



United States Air Force Museum

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News Release

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HABU'S TO REVEAL MYSTERIES OF THE SR-71 "BLACKBIRD"

DAYTON, Ohio – Pilots and crewmembers of the SR-71 "Blackbird" will host panel discussions about the unequalled capabilities of this renowned aircraft at the U.S. Air Force Museum on Sept. 13 and 14. Three discussions will be held each day in the Museum's Carney Auditorium, at 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Each panel discussion will feature a different mix of pilots and crewmembers as they discuss their unique experiences with the Habu. The SR-71 earned the nickname "Habu," which is the name for a Cobra snake in Okinawa, because of its sleek "hooded" appearance. Pilots and crewmembers are also called Habu's.



Following each panel discussion, attendees will have the opportunity to meet the authors of two highly acclaimed books on the SR-71. U.S. Air Force Colonel (retired) Richard Graham, a graduate of the University of Akron, who piloted the SR-71 and went on to command the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, will be available to sign his book, "SR-71 Revealed." U.S. Air Force Colonel (retired) Donn Byrnes, who served with the Blackbird Program as a design, development and test engineer from 1962 through 1968, will be available to sign, "Blackbird Rising," a book he coauthored.

From noon to 1 p.m. on both days, Blackbird enthusiasts visiting the Museum will be able to view a 45-minute aviation heritage film, "Mission SR-71 Blackbird."

The first flight of an SR-71 took place in December 1964 and the first to enter service was delivered to the 4200th (later, 9th) Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Beale AFB, California, in January 1966. Built by Lockheed in the famous "Skunk Works" program, the delta wing aircraft is powered by two Pratt and Whitney J-58 axial-flow turbojets with afterburners, each producing 32,500 pounds of thrust. Faster than a 30-06 bullet, the SR-71 is capable of speeds in excess of Mach 3, or three times the speed of sound. Built almost entirely of titanium and titanium alloys

to withstand the heat associated with Mach 3, the SR-71's primary mission was unarmed global strategic reconnaissance.

On July 28, 1976, an SR-71 set two world records for its class: an absolute speed record of 2,193.167 miles per hour and an absolute altitude record of 85,068.997 feet. Over 25 years later, these records still stand.

The U.S. Air Force retired its fleet of SR-71s in January 1990 because of decreasing defense dollars, however it was returned to the inventory in 1995 and began flying operational missions again in 1997. The planes were permanently retired a few years later.

While here at the U.S. Air Force Museum, visitors can get a close-up view of the SR-71 that made the first operational sortie on March 21, 1968, located in the Museum's Modern Flight Hangar.

No tickets or advance reservations are required for the panel discussions. For more information, contact the Museum Special Events Office at (937) 255-8046, Ext. 491. The U.S. Air Force Museum is located on Springfield Pike, six miles northeast of downtown Dayton. It is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day). Admission and parking are free.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: For more information, contact the U.S. Air Force Museum's Public Affairs Division at (937) 255-4704, Ext. 333.