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variety of sizes shapes and wing configurations generally speaking all military aircraft fall into one of the following categories fighters which secure control of essential airspaces by driving off or destroying enemy aircraft bombers which are larger heavier and less maneuverable craft designed to attack surface targets with bombs or missiles ground support or attack aircraft whi an airplane is any of a class of fixed wing aircraft that is heavier than air propelled by a screw propeller or a high velocity jet and supported by the dynamic reaction of the air against its wings learn more about the different types of airplanes as well as their construction has aircraft has a maintains a fleet of aircraft that enable the agency to conduct its aeronautical research study our planet train its astronauts and otherwise operate its many air and space programs this page will be a constantly growing and evolving home for information about nasa aircraft past and present latest nasa aircraft news types of aircraft there are a number of ways to identify aircraft by type the primary distinction is between those that are lighter than air and those that are heavier than air lighter than air airship a colorful airship flies over dodger stadium in los angeles california features the conventional takeoff and landing ctol f 35a gives the u s air force and its allies the power to dominate the skies anytime anywhere the f 35a is an agile versatile high performance 9g capable multirole fighter that combines stealth sensor fusion and unprecedented situational awareness history from airpower to global superpower for over a century our airmen have helped our nation remain a leading global superpower in air space and cyberspace 1912 1939 changing the way of war fixed winged aircraft came onto the scene in ground attacks when wwi broke out in europe on july 28 1914 thunderbirds mission the usa ir force air demonstration squadron the thunderbirds performs precision aerial maneuvers demonstrating the capabilities of air force high performance aircraft to people throughout the world boeing b 52 stratofortress us air force this american project was first conceived in the immediate wake of the second world war the us needed a long range subsonic strategic bomber capable of delivering a huge amount of ordinance either conventional or nuclear to an enemy position deep within their airspace november 21 1783 first manned hot air balloon flight two months after french brothers joseph michel and jacques Étienne montgolfier engineered a successful test flight with a duck a sheep and a an aircraft pl aircraft is a vehicle that is able to fly by gaining support from the air it counters the force of gravity by using either static lift or the dynamic lift of an airfoil 1 or in a few cases direct downward thrust from its engines airbus has revealed for the first time a special a330neo full size mockup at the aircraft interiors expo aix showing proposed new airspace cabin features these include a new hero light and welcome panel new linings for the interior sidewall ceiling and door frame panels as well as electro dimmable windows edws complete list of planes used by the blue angels since 1946 with beautiful historical pictures world war wings published mar 14 2017 by maciej karol airman magazine things have definitely changed the blue angels have been around for over a half century the families of four marines who died in a v 22 osprey crash in california on june 8 2022 have filed a lawsuit accusing the manufacturers of the twin rotor military aircraft of negligence in a aviation the development and operation of heavier than air aircraft the term military aviation refers to the development and use of military aircraft while the term civil aviation refers to all nonmilitary aviation such as air transportation provided by airlines or the carrying of cargo by commercial aircraft noun c uk 'eəkra:ft us plural aircraft add to word list transport a vehicle 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