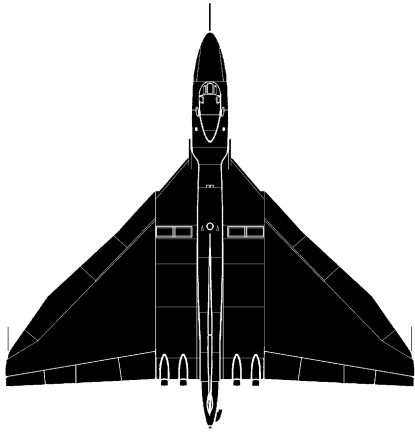


## Vulcan



The delta-wing Vulcan is to British bombers what the Spitfire is to British fighters—a beautiful icon symbolizing the best the Royal Air Force has produced. Avro built it for the nuclear deterrent, but in time the Vulcan played a key conventional bomber role in combat. Highly maneuverable—even aerobatic—the Vulcan's superb flying qualities were beloved of a generation of RAF crews, and its sheer style produced a worldwide following.

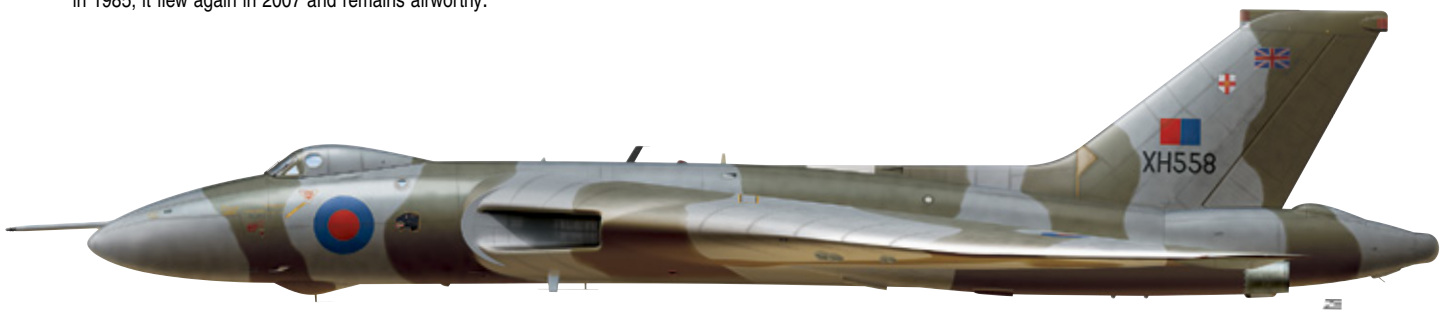
Use of delta wings was cutting edge and daring in the 1950s. These wings were selected for their large load capacity and were carefully tested on one-third scale Avro 707 prototypes. In flight, the bomber was surprisingly agile, and was even somewhat stealthy,

sometimes vanishing from radar screens. Over the years, new wing shapes and other modifications came along. Initial mods included upgraded engines and electronic countermeasures gear. Vulcan B.Mk 2 had air refueling and more weapons-launch capabilities.

With introduction of Polaris nuclear submarines in the 1960s, Vulcan's deterrent mission ended, and it became a low-level conventional bomber. Five Vulcans were modified for the 1982 Falkland Islands war, where they proved highly effective. Vulcans based at Ascension Island flew 4,000-mile raids against airfields and radar sites held by Argentina at Stanley. These were, at the time, the longest combat air missions ever executed.

—Walter J. Boyne

**This aircraft:** Vulcan B2 XH558, the last to serve on RAF active duty, as it appeared, on display, in 1990. Retired in 1985, it flew again in 2007 and remains airworthy.



### In Brief

Designed, built by Avro Aircraft ★ first flight Aug. 30, 1952 ★ crew of five (two pilots, two navigators, one air electronics officer) ★ number built 136 ★ **Specific to B.Mk 2:** four Rolls Royce Olympus turbojet engines ★ armament one Blue Steel standoff nuclear missile, 21 1,000-lb gravity bombs ★ max speed 632 mph ★ cruise speed 625 mph ★ max range 4,600 mi ★ weight (loaded) 200,000 lb ★ span 111 ft ★ length 99 ft 11 in ★ height 27 ft 1 in.

### Famous Fliers

**Test pilots:** Tony Blackman, Roland Falk. **Record Setter:** Michael Beavis, fastest nonstop flight Britain-Australia. **Notables:** Michael James Beetham, Ray Bray, Harry Broadhurst, Milt Cottey, David Craig, Ron Dick, Jimmy Harrison, Robby Robinson, Martin Withers.

### Interesting Facts

Appeared in 1965 James Bond thriller "Thunderball" ★ nicknamed "Tin Triangle" ★ carried nuclear bombs named Yellow Sun, Violet Club, Blue Danube, Red Beard ★ performed near-vertical bank, upward barrel roll at 1955 Farnborough air show ★ flew Britain-Australia route in record 20 hours, three minutes (1961) ★ modified for maritime radar reconnaissance and air tanking ★ began as a radically new tailless design ★ had only two ejection seats (for pilots) ★ crashed into Detroit suburb in 1958.



*For its time, the delta wing was cutting edge.*