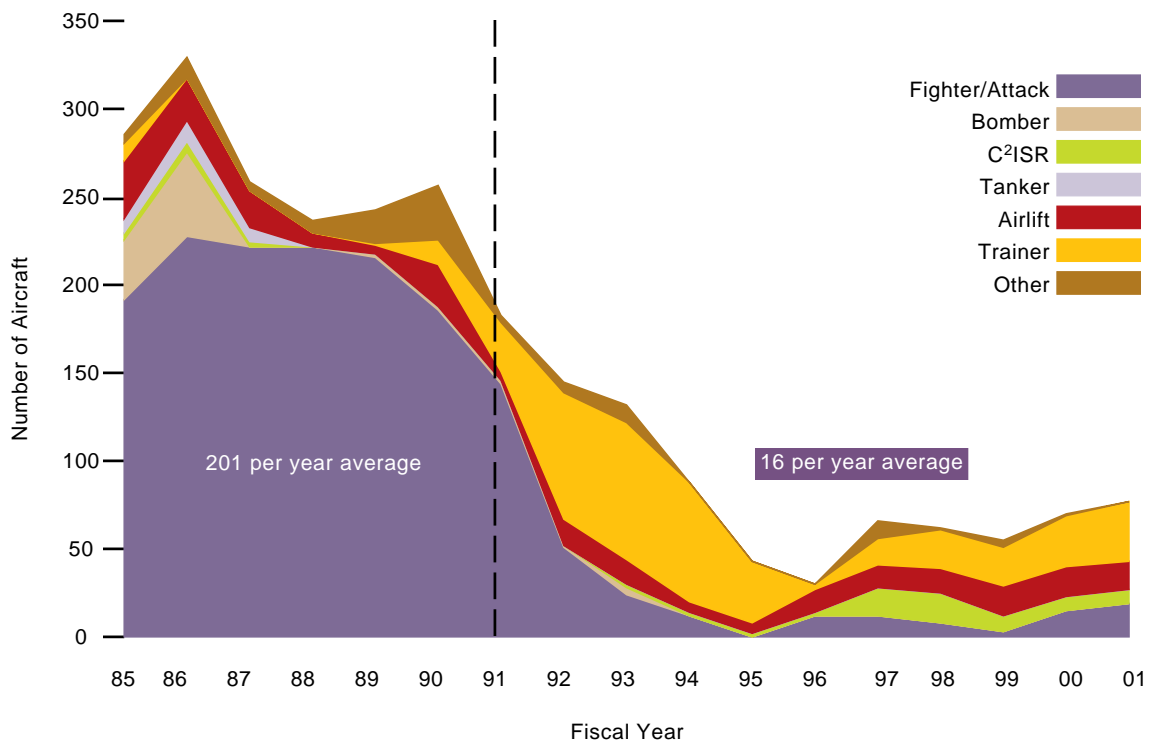


The Chart Page

By Tamar A. Mehuron, Associate Editor

How USAF's Fighter Force Got Old

A decade ago, purchases of fighter/attack aircraft plunged dramatically and have stayed low ever since, depriving the fleet of needed replacements. As a result, fighter aircraft average age has soared. In the period 1985–91, the Air Force bought 201 fighter and attack aircraft per year, on average. As can be seen, the end of the Cold War, together with Clinton Administration defense policies, brought radical change. Fighter procurement during the past decade—1992 through 2001—averaged only 16 aircraft per year. In 1995, USAF bought none at all. The severity of the overall decline in aircraft procurement was masked somewhat by large purchases of trainer aircraft. Those noncombat systems accounted for 49 percent of all purchases.



Source: USAF