate. The troopers estimated it to have struck the cliff face at 450 to 500 MPH.

Moral: Don't grab a tail until you see how big the tiger is!