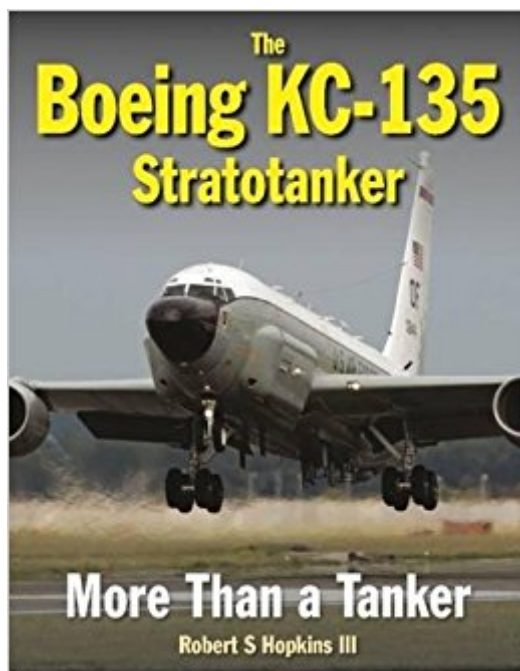


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The Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker: More Than A Tanker



Synopsis

Few would have imagined when "Dix" Loesch and "Tex" Johnston took the KC-135A up for its maiden flight on August 31, 1956 that some 60 years later, it would still be in front-line active service around the world. What began as a jet-powered replacement for the KC-97 to refuel Strategic Air Command's growing B-47 and B-52 bomber fleet soon evolved into America's first military heavy jet transport, an airborne command post platform capable of surviving and then commanding America's nuclear war plan, a testbed that enabled scientists to study the Earth, send men to the Moon and understand the power of the atom. Other variants of the KC-135 included a reconnaissance airframe that monitors arms agreements, gathers intelligence to understand the intentions and capabilities of potential enemies and provides real-time intelligence in combat - beginning with the war in Southeast Asia, and continuing to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. Today, tanker versions of the KC-135 remain in service with Chile, France, Singapore, Turkey, and the United States, while reconnaissance variants operate with Great Britain and the United States. This is a fully revised and expanded edition of the original bestselling 'Aerofax' book and includes operational histories of the 80+ unique types, as well as individual details for all 820 airplanes by serial number including first flight, delivery, changes in configuration, attrition, and retirement. Appendices cover all units, a summary of each accident, display and stored aircraft, and record-setting achievements. The author is a former USAF pilot qualified on 17 types of KC-135s, EC-135s, and RC-135s, who bring both personal experience and a broad historical understanding to this definitive work on one the most significant military aircraft of the Cold War and beyond.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bought for an ex-KC135 crewchief. Book is excellent and well appreciated by someone who literally knows this plane inside out! It is a favourite of ground crew which says a lot about how well it's regarded by the professionals. They also appreciate the detail about the individual planes, many of which are regarded as 'their babies', getting detailed information about each planes 'life-path'. I was particularly lucky to find a 'new' copy that was part of a shop buy out, and the trader was also excellent. All in all, everything was perfect!

Well written, loads of detail. I like nonfiction books with small print because that often means the book is full of "meat and potatoes ", and this one didn't disappoint

I was a crew member on RC-135s for 7 years and when I saw this book I could not put it down. It gives excellent, well explained descriptions of each variant along with photos making it easy to follow and equally interesting. My compliments to Dr. Hopkins.

Great Book - I am in it!!

As a current aircrew member on the Advanced Range Instrumentation Aircraft, I am always looking for anything out there with the history of our airframes. This book is EXCELLENT. The data is accurate and even though you might think you have seen or heard of every variant of the 135 out there, after reading this book you'll soon discover there are a lot more. I highly recommend this book as the benchmark 135 book on the market

I have the rare privilege to own an autographed copy of Dr Bob's book that I received signed 14 January 1998. I spent 4 years as a KC-135A crew chief and flew my tanker on air refueling missions over Vietnam in Linebacker I&II in 1972 and in the Yom Kippur war of Oct 1973. My tanker was a 59 model ... it was 11 years old when I started crewing it ... I went on to a 36 year USAF career and retired in 09 as a Colonel. My tanker still serves and flies out of Bangor Maine. Boeing nailed it with the 135 ... and this book chronicles the entire story. References to tail numbers, build dates, attrition dates, etc are all in this book along with some fabulous photos. If you worked or flew Stratotankers ... find a copy of this book ... it is a treasure. Thanks Dr Bob!

This has got to be the definitive book on the Boeing RC-135 aircraft. But it is also more. For

someone like myself, who has only been as close to an RC-135 as standing next to it in the SAC Museum, the book tells me more than I need know about this long serving aircraft. But at the same time, if for whatever reason I ever need to know it, this book will tell me. With all its technical detail, and the documentation of that detail, for the aircraft aficionado, the real value of this book to the "layman" like myself is Robert Hopkins historical commentary. A former USAF pilot and RC-135 aircraft commander, with a Ph.D. in history specializing in the Cold War, Dr. Hopkins is able to put all this hardware into perspective. He explains how the technical development of the aircraft fit into, and was utilized by, the diplomatic policy and the military defense mission of the United States during the Cold War. With seemingly at least one photograph on every page - including a 16-page color section - this is an excellent and remarkably researched book. As a knowledgeable veteran called it, "It's an encyclopedia of the RC-135."

If you have even the remotest interest in Boeing's fabulous C-135 family, you have to get this book. Bob Hopkins' extensive research into the history of this huge family of aircraft really shows. It covers the history, development, employment, and the multitudinous variants, sub-variants, and sub-sub-variants in great, readable, detail. The selection of photographs is outstanding, although the great majority are in black & white. Separate sections cover the major functional families such as transports, recon aircraft, tankers, testbeds, and command posts. Within each section is a description of each variant, a little about its history, and then a complete history of each individual airframe which carried the MDS. Appendices cover each and every airframe and its history (through the time of publication), leaving few questions unanswered. The book could easily have been five times as long as it is and still have only scratched the surface of detailing the exploits of the C-135 family. However, this volume should serve all but the most ardent fanatic perfectly.

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