

# SABREJET CLASSICS

*A Publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association*

Volume 24, Number 1

Winter 2016-17



► Inside: 2017 Reunion info & Registration update, It Never Happened!, an RF-86 story – pt.2, Boyhood Dream, Who Let The Dogs Out!, more!

## SabreJet Classics

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## SabreJet Classics

Volume 24, Number 1 • Winter 2017

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### Front Cover:

One of the first F-86A-1s on the outdoor assembly ramp at the North American Aviation Inglewood, CA plant in 1948. The aircraft left the main plant with anti-corrosion zinc chromate paint, which was removed before acceptance by the Air Force. (credit - NAA)

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SabreJet Classics is published by the F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn. The F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn. is a non-profit, veterans organization, with membership limited to individual pilots who have flown the F-86 Sabre aircraft. The goals of the Association is to "perpetuate the history of the F-86 Sabre, the units to which it was assigned, and the men that flew the Sabre"; and to perpetuate an accurate, patriotic portrayal of our national, military, and Air Force history and heritage. If you are NOT a member, but meet the membership qualifications, you are invited to join. Application forms are available on our website or at the Las Vegas address. Dues are \$25/year, \$50/3 years. SabreJet Classics is published solely for the private use of association members. No portion of SabreJet Classics may be used or reprinted without permission from the President of the Association, and the Editor of the magazine. SabreJet Classics is published three times per year. Extra copies of an issue can be ordered at \$3.00/copy. Subscriptions for non-members are available at \$25/year. All payments should be made payable to "F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn.", and sent to the Las Vegas address.

## The President's notebook

We're well into 2017 and getting very close to our final reunion. By the number of you who have already registered when I wrote these comments, it looks like a big turnout is in the making. It should be a very exciting time. I will talk more about our reunion a little later, but there are a few things that I would like to discuss first.

You all have seen the nice tribute Larry Davis gave to Bob Hoover's Flying West in our last issue of the SabreJet Classics. Bob folded his wings on October 25, 2016 just before Larry needed to get that issue to the printer. I did not want to hold up the issue in order to get it to you before Christmas. Larry assured me it would not be delayed. We all owe Larry kudos for the great job he has and is still doing for us. With that said about Bob Hoover, I want to share an experience Dan Druen and I had concerning the Robert A. "Bob" Hoover's Celebration of Life that was conducted in remembrance of one of the greatest aviation icons of our times. Looking back, we, our Association, were extremely fortunate to have had Bob and his lovely wife, Colleen, attend our 2011 reunion for the entire three days.

On November 18 a group of aviation well known's organized the production of a Memorial and Celebration of Life in an extremely short time that was tremendous. Dan Druen and I were fortunate to be invited to a group of over 1500 aviation notables from civil and military aviation gathered at the Clay Lacy Aviation hanger at Van Nuys Airport in California. Dan was selected to be one of 20 who gave personal speeches of their experiences with Bob Hoover over the years. Also, in attendance from Nellis was B/G Jeannie Leavitt, 57th Wg Commander.

After the indoor ceremony was finished, the hanger doors were opened to allow everyone to move outside to view a very impressive presentation of military honors performed by a military rifle guard salute, bag pipes, presentation of the American flag to the family and a series of fly-bys lead by a diamond formation with a Sabre Liner leading, two Thunder Bird F-16s flying the wings and a Canadian Snow Bird CT-114 Tudor bringing up the slot. That was followed by a beautiful sight of a Nellis F-22 leading a pair of F-86 Sabres from Planes of Fame Air Museum. The finale and a tremendous salute to Bob was a War Bird four-ship with a P-47 Thunderbolt leading a Hellcat, Bob's famous yellow P-51 Mustang and a Spitfire. Passing over head, the P-51 performed the missing man fly-away with a back ground of Taps being played. What a tremendous tribute to a flying legend.

Of special note, in Bob's Celebration of Life program hand-out and announced during the indoor ceremony, was a thanks to those who donated financially to make this event possible. The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association was included as we, our Board, approved a \$1000.00 donation to help in the over \$50,000.00 needed.

In previous issues I have expressed our Association's desire to support construction of the Planes of Fame Air Museum's Korean War Memorial. Last year the ground area was prepared and the MIG-15 was laid in place. Work came to a stand still for lack of money. Our Association has donated \$10,000.00 for this effort and I have been notified the F-86 is in the final stages of finishing and will be positioned up on the pedestal this coming year. Personal donations by our members are welcome.

Now, to an issue that many of you have been exposed to recently and some of you have asked me what is it all about; that is The Sabre Jet Association. First, this association has no affiliation with us. Basically what Rick Mitchell, the founder, has said in his emails to many of our members as to his history and background to our association are true. He was the first Sabre Jet Classics editor for nearly three years in the early "90s". I'm not sure of all that transpired, but Hank Buttelmann, then president and the board, decided to get a new editor and found Larry Davis. The Association paid Rick for the issues he wrote and that left us clear. However, they did make Rick an honorary member. As for our association sponsoring or supporting Rick's Sabre Jet Association, we have no part in it. Joining his association is strictly up to our individual member's desires.

Back to the status of our reunion next April. Having Planes of Fame Air Museum's F-86s coming to Nellis is a go. We have our entertainment set and our banquet dinner plans are falling in-place. At the time of writing this piece, first week of January, we had nearly one hundred and fifty people signed up. That's a good sign of a great attendance.

Happy and a Safe New Year to All.

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

**J.R. Alley**  
*President*

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## from the *Editor*



Well this is it! The FINALE of Sabrejet Classics!. The last of the Mohecans. It's been many long years since we published our first issue, vol 3-1, way back in 1994. I can remember the day that Col. Hank Buttlemann, then President of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn., gave me my orders.

He told me the Association had bought the rights to the magazine and wanted me to be the editor. When I objected saying, "But I'm just an author, not an editor. I wouldn't know where to start." And he replied - "Then learn. I'm a colonel and you're enlisted. You will learn!"

And learn I did, very quickly. The first issue of SabreJet Classics came out six months later. Now here we are twenty three years and some sixty nine issues later.

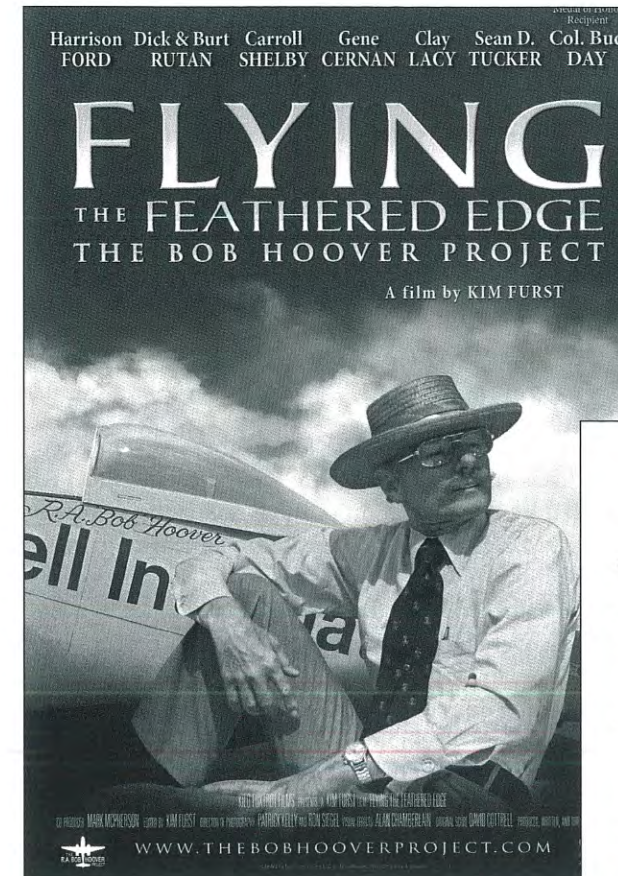
Over those sixty nine issues, we've covered virtually every Sabre subject you can name. We of course, covered Korea extensively. But we also had entire issues devoted to Air Defense Command F-86Ds, Air Guard Sabres. F-86Hs, RF-86s, and development of the XP-86. And we had the story of some really esoteric birds like the inflight refueling tests. And one really amazing uncovering of the F-86E with 'wingtip tanks'

All of these stories were from you the guys that flew our beloved Sabres, and a few from guys that maintained them either on the ramp or in the factory. I did add a few history articles here and there.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the help I received over the years in trying to bring you the best magazine possible. In the beginning there was BrigGen. Lon Walter, who tried to make the magazine readable. And John Henderson, NAA Tech Rep, who made sure the megazine was correct. And my good friend, SSgt David Menard, who probably knew more than any Air Force historian ever.

It's been many a good time over these past years. I will miss it. But not before seeing everyone at the 21st Reunion on April 23, 24, 25, at the Gold Coast. See you guys there.

Thanks for all the help!  
Larry Davis, *editor*



### ◀ FLYING THE FEATHERED EDGE,

The Bob Hoover Project is a film about the life of our own Bob Hoover. It's a film by Kim Furst, and features such prominent people as Harrison Ford, Carroll Shelby, Dan Druen and Col. Bud Day among many others., It is available at: [www.THEBOBHOOVERPROJECT.COM](http://www.THEBOBHOOVERPROJECT.COM)



"Wow! GR8 film and an important tribute to Bob."

- Burt Rutan  
Aerospace Engineer, SpaceShipOne, etc.,



"Best aviation documentary I have ever seen."

- Jack J. Pelton,  
Chairman, Experimental Aircraft Association



"This is by far the best job of story telling of a legend in our business that I have ever seen."

- Steve Hinton,  
President, Planes of Fame Air Museum

Now available at  
[WWW.THEBOBHOOVERPROJECT.COM](http://WWW.THEBOBHOOVERPROJECT.COM)

► This photo was taken at the F-86 Sabre Dedication at the National Museum of the US Air Force in the late 1980s. Jim Campbell (L) and Don McNamara (R) represented the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. The monument is in the park on the west side of the museum. If you're near Dayton, Ohio, visit the Museum. It's well worth the trip. There's an entire wing of the building devoted to the Cold War Warriors.



# Boyhood Dream To A Flying Legend

## Steve Hinton Flying the Sabre

By JR Alley

• • • • •

*For nearly twenty five years, the SabreJet Classics magazine has been filled with over two hundred stories written by our members sharing their many experiences while flying the F-86 Sabre in combat or other military related flying operations.*

Many articles were and are written by Larry Davis, our editor since 1994 as he is considered the archival expert on the F-86 with his vast collection of F-86 historical documents and photos. More recently, some of our members who flew Sabres in the civilian world have shared some of their stories with us. We, as an Association, about to stand down, need to follow one of constitution's prime purposes. That is to preserve and perpetuate the proud history of the F-86 Sabre. What have we, as an Association, done over the years to meet our Constitutional goal?

Most obvious is the publication of our SabreJet Classics magazine for all these years. Second, the Association's F-86 Memorial at the Air Force Museum's Memorial Park at Wright Patterson AFB became a reality in October of 1988. That was followed by the dedication of the F-86E static display at Nellis AFB's Freedom Park in April of 1994. For the 1994 Nellis AFB Golden Tattoo air show, the Association donated \$32,000 to support the flying demonstrations of four F-86s and one MIG 15 for two days. The list of actions to perpetuate the history of the Sabre goes on to include Smithsonian Air and Space Museum's Udvar-Hazy Wall of Honor foils listing over 800 of our members names as well as more recent donations to the Planes of Fame Air Museum's Korean War Memorial still in progress. When it comes to perpetuating the history of the F-86 Sabre, nothing does it better for our nation's younger generations than to see the Sabre actually flying. As an Association, we do not have the financial resources to make that happen. There are nearly a dozen Sabres flying today, but there is only one organization that has the organizational, financial and piloting skills to keep the Sabres flying for many years to come and that is

the Planes of Fame Air Museum at Chino, California. The driver of flying the F-86 at P.O.F. is a guy by the name of Steve Hinton, a pilot who, as a very young boy, dreamed to fly the Sabre. He made that dream come true in a big way.

Steve Hinton clearly remembers, as a three year old boy, when his father, a former marine, took him to see the famous movie, "The Hunters." Steve fell in love with the F-86 Sabre at that young age. A few years later that passion was reinforced when an F-86 pilot by the name of Ross Diehl, with the California Air National Guard, took Steve under his wing and shared 8 mm movies and many Sabre stories with him. Steve built a love of the Sabre that developed into a burning passion which grew stronger after he started working as a teen ager on several Sabres at the Planes of Fame Air Museum by disassembling, moving, painting, and ect.

In 1972, Steve started working for Leroy Penhall's Fighter Imports at Chino. At that time, the main project in the hanger was Gary Levitz's Sabre. Steve's previous experience with the "Museum's Sabre, fit in as one of the crew.

During 1974, Bob Hoover started to do air shows in Penhall's Sabre and Leroy asked Steve if he wanted to be the delivery guy for Hoover? What a fantastic opportunity that was impossible to turn down. At that time, Steve was flying the museum's Mustang, Hellcat and Leroy's P-51D. Leroy said Steve needed an instrument license. Steve borrowed money from his girl friend and had his instrument ticket in two weeks. Ross Diehl checked Steve out in the T-33 first. Steve flew ten hours solo before Ross checked him out in the Sabre in 1974. After flying about 70 hours in the Sabre, Canadair Mk. 5, Steve took the Sabre to Oshkosh, Fargo, Winnipeg, Salt Lake City, Great Falls, Reno Air Races, Mojave Air Races and Pt. Mugu. Steve flew Levitz's Sabre "86" many times that year after Leroy was killed in January 1975. Then "86" was sold to Bob Laidlaw's Flight Systems Inc. at Mojave, California. Steve's Sabre flying was just beginning. A few years later, he flew Jim Robinson's Mk 6 after it had been rebuilt at Chino by Bruce Goessling. Steve flew John Sandberg's Sabre while it was kept at the museum for about three years. During that time Steve flew it for a few TV shows including Blue Thunder, Space and others.

Steve's Sabre flying went to a higher level when Tom Freidkin purchased his Sabre, F-86F-30, 52-5012 from the Argentina Air Force and kept it on and off at the Air Museum. Tom donated the Sabre to the Planes of Fame Air Museum in 2000 where it is a center piece of the Museum's jet flying operations.

Steve and some of the Museum's other jet qualified pilots have been flying "012" for the last fifteen years for local demonstrations and air shows. More recently, Steve has been flying in a new and exciting roll as USAF Heritage Flight performer in front of tens of thousand people all over North America. Flying in the Heritage program gave Steve the opportunity to fly the Sabre in the higher performance arena of 360 to 420kts without being restricted to the standard FAA flight restrictions below 10,000ft. Additionally, flying with F-15s/F-16s/A-10s at low level is about as good as it gets for civilian pilots these days.

*continued on page 7*

In order to present to air show viewers what the Sabre was designed to do, Steve re-enacts dog fighting the MIG-15. He has spent many hours pulling "Gs" rolling scissors, zooming and diving trying to get that MIG-15 in his gun sight or reversing and zooming to keep that MIG of his tail. That aerial duel is a real crowd pleaser.

Another air show crowd pleaser is the more recent add of the three ship Sabre formation team, "The Horsemen." This team is made up of P.O.F.'s Sabre with Steve leading, Dan Friedkin flying his Mk 6 and Ed Shipely in his 86F flying the wings. Their show is not as dynamic as the Thunderbirds or Blue Angels, but it is a beautifully orchestrated series of low altitude formation acrobatics done in flowing harmony that fully displays the beautiful lines of the Sabre.

Steve has been blessed with the opportunity to fly this great air machine for well over 40 years. In his "Fighter Rebuild shop", Steve has rebuilt 3 or 4 Sabres for other owners. He has signed off the FAA Letters of Authorization for many Sabre pilots including the famous Skip Holm of Reno Unlimited air racing fame.

Steve was fortunate enough to be around people like Ross Diehl and Bob Hoover and soak -up so much of their great experiences flying the Sabre. He was able to get good training at a young age. He continued to build on that over the years and is fortunate to fly, for so many years, one of the most beautiful jet fighters ever built. But, Steve's flying career was not just flying the Sabre. Actually, that was and is a small part of his world of flying.

Steve has logged over 11,000 hours flying over 150 type war birds and vintage military type airplanes. In 1979, he and his crew broke the 3-kilometer speed record for a piston engine aircraft when he flew the famous "Red Baron" a modified P-51 at an average speed of 499.018 mph.

Steve became a notable unlimited air racing champion at a young age. He won six unlimited-class air races and was the Unlimited National Champion in the Red Baron in 1978 and again in 1985 flying a Super Corsair. He won four consecutive Unlimited races in one year, and remains the only pilot ever to do so.

Steve Hinton, now 63 years old, was inducted into the California Aviation Hall of Fame in March of 2016. He has no plans on slowing down and flies the Sabre any chance he gets.

At the lead-in of this article, perpetuating the history of the F-86 Sabre was and is the goal of the F-86 Sabre Pilot Association. One might wonder at age 63 how much longer Steve will be able to continue flying the Sabre. Well, Planes of Fame Air Museum has a stable of other jet qualified pilots that can keep the tradition going. M/Gen Tommy Williams is now flying "012" and performing in Heritage Flight demonstrations. Coming along is Steve's son, Steve Jr. following in his father's foot steps. At age 21 he became the youngest person to win a Reno Unlimited Class air race and has a great racing career ahead of him. Young Steve Jr. is chomping at the bit to get checked out in the F-86 so he can fly that beautiful bird for the world to see for many years.

For those attending our reunion this April, we will get a chance to see Steve fly that beautiful Sabre. On behalf of the Planes of Fame Air Museum he has agreed to bring their Sabre to Nellis AFB and fly at our Nellis Day event next April. Steve, we will be looking forward to seeing you then.

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## PLANES OF FAME AIR MUSEUM KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL - UPDATE



In past issues of our Classics, we have informed you of the Korean War Memorial that the Planes of Fame Air Museum at Chino, California is in the process of building. Initially, they thought they would have it completed by the end of 2013. Due to very expensive construction criteria required by the state of California and the lack of donations, progress has been slow. The land has been prepared for some time. A big obstacle has been getting the twenty foot deep hole and the foundation plan for the pedestal to mount the F-86 approved by the state. That has been done and the hole and foundation have been completed. But there is much work yet to be done and the money to support that effort is not available.

Since perpetuating the F-86 and its history is part of our constitutional charter, our Board of Directors has approved that we donate \$5000.00 to the Planes of Fame for that worthy effort. As a point, all \$5000.00 will go toward that project.

To further help move this project toward completion, we fully encourage any of our members who would like make a personal donation to this project. You can do so for whatever amount you feel you can make. Be sure you note on your check that your donation is for the Korean War Memorial project. By doing that, it guarantees one hundred percent of your donation will go to that project.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Jerry Wilkins, Executive Director, Planes of Fame Air Museum, Chino Airport, 7000 Merrill Ave., 17 Chino, CA 91710. PH is (909) 597-3722 and web site is [planesoffame.org](http://planesoffame.org).

# God Speed John Glenn

The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association lost one of its truly premier members on December 8th, 2016, when John Glenn, fighter pilot, test pilot, astronaut, and Senator passed away at the age of 95. John Glenn was born on July 18th 1921. During his senior year at Muskingum College, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. In March 1942 John left Muskingum and joined the Navy as an Aviation Cadet, before transferring into the US Marine Corps. He flew 59 combat missions, earning two Distinguished Flying Crosses and two Air Medals.

When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, Glenn went to Korea in 1953 where he flew F9F Panther jet fighters, flying 63 more combat missions with VMF-311, flying alongside Boston Red Sox Hall of Famer Ted Williams. In June 1953, Glenn applied and was authorized an inter-service exchange position with one of the US Air Force squadrons flying combat in Korea.

He reported to the 25th Fighter squadron at Suwon and flew 27 more combat missions in F-86F Sabres. Between June 12th, 1953 and July 22nd, 1953, Glenn shot down three

MiG-15 soviet jets. After Korea, he started a test pilot career and his first assignment was in the FJ-3 Fury, a Navy version of the Sabre.

It was his experience in test flying that landed him his most famous mission, one of the Mercury Seven, the first US astronauts. On February 20th, 1962, John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth in the Friendship 7, making a total of three orbits, before splashing down 800 miles southeast of Cape Canaveral. John Glenn resigned from NASA in 1964 and retired from the Marine Corps in 1965.

John Glenn successfully ran for the US Senate and was elected in 1974, serving 24 years before retiring in January 1999. However, while still a Senator, John again went into space in 1998 as a crew member of the shuttle Discovery, the oldest person to fly in space. During the 1990s, John Glenn was an active member of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association.

*God Speed John Glenn!*



## Folded Wings

Logan Jack Doub ~ January 13th, 2017

John H. Glenn ~ December 8th, 2016

Donald V. Jones ~ November 22nd, 2016

Donald A. Kachlert ~ March 1st, 2016

Lee P. Kriner ~ February 19th, 2005

Ben M. Pollard ~ November 11th, 2016

Elmer L. Slavey ~ January 12th, 2017

Robert "Bob" Sicard ~ December 25th, 2016

Donald W. Stewart ~ December 23rd, 2015

Bobby E. Walls ~ December 14th, 2016



# It Never Happened!

## The Story of One Spook Pilot - Part 2

By William J. Semonin



As we moved out to sea the thought of my utility failure once again made me realize that I had to get this thing on the ground without incident before I could claim any success. I guess it was getting time for me to try to get the message to Bob that I had a problem. We were approaching about half way across the channel when I began sliding into close formation to get Bob's attention. Usually you do not do this until the leader rocks his wings, the signal to close up the formation. When I got close in Bob looked my way to see what was going on and that's when I gave him the HEFOR hand signal which indicates a problem.

That signal is mostly used when you have a radio problem and cannot transmit on the radio. With us operating under radio silence I felt Bob would be on the alert for further signals. The hand signal for HEFOR is to pat the top of your helmet with your hand with your palm down then hold up the number of fingers that indicate which of the HEFOR you are attempting to indicate. One finger is for (H) hydraulic. Two fingers is for (E) electrical. Three fingers is for (F) fuel. Four fingers is for (O) oxygen and five fingers is for (R) radio. If it's for a radio transmitter out you pat your oxygen mask in the front lower part of the oxygen mask which holds your mike. If your radio receiver is out you pat the side of your helmet over the ear as the ear phone receivers are over your ears. Then last, give the cut signal by moving your hand back in forth below your chin across your throat. On the ground that is used for cut engines, in the air that indicates that function you have given with the number of your fingers is inoperative.

In my case I gave him the HEFOR signal by patting the top of my helmet then holding up one finger to indicate (H) for hydraulic then moving my hand back and forth under my chin to indicate my problem is with a hydraulic system inoperative. I was not concerned about which hydraulic system to signal him that had failed because he could see that I had flight controls to be able to fly the airplane so I felt sure he realized it was the utility system. Bob nodded his



▲ Bill Semonin next to an RF-86F at Komaki AB, Japan in 1954.  
(credit - Bill Semonin)

head to let me know he understood the signal. Then I gave him the same HEFOR signal but held up three fingers (F) for fuel then gave him a thumbs up to let him know that my fuel was at least as we had planned. Actually it looked like that I would get back over K-55 at altitude with about 500 pounds, which was better than our plan. Bob immediately pointed to himself held up three fingers then a thumbs up also. I now felt better as I now knew that his fuel was OK too.

I wanted to see if Bob could look under or around the aircraft for any sign of a hydraulic leak. Hydraulic fluid is red and can be easily observed if you have a leak. While Bob was looking at me I lifted the aircraft up to above his canopy, hoping that he would get the idea and take a look under the aircraft for any sign of a leak. He kept looking at me and when I lowered the aircraft back into normal formation position he gave me the thumbs up signal. That helped some to know that there was no hydraulic fluid showing on the aircraft.

With this condition understood by Bob I felt sure he knew that the procedure for a utility system hydraulic failure was to land out of a flame out pattern rather than make a normal 360 degree overhead approach. I gave him another radio out

signal for land as soon as possible thinking that he would set up our let down for me to go into the flame out pattern at 6,000 feet. I held a clinched fist with my thumb down on the top of the canopy to indicate a landing signal then pointed to him and held up one finger then pointed forward to indicate for him to land first. I wanted to make sure he got on the ground before I did incase I would close the runway for some reason.

The procedure for using the flame out pattern to land with utility hydraulic failure is due to no hydraulic pressure in the utility system to lower the landing gear. All three landing gear have to gravity fall into the down and locked position. The main gear presents no problem and if required you can yaw the aircraft left and right to lock the gear into position using the wind stream to help lower the gear. The nose gear has to drop forward and has to rotate 90 degrees into the wind stream. You must keep your airspeed as low as possible when lowering the nose gear so as to minimize the wind force on the nose gear, usually lower than 175 knots. If the nose gear does not lock into position you can load the aircraft with a little G's to help pop it into locked position.

You also will not have any speed brakes to slow you down and using the flame out approach gives you some extra time to get set up for the correct landing speed. Upon touchdown you only have one application of brakes available from the pressure in the accumulator. You will have no nose wheel steering either. The flaps are electrical and you can lower them when you put the gear down or anytime during the approach as required.

As we approached the coast Bob gave me the hand signal to reduce power then started our decent without using any speed brakes. Bob must have felt like we had enough fuel to make a more gradual power off let down but still keeping our indicated air speed up. Letting down from our high altitude with our air speed increasing from 240 knots to about 500 knots required more time in the decent, thus we would burn more fuel which we did not have a whole lot of.

Once we got past the coast of Korea and over land I ran off about ten clearing shots on all cameras. My mind was locked into the landing so much that I almost forgot to do that. I could have done it earlier, however, I was always told not to take clearing pictures over water, as some of the film processing personnel that processed the film do not have

a trained eye and might think that a water photo would look like unexposed film and would discard the film. I later learned that was not the case.

We adjusted our turns and orientation to K-55 so as to cross over the field at about 10,000 feet and Bob tipped his hand with a quick finger swirl then broke off to get on down to enter the landing pattern.

As I continued to let down I switched the radio to the tower channel at K-55. I had been giving some thought to break radio silence and advise the tower of my hydraulic pressure failure and declaring an emergency. With no breaks and nose wheel steering there is the possibility of running off the runway if everything did not work out just right. With the cameras exposed with the photos we had just taken I decided it was worth the risk to play it safe and break radio silence verses maybe telegraphing to the North Koreans some flight was in the air. We knew that they monitored our radio frequencies all the time. Besides, we were home and there was not anything they could do about it now.

I decided to make up a call sign that I hoped any body with information about us in the tower might realize it was me. I felt that Bob had landed or was in the pattern by now and if they saw that there was only one RF-86 they would wonder where the other one was.

Osan Tower "This is Martini 2 declaring an Emergency with utility hydraulic failure. I will be landing out of a flame out pattern...over". "Roger Martini 2" they gave the runway heading and altimeter setting and stated you are cleared to land. "Roger 2", and that was the end of the radio communications.

I was now entering high key at 175 knots and lowered the landing gear. As expected I heard the gear start down. After what seemed like forever, I felt the two main gear lock into position and two main gear green lights came on. I keep my eye on the nose gear light, anxiously waiting for it to turn green or hear it lower into the down position. Just as I decided to pop the stick forward then back to see if I could help by pulling a little G's and jerk it down, on came the third green light. Wow, what a relief that was. Now I could concentrate on setting up for the landing then lowered the flaps. With the fuel as low as it was I knew this thing was going to float a long way on round out. I wanted to come

across the runway at 130 knots, a little below normal final airspeed, and try to touchdown within 1,000 from the end of the runway. As I turned final the tower gave me a green light. I hope that meant they saw all three landing gear down.

With my airspeed and altitude a little lower than normal I crossed the end of the runway and began my round out. Then, on the radio came "That's that recce bird". One of the F-86 ground alert aircraft pilots must have not been in on the radio silence briefing...so much for that. Touchdown was normal, except for having about 120 knots. The first thing I did was to open the canopy to help with aerodynamic breaking, then I shut down the engine. There was no need to keep the engine running as the utility system was gone and the engine running would not help keep the gear locked down. I held the nose gear as high as possible to provide for as much aerodynamic breaking that I could get. I did not want to have it drop and hit the runway hard. With no hydraulic pressure to help hold into the locked position I wanted to ease it down gently. The nose wheel touched the runway and did not collapse. That was another sigh of relief. All I had to do now was roll to the end of the runway and apply some left break to start my exit on to the run-up ramp at the end of the runway. Then apply both full brakes until I came to a stop. I knew I would only have one application of brakes and I just hoped that would be adequate to bring me to a stop.

The fire trucks were there following me across the ramp and that was a good sight to see. There were two ground crew personnel in a blue pick up truck that jumped out as soon as I came to a stop and headed under the aircraft. I could see the gear pin banners in there hand so I knew what they were about to do. Without hesitation they came back out from under the aircraft with the thumbs up hand signal indicating the pins were in place. Up rolled a yellow tug with a tow bar and started to back up to the nose gear to prepare to give me a tow back to the ramp. Every one on the ground knew exactly what to do and did it in a hurry. I then felt a little better about declaring and emergency because all the ground personnel were there and ready to do the job they were trained to do under this circumstance.

I do not remember exactly what my thoughts were at the time. I just realized that we had been in the air over three hours and my butt was a little numb. I decided to remain in

the aircraft until we got to the ramp to make sure no one got to the film. Besides, this bird had gotten me this far so I was going to ride it all the way back. All I remember is looking at the fuel gage and that it was below 200 pounds. I was going to ask the refueling crew to tell me how many gallons of fuel they put in when we got to the ramp but never had a chance to.

When we got to the ramp Bob, John and the Osan Spook Guy were talking and waiting for me to get out of the plane prior to going to our debriefing. As you would expect the first thing they asked was what was wrong with the aircraft. I just gave them the simple answer "I lost the utility hydraulic system". There was no further discussion by me. Mr. Spook Guy said that they will have maintenance get right on it and let me know what they found out. We still had to fly the film back to Yokota Japan today so time was of the essence. Not much was said while we were going back to the briefing room. I did not know what Bob may have said prior to my getting back so I did not say anything or ask any questions.

When we got a coke and settled down in the debriefing room Mr. Spook Guy ask, with a blunt tone. "Were we able to get the targets?". Bob gave him a brief description of what we found and that he thought we got what we went after. I also stated that I photographed both of the targets. He seemed pleased at our answer and for the first time I saw a smile on his face. His response was "That sounds great". There was not much more said at that point about the mission. We discussed the need to get going and make our flight plan to return to Yokota. Again, we would not file a flight plan and were to go back as we came with radio silence. Bob and I were to go directly to Yokota and we were to drop John off at Komaki on the way back. We elected to plan our flight back along the airways so as not to cause any more attention that necessary. That route would take us over Komaki which would be perfect for John to stay with us until he got home.

We expressed the need to get the weather at Komaki and Yokota and find out when my aircraft might be ready. We ask to have 200 gallon drop tanks be installed as we would need that much fuel to get to Yokota and we wanted the same drop tanks on the aircraft as we took off with so as not to cause any questions to be asked when we got the aircraft back to Komaki on Sunday. We didn't want the ground crew on Monday to wonder how the tanks were changed. Believe me they would know.

After we finished our flight planning we felt that we would be able to get to Yokota with about 1,000 pounds. That would be enough to make a jet penetration and low approach with one GCA if necessary. We agreed to talk about that more when we found out what the weather would be at Yokota.

Bob, John and I went to get some lunch and to my surprise John did not ask any questions about the mission. I guess the top secret teachings made it easy not to discuss the matter. We went directly back to the briefing room to find Mr. Spook Guy there with the news about my aircraft and the weather. He said that the utility hydraulic pump had failed and that they could not find evidence of any hydraulic leak. I guess that was good news. He went on to say that they had installed a new hydraulic pump and were in the process of running up the engine to check it out now and it would be ready in about thirty minutes.

The weather at Komaki was high thin overcast and that did not look like that was going to be a problem for John returning to Komaki. The weather at Yokota was a different story. About that time a weather man came into the room to give us the detailed weather at our destination. I don't think he had any idea of what was going on as he frequently gave squadron weather briefing to many different groups of pilots at Osan. The weather was forecasted to be something about 900 feet broken with a 1200 foot overcast with visibility about one mile as best as I could remember. He also said that there were thunderstorms in the area and we could expect intermittent rain showers on arrival. The top of the cloud layer would be somewhere in the 32,000 to 35,000 range. He also went on to say that the weather conditions were expected to get worse as night came on and suggested we try to get there as soon as possible.

With this weather forecast Bob and I felt that we needed to brief further on the let down and approach as we were not filing an instrument flight plan and would be somewhat on our own in weather unless we broke radio silence. Mr. Osan Spook Guy spoke up to say that if we thought we needed to make a GCA at Yokota do not hesitate to use the radio to get us on the ground. The most important thing is to get that film back safely.

Bob and I discussed the situation and decided that we would make a jet penetration with the published low approach into Yokota. The approach minimums were like 600 feet so

we thought we would break out of the weather in time to make a visual landing. Our only concern was to be able to track outbound from the radio station and be lined up with the runway. The outbound approach heading was about ten degrees of the runway heading. We kind of laughed about any traffic that we might run into with these weather conditions, but chances of running to anyone was slim as the operational units would not be flying on Sunday and probably not in these weather conditions. The F-86D all weather interceptors were stationed there, but they would only be on runway alert.

It was our plan to make the approach and if we missed the field we would make a missed approach then get on the radio and we would advise approach control of our position. Then request a GCA (Ground Control Approach) and use ground radar to give us verbal instructions to a precision landing. This of course would cause us to break radio silence. The other situation to break radio silence, other than an emergency, would be if fuel presented a problem or it was below what we planned on arrival. We felt that it would be best to use the radio instead of trying to use hand signals in this type weather. We discussed the idea of an alternate but with the fuel we had that would not work. There was probably some other stuff we went over but I can't remember that now.

We also discussed what we would squawk on our IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) on the way back. We decided it would be best to turn the IFF off and not use code 77 the normal identification. We did not want to alarm the Japanese Ground Defense Radar stations. Picking up blips on their radar squawking code 77 with no flight plan coming into Japan might cause them to launch the F-86 fighters. We planned to be cruise climbing to above 45,000 feet to conserve as much fuel as possible and from experience while working with these guys in the past it was possible that they wouldn't see us anyway with the IFF turned off. We told John to turn his back on when we got back over Komaki. We were going to turn ours back on when we started our descent into Yokota as that is where the F-86D fighter interceptors are stationed. If we had been picked up on the way in while descending to a lower altitude that's where they most likely would intercept us.

We would start engines on a visual signal on the ramp and taxi to the take off runway as quickly as possible. We figured



◀ Rudy Anderson was a member of the 15th TRS at Komaki in 1954. Rudy Anderson would later be killed in action flying a U-2 spy plane over Cuba in October 1962.  
(credit – Bill Semonin)

the tower would keep anybody else out of our way. We did not have to copy our flight plan usually given verbally by ground control as we were not going to file a flight plan. That just meant that we should start engines and go.

Mr. Osan Spook Guy then asked if we were ready he would escort us to the aircraft. But first we had to come up with a security pass word and question to identify the correct person meeting us at Yokota. I assumed this was to be the "Yokota Spook Guy". He explained how this was to work. We would ask him the predetermined question and he would respond with the correct answer. I guess he would transmit the correct answer to him before we got there. Bob looked at me and I looked at him then Mr. Spook said any simple question would do. I said to Bob let's ask him "What's our favorite drink" and he could answer "A Martini" as that is Bob's drink of choice. I would have selected "Bourbon and Water" being that I am a true Kentuckian, but I figured that since he is leading and outranked me it was his call. He said that was a good one because he would not forget the answer. Bob said the first thing he was going to do after we got there was to have a double at the Officers Club.

Mr. Spook said that would work fine and repeated the question and answer to make sure we all understood what the procedure would be. After a pause I asked Mr. Spook what we were to do if we did not get the right answer. He said that would not be a problem. I guess that's what we carry this Colt 45 for if we get the wrong answer. He assured

us that we would be met by the right person and not for us to worry about that. Just ask the security question as a precaution. He never gave us an answer what to do if we did not get the correct answer. As it turned out all went well. Mr. Spook said, just one more thing. "I want to thank you for what you have just accomplished and want you to know it is of the extreme importance for our country to have had this mission be successful". He went on to say "I want to remind you that the Air Force would never have any record of this mission or acknowledge that it ever occurred". "For us to remember the top secret classification of this situation and to treat this mission as if "It Never Happened", seems like I've heard that before.

With that we shook hands and were off to the aircraft. When I got to the aircraft the ground crew said that they had replaced the hydraulic fuel pump and it checked out OK. I said thanks and how much I appreciated their quick repair. I thought to myself that I was going to check the operation of that system after I started the engine.

Once we were strapped in Bob gave the signal to start engines. Pre flight cockpit check went as required. Checking the automatic transfer of the primary hydraulic system to the utility hydraulic system in the event of the primary hydraulic failure is a normal item on the check list. This time I wanted to make sure that this worked properly. The check requires the stick to be rotated in a circular motion rapidly until the primary system pressure drops below 900 pounds, then the utility hydraulic system would kick in and you would have continued flight control on the utility system. This check worked perfectly, but to make sure, after the primary system came back to normal pressure I did this check again. Just as the first check, the system again checked out properly. I was then satisfied the systems were working properly and continued to complete the check list. By then Bob started to taxi and I taxied into trail to follow him. John fell in behind me. Taxi out, run up and take off were normal with no problems.

The weather in Korea was still clear with great visibility and our climb and level off at 40,000 feet was without event. As we crossed into Japan our cruise climb, as fuel burned off, took us up to above 45,000 feet which we felt was high enough that the Japanese radar stations would not pick us up with our IFF turned off. We continued on to Nagoya and began running into a high thin overcast which was expected.

As we approached Nagoya the clouds began to thicken into a solid overcast and that is when John rocked his wings, rolled over and began his descent home.

The ADF needle rotated from the nose to the tail on the gage which indicated that we had just passed over the Nagoya radio range station. We made a slight turn to the next course to Yokota for our last leg, with a fuel check that turned out as planned. Following a couple adjustments to our course we began tracking on the outbound leg of the Nagoya radio. I switch the radio to pick up the radio at Yokota. The out bound leg of the radio you just passed does not always match up to the inbound leg of the next radio which requires another adjustment in headings to get on course of the new radio. Bob soon began a course correction and then I knew he had also tuned in the radio range at Yokota.

The radio ranges were set up so as to have the range leg matched the airway that you were on. When you are on course you hear a steady signal in your head set. They are designed so that if you get off course from the range leg you begin to hear the Morse code for which ever side you have drifted to. A drift to the left might be the mores code for an (A) which would be a dash-dot or a daa-dit in sound. A drift to the other side would be the mores code for an (N) which would be a dot-dash or a dit-daa sound. The two merge together would give you a steady sound when you are on course interrupted by a pause then the Morse code identifier for the radio you were tuned in to. After checking the let down book, which contains the three alphabetic identifiers for the radio plus a graphic dot-dash for those letters, I was satisfied I had the correct radio tuned in.

As we approached Yokota the clouds began to get thicker and you could see some tops of thunder storms poking out the top of the overcast. Occasionally you would hear some static in the radio and the ADF needle would swing momentarily toward the electrical thunder storm. This was a normal situation with an ADF radio system. This was the only navigational system installed in the RF-86 and you learned to live with it. If this situation remains unchanged the penetration into Yokota could be challenging. Sometimes the lower you descend in altitude the condition can get worse depending on how many thunder storms are in the area and how close you are to them. The ADF needle goes nuts trying to home in on the radio and several thunder storms at the same time. Around and around she goes, where the radio

station is nobody knows. Not good when you are trying to make an approach.

We started our descent into the Yokota radio and as we descended lower the overcast had gotten thicker to where the visibility has decreased to where you could make out Bob's fuselage but that was about it. The ADF needle would point to 12 o'clock then spin in both directions pointing to the thunderstorms with the most electricity. This was going to make determining station passage at the high key, which was 20,000 feet, difficult. When you are flying on instruments alone you would use the aural null procedure to determine station passage and make your let down. That requires you to switch to the manual procedure on the ADF and use a switch to rotate the antenna manually to hear the null tone in your head set to track your course. We did a lot of that while flying in Japan. Flying on the wing it is impossible to do this because you have to concentrate of flying formation. All your attention is devoted to stay in formation when the visibility is low. You can't fly formation in weather and look into the cockpit at the same time. It's tough enough to just trying to check your instruments and altitude with a quick glance.

I was trying to fly formation and watch the ADF for station passage when Bob gave the signal to open the speed brakes and reduce power. That is when I figured he had gotten station passage and my ADF needle had been going in circles so I could not determine if we were over the station or not. I had to put that out of my mind and concentrate on staying in formation because we were starting to go into and out of clouds that were getting so thick that it was like trying to fly in a glass of milk. Some times they would be so thick I could only see Bob's wing tip and light. As a result I had to move in closer so as to keep him in sight. That makes it harder for him to fly instruments as my wing creates an air buffer between our wings that tends to push his wing up. I really didn't have much choice, but with the turbulence getting rougher we were bouncing around anyway. We would both hit he same bump at the same time because we both flying in the same air mass. None the less it makes it hard to stay in formation especially with low visibility.

We were bouncing around so much I was not sure if we had started our penetration turn back to the low key or not. The ADF needle had settled down some which was a good thing as we approached low key at around 2000 feet. You are

very close to the radio at the low key and can get a better indication when you have passed the low key. The most critical part of the approach was to track outbound from the low key to the airfield. The track outbound did not exactly line up with the runway so once we broke out of the weather it was going to require a quick ten degree right turn then a left turn to get lined up with the runway. If our track was on course with our outbound heading it was going to require quick turns at landing speed to get lined up with the runway. That's if you are on course. Wind could change that. Either way descending turns close to the ground at low airspeed, with every thing hanging out, this can be a tricky maneuver in formation, to say the least.

We have just passed low key and still in thick weather. It was getting late in the evening and the clouds were getting darker with the sun angle now low on the horizon. We were not in any rain showers as Bob gave the hand signal to lower the flaps and landing gear and increase power. We now began our descent and set up our rate of decent to descend down to the minimums for this type of approach. We adjusted power and airspeed to about 160 knots which is what is best for our fuel. We were now down to just under 1,000, pounds. As we continued our decent through 1,200 feet we were still in the clouds. We needed to reach the minimum altitude before we got to the airfield.

Our position to the airfield was by using time from the low key based on our air speed. At about 1,000 feet we were now in a broken weather condition where we could see the ground, but not straight ahead. The forecast visibility was one mile but that's on the ground. In the aircraft it's the slant range visibility that matters. Our minimums were, as I recall, about 600 feet and we were in the bottom of the broken cloud condition. I could see forward some but I did not have the airfield in sight. We were at minimums and I thought Bob has the airfield as we continued our descent and began a 30 degree bank turn to the right. I glance at our airspeed and saw we still had 150 knots so I was not concerned with the 30 degree bank but knew we were going to have to make another one to the left at some point. As we make the last correction to line up with the runway I could now see it and realized we would have to reduce power and drop lower at the same time to make our landing. We came across the end of the runway as we were completing our turn and Bob gave quick hand signal to reduce power. Actually we pulled it off to idle as we began our round out. We touched down almost

side by side but Bob had lined up so I had plenty of runway left on my side.

We had about 140 knots as we touched down about 1,500 feet down the runway. At Komaki that could present a problem on their 7,000 foot runway, but Yokota had 9,000 feet so it was not a major problem. The runway was wet from a previous rain shower, but with holding the nose high as long as possible to get maximum aerodynamic breaking we were able to break to a stop with about 1,000 feet of runway to spare. I wonder what the tower though with two birds just suddenly appearing out of the clouds. When we turned to the ground control channel nothing was said so I guess they had the message.

As we turned off the runway we cleaned up the aircraft and my first thought was, man was I glad Bob was leading. Another lesson learned from him. Not only did he teach me some tough lessons rat racing, he always wound up at my 6 o'clock position, he left the lasting impression that there was much more to this game than being a tiger.

This reconnaissance business required you to be first class from the get go. If you were in a fighter unit you may have to fly number four in your flight for about six mounts. Then after a year you may move up to number two. If you were lucky you may get to number three, as an element leader, that is if your good enough. It could take you two to three years before you're a flight leader and maybe not even then. As a reconnaissance pilot you jump in with both feet from the beginning. Often you are alone or in a flight of two, like we are, and you have to bring the film home before you can call the mission complete. When you get an assignment and are expected to be the leader way before you may be ready. It's just that way in this business. You learn more in one flight than you would in a year in a fighter squadron and sometime that was one hell of a lesson.

Usually a yellow pick up truck would meet you if you are a transient aircraft to take you to your parking spot, but we were met by a blue pick up that took us all the way down the ramp to an area where there were only a few aircraft parked. There was only a B-45 or RB-45 and a couple of T-33s. When we pulled into the designated parking place the driver of the pick up jumped out and directed us in and put the chock in place. Another pick up came up with two guys and parked in front of us. I thought they were the guys

that were going to download the cameras, but they did not get out of the truck. As Bob and I were getting out of the aircraft a blue staff car drove up to Bob's aircraft and walked up to Bob. He was in civilian cloths so I thought that must be the "Yokota Spook Guy". They shook hands and began some type conversation which I assumed to be the security pass word check. By the time I walked over everyone must have passed the check. Their conversation had then turned to the weather conditions on landing.

The Spook Guy waved his hand to the two guys in the truck and they jumped out to begin unloading a ladder so they could unload the film cans. When I walked up Bob did not introduce me to this guy because he never gave Bob his name. He just said to go get my bug out bag and that we were going to follow him, meaning the Spook Guy. I am not sure if the camera guys knew how to get to my bug out bag so I got it myself and left these guys to their work. When I got back to the car Mr. Spook asked if there were any write ups on the aircraft. We both said that they were in fine condition and that we only needed fuel and oxygen. After that we all got in the Spook Guy's staff car and drove off to a room in the adjacent hanger.

When we went in I looked for a vending machine to get us a coke but could not see one. I asked Mr. Spook where the rest rooms were and a place to get a drink of water. His demeanor was about like the Osan Spook Guy, curt and to the point. Bob and I got our drink and we both said how great it would be if this were a beer. Back in the debriefing room Mr. Spook seemed to warm up a bit and began asking questions about the mission. He was mostly concerned about whether we were able to photograph the targets. Our positive response seemed to please him and he was more receptive to casual pilot type conversation. He obviously knew what we were talking about and gave me the impression that he was an Air Force pilot of some sort. We discussed the mission targets and tried to describe what each airfield looked like as best as you can tell from 50,000 feet. He seemed satisfied with the information we were sharing and the conversation turned to giving us what we should be doing next. Then Bob said, oh by the way, on the way out we saw what we think is an airfield to the south of our track about 50 miles away. And we banked up and tried to photograph it with the six inch vertical.

That got his attention fast and with that news he began

interrogating us like a guy that had a photo interpretation back ground. He knew all the terms and began to ask the appropriate questions. After that conversation, he seemed like his excitement was satisfied, he said that he wanted us to stick around in the morning to see if there were additional question he might have before we started back to Komaki. We asked about accommodation and he said that they had already been taken care of. That we would be staying in the BOQ (Bachelors Officer Quarters) within walking distance to the Officers Club where we could get something to eat. He gave us the room number as he dropped us off and said that he would pick us up around eight in the morning.

I think we both were glad to get this guy out of our hair and did not want to think about our activity this day much more. We were both tired and were ready for a drink. We both showered and set out to the Officers Club. We sat down at the bar and Bob ordered you know what...a double martini with extra olives. I got my ole Kentucky stand by, bourbon on the rocks. I usually order it with water but this time I thought I would like it on the rocks. We both looked around the bar to see if there was anyone we might know. The last thing we wanted is for some one we knew to come up and ask what we were doing there. We didn't see any one but agreed if we did run into some one we knew we would say we were here to photograph the port at Atsugi. After another drink we went to the dinning room and had dinner then hit the sack early.

Sunday morning seemed to come early. We got ready, got some breakfast, then sat down and waited for the "Yokota Spook Guy". He was on time and then we drove to a different area than we were yesterday in the same hanger without much conversation. When we got there he stated that he wanted for us to talk to one of the photo interpreters and intelligence guys. I realized that he must of had some conversation with these guys prior to picking us up. I thought to myself that this was not as Rudy had described things would be in his briefing earlier. He said not to expect to review any of the film or ever get any feed back about the targets we photographed on our missions. We were escorted in to a connecting room where two persons in civilian cloths were bent over a light table looking at a roll of exposed film spread out on the light table. Again, without introduction, the guy with a magnifying glass, looked up and said, you guys did an excellent job and we got great photos of each target. He went on to say that the intelligence we got will be

of great value as we had nothing on these targets before our mission. He got right down to the issue. He asked us to look at the film he had laid out on the table. Pointing to the center frame his direct question was. Is this the airfield we thought we saw on your way out?

Photo interpretation is mostly done from negatives where everything is in reverse from a picture. What is black on a negative is white on a picture and visa versa. To the untrained eye it is different and takes some time getting used to. Bob and I both bent over the light table saw the film from one of our six inch cameras taken in a right oblique camera position. This was one of the photos one of us took by banking up 90 degrees. In the center of the picture you could see a long wide black, which would print in white, object. We both spoke at the same time. That's the runway we though we saw. It was really small in the negative, but it was a long way away and that is what you would expect.

The one guy that did not have the magnifying glass spoke up and said that's what we thought also but just wanted you guys to look at it to make sure. It looked like an airfield to me. They did not offer for us to look at the split forty's so we never knew if this airfield was in one of them. Once they were satisfied that they could identify the airfield in the six inch camera the split forty's was a given, who knows. They both thanked us then followed us to the door. This meeting was over as fast as it started. I told Bob after we left that the film we were looking at was his. If it had been the one I took, with me on his left and banking to the right, his airplane would have shown up in the picture. Bob answered, "I think your right" and no more was said.

The weather was still not much better than when we came in yesterday. The ceiling was not as low and the runway was dry. We asked if we could get the weather at Komaki and got in the car and headed for base operations. Mr. Yokota Spook Guy parked and asked us to stay in the car and he would go in and get the weather for us. I guess he did not want anyone to see us. He came out with a telegraph weather strip for Nagoya and gave it to us to read. It showed an over cast at about 20,000 with 12 miles visibility. It's hard to remember exactly but that is close. We were satisfied with the weather and preceded to the aircraft.

The same flight routine was in order. No flight plan and radio silence. Pre flight, start up was the same as before with taxi out and take off and into the weather.

We were able to get the gear and flaps up prior to entering the clouds. The climb out was about like the let down yesterday, in and out of thicker clouds like cotton balls. It was mid morning and the thunder storms had not had time to build up so the ADF was acting more like normal as we climbed to altitude. We broke out of the weather at about 30,000 feet with visibility forever. We were going to stay just above the overcast as we were going to have plenty fuel when we got home. The ground crew had filled up the drop tanks as we did not given them any instructions on landing about the fuel load.

When we got close to Nagoya we started our letdown so as to arrive over the radio station at 20,000, at the high key. We were going to hold that heading until we broke out of the overcast then go in from there VFR (Visual Flight Rules). The weather forecast was about right as we broke out of the overcast around 18,000 feet. We were anxious to get on the ground and get home as it has been a long weekend. We opened the speed brakes, descended to 10,000 feet, left the speed brakes open, and added power to burn up fuel. We circled the field several time to see if we could determine which runway they were landing on as the weather forecast called for calm winds. Once we determined which runway they were using to land we burned our fuel down low enough for landing then we continued on to enter initial for a normal 360 degree overhead approach.

There was no radio communications with the tower while we were in the landing pattern or with ground control while we were taxiing to the parking ramp. We taxied past the tower and I remembered waving to the tower operator. I used to do that on test flights. There was one of our 15th ground crew there to park us. After a brief cordial conversation with him, mostly about the condition of the aircraft and the weather on the way in, we got our bug out bags and started walking to the operations tent. We left the ground crew on the flight line to finish putting the birds to bed. We did not indicate to him where we had been or any comments about the flight. And, he didn't ask. We had no write up for the aircraft, we only had to record all our times and dates. We stuck the aircraft form in the wind screen as usual. The operations tent was closed so we put our parachute and flight gear in the personal equipment tent and left for home.

Bob and both had our cars at the base so we didn't have to get anyone to pick us up. As I drove home I hoped that I

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GOLD COAST HOTEL & CASINO, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

The 21st and "FINAL" F-86 Sabre Pilots Association reunion will be held again at the Gold Coast Hotel/Casino in Las Vegas. Register early and avoid the rush. If you have to cancel please contact J.R. Alley at 702-363-9880 email alleyoop3@cox.net, Jerry Johnson at 702-458-7863 e-mail jerdot56@cox.net, or Pat Hughes at 702-870-4600 email hugpat@aol.com. You may cancel up to 10:00AM PST Saturday April 22th, 2017 and get a full refund. No refunds after that time unless due to a medical situation.

Making and canceling of room reservations is your responsibility. You can book your room reservation by calling the Gold Coast Hotel (888) 402-6278 or on-line, <http://goldcoastcasino.com/groups>. Identify yourself as a member of the "F-86 Sabre Pilots Association" and group code "AAIRF86". Cut-off date for room reservations using our guaranteed group discount, \$44 per day for premium rooms, \$36 per day for the Deluxe rooms, is March 20, 2017. After that date, rooms may cost more.

Being our final reunion, the Association has agreed to cut in half the registration fee and reduce all food and activity fees considerably. As an example: our banquet dinner cost for a combination "Filet and Chicken Breast" including gratuity and tax is \$56.00 per plate. Your cost is \$25.00. That does not include the wine we provide at each table. There will be pay-as-you-go bars. For our listening and dancing pleasure, Las Vegas's famous pianist and singer, Wes Winters who performed for us in 2015, has agreed to again perform for us after our dinner buffet on Monday evening. We are working on another tremendous entertainer for our Guys and Dolls luncheon as well as other guest speakers that will be of great interest to us. Additionally, the Super Sabre Society will be back at the Gold Coast with their reunion following ours as was the case prior to 2015.

The Planes of Fame Air Museum, Chino California, has agreed to fly their F-86F to Las Vegas for our second day, Monday, activities. The location, yet to be determined, will be at Nellis AFB or Henderson Airport. That day's activities are still in the planning and approval stage. Updates will be posted on our web site, [sabre-pilots.org](http://sabre-pilots.org) and in our next issues of our Sabre Jet Classics to published in the Summer and Fall of 2017.

Sign-in starts 10 AM Sunday April 23th, followed by a Cocktail Party 5PM to 7:00 PM or longer. For other events see the registration form.

Our business meeting to be conducted after our breakfast brunch on Tuesday, 25 April will be relatively short as our prime area of discussion will be the presentation of the Stand Down procedures of our Association.

Our banquet night guest speaker will not be our usual Nellis AFB Warfare Commander, but will be a speaker that we feel will be more appropriate for our final reunion.



LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
SPOUSE/GUEST, (FIRST & LAST) \_\_\_\_\_

EVENT FEE NO. IN PARTY TOTALS

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017:

REGISTRATION: Starts at 10 AM MEMBER/SPOUSE/GUEST \$25.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

RAFFLE TICKETS (6 for \$5) \$5.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

COCKTAIL PARTY (5PM to 7PM)  
Hors D' Oeuvres & Cash Bar \$10.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017:

NELLIS DAY \$15.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Buses Depart at 7:30AM east entrance Gold Coast Hotel

Guys and Dolls Luncheon ( 12:30PM – 3PM) \$15.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

BUFFET Dinner (7PM TO 10PM) cash bar \$20.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2017:

BREAKFAST BUFFET: (9AM TO 11AM) \$16.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

BANQUET (6:30PM to 10pm) cash bar  
Petite Filet Mignon & Chicken Breast \$25.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

REUNION FEES - TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE YOUR TRAVEL AND ROOM RESERVATIONS EARLY. Call the GOLD COAST room Reservations @ 1-888 402-6278 or web site <http://www.goldcoastcasino.com/groups>. Identify yourself with the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association and use GROUP CODE "AAIRF86" to receive the Premium \$44 room rate (Deluxe room rate - \$36.00) except Friday and Saturday nights. All reservations must be received by the GOLD COAST by Wednesday MARCH 20, 2017. Mail completed form and check to:  
F-86 Sabre Pilots Association  
P.O. Box 34423  
Las Vegas, NV 89133-4423

# Reunion 21

## MAIN EVENTS

### 1. Sunday 23 April ( 5PM to 7PM)

Registration day and Cocktail Party

### 2. Monday 24 April (0830AM – 1130AM)

Nellis Day featuring Planes of Fame Air Museum's F-86F flown by California Aviation Hall of Famer, Steve Hinton. We will be presenting Nellis AFB with a major gift in memory of our Association. It was engraved in stainless steel by the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum and it will be inlaid in stone.



### 3. Monday 24 April (1230PM to 3PM)

Guys and Dolls luncheon featuring Sandy Vee Anderson, famed Dolly Parton impersonator

*Sandy Anderson traded in singing "9 to 5" when she began her award-winning tribute to Dolly Parton a decade ago. The Las Vegas -based entertainer has even performed a duet with Dolly herself – the two of them charming fans at Dollywood and a sassy version of "Anything You Can Do I Can do Better." She has portrayed Dolly with the world-famous Legends in Concert show at such illustrious venues as the Imperial Palace and Harrah's in Las Vegas, The Grand Palace in Branson, Atlantic City, Biloxi and legends Theater in Myrtle Beach, SC. Sandy Truly becomes Dolly when she performs. Her glamorous costumes and wigs create a striking visual resemblance to the Country Music icon and her singing voice is a dead-ringer for Dolly's; setting the stage for a very memorable performance. She even includes the trademark Dolly comedy routine, which begins with, "it costs a lot of money to look this cheap." But her proudest moment was when Dolly Parton herself said of her impersonators in an "Q Magazine" interview, "... the best one is Sandy Anderson, she even fools my family.*



### 4. Monday 24 April (7PM to 10PM)

Buffet Dinner followed by return engagement of Las Vegas and world known pianist, singer and entertainer Wes Winters

*One of the most popular and most versatile musical entertainers in Vegas is the award-winning Wes Winters. Wes has been entertaining professionally over 30 years. Not only has he performed extensively throughout the United States, but in countries abroad including Ireland, Hungary, Austria, Italy, France, Spain and more.. He does not read music and plays strictly "by ear." He conceived, wrote, produced and starred in "A Musical Tribute to Liberace" at the world-renowned Liberace Museum, followed by a Las Vegas Strip engagement at Planet Hollywood in 2008. Winters is not an impersonator or look-a-like, but a "sound-a-like the moment his fingers hit the keys" according to several reviewers. With the ability to go from Jerry Lee Lewis to Barry Manilow, Big Band to Country, Andrew Lloyd Webber to Rachmaninoff, and most points in between, Winters has attained a very large and loyal following.*



### 5. Tuesday 25 April (9AM to 11AM)

Breakfast buffet followed by our Association business meeting. Immediately after business meeting Col. USAF ret. Gail Peck former commander of the "Secret MIG Squadron" will give us his presentation followed by his book signing for those interested in purchasing.

### 6. Tuesday April 25 (630PM to 10PM)

Final banquet night dinner featuring many honored guests and our own special guest speaker.



could get in the house without seeing Jimmy Simmons who lived in the same complex next door. I didn't want to have to make any conversation with him about the week end. As It turned out he and his family were out and I didn't run into them. My wife greeted me and I gave my daughter a long hug thinking I was glad this trip was now over and I could put it behind me as if "It Never Happened". After a shower and short visit, we decided to go to the Officers Club for dinner. That was something to do and the course of the conversation was more about their week end with no mention about where I had been. I had advised my wife not to ask questions about any event such as this and she never did. A big thanks to her for that.

The next day started a new week and no further thought was given to the past week end. Things were back to normal, with business as usual. Bob, John and I never brought up the subject again.

A few weeks passed with local training missions being the main activity. Then on a Friday afternoon with another clear week end in the forecast came the invitation to another party and the whole Spook thing started over again. The same guys were to go back to Osan K-55. The same routine was the order for this mission. As Bob, John and I were walking out to the aircraft the thought crossed my mind and I said to Bob, you know with the three of us going on this mission together I'll bet you a drink at the bar that we are going after the airfield we found on the way out on the last mission. Why else would they pick the same pilots? We already knew about the airfield. Bob said that is no bet, but I'll let you buy the drink.

Our start up, take off, and departure went off without a hitch. When we got to Osan the weather was clear and landing was as if we did this all the time. We parked in the same location and were met by the same personnel as the last trip. All three aircraft were in good condition and we did not need any maintenance only fuel.

Mr. "Osan Spook Guy" was there to meet us and everything was like before. When we got to the briefing room Mr. Spook said that he was glad to see us again and went right to the business at hand. We are going to ask you to go photograph the airfield you guys identified on your last mission. You will need to make sure you are out of the contrails before you go in and then after getting the target you will come out

immediately. That all sounded good and wondered why we had to be reminded of that. That was going to be a natural for us.

We began our flight planning without any hesitation. We had the same scale map given to us as before, but we were not concerned about the lack of detail. We could almost get this target without a map. After plotting our headings, distances and fuel we stated that we would only need the 200 gallon drop tanks. That's what we had brought with us so there was no need to discuss this further. We asked if he knew what the contrail levels were forecasted to be and the weather over the target. He said he would get that in the morning and let us know, but the forecast for the target now is clear with good visibility. We advised him that the start, run up and take off procedure would be the same as the last mission. We ask to make sure the ground crew packed the fuselage tanks as we planned for that fuel. Not much else was said so we left to clean up and get something to eat.

Mr. Spook picked us up around 7 o'clock the next morning and took us to the briefing room, He said the weather at the target was still clear but we might see some cloud cover further inland but thought that would not present a problem. The contrails levels were a little higher than the previous flight, so we would have to climb as fast as we could to altitude, then after level off we would pick up as much airspeed as possible. This mission looked like it was going to be simple compared to the last one. We were in good spirits and were anxious to get going.

Everything on the ground worked out as planned. After take off we made a turn to the south to go down the South Korean peninsula parallel to the coast while climbing to altitude. We took our clearing shots and all indications were that the cameras were working satisfactorily and our camera doors were open. We continued our climb to a point directly across from the target then started a very gentle 270 degree turn to the left and continued our climb to the desired altitude of 42,000 feet prior to leaving the coast line. We began entering the lower contrail level about the time we started this wide turn. We only used about 10 degrees of bank, so it took us a while to complete the turn heading straight to the target. By the time we reached the coast we were right on track heading about due east. The coast line was a good check point for our navigation and we had climbed out of the contrails by now. We were happy to see that. All of our markings were over

Korea which would not be seen from China.

When we left the coast we were slightly south of our pre planned check point on the coast. The upper level winds were forecast to be a 90 degree cross wind and could be pretty strong at this altitude. We were above the jet stream that they gave us but experience told us not to always count the weather people being right, especially in Korea. We could not see the China coast from our current position and our navigation across the Yellow Sea was using dead-reckoning....time and distance. We adjusted our heading about five degrees to crab slightly into the cross wind as we felt the climb out in that big circle drifted us a little off course. Shortly after we departed the coast our drop tanks ran dry. It was now time to drop the tanks and hope they come off clean. A slight adjustment to nose the aircraft down then a little back pressure on the stick, press the eject button and away they went. That was one more critical event out of the way. With the tanks gone the spare wingman left the two mission aircraft, with a tip of the wings, off he went to head back to K-55.

Our concentration for any air activity was straight ahead. Any threat would be coming at us from the front so we did not have to worry about the 6 o'clock as much. There was no intelligence information about this airfield or any around it so we did not know what to expect in the way of fighters that might intercept us. We were trying to cruise climb to above 47,000 feet prior to hitting the coast line with as much Mach as we could get. There was not going to be a problem lining up on the target runway as it was pointing straight toward us.

We could now see the coast line of China but we were not able to locate the target yet. It's harder to see a target from the straight on angle than it is from the side. We were looking at it from the side when we picked it up the last mission.

Our fuel was such that it was not something that was critical on this trip. We would have plenty to make a normal approach and landing.

The target was located about ten to fifteen miles in from the coast so after taking the pictures and turning outbound we would only be over China about 16 to 20 minutes if all goes according to plan. We could see the weather off in a distance. Clouds seem to be from the ground up to around

40,000 feet. They were far inland and looked like a front of some sort and was definitely not going to be an issue.

When we picked up the target runway we were slightly off course and had to make an adjustment to our heading to get lined up with the runway. The cross wind was going to be such that we were going to have to crab into the wind some to stay in line as we crossed the airfield. There it was as big as we thought it might be. The major portion of the white area we saw was turning out to be the ramp. It was as large as any that we have and it extended from one end of the runway to the other. It looked like the taxi way and the ramp were all one and the same but it was hard to tell as you could not concentrate on it and look around for any aircraft at the same time. We would let the PI's figure that out when the looked at the film.

It was necessary to close the formation in order for both aircraft to take a picture of the target. The time from the coast line to the target went by quickly and we were not going to be over the target very long. Rocking our wings to get linged up on the target caused us to loose some speed. We were not as high as we would have liked to be, but it was what it was, and our speed was around .95 Mach. The photo run was easy to make with no problem and we felt comfortable with the results.

After our run over the target we began an immediate right turn to head back out to sea. We planned to lower our nose slightly to give up a little altitude to obtain the maximum Mach that we could get. As we rolled out of the turn heading back toward Korea our Mach increased to about .98. We felt with that speed it would be hard for them to catch us if they were trying to make an intercept. This of course caused us to lose altitude back down to 45,000 feet, but that was not much of a concern with this high speed. All we wanted to do is get out of there fast, which we did with no problem. Once out to sea we set course for home and maintained that altitude till we got within sight of the Korean coast line.

In our pre flight briefing we talked about the chance of us being picked up by our own radar and they might want to launch the F-86 fighters, standing strip alert at K-55, against an unknown blip on their radar inbound to Korea. Mr. Spook said that he would take care of that and we could come back at whatever altitude we wanted. We did not get intercepted, so he kept his word.

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◀ Bill Semonin in the cockpit of an RF-86F 'Ashtray' Sabre at Kimpo AB in 1953. The Ashtray Sabres did not have the vertical camera suite developed later in the year.  
(credit – Bill Semonin)

We started our let down in plenty of time, with the power off and not using speed brakes, to keep our speed up all the way to entering the pattern for a normal 360 degree overhead approach and landing. We ran off our clearing shots after we passed the coast as briefed. This time there was no hydraulic problem which was much appreciated. It's a lot easier to land without that distraction. The approach and landing went as planned and was without any unexpected event.

The debriefing was about the same, with no fan fair. We had lunch did our pre flight on the aircraft and were off to Yokota. Mr. Spook gave us another sincere thanks and, as we began to expect, reminded us again to treat this mission as "It Never Happened". By now this message was now beginning to set in for sure.

The flight to Yokota was uneventful and like any other cross country. The weather at Yokota was a high thin overcast and the same at Komaki. It was rather pleasant not having to use the radio all the time. The activity once on the ground was a carbon copy of before except we were not asked to review the film.

The flight back to Komaki the next day was easy with little activity along the way.

Monday was back to normal again with no indication that we had been gone. It was just as said, "It Never Happened".

That was the last of any situation concerning the Spook Missions. Operations went on as usual. Every one went

about there business in a casual manner. We soon learned that the 15th TRS was being transferred to Yokota to get ready to receive the new tactical reconnaissance aircraft the RF-84F. Some of the bachelor pilots were sent to Yokota prior to us going to Yokota to be assigned to a new Squadron the 6021st. It was a classified unit with not much known about its mission. There patch with their motto on it was, "The Eyes of The Bamboo Curtin" spoke for itself. Those of us in the Spook business could figure it out pretty easily, but never acknowledged anything about it.

Jerry Depew was the first to go followed by Bill Kirk, Bill (Lump) LaMarsh, John Green and I think Jim Wall. When we got to Yokota we renewed our friendship with our former pilots and were close friends socially, but we never discussed what they were doing. They got some of our RF-86 Haymakers, but I do not remember how they got there. They must of have one day just disappeared from our ramp. They also had RB-45's, T-33's with Sniffer wing tanks, RB-57A's, and three of the new RF-100's. That mixture of aircraft ought to tell you something.

The move to Yokota with our RF-86's and RF- 80's put the 15th TRS out of the Spook mission business. The deployments to K14 to stand alert in Korea also came to an end. Our RF-86's were sent to the 6021st at Yokota and the Chinese National Air Force at Taiwan. The last four of the RF-80's went to the South Korean Air Force. Our main focus was receiving and becoming combat ready in the new RF-84F.

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During our remaining operations at Yokota there was no mention of the prior Spook missions, even with our association with the ex 15th pilots now flying with the 6021st. There were two incidents that I experienced that related to the past missions that I thought you might find interesting. Our RF-84F's were brought to Japan on the deck of the Navy aircraft carriers, and unloaded at Atsugi the Navy and Marine base outside of Tokyo. They were flight tested there then we would go to Atsugi to pick them up to fly them back to Yokota. We would travel to Atsugi and spend the night and fly them back the next day.

On one of my trips, along with another pilot from the 15th (I don't remember who), we went into the town of Atsugi for a dinner and drink. We did not go the Officers Club at Atsugi as we had often in the air engaged in dog fights with some of the Navy or Marine aircraft stationed there in the air and whipped their butts. We didn't think we would be welcomed by them, in an Air Force uniform, if they knew who we were. Even in civilian cloths you know who the strangers are.

We went to a local Bar and when we sat down at the table I was surprised to see John Shinn and another person, in civilian cloths, sitting at the bar having a drink. I went over to John and greeted him with a friendly smile, "Hey John, I didn't expect to see you here". His response was, "You must have the wrong person, my name is not John" and returned to his drink and conversation with the person next to him. I knew it was John and in this Spook business you learned to keep your mouth shut. After going back to my table I stated to my companion that I thought I knew that guy but it was someone else.

I quickly figured out what the classified briefing that we received earlier in the week was all about. We were briefed in a secret briefing that there was a new aircraft in the theater that was painted black and looked like a glider. If seen on the ground it would be covered up and if we saw anything in the air that looked like this description not to approach it or report it to anyone on the radio. Some of us had heard of the U-2 being flown by civilian pilots for the CIA. I now realized what the whole thing with John was all about.

The second incident was at Yokota on an occasion, I don't remember how we got together, when I came in contact with my ex 54-D flying training buddy George (Gus) Hoster. He

and his wife were our best friends in pilot training and we lived together in the same subdivision in College Station while in basic training at Bryon AFB. Upon getting our wings Gus chose fighter bombers and went to Luke AFB for his advance training in the F-84 while I was at Nellis AFB in the F-86. His first assignment was to the fighter bomber squadron stationed at Misawa AB in Japan. This was a SAC (Strategic Air Command) unit flying the F84-G or H with the nuclear bomb mission. They had a sister squadron stationed at Komaki just across the field from us. Their operation was super secret and we had little to no contact with them. We would see them at the officers club occasionally but they were cordial and stayed to themselves. Every now and then we would get into a rat race with them in the air. The F-84 and F-86 were not compatible in a dog fight and we came out on top most of the time. They could out turn us at low altitude but we were faster and more maneuverable.

When Guess and I met we exchanged greeting about the past and out current assignments. Again, to my surprised, Gus, just came out and said, how impressed he was with the work we were doing. I didn't relate to his statement at first and asked what he was talking about. His unit was assigned to SAC, due to the nuclear mission, and their primary function was to comply with the EWP (Emergency War Plan) for the 5th Air Force. Gus said he was referring to his target folder and the stuff that was in there. The Spook Mission photographs that we took wound up in their target folders with the 15TRS and date on the bottom of each print so he knew we must have been there to take the photos. I knew that all of our conversation was dealing with top secret material, so I told Gus I was not sure what he was referring to and that brought the conversation to an end.

We also had a EWP requirement and each of us had our own individual folder in which we had to commit all the flight information to memory. Every three months we were required to fill out a blank map and flight plan from memory as a test to our target assignment in case of a war and we could not get to our folder material. I knew exactly what Gus was talking about but did not want to acknowledge it to him, due to the classification of the Spook missions, or any involvement that I had with the missions. No more was ever said, I don't think that any of us who were Spook pilots ever thought our photos would wind up in the fighter bomber target folders because we were always told by the Air Force to remember that "It Never Happened".

Within a year after we moved to Yokota the 15th TRS was transferred to Kadena AFB on the island of Okinawa Japan. There we continued to fly the RF-84F with the projection to convert to the RF-101C's which were now just coming into the USAF inventory. There were two events that had implications to the Spook Missions which did not raise any suspicions to the past history. I was presented my Distinguished Flying Cross at an awards ceremony. The citation read that I had distinguished myself by extraordinary achievement while participation in aerial flight in 1955. It went on to give some more hints as to the nature of the award and that I thought it would invite some questions by my fellow pilots at the time, as to what I had done to deserve the DFC. I was glad that no one ever mentioned why I received the award so that turned out not to be an issue.

One morning Major Nudding, our Squadron Commander who was assigned to the 15th from SAC, came into my office where I was debriefing a check ride at the time. I was assigned to the position of Standardization Flight Check Officer a position that Major Nudding established when he came on board. He said he wanted to speak with me as soon as I completed my briefing. I wondered what that could be all about. When I got to his office he closed the door and asked that I sit down as he had a subject he wanted to talk to me about. At that moment I thought I was in some sort of trouble. I had recently failed a couple guys on their check ride for not meeting all the requirements that I had set for successful accomplishments of a check ride. I never thought he would infer anything about any spook missions as I didn't think he would know anything about them. As it turned out he did not, but went on to say that the subject he wanted to discuss with me was top secret and asked me to treat what he was about to state as classified. I still did not know where he was going.

He advised me that 5th Air Force had ordered our unit to prepare to fly top secret missions in to China, on a moments notice, and he wanted me to brief all of the pilots and intelligence people on how we would do this. I was not sure why he had asked me to do this, as I thought it would be the Operations Officer responsibility to do this. I think this is what gave me the feeling that he knew something more than he stated to me. I'm not sure what made him think that I was more qualified to make this briefing. My first question to him was did he want me to plan these missions for a high or low penetration. That sort of stumped him for an answer.

He asked me how I would do this. Again, this gave me an uneasy feeling because I did not want to imply that I had done it before. I thought he may have known, but didn't want to say it.

"Well sir, I don't think we would be successful either way, in fact, I think we would not come out at all". The RF-84F is the most stable photo platforms I have flown but it is, as it's reputation implies, "A Led Sled". It can't fly high enough or fast enough to get in and out without getting shot down, and we do have to bring the film back. I don't know how far into China the targets we are expected to photograph are going to be, The RF-84F, even with the big external fuel tanks it can carry, does not have that much range if we go in low.

The RF-84F does have Air-to-Air refueling capability but the design was not very successful and not used, at least in the Far East. There were no boom tankers available to use at the time. Besides refueling with a boom tanker on a RF-84F did not work out well as the receptacle for the boom, in the left wing of the aircraft, was so close to the fuselage that the wings on the flying boom would just barely clear the fuselage on the 84 aircraft. The boom would come so close to the canopy that when the boom was inserted into the receptacle of the aircraft the aircraft had a tendency to yaw into the boom which was not good.

That was not the only thing that we never used on the RF-84F. The 84 had four forward firing 50 caliber machine guns which we never fired. They were a bad idea also. No one asked a recce pilot if he wanted machine guns to suppress fire from an enemy target on a photo run. If you were taking a vertical picture they were worthless because you can't shoot at a target and take a vertical picture at the same time. Using the nose oblique on a photo run didn't work either, the bore sight for the guns and the camera alignment were not in alignment thus you still could not aim the guns at the target and take a forward picture at the same time. The best element for a successful photo run is surprise not shoot your way in.

The RF-84F had a compressed air starter to start the engine. The air starter had an air bottle or tank to provide the compressed air for the start. Thus a big bang sound every time the starter was fired. This bottle could be refilled while in the air from an on board air compressor in the wing of the aircraft. A was a bad design that resulted in an explosion

when you used the compressor in the air thus this system was never used either.

There was some more discussion about our capability to realistically think we could get this done, but with no avail. He said that this briefing is what he wants me to do. I was uneasy with this assignment because I thought some of these guys would perceive my involvement in the spook program. Some of these guys know more that you might think about what's going on. I went on to give this classified briefing and offered my opinion as to the best approach to take depending on the distance of each target. There was nothing more ever said about this mission while I was there. I think the whole thing was dropped until the RF-101C's came on board and that was after I left the unit.

Shortly there after I received my orders for reassignment back to the states and I was FIGMO (F--- you, I've Got My Orders) It was now mid July 1957 and my time in the 15th was now over.

The following information is a brief presentation of my career in the AF (Air Force) and the KYANG (Kentucky Air National Guard). It briefly tells my experience as a reconnaissance pilot and the various assignments I held until my retirement in 1975. There were no further events or situations concerning the spook missions until I received a call from Cargill Hall in 2001 about the declassification of the spook missions and the Symposium in Washington.

I had requested for reassignment in the states to the southeast in reconnaissance expecting to be assigned to a unit at Shaw AFB in South Carolina. Like many other things in the government, they can mess up a good thing, I was assigned to 1800th AACS Wing 1801st AACS Group 1850 AACS Flight at Hamilton AFB San Francisco California. I had no idea what type of unit that was or what type aircraft they were flying.

To say the least, I was very unhappy and disappointed with this assignment. I took a 30 day leave back to my home town in Louisville, Kentucky to visit our family and give our relatives a chance to get to see our children as it had been three and one half years since we had been home. We had one Daughter borne at Yokota which the family had never seen.

While in Louisville I visited the KYANG unit flying out of Standiford Field, the civilian airport, to see if there were any openings for pilots with my past experience. I was pleasantly pleased to find out that the Guard had the 165th Fighter Interceptor Squadron assigned to the 123rd Fighter Interceptor Wing flying F-86's there in Louisville.

My visit with Vern Yahne, the Base Detachment Commander, was very interesting. As it turned out the unit had not been flying the F-86 very long and after a discussion of my experience in the F-86 and with my Advance Fighter Training at Nellis AFB he thought I was more experienced in the F-86 than most of the pilots in the unit. He also, even more interesting, informed me that the unit was going to change their mission to a Tactical Reconnaissance Unit in the near future. After further discussions of my experience in tactical reconnaissance with the 15TRS flying the RF-86F and the RF-80C he felt that I would be in a good position to get an assignment in the Guard.

He could not hold a slot open for me but said to get in touch with him as soon as I could get released from the Air Force.

When I reported in to the Commander of the 1850 AACS Flight at Hamilton AFB he was surprised to find out my flying background and he could not understand how I got assigned to his unit. The 1850th were flying C-45H and C-47D type aircraft flight checking radio range, VOR, TACAN and ILS systems.

They had no jets only these flight checking aircraft. He was not sure how I would fit into his unit with no propeller flying experience since pilot training and advised me that I would have to fly as co-pilot for some time. All of his pilots had thousands of hours in these type aircraft and would always be the pilot for years to come. He wasn't sure what to do with me.

I asked him what my chances would be to get a transfer out of this unit and he stated that they were part of MAC (Material Air Command) and they would not do this as MAC would not transfer pilots out of their command. MAC was only flying propeller type aircraft at the time. It did not take more than the time for him to state this, that I had made up my mind. I asked him to be discharger from the Air Force. I had completed my obligation to the Air Force. When I got my commission, I signed up for four years after pilot training and there should be no reason they could hold me as I had

completed my obligation. He was in agreement with that and said he would be glad to get my paper work started.

The next problem was what to do with me until my release. His pilots did not want to have me as their co-pilot, and I didn't blame them, but hey were forced to by their Commander. That was not a fun experience, they talked down to me and gave me a lot of static at any chance they could. The Commander, (I do not remember his name) inquired with his Wing Commander as why I had been assigned and he found out that his unit was going to get a new T-33 from the factory very shortly and I was assigned to be and IP (Instructor Pilot) to check out his pilots in jets as none of them had any jet time.

I was able to get recurrent in the T-33 by getting a recheck from base operations. As it turned out I had more IP time from my flight checks in the 15th than the guy that checked me out there. My release from active duty had already gone in and that could not be changed even if I wanted to stay in the Air Force. My time was spent riding in the right seat taking a lot of guff from those guys about my lack of experience while flying the T-33 from base operations.

After about three month of this unpleasant experience the new T-33 arrived and I got acquainted with a new T-Bird. It had different cockpit arrangements and equipment from the old version. Within one week after receiving the new T-33 I was tasked to go to pickup an airman, flight checking a system in North Dakota, because his wife had been critically injured in an automobile accident. Upon return to Hamilton my Operations Officer met us upon landing late at night and advised me that my release from active duty had been approved and I only had a few days remaining in The Air Force.

That was good news and my first action was to call Vern Yahne and tell him I would be home in November, it was 1957. He said he had a slot for me and to check in with him as soon as I got back to Louisville. My only disappointment was that I did not get a chance to checkout all of these pilots in the T-33 that had been giving me all this multi engine stuff the past couple months. I don't know if there would have been enough barf bags to take care of these guys fate.

Upon returning to Louisville I began looking for a job and started my career with the KYANG. My check out ride was

by an old high school classmate Dub Shane. I had more than 600 hours in the F-86 and the average time by most of the pilots in the unit was a little over 25 hours so I only had to get familiar with the F-86A and the fighter interceptor mission there. It took only a few rides to get back up to speed. I was glad to get back in an aircraft that I knew how to fly. Our mission was to defend the Oak Ridge Danger Area in Oak Ridge Tennessee where our nuclear bombs were being made and stored. We had aircraft on alert 24 hours a day 7 days a week, so I had plenty to do and fly as much as I wanted until I found a civilian job.

I got a job Louisville and continued to fly the F-86 until March of 1959 when we changed our mission to reconnaissance and we all were checked out in the B-57B. We received the Bomber version from the Air Force earlier which did not have any camera capability when we got them. They were converted to the RB-57B, but did not the change bomber capability. We only installed a vertical camera in the nose. The bombardier-navigator seat in the rear was maintained, however we did not use it for our mission.

The reconnaissance mission for the 165th TRS was bomb damage assessment in the United States. Our nation was in the middle of the cold war and we were tasked to take pre strike photograph of potential nuclear bomb targets that may be hit by the Russians in the event of a nuclear war. If a strike did occur then we were to do the bomb damage assessment of those targets that were hit. A lot of these targets required us to stage out of Air Force Bases due to the time and distance necessary to take a photographic record of them. Some of there AFB's were targets themselves. I wasn't sure how we were to pull this off with so many nukes going off close to each other causing all the radio active fall out to be all around us. On some large cities it required 15 to 20 flight lines, at a middle altitude. to photograph the target to make a mosaic. I'm glad that we never had to do that.

I continued to fly the RB-57B until December of 1964 when the USAF took our B models back into the Air Force to use them as a bomber again in the Vietnam War. We got the RB-57A from them in return. In mid November 1965 I went to Shaw AFB and checked out in the RF-101 when we received the F-101A and C from the SAC (Strategic Air Command) unit in Bentwater England. These were the nuclear fighter version from SAC and did not have photographic capability. The KYANG was to convert these A's and C's to RF-101G

and H's. This conversion took until some time in June of 1967 when they became the G and H but without any camera capability. The G and H model was supposed to have similar camera capabilities as the new RF-4 now in service in the Air Force. We did not have night capability or any radar capability. I'm not sure the difference in the G and the H model, from the cockpit and aircraft systems point of view they were the same.

We flew the G's and H's without any cameras, due to design and installation problems with the cameras, until January 1968 when we were called to active duty by President Johnson during the Pueblo Crises. We did not have any camera capability at the time, thus we stayed at our home base for six months until we finally got our cameras installed. Then in July 1968 we were transferred, along with our wing, to Richards Gebaur AFB in Kansas City, Missouri. We operated from there until we were sent to Itazuke AB, Japan for four months. During our operation out of Richards Gebaur we maintained a flight of six RF-101 aircraft in Alaska and Panama on a four month rotation. While flying out of Japan we photographed over 800 targets assigned in Japan and South Korea and received the 5th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for this accomplishment. In June of 1969 we were released from active duty and returned to Louisville, KY.

When we were called to active duty in January of 1968 I had been the Squadron Commander for the 165th TRS since 1966. Due to the organizational structure of an Air Force TRS our Group Commander became the Squadron Commander and I became the Squadron Operations Officer while on active duty until we were returned to KYANG status in 1969. I then returned to the Squadron Commander position until appointed as the Chief of Staff of the Headquarters of the KYANG in 1970. I was selected as the 123rd TRW (Tactical Reconnaissance Wing) Commander in 1972 with Squadrons assigned in Louisville, Ky. Little Rock, AK and Reno, NV. In 1974 I was appointed as the Assistant Adjutant General for Air and remained in that position until I retired from the KYANG in 1975.

My span of time in the Air Force and Air National Guard covered 22 years. I thought it interesting to note that during my time in the KYANG only one person asked me how I got my DFC. That was John Conaway and we were best friends that lived together in the same neighborhood. We were also

room mates while recalled to active duty in 1968. I told John that the situation was classified and that I was not able to talk about it. Nothing more was said. For those of you that might be interested here is the Citation that accompanied my award.

First Lieutenant William J. Semonin distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement in aerial flight in 1955. The effectiveness and courage exhibited by Lieutenant Semonin in the accomplishment of this mission, under extremely hazardous flight conditions, ably demonstrated his outstanding proficiency and steadfast devotion to duty. In performance of this special mission of vital significance to the United States, he has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

I now have this displayed on my Air Force memorabilia wall. I did not show this to anyone while on active duty in the Air Force or KYANG because it probably stirs more questions than it answers.

I remained in my civilian employment in Louisville KY until 1981 when I moved to Fountain Town, Indiana. In 1983 I moved to Cincinnati, OH, then in 1984 I moved back to Lake Side Park, Kentucky and remained there until I retired 1992. From 1993 until the present I have lived in Charlotte, NC.

It was not until 2001 that I gave any thought to the Spook missions when Cargill Hall, head of the NRO (National Reconnaissance Office), called me to advise me that the missions that we had flown were no longer classified. He invited me to a Symposium to be held in Washington DC to meet with the Air Force Historians that want to try to reconstruct the history of these missions as there was no record in the Air Force archives relating to who flew these missions or how and when these missions were flown. They had the photographs of targets that were photographed but had no information about any of the missions or who flew them or how they were conducted.

Without any knowledge of this information they were inviting all the past RF-86 pilots who were assigned to the 15th TRS during this period to attend this meeting and would ask, in an attempt to find out, who had participated in these flights.

When we checked into the Symposium there was a clip board

at registration with the request for all the pilots that flew the classified missions to sign the roster. They really didn't have any record of these flights or knew who had flown them. They were relying on us to come forth and identify who the pilot were that participate in these missions. After reading the names of the guys who signed up on the list it was the first time that I knew who my fellow pilots were that were the Spook Guys. Some I suspected and some were ones that I would not have ever thought were involved.

The next day everyone met for the Symposium. Outside of the meeting room were displays with some of the airfields that were photographed on these missions. This was the first time I had an opportunity to view some of the work we did. There were other presentations on display that were very interesting.

When I entered the meeting room my first impression was that there were a lot of people attending this gathering. I did not have any idea who all these people were. The NRO (National Reconnaissance Office) organized this Symposium along with personnel in the Air Force historical organizations. Many were in uniform, but the majority of them were in civilian clothes. There could have been reporters there also as this was the first time that this type information was being made public. The spook pilots that were identified on the sign in roster were asked to sit at the head table in order of the sequence that the missions were flown. I don't think we got that just right as we were not sure who did what in any type of order. I was just glad that I did not have to go first. There were a few of the earlier pilots that were spook guys while the 15th TRS was in Korea and had left the unit prior to my arrival that I did not know. They evidently were more aware of each other as they seemed to be sitting in some order.

Cameras were placed in the middle of the room so the information that was forth coming could be recorded for history. I was near the last, along with Bob Taylor, which allowed me to hear in detail the description of each mission as our turn passed down the table. I felt like I was sitting at the head table being interviewed after the National Basketball Championship or after winning the NASCAR Daytona 500 race. Every one in the room was hanging on every word.

Cargill Hall opened the meeting with the customary thank you and appreciation to all for being here for this historic

event. He then set the stage for the purpose of these missions describing the conditions during the Cold War at the time when it was of vital importance to have the intelligence obtained from these missions. The United States was then confronted with Russian Iron Curtin and Chinese Bamboo Curtin and there was little to no intelligence about their military capabilities known to us. The only way to obtain knowledge of their current situation was to fly into these targets and photograph them. I was very surprised to find out that the RB-47's flying in Europe were flying these spook missions also.

We had been asked to describe in detail each mission that we had been involved with. Many, like my self, stated that it was difficult to remember all the facts and details because we were told to forget that these missions ever occurred. And, for us to treat the missions as "It Never Happened". For nearly fifty years I had not given this subject any thought as I was living under the direction that these missions would never be declassified. It was only after sitting down to attempt to write this article, or what ever you want to call it, that I could reconstruct much of these missions from my memory. It has taken three years to try to recall this type detail and to my surprise many of the events only came back into focus as I was writing this. When you were told to put this out of your mind, that is just what you did, and to recall it has been more difficult that I thought it would be

A lot of the interesting pieces of information that were not readily known were presented, such as the lowering of one inch of flaps to put the F-86 up on a step that increased the speed and/or higher altitude capability. I offered the information about the packing of the fuel tanks which had not been mentioned prior to my opportunity to speak. Bob and I had pre arranged for me to describe the first mission and that he would present the second mission. I did not mention anything about finding the new airfield on our way out of the first mission, and Bob spoke up for me to tell that part of the story also. I was going to let him do that as he was leading at the time and our second mission was to go after that target. I thought that the two missions that Bob and I flew together were the last missions flown but after this meeting I discovered that Bob and Jim Black had flown a mission into China following our missions. That speaks to how well the top secret classification was conducted around these missions as Bob and I were very good friends and we flew our missions as a team but never discussed this event.

This presentation lasted about two hours; however, there were many other personal meetings among the spook pilots following the meeting. All of the Spook Pilots wanted to discuss more mission information and details that sparked our interest. A lot of the attending people had interesting questions of interest that they had on specific details of how these missions were conducted. That evening we split up into groups of like members and enjoyed dinner together with a lot of stories relating to events that we were now free to discuss.

A few weeks after the symposium Sam Dickens, one of the early Spook Pilots, called to ask if Bob and I could provide more detail information on our missions such as target names, coordinates, photographs, date flown and mission information. Sam was in the process of writing a book on the spook missions and would appreciate us providing this information for his book. I could not remember all the things he was asking for and called Bob to see if we could reconstruct this together. We were unable to figure much of this out. We had our Form-5's that were given to us when we retired from the Air Force and attempted to find times and dates recorded in our flight records that matched for certain any period of times in 1955. We both discovered that there were no dates and times recorded in either of our records for these time periods and concluded that these mission flights were not recorded at all. This we could not understand but I never looked at these records in any detail each month as they occurred, thus would not have recognized that these flights were missing. We did the best we could and sent the items to Sam that he requested. Unfortunately, Sam passed away prior to completing his book and I do not know the status of the items I sent to him.

Time has now passed and this concludes my record of the events relating to the spook missions as best I can remember and reconstruct.

I was proud to have been part of these historical events and be able to serve in the United States Air Force. The following sums it up best.

After the symposium I received the following from Donald Rumsfeld, The Secretary of Defense.

**THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301**

*Message of Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld  
To the Veterans of Cold War Overflights  
of "Denied Territories"  
On the Occasion of The Early Cold War  
Overflights Symposium*

*It is with great pleasure that I join in honoring the service and bravery you displayed while risking your lives in the earliest and most dangerous skies of the Cold War. In the name of security, the story of your courage has for so long remained behind the veil of secrecy. In the name of history, America today lifts that veil and proudly honors your extraordinary contribution to the nation's defenses. Today, you step from the shadows of the unknown and the unsung and at last assume your rightful place in the ranks of this nation's heroes.*

*We are now more than a decade removed from the collapse of the Berlin Wall and freedom's victory in the Cold War. The Soviet Union is no more. Communism is discredited. More people live under freedom than ever before.*

*From this day forward, America will know the full story---until now, largely unknown even to your family---of how your heroism made all the difference in that great struggle. America will know from 1950 until 1956, you took to the skies over "denied territories" such as the Soviet Union and China. America will know how you risked your lives every flight---often taking fire from the most advanced Soviet fighters when the Cold War turned hot. America will know about your unparalleled record---how in mission after mission, every plane and every airman returned safely home.*

*As Secretary of Defense, I want the nation to know about your service. Even more, I want you to know what your service meant to the nation. Because of you, our military stood stronger and more prepared in those early, uncertain days of a half-century ago. Because of you, the American people were safer and more secure during what President Kennedy later call "the long twilight struggle". And in that struggle, you were the wings of freedom.*

*I commend each and every one of you for lending your voices to this hereto untold chapter in our nation's history. On behalf*

*of all those who serve or have served this nation, I thank you for your vital roll in ensuring the strong, ready military that helped to win the Cold War. On behalf of the American people who enjoy the liberties you helped to preserve so long ago. I thank you for making us the force for freedom we are today.*

*The full account of your heroism may never be known, but it will never be forgotten.*

Signed:  
Donald Rumsfeld.

Rudy Anderson was shot down by a SAM missile and killed flying a U-2 over Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crises.

I would like to thank Margie, my wife, for encouraging me to write this and her support during my many sleepless nights trying to remember these events.

I would like to thank Betsy, my former wife, for something she did not understand.

I would like thank my two daughters, Sally and Alice, for asking me to write my account of these missions.

*In the words of our Presidents,  
"God Bless America"*



▲ The Roll-out Dinner of the RF-86F at the National Museum of the US Air Force took place on 16 March 2005. The restored RF-86F was actually assigned to the 15th TRS at Komaki in the mid-1950s. The dinner was attended by many of the pilots that flew the classified missions in the RF-86F. (credit NMUSAF)

# Standing Alert

## Who Let The Dog Out!

By Bob Matasick

• • • • •

The 44th FBS was the protector of the Philippines. As such, we were required to have two planes available for takeoff within two minutes after a scramble by radar control. During normal times, the alert period extended from thirty minutes prior to sunrise, to thirty minutes after sunset, seven days a week. During the so-called "Red Alerts", which were declared when unusual activity was perceived, the alert period increased to 24 straight hours. I'm sure this was nothing more than a cosmetic move because the F-86F was a day fighter and not worth a flip at finding and destroying an enemy at night.

When I first joined the 44th, our alert shack was a dilapidated Quonset hut beside one end of the runway. Later, a concrete building with air conditioning was constructed at the end of the runway. I was fortunate to be on the first crew to occupy the new building. The only problem was that the road to the new building traversed a section of the field that was not normally used, and nobody had forewarned the Philippine guards that we would be coming over that road in the early morning. Now, those Philippine guards were hired to protect the base from the HUKS, a Communist radical group, and they did a great job. However, every once in awhile we would learn that a few HUKS had tried to enter the base and had been shot by our guards. Also, each guard was accompanied by a German shepherd attack dog. A very large, snarly attack dog!

We were fortunate on this particular morning that we were in a car and not on our little motor scooters. I was half asleep with my head back against the seat while Speedy Butler was driving. I thought I had heard someone shouting, "Halt! Halt!", but I was in a dream world and not perceiving what was happening. Finally I suggested that Speedy stop to determine what was happening. Suddenly, at the open window beside me, one of those large snarly dogs had his front paws on the window sill, growling with his teeth bared. AT ME!

Barely holding him back was the guard who was ordering us out of the car while pointing a gun in our direction. Both of us tried to explain that we were pilots heading to the alert shack. But he would have none of it. He insisted that we get out and place our ID on the hood of the car. We both agreed to do that if he would hold his dog back.

When we exited the car, our flight suits probably provided a little credence to our story, and we were able to negotiate a deal whereby he would move back while we placed our ID on the car, and then permit us to move away while he examined it. Once he convinced himself that we were legitimate, he waved us on our way. Our adrenaline was pumping at full speed. But we managed to survive our little encounter.



▲ Bob Matasick in the cockpit at Clark AB, Philippines 1954. (credit – Bob Matasick)

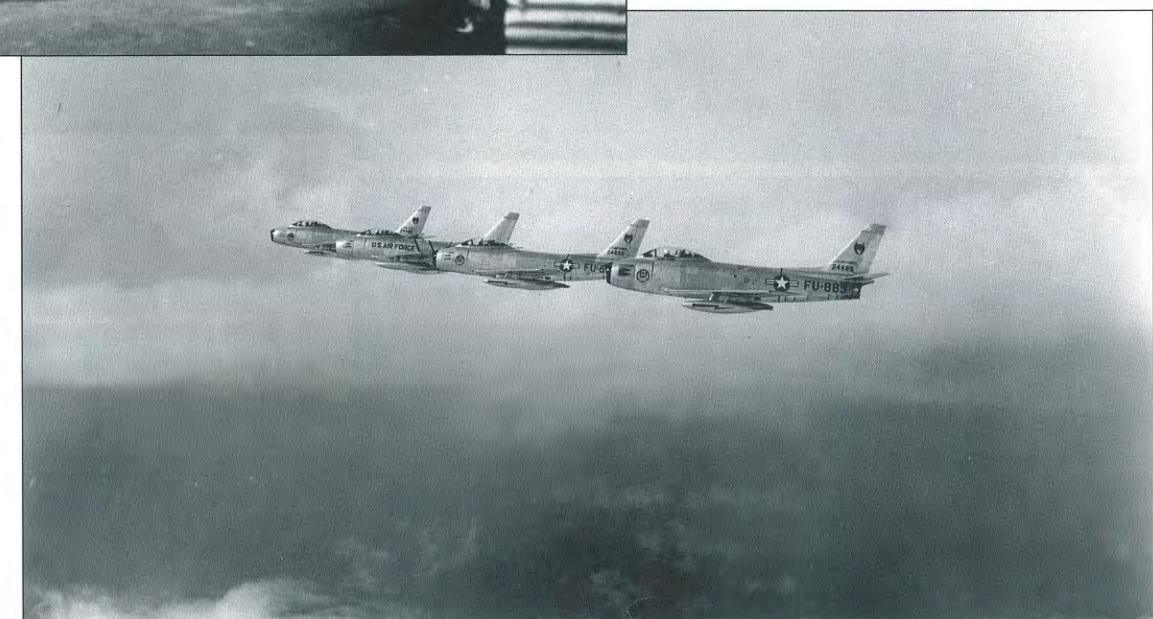
◀ A 44th FBS F-86F flies over the Philippine Islands during a routine patrol mission. The 44th FBS was assigned air defense duties against communist aggression over the Philippines in June 1954. (credit – USAF)



Major Don Robinson was CO of the 44th FBS at Clark AB in June 1954. Note the three blue bands signifying the squadron CO's aircraft. The 44th FBS was part of 13th AF. (credit – USAF)

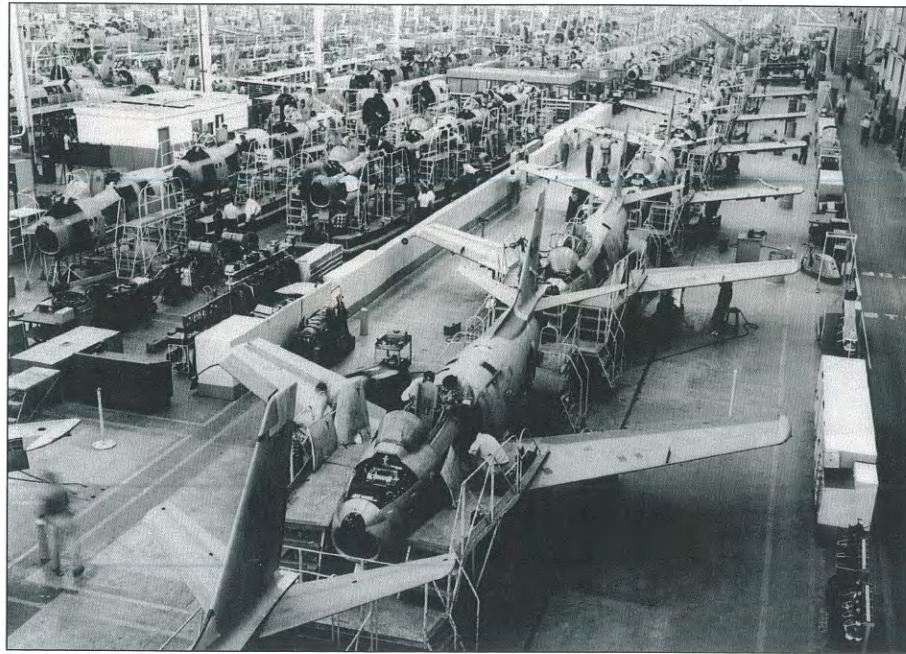


◀ 44th FBS pilots leave the alert shack at Clark AB during an alert in 1954. The alert shack was an old WW2 quonset hut left over from World War 2. (credit – USAF)



▲ A flight of 44th FBS F-86Fs over the Philippines in June 1954. The pilots would log many hours of air to air and air to ground gunnery practice, as well as pulling alert duty against any Communist Chinese aggression. (credit – USAF)

# this n' that

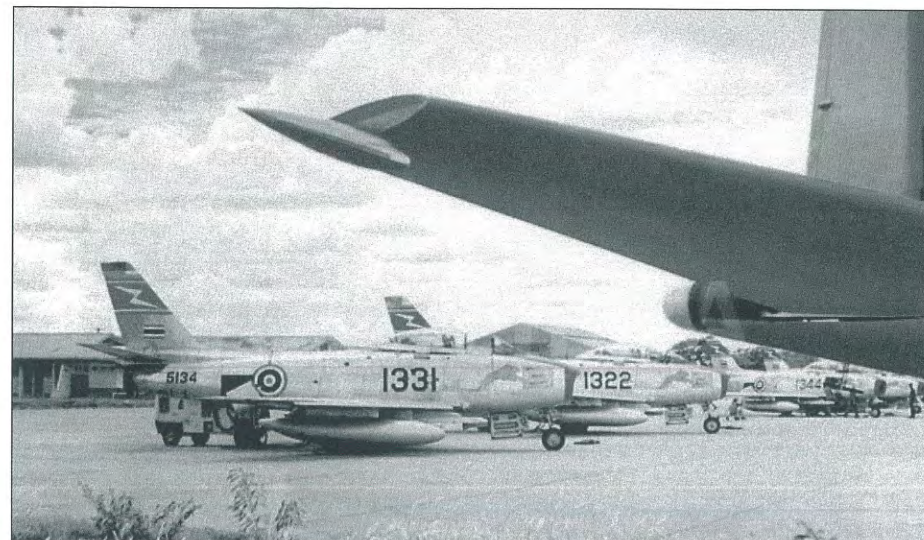


◀ The F-86F production line at North American Aviation's Columbus, Ohio plant in 1953. Many people do not realize that Columbus built most of the F-86Fs that went to Korea were built at the Columbus plant. (credit, NAA)

▶ One of the stories that appeared in a past issue of SabreJet Classics was the making of the movie "The Hunters", starring Robert Mitchum and Robert Wagner. The "MiGs" were Williams AFB F-84Fs. (credit – Dale Boggie)



▶ Sabre movie 'stars' for the film The Hunters included (L-R) Dale Boggie as Ed Pell, George Panas as Cleve Seville – "The Iceman", and Dave Brown as Monty Montcavage. (credit – Dale Boggie)



◀ As the US Air Force phased out the F-86 in favor of supersonic F-100s, nations all over the world clamored for the remaining Sabres, the best MiG-killers on the planet. These F-86F-40s belong to the Royal Thai Air Force. (credit – SabreJet Classics)



◀ One of the premier aerobatic teams, and the only USAF team to fly F-86Fs, was the Skyblazers team from the 48th FBW based in Europe. Air Force wanted a team in Europe since the Thunderbirds did not have an air refueling capability until the introduction of the F-100C. (credit – Mike Fox)



◀ The bosses airplane of the 21st FBW based at Chambley AB, France in 1955. Colonel Robert R. Rowland was Wing Commander at the time. Note all the 'command stripes' around the fuselage. (credit – Gary Sparks)



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★ *The Last Hurrah!* ★



## ◀ WHAT IS IT?

What better way to end the last issue of SabreJet Classics than with a photo of the last flight of the last F-86F that was operational in the US Air Force. F-86F-25, serial 52-5298, which was assigned to Air Material Command at Sacramento AMA before being delivered to the bonyard at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, where its final destination would be determined at a later date. It's unknown what happened to 52-5298.

*(credit – David Menard collection)*