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U-2 DRAGONLADY SPYPLANE DEMO - BEALE AFB



The U-2 spy plane flies at the edge of space above 95 percent of Earth's atmosphere, enabling it to skirt normal anti-aircraft missiles. The first U-2 was hand-built in 1952 by Lockheed engineers and went into service in 1955, making surveillance flights over the Soviet Union.

It had a flight radius of 3000 nautical miles, and a maximum safe altitude of 70,000 feet, 20,000 feet higher than Russian interceptors, making the U-2 the most difficult plane to engage at the time. The long, straight wings give the U-2 glider-like characteristics. It can carry a variety of sensors and cameras and is an extremely reliable reconnaissance aircraft. Because it has to fly at high altitude, the pilot must wear a full pressure suit.