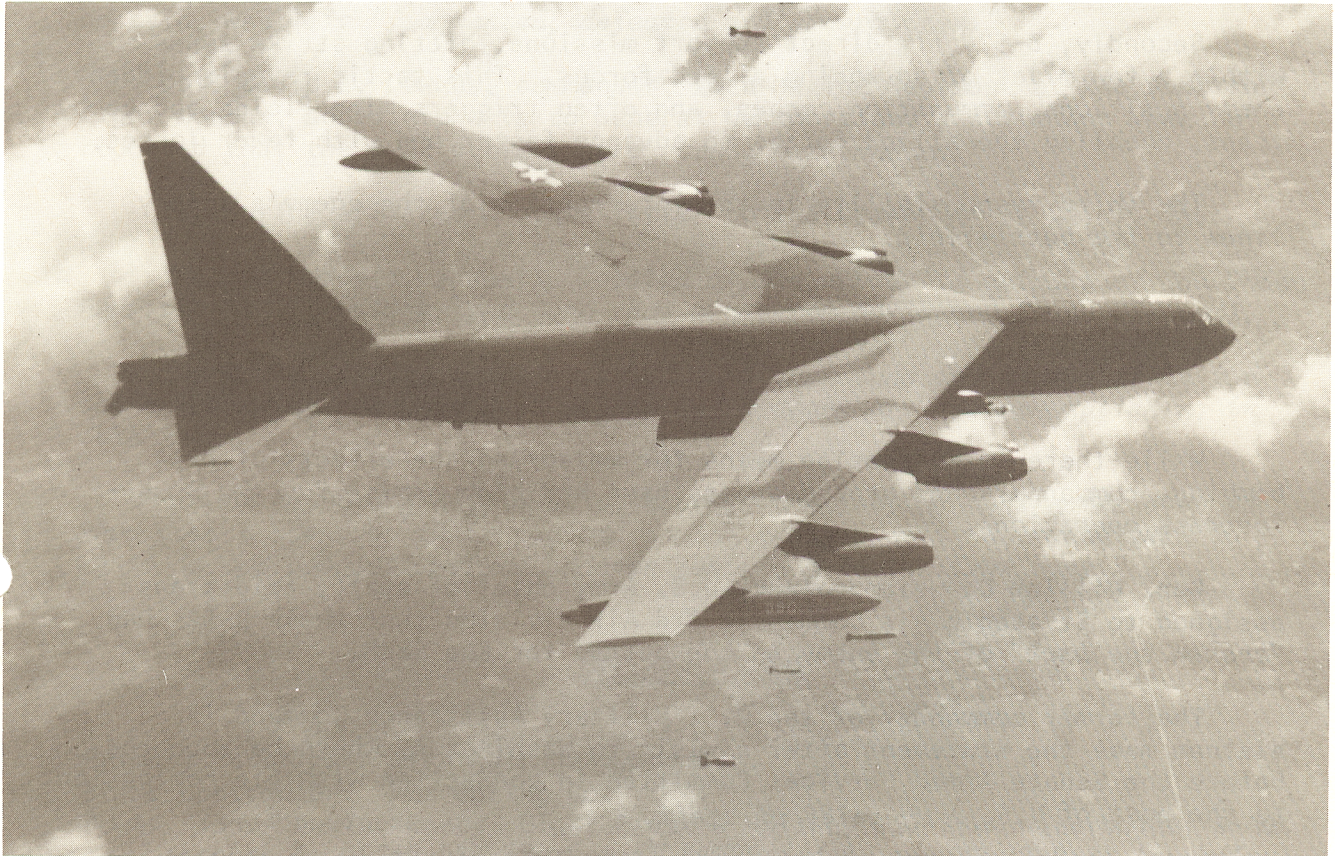


U.S./AIR FORCE/FACT SHEET

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B-52 IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



For more than three years, modified B-52 Stratofortresses of Strategic Air Command have contributed significantly to the U.S. war effort in Vietnam without degrading the Nation's overall nuclear deterrent posture. Should the need arise, the B-52s being used in Southeast Asia can be reconfigured quickly for their general war mission.

From bases in the Western Pacific, SAC personnel are accomplishing their present conventional mission in Vietnam without additional people or aircraft. The force of modified B-52s, the crews, and the people to maintain them are on temporary duty from home bases in the United States.

Depending on the composition of the bomb load, each modified B-52 can carry a total load of up to 67,000 pounds.

THREE PRIMARY MISSIONS

B-52s in SEA have three primary conventional bombing responsibilities. Most important is sanctuary denial or the continuous harassment that prevents the enemy from assembling large forces for sustained attacks against allied ground troops.

Secondly, B-52s fly direct support missions, hitting strike zones within a few miles of advancing allied forces. This tactic reveals hidden enemy positions, ammunition caches, and often triggers mine fields and booby traps, enabling the allied forces to advance faster and with fewer losses.

The third responsibility is the interruption of the enemy's supply lines to the battlefield.

EVALUATION

While there is no precise means for measuring the effects of B-52 bombing, commanders and ground troops have had high praise for the Superfortress operations.

Gen. William C. Westmoreland, U.S. Army chief of staff, told crews assigned to Strategic Air Command's 3rd Air Division that their B-52s had "*broken the back*" of the enemy in the battle for Khe Sanh.

The former commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam made the statement after a visit to Washington, where he appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee in connection with his nomination to the post of U.S. Army chief of staff.

He told the SAC crews that when he appeared before the committee he made "*a point that we would not be in the military position that we are today if it hadn't been for the support given by the B-52s.*"

He also told the SAC men that the B-52s are a major element of our scheme of warfare. He said: "*The professionalism of pilots, crewmembers and support people has been remarkable. Your contribution has not only been important, it has been absolutely essential to the success of our efforts.*"

"Khe Sanh...is a battle that was won by you, and subsequently exploited by the 1st Air Cavalry Division of the United States Army and the Marines.

"I chose the code name 'Operation Niagara,' because I visualized your bombs falling like water over the famous falls there in northern New York State and that's exactly what happened: your bombs rained there like water flowing over Niagara Falls."

General Westmoreland added: *"Without question the amount of firepower put on that piece of real estate exceeded anything that had been seen before in history by manyfold. And the enemy was hurt. His back was broken by airpower."*

The Army leader noted that artillery and tactical airpower also contributed to the victory but said that the weight of ordnance delivered by these sources was small in comparison with the B-52 delivered bombs, and that credit must be given to the 3rd Air Division for permitting the exploitation of the later ground link-up at very little cost to Allied Forces. The enemy, he said, was left *"fragmented, defeated and demoralized."*

Col. David E. Lownds, commander, 26th Marine Regiment at Khe Sanh for eight months, added emphasis to General Westmoreland's statement when he reported that the B-52 strikes were *"truly outstanding."*

Two Marine privates wrote a letter to the Commander in Chief, SAC:

"We are Marines presently located at the embattled outpost of Con Thien near the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone that separates North and South Vietnam).

"We would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the outstanding job your B-52 pilots and crewmembers are accomplishing in this area.

"It is extremely difficult to express the feeling that comes over us when your B-52s drop their payload on the enemy positions around us. To us it is the greatest morale booster next to a letter from home."

SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Function: Strategic heavy bomber
Prime Contractor: The Boeing Co.
Power Plant/Manufacturer: Eight Pratt & Whitney J57-29WAs (turbojet) B-52C through E; J57-P-43s (turbojet) B-52F and G; and TF-33-P-3s (turbofan) B-52H
Thrust: Up to 13,750 lbs each (B-52C through G); 17,000 lbs each (B-52H)
Dimensions: Span 185'; length 156' (B-52C through F) and 157' (B-52G and H); height 48' (B-52C through F) and 40'8" (B-52G and H)
Speed: 650 mph
Ceiling: Above 50,000 feet
Range (Unrefueled): Beyond 6,000 miles (B-52C through F); beyond 7,500 miles (B-52G); beyond 9,000 miles (B-52H)
Bomb Load: 50,000 lbs (without bomb bay modification); 67,000 lbs (modified for conventional bombing)
Armament: Four .50 caliber machineguns in tail (B-52C through G); ASG-21 Gatling gun in tail (B-52H)
Crew: Six
Maximum Gross Takeoff Weight: 450,000 lbs (B-52C through F); 488,000 lbs (B-52G and H)
Status: Operational

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