



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet NORTHROP F-89J SCORPION

Northrop designed the F-89 as an all-weather fighter-interceptor for the Air Defense Command. With the radar operator in the rear seat guiding the pilot, the F-89 could locate, intercept and destroy enemy aircraft by day or night under all types of weather conditions. The first F-89 made its initial flight in August 1948 and deliveries to the Air Force began in July 1950. Northrop produced a total of 1,050 F-89s for the Air Force.

On July 19, 1957, an F-89J (a modified F-89D) fired a Genie test rocket with a nuclear warhead, and it detonated over a Nevada test range. It marked the first launch of an air-to-air rocket with a nuclear warhead. Northrop converted 350 F-89Ds to J models, Air Defense Command's first fighter-interceptor to carry nuclear armament. Powered by two [Allison J35](#) engines, each capable of producing 7,200 pounds thrust with afterburner, the F-89J had a cruising speed of 465 mph.



DAYTON, Ohio -- Northrop F-89J Scorpion at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo)

The Maine Air National Guard transferred the Scorpion on display (S/N 52-1911) to the museum from in July 1969. This aircraft was the last F-89 in service with an operational unit. It is painted to represent an F-89J (S/N 53-2509) assigned to the 449th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in the late 1950s. Based at Ladd Air Force Base, near Fairbanks, Alaska, it carries insignia red arctic markings.

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Armament: Two [AIR-2A Genie](#) air-to-air rockets with nuclear warheads plus four AIM-4C Falcon missiles

Engines: Two [Allison J35s](#) of 7,200 lbs. thrust each (with afterburner)

Maximum speed: 627 mph

Cruising speed: 465 mph

Range: 1,600 miles

Ceiling: 45,000 ft.

Span: 59 ft. 10 in.

Length: 53 ft. 8 in.

Height: 17 ft. 6 in.

Weight: 47,700 lbs. maximum

Click here to learn more about the [Northrop F-89](#).

Click here to return to the [Cold War Gallery](#).

