





**Out in the Dakotas, the 28th Bomb Wing keeps the B-1B's edge sharp and ready.**

# BAD TO THE

*The B-1B on takeoff is an awesome sight. This one belongs to the 28th BW, located at Ellsworth AFB, S.D.*



# B-ONE

Photography by Ted Carlson



**W**ith a sleek shape, swing-wing design, and four powerful jet engines, the B-1B is the fastest of Air Force heavy bombers. Like other aircraft, it has an official name—Lancer—which no one uses. What they really call it is “the Bone,” a blending of “B” and “one.” Some go further and call it “Bad to the Bone,” recalling the raw rock classic by George Thorogood and the Destroyers. The 28th BW at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., is home to 29 of the big bombers.

Right: The B-1B’s frontal shaping is no accident; it provided the first version of stealth in a US bomber.

Below right: A B-1B soars above the Great Plains.

Below: “Sticks” of Mk 82 500-pound bombs fill up one of the B-1B’s three cavernous weapons bays.



*Clockwise from left: Lt. Col. Howard Shrum (l) and Capt. Donovan Davis pilot a B-1B back to Ellsworth. Note the bank angle. • A B-1B skirts Rapid City, S.D., Ellsworth’s host city. • Capt. Jesse Hamilton exits through a B-1B crew door after a long flight.*





The bomber's maintenance once was a headache, but the B-1B is now a strong performer.

Left: A maintenance crew tows a B-1B to the hangar for some TLC.

Clockwise from below: A B-1B shows its flying qualities, which more nearly approximate a fighter than a bomber. • A munitions crew loads a cluster bomb unit for transport to a B-1B. • Dark against a light background, a Bone begins a low-level bomb drop over Wyoming. • An ordnance crew member keeps close watch as he loads a cluster bomb on a B-1B.



Left: A B-1B lowers its gear and extends its slats in preparation for landing. The Bone can sweep its wings back to go fast or push them forward to get greater lift and range.

When conceived, the aircraft was supposed to serve as the bridge between the B-52—designed in the early 1950s—and a conceptual high-tech bomber—ultimately, the B-2. However, due to political delays, the B-1B was bought just before the B-2.

The B-1B almost didn't make it to the Air Force inventory. President Jimmy Carter in 1977 canceled the program just as it was about to go into the production phase. President Ronald Reagan revived it in 1981. USAF bought 100 aircraft.

Right: A1C Amy Hall and A1C Raleigh White, 28th Security Forces Squadron, stand ready to repel intruders.

Below: With wings pushed far forward, the B-1B achieves its full span.

Below right: A trio of Mk 82 500-pounders reposes in the bay.



Clockwise from above: The B-1B Black Widow shows off some of the modern nose art that adorns Ellsworth's Bones. • Support crew members keep on truckin' even in frigid Dakota winters. • A trio of stealthy AGM-158 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles awaits loading.







The B-1B soon will be equipped with Sniper targeting pods on an external mount for use with laser guided bombs. It also carries towed decoys, which play out from the tail to spoof any threatening missiles.

Left: In a right bank, this B-1B reveals its three weapons bays, one of which can be fitted with an extra internal fuel tank.

Below: Capt. Michael Brazda, a weapon systems operator, goes to work in his "office" behind the forward cockpit. WSOs alternate between the offensive and defensive systems stations to remain proficient at both.

Bottom: A B-1B banks over South Dakota's Black Hills, home of the famous Mt. Rushmore national monument.



Second above: B-1B ordnance crew members lift a Mk 82 bomb into one of the aircraft's huge bomb bays.

Directly above: Several Mk 62 Quickstrike sea mines await possible use. The B-1B also has a maritime mission; the munitions above can be laid on short notice at any ocean choke point.



*Clockwise from right: A B-1B catches the light of dawn over a nearby training range, the Powder River military operating area, during one of many daily training flights.*

*• The B-1B named Doolittle's Destroyer reminds all that the 34th Bomb Squadron, part of the 28th BW at Ellsworth, contributed crew members to Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle's famous April 1942 raid on Japan. • Airmen load Mk 82s on a B-1B; a yellow stripe around the nose indicates the round is live.*



*Above: A "JAMMR" bomb loader brings another round to a waiting B-1B, which can carry a mixture of weapons adaptable to many types of attack requirements.*

*Left: The B-1B's thin profile and dull gray camouflage blend remarkably well with the rolling Black Hills. Soon, the B-1B will receive a "glass cockpit" of modern instrumentation.*





More than 30 years after it first appeared on the drawing board, the B-1B still looks state-of-the-art—sleek, fast, and menacing. It is in greater demand than at any time in its service career. The average B-1B is 19 years old, still slightly younger than its junior crew members.

Counterclockwise, from left: A B-1B banks into a graceful turn. Note the wing-like canards near the nose; they smooth out low-level flight. • A Bone breaks formation and tears away toward some new destination. • Lt. Col. Howard Shrum maintains loose formation with another bomber. Note the fighter-like controls at his fingertips.



Left: B-1B crew members (l-r) Capt. Michael Sims, Capt. Jesse Hamilton, 1st Lt. Chad Hillen, and Capt. Cora Seidler walk the ramp at Ellsworth. Above, a B-1B heads out on another mission.

Most Ellsworth personnel have deployed to operations over Iraq and Afghanistan, and training for such real-world deployments is a never-ending challenge. ■