



USN Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron - Fact Sheet

Source: <https://www.blueangels.navy.mil/>

Mission

The mission of the United States Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron is to showcase the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps by inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach.

A Blue Angels flight demonstration exhibits choreographed refinements of skills possessed by all naval aviators. The Blue Angels' C-130, affectionately known as Fat Albert, begins each demonstration by showcasing its maximum-performance capabilities during a ten-minute performance. Shortly thereafter, you will see the graceful aerobatic maneuvers of the four-jet Diamond Formation, in concert with the fast-paced, high-performance maneuvers of two Solo pilots. Finally, the team illustrates the pinnacle of precision flying, performing maneuvers locked as a unit in the renowned six-jet Delta Formation.

The team is stationed at Forrest Sherman Field, Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., during the show season. The squadron spends January through March training at Naval Air Facility El Centro, California.

The Blue Angels are scheduled to fly 34 performances at 31 locations in North America during the 2018 season, making this our 32nd year of flying the F/A-18 Hornet.

Officers

A total of 17 officers voluntarily serve with the Blue Angels. Each year the team typically selects three tactical (fighter or fighter/attack) jet pilots, two support officers and one Marine Corps C-130 pilot to relieve departing members.

The Chief of Naval Air Training selects the "Boss," the Blue Angels Commanding Officer. Boss must have at least 3,000 tactical jet flight-hours and have commanded a tactical jet squadron. The Commanding Officer flies the Number 1 jet. The Chief of Naval Air Training also selects the "XO," the Blue Angels Executive Officer. XO is a Naval Flight Officer (NFO) and must have at least 1,250 tactical jet flight-hours.

Career-oriented Navy and Marine Corps jet pilots with an aircraft carrier qualification and a minimum of 1,250 tactical jet flight-hours are eligible for positions flying jets Number 2 through



7. The Events Coordinator, Number 8, is a Naval Flight Officer (NFO) or a Weapons Systems Officer (WSO) who meets the same criteria as Numbers 2 through 7. The Marine Corps pilots flying the C-130T Hercules aircraft, affectionately known as "Fat Albert," must be aircraft commander qualified with at least 1,200 flight hours.

Career-oriented officers specializing in maintenance, administration, aviation medicine, public affairs and supply fill support positions. The Blue Angels base their selection of officers on professional ability, military bearing and communication skills. Blue Angels officers are well-rounded representatives of their fleet counterparts.

Officers typically serve two years with the team. Blue Angels officers return to the fleet after their tours of duty.

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History

At the end of World War II, the Chief of Naval Operations, Chester W. Nimitz, ordered the formation of a flight demonstration team to keep the public interested in Naval Aviation. The Blue Angels performed their first flight demonstration less than a year later in June 1946 at their home base, Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville, Florida. LCDR Roy "Butch" Voris led the team, flying the Grumman F6F Hellcat. Two months later, on August 25, 1946, the Blue Angels transitioned to the Grumman F8F Bearcat. The 1947 team, led by LCDR Robert Clarke, introduced the now-famous "Diamond Formation." By the end of the 1940s, the Blue Angels were flying their first jet aircraft, the Grumman F9F-2 Panther. In response to the demands placed on Naval Aviation in the Korean Conflict, the team reported to the aircraft carrier USS Princeton as the nucleus of Fighter Squadron 191 (VF-191), "Satan's Kittens," in 1950.

The team reorganized the next year and reported to NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, where they began flying the newer and faster version of the Panther, the F9F-5. The Blue Angels remained in Corpus Christi until the winter of 1954 when they relocated to their present home base at NAS Pensacola, Florida. Here they progressed to the swept wing Grumman F9F-8 Cougar.

The ensuing 20 years saw the Blue Angels transition to two more aircraft, the Grumman F11F-1 Tiger (1957) and the McDonnell Douglas F-4J Phantom II (1969). In December 1974, the Navy Flight Demonstration Team began flying the McDonnell Douglas A-4F Skyhawk II and was reorganized into the Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron. This reorganization permitted the establishment of the first commanding officer (CDR Tony Less)



instead of a flight leader, added support officers and further redefined the squadron's mission, to enhance the recruiting effort.

On November 8, 1986, the Blue Angels completed their 40th anniversary year when they unveiled their present aircraft, the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet, the first dual role fighter/attack aircraft, which is still serving on the nation's front lines of defense. The 2012 show season brought out more than 11 million spectators and since 1946, the Blue Angels have performed for more than 495 million fans.

In April 2013, following sequestration, the Navy announced that the remaining air show season was cancelled as one of many steps to ensure resources would be in place for forces who were operating forward deployed. The Blue Angels remained committed to their mission, reaching out to their local community and performing more than 500 squadron community outreach events totaling more than 5,000 hours of community service.

In 2014, an executive officer was added to the team, making for a total of 17 Blue Angels officers.

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