

Time Line of the SR-71

This chronological history of the SR-71 was compiled from various sources, including my first hand witness, and was created to become a testament to an aircraft which by all accounts is the standard by which others should be measured. Any chronological history of the SR-71 must include leading events which resulted in the creation the aircraft. This Time Line will therefore contain events which might not, at first read, seem to be related to the SR-71. To fully appreciate the story of the SR-71 it is important to understand a little of the world into which this aircraft was born.

This time line was started in the hope that it would become a place where others who know of additional events will freely add their information. Additionally, some items may need some corrections.

Initial Compilation: 2002

Don Hildebrant

SSgt, USAF, February 1967 through February 1974

SR-71, Astroinertial Navigation System Technician

Beale AFB 1968 – 1974

4 TDY Trips to Okinawa during this period

1910/February/27 - Clarence Leonard “Kelly” Johnson is born in Ishpeming Michigan.

1916 - The first American military reconnaissance flight ever flown. It was flown in a Curtiss Flyer over France by the 9th Wing. The 9th Wing later became the unit to fly SR-71 missions from its home base of Beale Air Force Base California and it's various operational units. The most notable of these was Detachment 1 (DET 1) at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa.

1933 - Clarence L. “Kelly” Johnson joins Lockheed Aircraft Corporation as a fledgling Engineer. He excels at aircraft design and was the principal designer and builder of the P-38 Lightning. The P-38 was the most maneuverable propeller driven fighter in World War II.

1942/October - The Army opens Camp Beale in the rolling foothills of California about 50 miles north of Sacramento and 15 miles east of Marysville. The Camp was named after a son of the Old West, General Edward F. Beale. He was an Annapolis graduate and later served in the Army during the Mexican War. He began the Army's Camel Corp in California but that program was ended after then Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, lost his position with an administration change. He later became Superintendent of Indian Affairs in California. He was Surveyor General of California under Abraham Lincoln and acquired vast land holding in California.

Camp Beale was used as a prisoner of war camp for Germans during WW II. On the base, there still (1970) exists concrete structures and ruins that were used for this purpose.

1943 - The United States watches as the first German jet fighters appear in the war over Europe. The War Department turns to Kelly Johnson to build a jet fighter prototype. Kelly declares that he can design and build a new jet fighter aircraft, the XP-80, in just 180 days. His challenge to Lockheed management is called and he is allowed to hand-pick 22 Engineers and a number of mechanics. He sets up shop in a small assembly shed on the Lockheed facility in Burbank California. To get the needed room and to save money, Kelly sets up a big circus tent for his operation. They worked in war time total secrecy, with total autonomy and produce the first operational American jet fighter aircraft, the P-80 Shooting Star in just 143 days. It was June 1943 and the legendary Skunk Works was born. Kelly Johnson's motto was, “be quick, be quiet, be on time”.

The official name of the Skunk Works was The Advanced Design Projects Office. The nick name Skunk Works was taken from the Li'l Abner cartoon strip by Al Capp. In the cartoon strip, the character Injun Joe, operated the "Dogpatch Kickapoo Joy Juice Factory" (a still) in the local woods. Injun Joe would toss old worn shoes, dead skunks, etc. into his smoldering vat to make the legendary Kickapoo Joy Juice. Injun Joe's operation was a super secret affair and was known in the cartoon strip as the Skunk Works because of the foul smell it gave off. Nobody knows for certain, but, it was rumored that the nickname Skunk Works became popular after one of the Kelly's Engineers answered the phone one day, "The Skunk Works may I help you"?

1947 - The CIA is created by the National Security Act

After World War II, the United States is conducting secret reconnaissance over flights of the Soviet Union with B-57's. The US was worried about the Soviet military and desperately wanted to know what was going on. These reconnaissance flights are not deep penetration flights. They only covered the border areas over Soviet space. They were however, vulnerable to Soviet countermeasures. Until the development of the U-2 and its first use in 1956, hundreds of airmen were lost when their bombers were shot down over the Soviet Union. The United States kept this secret because they didn't want to admit to these operations. The Soviet Union kept it a secret because they didn't want to admit that they could be over flown with such ease.

1948 - Camp Beale is acquired by the new United States Air Force.

1953 - President Eisenhower proposed to Khrushchev to allow unfettered over flights by both nations to photograph military installations as a way to stabilize the situation. When Khrushchev refused, Eisenhower gave the green light for the development of a reconnaissance aircraft capable of over flights of the Soviet Union above the range of Soviet counter measures.

Eisenhower states; "I think our country needs this kind of information and I approve this project of reconnaissance flights. But I am warning you, one of these days one of these planes is going to be caught. When that happens we're going to have a hell of a problem on our hands.."

Eisenhower categorically refused the possibility of letting someone from the US Air Force fly one of the aircraft. Eisenhower states; "If such an aircraft was to be shot down whilst it was flying over the Soviet Union, I'd prefer it to be a civilian aircraft with a civilian pilot, the provocation would then be slightly less in the eyes of the Communists..."

1953/March - CIA issues a specification for a reconnaissance aircraft capable of 70,000 feet and a range of 1,750 miles. This leads to a contract with the Lockheed Skunk Works to develop an aircraft we know as the U-2. The U-2 program was code named ANGEL at the Skunk Works.

1954 - CIA Director, Allen Dulles, appointed Richard M. Bissell as his special assistant for planning and coordination to oversee the U-2 program. The CIA used the code name PROJECT AQUATONE.

To help mislead the Communist Intelligence Service, the aircraft was designated U signifying 'Utility' in the US Air Force designation code.

1954/January - The construction of the first few U-2 aircrafts are nearing completion and flight tests will soon begin. Lockheed's chief test pilot Tony LeVier was ordered, by Kelly Johnson, to find a suitable site for secret testing of the U-2.

1954/November - Lockheed chief test pilot Tony LeVier and chief Skunk Works foreman Dorsey Kammerer set out in a Lockheed owned Beechcraft Bonanza on a secret mission to search for a suitable U-2 test site. They told everyone they were going on a hunting trip in Mexico. They dressed and packed appropriately to keep their hunting trip cover realistic. During their two week mission, they photographed and explored

desert areas which had potential as a test site in southern California, Nevada and Arizona. Groom Lake in Nevada came in as the top choice from hundreds of possible sites. Groom Lake is a dry lake bed located about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas Nevada and just south of Bald Mountain. At that time, there was no highway 375 or the town of Rachel. Groom Lake was located on the Nevada Nuclear test grounds which had been divided into numbered area grids during atomic bomb testing. Groom Lake was on the grid number 51. This was the infamous Area 51 before it became widely known as Area 51.

1954/December/9 - The CIA signs a contract to buy the first batch of twenty U-2 aircraft.

1955 - Groom Lake begins its readiness for operations. All work (runways, hangers, quarters, water wells, sewers, etc.) is contracted through the C.L.J. Construction Firm (C.L.J. are the initials of Kelly Johnson). All contracts were paid in cash with funds obtained secretly from the CIA. Kelly would find blank envelopes of cash in his home mail box from time to time and use this to obtain the services needed.

1955/July - Groom Lake flight center is ready for U-2 test flights.

Groom Lake was also known as Home Plate, Watertown Strip, Area 51, Paradise Ranch, The Ranch or Dreamland. Watertown Strip was the CIA's semi-official name.

1955/July/24 - The first U-2 was flown in parts to Groom Lake on a C-124 Globemaster. All flights carrying U-2s to Groom Lake were accomplished at night to avoid attention. The C-124s flew to Groom Lake in complete darkness and the runway lights were only turned on at the last few minutes before landing. The C-124 pilots, flying in total darkness, were amazed to suddenly see a runway pop up.

1955/August/4 - First flight of a U-2 (article 341), the pilot was Tony LeVier. The term "article" was a Skunk Works designation which was similar to the term "serial number".

1955/October - Tony LeVier leaves Groom Lake (never to return) to become director of flight operations at Lockheed.

1955 - During test flights of the U-2, the then world altitude record of 64,000 feet was routinely broken by thousands of feet. However, that fact was a secret at the time.

1956/May - J-58 engines come under contract at Pratt & Whitney. The Pratt & Whitney J-58 after burning bypass turbojet engine were used in the SR-71s. The engines were originally intended for Navy aircrafts.

1956/May/7 - National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) announces the start of a new research program and a new airplane, the Lockheed U-2. This was the first public acknowledgement of the existence of the U-2. The NACA announcement listed, high altitude research, air turbulence studies, connective cloud tests, wind shear testing, jet stream research, cosmic rays studies, ozone and water vapor studies. All this research happened much later. The U-2 was a spy plane, the research projects were just a cover story.

1956/June - U-2s declared operational

1956/July/4 - U-2s conduct the first "Operation Overflight" out of Weisbaden West Germany. This mission was an overflight of the Soviet Union. This operation was under the cover designation of 1st Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, Provisional (WRSP-1). Other operational locations followed; WRSP-2 in Incirlik Turkey, WRSP-3 in Atsugi Japan.

1956/July/9 - The NACA makes another announcement about the great research work being conducted with the U-2. It informs the public of the need to conduct these types of research flights overseas. This just another cover story to explain the presence of U-2 in Germany and other locations. Through out 1957, 1958 and 1959 the U-2 regularly over flew the Soviet Union at a rate of about once per month. The Soviets

tried in vain to intercept the U-2 flights. However, they continued to get closer with each attempt. The United States knew that it was only a matter of time before a U-2 would be lost over the Soviet Union.

1956/October/18 - Air Force cancels the design efforts of the REX hydrogen fueled engines. This engine design was later considered for the SR-71.

1957/Fall - CIA arranges with Skunk Works to study how speed and altitude effect the possibility of being shot down. The results of this study concluded that supersonic speed when combined with altitude and low radar cross section, greatly reduced the chances of detection and vulnerability to counter measures.

1957/Winter - The CIA asks Lockheed and Convair to propose high speed and high altitude designs.

1957/December/24 - First J-58 engine test run.

1958 - US becoming more concerned that the Soviets would soon be able to shoot down a U-2.

1958/April - Kelly Johnson proposes to build an aircraft that will fly 60% faster than the maximum dash capability of the top jet fighter and 5 miles higher than the U-2.

1958/April/21 - First mention of project ARCHANGEL in Kelly Johnson's diary. Since the new project was to replace the U-2 with a code name ANGEL, ARCHANGEL was a natural code name.

1958/July/23 - Kelly presents the Lockheed design concepts to the Land Advisory Committee.

1958/August/27 - Beale Air Force Base is fully operational under the Strategic Air Command with newly built 12,000 foot runways.

1958/September - Several ARCHANGEL design variations are under consideration at the Skunk Works. Lockheed's first Blackbird on the design board was the A-1. As the design considerations progressed, they were coded A-2, A-3, A-4, etc.

1958/November - The Land Advisory Committee reviews Lockheed's A-3 design and the Convair FISH proposal. The committee recommends and the CIA obtains \$100 million to fund detailed designs and to build 12 aircraft. Code named GUSTO.

1958/December - CIA requests funding for a Mach 3+ reconnaissance aircraft program.

1959/May - Lockheed design numbering is up to A-11.

1959/July/20 - The President is briefed on the current designs and gives final approval for a Mach 3+ program to get underway.

1959/August/29 - Lockheed and Convair submit proposals for Mach 3+ reconnaissance aircraft.

1959/September/3 - The CIA terminated project GUSTO and asks Lockheed to develop a U-2 follow-on aircraft under the CIA code name OXCART. The CIA authorizes Lockheed to proceed with antiradar studies, aerodynamic structural tests and Engineering designs.

1959/September/14 - CIA awards first research contract to Lockheed. Lockheed works on the OXCART program under the Lockheed code name of ARCHANGEL.

1959/November - Lockheed builds a full sized mock-up of the design at that time. It was secretly trailered to Groom Lake. It was hoisted on the top of a pylon and viewed from various angles with radar. From this

testing new features were added to reduce the radar image, including the distinctive chine feature. After some modifications the designation is changed from A-11 to A-12. The CIA contracts with Pratt & Whitney to build and test an initial three J-58 engines to be ready in early 1961 - Perkin-Elmer is selected as the primary camera supplier with Eastman-Kodak to build a backup design. Minneapolis-Honeywell is selected to develop the inertial navigation system and the automatic flight control system. Firewell and the David Clark Corporations became the primary suppliers of the pilot equipment and the associated life support systems.

1960 - Some time in the early 1960s the highly classified National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) was created. Its task was to combine reconnaissance operations at the CIA and Defense Department. The existence of the NRO was secret until 1992 when its general mission was made public. The SR-71 was one of the many assets available to the NRO. In 1960, Groom Lake began being referred to as area 51. Groom Lake was part of a large adjoining atomic test site. During the days of the atomic testing, the test site was divided up into nondescript numbered areas and Groom Lake just happened to be located in the section known as area 51.

1960/January/26 - CIA orders an initial five A-12 OXCART aircraft

1960/February - Lockheed begins its search for 24 pilots for the A-12. Test pilot Louis W. Schalk joins the program and starts by assisting with cockpit layout. Pilots were to be qualified in high performance fighter aircraft, 25-40 years old, and to be able fit into the A-12s cockpit, under 6 feet tall and under 175 pounds. The CIA also had numerous emotional stability and motivational requirements.

1960/February/11 - CIA signs the contract which ordered a full twelve OXCART aircraft.

1960/May/1 - Francis Gary Powers shot down over the Soviet Union near Sverdlovsk in a CIA operated U-2, article number 360. The flight originated from Peshawar Pakistan and was to end by landing at Bodo Norway. Powers was brought down by improved Soviet SA-2 missiles.

1960/September - Additions to Groom Lake are under construction to accommodate the A-12s. Lockheed supplied a C-47 shuttle from it's Burbank plant to Groom Lake. A D-18 was chartered to shuttle from Las Vegas. The law in Nevada required any contractors to be named if working/staying in the State for more than 48 hours. Since security did not permit release of the names, and, since Government employees were exempt from this State requirement, all contractors received appointments as Government consultants.

1960/September/7 through November 15 - New runway constructed at Groom Lake

1960/September - Kelly proposes to build a long range, very high speed interceptor to address a perceived Soviet threat.

1960/October - Letter sent to Lockheed to build and test three AF-12 interceptors. Project code name KEDLOCK.

1961/January - Kelly Johnson proposes an RS-12 dual-role strategic reconnaissance bomber. This idea doesn't go far due to an Air Force interest in the B-70 program.

1961/May/31 - A forward fuselage mockup of a AF-12 was completed and inspected by an Air Force group.

1961/June - Wind tunnel tests of the AF-12 design revealed that the revised A-12 nose and cockpit configuration caused directional stability problems at high Mach. In a effort to solve this, a large folding ventral stabilizer was added under the aft fuselage, and a small fixed ventral fin was added under each engine. This gave the AF-12 a very distinctive appearance. A thorough survey of the highway route from Burbank to Groom Lake was made to ascertain the hazards and problems of moving the A-12s to Groom

Lake. Planned package measured 35 feet wide and 105 feet long. Obstructing road signs had to be removed, trees trimmed and some roadsides leveled. Arrangements were made with police authorities and local officials.

1961/July/5 - General Curtis LeMay of the Air Force, expresses interest in a bomber version of the A-12. The Q-bay located behind the cockpits (later the ANS bay) was envisioned as the bomb bay.

1961/November - An initial five CIA pilots were selected. The search for other pilots continued. The final list of A-12 CIA pilots was:

William L. Skliar	Kenneth S. Collins	Walter R. Ray
Lon Walter	Mele Vojvodich Jr	Jack W. Weeks
Ronald "Jack" Layton	Dennis B. Sullivan	David P. Young
Francis J. Murray	Russell Scott	

USAF Colonel Robert J. Holbury was named commander of the Groom Lake facility.

1962 - Fuel tank farm completed and ready at Groom Lake with a capacity of 1,320,000 gallons.

1962/January - Agreement was reached with the Federal Aviation Agency that expanded the restricted airspace in the vicinity of Groom Lake to preserve and enhance security. Selected FAA air traffic controllers were cleared for the OXCART project to ensure they did not talk about what they might see. The North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) established procedures to prevent their radar stations from reporting the appearance of high performance aircraft on their radar scopes. Special tank farms were installed in California, at Eielson AFB Alaska, Thule AB Greenland, Kadena AB Okinawa and Adana Turkey. Very small detachments of technicians were deployed at these facilities to maintain the specially refined fuel which was reserved for the OXCART project. A-12 (924), CIA Article #121 (the first Blackbird) received its final tests and checkouts at the Lockheed Burbank plant (Skunk Works).

1962/February/10 - Francis Gary Powers is released from Soviet prison and exchanged for a KGB Agent, Rudolf Abel

1962/February/26 - A-12 (924) is disassembled and placed in a specially designed trailer (costing \$100,000) 105 feet long and 35 feet wide for transport to Groom Lake.

1962/February/28 - The first A-12 (924) arrives at Groom Lake.

1962/Spring - Support aircraft and equipment began arriving at Groom Lake.

1962/April - Lockheed begins working on concepts that would later become the SR-71

1962/April/24 - First A-12 (924) engine test runs completed, high speed taxi tests. Pilot Lou Schalk. Accidental lifts off for a few seconds (first actual flight but not considered official).

1962/April/26 - First true A-12 (924) flight. Pilot Lou Schalk. 33 minutes, less than 300 knots. At Groom Lake. Blackbirds fly!

1962/April/30 - OXCART's first "official" flight, A-12 (924). Witnessed by a number of CIA and Air Force representatives. Pilot Lou Schalk. 340 knots, 30,000 feet, 59 minutes. This flight was just under one year later than originally planned.

Bill Parks joins the pilot program.

1962/May/2 or 4 - OXCART broke the sound barrier for the first time at Mach 1.1 using A-12 (924). Then Director of the CIA, John McCone sent a telegram of congratulation to Kelly Johnson.

1962/May - Promotional flights for McNamara were launched. Edwards AFB to Orlando FL (1 hour 28 minutes). San Diego CA to Savannah Beach GA (59 minutes)

1962/June/13 - SR-71 mock-up reviewed by Air Force officials.

1962/June/26 - Second A-12 (925) arrives at Groom Lake

1962/July/30 - J-58 completes pre-flight testing

1962/Summer - Lockheed working simultaneously on the A-12 and the AF-12 programs

1962/August - Third A-12 (926) arrives at Groom Lake. Jim Eastman joins the pilot program. A-12 (925) first flight at Groom Lake. CIA letter of intent for \$1 million for the YF-12 is sent to Lockheed

1962/October/5 - Start of engine change from J-75 to J-58. A-12 flights with one J-75 and one J-58 engine.

1962/October/10 - The CIA authorized Lockheed to study a new Drone program code named TAGBOARD. Within the Skunk Works, the drone was known as Q-12. As work progressed it was given the D-21 designation. For the TAGBOARD project Lockheed built two M-21 aircraft. The M-21 was not a modified A-12 but it did have only a few differences from the A-12. The D-21 stood for "daughter" and the M-21 stood for "mother". The 21 designation was simply 12 reversed to avoid confusion.

1962/October/14 - U2 flight over Cuba discovers Soviet ballistic missile base.

1962/October/27 - A U2 was shot down by a SAM over Cuba. The pilot, Rudolph Anderson was killed. The OXCART program goes into high gear.

1962/November - The only A-12 trainer arrives at Groom Lake. A-12 (927) was a two seater version intended for pilot training. The A-12B trainer was known as The Titanium Goose.

1962/December/3 - By the end of 1962, only two A-12s were engaged in flight tests. Full test speeds could not be reached since the J-58 engines were not fully available and were experiencing problems. CIA Director, McCone wrote to the President of United Aircraft Corporation (the parent company of Pratt & Whitney) and made a clear case by stating "I have been advised that the J-58 engine deliveries have been delayed again due to engine control problems. . . by the end of the year it appears we will have barely enough J-58 engines to support the flight test program adequately. . . Furthermore, due to various engine difficulties we have not yet reached design speed and altitude. Engine thrust and fuel consumption deficiencies at present prevent sustained flight at design conditions which is so necessary to complete development". By the end of January 1963, ten engines were available and the first flight with two J-58 engines occurred on January 15.

1962/December/7 - A full scale mock-up of the proposed D-21 drone was completed.

1962/December/17 - The 5th A-12 (928) arrives at Groom Lake. The Air Force expresses an interest in obtaining reconnaissance versions of the Blackbird. Lockheed obtains a USAF contract to build six SR-71s

1962/December/28 - Began weapons system developments for the AF-12. Kelly Johnson obtained approval to design a Mach 3 Blackbird fighter / bomber

1963/January - First flight of the A-12 (927) trainer, the Titanium Goose. Robert Gililand joins the pilot program. Ten J-58 engines arrive at Groom Lake. All A-12s were fitted with J-58 engines and the flight test program goes to three-shift work days.

1963/January/15 - First A-12 flight with dual J-58 engines. At speeds of Mach 2.4-2.8 the aircraft experienced such severe roughness that it was looking as if the program could not move forward. The trouble was diagnosed as being in the air inlet system of the engines. After a considerable period of experimentation the problem was solved.

1963/February/18 - Air Force authorizes the initial construction of the first six SR-71s. These aircrafts were designated R-12s. The project code name was SENIOR CROWN.

1963/May/24 - First loss of a Blackbird. A-12 (926) was lost due to instrument failure. Pilot Ken Collins ejected and was unharmed. The crash occurred 14 miles south of Wendover, Utah. The wreckage was recovered in two days. Local residents signed secrecy agreements and the press was told that an F-105 had crashed.

1963/May/31 - The mockup of the AF-12 (YF-12) is shown to the USAF.

1963/June/13 - Initial mockup review of the R-12 (SR-71) by the USAF.

1963/July - First AF-12 was trucked to Groom Lake

1963/July/1 - Air Force authorizes the construction of an additional 25 SR-71s

1963/July/20 - First A-12 Mach 3 flight. Pilot Lou Schalk.

1963/August - Production of the D-21 drones begins

1963/August/7 - First AF-12 (934) test flight. Pilot James Eastham.

1963/November/22 - President Kennedy assassinated

1963/November/29 - President Johnson called a National Security Council meeting to discuss whether to, or how to, release the technological aspects of the OXCART program.

1963/November - The design speed of Mach 3.2 was achieved by an A-12. Altitude 78,000 feet

1963/December/11 - Final Air Force review of R-12 (SR-71)

1963/December/17 - A-12 (928) arrives at Groom Lake.

1963/December - Nine A-12s in Service. The YF-12s (AF-12s) were fully ready for test launches of the GAR-9 air-to-air missiles.

1964/February - The B-58 testing of the GAR-9 air-to-air missile was canceled.

1964/February/4 - A-12 (924) sustained flight at Mach 3+ and altitude. Pilot James Eastham reached Mach 3.3 at 83,000 feet for just over 10 minutes. Aircraft heated to 800 F. Wiring insulation was burned and the aircraft was almost lost. All A-12s grounded for 6 weeks while Lockheed replaced all wiring in all the A-12s.

1964/February/7 - First photo of a YF-12 released. Aircraft 934.

1964/February/29 - President Johnson announced, "the United States has successfully developed an advanced experimental jet aircraft, the A-11, which has been tested in sustained flight at more than 2,000 mph and at altitudes in excess of 70,000 feet. The performance of the A-11 far exceeds that of any other

aircraft in the world today. The development of this aircraft has been made possible by major advances in aircraft technology of great significance to both military and commercial applications. Several A-11 aircraft are now being flight tested at Edwards AFB in California... The A-11 aircraft now at Edwards AFB are undergoing extensive tests to determine their capabilities as long-range interceptors.” The proper designation of the A-11s that President Johnson referred to was the AF-12. The A-11 reference was used to mislead intelligence sources. Also, there were no Blackbirds at Edwards AFB at that time. Following the Presidents announcement, the AF-12 officially was changed to YF-12A. The YF-12 program became an overt operation while the A-12 OXCART was to remain a black program at Groom Lake.

1964/March - Construction on the first six R-12s (SR-71) well under way

1964/March/13 - YF-12 (936) first flight by Jim Eastman. The Air Force designates the Lockheed R-12 as RS-71. This was the follow on number of the RS-70 version of the XB-70.

1964/April/1 - First M-21 flight (940)

1964/April/16 - The first XAIM-47A air-to-air missile is fired from a YF-12.

1964/June - Final A-12 (939) Article 133, delivered to Groom Lake

1964/June/19 - The first fit test of a D-21 to a M-21 (940) at the Skunk Works

1964/July/9 - Pilot Bill Park took A-12 (939) to a record altitude of 96,250 feet. The A-12 crashed on landing at Groom Lake due to an outboard aileron servo valve that was stuck. Pilot Bill Parks ejected safely.

1964/July/25 - President Johnson publicly revealed the existence of a new Air Force reconnaissance aircraft which he called the SR-71 instead of RS-71. The Air Force decided that it was easier to re-number the aircraft SR-71 than to correct the President. Thus we all know the aircraft as the SR-71 to this day.

1964/August/12 - The Air Force asked Lockheed to come up with a program to use an YF-12A to publicly break records. This was finally accomplished on May 1, 1965.

1964/October - Construction on the first SR-71 (950), completed

1964/Octobe/29 - First SR-71 (950) transported to the Palmdale test facility by specially design trailer. Air Force Plant 42, Site 2, Palmdale.

1964/December/7 - Beale Air Force Base, California, announced as the home base for SR-71s. Beale AFB was the home base of the SR-71 throughout its entire career

1964/December/22 - First captive flight test of an M-21 (940) and a D-21 drone. Pilot Bill Parks. First flight of an SR-71 (950) at Palmdale CA. Pilot Robert J. Gilliland. RSO seat empty.

1964/December - Eleven A-12s flying. Three YF-12s flying. Two M-21s flying. One SR-71 flying.

1965/January/1 - The 4200th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing activated at Beale AFB. Later (25 June 1966) it was changed to 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.

1965/January/9 - Pilot Jim Eastham sustained Mach 3.23 for 5 minutes in a YF-12A (934)

1965/January/27 - A-12 flown for 1 hour and 40 minutes above Mach 3.1 for a distance of 3,000 miles.

1965/March/18 - Secretary of Defense McNamara and Secretary of State Vance agree to build and operate a facility at Kadena AFB on the island of Okinawa. The operational name was BLACK SHIELD. The location on Kadena AFB was called area 19.

1965/March/18 - YF-12 testing of weapons systems. A drone is hit with a GAR-9 missile from 36 miles away at a closing rate of 2000 mph. Fired a missile from 75,000 feet and Mach 3.2 and hit a drone flying at 40,000 feet, 38 miles away.

1965/April - First Type III (60 inch focal length) cameras were delivered for the A-12 by Acton Corporation.

1965/May - YF-12 testing of weapons systems. Fired a missile from 75,000 feet and hit a remote-controlled B-47 flying over the Gulf of Mexico at 1,200 feet from 80 miles away.

1965/May/1 - Two YF-12s (934 & 936) demonstrate for VIPs at Edwards AFB.

934 sets a sustained altitude record of 80,257.65 feet and a 15/25 kilometer closed course record of 2,070.101 mph. Pilot Robert Stephens and Systems Officer Daniel Andre.

936 set a 500 kilometer closed course record of 1,643.042 mph. Pilot Walter Daniel and Systems Officer Noel Warner. 936 sets a 1000 kilometer closed course record of 1,688.891 mph. Pilot Walter Daniel and Systems Officer James Cooney.

1965/May/14 - The Air Force funded \$500,000 to continue Engineering work on the F-12B (the operational configuration of the YF-12A).

1965/August/5 - Director of the National Security Agency, General Marshall S. Carter, directed operational readiness for flights over Cuba. Code named SKYLARK. Due to priorities in Southeast Asia, SKYLARK was never launched.

1965/September/28 - An AIM-47 missile was fired from a YF-12A at Mach 3.2 flying at 75,000 feet. The missile missed its intended target 36 miles away flying at 40,000 feet by less than 7 feet.

1965/November/20 - Four A-12 aircraft selected to support operation BLACK SHIELD. Aircraft 930, 931, 932, 934 were selected. 931 remained at Groom Lake as backup. The actual deployment did not take place until May 22, 1967. Bill Park flew an A-12 at Mach 3.29 and an altitude of 90,000 feet with a sustained flight time above Mach 3.2 of 1 hour 14 minutes.

1965/November - OXCART program declared operational

1966/January/7 - The Air Force took delivery of its first SR-71. Aircraft 956 trainer, Pilot Doug Nelson (4200th SRW, Wing Commander) and instructor pilot Raymond Haupy. Arrived at Beale AFB CA.

1966/January/25 - SR-71 (952) came apart at Mach 3.17 and 80,000 feet due to pitch up accident. Pilot Bill Weaver and RSO Jim Zwayer ejected. Jim Zwayer was killed. Lost north of Tucumcary NM.

1966/March/5 - First successful launch of the Tagboard Drone (#503) from M-21 (941). Blackbird pilot Bill Parks. Takeoff from Groom Lake. Launched Drone over Pacific Ocean at 80,000 feet, Mach 3.2. Successful launch. Drone traveled 150 miles and ran out of fuel. Launch Control Officer was Heith Beswick.

1966/April/4 - First mission ready SR-71 (958) delivered to the Air Force at Beale AFB.

1966/April/25 - Two YF-12 were flown to Eglin AFB in Florida for firing trials. On the same day Jim Eastham fired an unarmed AIM-47 against a QB-47 flying 60,000 feet below. The missile passed through

the QB-47s horizontal stabilizer. The YF-12s scored an impressive 6 hits out of 7 attempts. The single miss was attributed to missile gyro defects.

1966/April/27 - Second successful launch of the TAGBOARD Drone (#506) from M-21 (941). Blackbird pilot Bill Park. Takeoff from Groom Lake. Launched Drone over Pacific Ocean at 80,000 feet, Mach 3.3. Successful launch. Drone traveled 1120 miles, Drone was lost due to hydraulic pump failure. Launch Control Officer was Ray Torrick.

1966/April/29 - 15 more D-21s are ordered.

1966/June/16 - Third test flight launch of the TAGBOARD Drone (#505). Bill Park pilot, Keith Beswick in back seat as launch operator. Launched Drone over Pacific Ocean. Successful launch. Drone traveled 1600 miles making eight programmed turns and collecting photographs at 92,000 feet and 4,000+ mph. Drone did not eject the film package due to electronic failure.

1966/June/25 - The 4200th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing it was changed to 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. The 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was organized as the unit to fly the SR-71.

1966/July/30 - Fourth test flight launch of the TAGBOARD Drone (#504) from M-21 (941). Bill Park Pilot, Ray Torrick Launch Control Officer. Launched Drone at Mach 3.25 over Pacific Ocean. Drone collides with the Blackbird causing it to spin wildly out of control. Bill and Ray both eject. Bill was picked up in a life raft 150 miles at sea. Ray's pressure suit was torn during the ejection and filled his pressure suit with sea water and he drowned before rescue teams could arrive.

1966/August - The M-21/D-21 program terminated. The D-21 drones would soon be modified for launch from a B-52. The B-52s of Beale AFB were used in this program code named SENIOR BOWL. Fewer than 5 B-52/D-21 operational flights took place.

1966/August/14 - YF-12 (934) is written off after an a landing accident at Edwards AFB. The rear of this YF-12 was used to build 61-7981, an SR-71C which became known as "The Bastard". This SR-71C is on display at Hill AFB Museum, Utah.

1966/December/12 - A Bureau of the Budget meeting was held to vote on three alternatives to continuing with both the OXCART and SENIOR CROWN programs. The final vote favored the termination of the OXCART program in January 1968, assuming an operational readiness date of September 1967 for the SR-71s, and assigning all missions to the SR-71 fleet.

1966/December/21 - Longest flight of a A-12 was flown by Bill Park. Lasted just under 6 hours and covered 10,198 miles. This mission was used to demonstrate the A-12s capabilities to support the BLACK SHIELD project in Okinawa.

1966/December/28 - President Johnson approves the termination of the OXCART program by 1 June 1968 (the A-12 program of the CIA)

1967/January/5 - A-12 (928) was lost near Callente Nevada. The aircraft ran out of fuel (due to a faulty fuel gauge) and crashed while on approach to Groom Dry Lake. CIA pilot Walt Ray ejected but did not survive due to a failure in his seat. He was found still strapped into the seat.

1967/January/10 - SR-71 (950), lost during wet runway brake testing at Edwards AFB. Pilot Art Peterson survived. The CIA informs the Department of Defense the A-12s would gradually be placed in storage with the process to be completed by the end of January 1967. This was later changed to allow some operational missions of the A-12 over Southeast Asia.

1967/April/13 -SR-71 (966) was lost. Pilot Earle Boone and RSO Butch Sheffield survived.

1967/April/17 - An SR-71 made the longest Mach 3 flight in history. The flight was over 14,000 miles. Pilot Robert L. Stephens (the Silver Fox), RSO Kenneth D. Hurley.

1967/May - The National Security Council was briefed that North Vietnam was about to receive surface-to-surface ballistic missiles. The A-12s were considered the best choice to obtain confirmation of these missiles. President Johnson approved the planned use of A-12s from Kadena AFB on Okinawa.

1967/May/17 - The notice to deploy to Kadena AFB arrives at Groom Lake.

1967/May/22 - Mele Vojvodich flew an A-12 (937) non-stop from Groom Lake to Kadena in 6 hours and 6 minutes, 6,873 miles. Due to the secrecy of the BLACK SHIELD operations, this flight was not recognized as a new transpacific speed record.

1967/May/24 - Jack Layton flew A-12 (930) non-stop from Groom Lake to Kadena in 5 hours and 55 minutes.

1967/May/26 - Jack Weeks flew A-12 (932) to Kadena. In route he had INS (Inertial Navigation System) and communication problems. He was forced to land at Wake Island. A recovery team arrived, repaired the problems and he arrived at Kadena on May 27.

1967/May/29 - The CIA operation BLACK SHIELD declared operational at Kadena AFB on Okinawa. CIA operational missions were called GIANT SCALE missions.

1967/May/31 - First operational mission of an A-12 (937). Pilot Mele Vojvodich. The target was North Vietnam. 70 of the known 190 SAM sites and 9 primary targets were photographed successfully. Flown at Mach 3.1, 80,000 feet, 3 hours 39 minutes.

1967/July/2 - First international flight of an SR-71 (972). During a training mission the ANS (Astroinertial Navigation System) failed and the aircraft accidentally flew into Mexico. Pilot Jim Watkins, RSO Dave Dempster.

1967/August - The Air Force decided not to continue the F-12B (YF-12A) program.

1967/October/25 - SR-71 (965) was lost during night training flight following an ANS platform failure. Aircraft crashed near Lovelock Nevada. Pilot Roy St Martin and RSO John Carnochan survived.

1967/October/28 - An A-12 obtains photos of SAM missiles being launched against the A-12.

1967/October/30 - A-12 (932) is the first and only Blackbird ever to sustain flak damage. Flown by Denny Sullivan. At least 6 missiles were fired and confirmed by photography. Pilot witnessed 3 missile detonations behind the A-12. Traveling at Mach 3.1, 84,000 feet. Post flight inspection revealed the flak damage.

1967/November/3 - Operation NICE GIRL, a fly-off pitting A-12s against SR-71s in an effort to demonstrate which aircraft had better performance. An A-12 and a SR-71 flew identical flight paths, separate in time by 1 hour, from north to south roughly above the Mississippi River. The data gathered was evaluated. The photo images of the A-12 were better but not to the point where information was lost using the SR-71 images. The SR-71 had other equipment which the A-12 did not have; infrared, sidelooking radar and ELINT equipment. The data was inconclusive. The A-12s were given a temporary reprieve in late November 1967.

1967/December/28 - A-12 (929) lost due to the newly-installed SAS (Stability Augmentation System) had the connections wired backwards, causing the airplane to lose complete control just seconds after takeoff from Groom Dry Lake; pilot Mele Vojvodich ejected safely at an altitude of 150 feet. Kelly Johnson receives the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award.

1968/January/5 - Lockheed receives the formal letter from the Air Force to not purchase the F-12B follow-on program. The USS Pueblo sails on its maiden operational voyage for the east coast of North Korea.

1968/January/11 - SR-71 (957) lost on final approach to Beale AFB due to a total electrical failure. Crashed on landing approach to Beale AFB. The instructor pilot Robert Sower and the student pilot David Fruehauf both ejected safely.

1968/January/23 - USS Pueblo seized by the North Koreans.

1968/January/24 - First A-12 flight over North Korea to observe the USS Pueblo. Pilot Frank Murray.

1968/February/1 - YF-12 program canceled by formal letter from the Air Force.

1968/February/5 - Lockheed ordered to destroy A-12, YF-12 and SR-71 tooling.

1968/February/19 - Second A-12 flight over North Korea

1968/March/8 - Last A-12 flight over North Vietnam. First SR-71A (978) arrives at Kadena AB to replace the A-12s

1968/March - USAF 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing operational at Kadena AFB Okinawa and taking over the BLACK SHIELD operations of the CIA. Originally, the USAF operation at Kadena AFB Okinawa was known as OL-8 (Operating Location 8). It was changed in 1970 to OL-RK (Operating Location Ryukyu). In 1971 it was changed to OL-KA (Operating Location Kadena). In August 1974 it was finally changed to Detachment 1. DET 1 is now the commonly used name for the operation at Kadena AFB Okinawa. Third SR-71 flown to Kadena AFB Okinawa by Bob Spencer and Kieth Branham

1968/March/21 - First SR-71 (976) operational mission over North Vietnam flown from Kadena Okinawa. Pilot Jerry O'Malley, RSO Ed Payne.

1968/May/8 - Second A-12 (937) flight to photograph the USS Pueblo detained by the North Koreans. This was also the last A-12 operational CIA flight from Kadena Okinawa. Pilot Jack Layton.

1968/May/16 - The OXCART program termination of 28 December 1966 was reaffirmed. A total of 29 OXCART operational flights had been made by the CIA since May 31, 1967.

1968/May/21 - President Johnson ends CIA operations at Kadena to be replaced by the USAF operations using SR-71 aircrafts.

1968/May/29 - CMSGT Bill Gormick starts tie-cutting tradition of Habu crews neck-ties.

1968/June/2 - Pilot Frank Murray performs a routine test flight near the Philippines in A-12 (932). During this flight engine problems occurred with a flame out and restart at subsonic speeds.

1968/June/5 - The A-12s at Kadena begin their flights back to Groom Lake and into storage. During a routine training and test flight before return to the US, A-12 (932) went down in the sea near the Philippines (NOTE: the official report says June 4, but most other sources say it was June 5), after exploding in flight at Mach 3 during a check flight prior to returning her stateside. The pilot, Jack Weeks was killed.

1968/June/7 - Frank Murray attempted to fly A-12 (937) back to Groom Lake but encounters a fuel leak and lands at Wake Island. A recovery team makes repairs. Pilot Ken Collins flies 937 to Hickam AFB in Hawaii where full service is performed. It took Frank Murray 3 more attempts before they were finally able to return 937 to Groom Lake.

1968/June/21 - Last flight of an A-12 (937) was flown from Groom Lake to Air Force Plant 42, Site 2, Palmdale CA. Flown by Frank Murray. All 9 remaining OXCART Blackbirds at the Palmdale facility were arranged into a tightly-regimented parking array in the corner of one of the large hangers, where they remained for more than 20 years (awaiting recall or dispersal to museums)

1968/June/26 - Deputy Director of the CIA, Vice-Adm Rufus Taylor presided over a ceremony at Groom Lake where he presented the CIA Intelligence Star of Valor to the A-12 pilots, Kenneth S. Collins, Ronald (Jack) L. Layton, Francis J. Murray, Dennis B. Sullivan and Mele Vojvodich for their participation in BLACK SHIELD. A posthumous award was given to Jack W. Weeks and accepted by his widow.

1968/October/10 - SR-71 (977) lost due to a wheel/tire failure on takeoff at Beale AFB on 10 October 1968. RSO Jim Kogler ejected, Pilot Gabriel Kardong rode the aircraft to a stop at the end of the runway. Both crew members unharmed.

1968/Winter - B-52 launches of TAGBOARD Drones over the open Pacific. The Captain Hook flights. 5 successful 2 failures over 14 month period.

1968/Winter - The SR-71 receives the nickname "Habu". The name was given by the Japanese on Okinawa because they said it looked like the Habu, a poisonous pit viper snake indigenous to the Ryukyu Islands.

1969/April/11 - SR-71 (954) was lost at Edwards AFB due to a wheel/tire failure on takeoff. It was being tested to determine problems associated with maximum gross weight takeoffs when a tire and wheel exploded, rupturing the left wing fuel tank causing a massive fire. Pilot Bill Skliar and RSO Noel Warner survived.

1969/June/5 - The Air Force agreed to allow NASA to use two YF-12s in a NASA program

1969/June/18 - The Air Force turns over two YF-12s (935 & 936) to NASA.

1969/July/18 - A public announcement was made of the NASA use of the YF-12s.

1969/November/9 - First SENIOR BOWL B-52 takes off from Beale AFB with 2 Tagboard Drones. Launches a drone for an over flight of China's Lop Nor nuclear test sight. Drone returned from mission but went off course and was lost.

1969/December/10 - First NASA flight of a YF-12 (935)

1969/December/18 - SR-71 (953) lost near Shoshee CA due to a pitch up accident. Pilot Joe Rogers and RSO Garry Heidlebaugh survived.

1970/May/10 - SR-71 (969) was lost due to a pitch up accident due to an improper center of gravity problem near Bangkok Thailand. Pilot Willie Lawson and RSO Gil Martinez survived.

1970/June/17 - SR-71 (970) was lost due to a pitch up accident during refueling resulting in a collision with the KC-135 tanker near El Paso TX. The pilot Buddy Brown and the RSO Mortimer Jarvis both ejected safely. The tanker made an emergency landing at Briggs Army Air Field near El Paso TX.

1970/October - Second SENIOR BOWL B-52 with 2 TAGBOARD Drones. Launches a drone for an over flight of China's Lop Nor nuclear test sight. Drone performed well and reached the rendezvous point. Upon dropping the photo load the chute failed to open and the package was lost at sea.

1971/March - Third SENIOR BOWL B-52 with 2 TAGBOARD Drones. Launches a drone for an over flight of China's Lop Nor nuclear test sight. Drone performed well and reached the rendezvous point. The photo package drop was good but the seas were heavy and the chute became entangled under the Navy recovery ship and the load was lost at sea.

1971/April - Fourth and final SENIOR BOWL B-52 with 2 TAGBOARD Drones. Launches a drone for an over flight of China's Lop Nor nuclear test sight. Drone was lost without a trace. It never returned from over China.

1971/June/24 - YF-12 (936) was lost at Edwards AFB due to a major in-flight fire in the right engine. Pilot Ronald (Jack) Layton and Billy Curtis ejected safely.

1971/July/23 - The SENIOR BOWL program which launched D-21 drones from B-52Hs was terminated

1971/July - The Air Force loans NASA SR-71 (951) as a replacement for 936. As a cover, 951 was renumbered 6006937 and designated as a YF-12C. This 937 number is not to be confused with the actual A-12 937, article 131.

1971/July/8 - TAGBOARD Drone program canceled. Ordered by the Defense Department to destroy all tooling.

1972/February/5 - First series of three SR-71 HABU flights launched at Kadena. At 14:16, 14:18 and 15:22. These missions were coordinated sorties to lay down sonic booms over the Hanoi Hilton POW camp. These flight were designed to show solidarity with the prisoners.

1972/May/4 - Second series of three SR-71 HABU flights launched at Kadena. At 14:16, 14:18 and 15:22. These missions were coordinated sorties to lay down sonic booms over the Hanoi Hilton POW camp. These flight were designed to show solidarity with the prisoners.

1972/May/24 - NASAs first flight of SR-71 (951) renumbered 6006937 and designated as a YF-12C.

1972/July/20 - SR-71 (978) lost at Kadena during a landing accident. Pilot Dennis Bush and RSO James Fagg both unharmed.

1973 -

1974/September - First SR-71 landed at RAF Mildenhall England for the Farnborough Air Show. The return flight from England was used to set a new world speed record from London to Los Angeles. Pilot Buck Adams and RSO Bill Machoreck flew the 5,645 mile trip in 3 hours and 47 minutes which set the new record.

1974/December/3 - First flight of the Big Tail SR-71 (959)

1975/January - Kelly Johnson retires as head of the Skunk Works

Some time during the late 1970s, the personnel at DET 1 became PCS (permanently stationed). Prior to this all personnel were on a TDY basis for approximately 4 month tours. PCS generally meant 12-18 month tours. The SR-71 crews, PSD, Tech Reps and KC-135Q crews were still used in TDY status.

1976 - During an operational flight, an SR-71 reached 85,068 feet.

1976/April - First operational deployment of a SR-71 (972) to RAF Mildenhall England (Detachment 4). The Mildenhall base was at that time was home to a U-2 operation. Two operational missions were attempted to the Barents Sea area but were aborted due to low fuel conditions.

1976/July - U-2s arrive at Beale AFB. Transferred from their former home base of Davis-Monthan AFB. When the U-2s came to Beale, the U-2 personnel began calling the SR-71 "The Sled". At times, SR-71 flight crews were referred to as Sled Drivers. A disparaging term of endearment.

1976/July/27 - SR-71 sets 100 KM closed course world speed record at 2092 mph.

1976/October/29 - Last flight of the Big Tail SR-71 (959)

1976/September/6 - SR-71 (962) arrives at DET 4.

1976/September/7 - First successful operational mission from DET 4. SR-71 (962) complete surveillance of Barent Sea area. Pilot Richard Graham, RSO Don ?.

1977 - Francis Gary Powers dies in a helicopter crash in Los Angeles.

1977/Spring - NASA could no longer afford to continue the Blackbird program and began plans to cancel the program.

1977/October/27 - NASA returns YF-12C (951) to the Air Force. It was placed in storage with the remaining nine A-12s at Plant 42 in Palmdale CA.

1977/November/7 - The NASA YF-12 (the sole remaining YF-12) made its final flight to the Air Force Museum. This ended the first and only Mach 3 fighter program.

1978 -

1979/March/31 - DET 4 at Mildenhall Royal Air Base in England formed. 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. Operational mission flown from DET 4 were called "GIANT REACH"

1979/April/20 - Operations at DET 4 start with SR-71 (972)

1979/November/7 - The last remaining YF-12 (935) was flown to the Air Force Museum at Wright-Paterson AFB, Dayton Ohio, and put on display.

1980 -

1981 -

1982/January/15 - SR-71B (956) flies its 1000th sortie.

1983 -

1984 -

1985 -

1986 -

1987 -

1988 -

1989/April/21 - SR-71 (974) was lost off the Philippines (0.25 miles north of the island of Luzon) due to an engine explosion. 974 was known as "Iche Ban". The crew ejected safely, made it to shore and were rescued by one of the island's former cannibal tribes. Pilot Dan House and RSO Blair Bozek survived.

1989 - DET 1 at Kadena AFB Okinawa was ordered to be disbanded.

1989/September/30 - SR-71 program terminated by Air Force and Intelligence officials.

1989/November/7 - Last training flight of an SR-71. Pilot Tom McCleary, RSO Stan Gudmundson. This flight was 21 years, 7 months, and 7 days after the first SR-71 flight.

1989/November/22 - Air Force SR-71 program officially terminated.

1989/December/20 - An SR-71 made a final pass down the Burbank runway to honor all those who worked in designing and producing the fastest air-breathing aircraft in the world. Kelly Johnson, long retired, and gravely ill, was there to watch.

1990/January/21 - Last SR-71 (962) left Kadena AFB. Tail art was a tombstone which read: "DET 1 RIP 1968-1990"

1990/January/26 - SR-71 is decommissioned at Beale AFB

1990/March/6 - What was to be the final flight of an SR-71 (972) set 4 international speed records while being delivered to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum at Dulles International Airport. Los Angeles to Washington DC, 2,404 miles, 67 minutes 54 seconds, 2404 miles at an average speed of 2124 MPH. Over Kansas City to Washington DC in 26 minutes. Over St. Louis to Cincinnati in 8 minutes, 32 seconds, a new city to city aviation record. It was also the first time that a sonic boom had transversed the entire length of the United States. Pilot Ed Yeilding and RSO T. "JT" Vida. SR-71s were retired from service. The SR-71 was the only operational military aircraft never to be shot down or lose a single crewman to enemy fire.

1990/December/21 - Kelly Johnson dies at age 80, at St Joseph Medical Center after an illness of many years. Kelly is buried at Forest Lawn (Hollywood Hills), Los Angeles, California.

1991/July/25 - SR-71B (956) (NASA #831) officially delivered to NASA Dryden

1991/October - Marta Bohn-Mayer becomes first female SR-71 crew member.

1992/June/1 - Strategic Air Command was inactivated. A new command was created, The Air Combat Command (ACC). The 9th SRW became part of this new command and its name was shortened to simply the 9th Reconnaissance Wing.

1993 -

1994/June/2 - Four D-21 drones delivered to NASA Dryden Flight Research Center for testing.

1994/September/19 - Congress passed the FY95 defense authorization bill and added \$100 million to bring three SR-71s out of storage.

1995/January/29 - The Air Force selected three former Habu crews to fly re-activated SR-71s.

1995/April/26 - The first re-activated SR-71 (971) (ex-NASA #832) flew its first sortie with a NASA crew.

1995/June/28 - The first re-activated SR-71 (971) returns to Air Force inventory

1995/August/28 - The second re-activated SR-71 (967) flew its first sortie.