

North American X-15A-2

The North American X-15 was one of the most advanced aeroplanes ever made. It was designed and flown to test extremes of flight performance and much of the research conducted by them in the 1960s is still relevant today.

By the early 1950s scientists had begun to explore aerodynamics up to about twice the speed of sound and needed a new experimental aeroplane to push the test envelope to new extremes. In 1955 North American was awarded a contract to construct three X-15s and the first one was ready for flight by 1959. Between 1960 and 1968 the three aeroplanes completed 199 missions, the only serious setback being the fatal crash of the third X-15 in November 1967. In 1962 the second X-15 was reconstructed after a crash to give it greater endurance and range and it achieved a record speed of over 4530 mph in October 1967.

This model represents the second X-15 and the only one converted to X-15A-2 standard.

Data: high speed rocket powered test aeroplane. *Engine* one Reaction Motors XLR-99 rocket motor of 313kN thrust. *Wing span* 6.8m (22ft). *Length* 15.47m (50ft). *Gross weight* 15,422kg (34000lb). *Maximum speed* 7,270km/h (4159mph). *Flight crew* one.

Monogram 1/72 kit completed by Leigh Edmonds in July 2003.



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