Military aircraft

In 1783, when the first practical aircraft (hot-air and hydrogen balloons) were established, they were quickly adopted for military duties. They were used mostly for scouting, but soon they were used as bombers. During French Revolution, aerostats used to help artillery. The Italian forces became the first to use dirigibles for a military purpose during the Italo–Turkish War, the first bombing mission being flown on 10 March 1912. It was World War I, however, that marked the airship's real debut as a weapon. Aeroplanes had essentially replaced airships as bombers by the end of the war, and Germany's remaining zeppelins were destroyed by their crews, scrapped or handed over to the Allied powers as war reparations.

Fighter aircraft

The primary role of fighters is destroying enemy aircraft in air-to-air combat, as part of both offensive and defensive counter air operations. Many fighters also possess a degree of ground attack capability, allowing them to perform surface attack and close air support missions. In addition to their counter air duties they are tasked to perform escort mission for bombers or other aircraft. Fighters are capable of carrying a variety of weapons, including machine guns, cannons, rockets, guided missiles, and bombs. Many modern fighters can attack enemy fighters from a great distance, before the enemy even sees or detects them.

F-35B Lightning II

The F-35B Lightning II features a vertical lift fan and pivoting engine nozzle to deliver vertical landing and short takeoff capability to expeditionary airfields. Designed to operate from austere bases and a range of air-capable ships with its short takeoff/vertical landing capability, the F-35B can also takeoff and land conventionally from longer runways on major bases. On 27 September 2018 an F-35B from the USS Essex carried out an air strike using a precision-guided bomb against a Taliban position in Afghanistan, marking the first US combat use of the F-35.

Bomber aircraft

Bombers are normally larger, heavier, and less maneuverable than fighter aircraft. They are capable of carrying large payloads of bombs, torpedoes or cruise missiles. Bombers are used almost exclusively for ground attacks and not fast or agile enough to take on enemy fighters head-to-head.

B-2 Spirit

The B-2 provides the penetrating flexibility and effectiveness inherent in manned bombers. Its low-observable characteristics give it the unique ability to penetrate an enemy's most sophisticated defenses and threaten its most valued, and heavily defended, targets. The B-2 has a crew of two pilots, a pilot in the left seat and mission commander in the right. The combat effectiveness of the B-2 was proved in Operation Allied Force, where it was responsible for destroying 33 percent of all Serbian targets in the first eight weeks, by flying nonstop to Kosovo from its home base in Missouri and back. Allegedly it was a B-2 Spirit which dropped the bombs that destroyed the Chinese embassy in Sarajevo.

Attack helicopter

Attack helicopter’s primary role is an attack aircraft, with the capability of engaging targets on the ground, such as enemy infantry and armored fighting vehicles. Weapons used on attack helicopters can include autocannons, machine guns, rockets, and guided anti-tank missiles. Many attack helicopters are also capable of carrying air-to-air missiles, though mostly for purposes of self-defense. Today's attack helicopter has two main roles: first, to provide direct and accurate close air support for ground troops, and second, the anti-tank role to destroy enemy armor concentrations.

AH-64 Apache Longbow

The AH-64 Apache is the Army's heavy division/corps attack helicopter. The AH-64 is designed to endure front-line environments and to operate during the day or night and in adverse weather via its avionics and onboard sensor suites. The Apache is capable of simultaneously tracking up to 128 targets and engaging up to 16 at once, an attack can be initiated within 30 seconds. Following the 1991 Gulf War Saudi Arabia purchased twelve AH-64As. It has been speculated that the Saudi purchase had motivated Israel to also procure the Apaches.

Thoughts

Humanity has always dreamt of flying, but the dream is cursed. Some aircrafts are destined to become tools for slaughter and destruction. But engineers just want to create beautiful airplanes. Designers face dilemma when their work can be used for both peaceful and wartime purposes. Wrights made the first sustained, controlled, powered heavier-than-air manned flight on December 17, 1903. The era of aircraft has started. Almost as soon as they were invented, airplanes were used for military purposes. The first bombing mission was flown on 1 November 1911. The first war to see major use of airplanes in offensive, defensive and reconnaissance capabilities was World War I. Flying in the air was a dream for all humanity, and using this dream for military purposes is a crime against mankind.