Fact Sheet

United States Air Force

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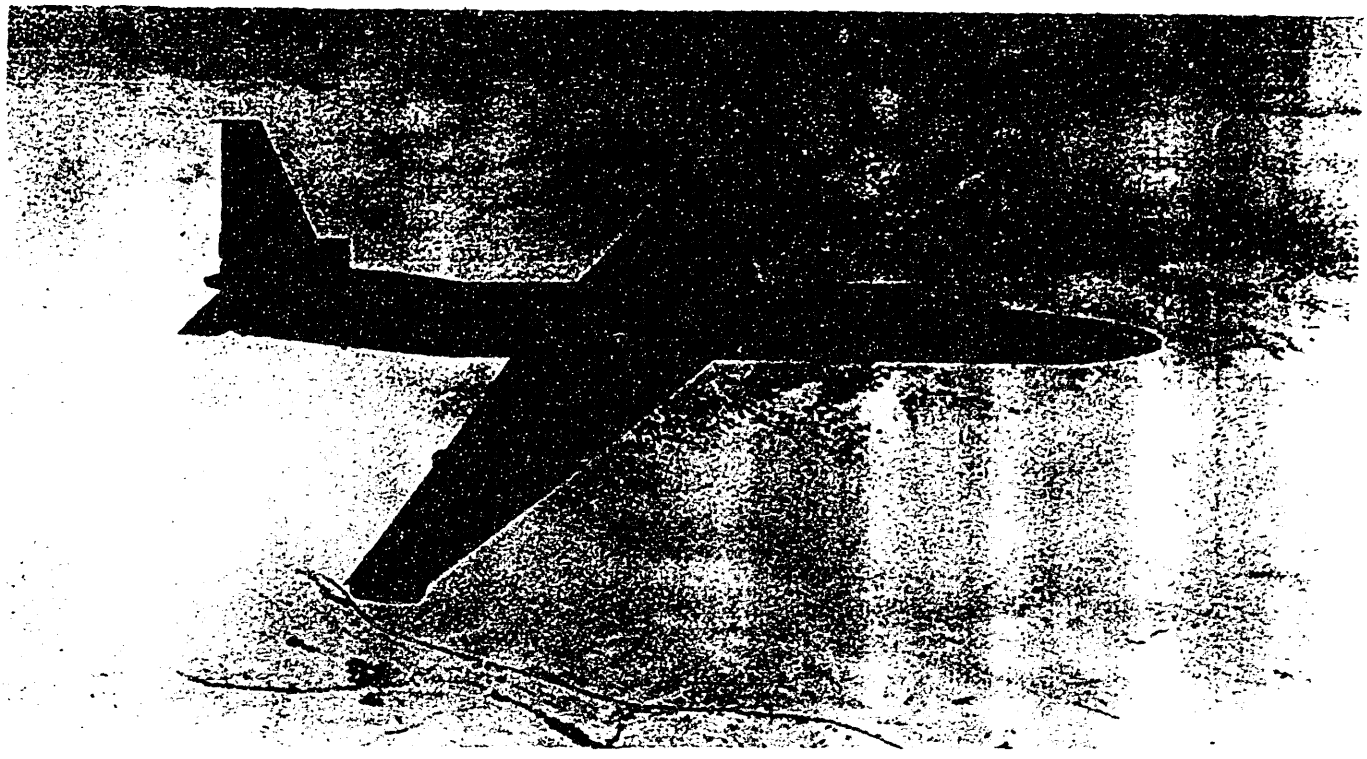

U-2

The U-2 is a single-engine, high-altitude, reconnaissance aircraft. Long, wide, straight wings give it glider-like characteristics and increase its load capacity to accommodate data collection instruments. It can operate above 70,000 feet and linger in an area for hours at a time. It can fly at speeds of up to 430 miles per hour and has a range of more than 3,000 miles.

The U-2 made its first flight in August 1955. Several U-2s remain in service with the U.S. Air Force's 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Beale Air Force Base, Calif., and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. They are used for high-altitude reconnaissance and air sampling flights.

Since 1957, a series of U-2 flights have been conducted to sample radioactive debris in the stratosphere. Data collected from these worldwide missions contribute significantly to the understanding of the environment and provide valuable scientific data.

It was the U-2 that obtained the first photographs, on Oct. 14, 1962, of the Soviet military buildup and offensive missiles being installed in Cuba. Further evidence of the missile buildup was gathered in the following days.

Air Force U-2s also have provided important nonmilitary mission support. Numerous missions have been flown in support of the Department of Agriculture land management

and crop estimate programs. The U-2 has been used to make photographs for the Army Corps of Engineers for flood control studies; and for state governments to determine damage from floods, hurricanes and tornadoes.

Other U-2 projects include obtaining data for the geothermal energy program and participation in search missions for missing boats and aircraft.

In October 1976, U-2 missions helped the U.S. Coast Guard locate a sailor who had been adrift in the Pacific Ocean for 28 days. Analysis of film from U-2 missions in the area enabled the Coast Guard to narrow their search to a 600-square-mile area, resulting in the rescue of the survivor from an orange life raft about 780 miles west of San Francisco.

Specifications

Primary function: high-altitude reconnaissance and air sampling
Prime contractor: Lockheed Aircraft Corp.
Power plant/manufacturer: one Pratt & Whitney J75-P-13 turbojet engine
Thrust: 17,000 lb
Dimensions: wingspan 103 ft, length 63 ft, height 16 ft

Speed: 430 mph
Range: more than 3,000 miles
Ceiling: above 70,000 ft
Crew: one (two in trainer models)
Status: operational