

Italian plane crash produces plume just like Flight 93's "ordnance" plume

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The conspiracy theory: plane crashes don't make plumes like that, bombs do



This is the only known photograph of the cloud of smoke rising from the impact area of Flight 93 in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The picture was taken by Valeria McClatchey from the porch of her home near Indian Lake, as reported by [Shankvillememorial.com](#) and [Post-Gazette.com](#).

Some conspiracy theorists say this picture proves conclusively that Flight 93 did not crash there. The shape of the cloud is wrong, they say: it's typical of ordnance, not of a plane crash. The implication is that the crater and debris were produced by using a bomb and so the tragic crash of the plane is staged.

This is an allegation made by an Italian conspiracy-theory site, [Luogocomune.net](#), in a video entitled *La verità di cristallo* (Crystal Truth) released on national TV on September 11, 2006, and by many other similar sites:

- *"the mushroom cloud in her photo is more reminiscent of an ordnance blast than a jet fuel column"*- Lisa Guliani, [Wingtv.net](#).
- *"It proves that this blast is more likely an ordnance plume"*- Killtown, in [his/her site](#).

The theorists say their claim is demonstrated by comparing the Flight 93 photo with images of plane crashes and ordnance blasts, as in this montage used by Killtown:



Left to right: the photo taken at Shanksville, an ordnance blast and a plane crash.

But is it really true that a plane crash always forms a smoke cloud whose shape is distinctly different from the one shown in Valerie McClatchey's photograph? No, it isn't.

On August 13, 2006, an Algerian C-130 Hercules four-engine turboprop crashed near Piacenza, Italy, as reported by local news and government sources (such as the [ARPA](#) environmental protection unit). If you're not familiar with the appearance and size of a Hercules, Wikipedia has the [specs](#) and a photograph:



A cloud of smoke rose from the crash site and a local resident, Gianluca Pietta, took a picture of it (shown here with his permission):



The resemblance to the Shanksville plume is impressive:



Therefore, it's beyond doubt that sometimes plane crashes do form clouds shaped like the one in McClatchey's Flight 93 photograph. Accordingly, anyone who claims that a cloud with that shape can only come from an ordnance blast is making a false claim and any theories based on such a premise are flawed.