

# IOWA WING HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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## INSIDE THIS EDITION

HISTORIANS UPDATE	1
MAIN FEATURE	2
MONTHLY OBSERVANCE	11
TRIVIA AND OTHER HAPPENINGS	12
FOOTNOTES & CREDITS	13

## FROM THE SHADOWS: THE FLIGHT OF THE BLACKBIRD

By 2d Lt Mark J. Struve



**CIVIL AIR PATROL**  
U.S. AIR FORCE AUXILIARY



## 2d Lt Mark J. Struve, Iowa Wing Historian

**2d Lt Struve joined Civil Air Patrol in February 2022 as a Squadron Historian. In December 2022 he became the Iowa Wing Historian. Since that time he has worked across multiple organizations and units within Civil Air Patrol and the Department of Defense to streamline and improve historical operations in the Wing, the North Central Region, and the National CAP History Program.**

### Historian's Update

Welcome to the new fiscal year, Iowa Wing. As we wrap up another year of exciting events and activities, it is important for us to look back on where we thrived and where we just survived. Annual histories are the next order of business for us here in the History & Preservation Operations Section (HAPOS), and that's coupled with so much more that we're wrapped up in. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for helping this section preserve our organizational memory.

In FY23, we accomplished a lot in our HAPOS. The biggest thing amongst others was better defining and establishing our staff. Add to that a rapid increase of interest and document ingest and you have yourself a busy year. Almost half-a-million documents were submitted to the section, and we have been busy processing each of them. This is something we will likely be continuing to work on as we press on into FY24 and beyond. We also had an opportunity to begin working on historic displays, partnerships, and launch new and exciting lecture programs as ways to inform people about the rich history of our Civil Air Patrol.

I have been extremely lucky to have a staff of individuals who are adamant about helping me accomplish these missions. The command team has been more than just a little supportive in our endeavors, and we have been able to get some additional assistance from state universities and national headquarters for our ongoing efforts.

Another major transformation in this coming FY is the introduction of this new newsletter format. Starting in this publication, the HAPOS will move to push a routine multi-page publication for your enjoyment. This includes a rich featured article each publication, plus a selected work from National, a detailed outline from the Defense Equal Opportunity Institute (DEOMI), plus all of the tidbits and facts that you have come to expect. This is a monumental task for us, and one that we have not undertaken in quite some time—certainly not just as a historical publication.

You can help us by continuing to submit history to us and suggest articles. We are always looking for new topics and subject matter to add to our rich historical archives and memory. Thank you for all that you do for our Civil Air Patrol.



2nd Lt. Mark J. Struve  
Historian, Iowa Wing (IAWG)



**CIVIL AIR PATROL**  
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# From the Shadows: The Legendary SR-71 Blackbird



*By 2d Lt Mark J. Struve*

Everyone is familiar with the concept of cause and effect. For every action, there is a reaction of the same or lesser magnitude. Sometimes the resulting reaction is just the first in a chain of events that leads up to something else. A chain reaction, that's what one might call the programs that led us to today's reconnaissance gathering mission in the U.S. military. The gathering and collection of intelligence and information has always been a key element in the grand art known as war. Even the great military philosopher Sun Tzu emphasized the importance of intelligence gathering and various forms of espionage.

But our tale today takes place far more recently than the fifth century BCE. Instead it takes place in 1951, when the U.S. military defined its need and requirements for a way to collect intelligence on Soviet assets well inside Soviet territory. The Cold War, by this time, was well underway and the race to the next new piece of technology was on. Double agents, spies, and espionage were old hat, but that didn't make these techniques or professions any less valuable. However, there surely had to be an effective and more direct approach to the problem of gathering information. From the skies, seemed to be a practical means to acquire this information. After all, two World War's had provided a wealth of insight into the effectiveness

of this method - regardless of how successful.

As time wore on, technology changed as does everything else. Planes were able to get heavier, fly faster, and punch higher into the skies. Notwithstanding the forerunners and adaptive nature of aircraft prior to the Korean War, the period that followed was one of major innovation. 1951 was, for all intents and purposes, the birth of the Spy Plane Renaissance.



◀ A left front view of a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft parked on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS AMERICA (CV-66) off the coast of Virginia in 1967.

### THE STRATOJET ERA

While it is true that the first aircraft to adopt the role of reconnaissance gathering in addition to its role as a high-altitude bomber was the RB-36 in 1948, the first widely produced, purpose-built reconnaissance aircraft was the RB-47 in 1951. In fact, the RB-36 and RB-47's served with each other through 1956, when the RB-36 was permanently retired. About 100 or so RB-36's were produced, and most of those were converted from existing B-36 airframes. The RB-47 remained in service well into the 1960s, with partial activation documented through at least the 1970s.

The first flyover by a Stratojet of the Soviet Union was in 1952 however, this was a converted B-47B that was equipped with a camera cluster in its bomb bay. Because of the nature of their mission set, the RB-47 variant was the most likely to see combat-related conditions. The service history of these aircraft included three that were shot down, and two others that managed to evade Soviet anti-air defenses. Unlike their successors, RB-47's were in fact bombers that were equipped with armaments. Gun turrets were present on these aircraft, meaning that their missions did include some form of insurance in the event that they were intercepted. However, the majority of techniques used by RB-47 crews to evade the Soviet responses was by way of maneuver and speed. This was the case in numerous interceptions with Soviet MiG-15's and 17's.

The role of purpose-built aircraft that were based on existing air frames was passed to the KC-135 family of aircraft in 1965. Most of those aircraft were then relegated for the sweeping of international airspace,

weather, battlefield reconnaissance, and anti-submarine warfare. By 1953, however, the game of spy aircraft was already in the process of being transformed into something much more fluid and special.

### THE BIRTH OF THE SPY PLANE

By 1953, defense contractor Lockheed had understood the growing need for a dedicated system to collect information on national and international interests. Kelly Johnson was the one to design the aircraft (he also worked on the P-38, SR-71, the C-130, and the F-117). In 1954, the Department of Defense approved the design and plan. By 1955, the first U-2A was ready for flight.

The need for such an aircraft was defined by Soviet missile defenses and interception capabilities of the MiG-17 - the most advanced Soviet fighter at that time. This Air Force defined the limitation of the MiG-17's ceiling at 45,000 feet and specified that an aircraft flying over about 60,000 feet would be virtually untouchable by the interceptor. In actuality, the MiG-17 was capable of achieving altitudes near 50,000 feet. Likewise, limited radar capabilities meant that if an aircraft exceeded 65,000 feet - it may be undetectable. Johnson and the rest of his team at Lockheed, however, were two steps ahead of the requirements.

Johnson's design, called CL-282, was a modification on the then-testbed XF-104 Starfighter. While the concept was met with resistance by GEN Curtis LeMay, other members within the Department of Defense were much more optimistic. The project was then

forwarded to the CIA, where it was almost immediately accepted. However, by the time a buyer had been lined up, Lockheed had since moved on with work on the XF-104 and other projects. The CIA eventually persuaded Lockheed into producing the aircraft (after the USAF changed their minds on the usefulness of the aircraft as well), which bore fruit in 1955 with the first test flight of the U-2A. Johnson, in anticipation of eventual need for a replacement, had already begun design on a more advanced reconnaissance aircraft by this time. The CL-400, known to many as the Suntan, would have been capable of flying just as far, with over six times the speed, and fifty percent higher than the U-2. However, the overall success of the U-2 program among other budget constraints cancelled the program in 1958. The technological advancements in the CL-400, however, were not lost nor forgotten - especially on the eve of 2 MAY 1960.

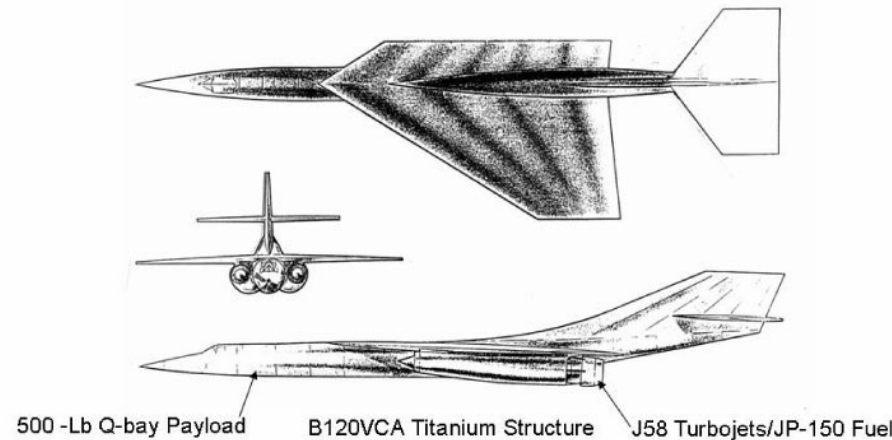
On 1 May 1960, a CIA U-2 piloted by Gary Powers was shot down over Soviet airspace by Soviet surface-to-air missile. While Powers was generally unharmed, this was a revelation for both the CIA and the USAF. The solution to this concern had already been placed on the table, however, a year earlier in 1959 with Project GUSTO. By the time Powers had been shot down over Soviet airspace, another much more vicious beast was already in the queue within the USAF. The Archangel's of Oxcart had already selected the prototype that was to be built.

## THE ARCHANGELS

The A-12 designation comes from the internal program name, and the number of designs that were within that program. Separate from the CL-400, there were twelve Archangels in total, with the twelfth being the one that went to production.

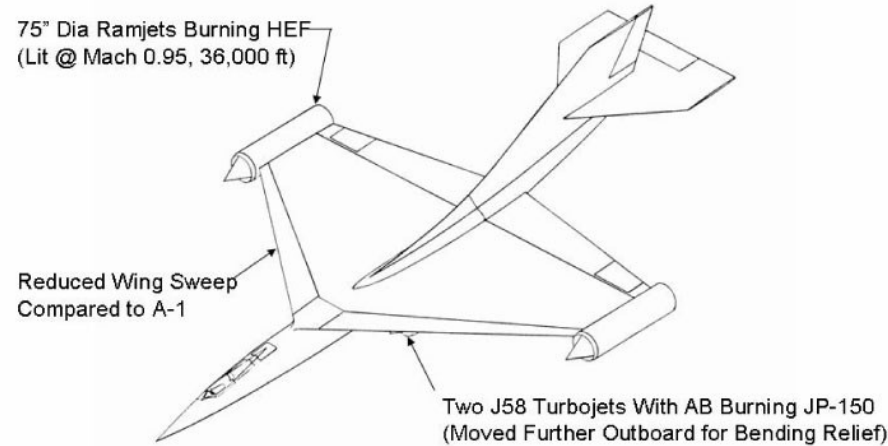
### ARCHANGEL 1 JULY 1958

Length: 116.67 ft	Zero Fuel Weight: 41,000 lbs	Cruise Mach: 3.0
Span: 49.6 ft	Fuel Weight: 61,000 lbs	Cruise Alt: 83 - 93 kft
Height: 23.58 ft	Takeoff Gross: 102,000 lbs	Radius: 2,000 NM



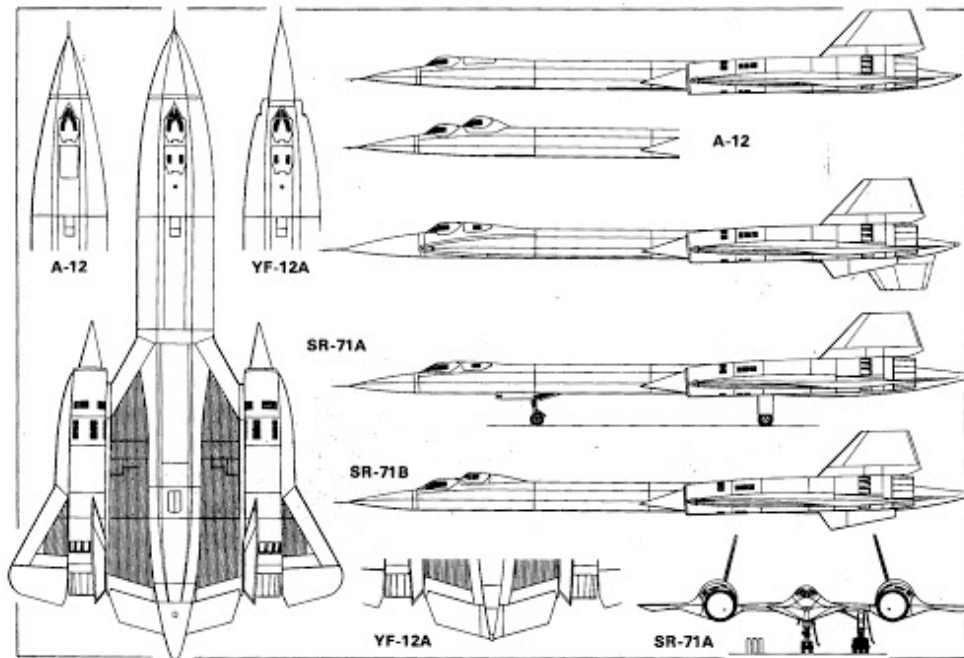
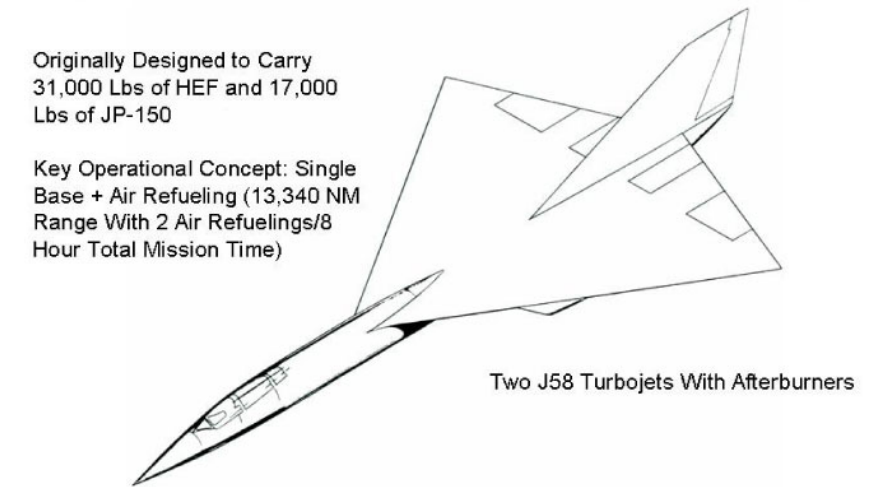
### ARCHANGEL 2 SEPTEMBER 1958

Length: 129.17 ft	Zero Fuel Weight: 54,000 lbs	Cruise Mach: 3.2
Span: 76.68 ft	Fuel Weight: 81,000 lbs	Cruise Alt: 94 - 105 kft
Height: 27.92 ft	Takeoff Gross: 135,000 lbs	Radius: 2,000 NM



### A-11 MARCH 1959

Length: 116.67 ft	Zero Fuel Weight: 36,800 lbs	Cruise Mach: 3.2
Span: 56.67 ft	Fuel Weight: 55,330 lbs	Cruise Alt: 93.5 kft
Height: 21.03 ft	Takeoff Gross: 92,130 lbs	Radius: 2,000 NM



#### ▲ DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Above, the discrepancies in appearances between the Archangel family is described. Note the appearance of the nose and tail. These (along with size in the case of the Oxcart versus the Blackbird) were the key visible differences between airframes. Note also the SR-71B's twin seat design. The SR-71C is not shown in this schematic.

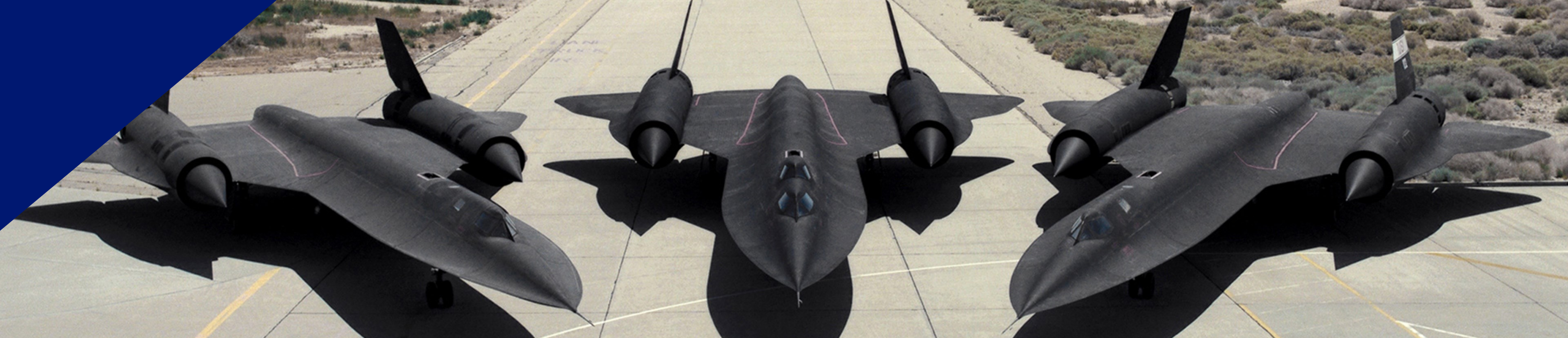
#### STEALTH & SPEED TAKE OVER

The CIA, as early as 1955, had been trying to reduce radar cross-section of aircraft. The concept that we now call stealth was rooted in Project Rainbow - the CIA directed project to reduce this cross-section. Johnson was of the opinion that one to possibly two generations of aircraft would be needed before satellites could replace aircraft in the reconnaissance role. Lockheed responded to the requirements of both Project Rainbow and Project GUSTO with the Archangel designs. It was Archangel-12 that caught the attention of both the CIA and eventually the Air Force. In 1960, twelve of these aircraft were ordered. Due to the nature of Archangel 12's design, technology had to be invented for it to function properly, while other components were selected to simply fill roles intermittently. This would not be the last time something like this would happen, as it also occurred in the A-X Program that produced the A-10, and the ATF Program, which produced the F-22. New aircraft materiel proved to be the most challenging obstacle to overcome for the manufacturing of the aircraft.

The A-12 was a smaller aircraft than the SR-71, it was

capable of achieving higher altitudes and higher speeds. However, by the time the Vietnam War peaked in 1968, the program had been cancelled due to rapid advancement in Soviet missile and radar technology. By 1969, all of the aircraft were grounded and put into storage. The SR-71 had entered service before the last A-12 retired. However, the function of the SR-71 remained in question for many years, and at least one A-12 variant was still in operation into the 1970s.

The YF-12 was not only the cover-story for the A-12's reconnaissance mission, but was also the aircraft GEN Curtis LeMay was really after for the Air Force - one of them, anyway. The YF-12, a two-seater version of the A-12, was designed to be a high-altitude, high-speed interceptor aircraft with an internal weapons bay that carried three AIM-47 Falcon air-to-air missiles. The AIM-47 had previously been designed for the XF-108 Rapier, a by-product of the Valkyrie Program. Future revisions resulted in the AIM-54 Phoenix missile, which is still in use today. The two-seat YF-12, meanwhile, served two additional functions: the testbed for what would become the SR-71, and a bomber that would adequately salvage research from the Valkyrie program.



### THE BLACKBIRD FACTOR

The early 1960s presented a number of technological advancements in aviation and weapon systems. The Valkyrie Program and the Archangel Family are examples of this. North American Aviation and Lockheed were grappled with each other in a major bidding war for the next weapon systems platform with these two projects. North American was presenting its XB-70 and XF-108, while Lockheed was presenting the SR-71 and the YF-12. Reconnaissance, fighter-interceptors, and bombers were the chief matter within this competition. Ultimately, Lockheed was the winner of the contest, but not in such a way that all of the product displayed would be built.

The YF-12 Interceptor would never make the leap from its prototype stage, and instead the project was scrapped with the introduction of the F-15 Eagle, which provided a much more natural approach at interception. The B-71 concept, a "Bomber Blackbird", was scrapped by budget restraints, and then eventually totally sunk with the development of the B-1 Lancer. Still, none could fulfill the role of the reconnaissance quite like the SR-71 Blackbird could. Thus, the 32 aircraft that were produced prior to the destruction of the manufacturing tools to build them were left in service. The SR-71A is the most commonly referenced variant of the program, with the SR-71B functioning as the trainer for new pilots. The SR-71B features a second cockpit located above a trainer cockpit. In the second, elevated cockpit, an instructor has full control of the aircraft. The SR-71C was a hybridized aircraft that attempted to merge the YF-12 Fighter Prototype with the SR-71 Production Variant.

The SR-71 served along with the U-2 in its reconnaissance capacity throughout the remainder of the Cold War, providing support to Allied forces in multiple smaller scale conflicts. In the 1990s, NASA began limited operation of the SR-71 to test various new technologies and sample high-altitude conditions for other research. In 1999, the SR-71 flew officially for the last time - although there were NASA missions flown by the aircraft through the late 2000s.

Many aircrews who had worked on the project described the aircraft's last flight as "surreal" and "impossible."

### "THE L.A. SPEED STORY'S" BRIAN SCHUL

Brian Shul described his last glance at the Blackbird (also referred to as "Habu" or "the Sled") in his book *Sled Driver*. Shul, who is well known by aviation enthusiasts for his "L.A. Speed Story" account of the Blackbird overtaking a Navy F/A-18C and a private Cessna, wrote:

As the SR-71 taxied by, I knew I was witnessing the passing of an era. This era began with the fateful flight of Gary Powers in a U-2 and the resulting embarrassment to the Eisenhower administration. An order was issued to proceed with the development of a more advanced plane that couldn't be shot down. The SR-71 was the result. For three decades it performed its mission untouched by the other side. As it swung its long nose into the run-up area, the jet took on that proud look I had seen before.

I watched the support people scurry beneath the jet, carrying out their normal procedures. The

familiar scene felt different because I watched with a heavy heart. The distinguished roar of the engines assaulted my hearing one more time, and I felt the jet defiantly telling all who could hear that it did not want to go away; it could still do the job. The airplane was still the best. The sound thundered across the airfield with the cry of one still undefeated, issuing its final challenge. When the run was completed and all the maintenance people had moved away, the jet sat alone, waiting to take the runway.

I saw her then as I had the very first time and tears welled in my eyes. I knew her better now and loved her more. How could I not love her, after all she had shown me? She had not changed, and she had not aged. She was a bit of the past and the future rolled into one, the hottest of hot rods, and a technological wonder built to last. As she sat there dripping fuel, leaning slightly forward on a sloped ramp, she embodied purpose and elegance. I knew I would always remember her that way, the elegant Lady in Black, superior in design and performance. Some people said that the continuous heating incurred at high speeds had caused the metals of the jet to weld tighter over the years, and she now flew faster than when she was new. I had flown her and I believed them.

I watched the last SR-71 pull two fiery plumes down the runway and climb steeply away, her voice echoing proudly across the foothills. My eyes strained to follow her, hoping somehow to keep



her alive, but soon she was swallowed by a bright blue sky. Though the jet was miles away and out of sight, I could still hear the faint rumble of the J-58s.

#### **THE LEGACY**

The Blackbird retains multiple records in aviation, and still set records even on her final flight. These records included fastest travel time from coast-to-coast, airspeed records, and international traversing time. All of these records were set in the category of manned flight. Unmanned flight had already well surpassed

the Blackbird by this time and continues to do so. While the Archangel may not have officially survived, the original Angel, the U-2 Dragon Lady, remains in service today and has even recently received technology updates. The U-2S is expected to remain in service for at least another decade, providing the United States with the ability to launch ad hoc reconnaissance missions into enemy territory.

All aircraft that were not lost (a total of twelve were lost in accidents) are on display, with one converted to a YF-12. No M-21 variants remain, but a few of the D-

21 drones that the aircraft launched are still on display in some locations. With the tools to service the aircraft no longer available, and no machines to manufacture the parts, the age of the Blackbird came to an end with its final NASA flight in the 2000s.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Just as with the Blackbird, the Dragon Lady, will eventually have to come to terms with her replacement. Advancements in military technology and weapons guarantee this as an inevitability, no matter how many fans exist of the tried and true technology of the past. War evolves, and so must the technology. The age of unmanned drones has arrived, calling into question the future of manned aircraft and sorties. While it is unlikely that military confrontations

feet, and generally would use similar engine technology. At this time, it would only replace USAF operated U-2 aircraft, as there have been no attempts to market the aircraft to the CIA. The last bit of information supplied by Lockheed on the TR-X program was in 2016, and it's current status is unknown.

The most anticipated replacement, however, is the SR-72 (middle left). Lockheed has all but confirmed that there is a concept for such an aircraft. However, this is not surprising considering the company's history with experimentation with hypersonic designs and space flight. The SR-72 would also be unmanned, capable of

reconnaissance role have been discussed in the past, ranging from modified bombers (such as the B-1), to smaller, cheap, and lightweight drones. Research for the next major reconnaissance platform continues to be centered around aircraft capable of flight altitudes between 75,000 and 100,000 feet upwards towards sub-orbital range. With this, other research has been conducted in defensive mechanisms against such technology and to defend the technology against any potential threats that may be encountered. The role of the USSF had not been considered at the onset of either of the previously mentioned Lockheed projects, and this will likely also play a role in future

in the air are ever going to reach a state where manned pilots are unnecessary, a reduction of manned aircraft is likely in the next few decades. The Northrop RQ-180 (top left) is an example of this, where it was built to fulfill the SR-71's role of penetrating enemy airspace that was heavily defended to conduct reconnaissance operations.

Lockheed has also described potential developments of two additional follow-on projects in sub-sequence to the SR-71 and U-2, respectfully. The first and most publicized of these is the TR-X Program (bottom left), which is designed to replace the U-2. The TR-X would be responsible for routine missions where time sensitivity was not a factor. It would be a heavier counterpart to the U-2, capable of flying up to 77,000

sub-orbital flight, and capable of reaching speeds of up to Mach 6. In 2014, NASA awarded a contract to Lockheed for researching the feasibility of such an aircraft. This study revealed that such an aircraft would be roughly the size of an F-22, capable of achieving Mach 6, and could be built for under \$1 billion 2016 dollars. In 2018, it was further disclosed that such an aircraft may also serve as a weapons platform for hypersonic missiles that could cater to multiple missions. No additional details on a weapons platform has been discussed other than feasibility. Lockheed last predicted a potential prototype flight as early as 2025, but no additional information has been made available since 2019.

Various other projects that could be cycled into the

development of space-operated reconnaissance aircraft. It is still unclear how this relates to the weaponizing of space and the prohibition thereof. It is likely that new international policy will likely dictate the extent of future developments and technology regarding space-travel.



## THE LAST CRY

In a glance between how this report began (fifth century BCE) to where it concludes (2025 and beyond), one notices a very jarring advancement in technological fervor and tenacity. One might also be shocked to see how quickly technological requirements escalated. What is more puzzling for researchers and the public is the mode of

declassification for projects even fifty years ago. Just twenty-five years ago, the Blackbird was an only child that was brought to us by way of a proposed fighter. Twenty-two years ago, it had an older sibling in the Oxcart that prowled the skies of Vietnam. It grew into having a whole family. It is unclear, even today, exactly to what extent the Blackbird Family extends out to. It is known that Kelly Johnson was not finished with the Blackbird, and that he continued work on aircraft such as the F-117 Nighthawk that wasn't declassified until the 1990s as well.

Time will tell just how much more there is to the legend of the Blackbird - but while her story may have ended, we may not yet be done uncovering all of her mysteries.

*This article originally was publicized on 2d Lt Struve's personal website. It has been modified for inclusion in this Civil Air Patrol publication. 2d Lt Struve's background specializes in familial weapon systems and military logistics during the Cold War. Maj (R) Brian Shul, USAF was a former pilot of the SR-71 Blackbird.*

This article was published in honor of Maj (R) Brian Shul, United States Air Force. Maj Shul served from 1970 to 1990 as an Air Force pilot. He was one of the first A-10 Thunderbolt pilots, and later operated on the first Thunderbolt Demo Team. Prior to this, he saw action in Vietnam, having been an Air Advisor for a number of years. He was shot down in 1973 and unable to eject from his aircraft. Having survived the crash, he held out for rescue behind enemy lines. Following his time as a Thunderbolt pilot, Shul was selected to pilot the SR-71 Blackbird. After he retired, he became an advocate of the aircraft along with other prominent individuals, such as John Glenn. Shul wrote several books and took numerous photographs during his time as a Blackbird pilot.

On 20 MAY 2023, Maj Shul collapsed on stage while giving a presentation on the Blackbird. He was subsequently pronounced dead having suffered cardiac arrest. Shul passed away at the age of 75 after a 20-year long Air Force career. He did so advocating for an aircraft—what he considered part of his own being—that he adored and loved.

His presence will be sorely missed.

## A Different Kind of Start-Up: Elistair Airborne Solutions



*By Intern Beckett Conwell*

In the 21st century, drone technology has quickly gone from a concept out of a sci-fi novel to technology that we encounter in our daily lives. From acting as flying cameras for photographers, spreading pesticide for farmers, to even seeing brief use as package couriers, we're in a golden age for the development of UAV technology. The U.S. military is no exception to this,

and drones acting as reconnaissance vehicles and weapons platforms have been a staple of the U.S.'s overseas conflict in the past decade. However, not all the military uses for drones have been developed in-house by the armed forces.

As this technology becomes more and more accessible to the public masses, private companies have started to get in on the profitable potential of the UAV and have even started licensing their designs to military

and police forces all over the world. A prominent example of one such corporation is the French company Elistair.



Elistar is a start-up tech company started in 2014 by Guilhem de Marliave and Timothee Penet. Both residents of France, the company's main office is based out of Dardilly, but the company also has international offices in other parts of the world. In the U.S., Elistar has offices in Wilmington, North Carolina, and in Boston, Massachusetts. Elsewhere in South Africa, the company has an office in Abidjan on the Ivory Coast.

The company got its start in 2014, where in the same year the company was founded, they won the San Francisco Alliance Startup Competition on 10 OCT. This earned Elistair International fame as well as a cash prize of \$15,000. The company quickly moved to capitalize on their new success, and in 2015 they patented both an optimized power system and the company's main claim to fame, the tethered drone system.

What sets the system apart from traditional UAVs is self-explanatory; the drone is tethered to a large power station on the ground with a long power cable, which both roots the system to a chosen area and provides a much longer battery life than traditional, non-tethered UAVs. Elistair's most recent version of the system, Orion 2.1, has an operation time of 50 hours. The test flight of this system was live streamed on the company's YouTube channel. The long operation time remains the primary selling point for Orion.

In its nine years of operation, Elistair has grown to provide their services to over 50 countries. In 2016 Elistair was chosen by the U.S. Army as a solution for persistent security operations, and in 2019 the Orion

system was chosen by the U.K.'s Royal Marines as an ISR solution. Elistair's tethered drone systems have also seen substantial use outside of military operations, as many large events and security companies have chosen tethered drone systems for event monitoring and crowd control.

Securitas, a large U.S. based security company, is a partner of Elistair, and tethered drone systems have been used at major sporting events such as the 2019 Superbowl in Atlanta and the 2018 Ryder Cup in Paris. As the demand and uses for UAV systems expand, so does the potential market for Elistair. The company has done nothing but flourish and expand since its inception, with seven million euros alone raised in 2021 just to fund the company's international expansion.

Elistair continues to work with the U.S. Armed Forces and may act as a possible model for future entrepreneurs. With a company like Elistair seeing so much success, it's highly likely that the future will see more start-up UAV companies rise to the occasion, seeing similar if not greater success than their predecessor. There is even a possibility of securing more lucrative deals with the U.S. government as the armed forces further explore private contracting. The potential of UAV systems continues to expand as we step further into the 21st century, and for Elistair and other similar companies, the sky's the limit.

*Beckett Conwell is an Art History & History major at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa. They are a Volunteer Academic Intern with the 41st Iowa Composite Squadron in Davenport, Iowa.*



**ADVANCING  
ACCESS AND EQUITY:  
THEN, NOW AND NEXT**

## National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) recognizes the contributions America's workers with disabilities make each day across our Nation.

In recognizing NDEAM, the Department of Defense's reaffirms its commitment to recruit, retain, and advance these individuals throughout the workforce.

This important national observance dates to the end of World War II. In 1945, with the return of thousands of injured Service members, the U.S. government pushed to educate the public about issues relating to disabilities and employment and made specific efforts to assist these individuals in a variety of ways.

Congress enacted Public Law 176, declaring the first week of October each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. In 1962, the word 'physically' was removed to include contributions of people with other disabilities. The federal legislature expanded the week-long observance to a month and changed the name to NDEAM in 1988.

In 2012, Alaska Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Maddamma, a pararescueman, sustained an injury that shattered the bones in his lower left leg. He spent years in the hospital, undergoing multiple surgeries, and physical therapy to regain the full use of his leg. Eventually, he chose to have his leg surgically amputated, enabling his return to military service.

When asked how NDEAM unites the community, he spoke about how people can be an "iceberg" and what a person knows about their own coworkers they see every day is just the tip of their life experience.

"These awareness months bring people together, opens doors, and draw attention to things," said Maddamma.

Each person brings distinctive skills and capabilities to their employment. Ensuring equity, dignity, respect, and cooperation among all individuals are essential values in the DoD work environment. The Defense Department recognizes past achievements as it strives to build an inclusive future workforce to achieve total force readiness.

## Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute

### MISSION

Develop and deliver innovative education, training, research, and collaborative solutions to optimize total force readiness.

### VISION

An inclusive force that values and develops all individuals and thrives on their contributions.



### Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute

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For more content from DEOMI visit [www.defenseculture.mil](http://www.defenseculture.mil)

New trivia is presented every odd month with answers every even month.

TRIVIA

What major reorganization in 1947 established the Department of the Air Force and eventually the Department of Defense?

**The National Defense Act of 1947**

What was the first organized air unit associated with the U.S. military?

**During the Civil War  
October 1861**

What was the fastest production American bomber aircraft?

**The B-58 Hustler**

11 OCT  
1910

Wright Brothers pilot Archibald Hoxsey crosses paths with President Theodore Roosevelt while at St. Louis during a cross-country flying exhibition and invites him for a ride. Roosevelt initially refuses, but his adventuresome spirit gets the best of him, and he changes his mind. Roosevelt straps in and becomes the first president to fly.

2 OCT  
1942

Col Laurence C. Craigie becomes the U.S. military's first official jet pilot when he takes off from Muroc Dry Lake in the Bell XP-59. The day before, a Bell test pilot accidentally lifted off during a high-speed taxi test.

14 OCT  
1947

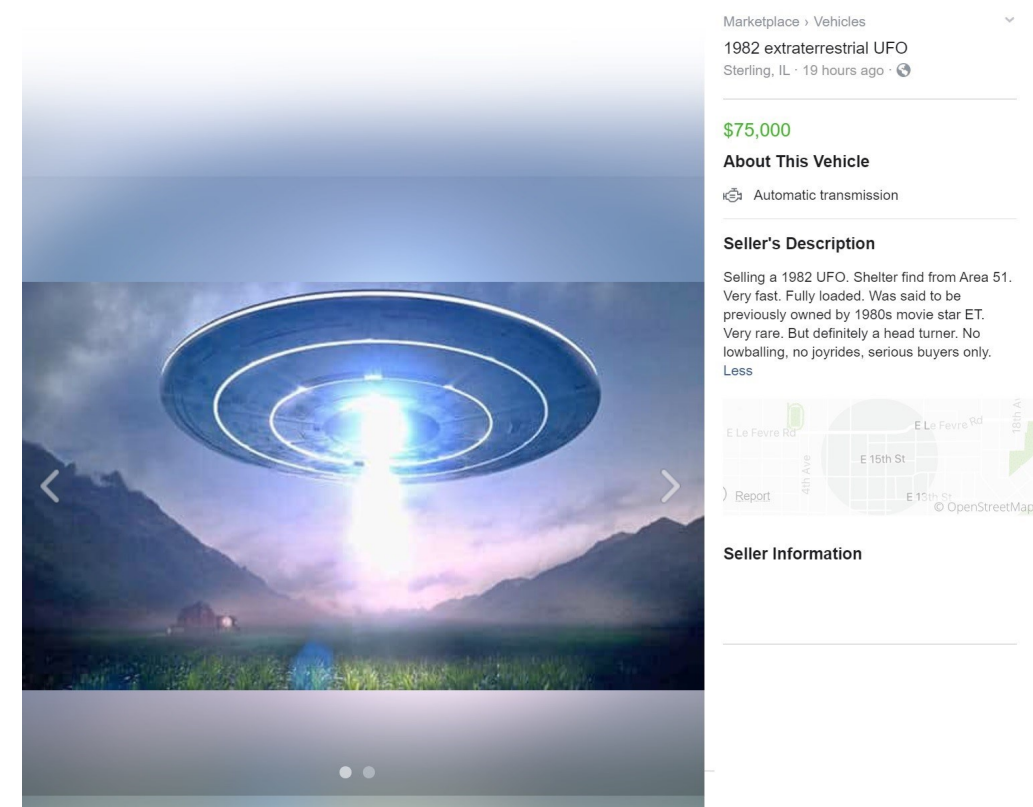
45,000 feet over California's Mojave Desert, USAF test pilot Charles "Chuck" Yeager becomes the first human to break the sound barrier, piloting his Bell X-1 to Mach 1.07.

1 OCT  
1951

The Air Force activates the 1st Pilotless Bomber Squadron at the Missile Test Center, which is now part of Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. The squadron was armed with primitive cruise missiles (surface-to-surface) such as the Republic-Ford JB-2 - a copy of Nazi Germany's V-1 buzzbomb - and the B-61 Matador missile, an improved design which could be armed with a 40-kiloton nuclear warhead.

18 OCT  
1983

The Rockwell B-1B Lancer supersonic bomber makes its first flight. Originally envisioned in the 1960s to combine the speed of the B-58 Hustler and the payload of the B-52 Stratofortress, the B-1 had been cancelled in 1977 after just four swept-wing prototypes were built. Lancers, originally intended to carry nuclear payloads, would later be fitted for conventional weapons, and will not see combat until the 1998 bombing of Iraq (Operation *DESERT FOX*). During the War on Terror, 40 percent of the munitions dropped during the Afghanistan campaign have been delivered by B-1Bs.



**AREA 51**

Restricted Area 4808 North. That's the official name given to a stretch of airspace that covers a region just to the north of Las Vegas, Nevada - more commonly known as Area 51. The airfield within it as served as a source of lore since its establishment during World War II. It has served as an operational area for RDE from the U-2 spy plane to the Have Blue project. The airfield also served as an auxiliary airfield for captured foreign aircraft to be examined and tested, especially during the Cold War era. Today it is attached to Nellis Air Force Base.

**THE GREAT 2019 RUN**

In 2019, there was plenty of chatter on social media about "storming" Area 51. Apparently some guy in Sterling, Illinois was the lucky winner and liberator of one ETV-1 Strategic Intergalactic Reconnaissance and Transport Vehicle. Apparently he claims this was actually the vehicle used by the 1980s movie star ET. It's fascinating, no one has checked ET's teeth marks in a pencil for confirmation.

Still, at \$75,000 that's probably a steal—probably.

Happy Halloween!

# NOTES & BIBLIOGRAPHIES

## FROM THE SHADOWS: THE LEGENDARY BLACKBIRD

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