

Most airplanes have at least two names—the official one and the one given by the troops.

What They *Really* Called Them

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After at least four rounds of suggestions and reviews over eight years, the Rockwell B-1 bomber was officially nicknamed "Lancer" this spring. That may catch on as an everyday flight-line reference, or it may not. The airmen who fly and fix airplanes have a long history of deciding for themselves what they will call their machines.

In the list that follows, by no means complete (either in terms of aircraft that have had unofficial nicknames or as a complete list for a given aircraft, some aircraft will be seen to have several "real" (flight-line) nicknames, some affectionate, others derogatory. In some cases, the disrespectful appellations are the work of rivals who fly some other airplane. In other instances, the tough-sounding name was awarded with fondness and used with considerable pride. Still others were given because the airplane was regarded as a "dog."

Aircraft are listed by the date of first flight of the prototype (or specific model), except for such planes as the C-47, which moved over from the commercial world. The dates for those reflect when they joined the military. (Another exception: The SR-71 date is first takeoff of the SR-71--not the A-12--from the Lockheed Skunk Works.)

US Air Force/Army

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nicknames
Curtiss JN-4 (1914)	None	Jenny Canuck (Canadian-built version)
Boeing P-26 (1932)	None	Peashooter
Douglas C-47 (1935)	Skytrain	Gooney Bird Placid Plodder "Dowager Duchess Old Methuselah Grand Old Lady (names also applied to DC-3, C-053, and C-117)
North American AT-6 (1938)	Texan	Awful Terrible Six Mosquito (Korean War)
North American B-25 (1939)	Mitchell	Billy's Bomber
Beech C-45 (1940)	Expeditor	Bug Smasher
Martin B-26 (1940)	Marauder	Widow-Maker Flying Prostitute (it had no visible means of support) Baltimore Whore
Vultee BT-13 (1940)	Valiant	Vibrator Bee Tee
North American P-51 (1941)	Mustang	'Stang Peter-Dash-Flash Spam Can
Republic P-47 (1941)	Thunderbolt	Jug T-Bolt
Ryan PT-22 (1941)	Recruit	Maytag Messerschmitt (Also a generic reference to L-series [Liaison] aircraft)
Cessna UC-78 (1942)	Bobcat	Bomboo Bomber Rhapsody in Glue San Joaquin Beaufighter Useless 78 Double-Breasted Cub
Douglas A-26 (1942)	Invader	Li'l Racer Li'l Hummer
Sikorsky R-4 (1942)	Hoverfly	Flying Eggbeater Frustrated Palm Tree
Consolidate C-109 (1943)	Liberator	Cee-One-Oh-Boom (several of these cargo B-24s exploded while ferrying fuel over the Hump to China)
Curtiss XP-55 (1943)	Ascender	Ass-Ender (its canards and rear-mounted engine made it appear to be flying backward)
Fairchild C-87 (1944)	Packet	Crowd Killer
Douglas A-1 (1945)	Skyraider	Spad Sandy (A-1H only)
Convair B-36 (1946)	Peacemaker	Aluminum Overcast Magnesium Overcast
Republic F-84 (1946)	Thunderjet	Hog Lead Sled Lieutenant-Eater
Fairchild C-119 (1947)	Flying Boxcar	Dollar Nineteen Crowd Killer

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nicknames
Lockheed T-33 (1948)	Shooting Star	T-Bird
Northrop F-89 (1948)	Scorpion	FOD Vacuum (because of its low intakes) Stanley Steamer (because of its oversized main landing gear)
Douglas C-124 (1949)	Globemaster II	Aluminum Overcast Old Shaky
North American F-86D (1949)	Sabre	Sabre Dog
Lockheed C-121 (1950)	Constellation	Connie Flying Speed Brake
Republic F-84F (1950)	Thunderstreak	Super Hog Lead Sled Ground-Loving Whore
Boeing B-52 (1952)	Stratofortress	BUFF (Big Ugly Fat Feller—polite form) Monkeyknocker (Vietnam) Coconutknocker (Vietnam)
Vertol CH-21 (1952)	Workhorse	Flying Banana
Convair F-102 (1953)	Delta Dagger	Deuce
Martin B-57 (1953)	Canberra	Cranberry
North American F-100 (1953)	Super Sabre	Hun Silver Dollar
Cessna T-37 (1954)	Tweet	World's Largest Dog Whistle Converter (converts fuel into noise) Hummer Tweety Bird
Lockheed C-130 (1954)	Hercules	Herky Bird Herk Hog (ski-equipped LC-130s are Ski-Hogs)
Lockheed F-104 (1954)	Starfighter	Missile with a Man in it
McDonnell F-101 (1954)	Voodoo	One-Oh-Wonder
Convair TF-102 (1955)	Delta Dagger	Tub (from bulged cockpit)
Lockheed U-2 (1955)	None	Dragon Lady Deuce Black Bird Angel
Republic F-105 (1955)	Thunderchief	Thud Lead Sled Thunderthud Squash Bomber (if all else fails, turn off the engine and squash the target) Triple Threat (it had three ways it could kill the pilot) Ultra Hog Iron Butterfly
Bell UH-1 (1956)	Iroquois	Huey (some versions were called Slick or Hog)
Boeing KC-135 (1956)	Stratotanker	Stratobladder Flying Gas Station Tank GLOB (Ground-Loving Old Bastard)
Convair B-58 (1956)	Hustler	Delta Queen
Convair F-106 (1956)	Delta Dart	Six Sixshooter (with gun pod attached)

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nicknames
Cessna U-3 (1957)	None	Blue Canoe
Kaman HH-43 (1958)	Huskie	Flying S--house
McDonnell Douglas F-4 (1958)	Phantom II	Double Ugly Rhino Old Smokey
Northrop T-38 (1958)	Talon	White Rocket
Boeing CH-47 (1961)	Chinook	S--thook Hook
Hughes OH-6 (1963)	Cayuse	Loach (from original LOH [Light Observation Helicopter] designation) Egg
Lockheed C-141 (1963)	Starlifter	Starlizard (from its camouflage paint scheme) T-Tailed Mountain Magnet
Cessna T-41 (1964) (military 172 Skyhawk)	Mescalero	Chickenhawk F-172
Douglas AC-47 (1964)	Skytrain	Puff the Magic Dragon Spooky Dragon (and Dragonship)
General Dynamics F-111 (1964)	None	Aardvark Flying Edsel Widow-Maker Switchblade Swinger
Lockheed SR-71 (1964)	None	Blackbird Habu (an Okinawan species of snake) Lead Sled
Sikorski CH-54 (1964)	Tarhe	Skycrane Crane
Bell AH-1 (1965)	Huey Cobra	Snake
LTV A-7 (1965)	Corsair II	SLUF (Short Little Ugly Feller—polite form) Man-Eater
Northrop M2-F2/M2-F3 (1966/1970)	None	Flying Bathtub Cadillac (from its 1950s-style tail fins)
Cessna O-2 (1967)	None	Duck (from the way its landing gear retracted) Blow-Suck (from its powerplant arrangement) Pushme-Pullyu
Lockheed C-5 (1968)	Galaxy	Fat Albert
Martin-Marietta X-24A (1970)	None	Flying Potato
Fairchild A-10 (1972)	Thunder-bolt II	Warthog SLAT (Slow, Low, Aerial Target) Porker Hog
McDonnell Douglas F-15 (1972)	Eagle	Great Bird Rodan Big Bird Tennis Court (a match could be played on it fuselage and wings) Aluminum Overcoat
Boeing T-43 (1973)	None	Gator (from Navigator) Strike Pig
Martin Marietta X-24B (1973)	None	Flying Flatiron

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nicknames)
General Dynamics F-16 (1974)	Fighting Falcon	Electric Jet Viper Lawn Dart Little Hummer
Rockwell B-1 (1974)	Lancer	Bone (from B-one) Lawn Dart The Jet
Sikorsky UH-60 (1974)	Black Hawk	Catfish
Grumman EF-111 (1977)	Raven	Sparkvark Electronic Fox
Lockheed F-117 (1981)	None	The Black Jet Nighthawk Frisbee F-19 (Note: "Wobbly Goblin" is purely a media creation)
Grumman X-29 (1984)	None	Polecat

Generic References

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nickname(s)
All rescue aircraft (SB-17, SB-29, SA-16, etc.)	Various	Dumbo
All cargo aircraft	Various	Trashhauler Trashcarrier

US Navy/Marine Corps

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nicknames)
Grumman FF-1 (1931)	None	FiFi
Stearman N2S (PT-17) (1934)	Kaydet	Yellow Peril
Consolidate PBV (1935)	Catalina	Pigboat P-Boat Black Cat (those aircraft involved in a specific, continuing, night mission only)
Naval Aircraft Factory N3N (1935)	None	Yellow Peril
Vought SB2U (1936)	Vindicator	Wind Indicator Vibrator
Douglas SBD (A-24) (1936)	Dauntless	Slow But Deadly
North American SNJ (AT-6) (1936)	Texan	J-Bird
Beech SNB (AT-11) (1940)	Kansan	Slow Navy Bomber
Vought F4U (1940)	Corsair	Ben-Wing Bird
Grumman TBF/General Motors TBM (1941)	Avenger	Turkey
McDonnell F2H (1947)	Banshee	Banjo Drut
Beech T-34 (1948)	Mentor	Radial Interceptor
Douglas F3D (F-10) (1948)	Skyknight	Whale
North American AJ-1 (1948)	Savage	Salvage
Vought F7U (1948)	Cutlass	Gutless Cutless
Douglas F4D (F-6) (1951)	Skyray	Ford (from pronunciation of F-4-D)
Douglas A3D (A-3) (1952)	Skywarrior	All Three Dead (No ejection seats)
Grumman S2F (S-2) (1952)	Tracker	Stoof (from pronunciation of S-2-F)
Lockheed WV-2 (EC-121) (1953)	Warning Star	Willie Victor
Douglas A-4 (1954)	Skyhawk	Scooter Heinemann's Hot Rod Tinker Toy Bantam Bomber Mighty Mite Skyhog
Vought F-8 (1955)	Crusader	MiG Master
Grumman WF-1 (E-1) (1956)	Tracer	Willie Fudd Stoof with a Roof (because of the large radome)
Douglas EA-3 (1958)	Skywarrior	Electric Whale
North American T-2 (1958)	Buckeye	Attack Guppy
Douglas ERA-3 (1960)	Skywarrior	Warbird

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nicknames)
Grumman E-2 (1960)	Hawkeye	Hummer
Grumman EA-6 (1963)	Intruder/Prowler	Sterile Arrow
McDonnell Douglas/British Aerospace AV-8 (1966)	Harrier	Jump Jet Whistling S--tcan Scarier
Grumman F-14 (1970)	Tomcat	Turkey
Lockheed S-3 (1971)	Viking	Hoover (from sound of its turbofan engines)
Sikorsky CH-53E (1974)	Super Stallion	Super S--tter (from its tendency to leak hydraulic fluid)

Foreign

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nicknames)
Bristol Fighter (1916)	None	Brisfit Biff
Royal Aircraft Factory R.E.8 (1916)	None	Harry Tate
de Havilland DH-4 (1917)	None	Flaming Coffin (from alleged tendency to burn)
Junkers Ju-52 (1930)	None	<i>Tante Ju</i> (Auntie Junkers) Iron Annie
Dornier Do-11 (1932)	None	<i>Fliegender Sarg</i> (Flying Coffin)
Heinkel He-51 (1933)	None	<i>Caza de Cadena</i> (Chain Fighter, from the Nationalists' follow-the-leader strafing tactics in the Spanish Civil War)
Supermarine Walrus (1933)	None	Shagbat
Fairey Swordfish (1934)	None	Stringbag
Avro Anson (1935)	None	Faithful Annie
Dornier Do-17 (1935)	None	<i>Fliegender Bleistift</i> (Flying Pencil)
Hawker Hurricane IIB (1935)	None	Hurribomber Hurricat (these were catapulted from merchant ships)
Messerschmitt Bf-109 (1935)	None	Usually called by series name (e.g. Bf-109E was Emil), but Bf-109G (Gustav) also called <i>Beule</i> (Boil) for additional equipment crammed in and faired over
Fairey Battle (1936)	None	Fairly Rattle
Hadley Page Hampden (1936)	None	Flying Frying Pan
Vickers Wellington (1936)	None	Wimpy
Westland Lysander (1936)	None	Lizzie
Blohm & Voss BV-138 (1937)	None	<i>Fliegender Holzschuh</i> (Flying Wooden Shoe)
Focke-Wulf FW-189 (1938)	<i>Uhu</i> (Owl)	Fliegendes Auge (Flying Eye)
Fairey Albacore (1939)	<i>Greif</i> (Griffon)	Luftwaffenfeuerzeug (Luftwaffe's Lighter)
Mitsubishi G4M (1939)	None (Allied code name "Betty")	<i>Hamaki</i> (Cigar)
de Havilland Mosquito (1940)	None	Wooden Wonder Mossie
Hawker Typhoon (1940)	None	Tiffie
Fiesler Fi-103 (V-1) (1942)	None	<i>Kirschkern</i> (Cherry Stone)
Messerschmitt Me-262 (1942)	<i>Schwalbe</i> (Swallow) <i>Sturmvogel</i> (Storm Bird)	Turbo
Messerschmitt Me-262 (1942)	Gigant (Giant)	Leukoplastbomber (Adhesive Tape Bomber--it was mostly canvas)
Dornier Do-335 (1943)	Pfeil (Arrow)	Ameisenbaer (Anteater--it had a long nose)

Aircraft (Year of First Flight)	Official Nicknames	Real Nicknames)
Gloster Meteor (1943)	None	Meatbox
Gloster Meteor (1943)	None	Dora Ameisenbaer (Anteater)
Avro Shackleton (1949)	None	100,000 Rivets Flying in Loose Formation