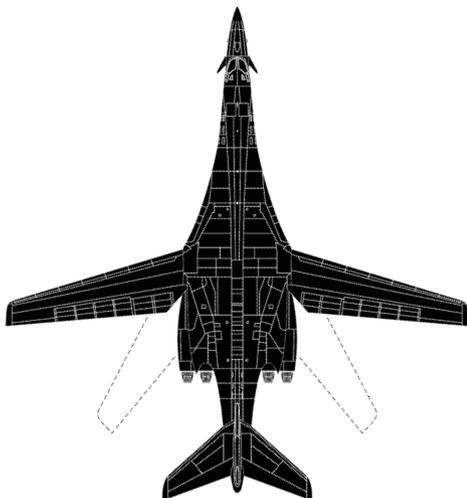


B-1



America's sleek, powerful B-1 combat aircraft gave supersonic punch to USAF's long-range heavy bomber force. Designed strictly for nuclear war, the B-1 in the 1990s became something different—a highly effective conventional bomber. The four B-1As never were given an official name; the moniker "Lancer" was applied only to the 100 B-1B aircraft.

Rockwell International's basic B-1 design featured a blended wing-and-body configuration, variable-sweep wings, four turbofan engines, triangular fin control surfaces, and a cruciform tail. The wing-sweep could swing from 15 degrees to 67.5 degrees, giving the B-1 high lift for takeoff and landing and low drag for high-speed dash. Presi-

dent Jimmy Carter canceled the B-1A in 1977, only to see the program revived by President Ronald Reagan as the B-1B. USAF built 100 B models, which traded some of B-1A's blazing speed for more payload and a smaller radar cross section.

The bomber was later modified to deliver precision and nonprecision weapons. It was first used in combat against Iraq in Operation Desert Fox in 1998. A few months later, B-1Bs flew in Operation Allied Force against Serbia, delivering 20 percent of the war's ordnance while flying only two percent of the combat sorties. In the air wars over Afghanistan and Iraq, the B-1B's contribution was even greater. It has since flown in the 2011 campaign in Libya and against Islamic State forces.

—Robert S. Dudley with Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: USAF B-1B Lancer—#86-0129, *Black Widow*—of the 34th Bomb Squadron, Ellsworth AFB, S.D., as it looked in August 2005 at the MAKS air show in Russia.



USAF photo by AIC Corey Hook

A B-1B Lancer on a training mission from Ellsworth AFB, S.D.

In Brief

Designed, built by Rockwell (now part of Boeing) ★ first flight Dec. 23, 1974 ★ number built 104 ★ crew of four (commander, copilot, two weapon systems officers) ★ four General Electric F101-GE-102 turbofan engines ★ defensive armament RWR, jammers. **Specific to B-1B:** max payload 125,000 lb (75,000 internal, 50,000 external) of conventional munitions (gravity bombs, PGM, missiles, naval mines, cluster munitions) ★ max speed 900+ mph ★ cruise speed 685 mph ★ max range approx. 7,000 mi (unrefueled) ★ weight (loaded) 326,000 lb ★ span 79 ft (swept) and 137 ft (spread) ★ length 146 ft ★ height 34 ft ★ ceiling more than 30,000 ft.

Famous Fliers

Mackay Trophy: 2008—Norman Shelton, Boyd Smith, Kaylene Giri, Louis Heidema. 1995—Doug Raaberg, Gerald Goodfellow, Rick Carver, Kevin Clotfelter, Chris Stewart, Steve Adams, Kevin Houdek, Steve Reeves; 1989—Joseph Day, Jeffrey Beene, Vernon Benton, Robert Hendricks; 1987—Pilots of Det. 15, AFPRO and SPO. **DFC:** Gerald Goodfellow (OAF); Chris Wachter, Sloan Hollis, Joe Runci, Fred Swan (OIF). **Notables:** Joseph Brown (flew with one wing forward, one back); Dustin Willard, Jeremy Stover, Anthony Rocco, Travis Keene (2012 LeMay Award); Stephen Wolborsky (commander, first B-1B combat flight); Matt Brown (longest B-1 combat mission, 21 hrs, 42 mins). **Test Pilot:** Douglas Benefield (killed in 1984 accident).

Interesting Facts

Boasts largest weapons payload of any US aircraft ★ nicknamed "Bone" ★ holds some 60 world records for speed, payload, range, time of climb ★ stands alone as the only variable-sweep aircraft in active US service ★ achieved top speed of 2.2 Mach (B-1A) ★ presents radar cross section similar to one of a small fighter ★ used in unsuccessful April 7, 2003, raid to kill Saddam Hussein ★ featured in James Bond film, "Never Say Never Again" (1983) and "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" (2009).