



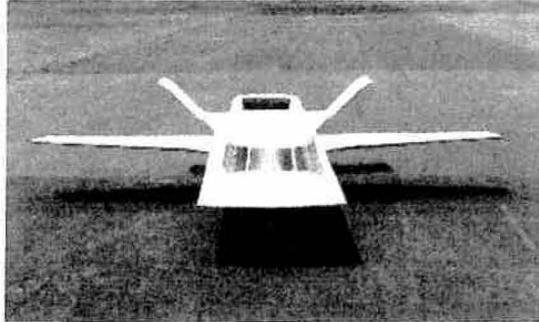
FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

NORTHROP TACIT BLUE

Note: This aircraft is located in the Research & Development Gallery on a controlled-access portion of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The gallery will close until further notice beginning May 1, 2013, as part of budget reduction requirements due to sequestration.

The Tacit Blue (Whale) aircraft was built to test the advances in stealth technology. The USAF, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the Northrop Corp. worked together from 1978 to 1985 to demonstrate that curved surfaces on an aircraft result in a low radar return signal from ground radar. With such a low radar return signal, Tacit Blue demonstrated that such an aircraft could operate close to the battlefield forward line without fear of being discovered by enemy radar. It could continuously monitor enemy forces behind the battlefield and provide targeting information to a ground command center.



DAYTON, Ohio -- Tacit Blue Whale at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo)

The aircraft made its first flight in February 1982, and by the conclusion of the program in 1985, had flown 135 times. It had a digital fly-by-wire flight control system to help stabilize the aircraft. Tacit Blue had a single flush inlet on the top of the fuselage to provide air to its two engines.

The aircraft was placed on display at the museum in May 1996.

A plaque mounted in the cockpit recognizes these Tacit Blue (Whale) Pilots:

Mr. Richard Thomas
Col. (Sel) Don Cornell
Lt. Col. Russ Easter
Lt. Col. Ken Dyson
Maj. Dan Vanderhorst

SPECIFICATIONS:

Span: 48 ft. 2 in.
Height: 10 ft. 7 in.
Length: 55 ft. 10 in.
Weight: 30,000 lbs.
Engines: Two Garrett ATF3-6 high-bypass turbofan engines
Armament: None
Crew: One
Cost: Approx. \$165 million

PERFORMANCE:

Design Operational Speed: 287 mph/250 knots
Operating Altitude: 25-30,000 ft.