



# FACT SHEET

## U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet CONVAIR B-58A HUSTLER

The U.S. Air Force's first operational supersonic bomber, the B-58 made its initial flight on Nov. 11, 1956. In addition to the Hustler's delta wing shape, distinctive features included a sophisticated inertial guidance navigation and bombing system, a slender "wasp-waist" fuselage and an extensive use of heat-resistant honeycomb sandwich skin panels in the wings and fuselage. Since the thin fuselage prevented the carrying of bombs internally, a droppable, two-component pod beneath the fuselage contained a nuclear weapon -- along with extra fuel, reconnaissance equipment or other specialized gear. The B-58 crew consisted of a pilot, navigator/bombardier and defense systems operator.



DAYTON, Ohio -- Convair B-58 Hustler at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Convair built 116 B-58s: 30 test and pre-production aircraft and 86 for operational service. Hustlers flew in the Strategic Air Command between 1960 and 1970. Setting 19 world speed and altitude records, B-58s also won five different aviation trophies.

The B-58A on display set three speed records while flying from Los Angeles to New York and back on March 5, 1962. For this effort, the crew received the Bendix and Mackay Trophies for 1962. It was flown to the museum in December 1969.

Click on the following links for more information about the B-58A.

[B-58A Escape Capsule](#)  
[Operation Heat Rise](#)

### TECHNICAL NOTES:

**Armament:** One 20mm cannon in tail; nuclear weapons in pod or on under-wing pylons

**Engines:** Four [General Electric J79s](#) of 15,000 lbs. thrust each (with afterburner)

**Maximum speed:** 1,325 mph

**Range:** 4,400 miles without aerial refueling

**Ceiling:** 64,800 ft.

**Span:** 56 ft. 10 in.

**Length:** 96 ft. 10 in.

**Height:** 31 ft. 5 in.

**Weight:** 163,000 lbs. maximum

Click here to learn more about the [Convair B-58A](#).

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

