

## Douglas A-26C Invader



### [Douglas A-26 Invader \(XA-26F\)](#)

Le Douglas A-26 Invader était un bombardier d'attaque léger bimoteur construit pendant la seconde guerre mondiale, et qui eut une très longue carrière militaire lors de la guerre froide. Le fait qu'il fut redésigné B-26 entre 1948 et 1962 entraîna parfois une confusion avec le Martin B-26 Marauder, d'autant plus qu'ils étaient contemporains et utilisaient les mêmes moteurs. L'A-26 fut conçu par Edward Heinemann, Robert Donovan et Ted R. Smith afin de répondre à une demande de l'USAAC datant de 1940, avec une spécification inhabituelle à l'époque : pouvoir être piloté par une seule personne. Son aile utilisait un nouveau profil laminaire, le NACA 65-215. Il devait accomplir aussi bien des attaques à basse altitude que des bombardements à moyenne altitude, et se passer d'une escorte. Il fut conçu pour succéder à l'A-20 Havoc, avec une charge utile de 5000 livres, 2 mitrailleuses de 12,7 mm tirant vers l'avant, ainsi que 2 tourelles de 2 mitrailleuses chacune, dorsale et ventrale. De fait, il s'agissait d'un A-20 agrandi, plus solide et doté de moteurs plus puissants. Une maquette fut présentée début 1941 et un contrat portant sur la construction de 2 prototypes, le XA-26 et le XA-26A, fut signé en juin. Le prototype XA-26 (41-19504) effectua son vol inaugural le 10 juillet 1942 à Mines Field (El Segundo) avec Benny Howard aux commandes. Les essais en vols révélèrent d'excellentes performances et tenue en vol, mais des modifications furent nécessaires concernant le refroidissement des moteurs et le train avant. 2 configurations furent retenues : l'A-26B disposait d'un nez plein lui permettant d'emporter divers armements, dont des canons de 20, 37 voire 75 mm. En définitive, 6 mitrailleuses Browning M2 de 12,7 mm furent retenues, cette combinaison étant jugée plus fiable que les canons. Les moteurs étaient des R-2800-27 de 2000 hp, les mêmes que ceux du XA-26A. Le prototype XA-26B fut commandé en juin 1942, et accepté par l'USAAF le 30 juin 1943.



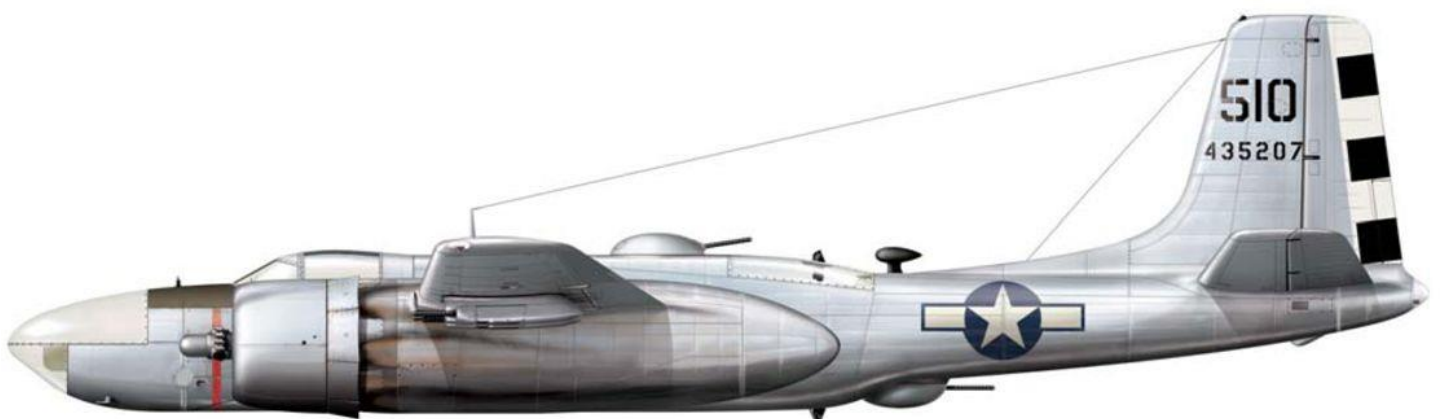
### [Douglas A-26B Invader aux couleurs de l'USAAF en vol](#)

L'A-26C disposait lui d'un nez vitré plus adapté aux missions de bombardement, et était doté d'un viseur Norden. 2 mitrailleuses M2 y furent également installées avant d'être remplacées par des mitrailleuses dans les ailes. Quand à l'A-26A, destiné à la chasse de nuit, il fut jugé inférieur au Northrop P-61 et ne fut pas retenu pour une production en série. Fin 1944, après 820 exemplaires construits, la verrière fut modifiée pour améliorer la visibilité. Après 1750 exemplaires produits, l'A-26B vit son nez passer de 6 à 8 mitrailleuses et l'A-26, en général, fut armé de 3 mitrailleuses supplémentaires dans chaque aile. Ce qui donnait un maximum de 14 mitrailleuses de 12,7 mm tirant vers l'avant. Enfin, les nez de l'A-26B et C étaient interchangeables. L'A-26B entra en service dans l'USAAF en août 1943, au sein du 13th squadron du 3rd Bomb Group de la 5th Air Force. La première mission de guerre fut effectuée dans le Pacifique le 23 juin 1944, contre les positions japonaises de Manokwari. C'est à cette occasion que la visibilité fut jugée médiocre pour les attaques à basse altitude. L'A-26 ne convainquit absolument pas les équipages, qui lui préféraient même son prédécesseur l'A-20 Havoc. Seule une douzaine de missions furent effectuées jusqu'à la fin de la guerre sur le théâtre du Pacifique, la dernière étant effectuée le 12 août 1945. L'A-26 fut déployé en Europe au sein de la 9th Air Force, qui effectua sa première mission de guerre avec cet appareil le 6 septembre 1944 sur Brest. Aucun appareil ne fut perdu lors des 8 missions-tests, et la 9th Air Force se déclara enthousiaste pour remplacer tous ses A-20 et B-26 par des A-26. Il devint réellement opérationnel en novembre 1944 au sein du 416th Bombardment Group. Il effectua des missions de bombardement, de strafing, d'interdiction de nuit et de reconnaissance tactique avec succès, et fut le bombardier le plus rapide de l'USAAF pendant la seconde guerre mondiale. En 1945, 11567 missions furent effectuées par la 9th Air Force, avec 18054 tonnes de bombes larguées, 7 victoires enregistrées et 67 pertes. L'A-26 fut également déployé en Italie au sein de la 12th Air Force à partir de janvier 1945.



### [Douglas A-26 Invader \(DB-26C\) de l'USAF](#)

La Royal Air Force fit évaluer 3 A-26 en 1944-1945 par l'Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment. Une commande de 140 exemplaires sous la loi prêt-bail fut envisagée, mais l'imminence de la fin de la guerre enterra le projet. En 1947, l'USAF devint indépendante et les B-26 Marauder avaient été retirés du service. L'USAF décida de ne plus utiliser la désignation A (pour Attack) et c'est ainsi que l'A-26 devint B-26 dès l'année suivante, en juin 1948. Il redeviendra A-26 en 1962, lors de la mise en commun des désignations au sein des forces armées américaines. L'A-26 fut un des premiers appareils de l'USAF à être déployé lors de la guerre de Corée, et le premier appareil à effectuer une mission de guerre, en l'occurrence le bombardement d'un aéroport près de Pyongyang le 29 juin 1950. L'apparition des MiG-15 le contraignit à intervenir uniquement de nuit. Il effectua également la dernière mission de guerre, 24 minutes avant l'entrée en vigueur de l'armistice le 27 juin 1953. Il fut crédité de la destruction de 38500 véhicules, 406 locomotives et 3700 wagons. 157 appareils furent perdus. L'A-26 équipa des Groupes de Bombardement de l'Armée de l'Air française, dont les GB 1/19 Gascogne et GB 1/25 Tunisie dans les années 1950. 111 A-26 furent loués à l'USAF en janvier 1951 et 85 lui furent retournés en 1954. Ils furent utilisés lors de la guerre d'Indochine, en particulier lors du siège de Dien Bien Phu. Dans une manœuvre désespérée, ils servirent aussi à larguer des colis de 400 kg. C'est aussi à bord d'un A-26 que disparut le général André Hartemann le 28 avril 1951, dans des circonstances toujours inconnues. Une opération, baptisée "Vautour", prévoyait l'utilisation massive d'A-26 de l'USAF basés aux Philippines contre l'artillerie vietnamienne, mais elle fut annulée. 85 appareils furent de nouveau acquis en septembre 1956 pour équiper 2 groupes de bombardement et participer à la guerre d'Algérie. La France le retira du service en 1965, sauf quelques exemplaires utilisés par le CEV jusqu'en 1970.





### [Douglas A-26 Invader \(RB-26C\) de l'USAF](#)

Les A-26 furent largement utilisés par la CIA, en particulier en Asie. Une douzaine fut utilisée en 1958 dans le cadre de l'opération Haik en Indonésie contre le gouvernement Soekarno. L'un d'eux fut abattu par un P-51 indonésien, mettant fin à l'intervention américaine. Mais cela n'empêcha pas l'Indonésie d'acquérir des A-26 qui furent notamment utilisés lors de l'invasion du Timor oriental en 1976. La CIA déploya des A-26 en Thaïlande pour contrer le Pathet Lao dès décembre 1960 (Opération Mill Pond), et au Vietnam (Opération Farm Gate) avec des cocardes sud-vietnamiennes. Des A-26 furent déployés par des exilés cubains, sous les couleurs castristes, le 15 avril 1961 pour bombarder des aérodromes cubains, puis lors du débarquement de la baie des Cochons. 9 A-26 de la Fuerza Aérea de Liberación furent perdus lors des opérations. La Fuerza Aérea Revolucionaria utilisait également des A-26C. L'A-26 fut également utilisé en Afrique, par la CIA lors de la crise congolaise en 1964, par le Portugal en Angola en 1965, et par le Biafra en 1967. Le Portugal acquit 7 appareils pour remplacer ses F-84 en Angola, mais seuls 6 d'entre eux furent remis en état en novembre 1971. Ils accomplirent des missions de reconnaissance armées jusqu'en 1975, avant d'être cédés à l'Angola. 2503 exemplaires furent construits, principalement des A-26B et C, mais aussi des A-26K destinés à la contre-insurrection dans les années 1960. Il servit ainsi au combat jusqu'en 1969 et l'Air National Guard le retira du service en 1972. La Colombie le retira du service en 1980. L'US Navy utilisa 150 A-26B et C d'occasion pour des missions de remorquage de cibles jusqu'à leur remplacement par des DC-130A. Il fut également utilisé par l'Angola (au moins 2 exemplaires portugais récupérés en 1975), l'Arabie Saoudite, le Biafra (au moins 2 exemplaires ex-français), le Brésil (14 A-26B, 17 A-26C et 1 CB-26, de 1957 à 1975), le Chili, la Colombie, le Congo-Kinshasa, Cuba, la France, le Guatemala, le Honduras, l'Indonésie (6 exemplaires, de 1959 à 1977), le Nicaragua, le Pérou, le Portugal, la république Dominicaine, le Salvador, la Turquie, le Vietnam du Sud. Au moins 300 A-26 furent inscrits sur le registre civil de la FAA après 1945. Des A-26 furent employés pour le transport de VIP ou d'hommes d'affaires et des variantes furent même développées pour cette mission, dont le "On Mark Marksman" pressurisé construit à 8 exemplaires à partir de 1961. L'A-26 fut principalement utilisé dans la lutte contre les incendies aux États-Unis et au Canada jusque dans les années 1990. Un bon nombre d'A-26 a survécu et est soit exposé, soit en état de vol, soit en cours de restauration. Une quarantaine est toujours en état de vol. Le musée du Bourget possède un exemplaire, un A-26B reconfiguré en A-26C.

Source : <https://aviationsmilitaires.net/v3/kb/aircraft/show/1033/douglas-a-26-invader>

Version anglaise Wikipédia

The **Douglas A-26 Invader** (designated **B-26** between 1948 and 1965) is an American twin-engined [light bomber](#) and [ground attack](#) aircraft. Built by [Douglas Aircraft Company](#) during [World War II](#), the Invader also saw service during several major [Cold War](#) conflicts. A limited number of highly modified [United States Air Force](#) aircraft served in [Southeast Asia](#) until 1969. It was a fast aircraft capable of carrying a large bomb load. A range of guns could be fitted to produce a formidable ground-attack aircraft.<sup>[3]</sup> A redesignation of the type from A-26 to B-26 led to confusion with the [Martin B-26 Marauder](#),<sup>[4]</sup> which first flew in November 1940, some 20 months before the Douglas design's maiden flight. Although both aircraft were powered by the widely used [Pratt & Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp](#) 18-cylinder, double-row [radial engine](#), they were completely different and separate designs, with some 5,300 Marauders produced to 2,503 Invaders.

## Design and development



Douglas XA-26 AAC Ser. No. 41-19504 first flight, Mines Field, California, piloted by Benny Howard

The A-26 was Douglas Aircraft's successor to the [A-20](#) (DB-7) Havoc, also known as Douglas Boston. Designed by [Ed Heinemann](#), Robert Donovan, and [Ted R. Smith](#),<sup>[5]</sup> the innovative NACA 65-215 laminar-flow airfoil wing of the A-26 was the work of project aerodynamicist [A.M.O. Smith](#).<sup>[6][7]</sup> The Douglas XA-26 [prototype](#) (AAC Ser. No. 41-19504) first flew on 10 July 1942 at [Mines Field](#), [El Segundo](#), with test pilot [Benny Howard](#) at the controls. Flight tests revealed excellent performance and handling, but engine-cooling problems led to [cowling](#) changes and elimination of the [propeller](#) spinners on production aircraft. During testing, the nose wheel was found to be structurally inadequate, thus the nose gear was redesigned and made more structurally sound.<sup>[8]</sup>



Douglas XA-26B Invader AAF Ser. No. 41-19588, 5 May 1943, with a "strafer" nose, was adaptable to a combination of weapons, including a 75 mm (3 in) cannon.

The early A-26 versions were built in two configurations:

- The A-26B gun-nose could be equipped with a combination of armament, including .50 caliber machine guns, 20 or 37mm auto cannon, or an experimental 75mm pack howitzer (never used operationally). The 'B' gun-nose version housed six (and later, eight) [.50 caliber machine guns](#), officially the "all-purpose nose", later known as the "six-gun nose" or "eight-gun nose".
- The A-26C's "glass" "Bombardier nose", contained a [Norden bombsight](#) for medium-altitude precision bombing. The A-26C nose section included two fixed M-2 guns, but those were eliminated after underwing gun packs or internal guns in the wings proved effective during colder weather.<sup>[9]</sup>

After about 1,570 production aircraft, three guns were installed in each wing, coinciding with the introduction of the "eight-gun nose" for A-26Bs, giving some configurations as many as 14 .50 in (12.7 mm) machine guns in fixed forward mounts. An A-26C nose section could be replaced with an A-26B nose section, or vice versa, in a few hours, thus physically (and officially) changing the designation and operational role. The "flat-topped" [canopy](#) was changed in late 1944 after about 820 production aircraft, to a clamshell style with greatly improved visibility.<sup>[10][11]</sup> Alongside the pilot in an A-26B, a crew member served as [navigator](#) and gun loader for the pilot-operated nose guns. In an A-26C, that crew member served as [navigator](#) and [bombardier](#), and relocated to the nose section for the bombing phase of an operation. A few A-26Cs were fitted with dual flight controls, some parts of which could be disabled in flight for access to the nose section. Access for the bombardier was through the lower section of the right instrument panel; he normally sat next to the pilot. This was similar to British designs such as the [Lancaster](#), [Blenheim/Beaufort](#), [Wellington](#), etc. A tractor-style "jump seat" was behind the "navigator's seat". In most missions, a third crew member in the rear gunner's compartment operated the remote-controlled dorsal and ventral gun turrets, with access to-and-from the cockpit via the bomb bay only if that was empty. The gunner operated both dorsal and ventral turrets via a novel and complex (and problematic) dual-ended periscope sight, a vertical column running through the center of the rear compartment, with traversing and elevating/depressing periscope sights on each end. The gunner sat on a seat facing rearward looking into a binocular periscope sight mounted on the column, controlling the guns with a pair of handles on the sides of the column. Aimed above the centerline of the aircraft, the mirror in the center of the column 'flipped', showing the gunner a limited view similar to the view the upper periscope was seeing. As he pressed the handles downward, and as the bead passed the centerline, the mirror automatically flipped, transferring the sight "seamlessly" to the lower periscope.

The guns aimed in the approximate direction the periscope was aimed, automatically transferring between upper and lower turrets as required, and computing for parallax and other factors. While novel and sound in principle, the developers invested a great deal of time and effort in their attempts to get the system to work effectively, delaying production. As might be expected, the complex system was difficult to maintain in the field.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Operational history



An eight-gun nose A-26, 8th BS, 3rd BG Machinato Airfield, Okinawa 20 August 1945

## World War II

### Pacific

Douglas officially delivered the first production model A-26B aircraft to the [United States Army Air Forces](#) (USAAF) on 10 September 1943.<sup>[13]</sup> These were sent for field evaluation in actual combat operations, with the [Fifth Air Force](#) in the [Southwest Pacific theater](#). The A-26 first saw action on 23 June 1944, when four aircraft attached to the [3rd Bombardment Group](#)'s 13th Squadron ("The Grim Reapers"), bombed [Japanese](#)-held islands near [Manokwari](#).<sup>[14]</sup> Aircrew from "The Grim Reapers", while evaluating these four A-26Bs, noted that downward views from the cockpit were significantly hindered by the nature of the design – especially the positioning of the engines – which made the A-26B unsuitable for its intended role of ground attack. In response to such evaluations, General [George Kenney](#), commander of the [Far East Air Forces](#), stated: "We do not want the A-26 under any circumstances as a replacement for anything."<sup>[15]</sup> Nevertheless, development continued. While the 3rd BG was waiting suitably modified A-26s, it requested additional [Douglas A-20 Havocs](#), although both types were used in composite flights.<sup>[16]</sup> Some USAAF units in the Pacific that operated either the A-20 or [B-25](#) received the A-26 for trials in limited quantities. The 319th Bomb Group was fully converted to the A-26 in March 1945, when it commenced operations with the 3rd BG. In August, after a few dozen A-26 missions, it became evident that the war was coming to an abrupt close, and operations began to wind down. The 319th officially ceased combat operations on 12 August 1945.<sup>[16]</sup>

## Europe



Douglas A-26 Invader "Miss Murphy"

Douglas needed better results from the Invader's second combat test, so ferried A-26s arrived in Europe in late September 1944 for assignment to the [Ninth Air Force](#). The initial deployment involved 18 aircraft and crews assigned to the 553d Squadron of the 386th Bomb Group. This unit flew their first mission on 6 September 1944. No aircraft were lost on the eight test missions, and the Ninth Air Force announced they were satisfied, eventually replacing their A-20s and [B-26s](#) with the A-26 Invader. The first group to convert to the A-26B was [416th Bombardment Group](#). With it, they entered combat on 17 November, and the [409th Bombardment Group](#), whose A-26s became operational in late November.<sup>[17]</sup> Due to a shortage of A-26C variants, the groups flew a combined A-20/A-26 unit until deliveries of the glass-nosed version caught up. Besides bombing and strafing, tactical reconnaissance and night interdiction missions were successful. In contrast to the Pacific-based units, the A-26 was well received by pilots and crew alike, and by 1945, the 9th AF had 11,567 missions, dropping 18,054 tons of bombs, recording seven confirmed kills while losing 67 aircraft.<sup>[17]</sup> In Italy, the [Twelfth Air Force's 47th Bomb Group](#) also received the A-26 starting in January 1945. They were used against German transport links, and for direct support and interdiction against tanks and troop concentrations in the Po Valley in the final campaigns in Italy.

### Postwar era

#### United States

With the establishment of the [United States Air Force](#) (USAF) as an independent service in 1947, the [Strategic Air Command](#) operated the again redesignated B-26 as an RB-26 reconnaissance aircraft in service 1949 to 1950. [U.S. Air Forces in Europe](#) continued operating the B-26 until 1957. [Tactical Air Command](#) operated the aircraft as both a B-26 and later designated back to A-26; the final variant was designated B-26K until 1966, then it again became the A-26A.

This final version continued in service through the late 1960s with active-duty special-operations TAC units, and through 1972 with TAC-gained special-operations units of the [Air National Guard](#). The [U.S. Navy](#) obtained Invaders from the USAF to use these aircraft in their utility squadrons (VU) for target towing and general utility until superseded by the DC-130A variant of the [C-130 Hercules](#). The Navy designation was JD-1 and JD-1D until 1962, then the JD-1 was redesignated UB-26J. The JD-1D was also used under the designation of DB-26J. <sup>[18]</sup> The CIA also used the type for covert operations. <sup>[19]</sup> The last A-26 in active US service was assigned to the [Air National Guard](#); that aircraft was retired from military service in 1972 by the USAF and the [National Guard Bureau](#), and donated to the [National Air and Space Museum](#). <sup>[20]</sup>

## Korean War



A B-26C Invader on a bombing run over Korea

B-26 Invaders of the [3rd Bombardment Group](#), operating from bases in southern Japan, were among the first USAF aircraft engaged in the [Korean War](#), carrying out missions over South Korea on 27 and 28 June, before carrying out the first USAF bombing mission on North Korea on 29 June 1950, bombing an airfield near [Pyongyang](#). <sup>[21]</sup>



A-26B-51-DL (AF Ser. No. 44-34331) over Korea, February 1951



B-26B-61-DL, AF Ser. No. 44-34517 "Monie" of the 37th BS, 17th BG flown by 1st Lt Robert Mikesh, Pusan AB, Korea 1952

On 10 August 1950, the [Air Force Reserve's 452d Bombardment Wing](#) was activated for Korean service.<sup>[22]</sup> It flew its first missions in November 1950 from Itazuke, Japan, providing daylight support, with the 3rd Bomb Wing, consisting of the 8th, 13th, and 90th Bomb Squadrons, flying night missions.

Because of the Chinese intervention, they were forced to find another base, so they moved to [Miho Air Base](#) on the west coast of Honshū. In early 1951, they moved to [Pusan East \(K-9\) Air Base](#), continuing their daylight and night-intruder missions. In June 1951, they joined the 3rd Bomb Wing ([Kunsan \(K-8\)](#)) in night activity only, dividing the target areas, with the 452nd taking the eastern half and the 3rd the western. For their efforts in the Korean War, they received two unit citations and the Korean Presidential Citation.<sup>[22]</sup> They also received credit for eight campaign operations. In May 1952, they were inactivated. Their aircraft and equipment along with their personnel were absorbed by the [17th Bomb Wing](#). During their time as an active unit, the 452nd flew 15,000 sorties (7,000 at night) with a loss of 85 crewmen. B-26s were credited with the destruction of 38,500 vehicles, 406 locomotives, 3,700 railway trucks, and seven enemy aircraft on the ground. On 14 September 1951, Captain [John S. Walmsley Jr.](#) attacked a supply train. After all his guns simultaneously jammed, he illuminated the target with his searchlight to enable his wingmen to destroy the train. Walmsley was shot down, and posthumously awarded the [Medal of Honor](#). Invaders carried out the last USAF bombing mission of the war 24 minutes before the [armistice agreement](#) was signed on 27 June 1953.<sup>[23]</sup> In addition to the standard attack versions of the B-26 for night interdiction missions, modified WB-26s and RB-26s of the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing flew critical weather observation and reconnaissance missions in supporting roles.<sup>[24]</sup>

### **Southeast Asia**

The first B-26s to arrive in Southeast Asia deployed to [Takhli RTAFB, Thailand](#) in December 1960. These unmarked aircraft, operated under the auspices of the U.S. CIA ([Central Intelligence Agency](#)), were augmented by an additional 16 aircraft— 12 B-26Bs and B-26Cs plus four RB-26Cs under [Operation Millpond](#). Their mission was assisting the [Royal Lao Government](#) in fighting the [Pathet Lao](#). The repercussions from the [Bay of Pigs invasion](#) meant no combat missions are known flown, although RB-26Cs operated over Laos until the end of 1961. Then, the aircraft operated in South Vietnam under Project [Farm Gate](#).<sup>[25]</sup> The only other deployment of B-26 aircraft to Laos prior to the introduction of the B-26K/A-26A was the deployment of two RB-26C aircraft modified for night reconnaissance during May–July 1962 under Project Black Watch. These aircraft, drawn from Farm Gate stocks, were returned at the end of these missions.<sup>[26]</sup>



A [Farm Gate](#) B-26B

The aircraft from Laos participated in the early phase of the [Vietnam War](#) with the USAF, but with Vietnamese markings as part of Project Farm Gate. Although Farm Gate operated B-26Bs, B-26Cs, and genuine RB-26Cs, many of these aircraft were operated under the designation RB-26C, although they were used in a combat capacity.<sup>[27]</sup> During 1963, two RB-26Cs were sent to [Clark AB](#) in the Philippines for modifications, although not with night systems similar to those modified for Black Watch. The two aircraft returned from Black Watch to Farm Gate were redesignated RB-26L to distinguish them from other modified RB-26Cs, and were assigned to Project Sweet Sue.<sup>[26]</sup> Farm Gate's B-26s operated alongside the other primary strike aircraft of the time, the [T-28 Trojan](#), before both aircraft types were replaced by the [Douglas A-1 Skyraider](#).<sup>[28]</sup> The B-26s were withdrawn from service in February 1964 after two accidents related to wing-spar fatigue, one during combat in Southeast Asia in August 1963 and one during a demonstration at [Eglin AFB](#), Florida, in February 1964.<sup>[29]</sup> On 11 February 1964, two pilots from the [1st Air Commando Wing](#) stationed at Florida's [Hurlburt Field](#) died in the crash of a B-26 on Range 52 at Eglin AFB after it lost a wing during pull-out from a demonstration strafing pass. The aircraft was participating in a demonstration of the Special Air Warfare Center's counterinsurgency capabilities, and completed a strafing run demonstration before the incident. SAWC presented the demonstration on an average of twice each month for the previous two years.<sup>[30]</sup> B-26 aircraft used by USAF Commandos in Vietnam were grounded 8 April 1964 following an investigation into the 11 February incident. B-26 aircraft in use by the South Vietnamese Air Force were also grounded in accordance with the U.S. ruling.<sup>[31]</sup>



An A-26A of the [609th SOS](#) in 1969

In response to this, the [On Mark Engineering](#) Company of [Van Nuys, California](#), was selected by the USAF to extensively upgrade the Invader for its new [counterinsurgency](#) role. The first production flight of the B-26K was on 30 May 1964 at the [Van Nuys Airport](#). On Mark converted 40 Invaders to the new B-26K Counter-Invader standard of upgraded engines, propellers, and brakes, remanufactured wings, and wing-tip fuel tanks for use by the [609th Special Operations Squadron](#).

In May 1966, the B-26K was again redesignated A-26A for political reasons (Thailand did not allow U.S. bombers in-country at the time, so the Invaders were redesignated again with an "A", for [attack aircraft](#)), and deployed in Thailand to help disrupt supplies moving along the [Ho Chi Minh trail](#). Two of these aircraft were modified with a forward-looking infrared radar (FLIR) system under project Lonesome Tiger, as a part of [Operation Shed Light](#).<sup>[32]</sup>

## CIA



A U.S. Douglas A-26C Invader painted in fake [Cuban Air Force](#) colors for the [military invasion of Cuba](#) undertaken by the CIA-sponsored paramilitary group [Brigade 2506](#) in April 1961

*Main article:* [Bay of Pigs Invasion](#)

In early 1961, about 20 B-26Bs, most converted from B-26C configuration, were "sanitized" at [Duke Field](#) (also known as Auxiliary Field Three at Eglin AFB), Florida. They had defensive armament removed, and were fitted with the eight-gun nose, underwing drop tanks, and rocket racks. They were flown to a CIA-run base in Guatemala, where training was under way for B-26, C-46, and C-54 [Cuban exile](#) air crews by personnel from the [Alabama Air National Guard](#). After transfer to Nicaragua in early April 1961, they were painted in the markings of the Fuerza Aérea Revolucionaria (FAR), the air force of the Cuban government. On 15 April 1961, crewed by Cuban exiles, eight B-26s of the *Fuerza Aérea de Liberación* (FAL) attacked three Cuban airfields to destroy FAR combat aircraft on the ground. On 17 April 1961, FAL B-26s supported the seaborne [Bay of Pigs Invasion](#) of Cuba. The conflict ended on 19 April, after the loss of nine FAL B-26s, ten Cuban exiles, and four American aircrew in combat. The FAR flew B-26Cs in the conflict, one of which was downed by friendly fire from a CIA "command ship" with the loss of four Cuban aircrew.<sup>[33][34][35]</sup> The [CIA](#) contracted pilots, some employed during the Bay of Pigs Invasion, to fly B-26Ks for ground attack against *Simba* rebels in the [Congo Crisis](#). Newly remanufactured B-26K Counter-Invaders were delivered to the Congo via Hurlburt Field in 1964.<sup>[11]</sup>

## France



French A-26C

In the 1950s, the [French Air Force's](#) (*Armée de l'air*) bombing groups (*groupe de bombardement*) including [Bombardment Group I/19 Gascogne](#) (GB I/19) and GB 1/25 *Tunisia*, used B-26s, during the [First Indochina War](#), lent to France by the USAF.<sup>[36]</sup> Haiphong [Cat Bi](#)-based Douglas B-26 Invaders operated over [Dien Bien Phu](#) in March and April 1954 during the [siege of Dien Bien Phu](#). In this period, a massive use of [Philippines](#)-based USAF B-29s against the [Viet Minh](#) heavy artillery, including the potential use of nuclear weapons, was planned by the U.S. and French [Joint Chief of Staff](#) as [Operation Vulture](#), but was cancelled by the governments,<sup>[37]</sup> while at the conclusion of the battle, some of the beleaguered French troops managed to escape through the jungle to neighboring Thailand.

### Indonesia

Concerned about Indonesian President [Sukarno](#)'s communist leanings, the CIA started [Operation Haik](#) in 1958 to overthrow his [Guided Democracy in Indonesia](#) regime.<sup>[38]</sup> The [covert operation](#) committed at least a dozen B-26 Invaders in support of rebel forces. On 18 May 1958, American contract pilot [Allen Pope](#)'s blacked-out B-26 was initially hit by antiaircraft ground fire and then brought down by a [North American P-51 Mustang](#) flown by Capt. Ignatius Dewanto (the only known air-to-air shoot-down in the history of the [Indonesian Air Force](#)).<sup>[39]</sup> The capture and trial of Lieutenant Pope brought a quick end to Operation Haik, but the capabilities of the Invader were not lost on the Indonesian government. In 1959, the government purchased six aircraft at [Davis-Monthan AFB](#), which were ferried to Indonesia in full military markings<sup>[which?]</sup> during mid-1960. Used in a number of actions against rebels in various areas, these aircraft went on to long follow-up careers. The last operational flights of three final survivors were in 1976, supporting the [Indonesian invasion of East Timor](#). In 1977, the last two flying aircraft were retired.<sup>[40]</sup>

## Portugal

The [Portuguese Air Force](#) purchased Invaders covertly for use in [Portuguese Angola](#) in 1965, during the [Portuguese Colonial War](#).<sup>[33]</sup>

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

B-26s were used in support of the [Dragon operations](#) to liberate Western hostages held by Simba terrorists during the Congo Crisis.<sup>[41]</sup>

## Biafra

[Biafra](#) used two provisionally armed ("provo") B-26s in combat during the [Nigerian Civil War](#) in 1967, flown, among others, by [Jan Zumbach](#).

