



Comet in 1946, and in a very short period of time the first prototype flew on 27 July 1949. The Comet 1 first entered BOAC service in May 1952, becoming the world's first jet passenger aircraft. With the improved Comet 2, orders from airlines around the world rapidly increased until the tragic losses of two BOAC Comet 1 in January and April 1954; the cause of these losses remained a mystery until exhaustive testing revealed hitherto unknown problems connected with metal fatigue, and thereafter all Comets were subjected to extensive redesign and rebuilding. The Comet 3 re-emerged as the Comet 4, which BOAC ordered in quantity in 1957. From 1958, British European Airways orders rose to 14 of the modified Comet 4B, which featured a lengthened fuselage giving high-density seating for up to 86 passengers, and a reduction of the wing span and deletion of the leading edge fuel.