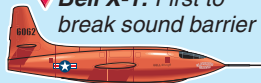


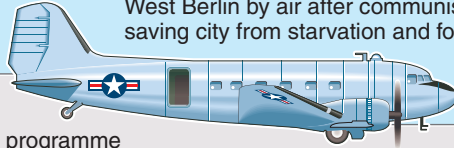
United States Air Force celebrates 60th anniversary

1947 Sep 18: National Security Act creates USAF. Within a month, test pilot Chuck Yeager flies faster than sound, taking Air Force into supersonic era

▼ **Bell X-1:** First to break sound barrier

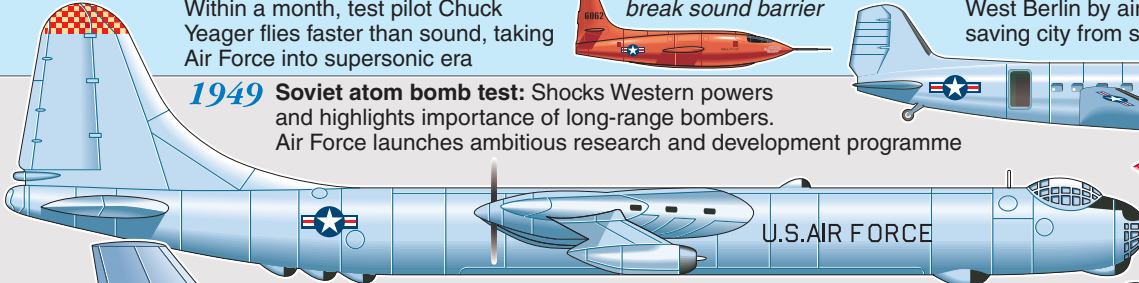


1948-49 Berlin airlift: In first test of Cold War, USAF and British RAF supply West Berlin by air after communist East Germany cuts land routes, saving city from starvation and forcing Soviets to back down



◀ **C-47 Skytrain:** Venerable transport used in initial airlift

1949 Soviet atom bomb test: Shocks Western powers and highlights importance of long-range bombers. Air Force launches ambitious research and development programme

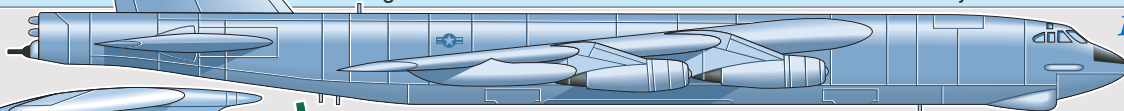


◀ **B-36 Peacemaker**
First bomber with intercontinental range and largest combat aircraft ever built



1950-53 Korean War: U.S. airpower contributes to UN gaining upper hand in conflict with North Korean and Chinese forces. Air combat takes place mainly between jet fighters for first time

F-86 Sabre ▶
Battles Soviet-made MiG-15 jets over Korea



▲ **B-52 Stratofortress:** Still operational more than 50 years after entering service

1950s **Invention of hydrogen bomb**
Superpower arms race accelerates. U.S. arsenal of strategic bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles becomes key element of defence strategy

1964-73 Vietnam War: Despite overwhelming airpower, new technological advances, and "smart" weapons, U.S. ultimately fails to prevent communist North Vietnam from invading and conquering South

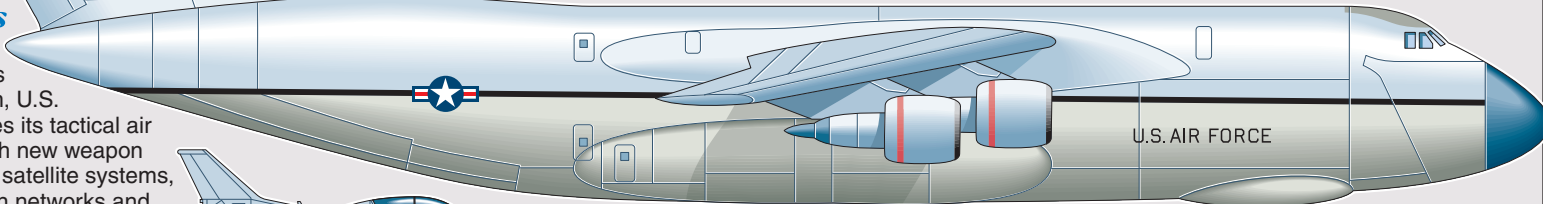


◀ **H-53 "Jolly Green Giant":** Search and rescue workhorse in Vietnam

● **C-5 Galaxy:** U.S. military's largest transport, can shift over 100 tonnes of cargo ▼

1970s and 80s

Drawing on lessons of Vietnam, U.S. modernises its tactical air forces, with new weapon platforms, satellite systems, information networks and global airlift capability



◀ **F-16 Fighting Falcon:** One of world's most successful combat aircraft, exported to 24 countries

Post Cold War

End of Soviet threat, and emergence of regional conflicts in Middle East, Balkans and Afghanistan, emphasise need for streamlined, flexible Air Force capable of rapid deployment



▲ **F-117 Nighthawk:** Stealth fighter strikes enemy targets while avoiding radar detection

▼ **F-22 Raptor:** Air Force's latest fighter features stealth technology and \$100 million price tag



Source: USAF

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