

The SR-71 Blackbird

"An Engineering Marvel"

**A talk presented by ASME
Distinguished Lecturer**

Richard H. Graham, Col. USAF (ret.)

The world's fastest and highest flying aircraft was conceived as early as 1958 by the renowned aircraft engineer, Kelly Johnson. Built in total secrecy, the first Blackbird flew on April 26, 1962. When cruising at over 2,100 mph, with skin friction temperatures reaching 700 degrees Fahrenheit, the SR-71 performed at its best! Col. (Ret) Richard Graham flew the Blackbirds for seven years on reconnaissance missions. The presentation includes two short videos, one on the SR-71, and another honoring Kelly Johnson.



Fuller Lodge, Friday, April 15th

SOCIAL TIME: 6:00-6:30 DINNER: 6:30-7:15

LECTURE: 7:15-8:00

COST: \$13 for members and guests, \$17 nonmembers

MENU: Almond Mango Chicken or Raspberry Pork, Rice Pilaf, Twice Baked Potatoes, Garden salad, cash bar.

RSVP by Wednesday, April 13, to Jessica Clark. Email

Jessica.Clark@Merrick.com,

or phone 662-0606.

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RICHARD H. GRAHAM

The world's fastest and highest flying aircraft was conceived as early as 1958 by the renowned aircraft engineer, Kelly Johnson. The gigantic leap in technology he and his engineers had to overcome at the Lockheed Skunk Works was phenomenal. Built in total secrecy, the first Blackbird flew on April 26, 1962. The Blackbird's only purpose was to gather highly classified intelligence on hostile countries around the world. Flying at Mach 3+ speeds and cruising at over 85,000 feet, the SR-71 could survey over 100,000 square miles every hour, gathering in millions of bits of intelligence. When cruising at over 2,100 mph, with skin friction temperatures reaching 700 degrees Fahrenheit, the SR-71 performed at its very best!.

From 1967 to 1990, the SR-71 served seven U.S. Presidents, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Agency (NSA), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Pentagon, and other government agencies. It provided them with the necessary intelligence to make crucial political and military decisions during the Cold War era.

Col. (Ret) Richard Graham flew the Blackbirds for over seven years on operational reconnaissance missions. He was selected to be the Squadron Commander of the SR-71 unit in 1980 and eventually became the Wing Commander at Beale AFB, which included both the SR-71 and U-2 aircraft. With over 15 years of experience with the SR-71 program, he is uniquely qualified to talk on the capabilities of the SR-71.

His presentation can be tailored to the audience and typically lasts one hour. The presentation is on PowerPoint and includes two short videos, one on the SR-71, and another, honoring Kelly Johnson. This presentation links the world of engineering with aviation. The Q & A session at the end of his program gives the audience an opportunity to ask questions about the once highly classified program.

Retiring after 25 years in the Air Force, Col. Graham flew for American Airlines. He retired in August 2002, after 13 years at American, as a Captain on the MD-80 aircraft. He has accumulated over 12,000 flying hours. He now keeps busy as an author, speaker, aviation consultant, and flight instructor. Col. Graham has written two books, "*SR-71 Revealed, The Inside Story*" and "*SR-71 Blackbird: Stories, Tales and Legends.*" He donates the royalties from his books to the National Air & Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Colonel Graham was the 1999 recipient of the University of Nebraska's William F. Shea Award for his distinguished contribution to aviation.



Rich Graham, Col., USAF, (ret.)

Speaker and Author

15 years with the SR-71 as a pilot, Squadron Commander, and Wing Commander. A Vietnam veteran, with 205 combat missions in the F-4 fighter. He's also flown the T-33, T-37, T-38, U-2, KC-135Q, and MD-80 aircraft, with over 9,000 flying hours

