



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet BOEING KC-97L STRATOFREIGHTER

A cargo version of the [B-29](#), the C-97 Stratofreighter first flew in November 1944. Boeing introduced the tanker version, KC-97 with the "flying boom" refueling system, in 1950. In all, the USAF ordered 890 aircraft: 74 C-97s and 816 KC-97s.

To keep its tankers compatible with its newer high performance jet aircraft, the USAF gradually replaced the slower KC-97s with Boeing KC-135 jet tankers after 1956. However, some modified KC-97s continued flying in other roles. In 1964 some of them received two jet engines. The increased speed of these KC-97L aircraft made them more compatible with high performance jet aircraft, and they served primarily with the Air National Guard. The USAF retired its last C/KC-97 in 1973, but others remained in use with the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard as tankers or search and rescue aircraft.

During Operation Creek Party, which started in 1967 and lasted for 10 years, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve tankers supported active duty USAF and NATO units in Europe. The aircraft on display, flown by the 160th Air Refueling Group of the Ohio Air National Guard, participated in this operation, and on June 7, 1973, the mayor of Zeppelinheim, a town near Rhein-Main Air Base in West Germany, christened this aircraft in his town's honor. The *Zeppelinheim* was flown to the museum in August 1976.



DAYTON, Ohio -- Boeing KC-97L Stratofreighter in the Cold War Gallery at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo)

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Engines: Four [Pratt & Whitney R-4360s](#) of 3,500 hp each and two [General Electric J47 turbojets](#) of 5,970 lbs. thrust each

Maximum speed: 400 mph

Range: 2,300 miles

Span: 141 ft. 2 in.

Length: 117 ft. 5 in. (with boom retracted)

Height: 38 ft. 4 in.

Weight: 153,000 lbs. normal maximum

Serial number: 52-2630

