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# U-2 Successor Reported Lost

EDWARDS AFB, Calif., Jan. 6 (UPI)—An SR-71 aircraft, a sophisticated and advanced type of strategic reconnaissance plane, was missing and presumed down in Nevada, the Air Force reported today.

The SR-71, more versatile than the U-2 spy plane which was shot down over Russia, was believed down in a remote area east of Las Vegas.

An Air Force spokesman at this sprawling flight research center 100 miles north of Los Angeles said the craft was on a routine test flight from Edwards Thursday when it disappeared.

The civilian test pilot, employed by Lockheed Aircraft Corp., builder of the SR-71, was not identified pending further developments.

According to the spokesman, the pilot was last heard from at 4 p.m. PST Thursday. The plane had only enough fuel to remain aloft for another hour and a half.

Search parties were combing the desolate area east of the gambling capital where the plane was believed down.

As a strategic reconnaissance plane, the SR-71 has a top speed of mach 3 (three times the speed of sound or 2000 miles an hour), top altitude of better than 80,000 feet and is "capable of worldwide reconnaissance." President Johnson announced July 24, 1964.

The President said it would be used "during periods of military hostilities and in other situations in which the United States military forces may be confronting foreign military forces."

The SR-71 became operational with the Strategic Air Command at Beale AFB, Calif., in December 1965, a year after it made its first flight from Palmdale, Calif.

The SR-71 was similar in appearance to the aircraft, now known as the YF12A, which was begun secretly in 1959.

But it is longer and heavier than the YF12A and is equipped with the latest electronic reconnaissance equipment. Flying at maximum capabilities, the SR-71 can survey 60,000 square miles of

land or ocean for each hour of operation.

The SR-71 test program was marred by a crash last January killing one of its two civilian test pilots, James T. Zwayer of Lancaster, Calif., who bailed out. The other parachuted safely. The plane was on a test flight from Edwards when it crashed on a rocky plateau near Albert, N.M.

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# Wrecked Spy Plane's Pilot Hunted

LAS VEGAS, Nev., Jan. 7 (UPI)—Rescue teams searched desolate terrain northeast of here today in hopes that the pilot of a 2000-mile-per-hour SR-71 super spy plane may have parachuted to safety.

The pilot was identified late today as Walter L. Ray, 33, of Canoga Park, Calif.

A spokesman at Edwards Air Force Base in California's Mojave Desert said in a terse statement earlier that the wreckage of the missing strategic reconnaissance plane was located late Friday. The SR-71, the world's fastest operational aircraft and successor to the U-2 spy plane, disappeared Thursday on a routine test flight.

The Air Force neither denied nor confirmed the possibility the civilian pilot was still alive, but reports from a crew which examined the wreckage indicated he was not aboard when the plane crashed.

The highly secret plane, made by Lockheed, was capable of flying 2000 miles an hour at a top altitude of better than 80,000 feet. It was described in 1964 as the most advanced aircraft of its type in the world.

Loaded with the latest electronic reconnaissance equipment, the SR-71 can, at maximum capabilities, survey 60,000 square miles of terrain for each hour of operation.

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