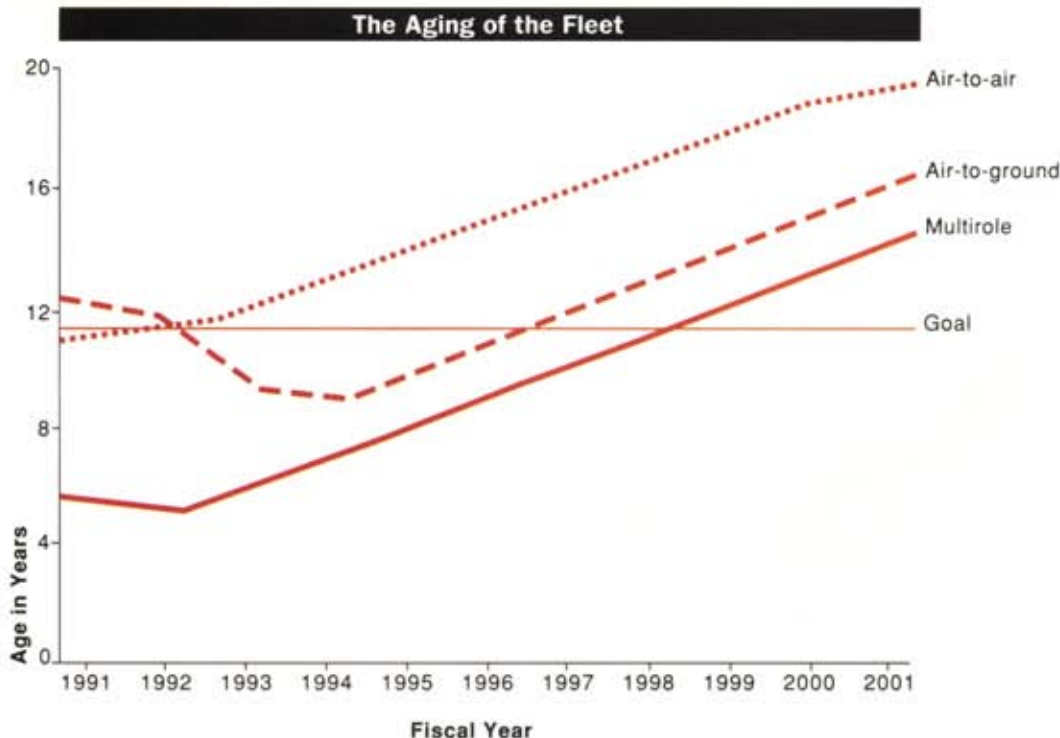
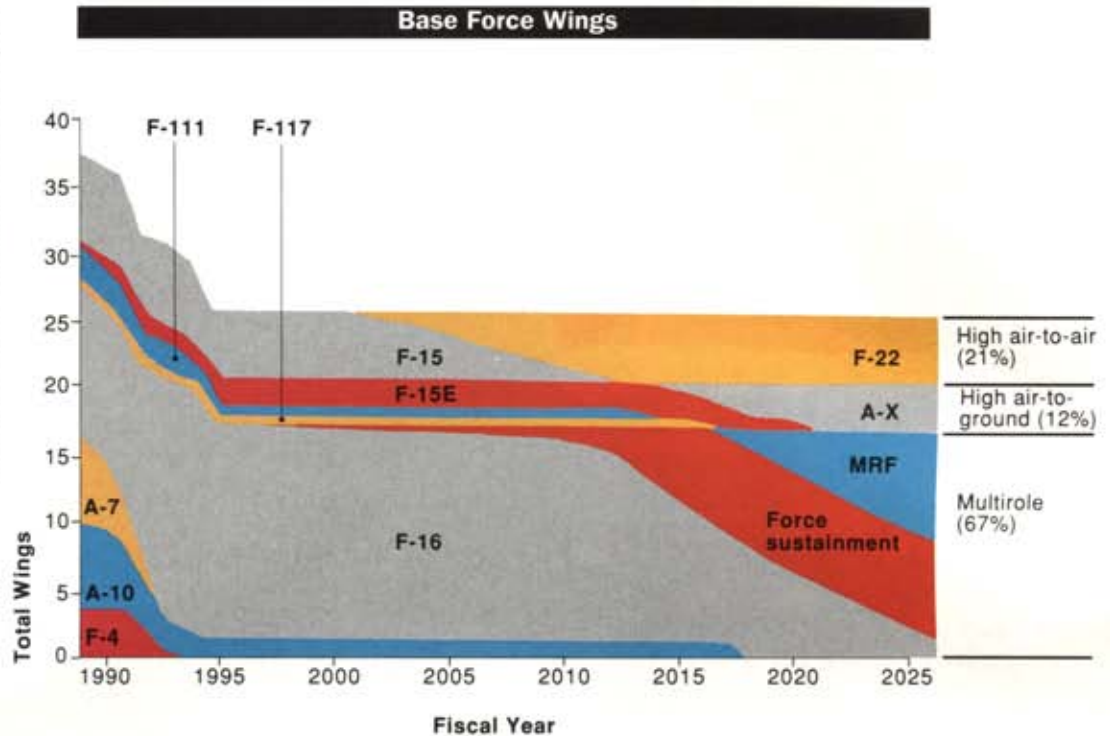


The Chart Page

By Tamar A. Mehuron, Associate Editor

Fighter Modernization

The Pentagon's Base Force calls for 26.5 Air Force fighter wings as of FY 1995. The F-16 component starts to decrease in 2005, while the proposed new Multirole Fighter does not come into play until 2015. To fill the resulting gap, the Air Force may buy up to 500 improved F-16s to serve as "force sustainment fighters" until MRFs fill out the force. The F-22 begins replacing the F-15 after 2000. The A-X enters the interdictor force around 2012.



By 1998, Air Force fighters will be older than the optimum 11.5 years. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that US tactical aircraft will still be far more capable than those of all regional powers.