

A publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

Volume 10 Number 1

WINTER 2002



# Sabre Jet Classics



The "Falcons" Team, F-86C/YF-93A,  
Air Force Museum Salute, More!

# SabreJet Classics

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Winter 2002  
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## Next Issue; The RF-86F Photo Sabre Story Revised, More!

(front cover) Ground crew personnel make final adjustments and charge the guns on a 16th Squadron F-86E-1 at Suwon in the Spring of 1952. Of note are the fine conditions of the ramp - mud and more mud.

(credit - USAF)

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## The Presidents Notebook

Happy New Year. I certainly hope 2002 is more prosperous and less traumatic for all of us than 2001.

Membership-wise, we gained 94 new members in 2001, which is **below** average. We need to continue working on the recruiting program PLEASE. Unfortunately we are dropping 120 old members for non-payment of dues. I think a lot of these guys have passed away and we haven't been notified. If you learn of the demise of one of our members please let us know.

Your organization treats deceased members differently than most similar organizations. We put the member's name in the FOLDED WINGS section of the next issue of Sabre Jet Classics magazine and on our web site SABRE-PILOTS.ORG. It is my privilege and obligation to write a letter of condolence to the

widow and advise she will be listed as an Associate Member. She will continue to receive the *SabreJet Classics* magazine for as long as desired and is invited to attend our reunions.

I still have Korean War Service pins available. If you served in Korea on the ground, in the air or at sea from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953 you are entitled to receive the pin. Just let me know and I will mail one to you. If you have friends or relatives who qualify let me know. I will need their names and inclusive dates served for our records. The pin will be mailed to you for presentation.

One of the articles in this issue is about Royal Canadian Air Force Sabre pilot Andy Mackenzie. Dorothy and I had a very informative and interesting conversation with Andy and his lovely wife Alison during the reunion. I know you will enjoy reading about his experience. Recently Larry Davis received an inquiry from one of our members as to why we didn't publish more articles about other Air Forces. We would love to but the stories have

to start from the source. We have members from around the globe and we need your stories and pictures.

If you want to contribute \$100 to have your name on the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association tablet at the National Air and Space Museum I hope the flyer mailed with this magazine helps.

It's not too early to put the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association 14th reunion April 13-16, 2003 on your calendar. We are having it conjunction with the Red River Rats so your should be able to see a lot of old friends and embellish a lot of war stories.

That's all I have.  
**God Bless America.**

**Jerry R. Johnson**  
President

## FOLDED WINGS

James H. Campbell, January 9th, 2002  
Walter G. Center, December 15th, 2001  
Francis S. "Gabby" Gabreski, January 31st, 2002  
Lauren D. Parriot, March 20th, 1999  
Maj. Gen. Don D. Pittman, September 11th, 2001  
Eugene D. Tande, September 6th, 2000  
Clifford M. Winter, January 11th, 2002

### POLICY STATEMENT

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## the editor's desk

Some of you may be wondering what this big package of stuff is all about. Why are we sending you another copy of the Fall 2001 issue (vol. 9-3)? Well, the reason is because we didn't send you the Fall issue, at least not all of it..

Somewhere between the final proof and the actual printing, the computer jumped over about 5 years worth of history of our association. We had several options to rectify this. We could print just the information that was missing. Or we could print the entire history of the association again as a separate article. Or we could reprint the entire issue and send it out as part of a package with the Winter 2002 issue, vol. 10-1.

We chose the latter. Not only did it allow us to make the obvious changes to the history article. It also allowed us to do some tinkering with other areas that we didn't like. Such as the front cover photo. You will notice that it is much crisper and the colors are brighter. It was a difficult photo to work with since it had a storm moving in behind the airplane. But I think you'll agree it is a much better looking cover on the reprint. And the history of our esteemed association is now complete.

**Speaking of photos.** I want to emphasize that we need photos to accompany any article that you send us. And when I say photos, I mean real photos or color slides to make prints from. Scanned photos, especially e-mailed photos cannot be used. The reason is simple. I don't have a laser printer. I have a very, very good inkjet unit. But inkjets use a dot pattern to create a photo. And the computer that the printing company uses picks up all those little, tiny 'dots' and reprints them, usually making them bigger. Thus, the photos turn out lousy when the originals were gorgeous.

So... If you plan to include photos, please trust us and send your originals to me personally at the following address: Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics, 4713 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709. I will turn your photos around and get them back to you in as short an amount of time as possible. Prints take about a week to copy; slides take about a month as I send them to a professional lab for printing.

**NEEDS** - Right now we're attempting to get enough information, stories AND PICTURES to do an issue devoted entirely to the F-86 in Air Guard service. These can be D/L models in air defense use, or A, E, F, and H models for the TAC mission. The stories can be stateside in origin, or from a deployment outside of the ConUS. I'm in great NEED NOW for some photos of the F-86H deployments to Europe during the 1962 Berlin Crisis. We have some good stories but few photos. Let me hear from you if you have anything you feel will work.

Many thanks to all those that answered the question of "What Is It?" in the last issue. The story of the mystery airplane is included in this issue.

Thanks Guys!  
**Larry Davis**

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## letters to the editor & other news

Many thanks to all those that sent in answers to our "What Is It?" puzzler. Every one knew the answer. The "mystery plane" is covered in depth with this issue. There were so many guys that had the right answer that I can't name all of them. Thanks again.

### 'Bones' Marshall Update

We received the following from Bones via Sandy Moats:

"Good News! In an e-mail dated 6 November, Bones said, "Saw the brain Doc at Tripler yesterday. He said that all tests are in and I have graduated. No more appointments...the blod clots are still there but smaller. The pressure points have improved. So he gave me a 'you are finished with all this stuff. Go out in the world and enjoy'.

"The Doc cleared me to drive, which I'd already been doing for a couple of weeks. Then being somewhat delirious, I proceeded direct to Comp-USA and bought XP. I haven't told the Doc all this for fear that he'll lock me up again."

Both the Doc and I salute "Bones" for a super job in his dogged determination to recover from a serious head wound, and Saint Millie for making it possible. No further updates should be necessary or expected.

### 1/Lt Bradley Irish

Wanted - Information regarding the MiG kill that 1/Lt Bradley Irish, 334th FIS, 4th FIG, scored on 21 October 1951. An effort is being made to record this victory in the "official credits list". Anyone knowing anything should **contact** Pat Halloran, 3791 Blue Merion Ct, Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
Ph. (719)576-6077  
e-mail - Pat HABU@aol.com

Aloha, Sandy

That certainly is good news. Congrats to "Bones" and Millie.

Paul Budline informs us that The History Channel is running a program on the F-86 Sabre, to be hosted by Roger Mudd. It will air on The History Channel on 19 March 2002. Watch for it!

**Sad News!** For those that attended the 4th Fighter Wing Reunion in Colorado Springs in 1997, you will recall meeting a young air cadet named Nicholas Jabara, grandson of James J. Jabara, the first all-jet ace in history. Nick was enrolled in the US Air Force Academy, and graduated with honors in May 2001.

He reported to Del Rio, Texas, this past summer to begin his pilot training. Sadly, while on a training flight on 31 January 2002, his T-37 crashed at an auxiliary field of Laughlin AFB. Both pilots, 1/Lt Chad B. Carlson (Instructor Pilot) and 2/Lt Nicholas J. Jabara (Student), were killed.

Condolences can be sent to:  
Mr. & Mrs. James Jabara  
1269 Chardonnay Drive  
Richland, WA 99352.

Condolences from the SabreJet Classics staff to the family of Nicholas J. Jabara and Chad B. Carlson.

**WANTED - Capt. Thomas M. Collie**  
Capt. Collie's son would like to hear from anyone that flew with his dad at Nellis in 1954-55. **Contact** Deane Collie-Beard at CollieDeane@aol.com

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Two North American Aviation personnel make final checks to the first F-86C prior to its first flight on 24 January 1950. The radical NACA-designed recessed air intakes are very evident in this photo. (credit - NAA)

## The F-86C/YF-93 "Sabre" by Larry Davis

**What Is It?** *SabreJet Classics* issue 9-3. Well, we sure didn't fool anyone with our subject last issue. Several members identified the photo as a North American Aviation YF-93A/F-86C. Thanks to all that sent notes and information about the subject airplane. With that in mind, we thought we should do the story of the F-86C Sabre.

So what exactly was the it? In 1946, the Air Force had recognized that all the current jet fighter designs were lacking in one critical area - range. The P-86A with 200 gallon ferry tanks under the wings, had a ferry range of 1052 miles. The two other major jet fighter types, the P-80 and P-84, were similar. And inflight refueling was still a glimmer in theyes of the engineers. And Strategic Air Command wanted jet fighters to escort their long range bombers to targets, which were now envisioned to be deep in the Soviet Union - and far outside the range of any jet fighters. They were known as "penetration fighters".

In late 1947, with the Penetration Fighter requirement in mind, North American engineers started a project to both increase the range and the speed of their swept wing fighter. Any increase in range required an increase in fuel capacity, either in bigger internal tanks or through droppable underwing fuel tanks. The engineers enlarged the entire fuselage in length, width, and depth. In addition, the wing span was increased 1' 8" on each wingtip.

Both of these changes increased the internal fuel capacity from 435 gals. in the F-86A to an incredible 1561 gals internally! And since the new penetration fighter

used a modified F-86A wing, it was able to carry any of the underwing tank designs available, including the 200 gal. ferry tanks. That brought total gallonage to 1961. Unrefueled range was estimated to be in excess of 2000 miles.

All of this extra fuel meant the airplane gross weight was increased a corresponding amount, from 15,876 lbs combat weight in the F-86A, to 26,516 lbs in the F-86C. The J47 didn't have enough power to keep the much heavier fighter in the transonic speed range necessary for jet combat. Pratt & Whitney had an engine available, the J48-P-6 engine which had an afterburner. The J48 was rated at 6,250 lbs static thrust, with 8750 lbs thrust available in afterburner.

The North American engineers decided to incorporate other new items which were just then becoming available such as the SCR-720 search radar and 20mm cannons (six) in place of the standard .50 caliber armament. The heavier weight necessitated a dual-wheel main landing gear. With the radar mounted in the nose where the air intake was on the F-86A, the engineers designed a novel set of flush-mounted NACA-designed air intakes on each side of the forward fuselage. The center of the fuselage was slightly concave, giving the aircraft a distinctive "wasp-waist" appearance.

Other portions of the new penetration fighter retained their F-86A ancestry - the canopy/windscreen design, both vertical and horizontal tail design, cockpit and ejector seat, nose gear assembly, and the main portion of the wing. With all that being common with the F-86A, it was natural that the aircraft be designated in the F-86 family. But Air Force decided that there were too many design changes in the penetration fighter design, and redesignated the airplane as the F-93. (The same thing occurred with the initial F-86D design which was originally designated as the F-95.)



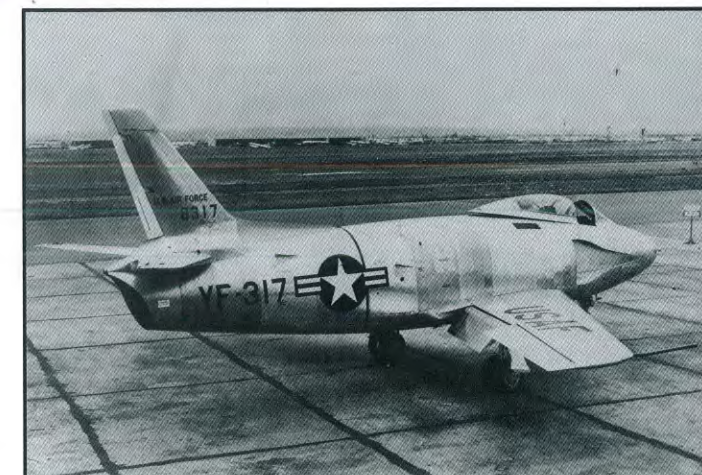
The newly designated YF-93A (ex-F-86C) shares the ramp at Muroc with the new YF-95A (F-86D) prototype. Both aircraft share various parts with the original F-86A Sabre, such as the windscreen and canopy, vertical and horizontal tail surfaces, and basic wing structure. (credit - NAA)

In December 1947, Air Force ordered two prototypes of the new fighter. Six months later, Air Force added a further 118 aircraft to the contract - 18 months prior to the first airplane coming off the assembly line! However, in February 1949, Air Force suddenly cancelled the entire project. The reason was two-fold. First was the development of the B-47 Stratojet bomber, which was estimated to be so fast that it wouldn't need any fighter escort. Second was a drastic reduction in the overall defense budget.

But North American already had the two prototypes under production and made the decision to go ahead and complete the two (now-designated) YF-93As. The first aircraft, serial 48-317, made its first flight on 24 January 1950. The second YF-93A #48-318, followed shortly thereafter. In the late summer of 1950, Air Force held a fly-off between the three "penetration fighter" designs - the McDonnell XF-88 Voodoo, Lockheed XF-90, and the YF-93A. The Evaluation Board declared the XF-88 as the winner of the fly-off. However, the rapid development of the XB-47 and the even more formidable XB-52, made the decision null and void. There was simply no need for a penetration fighter aircraft.

Air Force took control of the two YF-93As and gained the following results from flight tests. The YF-93A's top speed was 708 mph at sea level, and 622 mph at 35,000 feet. The range was almost exactly what the engineers had predicted, 1967 miles. Rate of climb with the J48 in 'burner was 11,960 feet/minute. Pretty impressive for an airplane that would never see production.

When Air Force was through with the YF-93As, they turned both prototypes over to the NACA's Ames Laboratory at Moffett Field for further tests and evaluation.



The YF-93A was powered by a Pratt & Whitney J48-P-6 turbojet with an afterburner that produced 8750 lbs/thrust with a huge exhaust structure. (credit - NAA)



Looking 'down the throat' of the YF-93A, showing the recessed air intakes and fuselage shape. Within the nose radome was an SCR-720 Search Radar. (credit - NAA)



High front view of the no. 2 YF-93A, #48-318, which had standard air intakes installed over the recessed units found on the first airplane. Note the V-shaped windscreen originally used on the F-86A. (credit - NAA)



Inflight over Southern California, the first YF-93A has had the redesigned air intakes fitted over top of the recessed units. Air Force declined to purchase the YF-93A when SAC indicated the new B-47 was so fast it wouldn't need an escort fighter! (credit - NAA)

NACA soon fitted the second YF-93A with standard intakes over the original flush-mounted units. It was found that the conventional air intakes increased performance and the first YF-93A was subsequently equipped with a set for further tests. Both aircraft finished their service careers flying as chase aircraft to the newly developed Century Series of fighters that would replace the entire F-86 series. Both aircraft were removed from service in the late 1950s and scrapped.

Following lengthy service with the Air Force at Edwards AFB in the role of chase aircraft, both YF-93As were turned over to the NACA's Ames Laboratory at Moffett Field, CA, for use as test and evaluation aircraft. Note that the #2 airplane has had the recessed intakes re-installed. (credit - Brian Baker)



### Radar Lock-on

## The Sabre's Radar Is Locked on... S/L Andy Mackenzie, RCAF (Ret)

*SabreJet Classics* is proud to lock the Sabre's radar on Squadron Leader Andy MacKenzie, RCAF (Ret). His story is truly a remarkable one, spanning World War II and the Korean War.

Andy achieved "ace" status in World War II, downing 8.5 Luftwaffe aircraft. Three of them went down in one day, 20 December 1943 - in only ninety seconds!! But his tour was not without a couple of rough spots. He was shot down twice by AAA. And one of those times it was by U.S. gunners over Normandy's Utah Beach. The other time, his Spitfire was hit by enemy flak over Caen while he was flying at 18,000 feet, and he was forced to dead-stick the Spit in friendly territory.

As exciting and spectacular as his WW2 exploits were, Andy would probably not be appearing in *SabreJet Classics* were it not for his brief (?) exchange tour flying the F-86 with the 51st Fighter Group in Korea. On 5 December 1952, his fifth mission, Andy was shot down again. And again it was American gunfire that brought him down! It was one of those terrible times when, in the heat of battle, his Sabre was mistaken for a MiG-15 by another Sabre pilot.

Andy successfully ejected, but was captured by the Chinese Reds, and remained a prisoner until 5 December 1954 - long after the 27 July 1953 cease fire went into effect ending the Korean War. Eighteen months of those two years were spent in solitary confinement. While in captivity, Andy was reminded by his captors that no one even knew he was alive, and he could easily be killed. But Andy steadfastly refused to sign any of the statements accusing the United States of war crimes. Only when other released prisoners asked, "Where the hell is Andy MacKenzie?", was Andy finally returned to freedom.

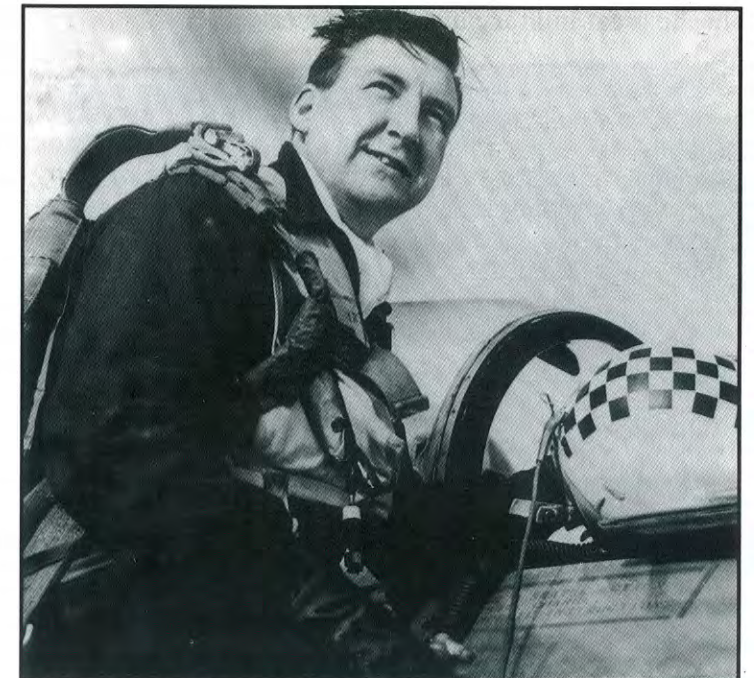
Andy and his wife Alison, live in Oxford Station, Ontario, and they attended the most recent reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. Now 81 years young, Andy proudly recalls his twenty-seven years as an RCAF fighter pilot. In all, Andy earned twelve medals, including the Distinguished Flying Cross awarded for the downing of the three German aircraft in one day. He retired in 1966, and retains his sense of humor. When asked recently what went through his mind when he squeezed the triggers on his ejection seat over



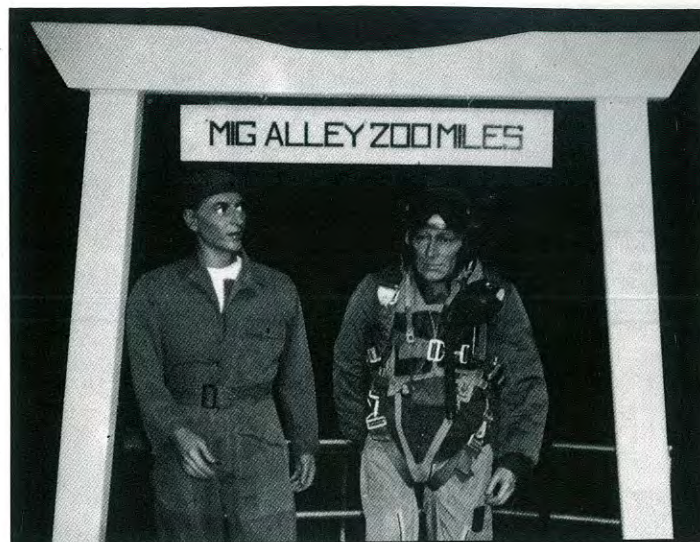
F/O Andy Mackenzie, RCAF, stands by one of his beloved Spitfires when he was assigned to No. 421 "Red Indian" Squadron. F/O Mackenzie shot down 8.5 Luftwaffe aircraft during the war. (credit - Andy Mackenzie)

Korea, Andy said, "I wonder if this damn thing works!"

The Association points with pride to our esteemed member and friend, S/L Andy MacKenzie. And we look forward to enjoying his company at future reunions.



S/L Andy Mackenzie was one of a handful of RCAF pilots that who an exchange tour with the 51st Fighter Wing at Suwon during the Korean War. He was shot down on 5 December 1952, and remained a prisoner of the Chinese Reds until 5 December 1954. (credit - Andy Mackenzie)



The entrance to the Korean 'salute' has a caricature of two 4th Fighter Wing crewmen passing under the famous torii that stood outside of the 336th Squadron Operations hut. (credit - USAFM)



Sign at the entrance to the main hall of the Air Force Museum. (credit - Larry Davis)

## The Air Force Museum Salutes "The Forgotten War - Korea"

As you walk into the halls of the US Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson AFB near Dayton, Ohio, the first thing you will see will be very familiar to pilots who served with the 4th Fighter Wing at Kimpo - the torii that led from the 336th Squadron Operations hut to the flightline. It said "MiG Alley - 200 Miles" With that as a beginning, a recently opened display of memorabilia and photos will take the visitor back to the years between 1950 and 1953, when airmen of the 5th Air Force and far East Air Forces fought the first of many struggles against communism - the Korean War, an all but forgotten saga in the great military history of America.

A hallowed silence greets visitors as they enter the new exhibit. Soon, the quiet yields to a faint mental whir of wartime activity at places with names like Kimpo, Suwon, Taegu, Pusan, Itazuke, Yokota, Kadana, and too many others to list completely. Your eyes scan the images before you - uniformed mannequins, personal artifacts, films and sound bites, all set against a majestic mountainous backdrop, transport the viewer rapidly through a time portal back to those dark cold days.

The Air Force Museum's exhibit commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War. It was officially opened to the public in October 2000, and is slated to remain intact through the anniversary of the end of that almost forgotten conflict in July 2003. Entitled "Korea Remembered: The US Air Force Comes Of Age", the exhibit recalls The Forgotten War by spotlighting the emergence of the modern Air Force and its evolution into a lethal air arm, although the service itself was in its infancy.

The theme of the exhibit is to show the Air Force in transition from the Army Air Force in World War 2, to a modern Air Force ready to tackle the challenges of the new Cold War. Jeff Duford, USAFM Research Division: "We wanted to put the Korean War in a greater historical

perspective than just to recall wartime events. After all, this was the first test for the new independent Air Force since its inception in 1947."

The exhibit uses striking visual effects like large color images of aircraft and crews, life-like habitats depicting what it was like for the troops in Korea. The exhibit tries to integrate the combat in Korea with the other elements to illuminate the role air power played in helping defend South Korea from its communist aggressor in the north. And to honor the service of all those who wore the uniform in those difficult times. The exhibit is aimed for those Air Force veterans who served in Korea. It is their moment to stand back and be recognized. And especially a time to remember all those who did not come back. "We wanted to create something that would grab the visitors attention and draw them in to read about those veterans and their mission of so long ago", Duford said.

About 75% of the 190 exhibit photos are in color, helping to lift the war from black and white pages of history and bring it to life. The exhibit features eight correctly uniformed mannequins, three videos, and more than 100 artifacts. It is divided into eight theme areas, matching the Air Force missions in Korea.

These include air superiority, strategic bombing, interdiction, close air support, reconnaissance, airlift, air rescue and evacuation. The text is punctuated by relevant quotes from historically significant Korean War-era figures.

Through these theme areas, the exhibit seeks to impart a more intimate understanding of the Korean War as a watershed event for air power and its evolving doctrine. The exhibit designers did this by emphasizing how sustained air superiority, combined with a campaign of stra-



Near the end of the Korean 'salute' is a diorama depicting a 5th AF airman ready to leave from Seoul City AB. The 'mile post' is typical of almost all the air bases in Korea. (credit - Larry Davis)

tegic bombing and interdiction, made the war very costly for the communists and helped force a cease-fire that endures to this day.

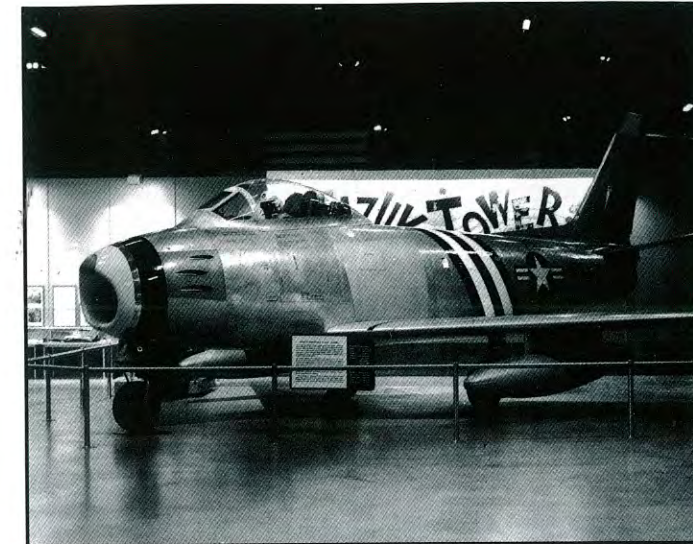
"Even though it was vital, fighter combat was numerically just a small portion of the total Air Force mission", said Duford. "We also wanted to focus attention on other combat roles as well as critical support functions in which so many personnel served."

The first thought of most people regarding the Korean War is that of silver F-86s and MiG jet fighters mixing it up over the Yalu River. But the Museum exhibit seeks to reach beyond the aircraft and air campaigns that were waged, and show the many sides and missions of all those who served.

"While the aircraft are important, not everyone relates to the airplanes", said Connie Johnson-Chapman, one of the exhibit designers. "I try to bring out the human element to which a broad audience can relate. We wanted to tell the story of veterans and communicate a realistic sense of the environment in which they served."

"The photos try to portray a variety of situations. "You can tell by looking at people in the exhibit photos, that there was a real camaraderie among them. Plus we wanted to show the wide range of roles that people filled. Not everyone was a pilot."

But if you want to see the airplanes, they are there. You can take your grandkids and show them the type of airplane you flew or worked on. Almost every type



In the main hall of the museum is an F-86A painted in the markings of our own Lt. Col. Bruce Hinton's 336th Squadron F-86A in which he shot down the first MiG by a Sabre pilot. Note the Itazuke Tower sign, which is original. (credit - Larry Davis)

is on display, from an F-86A to the LT-6G Texan, B-29 to H-19A, F-82G Twin Mustang to C-54D flying ambulances. Some are displayed in the Korean 'bay' of the museum, some are displayed in other areas of the vast museum. For those who have never been there, make sure you have at least one full day available to view everything. The US Air Force Museum is open from 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week, and almost every day of the year. Make plans for a trip, it's worth the effort. And for those in the Sabre Pilots Association, the outdoor park has a memorial dedicated to and from our association.



Many of the Korea exhibits tell many different stories. This one shows a TACP radio Jeep, which worked with the LT-6G Mosquito controllers, shown in the photo display on the right. (credit - Larry Davis)

# Flight 'E' From Chitose

by Cliff Winter

October 1952, the 'hot war' in Korea was winding down and the 'Cold War' was warming up. The occupation of Japan had ended in April, leaving the Far East Air Force responsible for air defense of that island nation. I was assigned to the 41st Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Johnson AB, having just completed a tour in F-80s with the 36th FBS at Suwon. In a few months the 41st would convert to F-86s.

My family had arrived in Japan about three months before, and we were looking forward to a couple of years without separation, when suddenly I received orders placing me TDY with Flight E(Provisional). I had no idea that the great flying would almost compensate for the new separation.

Flight 'E' was hatched because of Japanese concern over the intrusion of Russian MiGs over Hokkaido. MiG flights were coming down from bases in the northern Kuriles and on Sakhalin. FEAF air defenses consisted of a single squadron of F-84s at Chitose, and an early warning radar at the northern tip of the island. Major James Stewart, CO of the 41st, was given the job of creating the unit and selecting personnel, including pilots with F-86 experience. Luckily, I had 150 hours in the F-86 right out of flight training.

We were based at Chitose. Lacking experience in forming such an organization, Maj. Stewart dug out a TO&E, and drew the organizational chart in the dirt of the hanger floor. He called us together and had us stand in our assigned slot so he could tell which jobs were still open and assigned them on the spot.

I was eager to get a chance at the MiGs in a competitive fighter like the '86 after some frustrating encounters flying F-80s in Korea. My flight then, had a few guys who, like me, had an itch to tangle with the MiGs. The prospect of air to air combat seemed like a ball in comparison to the impersonal ground fire we faced on our interdiction missions.

We conserved our fuel after 'working on the railroad', so we could stay in the area a little longer. We'd discovered that after the '86s had left for home, a few MiGs would come looking for the defenseless F-80s. On a few missions, we managed to find each other. All we had to do was see them and turn into them and they were unable to get into position for a decent shot. Of course, we seldom got a shot at them either. But the game was a ball! Naturally, if they kept attacking, we had to keep turning and couldn't head for home, using up what was left of our fuel. They never figured this out and a couple of times we landed on fumes.

I came very close to scoring on one mission. After doing our usual shoot 'em up along the MSR, we were jumped by what appeared to be a single MiG. I called "Break right!", but my wingman called "Red Lead, roll out, you've got one passing under you." Sure enough, less than 200 feet ahead and low, a MiG had tried to slow down to



1/Lt Cliff Winter at Johnson AB, Japan, in 1952. (credit - Cliff Winter)

match our turn. He misjudged and now realized he'd just made an "Oh s—t!" blunder. He was so close that he filled 1/3 of my windscreen.

In an instant I had the pipper centered on his tailpipe. He was dead meat! I squeezed the trigger and waited to hear the chatter of the six .50s. What I got was "Pop! Pop!". I was out of ammo! And the MiG pilot was out of there too soon for my wingman to slide over for a shot. So much for the highlight of my Korea tour.

After getting Flight E organized, our first task was to pick up twelve new F-86Fs at Kizarazu. The F model was new to me on top of the fact that I'd flown nothing but F-80s in over a year. So I did a lot of smiling during the refresher check-out. In early December, the pilots and aircraft flew to Chitose.

Upon arrival, the first thing I noticed was the snow. The second was the temperature. I had come face to face with the fact that we had moved a lot closer to the Arctic Circle. Snow fell often, and almost always in the form of short intense showers lasting 10-20 minutes. The shortage of alternates, combined with the snow showers, made for many a 'pucker moment'. By the end of December, the taxiways and runway were like tunnels. Mammoth snow blowers capable of getting the snow to the tops of 35 foot high piles, kept Chitose open most of the time.

An F-84 pilot found the deep snow to be a blessing when he landed short and wiped out the main landing gear. My wingman, Pat McGee, watched the '84 approach and landing. It became obvious that the '84 was going to land short. Pat said it was a spectacular sight when that '84 disappeared into the snow about 1000' short of the over run, remaining hidden until it burst into sight with snow flying in all directions, and sliding more than 2000' straight down the runway.

That left us with two choices, one was poor and the other lousy. We could land over the '84 and try to stop on the remaining 3000' of ice runway. Or we could try



In late 1952, the 35th Fighter Wing traded their venerable old F-80C Shooting Stars for brand new F-86F Sabres. Based at Johnson AB, Japan, the 41st Fighter Squadron was responsible for air defense of northern Japan. (credit - USAF)

and make one of the alternates on what was left of our fuel. Being cocky fighter pilots, we chose the former. We'd have 2500' of runway, plus the over run to get stopped in. And if that wasn't enough, the big snow bank at the end "looked pretty soft"! As it turned out, I was actually able to turn off on the last taxiway. Pat also got stopped but blew a tire when he hit one of the few dry patches of runway.

Flight E's mission was to discourage the MiGs from entering Japanese airspace. This was easier said than done as there was no GCI capability on Hokkaido. The only radar in the area was an early warning station on the northern tip. They were able to tell us - by landline! - the location in latitude and longitude of the intruder, but no intercept information.

Once airborne we had no radio contact with the radar guys, and were left to find a couple of very tiny aircraft in a very large sky. To my knowledge, no contact was ever made as a result of any of these scrambles. Normally, we patrolled near the area where the MiGs might be. Apparently, this was successful because the MiGs stayed well clear of us. And reports of overflights dropped considerably. Occasionally, our guys reported seeing a flight of MiGs in the distance, making tracks for home.

To give us more patrol time, a deployment base was set up at Kenebetsu, about 200 miles north of Chitose. Kenebetsu was an old Japanese fighter base, but was now deserted. Six of our airmen, including a cook, starter unit, fuel truck, and practically nothing else, went to Kenebetsu to provide refueling and alert capability. The men slept in tents and cooked over open fires. We had to eat with our gloves on. To us pilots, it was a pretty lousy existence. But the ground crew seemed to enjoy it.

When the weather permitted, a flight of F-86s would leave Chitose, fly a patrol over the east coast and land at Kenebetsu. After refueling and lunch, we would repeat the patrol and head back to Chitose. Because we

were flying into the teeth of the jet stream, which often exceeded 150 knots, and snow showers were a likely possibility at Chitose, fuel reserve was always a serious concern.

By late January 1953, I still had sighted no more than a couple of MiG flights. I was scheduled to patrol what we knew as the MacArthur Line, a line established between Sakhalin and Hokkaido. Julian Logan was my wingman. Pat McGee and Abe Lincicome had the other element. We all liked having Pat with us because of his unbelievable eyesight. He could spot another aircraft long before anyone else. I felt that a decoy operation might bring the MiGs across the MacArthur Line where they'd be fair game.

I asked Pat to follow us by 15 minutes, and to fly where his flight would leave an obvious contrail. I planned to penetrate the southern coast of Sakhalin above the cons. This would allow the Russians to scramble the MiGs before we started our turn back. My hope was that the MiGs would head south, and instead of finding us, they'd see Pat's flight clearly visible heading north. And that's what happened.



Weather conditions at Chitose went from bad to worse. During the winter, snow fell almost every day, with the temperature dropping to -30° at times. Aircraft took off between drifts up to 35 feet high! (credit - David McLaren)



A 41st Squadron F-86F on the ramp at Chitose in 1954. 5th AF squadrons were responsible for air defense of Japan until the Japanese Air Self Defense Force, equipped with Sabres, was developed in 1956. (credit - Dave McLaren)

It was late afternoon when we spotted Pat's flight clearly visible heading north. With absolutely lucky timing, a flight of MiGs was headed south, conning brightly. I called them out to Pat, who acknowledged and said he was steady at 27,000'. It was the kind of perfect setup that all fighter pilots dream about - altitude advantage and surprise!

We punched off our tanks, hoping the bad guys wouldn't notice them flashing in the sun. I was already picturing myself painting a big red star on the side of my Sabre. We were in perfect position at about 36,000'. Unfortunately, we were slightly east of their position and looking into the sun. As we started our dive, the two flights started to turn toward one another, putting them in a circle with Pat's flight turning through east and the MiGs turning through west.

During our dive we were headed into the sun and I lost sight of both flights for a few seconds. I made a quick judgment as to which flight was which, and here's where I blew it. I closed on the No. 2 man with everything in my favor. I was looking right up his tailpipe from about 2500' and closing rapidly. I was actually starting to squeeze the trigger when I suddenly realized it wasn't a MiG. It was an '86. I had come within a split second of shooting down Abe Lincicome.

We still had plenty of excessive air speed so we pulled up and turned north expecting the MiGs to be headed in that direction. But they turned west and were making tracks out of there. Once again, I had missed my chance to finally get a MiG. We tried the decoy operation a few more times but the MiGs failed to fall for it again.



Flight 'E' at Chitose. (front row l-r) Lt. King, Lt. Logan, North American Tech Rep, Lt. McGee; (middle l-r) GE Rep, Lt. Cliff Winter, Lt. Cabana, ???, Capt. Lincicome, Maj. Stewart (CO), Capt. Hernandez; (on wing l-r) unknown airman, Lt. Fausett, Lt. Squier. (credit - James Stewart)

But chasing Migs wasn't our only source of entertainment. Before the F-86, few of us had had the opportunity to break the sound barrier. So occasionally, we would launch with a clean aircraft to see just how fast it would go. We'd climb to about 30,000, point the nose straight down with full power, and stomp on the floor to get the Mach meter to indicate more than 1.0. The most we could get was about 1.04. We also learned two other things - start your pullout at above 10,000' to avoid colliding with the planet, and not to use Chitose as an aiming point. How were we to know the post commander's wife lived there, and she had precious dishes in her closet. We were firmly told to find a new playground.

At Chitose, I had been adopted by a lovable, wooly puppy peculiar to the harsh winters of Hokkaido. With my TDY over, I couldn't leave Dusty behind. But getting her back presented a problem. I was to fly an '86 back which my replacement would return in. Dusty was pretty calm so I decided to take her with me in the airplane. In spite of his obvious doubts, the crew chief passed her to me after strapping me in. Before taking the runway, I ran the engine to full power. Dusty seemed to accept this so off we went. The flight was uneventful and both the dog and I arrived none the worse for wear. I wish I had a picture of the crew chief's eyes at Johnson when I opened the canopy and handed Dusty to him.

Flight E (Provisional) was a truly unique and enjoyable experience.

## Memories Of Great Fighter Pilots

### "The Bloody Great Wheel" Harrison R. Thyng

Larry Davis  
with  
James R. Thyng

Harrison R. Thyng was a helluva pilot, one of only seven to become fighter aces in both WWII and Korea. More than that, this fighter pilot was a leader of men. Few officers have experienced the assumption of command as young as did Harry Thyng and consistently commanded most of the organizations to which he was assigned from First Lieutenant through the rank of Brigadier General. Of those magnificent seven, only Harrison Thyng became a general officer.

He was a native of New Hampshire where it is said, men are made from granite. Born in 1918, he grew up in Barnstead and Pittsfield before leaving to join the Army Air Corps (USAAC) in 1939. Twenty seven years later he returned to New Hampshire, a Brigadier General and veteran of many battles.

He had fought in Europe as Commander of the 309th Squadron, 31st Fighter Group flying British Spitfires. He was credited with the USAAF's first encounter with a FW 190, on 8 November, 1942, near Shoreham, England. Shipped to North Africa, Harry Thyng led his squadron into Oran and shot down a Vichy French Dewoitine 520 fighter on that first mission. One hundred sixty one missions later, battle weary and wounded, this fighter was sent home. A full Colonel at age 26, Harry became commander of the 413th Fighter Group flying P-47Ns. He led the group across the Pacific to Ie Shima in June, 1945 flying 22 missions



Col. Harrison R. Thyng, Commander of the 4th Wing at Kimpo. (credit - James Thyng)



Capt. Harrison Thyng climbs into the cockpit of a Spitfire in England during 1942. Capt. Thyng shot down the first FW-190 by an Army Air Force pilot while flying with the RAF. He scored a total of five. (credit - Jim Thyng)



These six U.S. fliers flew with RAF Spitfire squadrons in the summer of 1942. Harrison Thyng is #5. Later that summer, all the American pilots were transferred to Groups within the newly formed U.S. Army Air Force. Thyng was assigned to the 31st Group, which was then transferred to the North African Theater of Operations. (credit - Jim Thyng)





In 1949, (now) Col. Harrison R. Thyng commanded one of the first groups to receive the brand new F-86A Sabre, the 33rd Fighter Wing at Otis AFB, MA. (credit - USAF)

before the atomic bomb ended it all. But, his fighting days were not yet complete.

Next it was Korea; and he answered the call. He was assigned as Commander of the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing, Kimpo, Korea on 1 November, 1951. He inherited a unit outmanned and outgunned by 750 MiG-15s positioned on five air bases north of the Yalu River. With not enough equipment and parts to effectively counter the overwhelming odds, he jumped the chain of command and risked his career to make something happen.

In a December, 1951 secret message he penned, "Personal to Vandenberg (Air Force Chief of Staff) from Thyng. I can no longer be responsible for air superiority in northwest Korea!" His F-86 Sabres were so badly outnumbered, Thyng feared that in spite of a favorable kill ratio, he was losing the war. He had listened to his maintenance personnel and S/Sgt Fred Newman told him, "Colonel, my crew chiefs are working 24 hours but we don't have the parts we need, we don't have the wing tanks, and if we had to put up a maximum effort tomorrow morning, we wouldn't be able to do it!"

S/Sgt Gordon Beem and the Wing Adjutant, Maj John Ross, didn't believe the commander understood the consequences of the message he was sending. Beem asked the Colonel if he really wanted to send the message. Col. Thyng replied, "Yes, there are too many lives at stake not to." The Colonel then climbed into his F-86 Sabre Jet, "Pretty Mary and the Four Js", and flew to MiG Alley.



Col. Walker Mahurin makes a point during the briefing of 335th Squadron pilots at Kimpo in 1952. Col. Thyng is second in the front row, with Capt. Jim Low sitting just behind him. (credit - Jim Ramsey)

The problem began to be rectified within 96 hours. The new North American Tech Rep, Mr. Penney Bowen, arrived in Korea, bringing with him some \$26,000.00 worth of badly needed parts. The AOC rate started to drop dramatically at Kimpo. By early 1952 the in-commission rate had risen to over 75%, and air superiority over MiG Alley was never again in doubt. Of course, Col. Thyng's career took a big hit from all his superiors for a short time.

Walter Boyne wrote of the incident, "From Longstreet at Gettysburg to von Paulus at Stalingrad to Walker in Korea, history is replete with stories of brave military leaders who would risk their lives in combat on a daily basis but would not risk their careers bucking their own superiors. In a stunning gesture defying the established order, Thyng did both."



Col. Thyng's jeep told it all. He was "The Bloody Great Wheel", especially after his encounter with all the brass clear up to the Chief of Staff. (credit - Jim Thyng)

Col. Harrison R. Thyng scored many more victories than the five that are credited to him by official sources. It is well known that he gave several of the victories to the wingmen that flew with him and kept him safe in the cold blue skies of MiG Alley. Wingmen never got any credit for their deeds. Thus after he had scored his 5th MiG, all further credits went to the pilots that watched his tail. Such was the leadership of Col. Harrison R. Thyng - "The Bloody Great Wheel" at Kimpo.

When Col. Thyng went home from Korea, he had good reason to feel good. On 29 September 1952, at Col. Thyng's going away dinner, General Glenn O. Barcus, commander of 5th Air Force, named him one of the greatest fighters of all time. He had put together the most formidable air superiority force of any nation at that time. He was an ace in two wars, but also a leader willing to take risks for the benefit of his men. Col. Harrison R. Thyng, the premier fighter wing commander of his era, has now been all but forgotten.

In concert with the Pittsfield Historical Society, his children - "The Four Js", are trying to ensure that their father is remembered. They are seeking the funds to erect a monument of granite for a New Hampshire patriot who must not be forgotten. Please consider supporting this tribute to a true American hero who gave to his country all that he had to give. For more information see Harry Thyng's website at "<http://www.pittsfield-nh.com/thyngmemorial.htm>"

Contributions are tax deductible; the Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. Please send any amount you feel is appropriate to:

Harrison R. Thyng Memorial  
Pittsfield Historical Society, Inc.  
13 Elm Street, P.O. Box 173  
Pittsfield, New Hampshire 03263

*Memories from the war.* Captain James J. Jabara laughs it up at a party in his honor following the day he became the first jet 'ace' in history. The party was held at Johnson AB, Japan, "Home Plate" for the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing during the early years of the war. Capt. Jabara was sent home by 5th AF as soon as he scored that elusive 5th victory. (credit - Don Griffith)



Col. Thyng laughs at a joke made by B/Gen. Glenn O. Barcus, Commander of 5th AF, during Thyng's going away dinner on 29 September 1952. Gen. Barcus said that Harrison Thyng was one of the "greatest fighters of all time." (credit - Jim Low)



(l-r) Col. Thyng, Cardinal Spellman, and Gen. Barcus on the Kimpo ramp during a visit by Spellman in 1952. (credit - Jim Low)

# "The Falcons"

The 5th AF Air Demonstration Team

via Paul Kauttu

In *SabreJet Classics'* never ending search for new and different things about the history of the F-86 Sabre, we have uncovered a new jet demonstration team - the 5th Air Force "Falcons". To be honest about it, we had never heard of them. But Paul Kauttu sent the following information about the team.

The 5th AF "Falcons" may have been the youngest air demonstration team ever formed. At one point, the average age was just 25, with a total commissioned service time of barely 13 years total. The team was formed in mid-1956 by Lt.Col. Philip Lovelace, then CO of the 5th AF Standardization & Indoctrination School at Naha, Okinawa. Lovelace made the first team selections, then rotated back to the States.

That summer, after all the wing and squadron COs had completed the FAFSIS course, the school was closed down and the team was absorbed by the 18th Fighter Wing. 5th AF designated the team as their 'official' air demonstration team. They called themselves the "Falcons". The original team consisted of Capt. Paul Kauttu - Lead, Capt. John Hart on Left Wing, Capt. Albert Funk on Right Wing, and Capt. Alexander Hutnyak in the Slot. Later that year the team added Lt. Edgar Griskowski, Right Wing; Lt. George Bracke, Slot; and Capts. Paul Ash and William Spillers were named Spares.

The Falcons flew standard combat F-86Fs assigned to the 18th Fighter Wing. No special modifications for the air demonstration mission were done to the airplanes. Each squadron ear-marked four airplanes for use by the team, with the team flying with each squadron on a rotational basis.

The routines consisted of a lot of Thunderbirds aerobatics - with some added spice. Maj. Bruce Carr, ex-Leader of the Aerojets team, and Lt.Col. Dick Catledge, ex-Leader of the Thunderbirds, helped design the Falcons' air show routines, with tips on speeds and formations.

Some of the added 'spice' included a maneuver where Capt. Hutnyak, who flew Slot, would remain in the diamond formation during the landing approach. On a signal from Falcon Lead, Hutnyak would pull up into a loop, stall off his air speed on the top, drop his gear on the way down, and pull out into the landing. The other three Falcons flew a tight 360 overhead in a V, then landed. The maneuver was later discontinued at Hutnyak's wife's requests!

The Falcons team began their flight demonstrations in the early summer of 1956, and were disbanded one year later in 1957 when the 18th Wing converted to F-100 Super Sabres. Capt. Paul Kauttu was



The 5th AF "Falcons" Air Demonstration Team, second generation. (front to back) Paul Kauttu - Lead, Joh Hart - Left Wing, George Bracke - Slot, and Edgar 'Gris' Griskowski - Right Wing. (credit - Paul Kauttu)

promoted to Major and served with the Thunderbirds Air Demonstration Team from September 1962 through February 1966, becoming Thunderbird Lead in 1965.

**Lt.Col. Vermont 'Gary' Garrison**  
Wanted - information, stories, anecdotes and photos of LtCol Garrison's life, Eagle Squadron, 4th FG WW2, Korea, between wars, Vietnam. For a story about his life.  
**Contact:** Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics, 4713 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709, ph: (330)493-4122, e-mail <sabreclsx@aol.com

**WANTED** - Information on orphanages operated or supported by USAF units in the Korean War. For an article in SabreJet Classics.  
**Contact** Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJetClassics, 4713 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709.  
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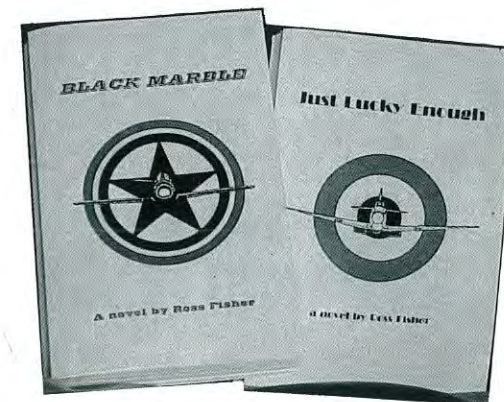
Book Review:

## Just Lucky Enough and Black Marble

by: Ross Fisher  
1291 Foxcraft Drive  
Aurora, IL 60506-1243  
(Each novel - \$7.95 + \$3.00 s&h)

Mr. Ross Fisher has written and published two novels which follow an RCAF fighter pilot and a few of his friends through the skies over England and the North Atlantic during World War 2 (*Just Lucky Enough*), and over Korea (*Black Marble*) where the hero serves as an exchange pilot with the 51st Fighter Wing.

The author has done extensive research for both of these fascinating novels, and his attention to detail adds a measure of authenticity that is not always found in works by historian-authors. In "*Just Lucky Enough*", we are treated to an inside view of what it was like to fly Hawker Hurricane fighters from merchant ships in the North Atlantic. Fighter pilots of today (and perhaps most fighter pilots from WW2) will shudder to learn that these intrepid pilots were catapult launched from the bow of a ship to intercept Luftwaffe bombers. Upon their return, the Hurricane pilot had to ditch next to his 'mother ship', and hopefully be retrieved from the icy North Atlantic. Our heroes return to fight another day, and we accompany them to more normal operations flying Spitfires from land bases. Ross Fisher will make you feel like you were part of the action.



In Korea, "Black Marble" takes the principle character from the earlier novel on a variety of adventures mainly involving air to air combat over MiG Alley. Again, Ross Fisher "tells it like it was", and readers who flew in Korea will recognize radio chatter and technical details woven into a thoroughly realistic story of adventure and daily life as seen through the eyes of our RCAF Sabre pilot. There is a surprise bonus to this story, dealing with Korean orphans, which reveals a very human side of our hero (and the author).

Do not expect to find either of these novels in your favorite book store. They're only available through Mr. Fisher at his home address. He can provide you with one or both of the limited edition novels. You'll want to enjoy them both and pass them on to your grandchildren as part of the answer to the eternal question, "What was it like Granddad?"

Review by Lon Walter

## Sabre Reunions

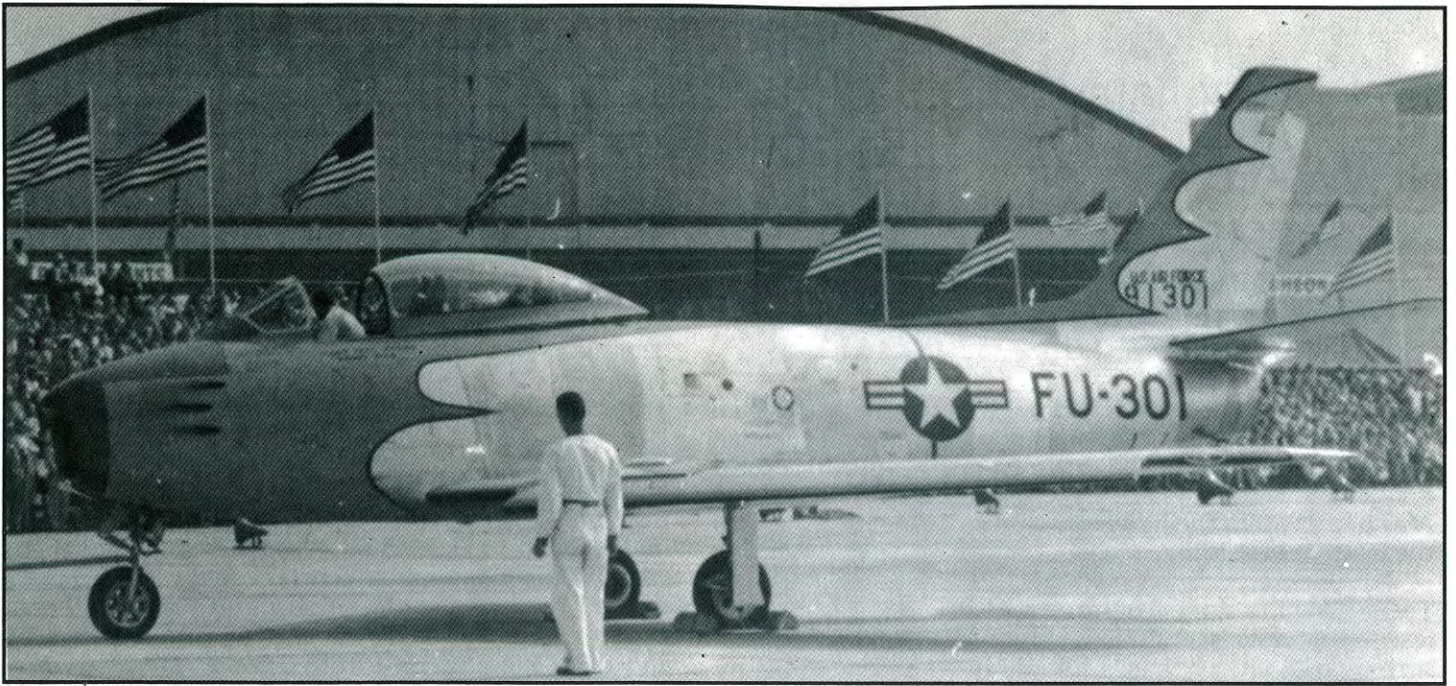
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58th Fighter Bomber Wing Assn.  
(Korea & WW2),  
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Contact Ellis Stanley, 2645 Chandafern Dr,  
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67th Tac Recon Wing  
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Contact Edward C Rice,  
(615)352-6304, or  
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City, FL 32404, ph. (850)769-4346,  
e-mail @ wmfoy@aol.com



**What Is It?** OK, that last one was too easy. Here's what we know about this F-86A. It was assigned to the Flight Test Center at Wright Field in the early 1950s. And it looks like the photo was taken during some type of Open House or air show. The scalloped nose is done in flat Orange or possibly Day-Glo. Other than that, you're on your own. So what is it? If anyone knows anything about this airplane, and especially those that have photos of the bird at any time, please contact Larry Davis, Editor SabreJet Classics, 4713 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709; or e-mail at [sabreclsx@aol.com](mailto:sabreclsx@aol.com).

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