

North American XB-70

The North American XB-70 was designed as a high speed, high altitude strategic bomber to deliver nuclear weapons long distance. However, by the time it was ready intercontinental missiles had taken over its role.

Strategic bombers had played an important part in World War II but, by the early 1950s, the atomic bomb had made strategic bombers even more threatening. However, defences against bombers had improved so much that the only way they could get through to their targets in the future would be to fly higher and faster. The XB-70 was designed to do that by flying at more than three times the speed of sound at over 70 000 feet to reach targets deep inside Russia. It was a huge aeroplane that involved many technical innovations. However, by the time the first XB-70 flew on 21 September 1964 intercontinental ballistic missiles had taken over the role it was planned to fill. The XB-70 made its final flight in February 1969

This model represents the first prototype.

Data: *Engines* 6 General Electric YJ93-3 turbojets of 120kN thrust each on afterburner. *Wing span* 32m (105ft). *Length* 59.75m (196ft). *Maximum take-off weight* 249,476kg (550 000lbs). *Maximum level speed* Mach 3.1 (over 2 000 mph). *Crew* 2.

AMT 1/72 kit completed by Leigh Edmonds in December 2000.



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