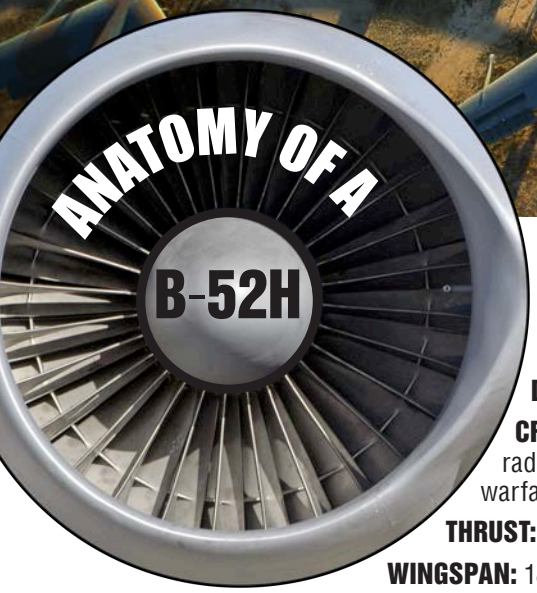
Stratofortress Statistics

Old military aircraft, such as these B-52 bombers, are stationed indefinitely at the "graveyard" at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base near Tucson, Arizona. (Photo: Getty Images)



CONTRACTOR: Boeing Military Airplane Company

DEPLOYED: 1962

CREW: Five (aircraft commander, pilot, radar navigator, navigator, and electronic warfare officer)

THRUST: up to 17,000 pounds per engine

WINGSPAN: 185 feet

HEIGHT: 40 feet, 8 inches **LENGTH:** 159 feet, 4 inches

CEILING: 50,000 feet **RANGE:** 8,800 miles **SPEED:** 650 mph (Mach 0.84)

EMPTY WEIGHT: approximately 185,000 pounds

ARMAMENT: approximately 70,000 pounds mixed ordnance: bombs, mines, and missiles, including nuclear-armed cruise missiles

INVENTORY: active force, 58; reserve, 18

Introduced in 1954, the B-52 Stratofortress is the backbone of the U.S. strategic bomber force. With proper maintenance and upgrades, the B-52 is expected to remain in service until 2040. No other U.S. bomber has been called on to remain operational for more than 70 years.

The B-52 is a long-range heavy bomber that flies at subsonic speeds at altitudes up to 50,000 feet or as low as 50 feet. Fully fueled, the plane has a range of 8,800 miles; with aerial refueling, the B-52's range is limited only by the endurance of its crew.

The B-52 can strike any target on Earth with air-launched cruise missiles armed with Los Alamos-designed W80 nuclear warheads. During a non-nuclear mission, the B-52 carries a large number and wide array of conventional weapons. No other U.S. weapon system offers the flexibility and versatility of the B-52.