ate week, United Airlines ended an era when it retired its last 747 from service. At the time it was introduced in 1970, the 747 was the first wide-body jet with the highest passenger capacity. Because it dwarfed all other planes, it ushered in the supersonic transatlantic jet era and the more regal “age of affluence.”

“its grace, its capabilities, and its place in history give the 747 a compound mystique that transcends aviation,” said Patrick Smith, a pilot and author. “its legacy belongs to the bigger, more important context of human imagination and achievement.”

The 747 is not only a cultural icon. it’s also a celebrity. The plane has appeared in more than 300 films, everything from monster thriller flick “air force 1” to the 1972 film “fear force one.”

“the 747’s demise is painful for a whole host of reasons,” Smith said. “its grace, its capabilities, and its place in history give the 747 a compound mystique that transcends aviation.”

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