



Sabre Jet Classics

A publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

Volume 12, Number 1

Spring 2004



INSIDE: Ben Hall, 15th HS Fireball,
Operation NATIVE DANCER, More!

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Sabre Jet Classics

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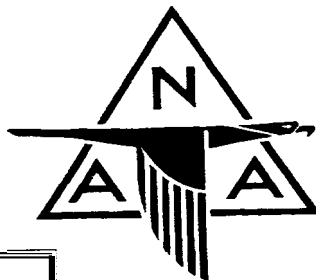
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*Next Issue:
Pete Fernandez Story,
8th FBW Stories, More*



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(front cover) Col. Carter, CO of the 15th
FIS, is seen over Yuma in 1955. The
15th FIS and their F-86D interceptors,
were based at Davis Monthan AFB, AZ.
(credit - Ralph Waddell)

The Sabre Jet Classics is published by the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. PO Box 97951. Las Vegas. NV 89193. The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association is a non-profit, veterans organization, with membership limited to individual pilots who have flown the F-86 Sabre aircraft. The goal of the association is to 'perpetuate the history of the F-86 Sabre, the units to which it belonged, and to the men that flew the Sabre'. A second goal is to 'link Sabre jocks with their old comrades'. A third goal is to perpetuate an accurate, patriotic portrayal of our national, military, and Air Force history and heritage. If you are not a member, but meet the membership qualifications, you are invited to join. Application forms are available on our web site or from our Las Vegas address. Dues for one year are \$25, three years \$50, and a Life Membership is \$200. \$100 for those over 75 years of age. The Sabre Jet Classics is published

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the *President's* *Notebook*

May the New Year bring health and happiness to you and yours. I would like to thank all who have sent us your change of address and the membership roster. Your consideration saves us time and money.

This time of year we get the state of the union, the state of the state and in our case the state of the city address. So I won't be too far off base by giving you the state the F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION for 2003. We currently have 1880 members. That's down from 1991 a year ago. We added 96 new members to the organization. 28 members that I know of passed away but I am sure there are more. On June 24, 2003, I mailed 86 notices to members who hadn't paid dues since 2001.

I received positive response from 47. The others were moved to the inactive file. On November 1, 2003, I mailed 229 notices of delinquent dues for 2002. As of this writing I have had positive response from 143. In February I will mail out notices to members who haven't

paid dues since the first 6 months of 2003. Your dues payment is recorded on the date your check is deposited. Unless you pay early then it is added on to your expired date.

Since the \$100 life membership, for those over 75, was introduced, 51 have signed up.

The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association tablet for the National Air and Space Museum was introduced, voted on and approved by the Board and 2001 reunion attendees. The tablet has space for 1000 names but so far only about 680 members have signed up. I received a call from a member who saw it and said it looked kind of empty. I haven't seen it but I agree. In this regard The Chairman of the Board received a call from some members who wanted to include the name of an F-86 pilot buddy, who had passed away before the tablet was available.

With the approval of the board I wrote a new paragraph to the constitution under Article 111 Membership, paragraph E. Folded Wings Membership. "This position was established to accommodate the

names of deceased F-86 pilots who passed away before the F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION tablet was available at the National Air and Space Museum. Members who are interested in having their deceased friend's name on the tablet may do so by completing an application for that person and sending it and a \$25 membership fee to the Association. Also send \$100 to the National Air and Space Museum along with the F-86 tablet donation form." This change to the constitution and the change to the life membership fee will be voted on by the 2005 reunion attendees.

As of this writing our country is at war and we have troops in combat. In November, with the approval of the Board, I ask Treasurer Richard Geiger to send a \$1000 check to the USO, for the purpose of paying for telephone calls from our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan to their loved ones.

May God Bless you and the United States of America.

Check 6.

JERRY R. JOHNSON
President

FOLDED WINGS

Albert R. Baardseth, September 17th, 2003
John H. Bartholoma, February 25th, 2004
Raymond A. Berg, May 24th, 2003
John C. Burr, November 11th, 2003
John C. Carmichael, 2002
Russell C. Hainline, November 29th, 2003
Justin W. Livingston, January 17th, 2004
Ronald E. McClure, October 30th, 2003
Richard M. Moroney, October 21st, 2002
G. Warren Ober, September 9th, 1999
Victor C.G. Sellers, July 11th, 1998
Richard R. Shoop, April 2002
Carroll L. Stanton, November 20th, 2003
Bernard Vise, January 2nd, 2004

POLICY STATEMENT

The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association does not participate in any solicitation or endorsement not controlled by, or for the sole benefit of, the association. Readers are cautioned to be wary of any representation in conflict with this policy.

from the editor

Here we are in the beginning of another year with *SabreJet Classics*. This coming year we will again return to a variety of subjects, all involving your favorite airplane, the F-86 Sabre, and the crews that flew them or maintained them. Yes, we will have some stories from the guys that kept them flying. We will have stories from the 'Dog' drivers, as well as some Guard stories, and stories about flying combat in the F-86.

Quality vs. quantity I have a problem regarding photos and the *Classics*. Everyone knows I'm always on the lookout for photos to go with the various stories that come into my office. Some guys are very trusting and loan us gobs of great photos. Some even give them to us for our files. Some don't have any to send but told us a great story. In those cases I go into the files and see if anyone else has sent photos without a story. Or find photos that I've collected over the years for the books that I've written.

Some of you will e-mail me photos or send color xeroxes of photos. Guys, your thoughts are in the right spot but... The "but" is that anything sent over the internet (unless it is in some very high resolution format) is almost unuseable. I can't download them and print them because I have a jet printer, which creates a dot pattern. It's a very good jet printer but dot patterns show up like a sore thumb when you go to publish them. (I know because my professional publisher won't accept anything along those lines.)

Those that send color xeroxes that they've gone to great lengths to have copied for the magazine are in almost the same predicament Unless the photo copy is done on a laser printer and on glossy photo paper, the photo copy will not be good enough to use in the magazine. I have developed a way to, correct some of these prints but it takes time.

What all this is leading up to is my pleading for you guys to trust me long enough for a loan of your photos and/or color slides. Using an original print, or a print made direct from your color slides, will result in a very, very high quality image for use in the book. Maybe even make the front cover. Plus, it will put your memories into a historical file for use by the magazine for years to come. We all know that we can't live forever. And many of us have photos and/or slides which will either go to a museum and never be seen again, or (perish the thought) go to an estate sale and probably get thrown away.

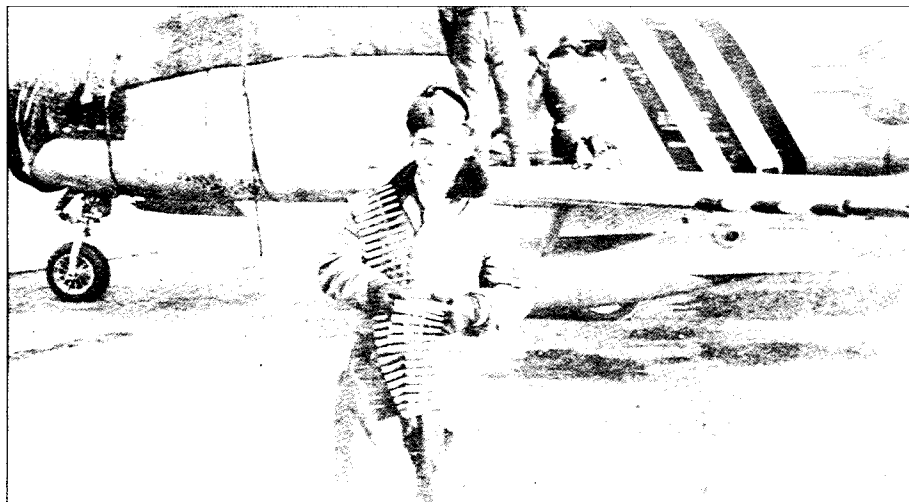
So please, if you know you have some photos and/or color slides from your time flying Sabres, please take the time to find them and stick them in the mail to me so that I can make copies of them for the magazine files. Make sure you send anything like that via Certified Mail or something as secure. I will return them to you the same way I receive them. On this end, I will take your slides and clean them up before having them printed. Usually takes me about a week or so to get everything done and proofed. Then everything will be returned to you. There are times when I will keep your material for an extended period, usually because your photo(s) are marginal in quality and I want to use your originals for a specific article. I will notify you of this intent. But everything will be returned if you want it returned.

That's my speech for this issue. Hopefully you guys will flood my mailbox with packages of photos and/or slides. Otherwise, Sabre Jet Classics will become very boring photo-wise. I look forward to seeing all you guys again in 2005.

Larry Davis - Editor

Who Is That Masked Man?

Oftentimes, members will send in photos of the men they worked and flew with. Some of them I know, some I don't. This one is very familiar as it is none other than our own Lon Walter when he was just a cocky lieutenant flying with the 4th Fighter Group in Korea during early 1951. (credit - Dick Medan)



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NEWS FLASH!!

For those that have been waiting for eons, information has been passed to my desk that the 1958 movie "The Hunters", starring Robert Mitchum, Robert Wagner, and the F-86 Sabre, will be released in DVD format sometime in the month of May 2004. Hooray! Now I can trash that old copy on VHS tape. Specific information will be provided as soon as it is known.

HELP! Sabre pilots under attack - again!

While doing some research for a future article about Pete Fernandez, I was put in touch with a fellow in South America that was doing research from the other side, i.e. the Communist side. At first it was an amicable relationship. He asked me about certain victories on certain dates, or losses on certain dates, and we exchanged some information. Then it turned sour, very sour.

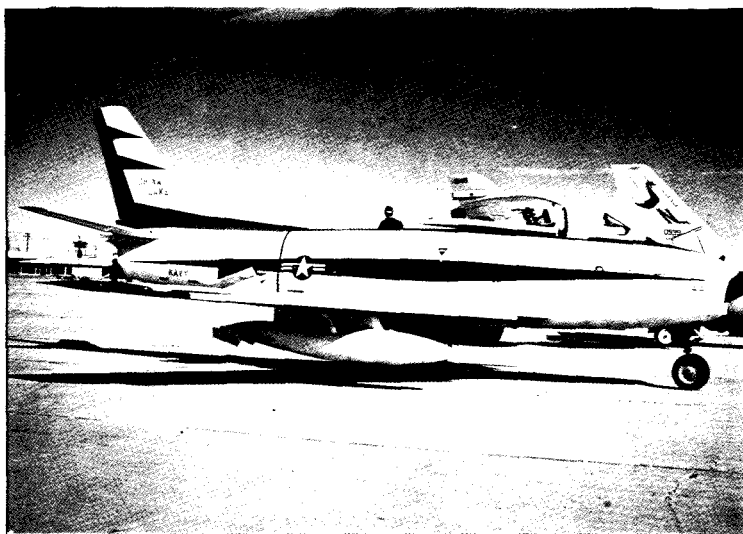
He started attacking the credibility of the claims of the Sabre pilots in Korea (Jim Jabara was not the first all-jet ace in Korea!!), and/or the records that were kept at unit level in Korea. Specifically, how an airplane was considered an "operational loss" as opposed to it being declared a "combat loss". He rationalized that if 4th FIW lost an airplane on 30 July 1951 to "operational" causes, and if the Communists, mainly the Russians, had MiGs flying that day, then they must have shot down the Sabre and 5th AF was lying about the cause! He even claimed one airplane that was on a ferry flight to Tsuiki and went down in the Straights of Japan, which was about 400 miles from the combat in MiG Alley!!!

Anyway, what I need from you guys in the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association, those that flew in Korea at any time, is a xerox of your Form 5 records. That will help me track serial numbers of airplanes that were actually in Korea. Plus if you were involved in combat of any type and have a copy of the after-action report, I'd appreciate a copy of that also. And if you were damaged by MiGs, let me hear about it or see any documentation you might have. Same for an operational problem, especially any that resulted in writing off the airplane for any reason.

This will give me some ammunition to counter any claims that might be forthcoming regarding losses in Korea. Send it via surface mail to your editor, Larry Davis, Editor - Sabre Jet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail on jpeg file to sabreclsx@aol.com

Thanks Guys!

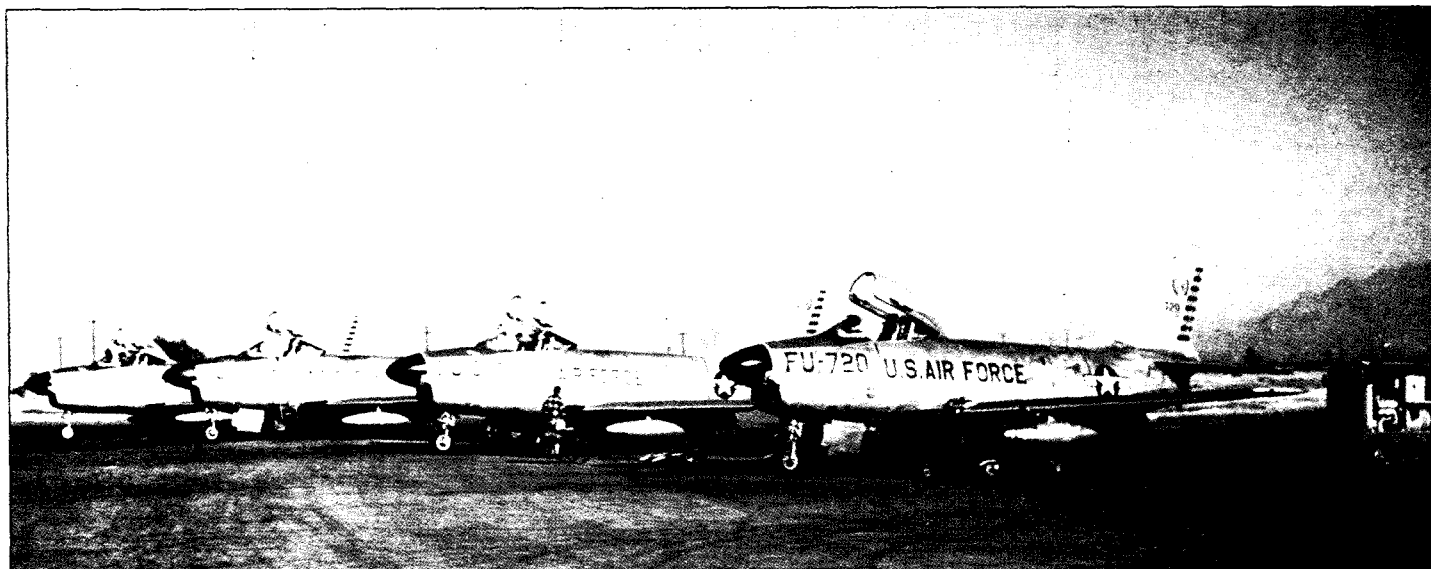
Larry Davis
Editor



What is it? Our "What is it! subject was answered quite rapidly by many members of the Association. It is indeed, an F-86F-40 Sabre, formerly serving with the Blue Impulse Aerobatic Team in the Japanese Air Self defense Force from 1976 through 1981. When Japan turned in a large number of the Sabres that had served their nation so well during the early years of the Cold War, several of the Blue Impulse Sabres were among them. The aircraft then served as a drone at Naval Air Station Point Mugu, probably ending up at the bottom of the Channel Islands off California. Thanks to Dave Menard, 'Big John' Henderson, and Jack Doub, among others.

What is it? #2 This subject of our "What is it? question is from the Summer 2002 issue of *Sabre Jet Classics*, vol. 10-2. No one came forward with any information about the aircraft in question. All we know is the airplanes were part of some type of color tests with each airplane having different color bands around the fuselage and wings - orange & yellow, red & green, red & yellow. All colors are thought to be Day-Glo paint and the airplanes may have been from the 63rd Squadron at Selfridge, MI. C'mon guys, someone has to know something about these airplanes and the tests. Please contact Lam- davis, Editor, Sabre Jet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at





15th FIS F-86D Sabre all-weather interceptors on alert at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, during 1955. Four Sabre Dogs were kept on 5 minute alert at all times. (credit - Ralph Waddell)

A FIREBALL IN THE NIGHT

by Dwight Purdy

The scramble horn was the signal to move fast. The flight, this night in October, 1955, was actually a routine training mission. With every training flight, however, we used the Air Defense Command's scramble system, which kept us a little closer to the state of alert we were always pursuing. I was into the cockpit and had the engine started and hit the runway rolling with clearance from D-M (Davis-Monthan) tower. No challenge, I was airborne well within five minutes, off into the inky blackness of the sky over the Arizona desert west of Tucson. Sleep well, Arizona. The brave defenders of the 15th Fighter Interceptor Squadron are protecting you.

The flight profile was simple. From D-M, I was to head northwest to the Hassayampa radio beacon, which was somewhat west of Phoenix, then north to Prescott, where I was to turn around and fly the same course in reverse. My flight altitude was only 24,000 feet, well below the optimum 30,000 at which the F-86D performed best. The objective of the mission was to make me more familiar with the fuel consumption characteristics of the aircraft in situations other than our usual mission profiles.

All went well, and at Hassayampa I made my turn and headed for Prescott. The lights of Phoenix were visible off on my right, as were the lights of Tempe and Mesa beyond, all separated by orange groves and desert. Glendale, though closer, was too small to make much of an impression. North of this area there were no lights; only the occasional twinkle that could be almost anything. When I got to Prescott, I made a 180 turn and wrote down the fuel level and compared it with my mission profile. I was shocked to find a huge discrepancy and the sudden realization that I couldn't afford the dogleg to Hassayampa if I was to have enough fuel to get back to D-M. There was an unexplained consumption of fuel that created a critical situ-

ation. I decided to abandon the mission profile and climb to the F-86D's optimum cruise altitude and head direct for Tucson. With that thought, I shoved the throttle forward for full power to climb.

What happened then was even more of a surprise. From behind me came a tremendous explosion. I jerked the throttle back, and watched in dismay as yellow and red warning lights started lighting up all over the cockpit. I realized that my engine had just gone bye-bye, and that I better come up with some new plans. I called Davis-Monthan tower to report my problems, and told them I was headed for Luke Field. Luke gave me clearance to approach from the northeast, but before I could even acknowledge them, my radio failed. I headed for the bright lights in the distance that marked the runway where I intended to land, and began to realize that I wasn't going to make it. The F-86D had a high wing loading and came down very fast. I went through an airstart procedure to see if there was anything at all available from the engine. I was pleased when it actually started, although it would only





"City of Colorado Springs, Colo.", a 15th FIS F-86D on the ramp at Yuma in 1956. 15th FIS crew members 'named' their aircraft when they deployed to Yuma for the rocket meets that were held annually, after major cities in the area that was under their protection. (credit - Ralph Waddell)

get up to about 18% of power - about half of what it took to bring the generator up and give back my radio. I figured it was better than nothing and I left it at that setting and started planning an ejection.

Another surprise appeared. There was an airfield almost directly below me! Bailing out wasn't my only option! I was both pleased and chagrined to realize that I had been homing in on the Litchfield Park airport, which was brightly lighted, and missed Luke, with much more subdued lighting. Luke Field was just off my right wing and I had only one approach available - to land in the direction opposite to the way they expected me. Sure enough, I could see red lights flashing from vehicles near the runway, as they prepared for my emergency landing.

I dumped the landing gear, the speed brakes and the flaps, all at once. If I thought that bird had a steep glide angle before, I was imitating a rock now. With the failure of the electrical system I had no way of knowing if the landing gear was really down, and I could only hope. Whatever, the ground was coming up fast, and from my steep diving turn I concentrated on making a touchdown in the first quarter of the runway. It actually went quite well, and I began a flare-out just after I crossed the end of the runway - skimming right over the crash barrier that had been erected for my expected approach from the opposite direction.

The touchdown was gorgeous, and I reached up and pulled the drag chute handle to help slow this high-speed tricycle down to reasonable speeds. Moments later I was impressed by the bright red light that came from behind me, and I wondered how the fire department had managed to catch up with me so fast, particularly from the wrong direction. Then I spied what no pilot wants to see; a fire warning light. Of course - the engine! I jerked the throttle to off position, which shut down all fuel flow and the indicator light went dark, as did the red glow reflected from the drag chute. I watched the tailpipe temperature, which had been

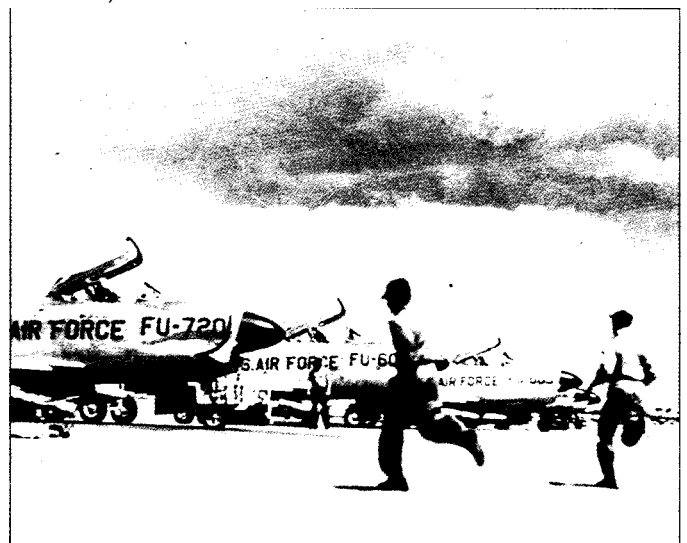


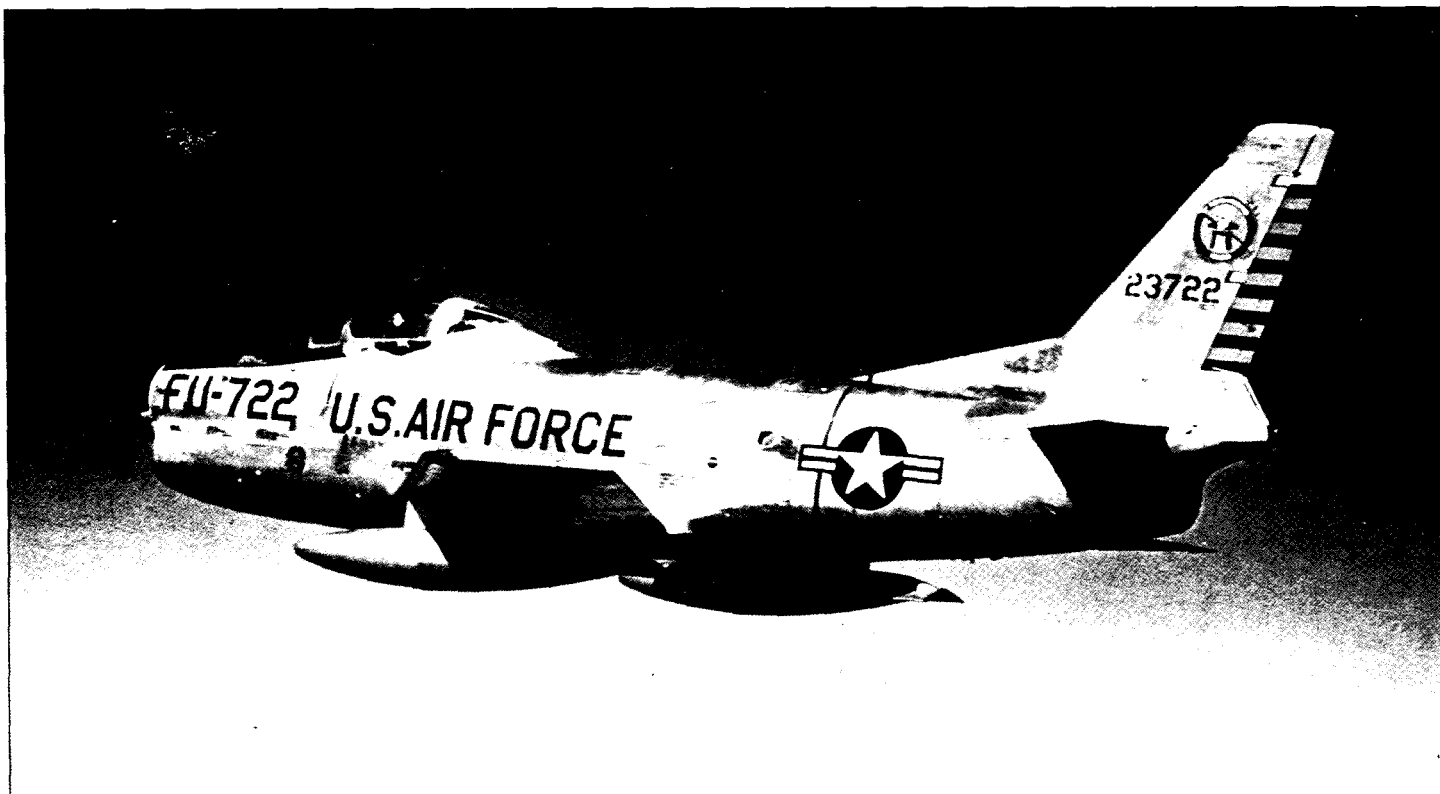
A crew chief and armorer load 2.75" FFAR rockets into the retractable rocket 'tray' under the cockpit of a 15th FIS F-86D. I'll bet the Safety Officers of today would not appreciate the practice of loading and arming live rockets on the flightline. (credit - Ralph Waddell)

pegged, rapidly return to zero. I dumped the chute, rolled to a stop and began shutting down all systems. A fire rescue crewman appeared on my left canopy rail and began trying to get me out of the plane, but I was having none of that until I had finished my shutdown procedures. No board of inquiry was going to ask me why I left this or that switch on and ultimately blame me for the engine failure in the first place. He was yelling that the plane was on fire and I had to get out. I knew I had shut down the source for the fire, so I ignored him. When I finally got out, I think they were treating him for nervous breakdown. It really wasn't a brilliant decision on my part.

The Captain who took me to flight operations in his staff car explained that I had been the most spectacular thing that had happened in years. My plane, turning on its final approach, was trailing a magnificent

Pilots rush to their waiting 'alert' Sabres during a scramble from Davis-Monthan AFB in 1956. The 15th FIS guarded the extreme southwestern approaches to the United States during the Cold War. (credit - Ralph Waddell)





A 15th FIS F-86D high over the Arizona desert during the Yuma deployment of 1955. Note the 'hood' is partially deployed behind the pilots head, indicating this was probably a practice night interception. The 15th FIS flew Sabre Dogs from 1953 to 1959, when they transitioned to the F-89 Scorpion. (credit - Ralph Waddell)

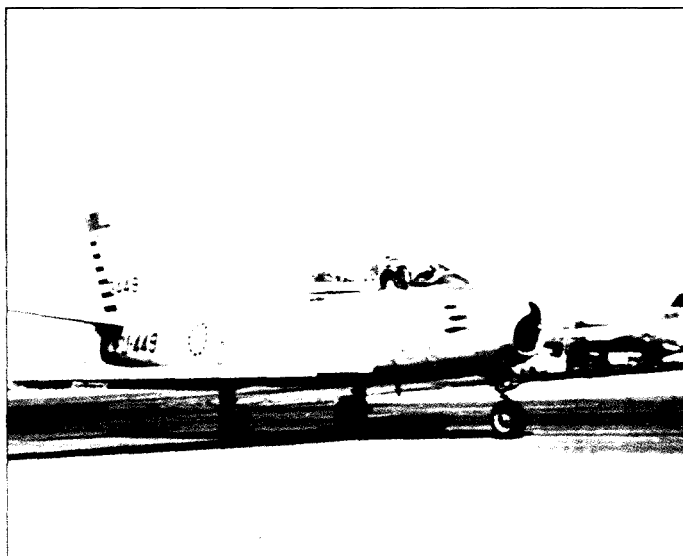
fireball dozens of feet long. My throttle setting was feeding raw fuel into the engine, which had stopped turning. It was burning behind the plane - lighting up the night sky like the fireball that it was. Everybody was waiting to see the impact as this burning plane smashed into the ground. I sort of disappointed them when I failed to crash.

I stepped out of the car and went into flight operations

to formally close my flight plan. The nervous energy I had been running on suddenly failed. I almost needed help to get to the door, and I began shaking so bad that I couldn't write. The airman behind the counter had problems understanding why I had landed at Luke when there was no such flight plan. The housing office assigning me quarters for the night groused about my late unannounced check-in. Obviously, everything was back to normal.

Around the World in the F-86 Sabre Days

Two photos of unusual F-86s from the Nationalist China Air Force. On the left is a very rare photo of an F-86D assigned to the CAF. Not much is known about CAF F-86Ds and most historians do not know they had them. (right) An F-86F flown by pilots of the CAF "Thunder Tigers" aerobatic team. What's unusual about it? The airplanes are "borrowed" from USAF units for a show the "Tigers" performed here in the United States during 1959. Note the 4th TFW F-105B Chiefs on the ramp behind the Sabre. (credit - Bob Hanes and Mary Levy)



the Sabre's radar is locked-on:

Ben W. Hall

And his own F-86!

Be forewarned: This is the stuff of dreams.

The story begins in early 1970. when one of Ben Hall's Seattle neighbors, Jim Larsen, learned of an F-86 languishing in a surplus dealer's storage yard near Fresno, California. The dealer was asking \$700 for the Sabre's remains, and a restoration project would likely require lots of work (and money). Jim knew that Ben Hall had owned t-6 and P-51 aircraft, and he asked him to join in on acquiring and restoring the Sabre. Ben joined Jim and flew to Fresno, where they determined that rebuilding the Sabre, F-86A-5 #48-178, was probably worth a try. It would be four long years and about 10,000 man-hours later before they knew for certain if they had been correct.

As purchased in 1970, F-86A #178, had many shortcomings. Most notably, it lacked an engine, had no wing leading edges, and the cockpit was a mess. Fortunately, another F-86 was located in a junkyard and bought for \$500. It provided most of the missing parts needed to make #178 flyable, including much of the cockpit but no usable leading edges.

Several J47 engines were located and purchased for prices ranging from \$50 to \$1500. (Can you believe those prices?) Surprisingly, one of the \$50 engines was ultimately the best performer and became the engine of choice. Additional major restoration sub-projects involved hydraulics, a complete electrical re-wiring job, and locating and installing a new fuel control.

Eventually, F-86 wings with leading edges were found at another surplus dealer. Removal of the leading edges and installation on #178 was a giant undertaking. In

Duxford in September 1994. Archie Nogle flew #178 with the 196th FIS and was amazed that it was still flying twenty years later. (credit - Archie Nogle)



the process, it was discovered that the slats were incompatible with the configuration of #178's wing. The restoration team (Ben Hall and four dedicated associates) decided that the leading edges should be installed with the slats permanently secured in the "Closed" position. They fashioned a procedure to do this, and for good measure, a mid-wing airflow 'fence' was added. This resulted in an F-86A with a wing that resembled the F-86F '6-3 hard wing'.

Along the way, there were many, many other problems to be solved. The team benefited at times from outside help such as famed North American Chief Test Pilot Bob Hoover, who helped locate North American engineers and documents to answer questions.

Finally, on 24 February 1974, the old Sabre was once again ready to fly. An experienced and current Sabre pilot, Paul Bennett, would take #178 into the air for its second 'first flight'. He was a Boeing test pilot then flying a Sabre Mk. 5 chase plane for the company. Sabre #48-178 flew with virtually no write-ups that day. Subsequent flights proved that the project was a resounding success. According to Ben, the secured slats

Ben Hall and member Archie Nogle beside 48-178 at Duxford in 1994. (credit - Archie Nogle)

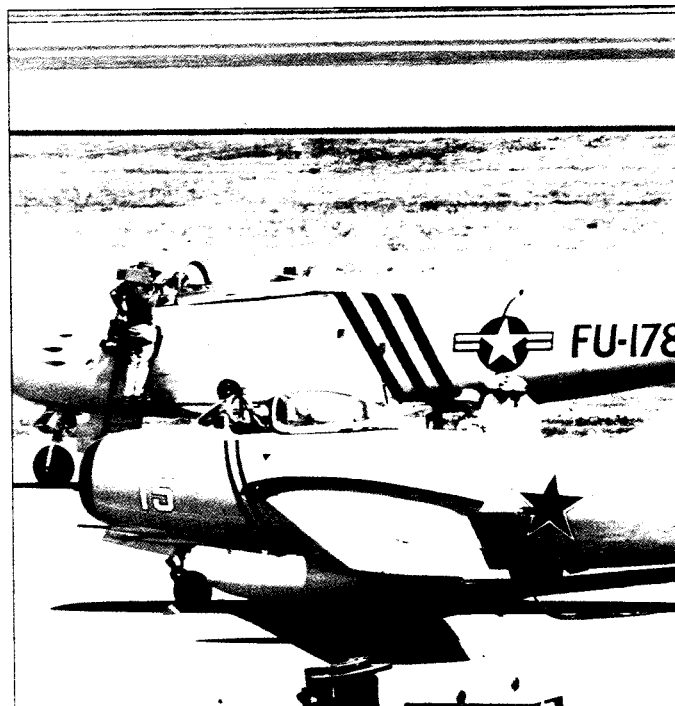




Unusual photo of Ben Hall and -178 with an early all-black paint scheme, possibly for a movie role. (credit - Ben Hall)

had little effect on the Sabre's performance. Arguably, this F-86 was the first American-made and flyable jet fighter in civilian hands. Ben Hall first flew the Sabre on 3 May 1974, and several months later. Bob Hoover flew it at an air show in Western Canada.

Although he sold the Sabre in 1988, F-86 Sabre Pilots Association member Ben Hall's love affair with this F-86A continues to this day. From his present home in Salt Lake City, he provided SabreJet Classics with the

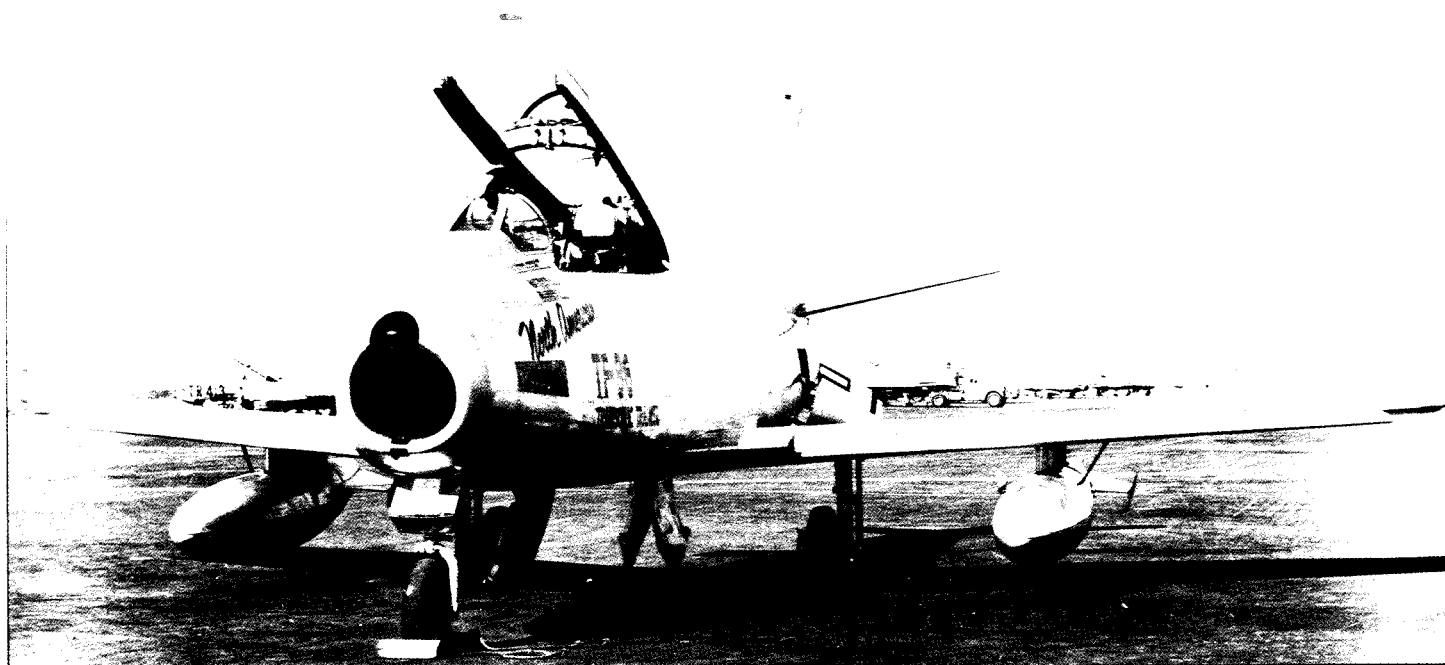


Ben Hall, -178, and a MiG-1S during an air show in 1988. Ben Hall often 'fought' with the MiGs out of Chino at air shows all over the United States during the 1990s. (credit - Ron Miller)

photos and material needed to tell this brief account of the restoration of 48-178. Most helpful was an article telling the full story, published in Air Classics Quarterly Review, Fall 1976, and written by Jim Larsen, who had discovered -178 in 1970.

Today, F-86A -48-178 still flies - at air shows in the United Kingdom, and remains the only airworthy F-86A Sabre in the world.

The second of two TF-86F Sabre Transonic Trainer aircraft. #53-1228, on the ramp at Craig AFB, AL, in 1958. Built by North American Aviation prior to the introduction of the TF-1000, the #2 TF-86F (the first was destroyed in a crash) was used as a chase aircraft at Edwards Flight Test Center. (credit - Duane Aasted)



SEARCH CONTINUES FOR KOREAN WAR MIAs

by Major Dale Cope

On 16 Sep 1952, Capt Troy Cope was flying his F-86F Sabre jet as lead with his wingman in a fighter sweep along the Yalu River, in the general area between Sinuiju and the Suiho Dam, North Korea. Sighting a flight of four MIG-15s, they gave chase when two more MIG-15s entered the action, and a maneuvering fight began. Capt Cope made a firing pass on one of the MIG-15s when it came within shooting range, and the action quickly developed into a furball, in which both the F-86s and MIG-15s engaged in close-in maneuvering and firing passes. Capt Cope and his wingman remained in close proximity, but had to engage separately as more and more enemy aircraft appeared. Losing sight of Capt Cope, the wingman was able to chase two MIG-15s out of the fight before returning to base, but Capt Cope's aircraft was not seen again.

Fifty years after the armistice ended hostilities on the Korean peninsula, the search for Korean War Missing In Action (MIA) continues, and for the family of one Kansas Air Guard member, Major Dale Cope of the 184th MXS, the search has gained new hope. Known as "Gordy" to his family, Capt Cope was "reported MIA on 16 Sep 1952 and, in the absence of evidence of continued survival, the Air Force issued a presumptive finding of death on 31 Dec 1953." Little effort was made by the U.S. government for the next four decades to account for the approximately 8,177 U.S. MIAs from the Korean War, including the case of Capt Troy Gordon Cope. Then, in 1992, a U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POWs-MIAs was formed to investigate the Soviet Union's involvement in the Korean War. In a report released in 1993, evidence was presented about the possible transfer of U.S. Korean War prisoners to the Soviet Union. The Soviets had formed and used a special Air Force unit with the mission of capturing pilots of the U.S. F-86 fighter, and the report identified 37 U.S. airmen missing from the Korean War who the United States believed may have been captured and sent to the former Soviet Union. Capt Cope was listed among the 37.

Then, in 1995, the first hard evidence of Gordy's fate surfaced when a businessman returned from China with rubbings of American dog tags, including that of Capt Cope. The dog tags were found in a Korean War museum in the border city of Dandong, China near where Capt Cope's plane was last seen. In the report to the U.S. Embassy, it was stated that Capt Cope and was met by locals who thought he was a Russian

hero and sent for Russian interpreters. Upon discovering that he was not Russian, it was reported that Capt Cope was taken away alive and not seen again.

Through the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), the U.S. government began pushing the Russians and Chinese for additional information, and in 2001, a major breakthrough was achieved on Capt Cope's case. While researching Soviet air combat reports in the Russian Ministry of Defense Archives, a Chinese report was discovered describing the shoot down of an F-86 on 16 Sep 1952. The report stated the enemy aircraft crashed into a house in a village and the pilot's body was found in the wreckage.

With this new information, DPMO representatives were able to meet with representatives of the Chinese government in Beijing in March 2003 to discuss Capt Cope's case along with other POW/MIA accounting issues. In a rare instance of cooperation by the Chinese government on a case involving a Korean War MIA, the Chinese agreed to technical talks to facilitate an investigation of the crash site. The Pentagon's Central Identification Laboratory will conduct the investigation, and if the information warrants, they will travel to Dandong for excavation of the crash site and exhumation of the pilot's remains. Once the remains are exhumed, then the laboratory will be able to use

Capt. Troy Cope, 4 FIG, Kimpo AB, 1952. (credit Dale Cope)





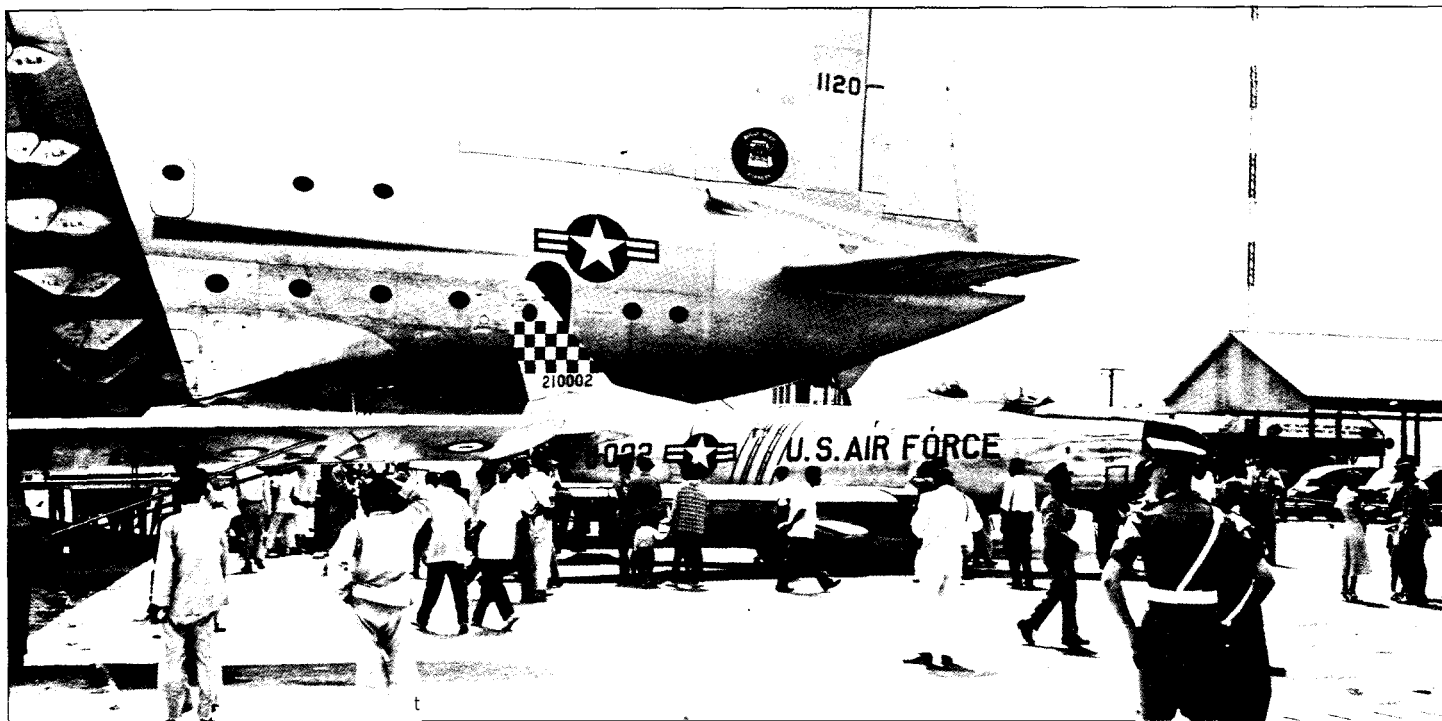
1Lt Robert F. Niemann (R) and 1Lt Don Stewart (L) on their way out to Niemann's last combat mission. Niemann was downed by Soviet Capt. Lazard Vin 12 April 1953. He was wounded during the engagement, captured and sent to the Soviet Union—never to be heard from again. (credit - John Lowery photo)

state-of-the-art forensic techniques to make positive identification.

Major Dale Cope and his brother, Chris Cope, (nephews of Gordy) recently attended a DPMO briefing for families of Korean War MIAs and POWs, which was held in Washington, D.C. just days prior to the 50th anniversary of the armistice, July 27, 1953. During these briefings, Major Cope learned details about the review of Russian archives and how an excavation is conducted. Major Cope and his brother met individually with the DPMO representatives who have been instrumental in the investigation of Gordy's fate. They discussed the specifics of Capt Cope's case and found out the technical talks with the Chinese were scheduled for August 2003. These latest developments have brought new hope for Gordy's family that he may be returned home after being listed missing for 51 years. Even after five decades, Gordy is survived by his wife, three sons, two brothers, a sister, and a multitude of grandchildren, nephews, and nieces. If the family is able to bring Gordy's remains home in a flag-draped coffin, it will help bring final closure for one MIA family, and hopefully, provide in-roads with the Chinese on the investigation of other Korean War MIAs. Capt Cope's case illustrates the U.S. government's commitment and DPMO's dedication to "Keeping The Promise" to achieve the fullest possible accounting of our missing in action — from all wars.

Sabre Pilots still listed as MIA

Name	Date of Loss	Name	Date of Loss
Capt William D. Crone,	18 June 1951	Major Felix Asla,	1 August 1952
Capt Robert H Laier,	19 June 1951	Maj Deltis H Fincher,	22 August 1952
1Lt Lawrence C Layton,	2 September 1951	Capt Troy G Cope,	16 September 1952
1Lt Carl G Barnett, Jr,	26 September 1951	2Lt Jack H Turberville,	18 November 1952
Capt Charles W Pratt,	8 November 1951	1Lt Donald R Reitsma,	22 December 1952
1Lt Charles D Hogue,	13 december 1951	2Lt Bill J Stauffer,	26 January 1953
Lt Lester F Page,	6 January 1952	1 Lt Paul J Jacobson,	12 February 1953
Lt Thiel M Reeves,	11 January 1952	1Lt Richard M Cowden,	9 March 1953
1Lt Charles W Rhinehart,	29 January 1952	1 Lt Robert F Niemann,	12 April 1953
1 Lt Thomas C Lafferty,	31 January 1952	Capt Frank E Miller, JR,	27 May 1953
Capt Charles R Spath,	3 February 1952	1Lt John Eoutherland.	6 June 1953
Capt Jack C Langston,	10 March 1952	1LT Allan K Rudolph,	19 June 1953
1Lt James D Carey,	24 March 1952	Capt Charles E Gunther,	19 June 1953
Maj George V Wendling,	13 April 1952	1Lt Jimmy L Escale,	19 June 1953
Capt Albert G Tenney,	3 May 1952	2Lt Gerald W Knott,	20 July 1953
Capt John F. Lane	20 May 1952		



Chinese and British personnel view a 26th FIS F-86D at the Far East Air Force show in Hong Kong during October 1955. The 26th FIS transitioned from F-86Fs to F-86Ds immediately following Operation NATIVE DANCER. SabreJet Classics has no photos of 26th FIS F-86F aircraft. (credit - USAF)

NATIVE DANCER

by John Moran

In the Fall of 1954, soon after the 16th and 67th FBS moved from Korea to Kadena AB, Okinawa, Air Force decided that the absence of the third squadron in the 18th Wing justified a month long gathering of that wing. During the Korean "Police Action", the 44th Squadron had remained in the Philippines at Clark AB, while the other two squadrons flew combat in Korea. But bringing the 44th to Kadean for Operation NATIVE DANCER would result in a loss of the squadron's air defense commitment to the Philippines.

Enter the 26th Squadron. Like the 44th, the 26th had remained in Okinawa with the 4th Squadron, while the 3rd squadron in the original 51st Wing operated in Korea. Flying out of Naha AB, near the southern tip of Okinawa, the 26th F-86Fs shared air defense responsibilities with the 4th, flying new F-86D Sabres.

Similar aircraft and missions, made the the 26th the logical choice to assume the alert posture of the 44th. Additionally, the experience of 'bugging out' in a hurry could only enhance the experience of both squadrons. The 26th had been living pretty well at Naha, with a brand new BOQ and a great O-Club called The Fighter Club. Everyone had a maid and "had it made!"

They sat VTR Alert from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. If a cloud could be found, we palmed the alert schedule off on the 4th Squadron, who stood weather and night alert. If we were able to pull off this charade, it was off to the skies for 'training', or to Bolo Point for air to ground gunnery.

But going to Clark Field was going to be great fun. A historical base, good flying and adventure. Yea! Little did we know that we would be restricted to the base for the first two weeks and that our BOQs would be 15 man tents (that we had to build!), which were 'furnished' with canvas cots. A far cry from air conditioning, nice baths, and the previously mentioned maids that we'd been led to believe were waiting at Clark.

The flying was great! A nice alert shack and enough "Scrambles" to keep the duty interesting. There was no all-weather squadron at Clark, so we stood alert in the manner to which we were accustomed. There was a good gunnery range, which we managed to take advantage of, And it sure was a lot of fun to shoot the guns without fear that someone was going to shoot back.

Just prior to NATIVE DANCER, the 26th had been selected to transition into the F-86D. Some of our F models had already been returned to Japan in preparation of the arrival of the 'Dogs'. Since we were below the proper number of airplanes to fulfil the commitment, we were sent a group of F-86Es that had just been through IRAN. The wings had been modified to remove the slats, so these Sabres were almost identical to our F models.

(editors note: This is the first time I've heard about operational F-86Es having the '6-3 hard wing' conversion other than F-86E-1Ss used in the Guard. Anyone with further knowledge of this, please contact your Editor.)



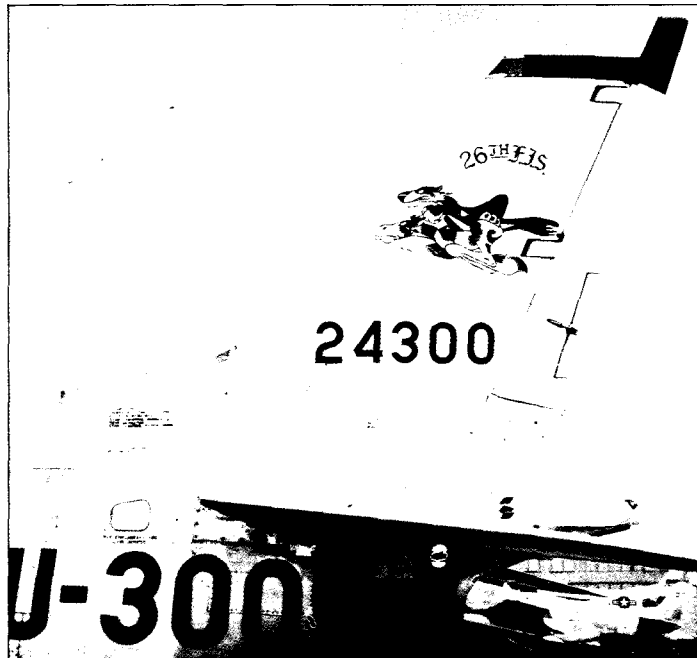
Members of the 26th FIS relax during off-duty hours at Clark AB, Philippines during NATIVE DANCER. (credit - John Moran)

About midway through 'DANCER', the 26th got the word that we had been selected to represent the United States at the celebration of the birthday of the Prince of Thailand. Sixteen Sabres were reapainted, scrubbed and shined up. Our normal 120 gallon combat tanks were moved to the inboard station and 200 gallon tanks were added to the outboard station. On the flight to Bangkok, these big tanks would be dropped in order for the flight to continue non-stop from Clark. The drop site was to be over the jungle of some small country called French Indo China, and the 200 gallon tanks would be replaced in Bangkok.

On the return to Clark, one of the Sabres developed a malfunction, requiring it and its element Leader to divert to Saigon. Both aircraft were disassembled and returned to Japan. The leader of that element was later to lose his life on a combat mission over that same country, but now called Vietnam.

During the Thailand visit, those of us who did not get to

Tail of a 26th FIS F-86D bearing the unofficial badge of the squadron. (credit - Merle Olmsted)



The fancy BOQ area that was created for the pilots and crews of the 26th FIS during the NATIVE DANCER deployment. The concrete structures in the background were for 'permanent party' personell. (credit - John Moran)

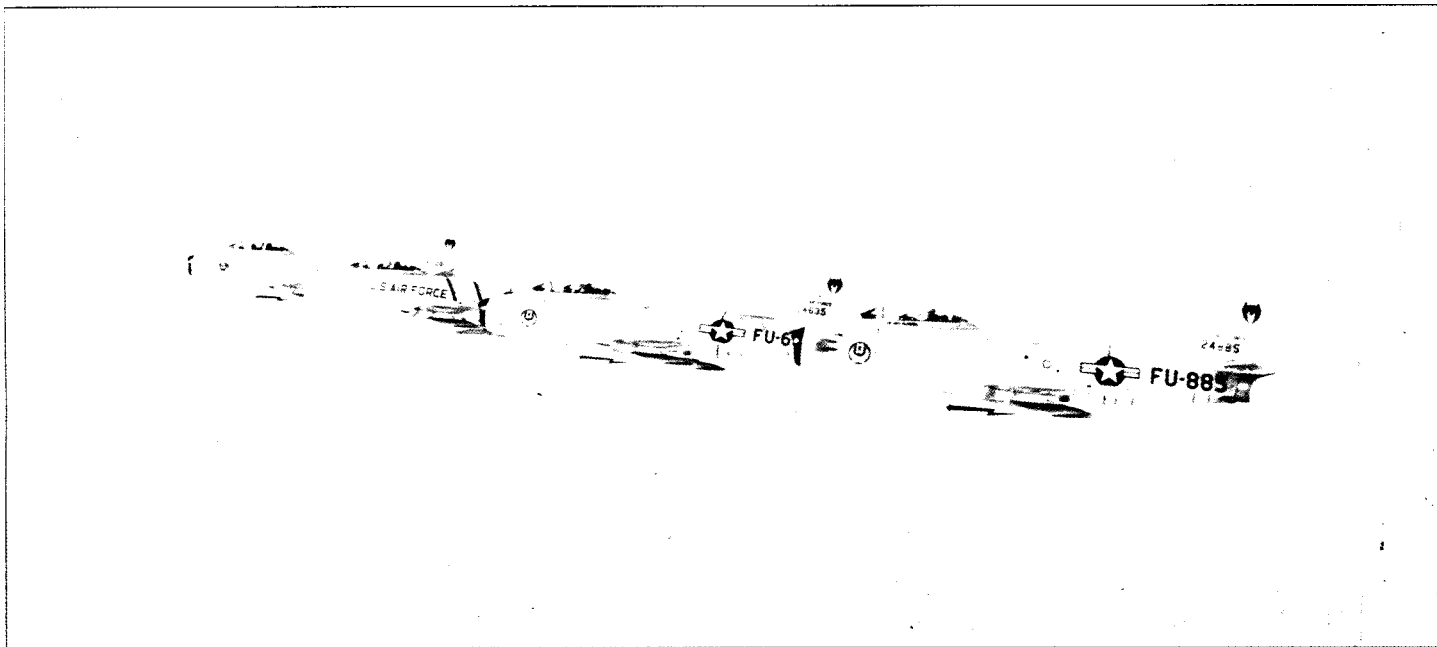
make the trip. continued to 'hold the fort' at Clark. While we still had alert responsibilities, the flying was a bit more relaxed and we were able to visit the rest of Clark Field. At the time, Clark still had the charm of an 'old Army' post. Classic officers housing was built in tropical style. widely spaced and surrounding a large parade ground. Additionally. Clark had one of the finest Officer's Clubs to be found anywhere. Even though not being chosen to make the trip to Bangkok was an ego buster, those of us left behind (aces in our own minds!) took advantage not only of the Club but also to take in the local color.

If, in your youth. you didn't have the pleasure of visiting Angeles City, you were truly deprived. 'Jitneys' were the transport of choice. These were Jeeps, ingeniously and colorfully converted to min-bus configuration for the run between Clark and the City. The fare depended on your ability to 'negotiate'. Once in Angeles, the mode of travel switched to small donkey carts. The owner-

26th FIS pilots relax on the Clark AB Officers Club patio. (L-R) Arnold Hogarth. Neil Simonson, and Barry Filgus. (credit - John Moran)



FU-88⁵



A flight of 44th FBS F-86Fs patrolling off the northern Philippine coast in 1954. The 44th was one of the squadrons assigned to Clark AB that were deployed to Kadena AB, Okinawa during Operation NATIVE DANCER in the Fall of 1954. John Moran and the 26th FIS took the place of the 44th at Clark in an air defense posture. (credit - USAF)

driver sat sideways at the front, and the seat could accomodate two passengers. Not a bad arrangement unless it was late at night and some fun-seeking GIs decided to take over the driving, resulting in racing two or more carts to the next point of happiness. If such was the case, one was well advised to seek shelter since the streets were narrow and two carts would barely fit between the buildings.

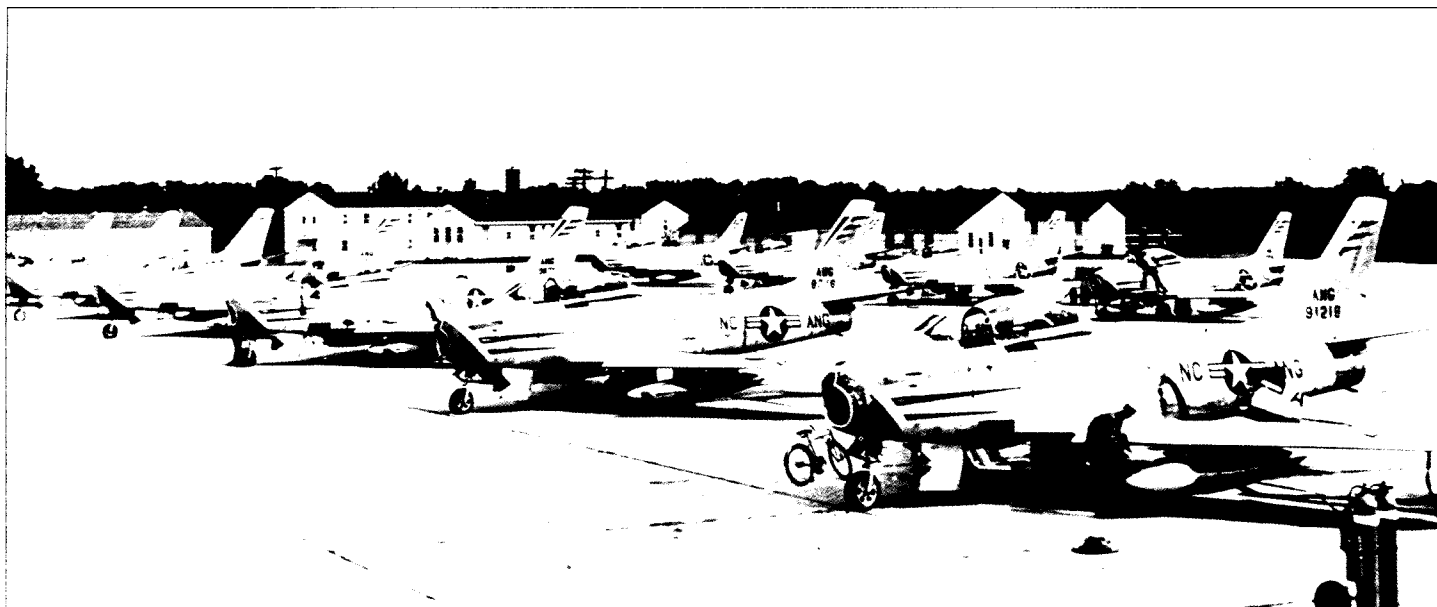
Later in the day at the O-Club, while bragging over some tall cool ones about our misadventures to a local cock fight, our friendly bartender, an elisted man at Clark, pulled us aside and advised us not to broadcast our tour since the fighting pit was seriously off-limits to all US military personnel.

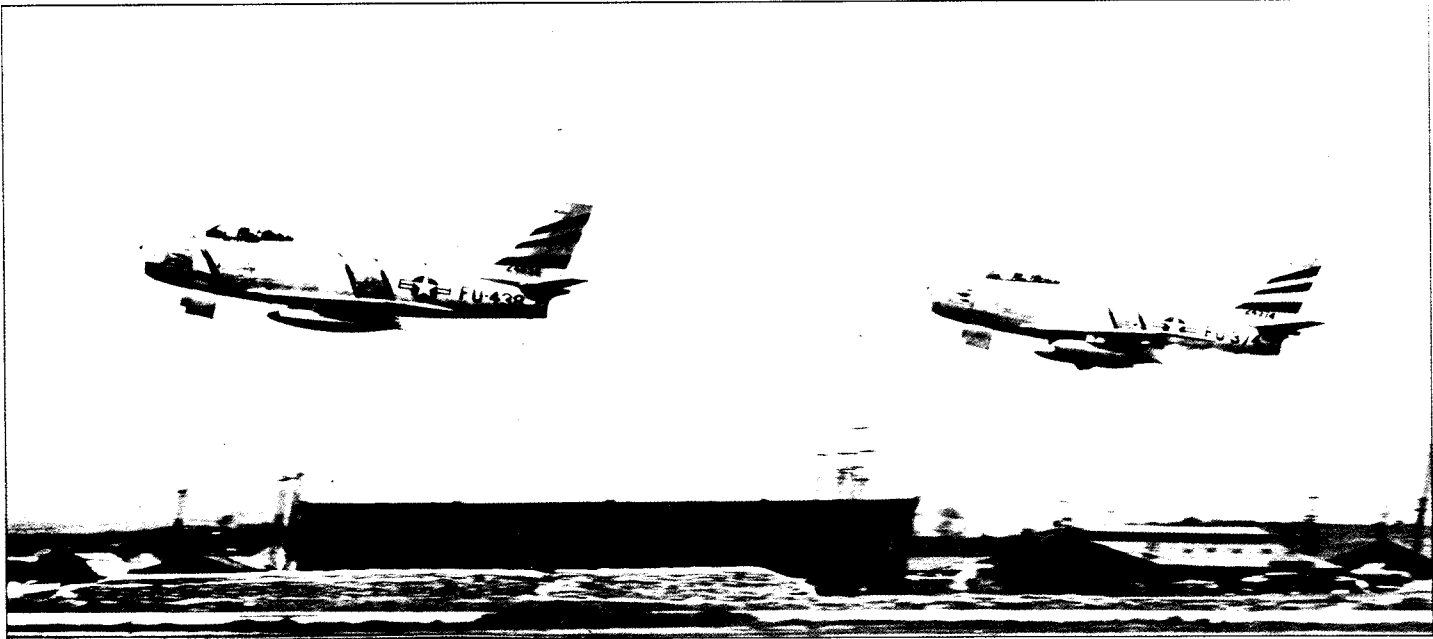
NATIVE DANCER ended with the 26th and 44th returning to their permanent assignments. The replacement F-86Es, even with the modified leading edges, did not have the capability of carrying multiple tanks, nor the big 200 gallon tanks. Those of us assigned to bring them back to Okinawa had to make a pit stop on Taiwan, where I was fortunate enough to re-new an old friendship with a Chinese Nationalist pilot I'd known during gunnery school.

Bottom line was that NATIVE DANCER was a success, proving that the national front line fighter aircraft, and the men who worked on those wonderful airplanes, could go where they were needed and get the job done. And have a good time while doing so.

Your Air Guard In Action

These colorful F-86A Sabres were assigned to the 196th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, North Carolina Air Guard based at Charlotte Airport in 1952. Many of the aircraft in this photo are veterans of the combat in Korea and previously flown by the pilots of the 4th Fighter Group at Kimpo. (credit - Jim Sullivan)





A pair of 8th Fighter Bomber Group F-86Fs lift off from Suwon AB for another patrol along the Korean coast. The 8th FBG converted from F-80C Shooting Stars to F-86F Sabre during the Spring of 1953. (credit - North American Aviation)

TWO JET FIGHTERS COLLIDE OVER SEA OF JAPAN - ONE PILOT KILLED

by Verlin B. Tranter

What do you suppose were the thoughts and feelings of the surviving pilot on that fateful day? Share with me the true story behind that headline.

The weather was perfect for flying on a Fall day in 1954, and the mission was to engage any enemy aircraft which challenged our right to fly in international airspace off the east coast of Korea. If no MiGs came up, they were to turn their gun switches to "Camera Only", and practice air-to-air combat with friendly aircraft they might encounter.

Ever since becoming jet pilots, they'd been motivated and taught to use their Sabres to destroy enemy aircraft. Dangerous business - Yes. But their confidence grew as they flew day after day against aerial targets and against each other in mock combat. And although they were sure of themselves, deep in the pits of their stomachs they were nervous and some degree of anxiety prevailed. If they went up against the MiGs, they would be locked in mortal combat. A sobering thought.

On this day, under a brilliant blue sky, they climbed higher and higher until the few puffy white clouds were far below them. From 35,000 feet they could see for miles, and they knew that their potential enemies could see them as well. After forty-five minutes of alert flying, they were sweaty and physically tired from the tension. No MiGs had been seen, so they went to plan "B" - seek out friendly adversaries.

The flight headed out to sea, where Navy and Marine fighters were often found. Soon two bogies were sighted

at two o'clock high! Their spirits picked up and the adrenalin began flowing - they were ready for anything. The friendly dogfight lasted for what seemed like fifteen minutes, and the Sabre pilots were the victors - with gun camera film to prove it! They headed for "home plate", tired but happy and relaxed. After their success of the past few minutes, thoughts turned to the future, when their opponents might be the MiGs.

The Sabre could sustain a lot of damage and still bring the pilot home. This 8th FBG F-86F, #52-4431 had over half of the horizontal stabilizer blown away by North Korean flak on 1 May 1953. (credit USAF)





The Sabre named "Rosalie" was flown by the squadron CO, Major Victor Thielhorn, as denoted by the three red bands around the nose. (credit - Larry Davis collection)

Suddenly, and without warning, there was a blue flash, a sound of crunching metal, and one of the Sabres began shaking and yawing. The airspeed dropped from about 350 to 200 knots. A mid-air collision with one of the Navy jets!

Thoughts raced wildly through the pilot's mind - "Would I die? Will my aircraft hold together long enough for me to land? Will the weakened airframe collapse on landing and cause a catastrophic ball of fire? But wait, first things first! I'm alive and the aircraft is still flying, although it is badly damaged." Emergency crews were alerted at home base, and fire trucks were standing by. After extending the landing gear, the pilot was satisfied that the crucial hydraulic system was okay, and a successful landing seemed possible.

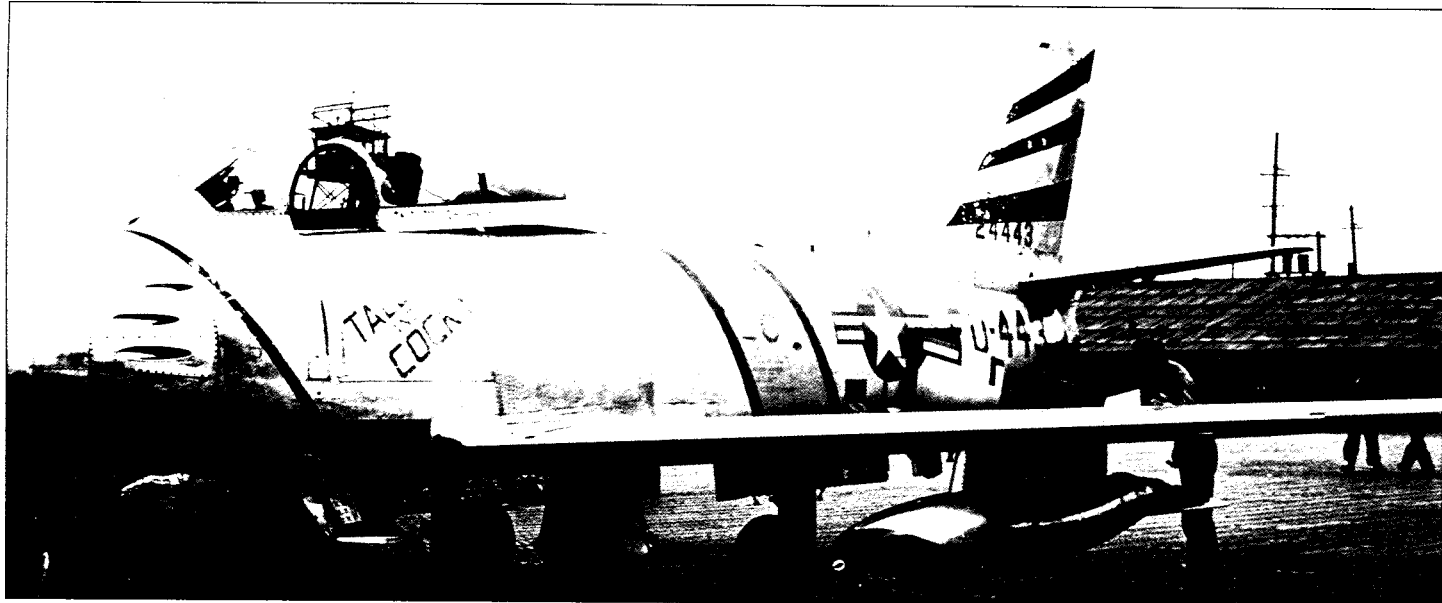
"Tall and Cocky" was the attitude of most of the F-86 pilots in Korea. After all, they were MiG killers at a rate of over 10-1! 1Lt K.W. Grubaugh was a pilot in the 35th FBS at Suwon in late 1953 and an element leader as denoted by the single blue band around the nose. (credit - Jim Carter)



A 36th FBS F-86F Sabre on the ramp at Suwon in late 1953. The aircraft has the 6-3 wing without leading edge slats. All the 8th FBG F-86F-30 Sabres were delivered with slats and later retrofitted with the new '6-3 wing'. (credit - Bill Neese)

Now another thought came to mind. With the wing badly torn up and some of the "skin" flapping in the windstream, what would be a safe landing speed? Normally 120 knots would be plenty, but after some experimenting the pilot decided on a straight-in final approach using 170 knots. The long, cautious, final went as planned, and touch down was right at 170 knots. Nose wheel down immediately! Maximum braking! Pump the brakes so they won't overheat and lock up! After what seemed like an eternity, the F-86 came to a screeching halt at the end of the two-mile long runway. "Whew! On the ground and still alive!" With the full realization of how close he had come to disaster, the pilot said a prayer of thanksgiving. God had spared his life.

How do I know how that pilot felt? I know, because I was that pilot!



Pete Fernandez

The Editor wants to hear from anyone with knowledge about Major Manual J. "Pete" Fernandez and his career in the US Air Force before, during after Korea. Please contact Larry Davis, Editor - SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at sabreclsx@aol.com

Fighter Bomber Sabres in Korea

Anyone with photos, color slides, and stories of F-86 fighter bomber missions from the 8th and 18th Fighter Bomber Groups in Korea, please contact Larry Davis, Editor, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at sabreclsx@aol.com

KOREAN WAR COTTON PICKERS

If you served in the 8th Photo Squadron (JET), or 18th Recon Squadron during the Korean War, you're invited to join a Wednesday chat group between 8 and 9 pm Central Time. Keep up to date on your fellow squadron mates. Contact L/C John Duquette at wrangler01@prodigy.net

Patches Wanted

Want loan of or color xerox copies of F-86 squadron and flight patches, any unit, any time frame. Special needs include Sabre aerobatic team patches such as the "Silver Sabres" and the "Mach Riders". All to be used in SabreJet Classics magazine. Please contact Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at sabreclsx@aol.com

F-86 Sabre Christmas Cards

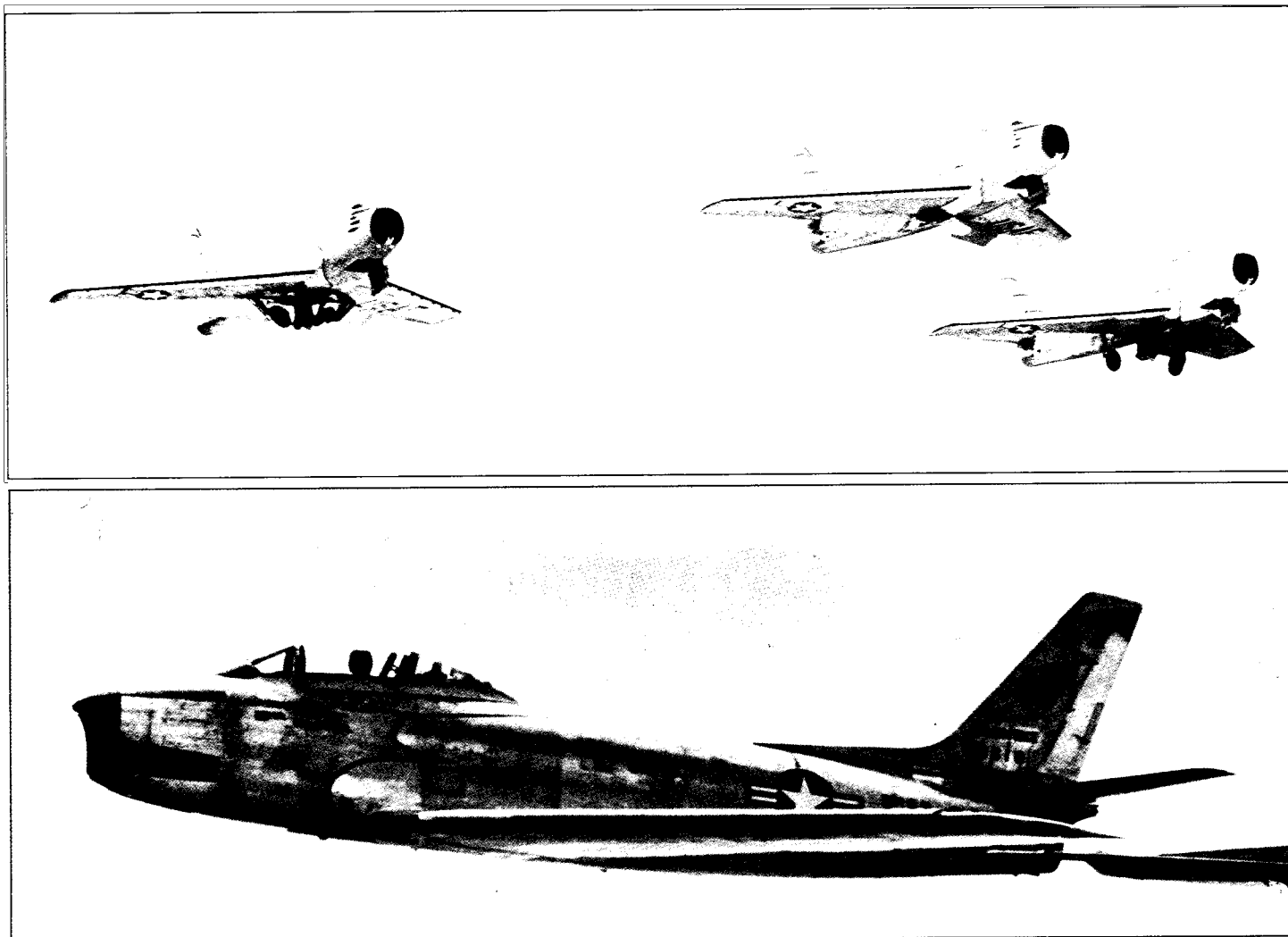
Wanted - Christmas cards from any F-86 Sabre squadron or wing. Anyone with old Christmas cards, please contact Larry Davis, Editor, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at sabreclsx@aol.com

Wanted

Form 5 and after-action reports from any pilot that flew combat during the Korean War. To be used to track aircraft serial numbers in Korea and rebutt any and all historical attacks against the record of Sth Air Force in the Korean War. Contact Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at

Sabre Aerobatic Teams

These '47 model F-86As flew as an aerobatic team out of the Wright Field Air Development Center during the early 1950s. Not much is known about the team, or even if they had a name, official or not. What we do know is they performed at air shows in the Ohio area, and that they had very colorful markings that included a red scalloped nose and tail with a sunburst on the upper wings. Anyone knowing anything about this team is asked to contact your SabreJet Classics Editor. (credit - USAFM via David Menard)



F-86 Sabre Plots 15th Reunion

April 4-7, 2004, at the
Monte Carlo Hotel, Las Vegas. BE THERE!!

4th Fighter Interceptor Wing (Korea)

The 2004 reunion of the 4th FIW will be held in Arlington, VA, September 22nd thru Sept 26th. Contact "Vern" Sprague, 1712 Port Rd, Machiasport, ME 04655, ph. (207)255-3061, e-mail Loissp@maineline.net

51st Fighter Interceptor Wing

The 2004 Reunion of the 51st FIW will be held in Albany, NY at the Quality Inn, September 9, 10, 11. 12. Contact Harry Bauser, 8 Redwood Rd, Saugerties, NY 12477, ph: (845)246-5818

50th Fighter Bomber Wing

Reunion of 50th FBW through the F-100 era at Hahn, including Clovis AFB. June 10th-12th, 2004 at the Marriott Hotel, Ogden. UT. Contact Jack Lowery, 2829 Country Oaks Dr, Layton. UT 84040, ph: (801)544-0315, or e-mail at @aol.com jumpnjack

Pilot Class '58 C&D

A reunion of Pilot Training Class '58 C&D will be held 14-16 September 2004 at the El Dorado Hotel in Reno, NV. Contact Mel Younker, ph.: (775)852-1995, or e-mail at fhbowmel@stcgoval.net

!! REUNION NOTICES - If you have an upcoming reunion, or are simply considering holding a reunion at a future date and wish *SabreJet Classics* to post a notice regarding same, we will do it provided we receive your notice in time to make the appropriate issue(s). We will run your reunion ad until the time arrives whereby the ad would no longer be timely. Please allow about 6 months lead time for the notice to appear And don't forget, you can always tie your reunion in with the F-86 Sabre Pilots Reunion.

The Thunderbirds team 2004 schedule is as follows:

March 27-28 4 Punta Gorda, FL

April 3-4 4 Eglin AFB, FL; 17-18 San Diego, CA; 24-25 @ March AFB, CA

May 1-2 Millville, NJ; 8-9 Lake City, FL; 15-16 Dover AFB, DE; 22 Charleston AFB, SC; 23 @ Langley AFB, VA; 29-30 4 Moffett Field, CA

June S-6 4 Maxwell AFB, AL; 12 @ Hill AFB, UT; 13 4 NAS Fallon, NV; 19-20 @ North Kingstown ANG Base, RI; 26-27 Janesville. WI

July 3-4 Kansas City, MO; 10-11 4 Binghamton, NY; 17-18 4 Cold Lake, Alberta; 21 @ Cheyenne, WY; 24-25 Fairchild AFB, WA; 31 @ Greenfield. IN

August 1 4 Greenfield, IN; 14-15 @ Westover AFB, MA, 21-22 Offutt AFB, NE; 28-29 Toledo, OH

September 4 @ Ellsworth AFB, SD; 11 4 Anderson AFB, Guam; 14 @ Kadena AB, Okinawa; 16 @ Kunsan AB, South Korea; 19 @ Osan AB, South Korea; 25-26 @ Hyakuri AB, Japan; 30 @ Misawa AB, Japan

October 3 @ Hamamatsu AB, Japan; 9-10 Redding, CA; 16-17 4 Houston, TX; 23-24 Ft Paso, TX; 30-31 @ Lafayette, LA

November 6 @ Camden, NJ; 7 Seymour Johnson AFB, NC; 13-14 4 Nellis AFB, NV



This photo shows the graduation of Thunderbird Squadron in the Spring of 1955. Members are invited to send other "graduation" photos to the Editor and we will print them as we receive them. (credit - Joe "JP-1" Pedjoe)



What IS It? You guys are probably saying "What the H— is a boat doing in my *Sabre Jet Classics*. But look closely, this is an Air Force boat!. Says so right on the side. And there is a no. 2 Squadron, SAAF, "Flying Cheetahs" badge on the front of the bridge. They flew Sabres out of Osan AB, Korea. in 1953. The photo was taken off Japan in 1953.

Question - What was an "F-86D" Sabre. Member Orren Ohlinger sent a partial of his Form 5 for early 1956 when he was assigned to McClellan AFB, California. Amongst many different F-86 types that he'd flown was an entry for an "EF-86D" that he had a 1 12 hour flight in. Anyone knowing anything about these subjects, please contact the Editor, Larry Davis, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721, ph. (330)493-4122, or e-mail

IT'S COMING!!

15th Sabre Pilots Reunion, April 4th thru 7th, 2005,
at the Monte Carlo Hotel, Las Vegas.
Start making plans. It'll be a blast!

Dear Member, if the date at the top of the address label is less than today's date, your dues are due. Dues are \$25 year. \$50 for 3 years. \$100 for Life Membership for 75 and older. \$200 for Life Membership for less than 75 years age. Send your check to F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. P.O. Box 97951. Las Vegas. NV 89193. Thank You.

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