

# **BOEING C-135 STRATOLIFTER / KC-135 STRATOTANKER**

## **C / KC-135 SERVICE**

*Manufacturer:* The Boeing Airplane Co., Seattle, Washington, USA  
(In 1961, became The Boeing Co.)

*Models:* Boeing Model 367-80, 717, 739

*Designations:* C-135, KC-135

*Names:* Stratolifter (C-135), Stratotanker (KC-135)

*First official flight:* Model 367-80 15/07/1954

KC-135A 31/08/1956

*Factory production period:* 1955 – 1965

*Primary service period:* 1957 – present

*Last official flight:* - -

## **C / KC-135 VARIANTS**

1956	<b>Model 717-100A</b>	<b>KC-135A</b>	29		
1957	<b>Model 717-146</b>	<b>KC-135A</b>	68		
1958	<b>Model 717-148</b>	<b>KC-135A</b>	635	732	<b>Total: 732</b>

1961	<b>Model 717-157</b>	<b>C-135A</b>		15	
1962	<b>Model 717-158</b>	<b>C-135B</b>		30	
1963	<b>Model 717-164</b>	<b>C-135F</b>		12	
1964	<b>Model 717-166</b>	<b>KC-135B</b>		17	<b>Total: 074</b>

1965	<b>Model 739-700</b>	<b>RC-135A</b>		4	
1964	<b>Model 739-445B</b>	<b>RC-135B</b>		10	<b>Total: 014</b>

**Total: 820**

## **C / KC-135 PRODUCTION**

### **KC-135A**

*4-engined, tanker / cargo transport, side loading door, refuelling boom. First 582 airframes with short tail, all later modified to tall tail.*

*produced 1955 – 1964*

Boeing Renton, Washington (BN)

55-3118 / 55-3146 17234 / 17262

56-3591 / 56-3658 17340 / 17407

57-1418 / 57-1514 17489 / 17585

57-2589 / 57-2609 17725 / 17745

58-0001 / 58-0130 17746 / 17875

59-1443 / 59-1523 17931 / 18011

*- 2 to FAA as civil N96 and N98.*

60-0313 / 60-0368 18088 / 18143

61-0261 / 61-0325 18168 / 18232

62-3497 / 62-3580 18480 / 18563

63-7976 / 63-8045	18593 / 18662		
63-8871 / 63-8888	18719 / 18736		
64-14828 / 64-14840	18768 / 18780	732	<b>Total: 732</b>
<i>57 additional airframes cancelled.</i>			
<b>C-135A</b>			
<i>As KC-135A, cargo / passenger transport only, no refuelling boom. 3 KC-135A's (60-0356, 60-0357, 60-0362) factory converted as C-135A "Falsies" with short tail and refuelling equipment.</i>			
<i>produced 1961</i>			
Boeing Renton, Washington (BN)			
60-0369 / 60-0378	18144 / 18153		
61-0326 / 61-0330	18233 / 18237	15	<b>Total: 015</b>
<b>C-135B</b>			
<i>As C-135A, turbofan engines, wider stabilizers.</i>			
<i>produced 1961 – 1962</i>			
Boeing Renton, Washington (BN)			
61-0331, 61-0332	18238, 18239		
61-2662, 61-2663	18292, 18333		
61-2664 / 61-2674	18340 / 18350		
62-4125 / 62-4139	18465 / 18479	30	<b>Total: 030</b>
<b>C-135F</b>			
<i>As KC-135A, "F" for France tanker aircraft.</i>			
<i>produced 1963 – 1964</i>			
Boeing Renton, Washington (BN)			
63-8470 / 63-8475	18679 / 18684		
(France) 93-CA / 93-CF			
63-12735 / 63-12740	18695 / 18700	12	<b>Total: 012</b>
(France) 93-CG / 93-CL			
<b>KC-135B</b>			
<i>As KC-135A, turbofan engine upgrade, provision for use as airborne command posts.</i>			
<i>produced 1963 – 1965</i>			
Boeing Renton, Washington (BN)			
62-3581 / 62-3585	18564 / 18568		
63-8046 / 63-8052	18663 / 18669		
63-8053 / 63-8057	18701 / 18705	17	<b>Total: 017</b>
<b>RC-135A</b>			
<i>As KC-135A, photo reconn. version, no refuelling boom.</i>			
<i>produced 1965</i>			
Boeing Renton, Washington (BN)			
63-8058 / 63-8061	18670 / 18673	4	<b>Total: 004</b>
<i>5 additional airframes cancelled.</i>			
<b>RC-135B</b>			
<i>As C-135B, ELINT version, no refuelling boom.</i>			
<i>produced 1964 – 1965</i>			
Boeing Renton, Washington (BN)			
63-9792	18706		
64-14841 / 64-14849	18781 / 18789	10	<b>Total: 010</b>
			<b><u>Total: 820</u></b>

## C / KC-135 CONVERSIONS

### USAF

#### KC-135A Relay

	7	KC-135A, 1966-1973, "Combat Lighting" mission radio relay conversions for use in the SEA theatre of operations.
GKC-135A	1+	KC-135A, conversions for ground instructional duties.
JKC-135A	5+	KC-135A, temporary conversions for test work.
NKC-135A	21	KC-135A, permanent conversions for electronic warfare tests. 2 to US Navy, no BuNo. assigned 1 to NASA as N930NA ( <i>civil reg.</i> ).
<b>(NKC-135E)</b>	<b>21</b>	NKC-135A, redesignation after engine upgrade.
NC-135A	3	C-135A, 1964, permanent conversions to monitor nuclear weapons tests.
(GNC-135A)	1	NC-135A, conversions for ground instructional duties.
VC-135A	5	4 KC-135A / 1 C-135A, VIP transports, originally VKC-135A as tankers.
C-135B T/RIA	4	C-135B, Telemetry-Range Instrumented Aircraft, nose extension.
VC-135B	5	C-135B, VIP transports.
WC-135B	11	C-135B, 1965, weather reconnaissance conversions.
<b>(OC-135B)</b>	<b>3</b>	WC-135B, 1993, "Open Skies" Treaty mission conversions to observe foreign military strength.
(TC-135B)	1	WC-135B, 1993, trainer for OC-135B.
<b>(C-135C)</b>	<b>3</b>	WC-135A, conversions as transports, engine upgrade.
<b>WC-135C</b>	<b>1</b>	EC-135C, 1999, temporary conversion as stand-in for the WC-135W.
<b>KC-135D</b>	<b>4</b>	RC-135A, 1972, tanker conversions.
<b>C-135E</b>	<b>3</b>	C-135A, engine upgrades for combat support.
<b>KC-135E</b>	<b>161</b>	KC-135A, 1982, engine / avionics upgrade.
C-135N	4	EC-135N, general support duties, nose radome retained.
<b>KC-135Q</b>	<b>56</b>	KC-135A, 1966, tanker upgrade (JP-7 fuel) for the SR-71 Blackbird.
<b>(KC-135T)</b>	<b>56</b>	KC-135Q, 1995, engine / avionics upgrade similar to KC-135R.
KC-135R	5	KC-135A, conversions with fuselage long fence antennae. Later redesignated as RC-135R.
<b>KC-135R</b>	<b>432</b>	KC-135A, 1984, CFM56 engine upgrade, various improvements. 7 to France, 4 to Singapore, 9 to Turkey. Original designation was KC-135ER.
<b>TC-135S</b>	<b>1</b>	EC-135B, 1984, trainer for RC-135S crews.
<b>TC-135W</b>	<b>3</b>	C-135B, 1987, trainers for RC-135W crews.
<b>WC-135W</b>	<b>2</b>	C-135B, "Constant Phoenix" mission collecting atmospheric samples from nuclear weapons detonations.
<b>(NC-135W)</b>	<b>1</b>	WC-135W, 2001, permanent conversion for test duties.

### USAF – Reconnaissance Conversions

RC-135C	10	RC-135B, 1963, upgraded equipment for use by SAC.
<b>(RC-135U)</b>	<b>3</b>	RC-135C, 1971, "Combat Sent" mission, ELINT duties.
<b>(RC-135V)</b>	<b>8</b>	7 RC-135C / 1 RC-135U, 1973, "Rivet Joint" ELINT mission duties. HBR engine upgrade in 1999.
RC-135D	4	1 KC-135A / 3 C-135A, 1962, "Rivet Brass" mission, SLAR antennas.
RC-135E	1	C-135B, "Rivet Amber" mission, various avionic and airframe upgrades.
RC-135M	6	C-135B, 1967, "Rivet Card / Rivet Quick" missions, electronic reconn. conversions.
<b>(RC-135W)</b>	<b>11</b>	RC-135M / +2 others, 1980, redesignation after subtle modifications for "Rivet Joint" ELINT missions, HBR engine upgrade in 1999. 3 KC-135R to RAF in 2013 with new s/n: ZZ664 / ZZ666.

<b>RC-135S</b>	<b>4</b>	1 KC-135A / 3 C-135B, "Rivet Ball / Cobra Ball" mission conversions for tracking foreign or hostile missile launches.
RC-135T	1	KC-135R, 1971-1985, conversion for command support and training.
RC-135X	1	EC-135B, "Cobra Eye" mission conversion for missile re-entry surveillance.

#### **USAF – Electronics Conversions**

EC-135A	11	KC-135A, 1965, flying command posts, radio-relay conversions.
EC-135B	2	C-135B T/RIA, 1978, conversions with radome nose and large antennae.
<b>EC-135C</b>	<b>14</b>	KC-135B, 1965, redesignation as SAC flying command posts.
EC-135G	4	KC-135A, 1965, radio-relay and airborne launch control centers.
EC-135H	5	KC-135A, 1968, airborne command posts.
<b>EC-135J</b>	<b>3</b>	KC-135B, 1965, airborne command posts for Pacific theatre.
EC-135K	3	KC-135A, airborne command posts for fighter support.
EC-135L	8	KC-135A, 1965, Post-Attack Command / Control aircraft.
EC-135N	8	C-135A, 1967, Apollo Range Instrumentation Aircraft (ARIA), used during Apollo moon landings, conversions by Douglas Aircraft Co., California.
(EC-135E)	2	EC-135N, 1981, engine upgrade, used in general test duties.
EC-135P	5	KC-135A, conversions as aerial command posts.
EC-135Y	1	NKC-135A, 1984, single command post modification.

#### **Foreign Conversions**

<b>C-135FR</b>	<b>11</b>	C-135F, 1984, CFM56 engine upgrade for French aircraft.
----------------	-----------	---