

Employed by EG&G, I was a radar operator at Groom Lake from 1962 until 1967. As a young man I was excited to be involved in the development of the A11. I operated and maintained the "Nike" radar system. We also had a system called the "Big Dish" which operated at a lower frequency but had a longer range. It probably still sits at the southern edge of Groom.

While the A11 was originally experimental we scanned sections of the planes fuselage, tail and wing with experimental shapes coated with new materials mounted on a pole out on the lake. We had a small control room plotting multiple tests over a few years until the signal responses got smaller as new materials and shapes evolved.

Finally the plane was operational. Fellow employees mounted a transponder in the bomb bay that operated at our radar frequencies. They invited me to go with them to the hangar a few times and needless to say I was in awe!

On flights from Florida, via Denver to Fallon Nevada the pilots would turn on the transponder so we could lock on to him. Then they'd turn it off and we'd lose lock. On off, on off etc. The skin and shape made it difficult to track. I had a favorite name for the A11 "Voodoo 1". It was frustrating for an operator to lose track within 200 miles!

Bob Jackson