



Air Force One: The Aircraft That Shaped the Modern Presidency

By Von Hardesty

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In the 1940s, FDR was the first airborne president, flying several times in a C-54 nicknamed the "Sacred Cow." In the 1950s, it was aircraft known as "Independence," "Columbine II" and "Columbine III" that transported Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower on occasion. But it was not until after the Korean War, with the United States becoming the leader of the free world, that presidential air travel entered the modern age. The jet-age mobility of the American presidency beginning in the 1960s corresponds directly to the nation's emergence as a super power. Air Force One: The Aircraft that Shaped the Modern Presidency is the story of the planes, the Presidents, their staff and, their many trips across the nation and around the globe. But it's also more than that-it is a vehicle for better understanding the activities and dealings of each presidential administration in the second half of the twentieth century. Through vibrant photography, this book communicates the story of a unique set of planes and the presidents who made them a vital national asset. Now all of these planes and their famous passengers have been captured. Written by Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum curator Von Hardesty and featuring over 200 illustrations, including new photos of the airplane's interiors, this book takes you on a memorable flight through history. Through insider accounts and from a unique vantage point on well-known political events, Hardesty shows how the presidency was transformed by the remarkable advances in aviation technology.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This compelling history of presidential air transportation begins with the first president to fly (and to fly abroad, and to have a special plane): FDR. Eisenhower and Truman both had dedicated prop planes, but JFK took the leap into the jet age with the 707 that had the grimmest task of any Air Force One—bringing his body home from Dallas. Other Air Force Ones have had less well-known dramas: Lyndon Johnson's impromptu around-the-world flight in 1967, Richard Nixon's last departure from Washington and Bush's escorted, circuitous route home after 9/11. But mostly the 707s and their successors the 747s have made the president accessible to the world and vice versa, without having to be out of touch with his responsibilities or reducing his security. The price of this is imposing; a double-page spread shows the logistics of a major presidential journey abroad. Among any number of fascinating sidebars are digressions on the transportation of other chief executives and on the presidential helicopters. With well-chosen and well-reproduced photographs, the author, a curator at the National Air and Space Museum, has provided a sterling contribution to the history of both the presidency and of American aviation and even includes an annotated bibliography of print, visual and electronic media.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 6 Up—An attractive cover is only the beginning of an interesting and informative presentation by the curator of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Divided into seven chapters, the text is basically a chronology of presidential travel. Brief mention is made of James Monroe's two treks by horseback through the northeastern states, and then through the South. The train later became the presidents' unofficial mode of long-distance transportation. Beginning with the *Guess Who II* used by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, the author describes the type, design, accommodations, and uses of the planes by each administration. Among those described are *Sacred Cow*, *Independence*, *Columbine*, and the various models known as Air Force One. Considerable space is devoted to how the interiors were redesigned to suit the personality of each leader. Double-columned text, sidebars, detailed captions, and wide margins result in a pleasing format. The text is generously illustrated with black-and-white vintage and color photos of all sizes. This title is not just a history of presidential aircraft, but is also a history of the presidency and how each plane played an important part in diplomatic and historical occasions, including the role of Air Force One on 9/11. A short epilogue lists where the retired planes may be viewed. Andrew Santella's *Air Force One* (Millbrook, 2003), which is much shorter, is for a younger audience, and focuses more on the planes than on history. However, it makes an excellent companion to this title. A first-class production.

Eldon Younce, *Harper Elementary School, KS*

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About the Author

Von Hardesty is the curator at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, where he has worked for two decades on publications and exhibits about aviation history. He is the author of *Lindbergh: Flight's Enigmatic Hero*, among numerous other books and articles. He is currently the editor of the "Cambridge Centennial of Flight" series.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Endsley:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or read a book called Air Force One: The Aircraft That Shaped the Modern Presidency? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have other opinion?

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Ben Papenfuss:

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