



# The B-58 Blunder: How the U.S. Abandoned its Best Strategic Bomber.

*Col. George Holt Jr*

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## **The B-58 Blunder: How the U.S. Abandoned its Best Strategic Bomber.** Col. George Holt Jr

Highly effective weapons of war that often cost millions of dollars can easily end up in a trash pile due to quick and uninformed decisions. This work is a case study on how the B-58 supersonic bomber came to a premature death in the U.S. military, largely because of infighting among military and civilian leaders, who failed to understand the value of this fantastic airplane. It was a technological marvel for its time and the very best pilots and navigators were chosen to fly this unique aircraft. At its maximum speed of 2.2 Mach (1,452 mph) it was 2½ times faster than the muzzle velocity of a .45 caliber bullet. It could fly faster and out turn must fighters of its day and was also capable of flying close to tree top level just below the speed of sound. It was nearly undetectable by enemy radars due to its speed and low radar cross section and was better at flying through heavy turbulence due to its solid delta wing design. It had a highly accurate navigation and bombing system. It had a capsule ejection system for the safety of the aircrew and was capable of getting airborne in only half the time required by other bombers. Told for the first time, this is the inside story that dispels the unproven myths surrounding the demise of the B-58 and why this magnificent airplane should have been saved. Its loss from the nuclear armory was a severe blow to our “Cold War” deterrence strength. The B-58 was a bomber that set the standard for fear in the heart of an enemy. Its loss was a strategic mistake. The author provides lessons learned and recommendations for military and civilian leaders, going forward, to hopefully prevent future blunders—like what happened to the B-58.

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