

# Lockheed U 2 SR 71 Greg Goebel

Developed in the 1960s and operated by the United States Air Force (USAF) from 1964 to 1998, the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird was a supersonic, long-range, high-altitude strategic reconnaissance aircraft that set numerous world records during its service. The SR-71's combination of speed, altitude, and stealth capabilities made it nearly impossible to intercept or shoot down, earning it the nickname "The Blackbird."

## Development and Design

The SR-71 was developed by Lockheed's Skunk Works, a secretive division dedicated to designing and building advanced aircraft. The project was initiated in 1962 in response to the Soviet Union's development of the MiG-25 Foxbat interceptor. Lockheed engineers were tasked with creating an aircraft that could outrun the Foxbat and penetrate Soviet airspace undetected.

The SR-71's design was revolutionary for its time. It featured a unique "waverider" shape that allowed it to fly faster than Mach 3 (three times the speed of sound) without overheating. The aircraft's skin was made of a titanium alloy that could withstand the extreme temperatures generated by high-speed flight.



## Lockheed U-2 & SR-71 by Greg Goebel

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English  
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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
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## Operational History

The SR-71 entered service in 1964 and quickly became the USAF's premier reconnaissance aircraft. It was used to gather intelligence on potential adversaries during the Cold War, including North Vietnam, China, and the Soviet Union. The SR-71's high-altitude performance allowed it to fly over enemy territory at speeds that made it virtually impossible to track or intercept.

The SR-71 was also used in a variety of other roles, including electronic warfare and weather reconnaissance. It set numerous world records during its service, including the record for the highest altitude (85,069 feet) ever flown by a piloted aircraft.

## Retirement and Legacy

The SR-71 was retired from service in 1998 due to budget cuts and the development of new satellite technology. However, it remains one of the most iconic aircraft in aviation history. Its combination of speed, altitude, and stealth capabilities made it a legend among pilots and aviation enthusiasts alike.

Today, the SR-71 is on display at several museums around the world, including the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington. It continues to inspire awe and admiration in visitors, reminding them of the incredible achievements of human ingenuity and engineering.

## Technical Specifications

The Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird was a remarkable aircraft that pushed the boundaries of aviation technology and set numerous world records during its service. Its combination of speed, altitude, and stealth capabilities made it nearly impossible to intercept or shoot down, earning it the nickname "The Blackbird." Today, the SR-71 remains one of the most iconic aircraft in aviation history and continues to inspire awe and admiration in visitors around the world.



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