



CLIMBING ON BOARD TWO BOEING 707S IN ONE DAY

News / Manufacturer



It's not often you get to climb on board a Boeing 707 these days, but two — a former passenger and then maintenance training aircraft now no longer flightworthy, plus a fully operational NATO E-3A Sentry AWACS airborne early warning & control jet, were on display at the Hamburg Aviation Days airshow, where AirwaysNews scampered up the airstairs inside.

Our first 707, registered as D-ABOD, first flew in 1960 and served with Lufthansa for fifteen years. [After retiring from passenger service, the 707 was for many years used by the training department of Lufthansa's MRO operation — an organization now known as Lufthansa Technical Training — to train the next generation of aircraft engineers until its retirement in 1998. Now owned by Hamburg Airport, its home is in a corner of the airport, just beyond the piano keys for runway 23, but the aircraft was rolled over to the display area for the airshow.](#)

The first class and economy class seats on board aren't original, but the preservation volunteers [Hamburg Aviation Days Lufthansa 707 - JW - IMG_2374](#)

on board think they came from a previous generation of Lufthansa's short-haul narrowbody business class seats. That would, of course, be at least two generations ago, before the convertible seats that preceded the current generation of slimlines. Even if they're not originals, though, they feel like museum pieces in their own right, pitched impressively far apart and in the original cabin. In the age of fewer narrowbody services on long-haul routes, it's fantastic to think that this aircraft was the key that unlocked the jet age.

At the rear of the aircraft is a nifty bar that swoops around in a curved wing shape, featuring the [Hamburg Airline Days Lufthansa Boeing 707 Models](#) behind a glass window. It's certainly not original — but it is cool.

The overall feel of the ex-Lufthansa 707 is of an events space (aviation enthusiasts looking for locations to celebrate in Hamburg, take note).

The same can't be said, though, for the Boeing 707-based NATO E-3A AWACS aircraft, where [Alex "The Wall" Herrmann](#), a German NATO Lieutenant Colonel and tactical director inside the E-3A, gave AirwaysNews a special tour during the airshow.

Based at the NATO Geilenkirchen airbase on the German-Dutch border, the maximum carrying capacity for the E-3A is 33 people, of which 18 are usually active crew, but for the airshow the Sentry jetted in with 31 on board, largely because of the need to rotate crew through the rotisserie oven of an old metal aircraft on an un-airconditioned hard stand on a hot runway in the German summer.

"The galley area is pretty old, but it works," laughs Herrmann, indicating the rather elderly kitchen facilities on the E-3A. "We get frozen meals, and because we don't have cabin crew we take care of our own food."

The E-3A's AWACS mission is about as different from the initial passenger operations of the Boeing 707 as you can get.

The interior reflects that, with functional, sturdy furnishings clearly focused on its airborne early warning and control operations.

This 707-based frame is significantly younger, too, assembled in 1986 as a purpose-built military aircraft, with a mixture of up-to-date avionics in the spacious older 707 flight deck.

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