

AVSIM Commercial Aircraft Package Review

AlphaSim - B58 Hustler



Product Information		
Publisher: AlphaSim		
Description: Aircraft Add-on		
Download Size: 32.2 MB	Format: Executable	Simulation Type: MSFS 2004
Reviewed by: Erv Schultze AVSIM Staff Reviewer		

Introduction

No bomber ever made such a definite break with tradition as the B-58 Hustler. It was the world's first supersonic bomber, and it set a long list of performance records which still remain unmatched to this day.

The B-58 could fly faster than any other bomber in the world; twice the speed of sound, pinpoint a target from an altitude of 60,000 feet, and was the first aircraft capable of low-level operations at near-supersonic speeds.

The Hustler was powered by four GE J-79 engines, each delivering a staggering 15,000 pounds of thrust with full afterburner. It was capable of flying over 4,500 miles unrefueled, and was limited only by crew endurance with aerial refueling.

Its electronic offensive and defensive systems were light-years ahead of anything fielded at that point, almost ten times more effective and requiring only two-thirds the space of earlier systems.

A turn away from the "bigger is better" school of bomber design, the B-58 was a futuristic looking delta-winged aircraft. The fuselage was designed using the "area rule" principle, which added to its sleek design. Much use was also made of honeycomb skin material, which served to reduce weight and withstand the high temperatures of supersonic flight.

The first production B-58 was delivered to Carswell AFB, Texas on December 1, 1959. Production ceased after the delivery of only 116 aircraft, and the USAF retired the last Hustler in 1970.

In its short operational life, the B-58 became a legend. It is still spoken of in awed tones as a hot, beautiful plane, and also as a handful to fly and a killer to the unwary.

Installation and Documentation

The purchase and download of this add-on is done through the AlphaSim store, which is about as quick and painless as possible. Once the zip file is downloaded, merely extract the contents into your main FS 2004 folder, and you are ready to go...almost.

AlphaSim includes a nine page checklist file which will walk you through the basics of flying the Hustler. Also included are several pages from the USAF Technical Order (T.O.) 1B-58A-1, also known as the aircraft Bible. I would encourage you to thoroughly read the page regarding landing and the "Landing Pattern (Typical)" page. You may also want to keep these handy references close by, as landing the B-58 is an adventure in itself!

The Aircraft

There are 5 models and 6 texture sets:

B-58A, Super Sue, 6592nd TS, Edwards AFB;
B-58A, 305th BW, 2nd AF;
B-58A , 305th BW, 2nd AF, Bunker Hill AFB - TCP;
TB-58A, 305th BW, Bunker Hill AFB, Indiana;
B-58A, 55-662, ARDC, Edwards AFB;
B-58A, Project Bullseye - SCP (SIOP camouflage over black scheme); and
YB-58A, 55-0664, Prototype B-58



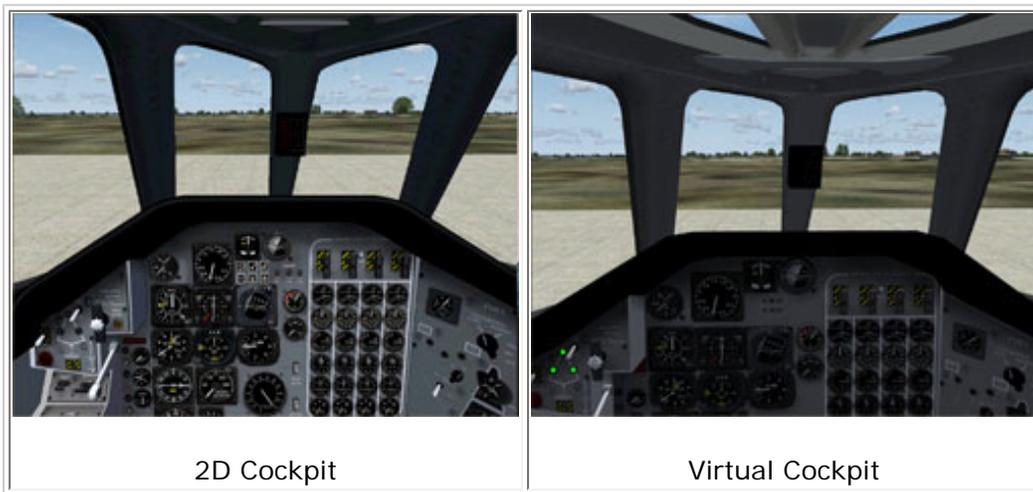


Each model is very well detailed and thoroughly conveys the feeling of a then top-of-the-line Strategic Air Command bomber. It may look like a fighter, but this plane is huge in its own right. The visual model is very well detailed right down to the opening slipway doors, animated engine nozzles, and control surfaces which droop authentically after the power is shut down.

The massive fuel/weapon pod is jettisonable, as are the smaller bombs (nuclear on the operational Hustler, and conventional on the camouflage model). All three crew entrance hatches on the top of the fuselage are also very well animated.

The Front Office

Both the 2D and virtual cockpit are outstanding pieces of work. The claustrophobic nature of the front cockpit is maintained right down to the top of the encapsulated ejection seat blocking part of your side view. If you are expecting a "high tech" panel, remember, this plane was designed in the 1950's. There are no MFDs, push buttons, strip gauges or digital readouts. Switches and gauges are all over the cockpit. In fact, to get to the starter switches on the left panel and the lighting controls on the right, it is necessary to shift your view around the seat and its stowed enclosure. (I can't recommend Track-IR enough for this!)



The engines start with a roar that lets you know this is a military aircraft! There is little to no soundproofing on a combat plane, and AlphaSim's sound package definitely ensures that you sit up and take notice! It requires a lot of power to get the Hustler moving. A typical taxi starts out with advancing the throttles to 80 percent RPM and waiting for her to start rolling. After that it takes careful coordination of the throttles to keep the speed within acceptable parameters.

Following clearance to takeoff, and lining up, the aircraft really comes into its own. Advancing the throttles, your takeoff roll starts out very slow but gets much faster as the afterburners deliver their full potential. Remember that a delta winged plane requires a lot of control movement and it will seem like an abnormal pitch angle on take off...this

is normal. Following the checklist, rotation and unstick speeds are as described. Once the gear is stowed away, come out of afterburner to avoid overspeed.

Flight is stable in all areas, and once leveled off at your cruising altitude you will be able to enjoy the scenery going by at a high rate of speed.

As mentioned before, landing is a self-contained adventure. Trying to coordinate airspeed, angle of attack, and sink rate all the while staying on the localizer and glideslope is quite a challenge. In fact, a good scan pattern between your instruments, the outside world, and the AOA/speed indexer on the windshield is a must! Allowing any element of the approach to get out of control will result in a "less than survivable" landing. Remember, if all else fails, re-read the reference materials!



Lift-off



On Final Approach



Roll-out

Another thing to remember, is that at the specified 12.5 degree angle of attack the runway will not be visible. While adjusting the eyepoint height helps somewhat, a good ILS approach will go a long way in making it down in one piece!

Test System
P4 3.0 HT, 1GB DDR2 RAM nVidia 9800 GT/OC PCIe video card Saitek X-45 stick and throttle CH products Pro Pedals and Throttle Quadrant Track-IR 3 with Vector Expansion
Flying Time: 20 hours

Performance

The team at AlphaSim has done a fantastic job at providing a well detailed package with minimal abnormalities. This aircraft had absolutely no impact on frame rates, and only a slight delay in aircraft texture processing was noted when switching from the virtual cockpit to an outside view. I was really impressed with the fluidity of movement around the virtual cockpit. In almost every other aircraft there are occasional stutters, but I haven't noticed any in the Hustler.

Conclusions

While I thoroughly enjoyed flying the B-58, it is not for the casual flight simmer. A lot of time will be spent in learning to handle the aircraft's quirks in landing. An "in the groove" landing on the center line of the runway is never guaranteed, and you will probably experience your fair share of crashes before getting the hang of

landing. In speaking with a pilot who actually flew the Hustler, he could only describe how challenging landings were.

However, while requiring a good deal of time to master, the ability to fly this classic piece of "SAC heavy iron" is worth all the work. AlphaSim has done a great deal to set the standard for military add-ons, and this great package is no exception. It also serves as a fitting tribute to honor the men and women on both sides of the Cold War.

What I Like About The B58 Hustler

- Outstanding flight model
- Authentically detailed 2D and virtual cockpits
- Powerful sound package
- Beautiful paint schemes
- Good documentation, including pages from the original pilot's manual

What I Don't Like About The B58 Hustler

- Beacon and Navigation lighting seems inadequate

Printing

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