

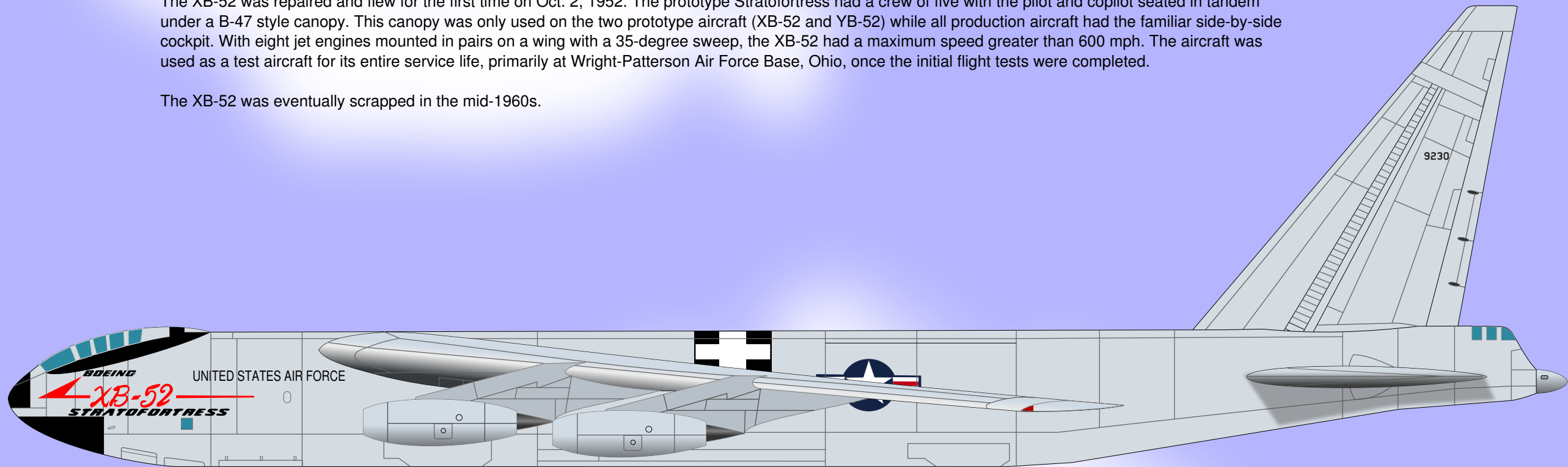
BOEING XB-52

The Boeing XB-52 was conceived in early 1946 in response to an Army Air Force request for a large bomber capable of carrying a 10,000-pound bomb load 5,000 miles at 300+ mph (450+ mph top speed). The original Boeing design was powered by six Wright turboprop engines because the jet engine consumed too much fuel to meet the range requirement. Approval for a mockup design was granted by the USAF on Sept. 30, 1947, just 12 days after becoming a separate service. About 13 months later, however, the turboprop design was dropped in favor of one with jet engines. Six months later, in March 1949, the design was modified again with a lengthened fuselage required, partly, to accommodate additional fuel cells and increase the range.

The first of two prototype aircraft was ready in late 1951. Ground testing continued until a hydraulic system failure caused extensive damage to the wing trailing edges. The aircraft was rolled back into to the Boeing plant for repair. In the meantime, the second prototype was completed and made its first flight on April 15, 1952.

The XB-52 was repaired and flew for the first time on Oct. 2, 1952. The prototype Stratofortress had a crew of five with the pilot and copilot seated in tandem under a B-47 style canopy. This canopy was only used on the two prototype aircraft (XB-52 and YB-52) while all production aircraft had the familiar side-by-side cockpit. With eight jet engines mounted in pairs on a wing with a 35-degree sweep, the XB-52 had a maximum speed greater than 600 mph. The aircraft was used as a test aircraft for its entire service life, primarily at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, once the initial flight tests were completed.

The XB-52 was eventually scrapped in the mid-1960s.



Type	Number built/ converted	Remarks
XB-52	1	Prototype

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Armament: Designed for two .50-cal. machine guns in a tail turret plus 25,000 lbs. of bombs
Engines: Eight Pratt & Whitney YJ57-P-3 turbojets of 8,700 lbs. thrust each
Maximum speed: 610 mph
Cruising speed: 525 mph
Range: 7,000 miles
Service ceiling: 50,000 ft.
Span: 185 ft.
Length: 152 ft. 8 in.
Height: 48 ft. 4 in.