

The Air Show

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds

The Thunderbirds are the air demonstration squadron of the U.S. Air Force (USAF), based at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, Nevada. The squadron first performed in 1946 and is currently USAF flying aerobatic team. The squadron's demonstration pilots fly the F-16 C/D Falcons tours the United States and much of the world, performing aerobatic formation and solo flying in specially-marked USAF jet aircraft.

Officers serve a two-year assignment with the squadron, while enlisted personnel serve three to four. Replacements must be trained for about half of the team each year, providing a constant mix of experience. The squadron performs no more than 88 air demonstrations each year and has never canceled a demonstration due to maintenance difficulty.

The U.S. Air Force F-16

Role: Multirole Fighter

National origin: United States

Manufacturer: General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin

First flight: 2 February 1974

Introduction: 17 August 1978

Status: Active

Primary users: United States Air Force

25 other users

Number built: 4,500+

Unit cost

F-16A/B: US\$ 14.6 million (1998 dollars)

F-16C/D: US\$ 18.8 million (1998)

F-16E/F US\$ 26.9 million (2005)

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds





The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds perform a special maneuver



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The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds perform a "reflection" maneuver



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The U.S. Navy Blue Angels

The United States Navy's Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, popularly known as the Blue Angels, first performed in 1946 and is currently flying aerobatic team. The squadron's six demonstration pilots fly the Boeing F/A-18 Hornet in more than 70 shows at 34 locations throughout the United States each year, where they still employ many of the same practices and techniques used in their aerial displays in 1946.

The mission of the Blue Angels is to enhance Navy recruiting, and credibly represent Navy and Marine Corps aviation to the United States and its Armed Forces to America and other countries as international ambassadors of good will.

The U.S. F/A 18

Role: Multirole fighter

National origin: United States

Manufacturer: McDonnell Douglas, Boeing, Northrop

First flight: 18 November 1978

Introduction: 7 January 1983

Status: Active

Primary users: United States Navy

United States Marine Corps

Royal Australian Air Force

Spanish Air Force

Number built: F/A-18A–D: 1,480

Unit cost: US\$29–57 million (2006)

The U.S. Navy Blue Angels





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Flight for Free World

