

# Once technology's height, Concorde timeline at end

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In this July 25, 2000, file photo, a firefighter sprays water on the debris of an Air France Concorde plane after it crashed into a hotel shortly after takeoff in Gonesse, France, outside of Paris. A French appeals court is expected to decide on Thursday, Nov. 29, 2012, whether to uphold a manslaughter conviction against Continental Airlines for the crash over a decade ago of an Air France Concorde that killed 113 people. Continental Airlines, Inc. and one of its mechanics were convicted in 2010.(AP Photo/Ministry of Interior/Civil Security, Joachim Bertrand, Pool, File)

A French court overturned the conviction of Continental Airlines and its mechanic in the crash of a Concorde that helped lead to the demise of the whole supersonic jet's program.

Here are key moments in its history:

1950s: The idea of a supersonic passenger plane gains momentum after legendary U.S. aviator Chuck Yeager's 1947 blast through the sound barrier.

1969: The plane, manufactured jointly by France and Britain, lifts off from Toulouse, France, for its first test flight.

1976: The Concorde begins commercial service at [Air France](#) and British Airways. It mainly flies from London and Paris to New York and Washington, DC. It is hailed as a technological marvel, but its economics are shaky and it never makes back the billions of tax dollars invested in it. Protests emerge about its noise and lack of [fuel efficiency](#) during an oil crisis.

1984: Britain and France stop underwriting the Concorde's costs, and the two [airlines](#) take responsibility.

2000: An Air France Concorde crashes after takeoff from Paris on July 25, 2000, killing 113 people and forcing both airlines to ground their supersonic jets for over a year.

2001: Overhauled Concorde's return to service two months after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, in the middle of one of aviation's worst slumps.

2003: Air France and [British Airways](#) both retire their Concorde's, citing [financial losses](#) on the planes' routes.

2010: A French court convicts [Continental Airlines](#) and one of its mechanics, John Taylor, of manslaughter in the 2000 Concorde crash. The court says Continental was to blame because one of its planes dropped metal debris onto the runway before the Concorde took off, rupturing one of its tires and sending rubber into the fuel tanks, sparking a fire.

2012: A French appeals court overturns the convictions, ruling that the mechanic's mistakes did not rise to the level of legal responsibility for the deaths.

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