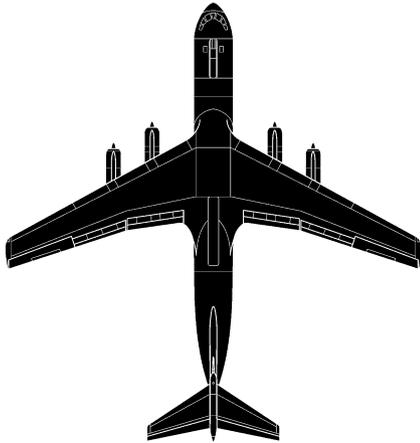


## C-141 Starlifter



The C-141 Starlifter was the first pure-jet airlifter specifically designed for USAF's strategic transport force. The beautiful Lockheed aircraft became, after 1965, the US airlift workhorse, carrying troops, vehicles, cargo, refugees, and even a giant Minuteman ICBM, while also turning in outstanding operational service from the Vietnam War in the 1960s to Persian Gulf conflicts in the 1990s. It was equally adept as a medical evacuation aircraft or transport for special operations forces.

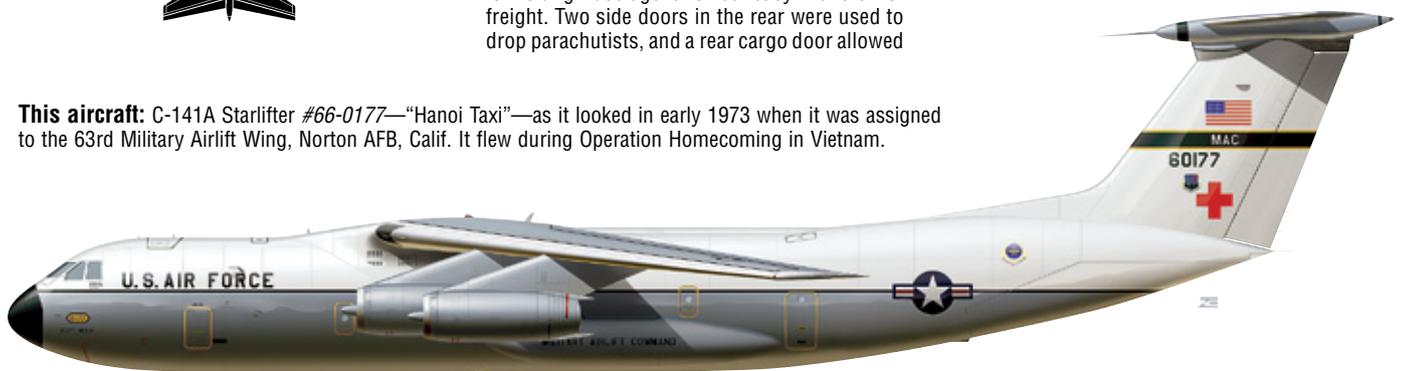
In response to Specific Operational Requirement 182, issued in 1960, Lockheed produced its Model 300 design, beating out General Dynamics and Boeing. The design featured a high swept wing with four jet engines mounted in under-slung nacelles, and a tall T tail. Designed to perform both strategic and tactical missions, the C-141's low-slung fuselage allowed easy transfer of freight. Two side doors in the rear were used to drop parachutists, and a rear cargo door allowed

delivery of heavy cargo by parachute. The prototype C-141A was rolled out on Aug. 22, 1963. Testing proceeded swiftly.

Operational C-141A aircraft began service in 1965 and quickly became the preferred aircraft for flights to and from South Vietnam and Southeast Asia. Reliable and easy to fly, the Starlifter was beloved of crews accustomed to the slow, noisy Douglas C-124s it replaced. In 1973, the aircraft brought home POWs released by North Vietnam. "Stretched" into the C-141B by the insertion of fuselage plugs to increase its volume capability, the Starlifter continued in service until 2006. Its retirement was accelerated by its extremely heavy usage during the Gulf War.

—Walter J. Boyne

**This aircraft:** C-141A Starlifter #66-0177—"Hanoi Taxi"—as it looked in early 1973 when it was assigned to the 63rd Military Airlift Wing, Norton AFB, Calif. It flew during Operation Homecoming in Vietnam.



A C-141 over its assembly plant in Marietta, Ga.

### In Brief

Designed, built by Lockheed ★ first flight Dec. 17, 1963 ★ number built 285 ★ crew of six (pilot, co-pilot, two flight engineers, one loadmaster, one navigator) ★ armament none ★ max load 94,508 lb of cargo, or 205 troops, or 168 equipped paratroops. **Specific to C-141B:** four Pratt & Whitney TF-33P-7 turbofan engines ★ max speed 567 mph ★ cruise speed 490 mph ★ max range 2,935 mi ★ weight (loaded) 342,100 lb ★ span 160 ft ★ length 168 ft 4 in ★ height 39 ft 3 in.

### Famous Fliers

**Notables:** James Blackman, Alanson Bynum, Alfred Funck, Harold Hale, Benjamin Johnson, Leroy Leonard, James Sherrard III, Rondal Smith, Max Starkel. **Test Pilots:** Hank Dees, Frank Hadden, Herb Klein, Leo Sullivan.

### Interesting Facts

Was first US aircraft into Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield in August 1990 ★ ordered into development by President Kennedy in first official act ★ carried NASA's Kuiper Airborne Observatory Telescope at high altitude ★ suffered deep stall problems due to T tail ★ performed first paratroop drop from jet aircraft (August 1965) ★ off-loaded 68,000 lb of cargo and reloaded same amount in less than one hour ★ grew 23 ft in length when A models were "stretched" to B version ★ took on 24,000 gallons of fuel in 26 minutes ★ flew in Operation Deep Freeze through 2005 ★ made final flight on May 6, 2006, when the "Hanoi Taxi" flew to the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.