



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet DOUGLAS A-1E

Mission and Description (October 1968)

The principal mission of the A-1E is the destruction of ground targets in support of ground forces. The aircraft's middle compartment can be readily equipped with passenger seats, facilities for litters or provisions for carrying heavy cargo.

The forward compartment has a side-by-side seating arrangement for the two crew members. Dual controls are provided for assistant pilot. The A-1E has upward ejection seats for both crew members.

Four 20mm guns are installed in the wings. The aircraft is equipped to carry various combinations of bombs, rockets, mines, gun pods, and other stores on external wing stations. For long range missions, the airplane can be equipped with auxiliary fuel tanks internally as well as externally.

In 1963, the U.S. Air Force began a program to modify the AD-5 Skyraider for service in Vietnam and re-designated it the A-1E. Because of its ability to carry large bomb loads, absorb heavy ground fire, and fly for long periods at low altitude, the A-1E was particularly suited for close-support missions.

The [A-1E on display](#) at the National Museum of the United States Air Force was the airplane flown by Maj. Bernard Fisher on March 10, 1966, when he rescued a fellow pilot shot down over South Vietnam in the midst of enemy troops, a deed for which he was awarded the Medal of Honor. The airplane, [severely damaged in combat](#) in South Vietnam, was returned in 1967 for preservation at the museum.



Douglas A-1E in South Vietnam, January 1966. Note the C-47 and HU-16 Albatross in the background. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Type	Number built/ converted	Remarks
A-1E	212 as AD-5	USAF update of AD-5

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Armament: Four 20mm cannons and up to 6,500 lbs. of ordnance and/or fuel tanks on 15 external stations

Engine: [Wright R-3350-26WD Cyclone](#) geared radial of 2,700 hp

Maximum speed: 271 knots at 12,000 ft., military power

Cruising speed: 240 mph

Range: 2,647 nautical miles with 1,288 gallons of fuel at 177 knots average in 14.91 hours at 23,752 lbs. takeoff weight

Service ceiling: 24,900 ft. (500 fpm, combat weight, military power)

Span: 50 ft. 0 in. (24 ft. with wings folded)

Length: 40 ft. 0 in.

Height: 15 ft. 9 in.

Weight: 25,000 lbs. maximum takeoff

Crew: Two

Serial numbers: USAF kept the original Navy Bureau Numbers (BuNo) for the AD-5, but included the digit year of manufacture to create an Air Force-type serial type. For example, the museum's A-1E was built as BuNo 132649 but became 52-132649 when converted for USAF use.

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