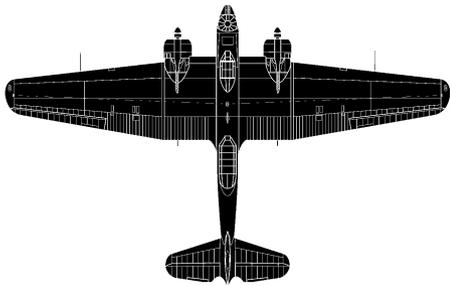


# Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

## B-10



The Air Corps B-10 sparked a revolution in bomber design. Conceived by the Glenn L. Martin Co. in 1932, it boasted an all-metal monoplane frame, the first gun turrets, retractable landing gear, internal bomb carriage, streamlined shape, multiple engines, and high speed. It brought instant obsolescence to the Air Corps' slow, wood-and-fabric, open-cockpit, external ordnance bombers and set a standard that led directly to the highly capable B-17 and other famous World War II bombers.

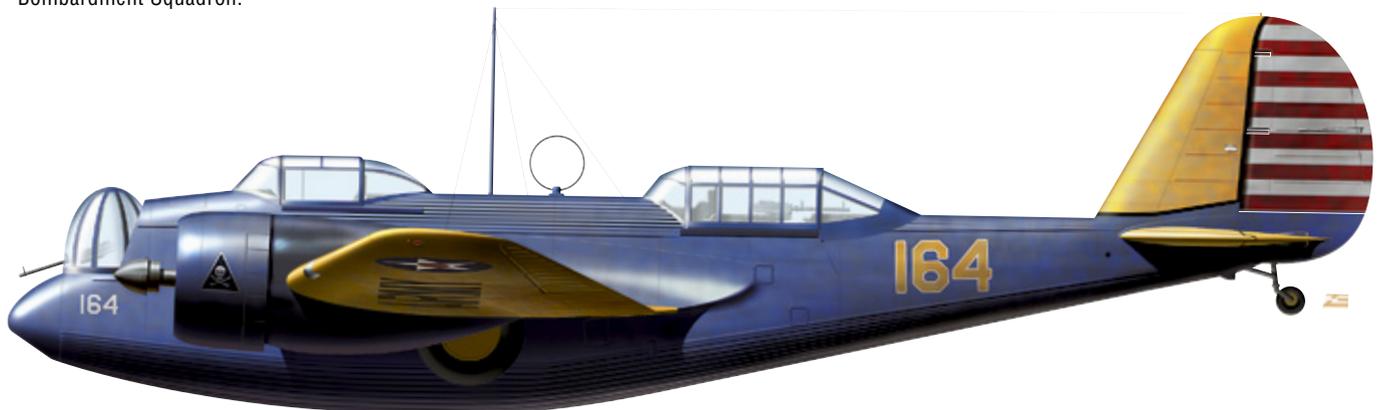
The airplane was privately funded by Martin. Accepted by the Army in 1932, the prototype was heavily modified with more-powerful engines, greater wingspan, and enclosure of the cockpits. In trials, the B-10 achieved 207 mph—a speed 50 percent faster than biplane bombers and even exceeding that of any US fighter. The Air Corps

placed a large order for more than 150 (32 fitted with Pratt & Whitney engines got the designation B-12). In addition, Martin struck export deals for 189 B-10 variants.

Gen. Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, who flew it on a MacKay Trophy flight to and from Alaska, called the B-10 "the airpower wonder of its day." Its great speed and long range convinced air planners that independent bomber attack—without fighter support—could succeed. In the peacetime 1930s, the B-10 was flown on numerous long-range shows of force and in the Army's new coastal defense mission. The Martin bomber, however, was overtaken late in the 1930s by the B-17, before World War II. Export versions sold to the Netherlands and China did see combat in the Pacific.

—Robert S. Dudley with Walter J. Boyne

**This aircraft:** US Air Corps B-10B—#164—as it looked in 1935 when assigned to US Air Corps 31st Bombardment Squadron.



### In Brief

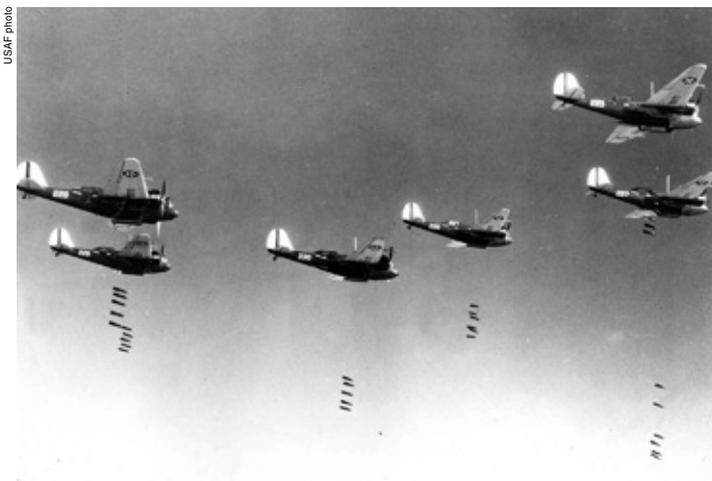
Designed, built by Glenn L. Martin Co. ★ first flight Feb. 16, 1932  
★ number built 342 (153 Air Corps, 189 export) ★ crew of four (one pilot, one radio operator, two gunners) ★ armament three .30 cal machine guns (nose, ventral tunnel, rear turret); 2,260 lb of bombs.  
**Specific to B-10B:** two Wright R-1820-33 radial engines ★ max speed 213 mph ★ cruise speed 193 mph ★ max range 1,240 mi ★ weight (loaded) 16,400 lb ★ span 70 ft 6 in ★ length 44 ft 9 in ★ height 15 ft 5 in.

### Famous Fliers

**Notables:** Lt. Col. Henry H. "Hap" Arnold (MacKay Trophy, 1934). **Future generals:** Frank Andrews, Malcolm Grow, Hugh Knerr, Westside Larson, Harold McClelland, Ralph Royce, George Stratemyer, Clarence Tinker, Nathan Twining. **Chinese:** Hsu Huan-sheng, Teng Yan-po. **Dutch:** E. T. Kengen, L. H. van Oyen. **Test pilot:** William K. Ebel.

### Interesting Facts

Won 1932 Collier Trophy, presented by FDR ★ nicknamed "Flying Whale" ★ began life (prototype) with three open cockpits ★ flew faster than any extant US fighter ★ adapted for coastal defense mission ★ sold in greater number to foreign nations than to Air Corps ★ developed into largest Air Corps aircraft order in post-World War I era ★ flown by Chinese and Dutch air forces against Japan ★ served in every Air Corps bomb group in 1930s ★ carried out first test of Norden bombsight ★ served in air arms of Argentina, China, Netherlands, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey ★ used continuously until retired in 1949 by Thailand.



A formation of Martin B-10s dropping bombs.