NASA crews flew four Lockheed SR-71 airplanes between July 1991 and October 1999. They were used for research and to support the U.S. Air Force reactivation of the SR-71 for reconnaissance missions. The Air Force had retired the Blackbirds in 1990, but Congress reinstated funding for additional flights. Steve Ishmael and Rod Dyckman flew two functional check flights in Lockheed SR-71B (61-7956 / NASA 831) at Palmdale in early July 1991 before delivering the aircraft to Dryden on 25 July. The SR-71B trainer served as a research platform and for crew training and proficiency until October 1997. It was then placed in storage at DFRC pending delivery to the Kalamazoo Aviation Museum in Michigan. This aircraft made 1,454 flights during its service life, including 93 NASA flights. It accrued a total of 3,967.5 flight hours.


Flt. 15 / 28 JAN 92: Level accelerations. Ishmael/Meyer. Max. Mach=3.12, Max. Altitude=78,000 ft.


Flt. 22 / 08 DEC 92: Refueled from KC-10 tanker, Navy Radar Surveillance Technology radar (RSTER) test over Atlantic Ocean. Aircraft flew almost 6,000 NM in less than 5 hours. Ishmael/Bohn-Meyer. Max. Mach=3.09, Max. Altitude=76,500 ft.


Flt. 34 / 20 JAN 95: Crew proficiency. Schneider/Ishmael. Max. Mach=3.05, Max. Altitude=75,400 ft.


Flt. 48 / 27 SEP 95: FCF, crew proficiency. Smith/Schneider. Max. Mach=3.21,
Max. Altitude=80,300 ft.


Flt. 65 / 16 MAY 96 : Crew proficiency, tanker training. Smith/Bohn-Meyer. Max. Mach=3.01, Max. Altitude=74,000 ft.


Flt. 76 / 28 JAN 97: Crew proficiency. Schneider/Meyer. Max. Mach=3.20, Max. Altitude=80,000 ft.


Flt. 78 / 04 MAR 97: Pilot checkout. Schneider/Mark Stucky. Max. Mach=3.27, Max. Altitude=81,400 ft.


**Flt. 86 / 29 JUL 97**: Air Force training flight. Garrison/Luloff. Max. Mach=3.18, Max. Altitude=78,000 ft.

**Flt. 87 / 02 AUG 97**: Oshkosh Air Show fly-by, emergency landing at Milwaukee, Wisconsin due to fuel leak. Smith/Meyer. Max. Mach=3.05, Max. Altitude=74,600 ft.

**Flt. 88 / 11 AUG 97**: Ferry flight from Milwaukee to DFRC, trouble with left engine resulted in damage to exhaust ejector over Omaha, Nebraska. Smith/Meyer. Max. Mach=2.55, Max. Altitude=63,000 ft.

**Flt. 89 / 18 SEP 97**: FCF due to replacement of left engine. Smith/Bohn-Meyer. Max. Mach=3.22, Max. Altitude=80,150 ft.

**Flt. 90 / 24 SEP 97**: Air Force night IP check for Luloff. McCleary/Luloff. Max. Mach=3.03, Max. Altitude=75,000 ft.


**Flt. 93 / 19 OCT 97**: Edwards AFB Air Show fly-by. Schneider/Meyer. Max. Mach=0.70, Max. Altitude=25,000 ft.

Sources:

SR-71 program chronology by Mike Relja
DFRC Flight Operations Office Daily Logs
Monthly Aerospace Projects Update memoranda
Weekly Aerospace Projects Highlights