

Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 19, Number 3

Winter 2011/2012



*inside - When the Navy Flew Sabres,
4th FIG Markings,
Millie Marshall Honored,
First Sidewinder Kill, More!*

A Publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

SabreJet Classics

Vol. 19, number 3
Winter 2011 / 2012

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(Front cover) Spring 1951, Kimpo AB, Korea. This F-86E was flown by Maj. Winton "Bones" Marshall in late 1951 and is the subject of a discussion about 4th FIG Markings both before and after 1 January 1952. Note the many kills displayed on the nose, which are credits to all the pilots that flew this F-86E.

(credit - Vern Sprague)

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the president's notebook

For our Sabrejet Classics magazine, this has been a very difficult year. The severe winter weather in the Midwest played havoc with Larry Davis getting the Spring edition out prior to our reunion in April. It didn't get published and in the mail until June. Then, much worse than the winter weather, Larry had a very serious heart attack during the summer requiring quad by-pass open heart surgery. Fortunately, Larry fought hard and recovered well enough to get back to work on the summer edition, SJC 19-2. With that, I offered Larry the opportunity to skip the Fall edition so he could have more time to rest, recover and get his strength back. He denied that offer and said he wanted to get our Fall Classics out on time and be back on schedule. Our hats are off to you, Larry, for your dedication and efforts to keep the Sabrejet Classics coming to our members.

As for Association business, I want to remind everyone that our Life Membership program will end the first of January 2012. All those who are life members as of that date will continue to be life members. Our three year memberships for the price of two, \$50.00 is still in effect. Also, another reminder for anyone still interested in having their names engraved on our F-86 tablet at the Smithsonian; they are finishing up the last plate and the program will be over. On this subject, I was asked recently if a non-member former F-86 jock could have his name put on the tablet. Back in 2003 the Association sent a \$10,000 check to Smithsonian to kick off this great program to cover the initial program start up costs. In modern terminology terms, the Association has skin in the game. So, the answer is no, unless a check for \$25 and a membership application are sent to our Association by that person or in his name if he is deceased. We all owe much thanks to Glenn Carus for all the work and effort

he has done to make this program an everlasting recognition and a memorial to the men who flew the Sabre. I have held my next comments to last as they were the most difficult for me to express. Our reunion 2011 was a great success and the events and camaraderie made it a wonderful time. However, there was sad news. One of our brothers, Robert A. Ingalls, made his last flight. He flew west and was found the morning after our banquet night, 13 April, in his Gold Coast room with his wings folded. On the good side, Bob was able to spend his last few days being with old friends and being able to reminisce some of the great times flying the Sabre. He will be missed. Back to the brighter side, the holiday season is upon us and I wish you all a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*God Bless Sabre Pilots
God Bless Our Troops
God Bless America*

*J.R. Alley
President*

FOLDED WINGS

Robert B. Beveridge, December 7th, 2011
Donald R. D'Amico, date unknown
Robert E. Erickson, March 2nd, 2010
Donald L. Frisbie, October 12th, 2011

POLICY STATEMENT

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from the editor

Well guys, once again we are late with your Sabrejet Classics. Just couldn't be helped. With recovery from the heart surgery and rehab for same, I was unable to get the magazine together and out for the holidays. But here it is and I think you'll agree that it's a good one.

We have finally came up with an answer to one of the questions that has haunted us for many years. When did the 4th FIG change from the black and white stripes on their Korea based F-86s, to the black and yellow stripes as ordered by 5th AF to match those of the 51st Group at Suwon. The answer came to us accidentally when we answered a request from PACAF History Office about Sabre markings. The story is in this issue.

The request from PACAF concerned a Sabre Pilots member and his wife - Major General Winton 'Bones' Marshall and his wife Millie. And PACAF was doing a story about BOTH of them! Again, both stories are in this issue.

And then we have the unusual story, written by a Navy pilot that first flew F-4 Phantoms, THEN got into a real hot rod - the F-86 Sabre. His story and lots of photos of the Navy Sabres, are in this issue.

Now an update on your editor. As I said in the last issue, I had a heart problem that required a quadruple bypass operation. It certainly was strange to go for coffee, read my newspaper, and then wake up two days later full of IVs and air tubes.

That's behind me now. I finished up with rehab about three weeks ago and am now on my own. I walk 10 miles twice a day and do some rehab exercises at the local YMCA. I feel fine, with just some minor discomfort near the incisions. My wife keeps close tabs on everything I do. The doctor gave me a "Well done!" on the last checkup as my cholesterol has dropped to a total of 92! And everything else is also 'in the green'. I want to thank everyone that had me in the prayers and sent well wishes. It must have helped. I'm still upright and typing away.

All for now.

Larry Davis
editor

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ATTENTION!

Member Glenn Carus Wishes to announce a "Last Call" for any member to get his or her name on the F-86 Sabre Pilots panel displayed at the National Air & Space Museum in Washington, DC.
Please contact: Glenn for details prior to 31 Dec 2011 at: 703-444-3269 or email: gcarus@falconsresidents.org

Letters to the editor:

ERRATA!!

In the last issue of Sabrejet Classics, we had a communications problem and noted that the Super Sabre Society was not holding their 2013 Reunion at the Gold Coast with our Reunion. This was an error. The Super Sabre Society will, indeed, tie their 2013 Reunion to the F-86 Sabre Pilots Reunion. Their reunion is slated for 9, 10, 11, and 12 April 2013. We're sorry for any confusion this may have caused.

From the editor

In the discussion regarding the markings on 'Bones' Marshall's Sabre in Korea, Mr. Steve Diamond, Command Historian for PACAF related the fact that Mrs. Millie Marshall, had been a pilot in the WASP organization, which is how she met her husband 'Bones'.

He related that on 9 July 2009, General and Mrs. Marshall had been the guests of honor at a recent COMPACAF Warfighters Conference Heritage Dinner. The occasion? Millie had been presented the Congressional Gold Medal for her service, and indeed all the female WASP pilots service, with the US Army Air Force during World War 2. President Obama had presented the WASP pilots with the medal on 9 July 2009. We congratulate Millie Marshall on her recognition.

Mrs. Millie Marshall, wife of LtGen Winton Marshall, receives a copy of the poster documenting her service with the Womens Airforce Service Pilots during World War 2. (credit - PACAF HO)



From editor

Once again we had no one help us identify the "What Is It?" aircraft on the back cover of 19-2. The F86E in question was one of four Sabres assigned to Edwards AFB in 1951 for tests. One of the other aircraft, #2 FU-721, was the World Speed Record holder before being assigned to the 51st FIG in Korea.



The "What Is It?" photo from SabreJet Classics 19-2. (credit - Peter Bowers)

LtGen Winton Marshall and his wife Millie beside the poster honoring her service in the WASPs. Millie holds her Congressional Gold Medal presented to her by President Obama on 9 October 2009. (credit- PACAF HO)



WOMEN'S AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS OF WWII

As early as 1930, the War Department had considered using women pilots but the US Army Air Corps Chief had called the idea "utterly unfeasible." The attack of 7 December 1941 changed everything.



318th Army Air Force Flying Training Detachment



Two units of women pilots were formed in the fall of 1942: the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) who delivered planes from factory to military bases, and the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) who ferried planes, tested them, performed check flights, and put flying time on new engines.

In August 1943, WAFS and WFTD merged into the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP). More than 25,000 women applied for pilot training, but only 1,830 were accepted, 1,074 graduated and 900 remained at program's end. WASP assignments included flight training, towing gliders, towing targets for air-to-air and anti-aircraft gunnery practice, engineering test flying, and ferrying aircraft. WASPs flew virtually every type of USAAF aircraft from light trainers to heavy four-engine bombers. Thirty-eight female pilots lost their lives serving their country.



A young WASP named Mildred Taylor, Class of 44-W-5, impressed her male co-pilot with her ability to pilot and land the B-26. After the WASP disbanded in 1944, Millie married her co-pilot, Lt Gen Winton "Bones" Marshall, Korean War Ace and Vice CINC PACAF (1974-75).



The intrepid WWII female pilots received national recognition in a ceremony at the White House on July 2, 2009, when President Obama presented them the Congressional Gold Medal: "The Women Airforce Service Pilots courageously answered their country's call in a time of need, while blazing a trail for the brave women who have given and continue to give so much in service to this nation since."



F-86 Sabre Pilot's 2011 Reunion

From a Former RCAF Sabre Pilots View Point

By Richard "Dick" Dunn

Sunday morning we assembled on the convention floor of the Gold Coast Hotel to register for the 18th United States Air Force F-86 Sabre reunion. The welcoming package included an attractive colored medallion, challenge coin, emblazoned with 4 Sabres fronting the US flag.

At the evening meet-and-greet we joined 427 Squadron members John & Susie Shute, and Dale & Marilyn Horley. Also joining us were Kay & Bob Custer, honorary 427 members, having been inducted at the recent Penticton SPAADS reunion. It was at the Las Vegas Sabre reunion 4 years ago that Dale first encountered Bob Custer. "What squadron were you with?" asked Bob. Dale replied, "I'm just a visitor, from the RCAF." Then Bob asked, "What base?" and Dale replied "Zweibruken." "Wow- that was the party of the century!"

In the early 60's at the height of the Cold War, the Soviets erected the Berlin Wall, triggering the activation of Bob's unit, the 197th Fighter Squadron of the Arizona Air National Guard. Transferred from sunny Phoenix to the American Base at Ramstein, 30 kilometres northeast of Zweibruken, their F-104 Starfighters often tangled with the Sabres of # 3 Wing. In the time-honoured aviators tradition, the 197th were invited to the aforementioned party at Zwei.

Next morning bright and early we boarded buses for the short drive to Nellis Air Force Base. Once there we broke into two groups, one to the flight line to examine the F-22 Raptor and F-15 Eagle. Further down the flight line, the F-16's of the Thunderbird aerobatic team prepared for takeoff. A close-up examination of the Raptor revealed aspects of its stealth technology. Amongst other features, all weapons are concealed in internal bays. Afterwards we proceeded to the briefing at the Weapons School formerly known as "Fighter Weapons," but now there are so many diverse units involved it is known merely as "Weapons School." Following a short video demonstrating airpower from the First World War to the present, the briefing Colonel gave a very comprehensive overview of the unit's role.

During the question period, I remarked, "The F-35 purchase in Canada is somewhat of a political football with the current election;" and asked, "Could you shed any light on the relative merits and capabilities of the Raptor versus the F-35 and the Chinese J-20 stealth fighter." The Colonel prefaced his reply by saying it was his opinion, and not necessarily that of the US Air Force, but he felt that "the F-35 program was a complete waste of money and resources. The program was well behind schedule and the actual cost per aircraft was not yet known. The capabilities of the Raptor are superior to that

of the F-35, and it has two engines. The government had cut the Raptor program from 750 aircraft to 350 and then again to 186 and the production line is now closed."

He thanked me for my question and we boarded the bus for the return to the hotel. It is all rather moot from the Canadian perspective, for early in the development program, congressional legislation prohibited export of the Raptor.

That afternoon we attended a talk by the legendary aviator, Bob Hoover. His address was scheduled for one hour, but in the event, we sat enthralled for 3 hours as he related fascinating stories of his flying career. Having commenced flying as a teenager, he was already an accomplished aerobatic pilot when he joined the US Army Air Corps shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Despite being a enlisted man, he was put in charge of a group of 67 pilots when they shipped overseas on the Queen Elizabeth. Lacking sufficient aircraft, the US Air Corps assigned them to the Royal Air Force flying Spitfires. Two months later they shipped out to North Africa. Although keen to engage in combat, Bob was relegated to test flying the recently assembled aircraft off-loaded from American ships. Eventually he was able to join an American Spitfire combat squadron based in Sicily.

Jumped by four FW-190's, his external tank failed to drop, resulting in severely degraded performance, and he was hit by a 90° deflection shot. Fished from the drink by the Germans, he eventually wound up at the notorious Stalag Luft I. After numerous attempts, he managed to escape towards the end of the war, commandeering a German FW-190 that he flew to Holland and freedom.

After the war he joined another renowned aviator, Chuck Yeager as a test pilot on the Bell X-1 program, and later flew as a test pilot for North American Aviation. It was while testing an innovative control system on the F-86 Sabre that he demonstrated his phenomenal skill. After takeoff from Los Angeles, he found himself with a frozen control column.

As he describes it, "As soon as the landing gear was retracted, the nose of the airplane pitched straight up. The airplane was out of control. I pushed forward on the stick with all my strength, but it could not be moved fore or aft. Somehow both the normal and the emergency systems had failed.

The F-86 then pitched up, stalled, started to spin, and headed straight down. It was difficult to keep my bearings, but then the rudder control, which was mechanical, permitted me to stop the spin. The horizontal tail was free-floating and completely out of control, but the plane recovered, barely missing the ground. The plane climbed

right back up, and the same process started again. I called a Mayday, unsure of what response would come next.

For the next forty minutes, it was stark terror. I was so certain that a crash was inevitable that I asked Los Angeles Airport to stop all air traffic. An airliner that was ready for takeoff on the other runway was told to hold his position, leaving one clear runway for me in the event I could regain control.

I went through all sorts of gyrations to figure a way to gain control."

Eventually, Bob managed to find the "sweet speed," the airspeed at which the vertical downward force on the horizontal stabilizer equalized, and balanced the upward forces from the airfoil. Gently he climbed over the coastal mountains to the Mojave Desert, another dry-lake bed not unlike the aforementioned Death Valley, a plane on the plain so to speak!

Bob continued, "I had been increasing the power in an effort to get the nose up for landing. Joe Welch who had scrambled in another F-86 and flying my wing advised me to bail out before I set up the approach. Now he was telling me that I was going 240 knots and wouldn't survive the landing at that speed.

Instead of the hard landing I expected, the swept wings on the F-86 picked up ground effect. To my surprise, I

experienced one of the smoothest landings I've ever made even though I had no real control of the airplane. Later, after some further inspection, I found that I couldn't have ejected even if I had wanted to. The ground crew had not pulled the safety pin on the ejection seat. I'd have gone down with the F-86.

People have asked me over the years what's the most terrifying ride I've ever had. There have been many, but none scarier than the one in that F-86."

After that memorable tale, we adjourned to make ready for the evening formal dinner. The Custer's, 2 Norwegians who had trained in Canada, and 2 very amusing Americans joined our table. As the honour guard marched in, we rose for the obligatory question, "Oh, say can you see....?"

Following his introductory remarks, J.R. Alley, the President, asked all those who owed their life to the ejection seat to stand, whereupon about 40 pilots popped up, including one of our Norwegians Siegfried Hernes.

With the RCAF ensign proudly flying over our table, several pilots stopped to chat; the conversation of fighter pilots encompassing a universal language with both hands depicting aerial maneuvers. And so to bed, and thence to home.

Sabres Around the World

Our good friend Mr. Warren Thompson, sent us this photo of a Royal Australian Air Force CA-27 Sabre assigned to no. 79 Squadron based at Ubon RTAB during the early years of the Vietnam War. The Sabres were assigned an air defense mission and flew top cover for the returning F-4s of the 8th TFW. (credit - Warren Thompson coll.)



MYSTERY SOLVED

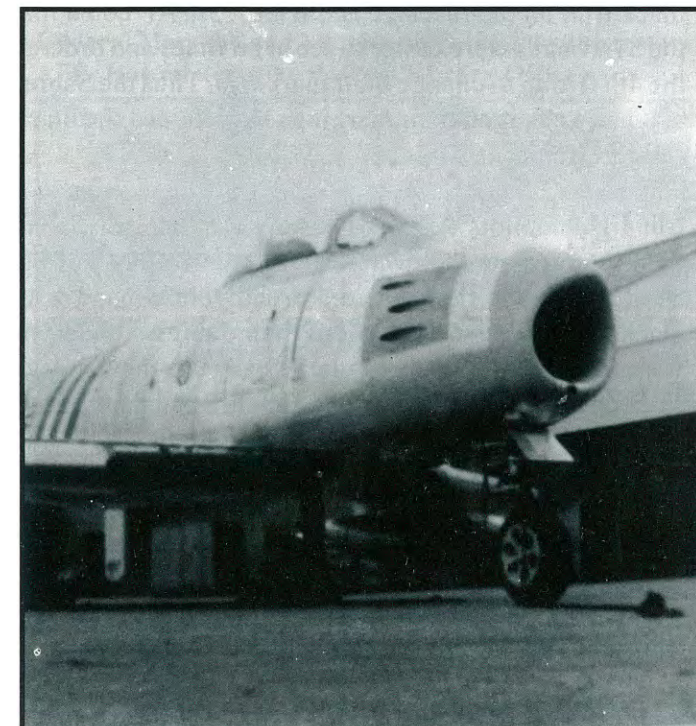
4th FIG Sabre markings in the Korean War
by Larry Davis

Over several issue of Sabrejet Classics we have attempted to put a date on exactly when 5th AF ordered the 4th Fighter Interceptor Group to change their black and white ID bands to yellow and black, the same as those on the 51st Group at Suwon. It was felt that the black and yellow bands were easier to see during combat. The 4th Group didn't like the idea at all as they felt the black and white ID bands were a unit markings for their airplanes. But 5th AF ordered it done.

But when did it take place was the question. Nowhere in the unit histories was there any mention of changing the ID bands. Photos were of some help but very few could even begin to pinpoint a date for the change. That is until Mr. Steve Diamond, Command Historian PACAF, started asking questions about the markings found on Major Winton Marshall's Sabre. The people at Hickam AFB were in the process of restoring a Sabre and marking it as Major Marshall's Sabre. Several people pointed them in my direction.

They wanted to know why Major Marshall's Sabre carried 13 red star kill markings when he was only credited with 6 victories. And why the markings were different on the right side of "Mr. Bones V". I explained that when the photo was taken of the left side of "Mr. Bones V", the markings were a carryover from the earlier markings when the airplane had black and white ID bands. And that only

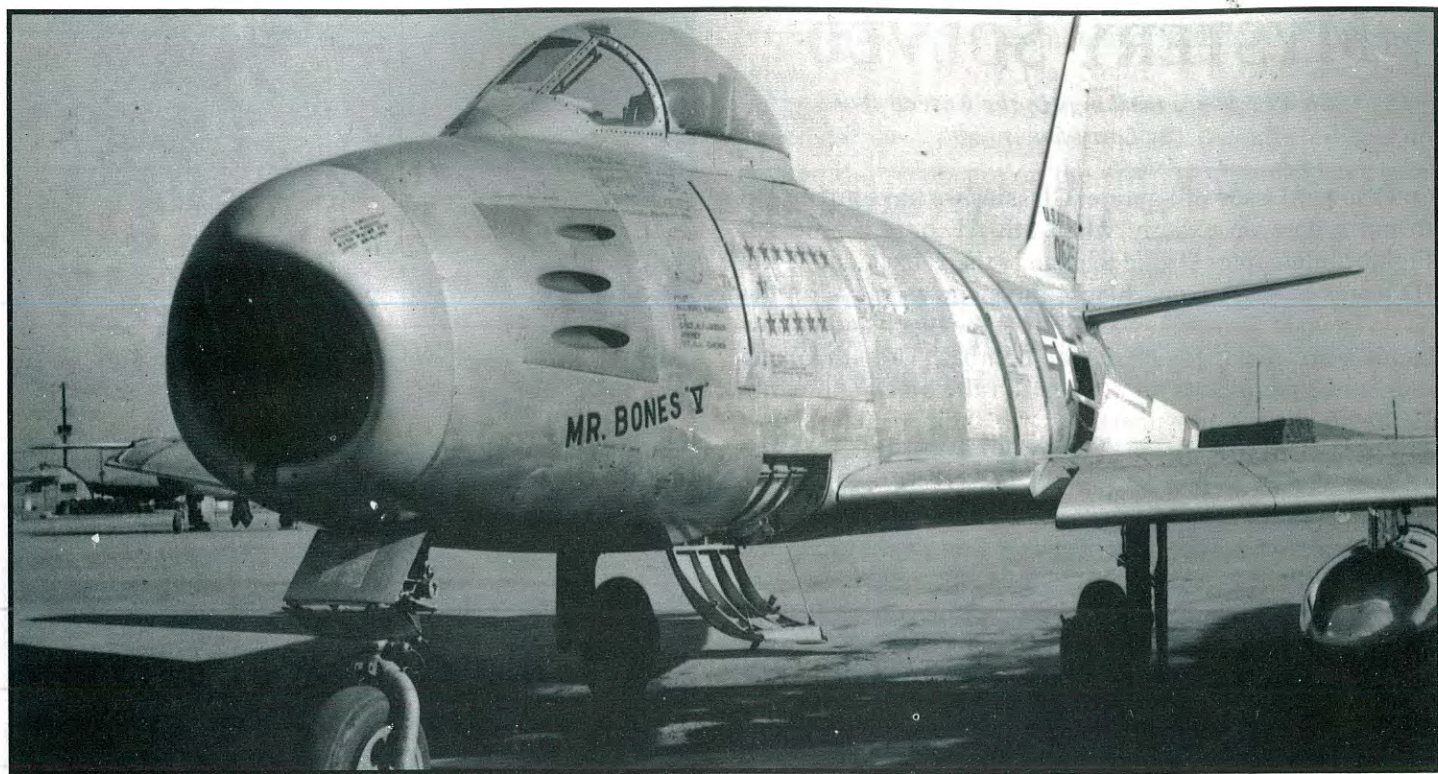
Starboard side of F-86E-1 #50-625. This was Bones' personal Sabre and shows that it had the black & white bands in November 1951. (credit - Larry Chase)



Major Winton S. "Bones" Marshall at K-14 in late 1951.
(credit - USAF)

The left side of Bones Marshall's F-86E in January 1952 showing his full kill markings 7 kills, 1 Probable, and 5 Damaged, and the name "Mr. Bones V".
(credit - B/Gen Winton Marshall)





This photo was taken just prior to Bones departure from Korea on 9 January 1952, and clearly shows his airplane now carries the black and yellow fuselage bands ordered by 5th AF in January 1952. (credit - B/Gen Winton Marshall)

the top row of stars were credited 'victories', while the 2nd row was Probables and the 3rd row were Damaged.

They also asked about the indian head insignia on the right side. I explained that that was put on the airplane and the entire markings system was changed in early 1952. It was then that I pulled all my photos of Bones' airplane out of the file and started close examination of them.

Yes, I did have photos of Bones' airplane, F-86E-1 #50-625, with the black and white ID bands. And I also had photos of the same airplane with the black and yellow markings as well as photos showing the bird with the Indian head badges and revised kill markings. Now we had to figure out when the photos were taken to pin down a date.

Bones' bio said that he rotated home on 9 Jan 1952. That meant that the picture with the black and yellow bands was taken before that date. And the photos showing the same airplane with the full Indian head markings were taken after that date. Thus the date of the markings change was just after the 1st of January 1952.

So here's the full story. When the F-86As of the 4th FIG arrived in Japan in December 1950, it was noted

that the similar planforms of the two airplanes might present a problem in combat. Major John Meyer and Flt Lt Omar Levesque collaborated on the markings - five white and black bands on the fuselage and wings, with a black stripe on the rudder as a unit marking.

When the 51st FIG transitioned from F-80s into new F-86Es in the Fall of 1951, they chose a different scheme for their Sabres - a wide yellow band with thin black trim on the fuselage and wings. 5th AF noted that the 51st bands were easier to see at all times and ordered the 4th Group to change their markings. Thus the Sabres at Kimpo changed their markings but retained the black rudder stripe.

But fighter pilots being what they are, the 4th Group didn't appreciate their Sabres looking like those of the 51st Group. So they added a broad yellow band with black trim to the vertical tail of their Sabres. Squadrons were identified by adding a large badge to the fuselage sides on the gun bay door - the 334th FIS had the 'pissed-off pigeon', the 335th Chiefs used an indian head, and the 336th were the Rocketeers. Of course, the 51st Group couldn't let the 4th get away with that and they added the familiar black checkerboard to their tail assemblies in June 1952. The markings remained the same until Summer 1953 when the logo "U.S. Air Force" was added to the fuselage sides.



This photo was taken in March 1952 showing Bones Marshall's F-86E in a revetment at Kimpo. The Sabre now has the later black and yellow tail bands and the 335th Indian head badge on the gun bay door, but still has the earlier black stripe on the rudder. (credit - Vern Sprague)



This photo shows Bones' Sabre now being flown by Capt. Robert Horowitz, aka James Salter, who wrote the novel "The Hunters". Horowitz scored one MiG kill as shown above his knee. Bones kills were shown on the starboard side. (credit- Larry Davis coll.)

General Marshall and his wife Millie pose by the restored F-86 carrying his name and victories that is displayed at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. (credit - PACAF History Office)



When The Navy Flew Sabres

By Lee 'Thumper' Griffon

During the spring of 1981, I had an opportunity to attend a McDonald Douglas F4J Tactical Manual review conference at Naval Air Station, Pt. Mugu, located in beautiful, sunny southern California. At the time I was attached to VF-161, aboard USS Midway, home-ported in Yokosuka, Japan. The Japanese winters can hold on with the tenacity of a bulldog, and the thought of seeing the sun again, and getting some work done for the Navy at the same time seemed appealing. So it was off to CONUS, the Navy vernacular for the Continental United States and, at least in my opinion, for some well-deserved R&R. I was billeted on the Air Station, so getting to and from the conference was simple. This fact afforded me an excellent opportunity to exercise one of a pilot's favorite pastimes: endlessly watching airplanes come and go. One evening, just before dark, I was returning from the Officer's Club and saw an aircraft in the pattern that did not immediately register in the "recce" file, the database of aircraft shapes so much a part of a fighter pilot's subconscious. There was a sinister, fleeting similarity to an aircraft filed under the category "adversary"—one that I had seen over North Vietnam, and had the opportunity to fight against when it flew from a little-known airfield, in what is now tangentially referred to as Area 51, the "Box", or sometimes just "Dreamland." The following day I had an opportunity to witness the aircraft up close and personal. It turned out to be the North American F-86F Sabre. The look-alike cousin, to which I referred was, of course, the Soviet Mig-17.

Needless to say, witnessing such a spectacular piece of our aviation lineage flying in an operational role was a rare treat and one that I had a chance to observe several more times during the next few days. I was later to find out that the F-86's were a part of the Navy's remote-controlled drone program and, hard as it was to believe, were being sacrificed in the interest of air-to-air and ground-to-air missile testing. My father had a long, and distinguished, career in the Air Force, and I remember vividly the stories he would tell about the aircraft he had flown. Growing up, I became familiar with the P-47, P-51, F-84, P-80, T-33, F-100 and the F-101. He flew them all but his favorite was clearly the F-86. After returning to Japan and settling back into the operational tempo of



Lee "Thumper" Griffon at Pt Mugu NAS in 1981.
(credit - Lee Griffon)

forward-deployed carrier ops, I never forgot, nor imagined, how that chance encounter with the Sabre would affect my aviation future.

PHANTOMS TO SABRES

About 2 years later, I was lucky enough to receive shore-duty flying orders to N.A.S. Pt. Mugu. Upon arrival at Pt. Mugu, and after a bit of wrangling and begging, I was assigned to the Threat Simulation Directorate who had both F-4's and F-86's as their compliment of aircraft. Since I was already flying the F-4 that part seemed easy. The trick was figuring out how to sneak my way into the Sabre cockpit. This turned out to be a non-issue since newly arriving pilots were normally assigned to fly the F-86 and if you had F-4 experience, you flew that aircraft as well. Checking out in the Sabre.

Upon initial checkout I was given a Dash One manual on the F-86, which was a bit unusual in itself. The checkout for most Navy aircraft involves the Natops manual and its associated Natops program, but since this was originally an Air Force aircraft, built under license by Mitsubishi Aircraft industries, the governing bible would be what the Air Force uses: The Dash One (The majority of the aircraft I flew were built by the Japanese but a check of the logbook



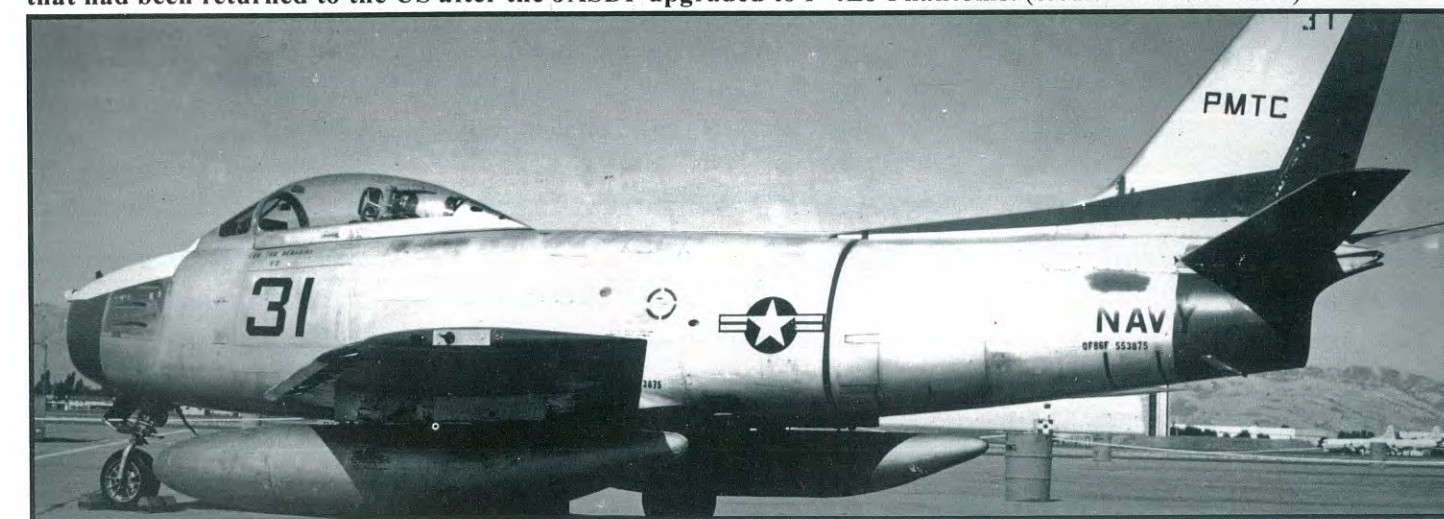
An QF-86F assigned to Pt. Mugu NAS Test Center in 1982. The Navy used F-86Fs as both drone targets and in simulated combat as part of the Top Gun program, since the F-86F had a similar planform to the Soviet MiG-17s. (credit - Bruce Trombecky)

serial #'s does show seven F-86's wire North American-built) In addition to the aircraft specific information you were expected to commit to memory the immediate action emergencies, called bold-faced procedures in military parlance, weight and balance data, certain performance graphs, course rules for the local area and, since Pt. Mugu is surrounded by restricted areas, a multiplicity of rules governing range procedures, clearances, classified use equipment and how to properly interface with the myriad of civilian and military controlling agencies.

Much has been made of the ejection process, and the procedures governing it's use, particularly by Navy pilots. Being that it was an older aircraft, the escape system was effective but dated. All pilots had previously flown zero-zero seats prior to coming to

Pt. Mugu. Simply put, their use required only that the pilot align his upper body as vertically as possible and then use the upper face curtain or the lower ejection handle to fire the seat. The seat sequencing was automatic and, as I got the opportunity to find out in a Phantom, one just sat back and enjoyed the ride—unless, of course, something went wrong, and then it was time to do some "pilot stuff" in a hurry. The major issue with the F-86 ejection system, especially to Navy pilots was the way the canopy separated from the aircraft. In the F model it slid aft along rails instead of rotating up and off the aircraft as in all other Navy aircraft we had flown. This procedure required the pilot to bend forward so the canopy would clear the aircraft without decapitating him in the process. This was not an innate move for Navy pilots due to training we'd received

A QF-86F at Point Mugu NAS in 1985. This QF-86F came from a batch of Japanese Air Self defense Force F-86F-40s that had been returned to the US after the JASDF upgraded to F-4EJ Phantoms. (credit- Michael Grove)



where canopies were never a factor in ejection. Forgetting to bend forward could ruin your whole day, and plans for tomorrow.

As one might imagine there were no simulators for the F-86. After reading the Dash One and performing a few starts with a check pilot observing from the wing, it was time to start and get the taxi/nose-wheel intricacies under your belt. As Operations Officer I had the opportunity to check out over 25 pilots in the F-86 and, when admonished about the nose-wheel steering system, no one believed me until they found out for themselves just what I meant. The NGS gave the pilot 21-degrees left and right of center. Where the pilot got into trouble, and needed help from the ground crew, was when he touched the same side brake when up against the 21-degree limit. This action caused the nose-wheel to rotate more than 21-degrees and an interlock prevented it's re-engagement until it returned to within limits. Get too slow and more than a few "SH" fighter pilots took on the look of "Ned and the first reader" by getting stuck in a tight corner of the ramp. It always seemed as though maintenance personnel, coming to the aid of the hapless pilot, relished the ever "SLOW" walk.

For all that the F-86 wasn't on the ground, it made up for, in spades, in the air—that is, once you got it there. The J-47-GE-27 engine produced approximately 6090-lbs of thrust. Weighing in at a robust 16,950 lbs with two 120 gal drop tank, and 20,650 lbs with two 200 gal drop tanks and two 1000 lb. bombs, the thrust-to-weight would not rival the

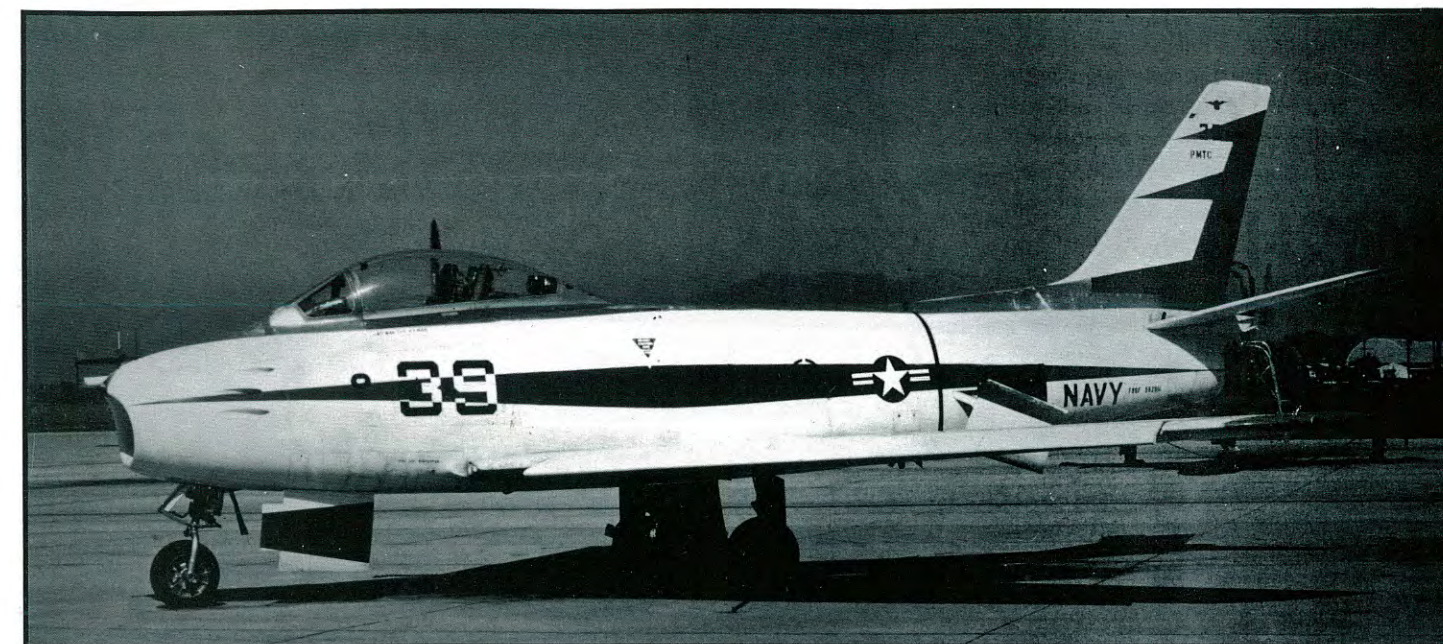
A Point Mugu QF-86F high over the California north desert in the early 1980s carries various missile simulators under the wing and on the wingtips. (credit - USN via Jim Escalle)



F-22 Raptor, but that's what runway is for. Although a turbojet engine, careful throttle movement was called for, but above 65-70% it was as good as the F-4 and that's saying a lot. Takeoff acceleration was subdued, especially at high-density alt airports. I have been on the nearly 14,000 foot long runway at Albuquerque with four external drops and 3000 ft to go, having a heart-to-heart with the aircraft about its takeoff intentions. But, and there's always a but, once airborne and cleaned up it was another story. For my first flight in the Sabre, I had a clean aircraft, which translates to about 435 gal (2800 lbs) of internal fuel, or about 45-50 min of flight time. The absolutely superb handling qualities belied the true age of the aircraft. A tad heavy on pitch, but well-balanced control harmony, excellent visibility, and an honesty born only of a North American flying machine made it a delight to fly. The -40 wing on the F model had all the aeronautical refinements North American ever put on any model Sabre: increased chord, extended wingtips, as well as full-span slats that were nothing short of superb in both function and execution.

FIGHTING THE SABRE

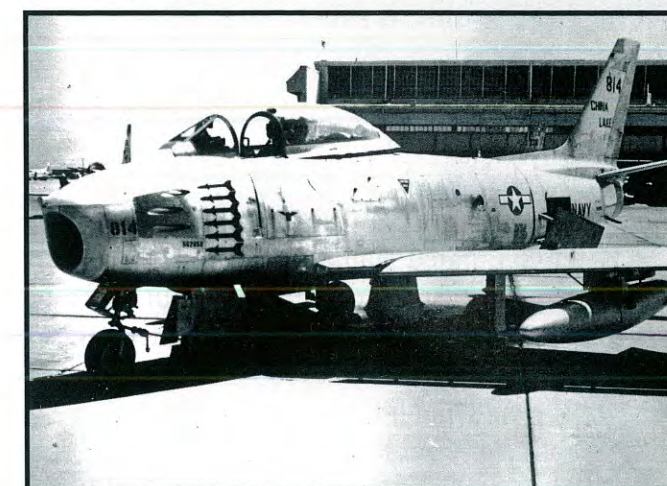
As an adversary pilot, I'd flown four models of the A-4, and slat departures were something you just learned to live with. This was not the case with the F-86. You were hard pressed to discern the slat deployment or retraction. Fighting the Sabre against an F-4 or F-14 or F-15 was a foregone conclusion if they dared get below 400-450 kts. If the turkey came



Even the best were used as drones. This Point Mugu QF-86F had once been part of the elite JASDF Blue Impulse aerobatic team but was now slated to be shot down. (credit - Bruce Trombecky)

by with his wings out it was over for him in two turns. You could park the F-86 at 95-100 knots in a flat scissors and talk yourself horse saying "Pipper On." Rolling scissors were equally amazing. Burying the nose was not a problem. Rudder control, at high alpha allowed nearly unrestricted maneuvering and nose positioning with adverse yaw issues being minimal. Both the F-4 and the F-14 had to fight the classic high-energy fight or they could count on watching from the side-lines. The Hornet was another story, but there were no steady-state gun tracking shots called by either aircraft. F-16's were hampered by the AOA limiter but snapshots and raking guns were the only shots afforded either aircraft. Corner velocity was 270-285 kts. and at that speed you had nearly 7G's available. It did not sit well with many C.O.'s, both Navy and Air Force, that a 35 year old F-86 gave their pilots and their fancy jets more than a little trouble.

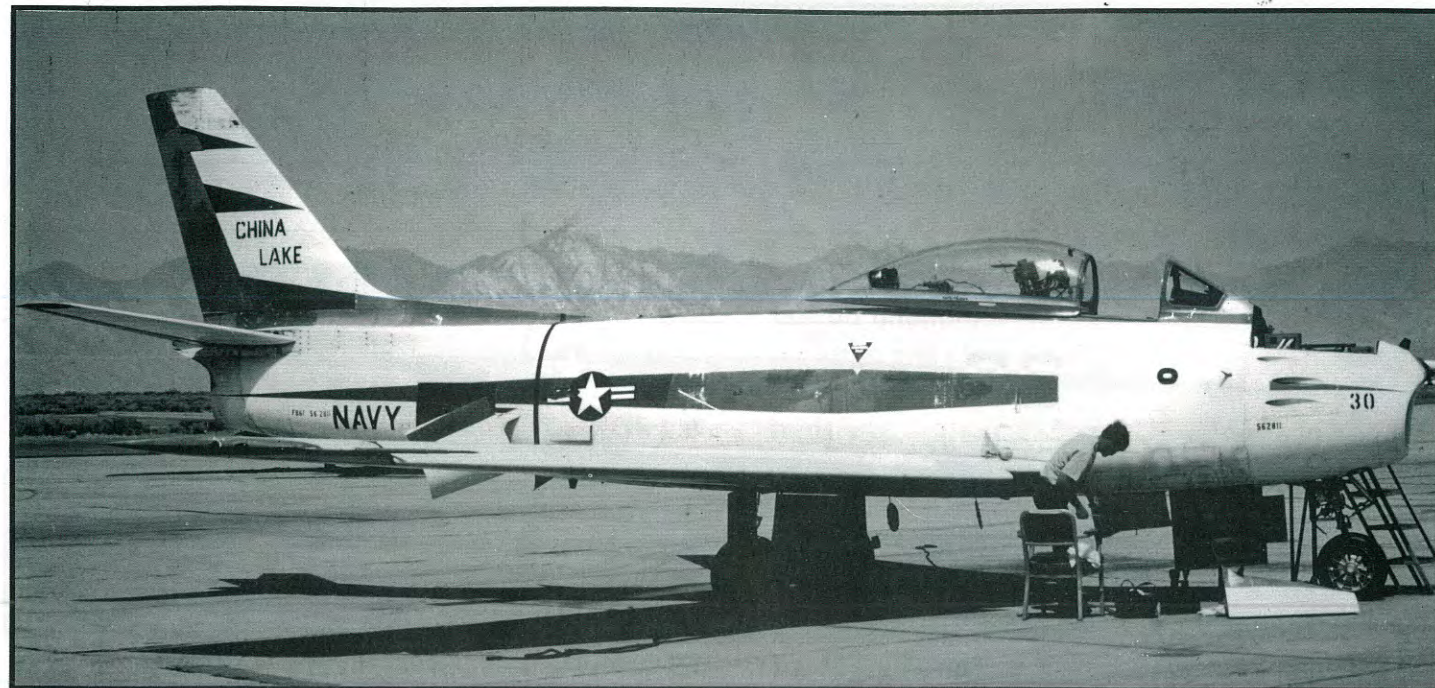
The aircraft suffered a bit in the transonic region, with phenomena such as Mach tuck, aileron reversal, and aileron buzz, but there are also many reliable reports of F-86's routinely beating Yeager and the Bell X-1 to the sound barrier. However that's not the politically-correct story to be telling! I flew most of the test cards on maintenance checks in the Sabre, and the profile called for you to take the Sabre as fast as it would go, record the Mach number on the card. How fast, you ask? The book states that when the aircraft started exhibiting flight



Point Mugu was not the only Navy base to operate the QF-86Fs. And some were luckier than others. This QF-86F has six AIM-9 "kills" during the simulated Top Gun combat. (credit - Larry Davis coll.)

A China Lake QF-86F on the ramp at Edwards AFB in 1983. (credit - Mick Roth)





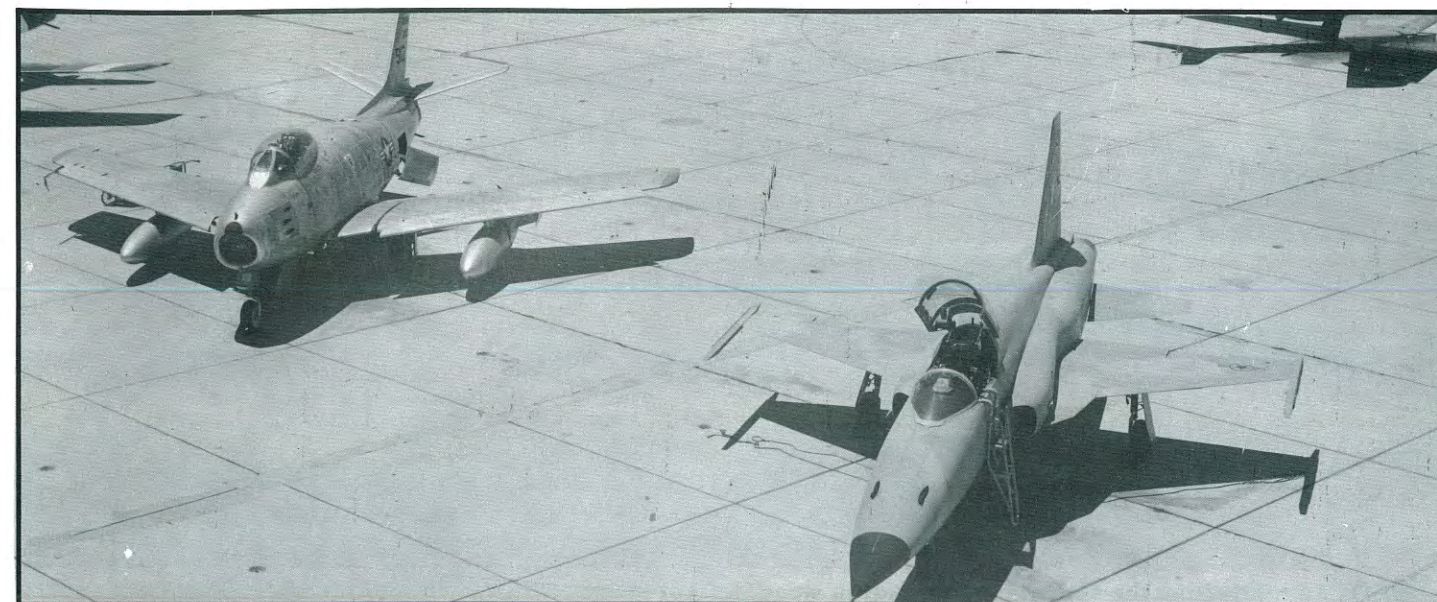
Another ex-Blue Impulse QF-86F at NAS China Lake Missile Test Center in 1982. QF-86Fs came from stocks of both Canadair and Mitsubishi-built Sabres. (credit- Chas. Stewart)

characteristics that you were not programming in, then that's the limit. At high Q, aero elastic properties produced an interesting reversal of roles of the aileron and wing.

Landings were a thing to behold. The Navy stopped practicing simulated flame-out approaches due to an unacceptably high accident rate. But since our bible was the -1, and allowed these maneuvers, we could practice them. The Sabre was as predictable, straight-forward and honest as any aircraft I've ever flown, and you could call your spot on landing. Aerobatics were a pleasure in the F-86. The airframe, courtesy of the slats, made for a buffet-free evolution and a feeling as though you were wearing, rather than flying the machine. The systems were simple and rarely, if ever, failed. My time in the aircraft was free of emergencies save a lone engine failure, which was quickly remedied by selecting the emergency fuel system. All test hops were done in the clean configuration. Due to the limited amount of internal fuel, one had to be expeditious to complete the required items on the card and still have enough fuel for the fun stuff. I remember one occasion when an engine simply needed run time in order to collect an oil sample. I climbed to over 40,000 ft. just west of Pt. Mugu, and it didn't take much to imagine myself high over the Yalu River, looking for that tell-tale glint or contrail coming from the archnemesis of the Sabre during the early 50's - the Mig-15. The intrinsic

talent and superb training of our pilots, coupled with the spirit of attack born only in a brave heart, produced a kill ratio, by many counts, well in excess of 10 to 1 against the North Korean and Chinese pilots. Some of our proudest moments and most cherished military traditions came courtesy of this fine fighter and the gallant heroes who flew the Sabre.

I was fortunate to get over 500 hrs in the Sabre and another 200-300 hrs. flying it in a drone configuration from a remote cockpit, sometimes over 100 miles away. Configured as a drone, you could do anything you could do as a manned aircraft—only the missiles that were being fired your way didn't get the adrenaline going quite like I remember they did in North Vietnam. I feel privileged to be associated with a gentleman named Rick Clemens who owns the Cactus Air Force Wings and Wheels Museum. He has a collection of over 15 war birds and we are readying a Canadair Mk. 5 Sabre which we have retrofitted with a F-40 slatted wing from an F model, which I hope to be flying very soon. We hope to be adding a P-51 to our collection of four other North American aircraft. If our neighbors to the north built them like North American did, I will eagerly look forward to renewing a love affair started late one evening in 1981 at N.A.S. Pt Mugu. So here's a nickel on the grass to you my friends; for your patriotism, loyalty and dedicated service to this wonderful nation.

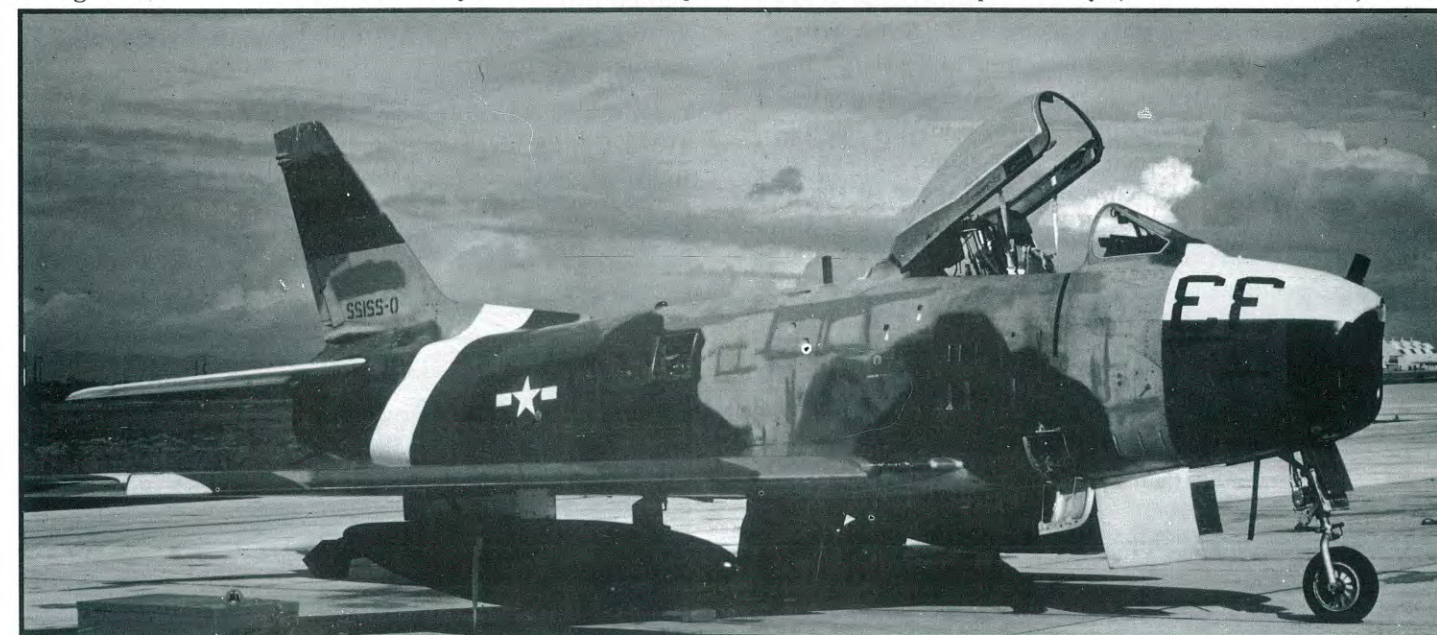


The ramp at China Lake in 1978, showing several different aircraft used as "aggressors" in the Top Gun program. Both F-86F and F-86H Sabres were used as 'MiGs' in the operations. (credit- USN)

One of the first female fighter pilots was Lt. Rosemary Conatser, who flew this QF-86F against the Top Gun pilots in the Mid-1970s. Seen here at Le More NAS in May 1977, Lt. Conatser's Sabre was adorned with a red rose under the canopy. (credit - Dave Begy)



A QF-86H assigned to Point Mugu NAS in 1976. The H models entered the Navy inventory in the early 1970s, coming straight from the New York and Maryland Air Guard squadrons that flew them previously. (credit- Ben Knowles)





Four ROCAF pilots from the 44th Fighter Squadron stand in front of one of their F-86Fs at the Little Brothers Gunnery Meet held at Clark AB, Phillippines in April 1960. Note the two MiG kills painted under the windscreen which could possibly be Capt. Chien's two GAR-8 kills. (credit - USAF)

World's First Air to Air Missile Victory

By Capt. Chien, "Mike" Yi-Chan From Sid Yahn

No, it was not an American pilot, nor German or Russian, that achieved this aviation milestone. It was a Chinese pilot assigned to the 44th Fighter Squadron at Hsin-Chu AB, Taiwan. And he was flying an F-86! Capt. Yi-Chan describes the events of the mission:

24 September 1958. The weather over the Taiwan Straights was clear and calm, a perfect day for what was about to take place in the skies over Communist China. Military activities between the Nationalist forces on Taiwan, and the communist forces in China had suddenly intensified. The Communists had initiated their shelling of Quemoy Island that would continue into 1971. Capt. Chien reported to his squadron at 7am that morning.

The 44th Squadron was equipped with the F-86F Sabre. What few people knew, however, was that several of the Hsin-Chu Sabres had been secretly modited to use the GAR-8 missile, an early member of the Sidewinder air to air missile family. North American Aviation Tech Rep Ed Kaston, assisted in the modifications. Capt Chien was one of about 10 Hsin-Chu pilots trained to operate this weapon system. Their training involved classroom briefings only. No actual missile firings were conducted.

The Republic of China Air Force (ROCAF) had been flying combat air patrols along the China coast for years. For this reason, when Capt. Chien and his fellow pilots hled into the briefing room, there was no reason to believe their mission would be anything more than a routine coastal flight.

It was 8am when General Shih Kuang-Lin, Wing Commander and his staff, began the briefing. As the details of the mission unfolded, the pilots quickly realized that it would be anything but routine.

An reconnaissance pilot was tasked to photograph Lu Chou AB, located deep in Communist China. Flight crews were briefed to maintain radio silence throughout the mission. Four F-86s, armed with two GAR-8s and the normal six .50 cal. Guns, would escort the RF-84F. It was the first combat mission involving ROCAF aircraft equipped with the missiles.

Col. Lee, Su-Yuan was assignecl to lead the flight, with Capt. Chien as Element Lead. Two additional F-86s were also scheduled, but they didn't carry any missiles.

Approximately 15 minutes behind the lead flight, twelve more F-86s would fly the same route as additional support if needed. In order the reach the target area, all mission aircraft carried two 200 gallon drop tanks. To conserve fuel, each aircraft was towed to the end of the active runway prior to engine start, reducing taxi time to a minimum.

Capt. Chien, Yi-Chan, as a young fighter pilot in the mid-1950s. Capt. Chien is credited with the first GAR-8 victory in history. (credit - Sid Yahn)



A ROCAF pilot from the 44th Fighter Squadron exits his F-86F at the Little Brothers Gunnery Meet at Clark AB. Pilots from the 44th FS, ROCAF, shot down at least three MiG-17s on 24 September 1958.

At 9am, the Leader advanced throttles to takeoff RPM, released the brakes and accelerated down the runway. Three seconds later, Capt. Chien's element did the same. Following takeoff, the flights joined up and climbed to 35,000 feet.

Approaching the China coast, Col. Lee signaled his flight to go into a "fluid four" formation. The second flight was free to fly as a tactical element formation, either right or left of Col. Lee's flight. They maintained 35,000 feet until the drop tanks were empty, dropped the tanks, and climbed to just below the briefed condensation level.

Since aircraft from other ROCAF bases were scheduled to fly over China that day, Col. Lee broke radio silence and requested that aircraft on such and such head, pull into the cons and make a right turn to the east. When the aircraft in sight did not respond, Col. Lee suspected that they were Communist aircraft on another frequency. Capt. Chien's radio was inoperable. Therefore he didn't hear Col. Lee's transmission, nor did he hear any other transmissions made that day.

Col. Lee was able to position his flight slightly below and behind the lead element of what was visually identited as four MiG-17s. At this point, Capt. Chien began pulling in behind the number 4 MiG, and began going through his GAR-8 check procedures.

By easing his nose up slightly, he was able to maintain the sight pippet on the MiG. When he heard the proper audio tone in his headset, signaling missile 'lock-on", Capt Chien pressed the bomb/ rocket button on the control stick, which launched one of his GAR-8 missiles. At approximately the same time, Col. Lee did the same.

Both Capt. Chien's and Col. Lee's missiles found their mark, resulting in two MiG-17s destroyed. Although these two young men didn't realize at the time, they had just made aviation history. Both pilots fired their second missiles at the two remaining MiGs, but due to excessive range and G forces, the missiles fell short of the targets.

Prior to returning to their home base on this day, Col. Lee's flight did encounter other MiGs. Gun camera film confirmed a second MiG for Capt. Chien with his guns, giving him two for the day. What's important, however, is that on 24 September, 1958, Capt. Chien, Yi-Chan "Mike", and Col. Lee, SuYuan, members of Republic of China Air Force, were the first pilots in history to destroy an enemy aircraft with an air to air missile during an aerial combat engagement. Today, Capt. Chien is retired and living in the United States. Unfortunately, Col. Lee was later killed in an aircraft accident.

Colonel Chein, Yi-Chan, ROCAF Ret., describing the actions of 24 Sept. 1958 which resulted in the first Sidewinder kills in history. (credit - Sid Yahn)



DON'T FORGET HOW TO START YOUR ENGINE

By Norm Green

There is an old adage among pilots "If you climb into an airplane you've been flying for years, and forget how to start it- get out!" You are being warned of impending doom. If you don't heed the warning, you might bust your butt. It sounded a bit much to the experienced 28 year old fighter pilot that I was back in 1958. I'd had more than 6 years of flying fighters. It wasn't about to happen to me.

Then, one day it did happen. It was early August and I was flying with the 131st FIS, Massachusetts ANG out of Barnes Field. I'd strapped myself in the cockpit and reached forward to begin the Start sequence. Then my mind went blank! Startled, I sat for a moment. "Could this really be happening?" In a second or two, my thoughts caught up to me and I recalled clearly how to start the engine. Yet, I wasn't sure if I should get out of the plane and run, or put aside the incident and go fly. I chose the latter. But I didn't forget this omen.

A few weeks later our squadron was on a two week encampment at Otis AFB. We had F-86Hs, the latest in the Sabre line. I was no. 4 in the flight as we took off in clear weather for a routine training flight over the mainland. However, summer weather on the Cape changes abruptly. As we were completing the mission, we were informed that Otis was 'weathered in', with a 400 foot ceiling and four miles visibility- marginal conditions for a landing. After an instrument letdown, we broke through the overcast about five miles out, skimmed just under the base of the clouds and lined up for a straight in approach to the runway, clearly visible in the distance.

No. 3 slowed his air speed for safe spacing as no. 1 and 2 were about a quarter mile ahead. We were landing in pairs- nos. 1 & 2, then 3 & 4. I was on the tail end. Wheels down, full flaps. Lead reduced his throttle to normal landing speed. The rest of us had to reduce power below that of Lead so we wouldn't overshoot the plane in front of us. Being no. 4, I had to slow further than 1, 2, or 3. I was right on stall speed.

The air was still with no wind. Our approach was progressing nicely except for one thing. I was getting a stall 'burbur'. No. 1 & 2 landed without incident. However, without ground wind to dissipate it, the jet wash left by the first two planes lay unseen at the leading edge of the runway. Riding the stall, I



Norm Green at K-14, Kimpo, Korea, Spring, 1953.

the leading edge of the runway. Riding the stall, I approached the roundout to land, hit the jet wash and lost lift on my right wing. Instantly, my aircraft flipped on its right side, wings vertical! I was falling. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the ground below me. I knew I was going in.

Fortunately, there was a large depression in the approach area just prior to the runway. I was in that low area below the runway. So low I couldn't see the runway! Reacting without time to think, I jammed full left rudder and aileron, yanked back hard on the stick and threw on full power. I might as well go out in a great ball of fire. Quicker than I could follow it, the plane rolled awkwardly to the left, raised its nose and lifted itself over the lip of the runway. Then fell with a THUMP! On its wheels, remarkably making a safe landing.

An old friend with whom I'd gone through primary flight school watched unbelieving from runway control. "After all these years, there goes Green!" was his thought as he saw me disappear below the end of the runway.

I taxied into the parking spot and shut down the engine. When I tried to get out of the cockpit, I couldn't move. My legs and arms didn't function no control, no strength. In my mouth was the taste of brass, the taste of fear. Emotionally though, I felt no fear. In fact I was quite calm. It was my body that took the brunt of the trauma. In a few minutes I gathered myself, crawled out of the airplane and made my way to Base Ops.

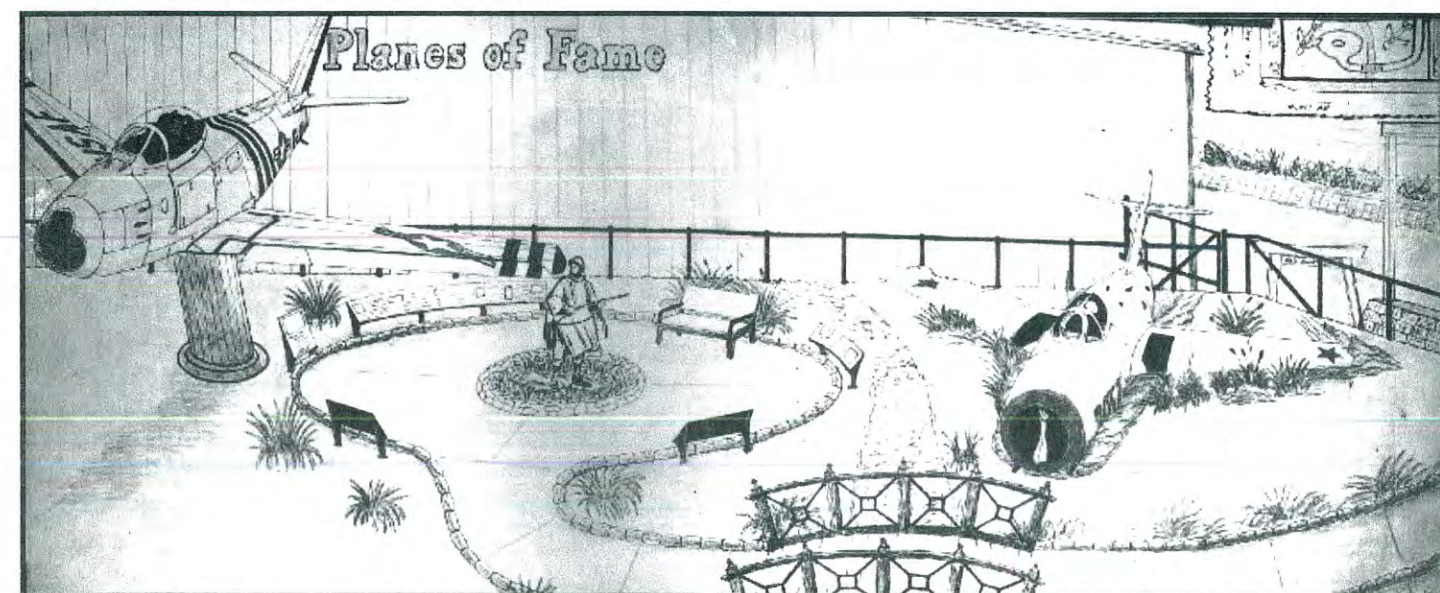
That old axiom about not remembering how to start your engine came crashing into my consciousness. I decided not to mess with fate and two weeks later I hung up my wings and resigned from military flying. It was an exciting life, but I didn't think my luck would hold as it hadn't for a lot of fellow pilots who'd lost their lives in those early days of jet fighters.

PLANES OF FAME MUSEUM KOREAN WAR DISPLAY

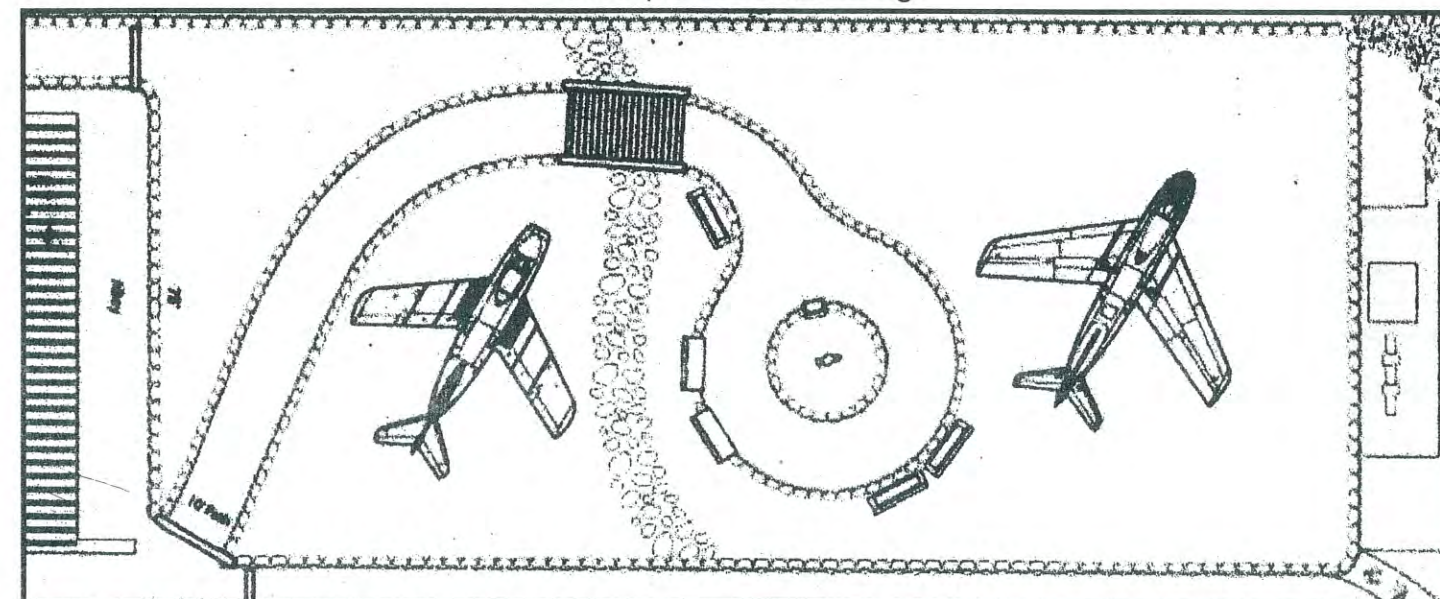
We received the following note from Mr. Steve Hinton, President of the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino, California. They are requesting monetary help from anyone so as to be able to build a brand new Memorial to honor our Korean War veterans. It looks like a very worthwhile cause and is endorsed by President JR Alley.

Some notes about the museum:

The Planes of Fame Air Museum's mission is to: Preserve Aviation history, inspire interest in Aviation, Educate the public and honor aviation pioneers and veterans. We are breaking ground on a Korean War Memorial located on a quarter acre of the museum campus to honor our veterans who sacrificed all to keep the Korean people free. Please vote of the "Pepsi Refresh Project" site to help us make this important project a reality in 2012...



<http://www.refresheverything.com/koreanwarmemorialatplanesoffame>
www.planesoffame.org



Here is an artists rendition of the proposed memorial. They already have the airplanes.
 Planes Of Fame Air Museum - "Where Warbirds Fly and Aviation History Lives"

Book review

We have another book about the F-86 that is currently available at better book stores and online at places such as Amazon.com. The title is: North American F-86 Sabre, 1947 Onwards, Owners Workshop Manual by Mark Linney.

The book is based on the Golden Apple Trust F-86A #48-178. It is 164 pages in length, with hard covers. Inside the pages are jammed full of history of the entire F-86 Sabre day fighter program, with dozens of drawings from the various Tech Manuals showing details of the airplane system.

There are also a couple of hundred photos in black and white and color, showing the service life of the Sabre series, including Korea, as well as dozens of detail photos of the GAT F-86A in various stages of undress. Literally every panel is removed and the compartment is shown open, many for the very first time. Highly recommended.

Larry Davis, *editor/reviewer*



Sabre reunions:

19th Reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association will be in Las Vegas on April 7th, 8th, and 9th, 2013.

Watch for full information and details. Start making plans NOW!

NOTICE: The Super Sabre Society reunion will again be tied together with the F-86 Sabre Assn. 19th Reunion. The Super Sabre Society Reunion is set for 9, 10, 11, and 12 April 2013 at the Gold Coast Hotel Casino, Las Vegas, NV. Contact their Society for full information.

**Class 53A Reunion
November 10-13 In New Orleans, LA.
Contact Tom Calkins, (941)792-8723
Email: Reunion53A@aol.com**

THE FIGHTER-BOMBER ACE

By Larry Davis

During the Korean War there were forty aces crowned. Each had shot down at least five enemy aircraft. Many had shot down ten and two men had downed over fifteen enemy aircraft. All but two pilots were assigned to fighter interceptor groups in Korea. And one of those two was Navy!

The lone pilot to make ace with a fighter-bomber squadron was Major James P. Hagerstrom. Major Hagerstrom had the distinct honor of being one of only seven pilots to make ace in both World War 2 and in the Korean War. He scored six victories with the 8th FS, 49th FG in World War 2; and then followed that with 8 - MiG kills in Korea.

Initially assigned to the 4th FIG at Kimpo in late 1952, Major Hagerstrom scored two MiG kills before transferring to the 18th FBG at Osan. The 18th FBG transitioned into brand new F-86F-30 fighterbombers in January 1953. Major Hagerstrom was assigned as the 67th FBS Commander to lend expertise in both flying the F-86F and combat tactics that he had used with the 4th FIG. He scored 8 - MiG kills by the Spring of 1953, becoming the only fighter-bomber Ace in Korea. Major Hagerstrom passed away on June 25th 1993.

Major James Hagerstrom taxlis to the active runway at Osan AB in his F-86F nicknamed "MiG Poison", in the Spring of 1953. (credit - Don McNamara)



Maj. James P. Hagerstrom, Korea 1953.
(credit - USAF)



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Sabre Pilots Association, PO Box 34423, Las Vegas, NV 89133-4423.

What Is It? Anyone know or have any information regarding this all-DayGlo Red F-86D photographed at Edwards AFB in the early 1950s. Note the various camera ports on the fuselage and wing leading edge. If you know anything about this gaudy Sabre, contact the editor, SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Drive NE, Canton, OH 44721, or email sabreclsx@aol.com

