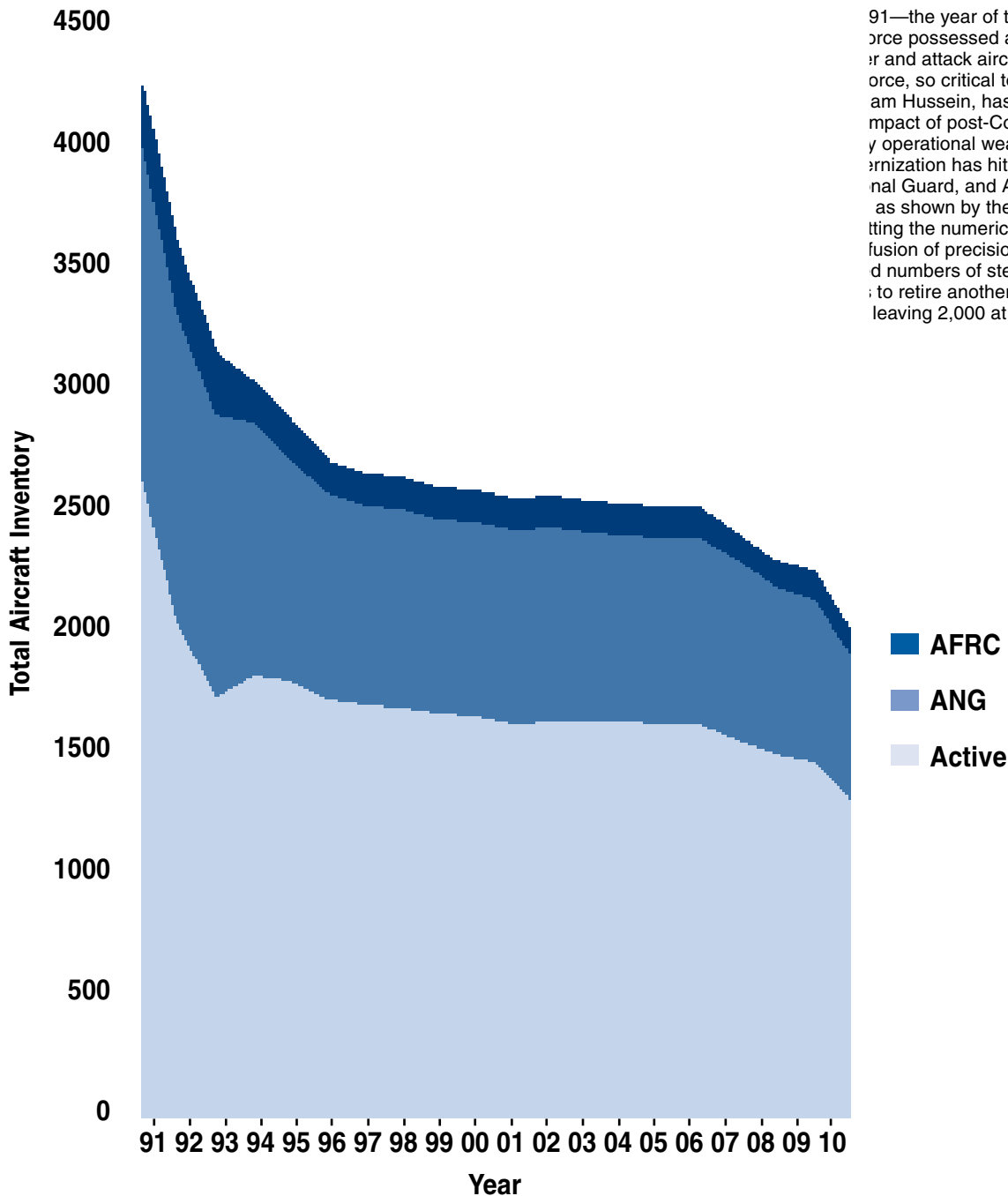


Fighter Fade-out

The force takes heavy losses



1991—the year of the Gulf War—the force possessed a force of 4,242 fighters and attack aircraft. Over 20 years, the force, so critical to the defeat of Saddam Hussein, has been cut in half. The impact of post-Cold War retirements, increased operational wear and tear, and slack budgetary authorization has hit the active force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve as shown by the chart. Partially offsetting the numerical decline has been the infusion of precision weapons and increased numbers of stealth aircraft. USAF plans to retire another 250 fighters this year, leaving 2,000 at the end of 2010.

Source: Data for years 1991 to 2009 from the "USAF Almanac" for years 1992 to 2010, published by *Air Force Magazine*, Arlington, Va. Data for year 2010 derived from Air Force sources.