

# Yeager's Encore

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*Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager (Ret.) mingled with scores of fans after landing the F-15 he flew in the re-enactment of his record-breaking flight at Edwards AFB, Calif.*

**W**ithin a few weeks of the establishment of the Air Force as a separate service, one of its young fliers, Capt. Charles "Chuck" Yeager, became the first man to break the sound barrier, flying at Mach 1.06 on Oct. 14, 1947. This historic achievement has been dramatically depicted in movies and numerous books but was commemorated in a special way when on Oct. 14, 1997—50 years after the historic event—it was re-enacted by the man himself.

**Fifty years later, an aviation legend repeats his feat.**

*For the benefit of an eager crowd of more than 5,000 aviation buffs, Yeager dumped fuel to form a contrail, which made it easy to see the aircraft as it streaked through the sound barrier. He followed the same flight path, at the same altitude, and in the same airspace (over what was then Muroc Army Air Field) as he did in the original supersonic flight—this time with Lt. Col. Curtis R. Elkin, operations officer from the USAF Test Pilot School, as his backseater. Also re-enacting his role as chase pilot was aviation legend R.A. "Bob" Hoover (seen here in the nearer F-16), accompanied by Air Force Flight Test Center Vice Commander Col. James H. Doolittle III, grandson of Gen. Jimmy Doolittle.*



*They broke the mold. In his signature panama hat, Hoover joins Yeager in addressing the crowd after the flight. Yeager told the audience, "What I am, I owe to the Air Force." Since his retirement in 1975 after 34 years in the service, Yeager has been a consultant test pilot for the AFFTC while Hoover has crisscrossed the country, wowing crowds with his aerobatic feats. Lt. Col. Joe Sobczak (far left), master of ceremonies for the event, shares the podium.*

*Yeager flew this F-15, specially marked Glamorous Glennis, named in honor of his wife—as was the X-1 in which he set the 1947 record. In his remarks, Yeager announced that he was giving back the keys of fast jets to the Air Force.*

*In 1947, breaking the sound barrier was a long-sought and hard-earned achievement that set the pace for future aviation. The 1997 replay helped cap USAF's celebration of its 50th anniversary and Yeager's remarkable career. In his words, "The rest is pretty much history." ■*



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