

Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 12 Number 3

Fall 2004

A publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association



INSIDE: Harry Thyng Memorial,
Day Of A Dozen Deaths,
15th Reunion Update, More!

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Volume 12, Number 3
Fall 2004
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(front cover) Mike Keenum in a 'rat race' with Terry Klingle's MiG-15 over Southern California in 2004. Mike has a limited number of these gorgeous prints available. Contact Mike at <MiGMad86@aol.com> for full details. (credit-Mike Keenum)

SabreJet Classics

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the President's notebook

IMPORTANT NEWS! Jack Seaman is now the manager of our Flight Line Store. George Menster, an outstanding manager for the past several years, has moved to Grand Junction, Colorado. Good Luck in your move George, Jack advises me that we have a limited supply of red or white jackets, especially in popular sizes. If you want a red or white jacket in Small/Xsmall, or 2XL/3XL, we can fill your order. We have all the sizes in the blue jacket.

SMITHSONIAN TABLET NEWS! As of this issue, 670 members of our association have paid the required \$100 contribution to have their name engraved on the F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION monument, actually several tablets. These tablets are located on the walkway into the new Udvar-Hazy addition to the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum located near Dulles Airport in Washington, DC.

The monument consists of four tablets accomodating 250 names on each tablet. We need another 100 names to complete the third tablet reserved for our association. If you haven't made a commitment to have your name included, please reconsider. For those of you that

have contributed, I hope you take advantage of subscribing to the Air & Space Smithsonian magazine. I know you will enjoy reading it.

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER! The 2005 Membership Roster will be finalized shortly after 1 January, 2005, and sent to the printer at that time. If you have any changes to be made before the 2005 roster is printed (address corrections, new e-mail addresses, etc.), now is the time to send them in. Contact Polly Winesett (pawinesett@aol.com), Larry Davis (sabreclsx@aol.com or 330-493-4122), or myself (Jjohn52132@aol.com), and we'll make sure the changes get made.

About 100 members have taken advantage of the "Over 75" rate for a \$100 Life Membership. Congratulations! Currently, we have 1805 members, but I'm going to have to drop about 40 of those for non-payment of dues. Unfortunately, several of these guys have passed away and we haven't been notified. Your renewal date is shown at the top of your address label. If you have a question regarding your standing, feel free to contact either myself or Larry Davis, our Editor.

REUNION! If you haven't sent in your registration form for the 15th Reunion, now is the time. Use the form included with this issue. The

difference between the cost of a registration form being received before 15 February, 2005, and one received after that date is \$35. If you register early and have to cancel, we have a very liberal refund policy. If you do have to cancel, please do it as early as possible. However, if you do have a last minute cancellation, we will give you a full refund.

We need volunteers to work DURING the reunion. I would like sufficient volunteers to spread the work load through scheduling. Please consider volunteering.

Lastly, I attended the Reno Air Races again this year. Reno just gets bigger and bigger with every year. The Mustangs still compete in the Unlimited Race. Although they don't win against the Sea Furies and Bearcats, they always take First Place in looks and sound. That big Merlin sure is sweet!

May Gob Bless you
and the United States of America.
Check 6.

JERRY R. JOHNSON
President

FOLDER WINGS

John F. 'Jack' Bolt, USMC, September 8th, 2004
Richard C. Friend, March 26th, 2003
Stephen Maliner, January 8th, 2004
Lucien Sonnier
Robert F. Shover, October 1st, 2004
Stephan J. Walker, February 8th 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

Well the story about "Pete" Fernandez certainly was a hit judging by the amount of mail that I've received. Many thanks to all of you that took the time to either add something in the way of personal anecdotes about "Pete", or simply wanted to say what a good story it was about a great fighter pilot.

Comments: I love to receive any and all comments regarding *SabreJet Classics* and the stories that we print. If you can add something to ANY STORY, please do. Just write or e-mail us and we'll go from there. Derogatory comments will of course be ignored.

Seriously, if you have corrections, please send them along. We try to put out the best possible newsletter, balancing as much history with association news as we can. But we can and do, make mistakes, both spelling and historical. One gentleman recently wrote a nice note wherein he mentioned the previous issue had many typos, misspellings, and grammar problems.

I answered that the typos and misspelled words are completely my fault. But grammar is not. I write and/or rewrite the way that I speak. And I am very careful about changing an author's story just to correct the grammar. I assume that the way an author writes a story, whether it is grammatically correct or not, is the way he wants to see it in print. Quite often, a story loses something when the grammar is corrected.

That said, please keep the stories and photos coming. Right now I feel fortunate in having several really good stories, both short and long, in the files. But the photos still are not coming in. If you have photos of the men and aircraft that you are writing about, please include them with the story. The same goes for unit patches. If you write a story about your time with the 25th FIS at Suwon, and you have a patch from your time in that unit, go down to a xerox shop and have a color xerox made of the patch. We'll include it with your story.

Well gotta go. Hope you enjoy the new issue and I look forward to seeing you all in Vegas next April 4th! Til then, have a Happy Holiday season!

Larry Davis
Editor

folded wings

John F. "Jack" Bolt, USMC

It is with great sadness that Sabrejet Classics reports the passing of one of our nations greatest fighter pilots. Lieutenant Colonel John Bolt, USMC passed away on September 8th 2004.

Lt.Col. Bolt was one of only seven pilots to achieve the status of "Ace" in two wars. During World War 2, (then) Major Bolt flew with VMF-214, the famous "Black Sheep Squadron", when that unit was aboard the USS Block Island. Major Bolt scored six victories with VMF-214.

During the Korean War, Major Bolt was assigned to the 39th Fighter Squadron, 51st Fighter Group, at Suwon. Major Bolt shot down six communist MiG-15 jets in the 42 missions that he flew with the 39th Squadron.

He is survived by his wife Dottie.

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Lt.Col. John Bolt, USMC, Korea 1953.
(credit-USAF)



letters to the editor

Letters, we get letters.

The article about "Pete Fernandez in vol. 12-2 generated more letters than any other article that we've ever ran. All were complimentary for which I thank you guys. Many added small amounts of information that only add to the story about "Pete".

from Charlie Carr

Your article on Pete was superb, many thanks. However, page 8 has my part in his story but incorrectly has the name as "Charlie Cox" It's "Charlie Carr!" Even with that faux pas, the article brings back some really great memories. Cheers

My apologies to Charlie CARR. Charlie helped a great deal with the story of Pete's early service days in the 36th FG.

from Howard Meyers

I enjoyed reading "The Unknown Ace". I can add some information about Pete's activities at Miami's "Corrosion Corner". Our paths crossed after Pete retired, mine being as an employee of Riddle/Airlift Airlines, and Pete's as a line check captain. We were scheduled for DC-7 recurrent training as dictated by FAA regs. Several new hires were in attendance including a newly upgraded captain who was impressed with his new status.

The new captain let it be known that he served in the Air Force including a tour in Korea. I was aware of Pete's record and of course, was in awe of him since I also

from George Howell

Regarding the F-86D in the China AF. I was selected as advisor on the F-86D/L since I had 6 years experience in the D/L at Perrin AFB. The main difference between the USAF and the Chinese model was TACAN and 2 AIM-9s on the Chinese version.

I was transferred from Tainan to Hsinchu AB or Taiwan. In early 1960, I escorted three CAF pilots, Capts. Liu, Chien, and Wang, to Okinawa for F-86D indoctrination and checkout. The F-86s arrived at Hsinchu in the Spring of 1960. The F-86D/L -1 was rewritten for differences and Capt. Ken Liu translated it into Chinese.

Transition progressed smoothly and only one minor accident occurred during the checkout in the Fall of 1960. The CAF pilots were great pilots who were proud to be "all-weather", and they flew in some pretty lousy weather when alternates were not readily available. To transition into a different airplane and mission with only one minor accident was quite remarkable.

from John Henderson

John had contact with some troops from the 22nd Crash Rescue Boat Squadron, an Air Force unit. His contact was Les Adams, who was in charge of the 22nd CRBS in Korea, who writes:



"Pete" Fernandez, Korea 1953. (credit-USAF)

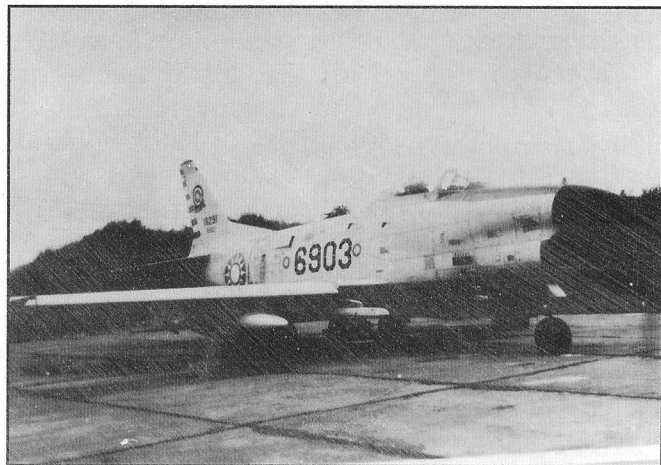
had flown the F-86 but never in combat. As the class proceeded, the instructor was interrupted several times by the self-impressed, supposed Korean hero, unaware who the nondescript looking character on the other side of the room was.

It became apparent that something needed to be said to stop all the "BS". Finally, Pete stood and said - "You know, I served in Korea and its funny, I never heard of you or your escapades. I'm Major Pete Fernandez, Retired. Does that ring a bell?" The room became very silent and there were no further interruptions.

In closing this look into the past, I had further occasion to meet with Pete as he founded a boating club in the Florida Keys which I became a member of. But I had to resign as my sloop drew too much water to utilize the facilities.

The photo of the 711 boat was taken at Chinhae during the war. The 22 CRBS kept a boat on-station at Chinhae throughout the Korean War. The South African pilots (no. 2 Sq, SAAF, was assigned to the 18th FBG at Chinhae) would often come down to the boat docks and have coffee with the American crash boat crews. It was well known that we always had a large pot of fresh coffee on board. The South Africans came to accept the American Air Force "sailors" as Honorary Cheetahs, and painted their logo on the 711 bridge.

Chinese Air Force F-86D. (credit-Larry Davis collection)



During the war, there were several different boats based at Chinhae. Boats were rotated at different bases in Korea because all maintenance was done in Japan. The 22nd CRBS was responsible for maintaining boats on station at Pohang for the 1st MAW; at Pusan for the 17th BW; at Chinhae: at Kunsan for the 3rd BW, and at Osan when the 18th FBG moved there in 1953.

The boats providing rescue support for Osan had to be docked at Inchon or Kunsan as Osan had no harbor and the tidal flow there is 35 feet per day! In addition, boats were kept on station at Pyongyang-do and Chodo Islands. The boats at the two island locations were for recovery of crews in trouble over North Korea that could make it out to sea for bailout or ditching.

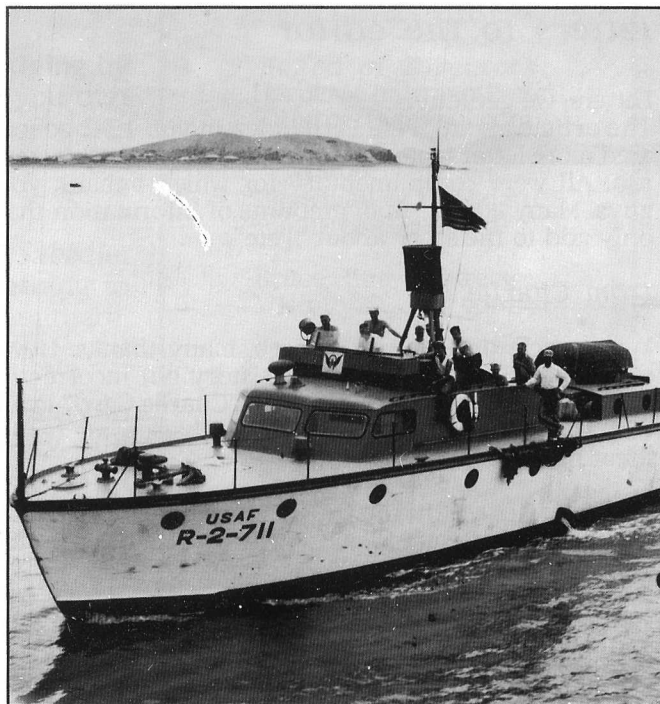
The men of the 22nd CRBS Assn. are restoring one of their boats. They have tried to get the Air Force Museum to recognize their deeds and perhaps place the boat on display. But their effort have proven unsuccessful to this date. For their unsung deeds during the war, they should at least rate some type of memorial at the Air Force Museum.

Those interested in contacting the men that served valiantly and without recognition in Air Force crash boats, they do have an association and a newsletter. They can be reached at the following address:

AAF/USAF Crash Rescue Boat Assn.
204 Gregory Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33405-5032

from Stephen Szalay

This is in regards as to your question about the Arizona Air Guard flying F-86D/L aircraft. Enclosed is the picture I talked to you about. The 197th Fighter Interceptor Squadron "Copperheads", Arizona Air National Guard, converted from the F-86A Sabre to the '86L in May of 1958, flying the Ls to April of 1960. From the '86L, we went into F-104A Lockheed Starfighter beginning in April 1960. In 1961, the 197th was activated and sent to Europe during the Berlin Crisis, returning the following year and converting to KC-97 tankers. We were based in Phoenix.



22nd CRBS boat #711 at Chinhae, 1952. (credit-USAF)



F-86Ls, 197th FIS, Arizona ANG 1959. (credit-Brian Baker and Stephen Szalay)



It Was a Day to Remember

By James R. Thyng

On July 17, 2004, the towns of Pittsfield and Barnstead, New Hampshire, dedicated a granite memorial to a local hero. The winged obelisk was inscribed with the words, "Brigadier General Harrison Reed Thyng, Patriot, Leader of Men."

Spear-headed by the Pittsfield Historical Society, it took 3+ years to raise the funds necessary to put the monument in place. The obelisk is flanked by four granite stones, one each for the four campaigns in which Harry Thyng fought. During World War 2, first he flew out of England, then North Africa, then to the Pacific; finally to Korea in 1951, where he commanded the famed 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing. A fighter ace in both wars, he scored five times in each war, Harry Thyng was one of only seven with such distinction.

Thanks goes to *SabreJet Classics* for the Winter 2002 issue highlighting the General's career. The widespread coverage made it possible for the Historical Society to reach out nationwide for the monetary assistance needed to make things happen. People in 30 states contributed to the effort which culminated on July 17th in an impressive ceremony attended by soldiers and civilians alike.

Following an aerial demonstration by pre-WWII PT-17's, in which the General took his flying training, a number of speakers recounted Harrison Thyng's moral courage and fierceness in the skies. Among them were United States Senator Judd Gregg, NH; keynote speaker was General Ronald Fogleman, former USAF Chief of Staff; Lt.Gen. Daniel James, Director of the US Air National Guard; and Maj. Gen John Blair, New Hampshire National Guard. Perhaps Major Gordon Beem, USAF Retired, told the most dramatic story - of Harrison Thyng's sacrifices in Korea, and how he took action no matter the personal cost, to ensure air superiority in Korea. General Thyng's three daughters, Judy, Joanna and Jeanie, unveiled the monument as a flight of four F-16s paid a tribute overhead.

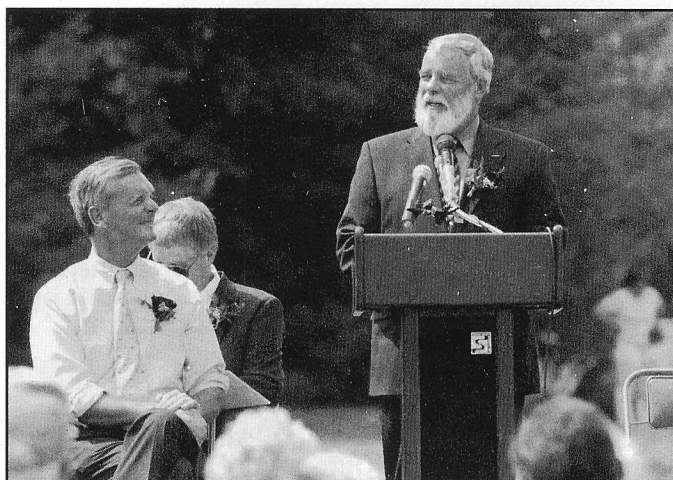
The F-16s were from the 309th Fighter Squadron which Harrison Thyng commanded as a First Lieutenant in 1942. The 309th flew British Spitfires then. He was the squadron's first commander. Sixty two years later, the fighter pilots of the 309th saluted their famous leader in a fly-by which ended the dedication ceremony.

For information about the memorial, with pictures, please see "<http://www.pittsfield-nh.com/>" Hit Enter and Click On Park/Trails.

As the son of Harrison Thyng, I am extremely grateful to all those who helped make the memorial come true. He was a man who will now be forever remembered in granite. He, like the memorial, was a man of granite.



Col. Harrison R. Thyng, Korea 1952. (credit-USAF)



James Thyng, son of Harrison Thyng, is flanked by (L) Senator Judd Gregg, R-NH; and General Ron Fogleman, former USAF Chief of Staff, during the dedication of the monument to Harrison Thyng. (credit-James Thyng)

The monument to Harrison R. Thyng, stands in a park in Pittsfield, New Hampshire. (credit-James Thyng)



NO SWEAT!

by Jerry Fowler

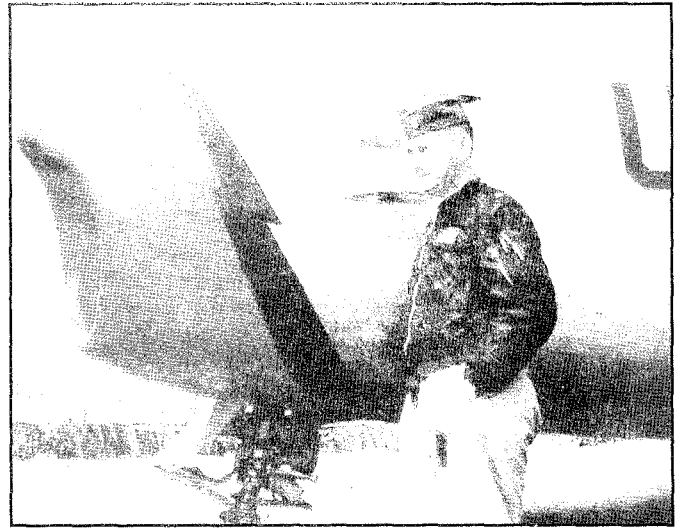
It seemed like a hundred times that I'd glanced at my fuel gauge hoping to see more instead of less fuel. But this time the needle was resting on ZERO. I knew that it could only be a few more minutes, or perhaps seconds, before my engine would flame out. For the umpteenth time I mentally went through the ejection procedure. "Head back against the headrest; feet in the stirrups; raise the handles to jettison the canopy, and squeeze the trigger. Unfasten the seat belt and kick the seat away. Pull the 'D' ring and pray the chute opens!" I decided that when the engine started winding down, I'd use what airspeed I had to 'zoom' from the 1000 feet we were flying at, to closer to the recommended eject altitude of 5000 feet.

It was the Summer of 1955, and my squadron, the 311th Fighter Bomber Squadron, had recently deployed from our base at Osan, Korea, to Taiwan. As I remember it, the Communist Chinese were threatening the Nationalist Chinese on Taiwan. In fact, the Communists were routinely shelling the offshore islands of Matsu and Quemoy. President Eisenhower wanted a U.S. presence in the area and fighter squadrons from throughout the Far East were being rotated on a two-week schedule into an old Japanese-built air base near the village of Chiaai on the western side of the island and only a few miles from the Taiwan Strait.

It was a sleepy afternoon in the middle weekend of our deployment. The base was actually shut down for the day. How much so, I wouldn't learn until later. The day before, Saturday, our Operations Officer, Capt. Lou Weber, asked me if I'd like to fly his wing on a cross-country to Clark Field just north of Manila. He had some paperwork to deliver and we'd spend the night at Clark. The prospect of sleeping in a real bed at a BOQ, and spending Saturday evening in a real officer's club stag bar was very inviting. Also, a young 2nd balloon fighter pilot couldn't resist an offer like that from his boss.

All had gone quite well. The trip down to the Philippines on Saturday was uneventful, and the flight back to Taiwan on Sunday afternoon started out with beautiful clear skies. However, soon after crossing the southern tip of Taiwan, we had a solid undercast of clouds. Not to worry. The clouds appeared to be at 5000 feet or so. We proceeded on a direct course for Chiaai. When our time and distance suggested that we were near the base, neither of us could receive the radio beacon. Also, our calls to the tower were not being answered. Very soon, it became evident that when the Nationalist Chinese shut down a base, they went home for the day! Because the Americans were standing down for the day, there were no U.S. personnel on duty either.

We quickly realized that we were (1) somewhere over the west coast of Taiwan (we could see mountains sticking through the clouds east of us); (2) we were flying over an undercast of unknown depth; (3) we didn't have enough fuel to go anywhere else; and (4) there was no one to talk to but each other. That's when I really got interested in the fuel gauge. Needless to say, Lou was taking considerable

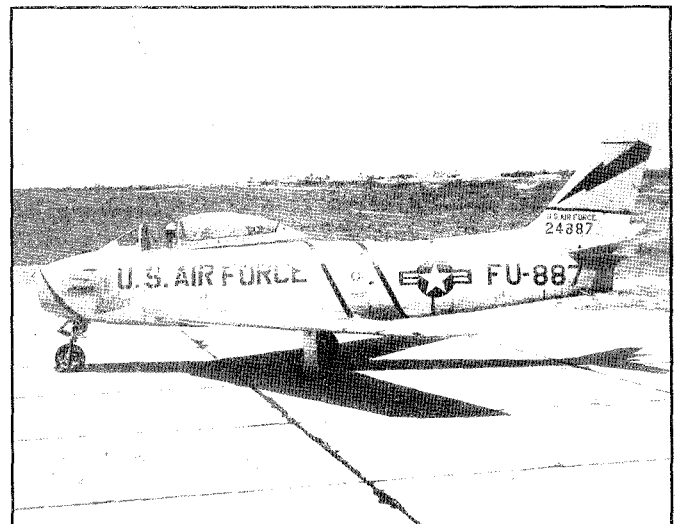


2Lt Jerry Fowler, 311th FBS, Korea 1955. (credit-Jerry Fowler)

interest in both our fuel gauges. There was no point in holding at altitude over a place we couldn't accurately identify. Besides, sooner or later we were going to descend, either under power, glide, or by parachute. This was the first of many times that I'd review the ejection procedure.

We decided (actually Lou decided and I agreed) to penetrate the cloud deck toward the water and return to the coast under the clouds, hoping to find something we'd recognize near the base. There was a gunnery range on the shore we'd been using all week and felt we could find. From there we'd go direct to the field. All the time, we're both making blind calls on the emergency frequency hoping someone with some radar would hear us. We got under the clouds and were pretty much in the clear at around 1000 feet. We got to the coast pretty quickly but weren't having much luck finding anything we could recognize. Besides hanging onto Lou's wing, I too was trying to see something I might know, and of course I couldn't keep from glancing at that pesky fuel gauge. It wasn't getting any better!!!

"Road Runner", a 311th FBS F-86F flown by Lt. Gary Road, taxis to the active runway at Chiaai AB, Taiwan. The 311th FBS deployed to Chiaai in the summer of 1955 in response to Red Chinese aggression against the Taiwan government. (credit-Pat Tomelden)



I was so busy that I missed a radio frequency change that Lou had signaled. We were back in the clouds and I had just noticed the fuel gauge was on empty. As I was tightening my harness and thinking "Bail Out!", Lou gave me the hand signal to lower my flaps. I didn't like that. I had no idea what he was thinking, but getting the airplane 'dirty' was going to cost me altitude that I wanted for bailing out.

Trusting Lou's judgment (after all I was just a wingman), I lowered the flaps. Now he gave me 'Gear down!' This really blew my mind. Then I realized that I hadn't heard anything on the radio for several minutes. Frantically, I started pushing frequency buttons. On the third button I heard a voice calmly say, "You're on the centerline, on the glide slope. You're one quarter mile from touchdown. You should have the runway in sight and you're cleared to land." And there it was, right in front of us - the most beautiful stretch of concrete I'd ever seen!

Apparently, the sergeant who ran the mobile GCA unit we'd brought with us to Taiwan, had heard us flying around and sensed that we might need some help getting down. He'd gone over and fired up the unit and caught Lou on one of our frequency changes that I had missed. He found us just in time, and like an angel, had delivered us to that gorgeous runway.

When my airplane was refueled in the next morning, the mechanic said it took only 8 gallons less than what the manual said was maximum fuel capacity! I figured that to be about one minute of flight. NO SWEAT!

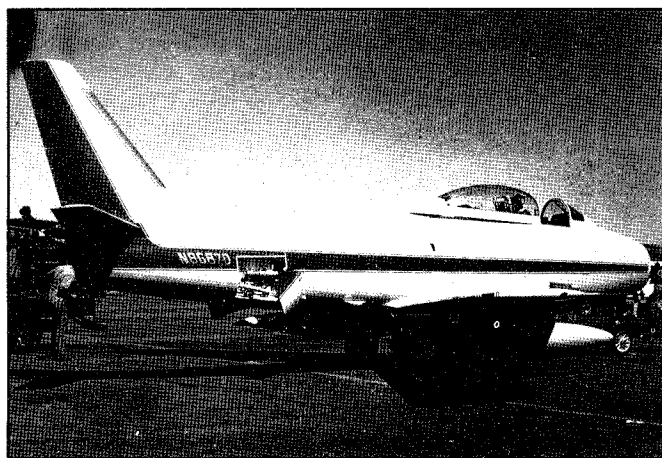
A ROKAF pilot climbs into "Kathy's Kalamitzer", a 311th FBS Sabre prior to a training flight from Kimpo. The 311th FBS turned their F-86F Sabres over to the Republic of Korea Air Force during late 1957. (credit-USAF)



"Miss Jane" was the F-86F flown by Lt. Don Johnson when his squadron was based at Kimpo AB, Korea in 1957. Note that the Sabre is equipped with the latest wing configuration - extended wingtips, 6-3 leading edge and slats. (credit-Don Johnson)



One of the most beautiful Sabres was the one that Bob Hoover flew at many air shows during the early 1980s. The overall yellow Sabre had red trim. It was originally a Canadair Sabre Mk 5. What happened to the Sabre after Hoover finished the show circuit is unknown. (credit-Mick Roth)





Four 335th FIS F-86Es on the alert ramp at Kimpo in 1952. 5th AF kept at least four F-86s on 5 minute alert 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the war. (credit-Karl Dittmers)

The Day Of A Dozen Deaths by Norman Green

12 April 1953. The sky was cold and clear. Climbing toward MiG Alley, we were the only two fighters north of the 38th Parallel. However, we'd soon be joined by hundreds of other jets in what was the biggest air battle of the Korean War. And unbeknownst to me, one in which I would face death a dozen times.

Just minutes before, four of us were sitting quietly strapped in our Sabres on the alert strip at Kimpo, waiting for the alarm scrambling us north. Ground crewmen in their cold weather gear were shadows moving among the airplanes, checking their readiness. The smell of JP-4 wafted through the cold air. The chugging of the APUs softened the tension-filled quiet. We waited. It was 4:45am.

Suddenly, the shriek of the siren shattered the calm. Pilots flipped switches and engines whined into life. Crewmen quickly unplugged power cables, and we slid our throttles forward as we taxied toward the runway. Four throttles moved in unison to full power as we picked up speed. Then we were airborne. We tightened our flight, climbing through a cloud layer that extended nearly the full length of the Korean peninsula.

Topping the cloud layer at 20,000 feet, we broke into clear sky. Well into enemy territory and subject to attack from the MiGs, we dropped our tanks. Well, three of us did. No. 4 had a tank hang up and had to abort taking no. 3 with him. Lead and I had North Korea all to ourselves. Immediately we saw MiGs coming south to meet us. Hundreds of them, I thought.

Soon, the MiGs were everywhere. We were only minutes ahead of the Sabres from Suwon. In fact, all the available fighters from both bases went into action as fast as possible. Ground-based radar reported "many flights of MiGs in the air" and more coming from the Communist bases. The Sabre pilots couldn't wait to tangle with them.

Maintaining radio silence, we heard other flights in hot action with the MiGs. I recognized the voice of a class-

mate as he called to his flight leader that he was going down into the cloud deck with a MiG firing on him. My leader was maneuvering to get on a MiG's tail. I doubled my effort to clear us, looking up, down and behind with an intensity known only to the quarry.

We were at 40,000 when Lead swung north in a nice easy climb. When we rolled out, two MiGs were directly in front of us. Perfect! One for each of us. Good show Lead! I twisted slightly, put my gunsight on the MiG's tail, and tensed my trigger finger....

BAM!!! A sharp jolt brought me out of the gunsight. Close in on both sides of me were white puff balls. MiG cannon fire! I rolled right, then left, looking hard to the rear. Far back was a small black dot. Sparklers from his cannons showed me that he was serious about getting me off his buddy's tail. With a now-damaged aircraft, I wasn't in position to argue.

I shouted into the radio, "Yellow Lead, break left! HARD!" As we snapped to the west, I heard and felt my engine lose power. Engine instruments unwound at a startling speed. I pointed the airplane down to maintain air speed, descending in a wide 360° turn to keep that 20,000 foot cloud layer under me in case I needed a place to hide.

Norman Green (R) joins an unknown pilot at the bar known as "Swig Alley", Kimpo AB 1953. (credit-Norman Green)





Capt. Joe McConnell, highest scoring ace in Korea, prepares to climb into his first "Beautifous Butch". McConnell and "Beautifous Butch" were shot down on 12 April 1953, during the same battle as Norman Green. (credit-USAF)

Lead and the MiGs followed, but at a higher altitude, seemingly waiting and watching. My engine quit. Raw fuel spewed out of the tailpipe, so I shut off the throttle. I lost altitude fast and leveled out above the clouds. Since there were no MiGs attacking us, I made a turn to the west, heading for the Yellow Sea about 100 miles away.

At 25,000, my engine and air speed were slow enough to attempt a restart. The procedure was simple enough - if you got it right. If not - BOOM! Turn on the ignition switch, then the fuel switch, and bring the throttle forward. I didn't blow up. I guess that was right.

The fuel system resumed spewing fuel into the engine compartment and out the tail. Fuel flowing next to a hot jet engine should have blown the airplane apart. 60% power was the best I could get. Not enough to sustain level flight, but enough to extend the glide and hopefully, get to the Yellow Sea. I held steadily on course toward the water. Later, Lead said I laid a white trail that could be seen from anywhere in North Korea. The MiGs followed at high altitude, but chose not to come in for the kill.

I turned on the IFF radar distress signal as I headed west. Every radar screen in Korea flashed a bright blip showing my position, starting an area-wide rescue and recovery process. I had great confidence that the Air Force would do all they could to get me back home. No one foresaw that this would be one of the rescue service's busiest days.

Rescue efforts were in full operation as I limped seaward. Joe McConnell, later the top ace in Korea, was hit soon after he entered the combat area but made it to the water. I listened as the chopper relayed information about his pickup. Joe hardly got his feet wet and was back at Suwon in time for lunch and the afternoon mission. Would I be so lucky?

My engine was still running at reduced power. But the radio was still working and my IFF was still squawking "MayDay!" Fuel continued streaming from the tailpipe. The shoreline was now visible in the far distance. Lead and the MiGs were still with me. Questions raced through my mind.



(L-R) Norman Green, Lt. McMullen, and Lt. Hall, wait in the 335th alert shack for the siren to scream sending them north to MiG Alley once again. Kimpo 1953. (credit-Norman Green)

Would I run out of fuel and have to bail out over land where I'd face certain capture and possible death from civilian pitch forks? Would the fuel last long enough to make the sea? And could I survive long enough for a water rescue? Maybe one of the MiGs would try for a last minute kill! I kept heading west and watched my altimeter slowly unwind.

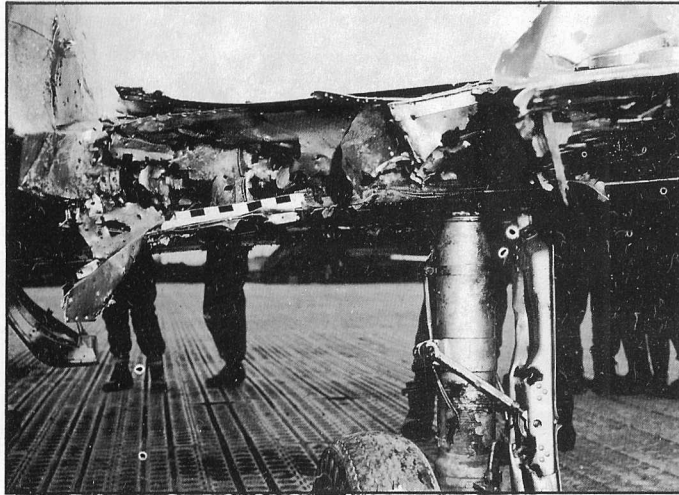
We passed over the coastline at about 15,000 and I made a sharp turn south, still descending and seriously low on fuel. The MiGs broke off and went home. In a few minutes, Lead called to say that he had to leave since he had just enough fuel to reach an island we occupied north of the 38th Parallel. He made a dead-stick landing on the beach, a difficult job even with the engine running.

Alone now, I edged away from the coast, fearful that North Korean fishing boats would see my 'chute if I bailed out. Abruptly, my engine quit, and my radio and IFF went dead. I turned 90° right, directly away from the coast. (I found out later that this maneuver nearly cost me my life.) I prepared to eject. Because of the engine inlet in the nose, the Sabre didn't ditch well. I'd heard that only two pilots had survived a water landing in the F-86.

Quickly, I pulled away the scarf protecting my neck from the rubber collar on the survival suit ("poopy suit") we wore, adjusting the collar snugly to make a waterproof seal. Approaching 5,000 feet, the recommended bailout altitude, I tightened the seat belt and shoulder harness. I was ready to eject. I didn't realize it but my problems were just beginning.

I was too tall to properly fit the ejection seat. If I sat up straight, my head hit the canopy and bent my head and neck forward. Ejecting in this position would surely break my neck. If I scrunched down to clear my head, my butt slid forward and bent my lower back. Ejecting in this position would probably break the lower spine. I assumed a compromise position bending a little at each end.

Precisely at 5,000 feet, I pulled the handle to blow the canopy. Nothing happened! I applied some muscle to it - nothing. Well, no sweat I thought, I can eject through the canopy. I pulled the ejection handle. Nothing! Pulling



Although the kill ratio in Korea was at least 10-1 in favor of the Sabre pilots, just one hit from the MiG heavy cannons could be deadly. This 4th FIG F-86E took a single 37mm hit, blowing off the right flap and heavily damaging the wing. But it brought the pilot home to Kimpo. (credit-NAA)

with both hands, I felt the cable stretch but nothing happened. Although I was sure the safety pins were removed, I could think of no reason for the failure. But at least I didn't have to test which vertebrae would break first.

There were other ways out. I pulled the lever under the right canopy rail to disengage the canopy from the frame. I pushed upward on the Plexiglas but there was no give. I reached forward with my right hand and slid my fingers into the handle to open the canopy. The canopy slid back about a foot, then stopped. If it had snapped away from the wind, it would've ripped off my fingers, if not my whole hand. I was wasting precious time and altitude.

I wanted out! With a 12 inch opening between the windshield frame and the canopy, I attempted to crawl out. I'd heard of only one pilot successfully crawling out of an F-86. Most who tried were killed hitting the tail. I decided to turn the airplane upside down and fall out!

Now well below 5,000 feet and with the airplane upside down, I stood up (or down depending on your viewpoint), stuck my head and arms out. Instantly, they were pinned to the canopy by the wind. My helmet flew off. (There went protection for my head if I should hit the airframe when I did get out.) I couldn't get back in even if I wanted to, and couldn't wiggle out because my 'chute was caught inside the canopy. "Out! Out!" screamed somewhere inside my head. I pushed with all my strength.

Suddenly there was total silence. The canopy had broken loose. I was free! And falling. Without hesitation I pulled the D ring. There was a short ruffling as the 'chute deployed, and a sharp Snap! when it opened. I looked down and saw a splash where my plane had gone in. I couldn't tell how high I was but just to be safe, I inflated my life vest.

Grabbing the risers, I turned in the harness to see the coastline, with villages and fishing junks not far away, maybe 4, 5 miles. Close enough for my parachute with orange and white panels, to mark my location. I should have tried to get further from shore.



Sign at Kimpo outside the 335th Operations hut in 1953. There was probably a similar sign at Antung. (credit-Larry Hendle)

Wham! I hit the water as if it were concrete. Stunned, I didn't realize for some moments that my 'chute was pulling me shoreward like a great sail. If anyone had seen me come down, the chute (now in full bloom) would surely give me away. The cold water cleared my head fast and I released the risers. The chute collapsed and just as quickly, I became entangled in the shroud lines. To panic now would have been fatal. Slowly, methodically, I unwrapped the lines.

Now there was work to do. I no sooner thought of my life raft than it was floating in front of me, with the CO2 bottle knob in easy reach. I pulled it. With a hiss, the raft inflated. As it took shape, I slipped it under me. The raft floated me into a sitting position with my knees bent. My "waterproof" survival suit leaked and filled with cold sea water. I started to shiver. Hypothermia was to become a major threat.

I took stock of the gear stashed in the pockets of the raft. Shark repellent, sea anchor, fishing kit, two "oars" the size of paint stirrers, two flare canisters, and best of all, a radio and battery pack. Just connect them and call for a chopper.

But this was not to be. The battery and radio were flooded with sea water. With great regret, I dropped them overboard. Any direct communication with my rescuers was now impossible and I was getting cold.

All 5th AF pilots were required to go through an emergency rescue course, which included an actual helicopter pickup using the rescue hoist attached to the H-19. (credit-USAF)





Air Force rescue squadrons used a trio of aircraft for the mission including the Sikorsky H-5 Dragonfly, the Grumman SA-16 Albatros flying boat, and the Bell H-19 Chickasaw helicopter. (credit-USAF)

Thick clouds moved in over the coast. Visibility was limited. The water, which a little while ago was calm, now became choppy. Small waves washed over me every few seconds. If conditions worsened, my raft might capsize. I made sure it was still connected.

Then that I saw blood in the water - my blood. I touched the right side of my head and felt scrapes and cuts from above the ear down to my jaw. I'd hit some part of the airplane as I went out. Any closer and I would've been knocked unconscious or worse.

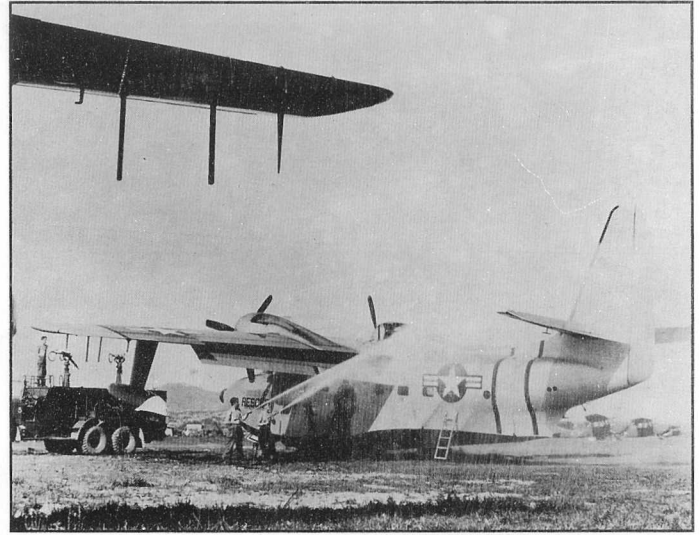
My spirits suddenly brightened when I spotted a helicopter near shore. They were looking for me. "I'm over here!", I shouted inside. They set up a search pattern exactly where my engine and the IFF signal had stopped. God, if I'd bailed out then, they'd see me. Had I made a mistake seeking the safety of the open sea?

After about 10 minutes, the chopper completed its search pattern and moved south. Hope subsided, then vanished. It was now late morning. I was cold and exhausted. I knew I wouldn't live through the night so I put out the shark repellent and waited to die.

I sat motionless for a long time. I don't know how long. Never before nor since have I been so cold. Infrequently, I'd open my eyes and glance toward shore. After a number of such fruitless glances, I thought I saw an airplane. Yes, way inshore where the chopper had been. It was an SA-16 Grumman flying boat.

I watched as it set up a search pattern similar to that of the chopper. And like the chopper, it soon gave up and flew south. The rescue service had plotted my last known position where the IFF quit. Not guessing I'd turn westward, they were looking in the wrong place.

The wind had blown me around facing north when I heard engines to the south - the SA-16 again, and coming toward me! Then it stopped and set up another search pattern a couple of miles away. I knew the crew would never see me in the black sea. The flares! They could see the flares at that distance.



A 3rd ARS SA-16 gets a wash down from the crash crew at Chinhae following a mission in 1951. Use of the crash truck was necessary to rid the airplane of the corrosive salt water residue. (credit-USAF)

I grabbed a flare canister. A little longer than a juice can, it contained two flares, one smoke, the other flame. I held it in front of me and pulled the igniter. A slight explosion followed. Black smoke shot into the wind, and fiery volcanic-like magma boiled out of the can onto the rubber covered canvas life raft. I thrust the canister underwater and quickly washed the fiery mass off the canvas. Another mishap like that and there wouldn't be anything for the SA-16 to pick up.

I knew the searchers hadn't seen the short-lived smoke of the flare, so I turned it over, held it well overboard and pulled the second igniter. Swoosh! An intense 6 inch flame shot out. Like the Statue of Liberty, I held my flame high. But the SA-16 continued its pattern. I saved the last canister for a better opportunity.

In a little while, the SA-16 concluded its pattern and flew a little farther out. Now only about a mile and a half away, I waited like a hunter fixed on its prey. I'd wait until the pilot made a turn towards me, watching carefully as his turn brought me into his line of sight. NOW! I lit the smoke flare. This time the smoke was orange. I was directly in his view.... But the nose of the airplane kept turning past me to start another leg. I had only the flame flare left. I had to try it. The pilot would complete his pattern any time now. I waited for one more turn.

There it was. Just as the nose swept through my direction, I set off the flame flare and held it high. The pilot kept turning. By the time the plane was on its next leg, the flame was spent. The pilot held course for a moment, then turned toward me and flew directly to me. They'd seen me!

The pilot dropped close to the water. Two big propellers roared past only feet away. The pilot waved and I clasped my hands together like a prize fighter. I could dare to hope that I would live. But one more harrowing experience was yet to come.

The pilot lifted the aircraft enough to turn without dragging his wing in the water and started his landing. What a beautiful sight! I'd never seen a water landing before



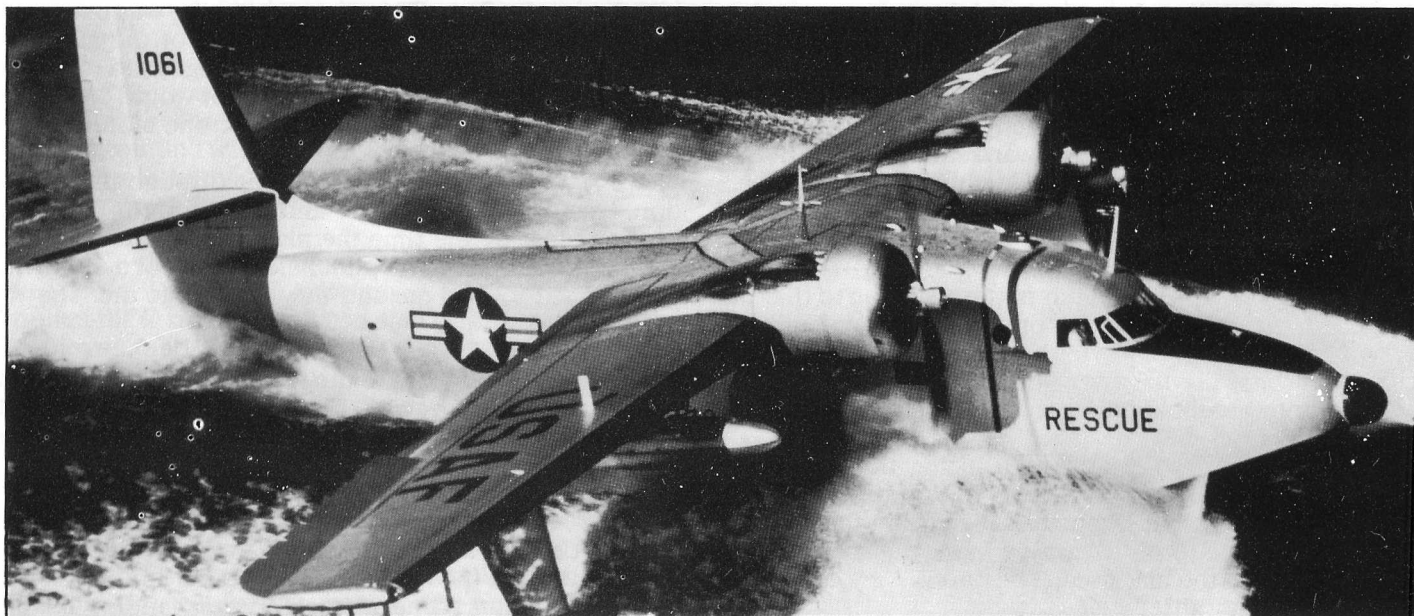
A 3rd ARS SA-16 takes off for another mission up the west coast of Korea in 1952. The SA-16 had a range of over 3000 miles, which meant it could fly to the mouth of the Yalu River, loiter for over an hour locating the downed pilot, then retrieve the pilot and bring him home. (credit-Budd Butcher)

and this one I'll never forget. The pilot taxied toward me. It was a bit unnerving at first but I caught on quickly.

Just before the left pontoon would've hit me, the pilot swung the left rear section toward me where there was a big open door with two crewmen waiting to grab me. But the propwash blew me and my raft past the door. On the second pass, I got out the two "paint-stirrers" and paddled like hell, but I was spent. The cold had exhausted my strength. I'd blown the second pickup.

The third pass worked. The pilot's timing was perfect. The tail swung and I paddled as if my life depended on it. It did! My strength gave out when the raft was only inches from the crewman's reach. The other man threw a rope that hit my right foot. I lunged for it, holding on

The pilot of this 3rd ARS SA-16 pours on the power during a takeoff from the Yellow Sea in 1953. Detachments of SA-16s were based throughout Korea, including the island base of Chodo, about 90 miles north of the 38th Parallel in the Yellow Sea. It was an SA-16 that plucked Norman Green from the ocean in April 1953. (credit-USAF)



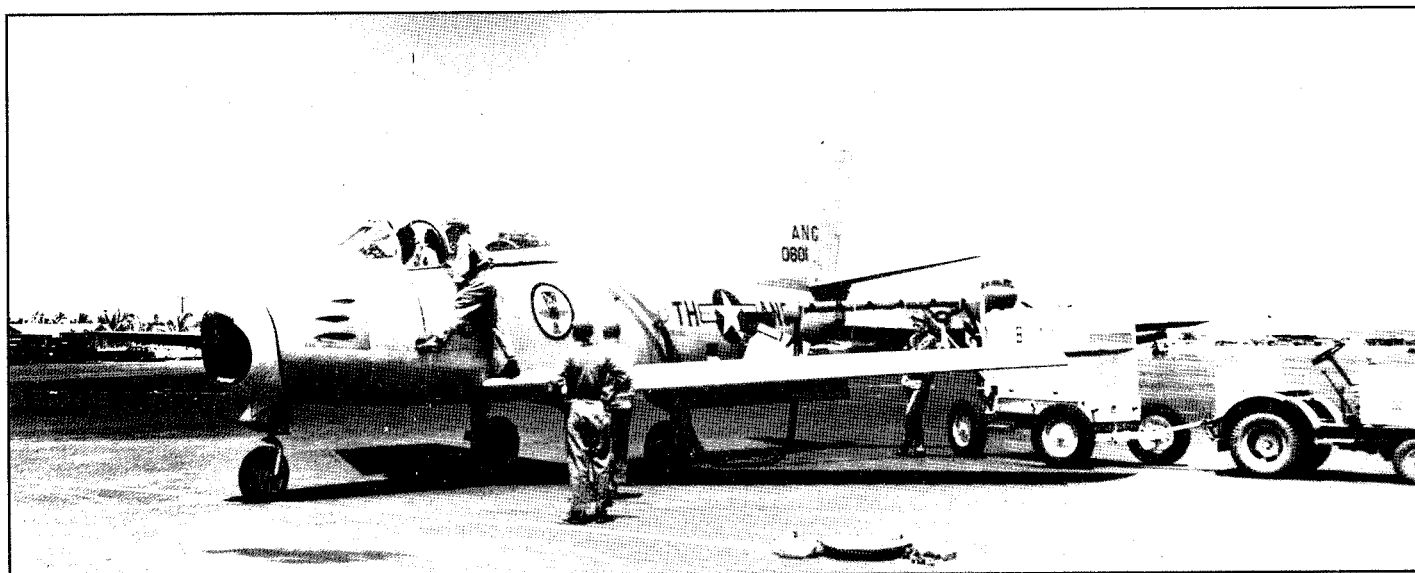
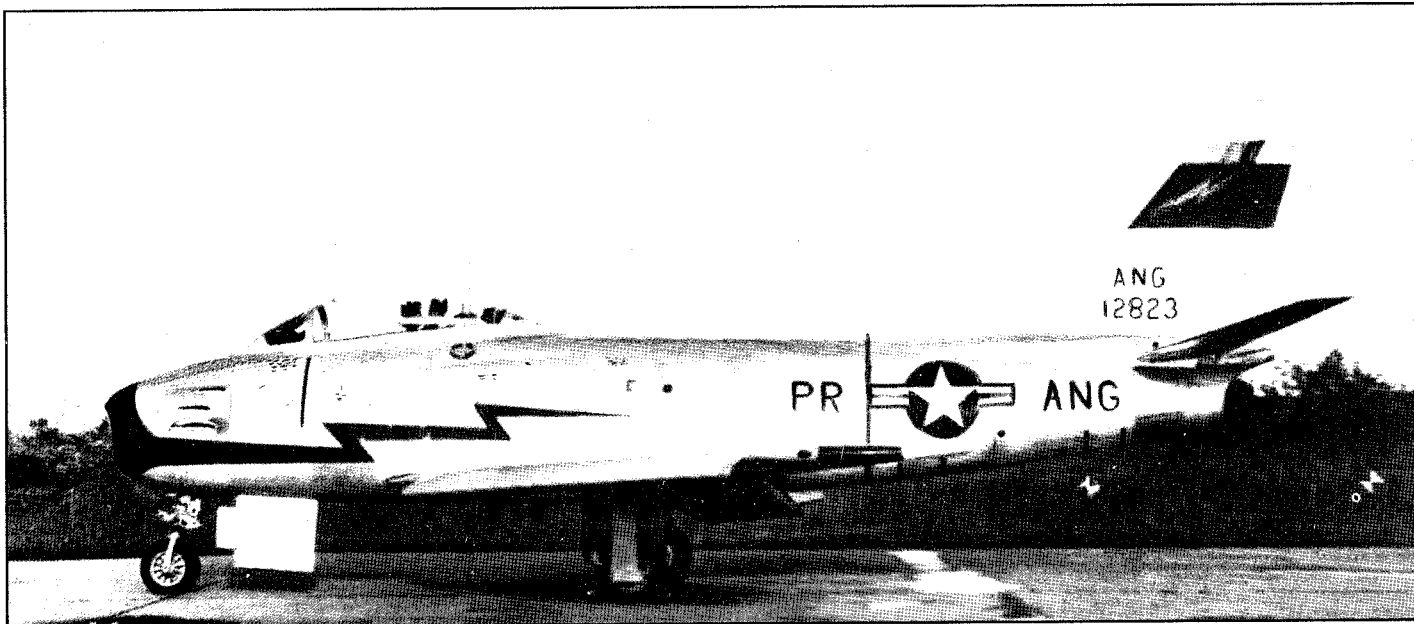
with what strength I had left. They pulled me alongside the hull, then all three of us tried to get me through the door. With my 'poopy suit' weighted down with water, it was no easy task to get me over the ledge. I got one arm over, then the other. "Get him in. Let's get the hell out of here!", shouted the pilot. We were 100 miles behind enemy lines and a sitting duck.

The crewmen grabbed my harness and pulled. With both heaving, I got one leg over the gunwale. They rolled me into the airplane, then cut both pant legs open to release the water. "Tie him down! We're goin'!" The engines roared to full power. As we picked up speed, the crewmen threw me on a stretcher, then lay on top of me and held tightly to the supports so I wouldn't get thrown loose during the takeoff.

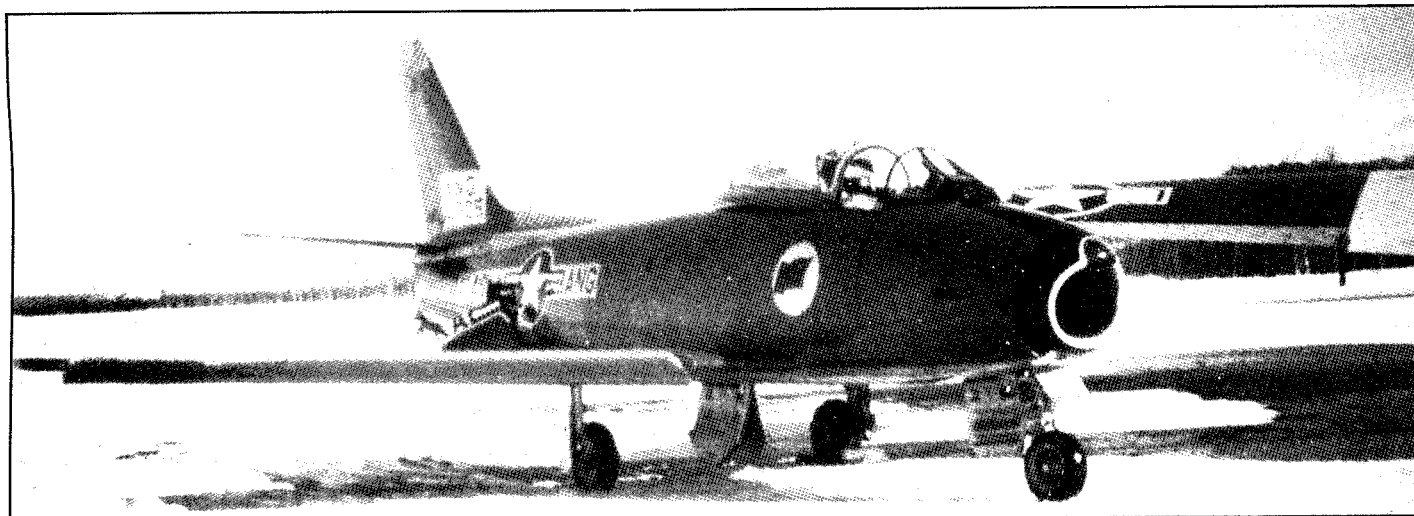
As the big seaplane approached takeoff speed, the banging of the waves against the hull threatened to break us apart. The pilot throttled back and aborted the takeoff. (I later learned that the sea was beyond safe conditions., but the pilot risked his plane, his crew, and his life to pick me up. Now there was the possibility that he couldn't get off the water!)

As soon as the plane slowed, I was secured to the stretcher. The crewmen dove for their seats and strapped themselves in. Again, the bird tried and failed to get off the Yellow Sea. The pounding on the aluminum hull made a frightening sound. It shook the very soul of the aircraft and all of us in it. If I had to die, this was a hell of a way to go!

On the third try, the pilot caught a large wave just right, literally throwing the airplane into the air. We were safely off and on our way south. Fifty minutes later we landed at Seoul with the sun shining brightly. I would live to fly again. I could have died a dozen times. If, as the foxhole philosopher observed, you don't die until your number comes up, who determines when that number is called? And why? And what does the "giver of numbers" have in store for me in future years?



Your Air Guard In Action. This issue features F-86 Sabres from Air National Guard units not based in the ConUS. Interestingly, all three units are flying F-86E Sabres. (top) The 198th Fighter Squadron, Puerto Rico ANG, was based at San Juan Airport. In July 1954, the 198th FS converted from F-47Ns to ex-Maryland ANG F-86E Sabres and was redesignated a Fighter Interceptor Squadron. (middle) The 199th FIS, Hawaii ANG, exchanged their F-47Ns for F-86E Sabres in February 1954. The 199th FIS was based at Hickam AFB. (bottom) An F-86E "target tug" assigned to the 144th FIS at Kulis ANG at the Anchorage Airport. The "target tug" was painted International Orange on the upper surfaces. (credits-Joe Bruch, USAF, and C. Williamson)



15th Sabre Pilots Assn.
Reunion
4-8 April 2005,
at the Monte Carlo Hotel,
Las Vegas, NV.

58th FBW & 474th FBW
Reunion of both the 58th and 474th
FBWs in Korea, will be held June 15-20,
2005, at the Days Hotel & Conference
Center, Herndon, VA. Contact Jean
kupferer, (812)945-7649, or
e-mail jkupfere@iglou.com

330/331 FIS
17-20 October 2005 in Lancaster, PA.
Contact Burnell Hostetter,
(717)898-7132, or e-mail
burnell@infionline.net

5th FIS/331st FIS
4-7 April 2005 at the Monte Carlo Hotel
(with the F-86 Pilots Reunion in Las
Vegas). Contact Don Manthei (801)942-
2345, or Paul Kallmeyer (631)324-3856

Sqdn/Ldr Graham Hulse

Member John Lowery is looking for photos and info
about Sqdn/Ldr Graham Hulse, who served in the
336th FIS during the Korean War. Contact John
Lowery at john.lowery3@comcast.net

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 con-
tact Larry Davis, Editor, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Can-
ton, OH 44721; or e-mail at sabreclsx@aol.com

67th FBS in Korea

1st Lt Glenn Beadle, wants to contact anyone that
served with him in the 67th FBS at K-55 during the
Korean War. Contact Glenn Beadle (601)956-4602,
or e-mail gbeadle@jam.rr.com

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



A FIGHTER FIGHTS YOUR AIR FORCE

What can I say? The photo speaks for itself. (credit-Larry Davis collection)

F-86 NOSE ART

Did your F-86 have any personal markings like names or nose art? Your Editor would like to see photos of F-86s of any type, and at any base or unit, with personal markings of any type. Contact Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721, (330)493-4122, or e-mail sabreclsx@aol.com

Typical Sabre nose art painted by Karl Dittmers, a 335th FIS pilot in 1952. (credit-Karl Dittmers)



book preview

"Warriors Without Weapons, Triumph of the Tech Reps", by John W. Casey, 320 pgs, \$19.95 plus \$5.00 postage, Premiere Editions International, ISBN 1-891519-07-7

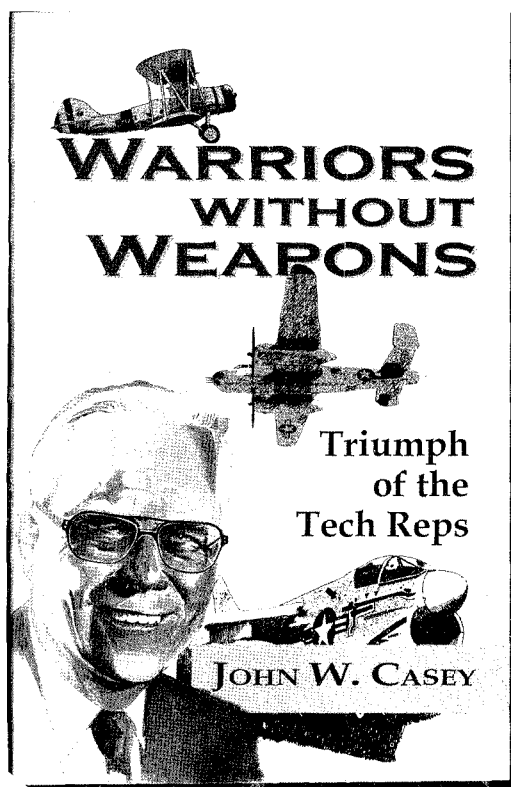
"Warriors Without Weapons" portrays the scope and depth of the training, action, and consequences of the aviation Technical Representatives, commonly called simply Tech Reps, those unsung heroes that kept the airplanes.

Thousands of civilian men who never fired a shot, accompanied military aircraft throughout the 20th century's conflicts, keeping the airplanes flying and the parts coming. The book tells their story in their own words, stories that illustrate the risk and responsibility of their daily lives on military bases and in ports around the world.

John Casey was a Tech Rep himself before becoming Chief of the Tech Reps for North American Aviation during the Korean War.

"Finally, a book that expounds on the admirable deeds and great contribution of the Tech Reps!" - Major General Frederick "Boots" Blesse, USAF Ret.

Available from Premiere Editions International, Inc.,
2397 NW Kings Blvd. #311, Corvallis, OR 97330



book list

Several new titles have been added to our list of books in this issue. The following is a list of books written by or about F-86 Sabre aircraft, Sabre pilots, or Sabre operations. Far from complete, SabreJet Classics will add any titles that a member has written. We will also give a little preview to a couple of books with each issue.

"Warriors Without Weapons, Triumph of the Tech Reps", by John W. Casey. Published by Premiere Editions International, Inc., 2397 NW Kings Blvd, #311, Corvallis, OR 97330.

"F-86 Sabre In Action", "F-86 Sabre Walk-Around", and "MiG Alley", by Larry Davis and published by Squadron-Signal Publishing, 1115 Crowley Drive, Carrollton, TX, 75011

"The 4th Fighter Wing in the Korean War", by Larry Davis, Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721.

"The Korean Air War", "Inside the Great Jet Fighters", and "F-86 Sabre - History of the Sabre and FJ Fury", by Robert F. Dorr, Motorbooks International, 729 Prospect Ave, Osceola, WI 54020

"Destination Clifford", by Dan Druen, Author House/1st Books, (800)839-8640

"Hot Shots, An Oral History of the Air Force Combat Pilots in the Korean War", by Jennie Ethell & Wm. R. Forstchen, HarperCollins Publishers, ISBN 0-688-16455-2

"MiG Alley to Mu Gia Pass", by Cecil Foster, MacFarland and Company Publishers, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640

"Failure Is Not An Option, from Mervury to Apollo 13 and Beyond", by Gene Kranz, Berkley Books, ISBN 0-425-17987-7

"Before Centuries, USAF Fighters 1948-1959", by MSgt David Menard, USAF (Ret), Howell Press, ISBN 1-57427-079-6

"USAF Plus Fifteen", A Photo History 1947-1962", by David W. Menard, Schiffer Publishing Ltd. ISBN 0-88740-483-9

"The Hunters", by James Salter, Counterpoint Press, PO Box 65793, Washington, DC 20035-5793

"Officers In Flight Suits", by John Darrell Sherwood, New York University Press, Washington Square, New York, NY 10003

"Sabres, Hogs & Thuds, The Diary of a Part Time Cold War Fighter Pilot" by Robert Thompson. Can be reviewed at sabreshogsthuds.com

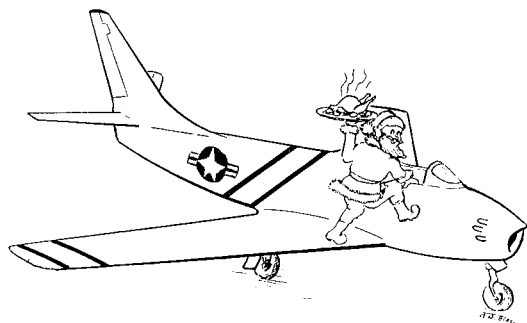
"MiG Alley - Sabres vs. MiGs over Korea", by Warren Thompson & David McLaren, Specialty Press, 39966 Grand Ave, North Branch, MN 55056

"Cold War Fighter Pilot", by Harold Wade, Trafford Publishing #04-1029, ISBN 1-4120-3202-4. Can be reviewed at www.trafford.com/4dcgi/view-item?item=6190

51ST FIGHTER - INTERCEPTOR WING
JAPAN - KOREA

CHRISTMAS DINNER

25 DECEMBER 1951



FRANCIS S. GABRESKI
COLONEL, USAF
COMMANDING

dinner menu - no caption. (credit-Phil Norton)

A CHRISTMAS STORY

by Robert J. Burns

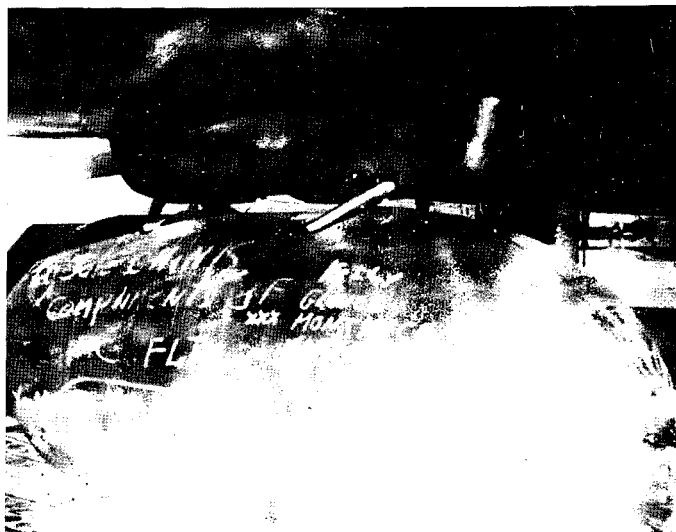
It was 1957. After flying F-86's for 3 1/2 years at Chicago's O'Hare Field, I was sent to Okinawa, leaving my wife and infant daughter in Sault Ste. Marie, MI. The drill was for me to get 'checked out' in my new unit, the 16th FIS, find a private rental and then apply for Pat and Ellen to join me. The wait for base housing was about a year so off-base housing was the way to go, and even that took about four months.

Regulations provided that if I had a child less than 6 months old, I could return stateside and accompany my dependents back overseas. I fit the bill but travel was on a "Morale Leave" basis, almost the lowest priority.

After two days waiting at Kadena, I made it up to Haneda Air Base near Tokyo. While waiting at Haneda I bought a TWA ticket for the flight from San Francisco to Chicago. It was a good thing I did because the railroads were on strike and the airlines and buses were jammed.

Finally, after four days of waiting and waching, I was on my way to Travis AFB, California. And my TWA flight was waiting to take me to O'Hare. However, there was absolutely nothing up to the "Soo", and I was stuck at my sisters house in Itasca, not far from O'Hare.

I decided to call my old squadron CO in the 62nd, Major Ken Daniels. Since it was a Friday evening I found him at the O'Club during Beer Call! Listening to all my old fighter pilot pals in the background, I explained my predicament. Not even waiting for me to ask, Ken told me to be at the flight line "tomorrow morning at 0730!", and he hung up!!



Christmas greetings to the communist Chinese are written on a bomb under the wing of a 4th FIG Sabre in 1952. (credit-Robert Kelly)

You better believe I was there. Sure enough, there were several crew chiefs preparing a T-33 and my friend Oscar Dardeaux was waiting with a big grin and a handshake.

My nickname then was "Any" so it was obvious for Oscar (I called him Oscaroo Dardoo) to just bluntly say - "OK Any Burns, here's a helmet and chute. Put 'em on, climb in and let's go!"

It's roughly 500 miles to Sault Ste. Marie and the weather at Kinchloe AFB was fierce bad - low ceiling, bad visibility, and snowing. But we made it in and I quickly headed to Ops to call Pat. Mumma, my mother-in-law, answered and was amazed that I was there. She told me that Pat was at Mass, but as soon as she came home, she'd send her out to the base.

I helped Oscar get ready for the return flight. Before long Pat showed up. I should tell you that I hadn't notified her of my plans to come home and she thought I was still on Okinawa. Wow! She had a great reunion with Oscaroo, who got plenty of hugs and kisses before climbing into the T-Bird and heading back to O'Hare.

Now there's something else I didn't tell you. It was Christmas Eve 1957, and my good friend Oscar had given up that day with Fran and HIS children to help get me home to MY family for Christmas.

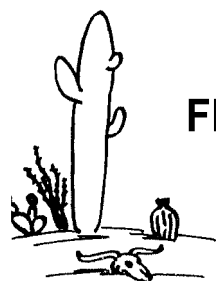
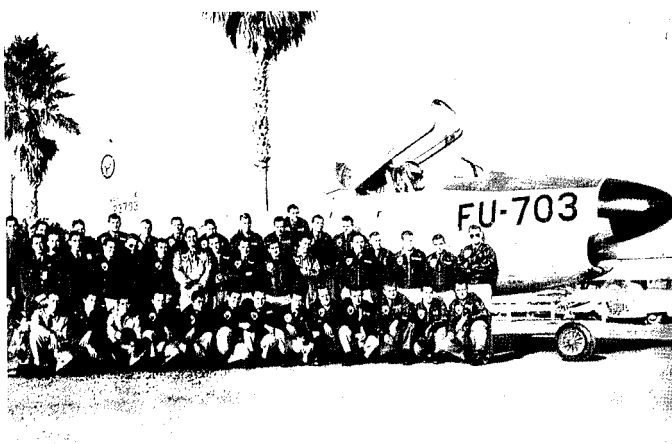
I never saw Oscar again. The last he was seen, his F-105 was on fire heading NW over Hanoi, about the same time that Jane Fonda was hugging and posing with the North Vietnamese gunners. About ten years later, Vietnam released the remains of several U.S. servicemen killed in action. 'Oscaroo' went from MIA to KIA, and was one step closer to his home in Baton Rouge.



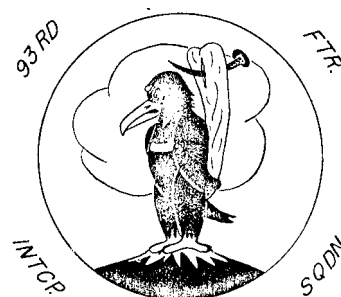
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

FROM THE STAFF OF
SABRE JET CLASSICS !

Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year



GREETINGS
FROM SUNNY TUCSON
HOME OF THE
15^m F.I.S.





What Is It? This is an interesting photo as it shows as much as it hides. The aircraft is an F-86E-1 from the 334th Squadron in the 4th FIG. The photo was taken at Kimpo in Spring 1952. Note that there are 8 red star "kills" painted on the gun bay door, along with the name "Satan's ??????" Major George Davis, Medal Of Honor winner and Double Jet Ace in Korea, flew this Sabre (50-689) at least three times, scoring 6 MiGs during December 1951. (credit-Irv Clark)

But his name does not appear on the black crew block, nor does any other pilot's name or crew chief. Does anyone know if this was indeed, Major Davis' "assigned" Sabre when he commanded the 334th Squadron. Can anyone else say for sure what the complete name was on the nose and whether or not that was also on the airplane when Major Davis flew it? Lastly, does anyone know who flew the airplane after Major Davis was shot down. Anyone with photos of Major Davis and/or this or any other F-86 that he flew, please contact your Editor, Larry Davis, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH; phone (330)493-4122, or e-mail sabreclsx@aol.com

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