

A-12, YF-12A, & SR-71 Timeline of Events

June 2010

1 May 1956

Pratt & Whitney contract to develop engine(JT9) for CL-400; J-58 (JT 11D-20) is 80% size of JT9 (SME)1 May 1956 Pratt & Whitney contract to develop engine(JT9) for CL-400; J-58 (JT 11D-20) is 80% size of JT9 (SME)

5 Jul 1956

First Soviet Union U-2 over flight flown by Carmine Veto. Surprise as Aircraft seen on radar and film shows advanced SAMs being deployed around Moscow(BC)

Summer 1957

CIA Director Bissell apprises President Eisenhower of growing risk to U-2 over flights. President directs a study group for a collection replacement(BC)

24 Dec 1957

First J-58 engine run (BB)

21 Apr 1958

First mention of Archangel (became A-12) in Kelly Johnson's dairy (LSW)

23 July 1958 Kelly Johnson presents his Archangel concept to Edwin Land's committee on High Speed, Mach 3,, and flying at 90,000ft vehicle

Summer 1958

Bissell commission reports back to President. Space not ready for collection – Corona project still not successful. Manned replacement required with three advanced characteristics: Mach 3 flight, flying above 80,000 ft, and America's first stealth aircraft President gives go ahead for study competition(BC)

September 1958 Skunk Works studying various configurations starting with Archangel-1, Archangel-2 eventually just called A-1, A-2 Etc

December 1958 President Eisenhower approves funding for further R & D on the U-2 successor. Bissell asked Convair & Lockheed to turn in detailed proposals

Summer 1959

President Eisenhower approves program

29 Aug 1959

CIA accepts Lockheed A-12 design (LSW; BB)

3 Sep 1959

CIA ok's project "Oxcart" studies (LSW)

Nov 1959

A-12 mock-up undergoes RCS testing at Groom Lake, NV (SME; LSW)

30 Jan 1960

CIA approves funding for 12 Lockheed A-12s (SME; LSW; BB)

Feb 1960

CIA proposes to Lockheed to begin search for 24 pilots for A-12

Sep 1960

Work begins to enlarge and lengthen runway at Groom Lake, NV

Jan 1961

Kelly Johnson sends proposal to Dr. Joseph Charyk(SAF), Col. Leo Geary (YF-12 Project Officer), Lew Meyer(Finance Officer) for RS-12 Strategic Recon Bomber (LSB; SME)

26 Feb 1962

First A-12 leaves Burbank, Ca for Groom Lake, NV by truck (SME; LSW)

28 Feb 1962

A-12 arrives by truck at Groom Lake, NV (SME)

24 Apr 1962

A-12 high speed taxi tests; Lockheed Test Pilot: Lou Schalk (AM1; LSB)

26 Apr 1962

First flight of A-12 article #121/ #6924; Lockheed Test Pilot: Lou Schalk (BIA; AM1; LSB; BB)

30 Apr 1962

A-12 article #121/#6924, first official flight; Lockheed Test Pilot: Lou Schalk

May 1962

Bill Park joins Lou Schalk as 2nd pilot for A-12 program

4 May 1962

A-12 goes supersonic(Mach 1.1) for first time (LSW)

4 Jun 1962

SR-71 mock-up reviewed by USAF (BB; LSW-14 May)

26 Jun 1962

Second A-12 article #122/#6925 arrives at Groom Lake;(now on display at USS Intrepid Museum, NYC) (SME)

30 Jul 1962

J-58 completes pre-flight testing (BB)

Aug 1962

Third A-12 article #123/#6926 arrives at Groom Lake, NV (SME; LSW)

Aug 1962

Jim Eastham becomes third pilot for Blackbird Program (LSW)

Oct 1962

Second A-12 flies at Groom Lake, NV (SME)

Oct 1962

Letter of Intent for \$1 million for AF-12(YF-12) delivered to Lockheed (LSW)

5 Oct 1962

A-12 flies with J-75(Left nacelle) and J-58(Right nacelle) engines (LSW)

10 Oct 1962

Skunk Works receives authorization for Drone(Q-12) study from CIA

15 Oct 1962

These pilots officially become Oxcart Test Pilots: Bill Skliar, Ken Collins, Walt Ray, Lon Walter

Nov 1962

Fourth A-12 (2 seat trainer) article #124/6027 arrives at Groom Lake, NV (SME)

17 Dec 1962

Fifth A-12 article #125/#6928 arrives at Groom Lake (LSW)

28 Dec 1962

Lockheed signs USAF contract to build 6 SR-71 aircraft (AM1; LSB; BB)

7 Jan 1963

A-12 Trainer flies for first time (TL; SME; LSW)

5 Jan 1963

Bob Gilliland hired as fourth pilot for "Program" (LSW)

15 Jan 1963

First fully J-58 engined A-12 flies (SME; LSW)

15 Jan 1963

Bob Gilliland arrives at Groom Lake, NV (LSW)

4 Feb 1963

First A-12 training Flight – Bill Skliar

6 Feb 1963

First A-12 training flight – Ken Collins

10 Feb 1963

First A-12 training flight – Walt Ray

14 Feb 1963

First A-12 training flight – Lon Walter

Mar 1963

Jim Eastham begins writing Flight Handbook for YF-12 (LSB)

24 May 1963

First loss A-12 article #123/#6926 crashed near Wendover, UT; CIA pilot, Ken Collins, pitched up and became inverted during subsonic flight (AM1; LSB; SME; BB)

31 May 1963

Mock-up review of AF-12 (LSW)

Jun 1963

Q-12 drone fit check to A-12 (RK)

20 Jul 1963

First Mach 3 A-12 flight (LSW)

7 Aug 1963

First YF-12 flight; Lockheed Test Pilot: James Eastham (AM1; LSB; LSW; BB)

1 Oct 1963

Q-12 design finalized, and renamed D-21 (RK)

Nov 1963

A-12 design speed (3.2 mach) and altitude(78,000ft)

3 Feb 1964

A-12 cruises at Mach 3.2 and 83,000ft for 10 minutes (LSW)

29 Feb 1964

President Johnson announces existence of A-11 (actually A-12, and showed pictures of YF-12) (LSW; BB)

13 Mar 1964

First Flight of YF-12 #6936, Lockheed Test Pilot: James Eastham (RK)

Apr 1964

M-21 #6940 First Flight

16 Apr 1964

First AIM-47 ejected in flight from YF-12; Lockheed Test Pilot/FCO: Hughes pilot/Ray Scalise (DB)(RON)

May 1964

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara cancels RS-70 program (Recon/Strike) in favor of SR-71 program(Recon) (SME)

Jun 1964

Final A-12 #6939 delivered to Groom Lake (RK)

19 Jun 1964

Fit check of mating of M-21 #134 and D-21 #504 is successful (LSW)

9 Jul 1964

Bill Park forced to eject from A-12 article #133/#6939 on final at Groom Lake; stuck outboard aileron servo valve (LSW)

24 Jul 1964

President Johnson makes public announcement to name SR-71 (LSW)

5 Aug 1964

Cuban over flights "Skylark" planning starts (Emergency operational status by 5 Nov) (SME)

29 Oct 1964

SR-71 #950 prototype delivered to Palmdale, Site 2, Air Force Plant 42 in 2 large trailers (BB)

10 Nov 1964

Planning for first A-12 mission and penetration of denied airspace over Cuba done. Flight never executed.

7 Dec 1964

Beale AFB, CA announced as base for SR-71 (BB)(LSB says Oct 64)

18 Dec 1964

First engine run of SR-71 prototype (BB)

21 Dec 1964

SR-71 taxi tests (BB)

22 Dec 1964

First flight of SR-71 #950; Lockheed Test Pilot Bob Gilliland at Palmdale; flew for 1 hour and at over 1000mph (AM1; BB)

22 Dec 1964

First flight M-21/D-21 at Groom Lake; Lockheed Test Pilot Bill Park (piloted all M-21/D-21 flights) (BIA; SME; BB)

1 Jan 1965

4200 SRW Activated at Beale AFB, CA, along with 4200 HQS, AEMS, FMS, OMS, Medical Group (BIA; LSB; SME)

Jan 1965

4200th OET & E unit activated at Edwards AFB. Two SAC pilots were Kennon & Bowles and two RSOs Fagg & Braeden

9 Jan 1965

Jim Eastham flies YF-12A at Mach 3.2 for 5 minutes

27 Jan 1965

A-12 flown for 1hr 40 min at Mach 3.1 or higher for a distance of 3000 miles (SME)

5 Mar 1965

First flight of SR-71A #951, Lockheed Test Pilot/Flt Test Eng: Bob Gilliland/ Jim Zwyer (now on display at Pima Air Museum, AZ) (LSW; BB)

18 Mar 1965

First firing of AIM-47 from YF-12A; Lockheed Test Pilot/FCO: Jim Eastham/? (LSW; RON, DB)

22 Mar 1965

Deputy Sec. of Defense Cyrus Vance briefed on Project "Black Shield", plan to base A-12s at Kadena AB, Okinawa (SME)

Apr 1965

Acton delivers the first 3 Type H(60" focal length) cameras for A-12 (SME)

29 Apr 1965

First SR-71 aerial refueling using SR-71 #952

1 May 1965

Two YF-12A(#6934 & #6936) sets Speed and Altitude Records: Class C, Group III Sustained Altitude(absolute):80,258ft USAF Pilots/FCO: Col Robert Stevens/ Lt Col Daniel Andre

15/25 KM Closed Circuit: 2,070.102mph, USAF Pilot/FCO: Col. Robert Stephens/ Lt Col Daniel Andre

500 KM Closed Circuit: 1,643.042mph, USAF Pilot/FCO: Maj Walter Daniel/ Maj. Noel Warner

1000KM Closed Circuit: 1,688.891mph, USAF Pilot/FCO: Maj Walter Daniel/ Capt James Cooney

(BIA; LSW)

1 Jun 1965

SR-71/YF-12 Test force officially recognized at Edwards AFB, CA (DB)

3 Jun 1965

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara inquires of Under Secretary of USAF practicality of substituting A-12 for U-2 over Vietnam (LSW)

4 Jun 1965

First flight of SR-71A #953; Lockheed Test Pilots: Bill Weaver/ George Andre (LSW; BB)

1 Jul 1965

Col J. A. Des Portes becomes 4200 SRW Commander thru 17 Jul 1965 (9RW)

7 Jul 1965

First T-38 companion trainers arrive at Beale AFB, CA (LSB; SME; BB)

20 Jul 1965

First flight of SR-71A #954; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ George Andre (LSW; BB)

17 Aug 1965

First flight of SR-71A #955; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ George Andre (Now on display at USAF Flight Test Museum, Edward AFB, CA) (LSW; BB)

18 Sep 1965

Col D. T. Nelson becomes(again) 4200 SRW Commander thru 24 Jun 1966 (9RW; BB)

28 Sep 1965

AIM-47 fired from YF-12A at Mach 3.2 at 75,000 ft, with target at a range of 36 miles,

missed target by 6 feet (DB)

5 Nov 1965

Project "Skylark" (Cuban over flights) on emergency operational status (SME)

18 Nov 1965

First flight SR-71B #956; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bob Gilliland / Steven Belgau (BB; JS)

20 Nov 1965

A-12 flies for 6hrs, 20 minutes(longest flight to date) (LSW; SME;)

2 Dec 1965

"303 Committee" asked to deploy Oxcart to Far East(Black Shield); They reject proposal , but want quick-reaction capability in 21 days (SME)

14 Dec 1965

Col W.R. Hayes becomes 9 SRW Commander through 26 Jun 1969 (9RW; BB)

15 Dec 1965

First flight of SR-71A #958; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ George Andre (LSW; BB)

18 Dec 1965

First flight of SR-71B #957; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Jim Eastham (LSW; BB)

7 Jan 1966

First SR-71B #956 delivered to USAF flown to Beale AFB by Ray Haupt/ Doug Nelson (AM!; SME; LSW; LSB)

9 Jan 1966

First flight SR-71A #960; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ George Andre (LSW; BB)

19 Jan 1966

First flight SR-71A #959; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ George Andre This aircraft was later used for the "Big Tail" test. (now on display Eglin AFB, FL) (BB)

25 Jan 1966

First SR-71A crash, #952 crashed near Tucumcari, NM; Lockheed Test Pilot/Flt Test Eng: Bill Weaver ejected at over 3 Mach Jim Zwayer was killed (LTR)

11 Feb 1966

Staff Crew #1 completes initial qualification in SR-71, USAF Crew: Doug Nelson/ Russell Lewis (RLL)

5 Mar 1966

First D-21 #503 launched from M-21 #6941, and flew 150 nm; Lockheed Test Pilot/FCO: Bill Park/ Keith Beswick (LSW)

13 Apr 1966

First flight SR-71A #961; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ George Andre (LSW; BB)

27 Apr 1966

Second D-21 #506 launched from M-21 #6941 and flew 1120 nm; Lockheed Test Pilot/LCO: Bill Park/ Ray Torrick (LSW)

29 Apr 1966

First flight SR-71A #962; Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau; (At Imperial War Museum at Duxford, United Kingdom) (LSW; BB, LH)

29 Apr 1966

Second batch of 15 D-21s ordered

10 May 1966

First SR-71A #958 delivered to Beale AFB, CA USAF Pilots: Doug Nelson/ Russell Lewis (LSB)(LSW says 4 Apr 1966)

11 May 1966

First flight SR-71A #964, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau (LSW; BB)

24 May 1966

SR-71A #962 Delivered to Beale AFB, CA, by USAF Crew: Douglas Nelson/ Russell Lewis, from Palmdale, CA SR-71A # xxx delivered by USAF pilot/RSO Bill Campbell/Al Pennington Only recorded SR-71 Formation flight departing Palmdale and arriving together to pitch out to land at Beale AFB.

16 Jun 1966

Third D-21 #505 launch from M-21 #6941, it flew 1600 nm; Lockheed Test Pilot/ LCO: Bill Park/ Keith Beswick (LSW)

9 Jun 1966

First flight SR-71A #963, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau (LSW; BB)

10 Jun 1966

First flight SR-71A #965, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Kenneth Moeller (LSW; BB)

25 Jun 1966

4200 SRW inactivated, 9 SRW formed & Col Douglas Nelson is the first 9th wing commander(9RW; BIA; LSB; SME)

1 Jul 1966

First flight SR-71A #966, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bob Gilliland/ Steven Belgau (LSW; BB)

30 Jul 1966

Fourth D-21 #504 launch from a M-21 #6941, results in the D-21 colliding with the M-21, both crew eject Pilot Bill Park survives, but LCO Ray Torrick drowns, ending M-21/D-21 program (AM1; SME)

3 Aug 1966

First flight of SR-71A #967, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ George Andre (LSW; BB)

14 Aug 1966

YF-12A #6934 had landing accident that made the aircraft unsalvageable., (rear half mated to front half of SR-71 static model to make SR-71C #64-17981)(DB)

10 Oct 1966

First flight of SR-71A #968, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ George Andre (LSW; BB)

18 Oct 1966

First flight of SR-71A #969, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau (LSW; BB)

21 Oct 1966

First flight of SR-71A #970, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau

(LSW; BB)

17 Nov 1966

First flight of SR-71A #971, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Kenneth Moeller; (now being flown by NASA as #832) (LSW; BB)

12 Dec 1966

More than five months before Article 131 would fly the A-12's first operational mission – four senior US officials met to consider retirement options. Over DCI Helm's objections, Deputy Defense Secretary Cyrus Vance, BOB Director Charles Schultze, and presidential scientific advisor Donald Hornig decided to end the A-12 program and submit this to President Johnson.(CIA)

12 Dec 1966

First flight of SR-71A #972, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau (LSW; BB)

14 Dec 1966

Col William R. Hayes becomes the 9th wing commander(CM, 9RW)

21 Dec 1966

Bill Park flies A-12 10,200 mi (statute) in 6 hrs (LSW; SME; ADR)

23 Dec 1966

Decision is made to terminate A-12 Operation by 1 Jun 1968 (LSW)

Late Dec 1966

President Johnson accepts the recommendation to end the A-12 program by Jan 1968. This date would later be slipped to June 1968 to allow the SR-71s to become operational at Kadena AB, Japan.(CIA)

5 Jan 1967

A-12 #6928 lost on training mission from Groom Lake, NV, the a/c ran out of fuel due to a faulty fuel gauge, CIA Pilot: Walt Ray killed when he failed to separate from ejection seat after ejecting from A-12 (AM1; SME)

10 Jan 1967

SR-71A #950 destroyed at Edwards AFB, CA during max gross weight anti-skid brake test on wet runway; Lockheed Test Pilot: Art Peterson OK, no RSO on flight (LSW; PH)

10 Jan 1967

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara advised that 4 A-12s will be placed in storage by July, and 2 more in Dec, and 4 more in Jan 1968 (SME)

18 Jan 1967

First flight of SR-71A #973, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Darrell Greenamyre (LSW)

16 Feb 1967

First flight of SR-71A #974, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau (LSW; BB)

13 Apr 1967

First flight of SR-71A #975, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau (LSW; BB)

13 Apr 1967

First SR-71 #966 lost by 9 SRW crew, crashes near Las Vegas, NM, as a result of overextended angle of attack and stalled aircraft; USAF Pilot/RSO: Earle Boone/ Richard Sheffield (crew E-12) (LSW; PH)

17 Apr 1967

R.L. "Silverfox" Stevens flies SR-71 14,000 miles and is awarded FAI Gold Medal (BIA; BB)

May 1967

Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance directs that SR-71 assume Cuban over flights in July 1967 and in Vietnam by Dec 1967 from CIA's A-12s (SME)

May 1967

First flight of SR-71A #976, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bob Gilliland/ Steven Belgau (LSW; BB)

17 May 1967

First support components for operation "Black Shield" airlifted to Kadena AB, Okinawa (OL-8) (LSW)

22 May 1967

First A-12 art#131/#937, flown to Kadena AB, Civilian Pilot: Mel Vojvodich (LSW)

24 May 1967

Second A-12 art #127/#933, flown to Kadena AB, Civilian Pilot: Jack Layton, A-12 lost TDI after take-off but he proceeded anyway to Kadena (SME)

26 May 1967

A-12 art#129/#932, lands at Midway Island with INS problems on way to Kadena AB, Okinawa deployment, Civilian Pilot: Jack Weeks (SME)

27 May 1967

Photo of initial SR crews taken at Beale AFB, CA (LSB)

27 May 1967

Third A-12 art#129/#932 arrives at Kadena AB after stop-over at Midway Island (SME)

29 May 1967

"Black Shield" unit declared operational (SME; LSW)

31 May 1967

First A-12(art#131/#937) mission, It was over North Vietnam and lasted 3 hrs 39 minutes; CIA Pilot: Mel Vojvodich (SME; LSW; RON)

15 Aug 1967

Since 31 May 1967, 15 A-12 missions alerted, but only 7 flown (SME)

6 Jun 1967

First flight SR-71A #977, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bob Gilliland/ Darrell Greenamyer (LSW; BB)

2 Jul 1967

Jim Watkins and Dave Dempster flew first international sortie in SR-71A #972 when on a training mission the INS failed and they flew into Mexican airspace (SME)

5 Jul 1967

First flight SR-71A #978, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bill Weaver/ Steven Belgau; Aircraft became known as "Rapid Rabbit" (LSW; BB)

10 Aug 1967

First flight SR-71A #979, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Darrel Greenamyer/ Steven Belgau, (now on display at Lackland AFB, TX) (LSW; BB)

25 Sep 1967

First flight SR-71A #980, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bob Gilliland/ Steven Belgau; (LSW; BB)

28 Sep 1967

D-21 #501 accidentally dropped from B-52H, while on the ground (LSW)

25 Oct 1967

SR-71A #965 crashed near Lovelock, NV after ANS failure, 2nd SR lost by 9 SRW, USAF Pilot/RSO: Roy St.Martin/ John Carnochan (crew E-18) ok (LSB; SME; LSW)

30 Oct 1967

Dennis Sullivan flying an A-12 mission over North Vietnam had 6 missiles launched against him, 3 detonated, on post flight inspection, they found a small piece of metal from missile imbedded in lower wing fillet area (LSW)

20 Oct- 3 Nov 1967

A-12 and SR-71 are pitted against each other in a recon fly-off, code named "Nice Girl" over USA that included refueling, flying identical routes 1 hour apart on three different days and both would complete the full sortie with collection sensors operational. .

On the 1st attempt, the SR-71 was OK but the A-12 had a problem. On the 2nd day, the reverse was the case. On day 3, both aircraft successfully flew the route. On that day, it was under-cast for the northern part (from California to Kentucky) and the A-12 could only photograph clouds while the SR-71 was able to collect ELINT and SLR data. After air refueling, both accelerated and climbed over the Gulf of Mexico. From New Orleans to the San Francisco area, the weather was CAVU and both aircraft were able to provide their full collection capability/data for the evaluation.(WJC)

AIRCROWS:

Lt. Col. Al Hichew and I, Maj. Tom Schmittou flew mission #1.

Maj. John Storrie and Maj. Coz Mallozzi flew mission #2

Maj. Bill Campbell and Capt. Al Pennington flew mission #3.(TS)

Jack Weeks flew all three A-12 missions(FM)

First two flight days were inconclusive. After the third day of flights it was determined by Intelligence evaluators that the SR-71 was a better overall investment. A-12s had much better cameras – wider swath and higher resolution but the SR-71 collected more types of intelligence than the CIA aircraft could. These other sensors were infrared detectors, side looking airborne radar, and ELINT-collection devices needed for the SR-71 mission of post-nuclear-strike reconnaissance(CIA)

6 Nov 1967

D-21 #507 launched from B-52H and flew 134 nm (LSW)

2 Dec 1967

D-21 #509 launched from B-52H and flew 1430 nm (LSW)

28 Dec 1967

A-12 art#126/#929 crashed at Groom Lake, NV due to cross wired SAS, CIA Pilot: Mel Vojvodich ok (LSB; SME; PH)

31 Dec 1967

Since 16 Aug 1967, 26 A-12 missions alerted, only 15 flown (LSW)

5 Jan 1968

Skunk Works receives official USAF notice closing down YF-12 ops (LSW)

11 Jan 1968

SR-71B #957 crashes near Beale AFB, CA due to double generator failure; USAF Pilots: Robert Sowers/ David Fruehauf (LSB; LSW; BB)

19 Jan 1968

D-21 #508 launched from B-52H and flew 280 nmi (LSW)

26 Jan 1968

First A-12 over flight of North Korea, this was during Pueblo incident, CIA Pilot: Jack Weeks (FM)

5 Feb 1968

Lockheed receives letter from USAF, instructing them to destroy A-12, YF-12 and SR-71 tooling (LSW)

Feb 1968

Second A-12 over flight of North Korea with the continuing Pueblo incident, CIA pilot Frank Murray (FM)

8 Mar 1968

First SR-71A #978 arrives at Kadena AB, Okinawa(OL-8), USAF Pilot/ RSO: Buddy Brown/ David Jensen (LSB, SME, BB)

10 Mar 1968

2nd SR-71A #976 deployed to Kadena AB, Okinawa(OL-8), USAF Pilot/RSO: Jerry O'Malley/ Edward Payne (SME)

13 Mar 1968

3rd SR-71A #974 arrives at Kadena AB, Okinawa, USAF Pilot/RSO: Robert Spencer/ Ruel Branham (SME)

15 Mar 1968

All 3 SR-71s operational at Kadena AB (SME)

16 Mar 1968

Fourth Aircrew arrives at Kadena AB, Okinawa the "hard way" by KC-135Q (SME)

21 Mar 1968

First SAC/9 SRW SR-71(SR-71A #976) operational mission flown from Kadena AB over Vietnam, USAF Pilot/RSO: Jerry O'Malley/ Edward Payne (Crew E-10) (LSB; SME)

30 Mar 1968

D-21 #511 launched from B-52H and flew 150 nmi (LSW)

31 Mar 1968

Since 1 Jan 1968, 15 A-12 missions alerted, only 6 flown (LSW)

8 May 1968

Last A-12 mission flown over North Korea, CIA Pilot: Jack Layton (SME; LSW)

29 May 1968

CMSGT Bill Gornick starts tie-cutting tradition of HABU crews neck-ties (SME)

4 Jun 1968

First overseas loss of A-12 art.#129/#932, crashed for unknown reason (neither A-12 or pilot ever found) on post maintenance test hop (FCF), CIA Pilot: Jack Weeks was killed (LSW)(AM1; BB; SME says 5 June)

7 Jun 1968

A-12 art. #131/#6937, had to divert to Wake Island on way from Kadena AB to Groom Lake, NV, due to fuel leak from ruptured recirculating valve on left engine while refueling near Wake Island; CIA Pilot: Ken Collins (SME)

9 Jun 1968

A-12 art.#127/#930 deployed back to Groom Lake, NV from Kadena AB in 5 hrs,

29mins, CIA Pilot: Denny Sullivan(SME)

16 Jun 1968

D-21 #512 launched from B-52H and flew 2850 nmi, camera hatch recovered, but no camera was carried (LSW)

19 Jun 1968

Maj. Bill West writes poem for the 2 "slow" A-12 flights from Kadena AB to Groom Lake (SME)

21 Jun 1968

Last A-12 art. #131/#6937 flight, it was ferried from Groom Lake, NV to Palmdale, Ca; CIA Pilot: Frank Murray (SME; LSW; BB)

26 Jun 1968

"Black Shield" pilots: Jack Layton, Frank Murray, Ken Collins, Denny Sullivan, Mel Vojvodich, and the Widow of Jack Weeks receive CIA "Intelligence Star for Valor" medal at Groom Lake from the Director of the CIA VAdm Rufus Taylor (SME)

1 Jul 1968

D-21 #514 launched from B-52H and flew 80 nm (LSW)

5 Jul 1968

USAF SR-71 Pilot Robert Powell who was the first pilot with 1000 hours (total 1,020.3 hrs), had his first SR-71 flight

26 Jul 1968

SR-71A #974 with USAF Pilot/RSO: Tony Bevacqua/ Jerry Crew, positively fired on by SA-2 missile, it was photographed by the SRs cameras. This was first confirmed SAM firing on an SR-71 (SME)

28 Aug 1968

D-21 #516 launched from B-52H and flew 78 nmi (LSW)

Sep 1968

First in-air recall of SR-71 mission, USAF Pilot/RSO: Dale Shelton/ Lawrence Boggess (SME)

Sep 1968

Switched OL-8s SR-71s #974,#976,#978 with #962, #970, #980 (SME)

10 Oct 1968

SR-71A #977 crashes at Beale AFB, CA,(wheel hub fractured sending shrapnel into fuel tanks starting fire on take-off); USAF Pilot/RSO: Gabriel Kardong/ Jim Kogler ok (LSB)

2 Nov 1968

9th SRW receives Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for 1 Jul 1967-30 Jun1968 (LSB; BB)

Dec 1968

SR-71 Cat III Operational testing ends

15 Dec 1968

D-21 #515 launched from B-52H and flew 2953 nm, camera hatch recovered, photos are "fair" (LSW)

11 Feb 1969

D-21 #518 launched from B-52H and flew 161 nm (LSW)

5 Mar 1969

9th SRW receives 15th Air Force Outstanding Recon Crew Award (Pat Halloran/ Mort Jarvis)This is formally called the MajGen Charles M. Elsenhart Reconnaissance Crew of

the Year Award. MajGen Elsenhart was the 15th Air Force Vice Commander and was killed in a KC-135 accident at Eilison AFB, Alaska. Also received a Maintenance activity award and Strategic Recon Wing Award for 1968 (9RW; PH)

14 Mar 1969

First flight of SR-71C #981, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Bob Gilliland/ Steven Belgau; (Now on display on at Hill AFB, UT); (SR-71C was built from half of static SR test model and rear half of crashed YF-12A #6934) (LSB; LSW; BB)

11 Apr 1969

SR-71A #954 crashes at Edwards AFB, CA, (during Max weight take-off test, left tire blew and caught the aircraft on fire), Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: William Skliar/ Noel Warner were ok (LSB; SME; LSW; PH)

27 Jun 1969

Col C. F. Minter 9th SRW Commander thru 30 Jun1970 (BB; 9RW)

10 Jul 1969

D-21 #520 launched from B-52H and flew 2937 nm, camera pallet recovered, photos good (LSW)

Sep 1969

SAC SR-71s had flown over 100 "Hot missions" out of Kadena AB, Okinawa (LSW)

9 Nov 1969

First operational D-21 mission. D-21 #517 launched from B-52H, no camera pallet recovered (LSW)

11 Dec 1969

NASAs first YF-12 flight. YF-12A #6935, USAF Pilot/FCO: Col. Joseph Rogers/ Maj. Garry Heilbaugh (BIA; LSB; LSW)

18 Dec 1969

YF-12A #935 crashes near Shosone, CA; USAF Pilot/RSO: Lt. Col. Joe Rogers/ Maj Garry Heilbaugh ejected (after loud explosion and loss of power and control difficulties) (LSW; SME; LSW; PH)

16 Jan 1970

YF-12/SR-71 Test Force redesignated 4786 Test Squadron (LSB; BB)

13 Feb 1970

9th SRW, SR-71 crew receives 15th Air Force Outstanding Recon Crew of the Year Award for 1969 Pilot/RSO Willie Lawson/Gil Martinez(9RW, GM)

20 Feb 1970

D-21 #521 launched from B-52H and flew 2969 nm, camera pallet recovered, photos good (LSW)

1 Apr 1970

First NASA piloted YF-12 flight, NASA Pilot: Donald Mallick (LSW)

10 May 1970

SR-71A #969 crashes near Korat RTAFB, Thailand, USAF Pilot/RSO: William Lawson/ Gil Martinez (LSW; PH)

1 Jun 1970

Col. H. F. Confer, 9 SRW Commander thru 30 May1972 (9RW)

17 Jun 1970

SR-71A #970 crashes near El Paso, TX, (after striking KC-135Q during refueling); USAF Pilot/RSO: Buddy Brown/ Mort Jarvis (crew E-08) ejected and ok. The tanker

and its crew recovered safely back at Beale AFB(LSB; LSW; PH)

30 Oct 1970

OL-8(Kadena AB, Okinawa) redesignated OL-RK (Ryukyus, chain of islands Okinawa and Japan are in) (SME)

16 Dec 1970

Second operational D-21 mission. D-21 #523 launched from B-52H and flew 2448 nm, no camera pallet recovered (LSW)

31 Dec 1970

Air Force Logistics Command took over Functional Flight Check for SR-71 and Det 51(Norton AFB) created; also Sacramento Air Logistics Center provides maintenance support for SR-71 (LSB; SME)

4 Mar 1971

Third operational D-21 mission. D-21 #526 launched from B-52H 60-036 and flew 2935 nm. Mission launched from Beale AFB California to Anderson AFB Guam, 22.6 hours mission flight duration. D-21 Launch Control Officer (LCO) was Larry Elliott who would later become an SR-71 RSO. Camera pallet jettisoned, but not recovered (LSW, LE)

20 Mar 1971

Fourth and last operational D-21 mission. D-21 #527 launched from B-52H and flew 2935 nm; no camera pallet recovered. Aircraft missed airborne catch and before a helicopter could recover the pallet in the water a Navy Destroyer had run over it and sunk it. (LSW)

23 Mar 1971

T-38 #91606 crashes on take-off; USAF Pilots: Jack Thornton, staff pilot, survived, Jim Hudson, SR-71 pilot, was killed. Only SR-71 crewmember ever lost in an aircraft accident. (LSB, JS)

1 Apr 1971

99 SRS inactivated as an SR-71 unit (LSB; BB)

26 Apr 1971

USAF Pilot/RSO: Thomas Estes/ Dewain Vick fly a SR-71 #968 15,000 miles in 10 hours 30 minutes non-stop (BB; RK)

24 Jun 1971

NASA YF-12A #6936 crashed at Edwards AFB, CA due to a fire in the right engine due to fatigued fuel line. NASA Pilot/RSO: Ronald Layton/ Bill Curtis (AM1; LSW)

30 Jun 1971

14 Strategic Aerospace Division takes command of 9 SRW

15 Jul 1971

Lockheed receives word of D-21 program cancellation (LSW)

16 Jul 1971

NASA receives YF-12C #937 (actually SR-71A #951)

26 Oct 1971

OL-RK redesignated OL-KA(Kadena AB, Okinawa) (SME)

6 Jan 1972

9 SRW receives USAF Outstanding Unit Award for 1 Jul 1970- 30 Jun 1971 (9RW)

12 Jan 1972

4786 Test Sq inactivated (LSB)

Mar 1972

9 SRW receives 15th Air Force Outstanding Recon Crew, Pilot/RSO Tom Estes/Dewain Vick

2 May 1972

Three Det 1 SR-71s fly first flight of two simultaneous passes over Hanoi. SR-71 Crews were Pilots/RSOs: Bob Spencer/Butch Sheffield, Darryl Cobb/Reggie Blackwell, & Dave Fruehauf/Gil Martinez - Intel said all three passed within 10 seconds(GM)

4 May 1972 Second three Det 1 SR-71s cross Hanoi simultaneously to give our POWs the resounding sound of Freedom. SR-71 980 USAF Pilot/RSO Bob Spencer/Butch Sheffield, SR-71 978 Crew USAF Pilot/RSO Darryl Cobb/Reggie Blackwell, & SR-71 968 Crew USAF Pilot/RSC Tom Pugh/ Ron Rice(GM)

15 May 1972

SR-71A #978 loses both AC generators while over Hanoi and by the time Pilot Tom Pugh got aux power on the SR had dropped to 41,000 ft and 1.1 mach; Tom Pugh/ Ron Rice landed safely at Korat RTAFB, Thailand

31 May 1972

Col. J. F. O'Malley becomes 9 SRW Commander thru 9 May 1973 (9RW)

6 Jul 1972

SR-71A #955 flew a refueling flight envelope and "dry boom" contact checks on a boom equipped 747, USAF Pilot/RSO: Merv Evanson / Cos Mallozzi (SME)

18 Jul 1972

Thomas Estes/ Dewain Vick receive McKay Trophy for 10 hour & 30 minute record SR-71 flight on 26 April 1971

20 Jul 1972

SR-71A #978 "Rapid Rabbit" destroyed on landing at Kadena AB, (due to strong crosswinds), USAF Pilot/RSO: Denny Bush/ Jimmy Fagg (LSW; BB)

28 Jul 1972

SR-71A #975 flown for ECM cover for B-52 bombing missions (Linebacker) over Haiphong & Hanoi; USAF Pilot: Darrell Cobb/ Reg Blackwell (SME)

23 Jan 1973

9 SRW receives USAF Outstanding Unit Award for 1 Jul 1971-30 Jun 1972 (9RW)

10 May 1973

Col. P. J. Halloran 9 SRW Commander thru 29 Jan 1975 (9RW)

20 Sep 1973

President Nixon awards Thomas Estes/ Dewain Vick the Harmon International Aviator Award for their record flight on 26 April 1971

11 Oct 1973

SR-71A #979 Flown to Griffis AFB, NY for "Giant Reach" ops, USAF Pilot/ RSO: James Shelton/ Gary Coleman (BB)

12 Oct 1973

Middle east over flights from CONUS during Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War from Griffis AFB, NY and Seymour-Johnson AFB, NC; 9 sorties were flown: Operation Giant Reach (BB)

13 Oct 1973

SR-71A #979, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: James Shelton/ Gary Coleman (BB)

25 Oct 1973

SR-71A #979, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: Al Joersz/ John Fuller (BB)

4 Nov 1973

SR-71A #979, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: Bob Helt/ Larry Elliott; (left Griffis AFB, and returned to Griffis AFB, NY. Flight time was 11.4 hrs. (LE)

11 Nov 1973

SR-71A #964, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: Jim Wilson/ Bruce Douglas (BB)

15 Nov 1973

"Giant Reach" ops moved to Seymour-Johnson AFB, NC (OL-SB) (BB)

2 Dec 1973

SR-71A #964, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: Jim Sullivan/ Noel Widdifield (BB)

10 Dec 1973

SR-71A #979, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: Pat Bledsoe/ Reg Blackwell (BB)

21 Jan 1974

9 SRW receives 15th Air Force Recon Crew of Year Award, Pilot/RSO Jim Shelton/Gary Coleman

25 Jan 1974

SR-71A #971, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: "Buck" Adams/ William Machorek (BB)

7 Mar 1974

SR-71A #979, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: Ty Judkins/ G.T. Morgan (BB)

Mar 1974 Jim Shelton & Gary Colman win the 15th Air Force outstanding Recon Aircrew of the Year Award.

6 Apr 1974

SR-71A #979, Flown in "Giant Reach" ops; USAF Pilot/RSO: Lee Ransom/ Mark Gersten (BB)

30 Apr 1974

9 SRW Maintenance Complex receives 15th Air Force Haskell Grey Award for outstanding aircraft maintenance in 1973 (9RW)

9 Aug 1974

Det 1, 9 SRW activated at Kadena AB replacing OL-KA (SME; 9RW)

1 Sep 1974

First SR-71A visit to UK; setting World Record NY to London, 1806.96 mph, dist: 3461.50 miles, in 1 hour 54 minutes 56.4 seconds in SR-71A #972, USAF Pilot/RSO: Jim Sullivan/Noel Widdifield (BB, EY)

12 Sep 1974

First attempt to set London to LA record, returned due to oil light

13 Sep 1974

SR-71A #972 set World Record London to LA 1435.59 mph, 5447 miles in 3 hours 47 min. 39 sec., USAF Pilot/RSO: "Buck" Adams/William Machorek (BB, EY)

Jan 1975

Clarence "Kelly" Johnson retires as Head of the Skunk Works

6 Jan 1975

9 SRW selected Outstanding SAC Recon Organization for 1974 (9RW)

17 Jan 1975

Ben Rich becomes Head of the Skunk Works

18 Jan 1975

9 SRW won 15 Air Force Recon unit and 15th Air Force outstanding Recon Aircrew of Year Award

12 Mar 1975

OL-SB was inactivated at Seymour-Johnson AFB, NC

Apr 1975

TDY Operations start at RAF Mildenhall, UK(Det 4)(BB)

15 May 1975

SR-71A #976 flew in support of Mayaquez incident, USAF Pilot/RSO: Al Cirino/Bruce Lieberman

18 Jun 1975

Joseph T. Vida flies for the first time in a SR-71 as RSO; became High-time crew member with 1,392.7 hrs (BB)

30 Jun 1975

Col. J. H. Storrie becomes 9 SRW Commander thru 29 Sep 1977 (9RW)

20 Nov 1975

SR-71A #959 in "Big Tail" configuration does high speed taxi-tests, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Darrell Greenamyre/ Steven Belgau (SME)

3 Dec 1975

First flight of SR-71A #959 in "Big Tail" configuration, Lockheed Test Pilot/RSO: Darrell Greenamyre/ Steven Belgau (LSW)

20 Apr 1976

TDY ops started at RAF Mildenhall in SR-71A #972, USAF Pilot/RSO: Pat Bledsoe/ John Fuller (SME)

Apr 1976

First ops sortie from Det 4 in SR-71A #972, USAF Pilot/RSO: Maury Rosenberg/ Don Bulloch (SME)

30 Apr 1976

SR-71A #972, returned to Beale AFB, CA after 10 day deployment to RAF Mildenhall, UK (SME)

5 May 1976

First flight of SR-71A #959 in "Big Tail" configuration by USAF Pilot/ RSO: Tom Pugh/ John Carnochan

1 May 1976

USAF consolidates SR-71 and U-2 operations at Beale AFB, CA (9RW)

27 Jul 1976

SR-71A sets World Record Closed 1000KM Course, Speed: 2092 mph, USAF Pilot/RSO: Pat Bledsoe/ John Fuller (LSB; LSW; BB)

28 Jul 1976

SR-71A #962 set an Altitude World Record of 85,068.997 ft, USAF Pilot/RSO: Bob Helt/Larry Elliott (LSB; BB)

28 Jul 1976

SR-71A #958 set a World Straight 15 & 25 KM Course Record with a speed of 2193 mph, USAF Pilot/ RSO: Eldon Joersz/ George Morgan (LSB; BB)

4 Jul 1976

SR-71A #959 "Big Tail" flown to 3 Mach by USAF Pilot/RSO: Tom Pugh/ ???

6 Sep 1976

SR-71A #962 arrives at RAF Mildenhall, UK for a 12 day deployment (SME)

28 Oct 1976

Last Flight of SR-71A #963; (now on display at Beale AFB, CA flight line) (LSW)

29 Oct 1976

Last Flight of SR-71A #959 "Big Tail", USAF Pilot/RSO: Tom Pugh/ William Frazier; (Now on display at USAF Armament Museum, Eglin AFB, FL, (transported by truck)) (SME; LSW)

7 Jan 1977

SR-71A #958 arrives at RAF Mildenhall for 10 day deployment (SME)

2 Feb 1977

Last Flight of SR-71A #961, was used as parts aircraft; (on display at Cosmosphere and Space Center, Hutchinson, KS) (LSW, JSS)

1 Sep 1977

Det 51 reorganized to Det 6, Norton AFB, CA reporting to 2762 Logistics Sq (LSB)

30 Sep 1977

Col. L. M. Kidder becomes 9 SRW Commander thru 31 Jan 1979 (9RW)

24 Feb 1978

9 SRW wins 15 Air Force Recon Unit of Year Award for 1977 (9RW)

March 1978 Col Willie Lawson leads team to create an operational SR-71 location on Diego Garcia. SR-71 team crewmembers on Diego Garcia were USAF Pilot/RSO Buz Carpenter/John Murphy. Base was prepared, an aircraft shelter was removed from Beale AFB, flown via C-5A, and installed on Diego Garcia and a temporary to become permanent fuel farm was established. A Tanker airlift moved fuel from Clark AB, Philippines for over a week to create a JP-7 Fuel supply. The set-up was completed but SR-71 deployment Operations were never executed by President Carter.(BC)

31 Mar 1978

9 SRW awarded USAF Outstanding Unit Award for 1 Jul 1975- 30 Jun 1976 (9RW)

28 Sep 1978

Last and 88th Flight of NASA YF-12C(SR-71A #951) (LSW)

28 Oct 1978

YF-12C(SR-71A #951) retired from NASA . Now at Pima Air Museum, Tucson, AZ(LSW, LH)

7 Nov 1978

Cuban Over flights renewed thru Apr 1983 (BB)

1 Feb 1979

Col. Franklin D. Shelton 9 SRW Commander thru 16 Jul 1980 (9RW)

12 Mar 1979

SR-71A #972 arrives at Det 4 for recon of Saudi Arabia & Yemen tensions, USAF Pilot/RSO: Rich Graham/ Don Emmons (SME)

Mar 1979

SR-71A # 972 Flies mission into Middle East for Yemen- Saudi Arabia tensions, USAF Pilot/RSO Buz Carpenter/John Murphy(BC)

28 Mar 1979

SR-71A #972 returns to Beale AFB, CA after deployment to Det 4, USAF Pilot/ RSO: Rich Graham/ Dom Emmons (SME)

31 Mar 1979

Det 4(RAF Mildenhall) activated (LSB; BB)

17 Apr 1979

SR-71A #979 deployed to Det 4 till 2 May (SME)

18 Oct 1979

SR-71A #976 deployed to Det 4 till 13 Nov (SME)

31 Oct 1979

Last Flight of NASA YF-12A #6935, and end of flight test program (BB)

7 Nov 1979

The last remaining YF-12A #6935 flown to USAF Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH; Pilot/RSO: Jim Sullivan/Upstrum (AM1; LSW; BB)

18 May 1980

Mt. St. Helens disaster relief flights (LSB; BB)

Jul 1980

Col Dave Young becomes 9th Wing Commander till July 1982(9RW)

1 Jul 1980

SR-71A #962 flies from Kadena AB to Diego Garcia to test facility, USAF Pilot/ RSO: Bob Crowder/ Don Emmons (SME; RG)

Aug 1980

Honeywell starts conversion of analog flight & inlet control system(AFICS) to digital automatic flight & inlet control system(DAFICS) (SME)

Oct 1980

SR-71A #955 flies S-Band Space Transponder to evaluate C-Band tracking, communication & navigation system for Space Shuttle (LSB)

14 Jan 1981 #960 flies from Kadena AB on Operational sortie to Diego Garcia, USAF Pilot/RSO Buz Carpenter/Tim Shaw(BC)

15 Jan 1981 960 Return flight from Diego Garcia to Kadena AB, USAF Pilot/RSO Buz Carpenter/Tim Shaw(BC)

6 Mar 1981

SR-71A #972 deployed to det 4 till 5 May 1981 (SME)

6 May 1981

Refueling tests with KC-10 #N110KC and SR-71A #955, USAF Pilot/RSO: Calvin Jewett/Bill Flanagan (SME)

1 Aug 1981

4029 Strategic Recon Training Sq formed to train SR-71 crews (BB)

12 Aug 1981

SR-71A #964 had to divert to Bodo, Norway, with low engine oil problem arose, USAF Pilot/RSO: B.C. Thomas/ Jay Reid (SME)

16 Aug 1981

SR-71A #964 returned from being diverted to Bodo, Norway, was nicknamed "Bodonian Express" USAF Pilot/RSO: B. C. Thomas/ Jay Reid (LSB; SME)

31 Aug 1981

C. L. "Kelly" Johnson announces that the SR-71 has had over 1000 missile launches against it, but none successful (BB)

15 Jan 1982

SR-71B #956 flies it's 1000th Sortie (LTR)

24 Feb 1982

9 SRW wins the 15 Air Force Outstanding Recon Wing and Crew for 1981 (9RW)

Jun 1982

Internal Navigation System(INS) changed to Singer-Kearfott SKN-2417 from the gyro flight reference system (SME)

20 Jul 1982

Col. T. S. Pugh becomes 9 SRW Commander thru 22 Jul 1983 (9RW)

17 Mar 1983

SR-71A # 955 conducted aerial refueling tests with KC-10, USAF Pilot/ RSO: Thomas Tilden/ J.T. Vida (SME)

18 Apr 1983

SAC awards the 9 SRW the Outstanding Unit Award for 1 Jul 1981 thru 20 Jun 1982 (9RW)

1 Jul 1983

SR-71A #955 flies the first ASARS-1 familiarization flight, USAF Pilot/ RSO: B.C. Thomas/ John Morgan (SME)

9 Jul 1983

SR-71A #955 arrives at Det 4, as #962, to test ASARS-1 (SME)

23 Jul 1983

Col. D. H. Pinsky becomes 9 SRW Acting Commander thru 3 Aug 1983 (9RW)

4 Aug 1983

Col. G. V. Freese becomes 9 SRW Commander thru 28 Jan 1985 (9RW)

10 Nov 1983

9 SRW awarded Best Active Duty Tanker Unit and best unit in SAC Bombing and Navigation competition (9RW)

5 Apr 1984

British Government announces that they will permit 2 SR-71s to be based at RAF Mildenhall, UK(Det 4) (SME)

1 Nov 1984

9 SRW Tanker crew awarded the Navigation Trophy in the SAC Bombing and Navigation Competition (9RW)

7 Nov 1984

First Nicaraguan SR-71 over flights from Beale AFB; USAF Pilot/RSO: Bob Behler/ Ron

Tabor (flew 3 of 6 sorties) (SME; BB)

24 Jan 1985

Last flight and 722nd sortie of SR-71A #955, USAF Pilot/RSO: Thomas Tilden/ Bill Flanagan (SME)

28 Jan 1985

Col. D. H. Pinsky becomes 9 SRW Commander thru 17 Jul 1987 (9RW)

28 Jan 1985

SR-71A #955 did runway roughness evaluation then was parked at Palmdale, CA; USAF Pilot/RSO: Thomas Tilden/Bill Flanagan; (now on display at USAF Flight Test Center museum, Edwards AFB, CA) (SME; LSW)

20 Apr 1985

Gen Jerry O'Malley & wife Diane and Crew of T-39 were killed when landing in Western Pennsylvania (SME)

8 Aug 1985

SR barns at RAF Mildenhall used for the first time by SR-71A #962 (LSB)

18 Sep 1985

USAF Awards Jerome F. O'Malley Award for Best Recon Crew to USAF Pilot/RSO: Bob Behler/ Ron Tabor (9RW; PH)

Nov 1985

Honeywell completes conversion of SR from analog to digital auto. flight & inlet controls systems (SME)

7 Jan 1986

20th Anniversary of the SR-71s arrival at Beale AFB, CA

8 Feb 1986

9 SRW won 15th Air Force Outstanding Recon Wing for 1985 (9RW)

15 Apr 1986

SR-71A #980 performs post bombing damage assessment flights of Libya in support of Operation "Eldorado Canyon", USAF Pilot/RSO: Jerry Glasser/ Ron Tabor (SME; BB)

15 Apr 1986

First operational use of KC-10s(#30079; #30082; #30075) as refueling aircraft for SR-71 (TU; LSB; SME)

16 Apr 1986

SR-71A #960 performs post bombing damage assessment flights of Libya in support of Operation "Eldorado Canyon", USAF Pilot/RSO: Brian Shul/ Walter Watson (BB; UN)

17 Apr 1986

SR-71A #980 performs post bombing damage assessment flights of Libya in support of Operation "Eldorado Canyon", USAF Pilot/RSO: Bernie Smith/ Denny Whalen (BB; UN)

17 Jul 1987

Col. R. H. Graham becomes 9 SRW Commander thru 28 Nov 1988 (9RW)

21 Jul 1987

Last Flight of SR-71A #973; (Now on display at Blackbird Airpark, Palmdale, CA) (LSW)

22 Jul 1987

Giant Express Persian Gulf missions from Det 1; SR-71A #967; 11.2 hours USAF

Pilot/RSO: Mike Smith/ Doug Soifer

9 Aug 1987

Giant Express SR-71A #975 USAF pilot/RSO Terry Papas/John Manzi 11.1hours(JM)

20 Oct 1987

SR-71A Giant Express USAF Pilot/RSO: Warren McKendree/ Randy Shelhorse fly from Kadena AB to Iran on a Giant Express mission to look for Silkworm missile batteries in Iran during Iran-Iraq War 10.8 hrs.(SME)

26 Oct 1987

SR-71A Giant Express #967

5 Mar 1988

1 Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron celebrates 75th Anniversary; it is the oldest unit in the USAF (AFM)

30 Apr 1988

Giant Express SR-71A #974

6 Dec 1988

Col J. S. Savarda becomes 9 SRW Commander thru 12 Jun 1990 (9RW; BB)

21 Apr 1989

SR-71A #974 crashes off coast of Philippines, last SR lost by USA, Pilot/RSO: Dan House/Blair Bozek (SME; LSW)

1 Oct 1989

USAF SR-71 operations suspended except for minimum proficiency flights (LSW; BB)

22 Nov 1989

USAF SR-71 program officially terminated (Thanks Larry Welch) (SME; LSW; BB)

22 Dec 1989

SR-71A # 972

SR-71A #972. The SR-71's only appearance at Burbank. Three flybys in honor of all Lockheed employees and the 25th anniversary of the first flight. Kelly Johnson was present, and the last time he saw his beloved SR-71. Pilot/RSO: Yeilding/Fuhrman.(EY)

21 Jan 1990

Last SR-71 #962 left Kadena AB(Det 1) for Beale AFB, at 0500, Tail art: A tombstone which read: "Det 1 RIP 1968-1990" (BM)

26 Jan 1990

SR-71A #960. Supersonic Mach 3 over flight, airshow, landing and SR-71 Retirement Ceremony at Beale AFB attended by CincSac General Jack Chain and Ben Rich.

Pilot/RSO Rod Dyckman/Tom Bergam SR-71 is decommissioned at Beale AFB, CA (LSW, EY)

26 Jan 1990

Last Flight of SR-71A #960 (this was the high mission SR) from Beale AFB, CA to Castle AFB, CA; USAF Pilot/RSO: Steven Grzebiniak/ Jim Greenwood (LSW)

12 Feb 1990

Last flight of SR-71A #968, Beale AFB to Palmdale, CA, Now on display at the Virginia Aviation Museum, Richmond, VA. Set world record for endurance flying on 26 April 1971. (LSW, LH)

14 Feb 1990

Last flight of SR-71As #962 & #967, Beale AFB to Palmdale, CA, and was placed in flyable storage at AF Plant 2; #967 later flown by USAF Det 2, Edwards AFB, CA

(LSW)

15 Feb 1990

Last SAC sortie for SR-71A #980. Delivered to NASA, Edwards AFB. USAF Pilot/RSO: Terry Pappas/John Manzi(JM)

15 Feb 1990

Last Flight of SR-71A #975, Beale AFB to March AFB, CA, USAF Pilot: Terry Pappas/John Manzi(JM)

23 Feb 1990

Last Flight of SR-71A #958 (holds World Speed Record set 27-28 July '76), Beale AFB to Robins AFB, GA, USAF Pilot/RSO: Don Watkins/ Bob Fowlkes (LSW)

28 Feb 1990

Last flight of SR-71A #975, Beale AFB to March AFB, CA USAF Pilot/RSO Terry Pappas/John Manzi (JM)

6 Mar 1990

SR-71A #972 Smithsonian Delivery Flight and sets 4 World Records, Palmdale, Ca to Dulles Intl. Airport; USAF Pilot/RSO: Ed Yeilding/ J.T. Vida

US Coast to Coast(2404 miles): 67m. 54 s for 2124.5 mph

Los Angeles to Washington, DC(2299.67miles): 64 m. 20 s. for 2144.8 mph

Kansas City to Washington, DC(942 miles): 25 m 58.53s for 2176 mph

St. Louis to Cincinnati, OH(311.44 miles): 8 m 31.97s for 2189.94 mph

(LSW; BB, EY)

6 Mar 1990

Last Flight of SR-71A #979, Beale AFB to Lackland AFB, TX; USAF Pilot/ RSO: Steven Grzebiniak/ Stanley Gudmundson (LSW)

19 Mar 1990

SR-71A #971 delivered to NASA DFRC

20 Mar 1990

Last Flight of SR-71A #964, Beale AFB to Offutt AFB, NE; USAF Pilot/ RSO: Terry Pappas/ Mike Finan (LSW; BB)

27 Mar 1990

Last Flight of SR-71A #976 , Beale AFB to USAF Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH; USAF Pilot/RSO: Don Watkins/ Bob Fowlkes (this SR flew first operational sortie 21 Mar 1968) (LSW; BB; PH)

Jun 1990

Col Tom Keck becomes the 9th Wing Commander until Nov 1991(9RW)

22 Dec 1990

Clarence "Kelly" Johnson dies at the age of 80

23 Dec 1990

Ben Rich retires as the Head of the Skunk Works

1 Jul 1991

NASA Pilot: Steve Ishmael initial flight in SR-71B #956 (BB)

25 Jul 1991

SR-71B #956(NASA #831) Officially delivered to NASA Dryden, Edwards AFB, CA (BB)

14 Aug 1991

Rogers Smith (NASA Pilot) first SR-71 flight. First all-NASA flight

3 Oct 1991

Marta Bohn-Mayer first flight becomes first Female SR crew-member (BB)

9 Oct 1991

Robert Meyer (NASA Pilot) first SR-71 flight

27 Oct 1991

A-12 art. #128/#6931 delivered to Minnesota ANG Museum, by NY ANG C-5 (SME; JG)

Nov 1991

Col Rich Young becomes 9th Wing commander till (9RW)

19 Sep 1992

Joseph T. Vida (high time SR Crew member) passes away (RG)

24 Sep 1992

First NASA flight with SR-71 #980 (NASA 844) Crew- Steve Ishmael/Marta Bohn-Meyer

9 Mar 1993

NASA's first flight test in SR-71 (LSW)

Jul 1994

BGen Bill Rutledge becomes the 9th Wing Commander until Sep 1995(9RW)

28 Sep 1994

Congress votes to allocate \$100 million for reactivation of 3 SR-71s (RG)

18 Oct 1994

Ed Schneider (NASA Pilot) first SR-71 flight

5 Jan 1995

Ben Rich dies at the age of 69 (AWST)

12 Jan 1995

SR-71A NASA #832 (USAF #971) flown from Edwards AFB, CA to Palmdale, CA for overhaul before USAF "borrows" it; NASA Pilot/RSO: Steve Ishmael/ Marta Bohn-Mayer (AFNS; LS)

Mar 1995

ACC selected three crews for the reactivation of the SR-71, Pilots: Gil Luloff, Tom McCleary, Don Watkins; and RSOs: Blair Bozek, Michael Finan, Jim Greenwood (RG)

26 Apr 1995

SR-71A #971 (ex-NASA #832) flown for the first time after reactivation and renovation at Air Force Plant 42, Palmdale, CA; NASA Crew: Ed Schneider, Marta Bohn-Meyer; Sortie #1054-1; Low and slow (AS #1)

25 May 1995

SR-71 # 980 (NASA 844) returned to Skunk Works in Palmdale for modification to carry the Linear Aerospike SR-71 Experiment (LASRE)

27 Jun 1995

LtCol Gil Luloff has first SR-71B flight of reactivated SR-71 crew

28 Jun 1995

First reactivated SR-71 returns to USAF inventory, Dennis E. Thompson (Lockheed) presented SR-71 #971 to Gen. Bill Rutledge (9RW CO) in a ceremony at Air Force Plant 42 (AFNS; AWST)

27 Jun 1995

First USAF flight for (Lt. Cols. Gil Luloff, Mike Finan) crew flies reactivated SR-71 #971; 80,100 ft at Mach 3.23 for 2.5 hours; Sortie #1060-7 (AS #1)

28 Aug 1995

SR-71A #967 makes "maiden" flight after being refurbished by Lockheed Martin Skunk Works; NASA crew: Ed Schneider, Bob Meyer; Sortie #854-1; Low and slow (LS & AS #1)

29 Aug 1995

Crew #1 Mission Ready (MR) Lt. Cols. Luloff and Finan (AS #1)

Sep 1995

BGen Robert Behler becomes 9th Wing commander serves till April 1997

17 Jan 1996

Lt. Cols. Don Watkins and Jim Greenwood make flight in SR- 71A #971; 80,100 ft at Mach 3.25 for 2.5 hour, Sortie #105-22, from Palmdale, CA (AS #1)

30 Jan 1996

SR-71 #967 Leaves Palmdale and arrives at Edwards AFB, CA Det2/ 9RW at approx. 1:30pm; after a 1.5 hour flight; USAF Pilot/RSO: Tom McCleary/ Michael Finan (TL)

1 Feb 1996

Second aircraft delivered to Det. 2/ 9 RW, Edwards AFB, CA from Palmdale, CA; SR-71A #971; USAF Pilot/RSO: Lt. Cols. Tom McCleary/ Mike Greenwood; 77,200 ft at Mach 3.05 for 2.7 hours (AS #1)

15 Feb 1996

SR-71 #967 First flight test of real time data transmission at Det 2; USAF Pilot/RSO: Lt. Cols. Tom McCleary/Mike Finan; 72,700 ft at Mach 3.01 for 3.1 hours (AS #1 & AWST)

14 Mar 1996

SR-71A #980 (NASA 844) returned to DFRC

15 Apr 1996

Deputy Defense Secretary John White, directed the Air Force to ground the Air Force's SR-71s due to conflicting language in section 304 of the National Security Act of 1947, and Section 102 of the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY-96 (-Inside the Air Force; RG; AWST)

21 Sep 1996

House and Senate Appropriation committees have agreed to fund the Air Force's 2 operational SR-71s for Fiscal Year 1997. (-RG; RON)

1 Jan 1997

SR-71 and crews are operational at Det 2, Edwards AFB, CA (RG; AFNS)

24 Jun 1997

Maj Bert Garrison first flight SR-71 flight. Last USAF pilot checked out in SR-71.

18 Apr 1997

BGen. Charles Simpson assumes command of 9th RW until Jun 1999 (SS)

19 Aug 1997

The first new Air Force SR-71 crew in nine years soloed today at Det 2 Edwards AFB, CA. Major Bert Garrison(Pilot) and Capt. Domingo Ochotorena(RSO) (SS)

26 Aug 1997

NASA mated the LASRE engine with NASA SR-71 #844 (PM; RON)

Sep 1997

Second new crew was selected to fly the SR-71; Capt Greg Barker(Pilot), Capt Dale Zimmerman(RSO) (RG)

15 Oct 1997

President Clinton Kills SR Funding with Line Item Veto (RG, AH, ABC News)

10 Oct 1997

Last flight of SR-71 #967

19 Oct 1997

Last Flight of SR-71B #956 (NASA 831) Flight #1454/3967.5 hours at Edwards AFB
Open House Crew Ed Schneider/Robert Meyer

31 Oct 1997

NASA SR-71 #844 (AF #980/Lockheed #2031) Flew for the first time with the
Aerospike engine piggybacked on it, this is the first in a series of flights in the
LASRE(Linear Aerospike and SR-71 Experiment). It reached a speed of Mach 1.19 at an
altitude of 27,000-33,000 ft. (NASA, AWST)

4 Mar 1998

First cold flow test of LASRE in flight on SR-71A #980(NASA #844)

29 Oct 1998

Final LASRE test flight on SR-71A #980 (NASA 844)

3 Dec 1998

Det 2/9RW holds "Final Salute" ceremony at Edwards AFB. SR-71A #9667 performs
dual afterburner ground engine run at night for ceremony

Jun 1999

BGen Kevin Chilton takes over command of 9th Wing until Sept 2000(9RW)

9 Oct 1999

Last flight of SR-71A #980 (NASA 844) Flight #734/2353.6 hours at Edwards AFB
Open House. Crew Rogers Smith/Robert Meyer. Mach 3.21/80,100ft(BC)

14 Sep 2002

SR-71A # 980 (NASA 844) placed on display in front of NASA DFRC()

24 Mar 2003

SR-71B #956 moved from NASA DFRC to Kalamazoo Air Museum, Mich

30 Apr 2003

SR-71A #971 moved from Edwards AFB to Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum,
McMinnville, OR.

Sep 2003

SR-71A # 967 moved from Edwards AFB to Eighth Air Force Museum, Barksdale AFB,
LA

Oct 2007

Air Force sends disposal crews to SR-71 storage facility at Marine Corps Logistics Base
in Barstow, CA to dispose and/or destroy all of the remaining SR -71 spare parts

Information for this timeline was researched from these sources:

ADR -A. D. Rossetti

AH -Art Hanley

AMI – “Aerofax Minigraph #1” Jay Miller
AFNS – USAF News Service
AS1 – Anonymous Source #1
AWST – Aviation Week & Space Technology
BB – Buddy Brown
BC – Buz Carpenter
BIA – “SR-71 Blackbird in Action” Lou Drendel
BM – Bob Miller
CC – Dr. Coy Cross
CIA – CIA Historian
DB – Donn Byrnes
EY – Ed Yeilding
FM – Frank Murray
GM – Gil Martinez
HF – High Flyer (new name of Beale AFB newspaper)
JM – John Manzi
JS – Jim Shelton
LB – “Lockheed Blackbirds” Anthony M. Thornborough & Peter E. Davies
LE – Larry Elliott
LH – Leland Haines
LS – Lockheed Skunk Works Star
LSB – “Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird” Paul F. Crickmore
LSW – “Lockheed Skunk Works – The First 50 Years” Jay Miller
LTR – Lockheed Tech Rep
NASA – National Air and Space Administration Public Affairs
PH – Pat Halloran
PM – Peter Merlin
RG – Richard H. Graham
RK – Ron Kloetzli
RLL – LtCol Russell L. Lewis
RON – Ron Girouard
SME – “Lockheed “SR-71: The Secret Missions Exposed” Paul F. Crickmore
SS – Space Sentinel (Beale AFB newspaper, also see “HF”)
SW – “Skunk Works” Ben Rich & Leo Janos
TB – Tony Bevacqua
TL – Tony Landis
TS – Tom Schmittou
UN – “The Untouchables” Brian Shul & Walter Watson
WJC – Bill Campbell
9RW – 9th Reconnaissance Wing History