

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
Washington 25, D. C.

Supply and Logistics PAF

23 November 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MATERIEL)
THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MATERIEL)

SUBJECT: Naming of Aircraft

1. Effective as of the date of this memorandum, each Military Department will be responsible for assigning popular names to its own aircraft. The authority of the Munitions Board Joint Aircraft Committee for assigning names to aircraft is hereby rescinded.

2. The Military Departments will observe the following precepts in naming aircraft:

a. For purposes of brevity, names normally should consist of one word.

b. Names will normally be assigned only to those types of aircraft which have reached the production stage or which have immediate prospects of so doing.

c. The names shall not duplicate or permit confusion with names previously assigned to Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard aircraft, or where readily ascertainable, with aircraft names in use by civil aviation or by foreign nations. The names, also, shall not duplicate names currently in use by the Military Departments for other types of materiel, such as tanks, etc.

d. Names will not supplant numerical or letter designations assigned to aircraft by the military departments.

e. Each basic model of aircraft will normally retain the name originally assigned, regardless of its subsequent manufacturer or operational use; and all aircraft of a series within a basic type will normally retain the one name assigned thereto, i.e., all series of F-86 will have the name "Sabre" and all series of the F7U will have the name "Cutlass."

f. Manufacturers may, if they so request, have reserved for them exclusively a "family" of names for future models. For example, the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation now uses the "Cat" family, and the Douglas Aircraft Company uses the "Sky" family.

g. The selection of names should, in general, conform to the characteristics of the aircraft as follows:

- (1) Fighters: Names indicating speed, maneuverability, fighting characteristics or aggressiveness.
- (2) Bombers: Names indicating size, weight, power, range or destructive characteristics.
- (3) Patrol Types: Names employing seafaring terms.
- (4) Transports: (Cargo and Personnel) Names implying transportation, range or load-carrying ability.
- (5) Trainers: Names employing tuition terms, educational institutions or places of training, but not names of military or naval establishments.
- (6) Reconnaissance: Names indicating keen vision, careful surveillance.
- (7) Miscellaneous: Names indicating the primary operational functions of the aircraft.

3. The Department of the Air Force will maintain for reference purposes a current complete listing of names previously assigned to military aircraft and, insofar as practicable, the names of civil and foreign aircraft.

4. Prior to assigning a name, each military department will check this listing for duplication or confusion with previously assigned names. In addition, the Department will check with the other two Military Departments to assure that the proposed name does not duplicate a name currently in use for other types of materiel. It is suggested that the Military Department establish appropriate interdepartmental channels for expeditiously making these checks.

5. Conflicts arising among the Military Departments with regard to the naming of aircraft should be referred promptly to me for resolution. It is requested that the Department proposing the name initiate this action.

6. The file of aircraft names heretofore maintained by the Staff of the Munitions Board Joint Aircraft Committee will be transferred to the Department of the Air Force under separate cover.

/s/ C. S. THOMAS