

Bell X-5

The Bell X-5 was based loosely on a German World War II fighter design. It undertook some of the earliest tests of variable geometry wings that led to a whole generation of ‘swing wing’ military aeroplanes.

After World War II an incomplete Messerschmitt P.1101 was sent to the United States for examination. Engineers at Bell used it as the basis for a more advanced aeroplane with a ‘swing wing’ capable of moving between 20°, 40° and 60° in flight. Two X-5s were built, the first one making its initial flight on 20 June 1951. The X-5 had poor flight characteristics, particularly due to its poorly positioned tail and vertical stabilizer, leading to an irrecoverable spin in some wing positions. As a result, one X-5 was lost in a flying accident in October 1953 while testing of the other continued until 1955 and it remained in use as a chase aeroplane until 1958.

This model represents the first X-5 at Edwards Air Force base, c.1952.

Data: variable geometry experimental aeroplane. *Engine* one Allison J35-A-17 turbojet of 21.8kN thrust. *Wing span* 10.2m (unsept) and 6.5m (fully swept). *Length* 10.1m. *Maximum take-off weight* 4.536kg. *Maximum speed* 1150km/h. *Flight crew* one.

Mach 2 1/72 kit. Completed by Leigh Edmonds in August 2010.



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