

Air force one

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Air Force One is so much a part of the American Presidency. It brought the President to places where he normally never would have been able to go to. For the obvious and most mundane reason that, before there was a jet plane, he couldn't get there.

And Air Force One, in all its magnificence and in all its glory, was, and is, the vehicle by which the President can bring his policies and the American ideals to places where he had never been before, like China, where no President had ever been until Nixon journeyed there.

Kennedy flew across a divided Berlin, landing in West Berlin to call for the end of the Berlin Wall. That tradition has continued over the past 50 years of Air Force One's existence. It's not that the plane itself does anything more than transport the President, but it is such a powerful symbol of America. Presidents use it for that, and they use it very well.

In 1944 President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for the creation of the Presidential Pilot Office to provide air transportation to the President and his staff. For most of the next 20 years, various "four-engine propeller-driven aircraft" were used for presidential air travel. In 1962, the first jet aircraft, a Boeing 707, was purchased for use as Air Force One. (The White House, 2003).

It was President John F. Kennedy's wife, Jacqueline Kennedy, selected the colors of the first Air Force One, VC-137C. The 707s served as presidential aircraft until they were replaced by 747-200s, designated VC-25, in 1990. The long-range version of the Boeing 707-320 intercontinental became the most commonly ordered version of the 707 airliner. Its fuselage was

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8 feet longer than the 707-120 and its wingspan was 12 feet longer. With new turbofan jet engines, the B versions had a range of 6, 000 miles, and in 1962, a 707-320B took over the role of U. S. government VIP and presidential transport, designated VC-137C. A second VC-137C was delivered in 1972. These were the first Air Force Ones. (Boeing, 2006).

Air Force One Today

The current presidential fleet consists of two specifically-configured Boeing 747-200B series aircraft - tail numbers 28000 and 29000 - with Air Force designation VC-25A. When the President is aboard either craft, or any other Air Force aircraft, the radio call sign is " Air Force One."

While on the aircraft, the President and staff have access to a full range of services, including communications systems, secure and non-secure voice, and fax and data communications, along with access to photocopying, printing, and word processing. (Harris, 2006).

Today, not president but also the chief executive flies aboard a specially configured 747-200B, the newest and largest presidential airplane. Its capabilities include:

There was a longer range for presidential travel, Aerial refueling and Self-sufficiency at airports around the world. The " flying Oval Office" has 4, 000 square feet of interior floor space.

Among its accommodations are conference/dining room, quarters for the president and the first lady, an office area for senior staff members, another

office that converts into a medical facility when necessary, work and rest areas for the presidential staff, media representatives and Air Force crews, two galleys that can provide 100 meals at one sitting and multi-frequency radios for air-to-air, air-to-ground and satellite communications. (Game Puppet, 2006).

Principal differences between Air Force One and the standard Boeing 747 include state-of-the-art navigation, electronic and communications equipment; its interior configuration and furnishings; self-contained baggage loader; and front and aft air-stairs. (Boeing, 2006).