



# Sabre Jet Classics

Volume 12 Number 2

Summer 2004

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



**INSIDE: "Pete" Fernandez Story,  
Flying The Sabre 6,  
15th Reunion Update, More!**



# *the President's notebook*

Now is the time to start planning to attend the 15th reunion of the 1-86 Sabre Pilots Association. We encourage mini reunions within ours so get your group together and have a good time. If some of your group flew the Sabre but are not members, get them to join and come to the party. Registration begins Monday 2PM April 4, 2005, at the Monte Carlo Hotel. I selected Monday over Sunday because some members complained last reunion they had a hard time hooking into Vegas on Sunday. I hope Monday is better. Shop around early to get a good flight at a reasonable rate.

You will find a reunion reservation form and a brief explanation of events in this issue and the winter issue of Sabre Jet Classics. The

reservation form will also be posted on our Web Site SABRE: PILOTS.ORG Book early and avoid the rush. If you have to cancel, do it as soon as possible. However, if you have unforeseen problems and have to cancel you may do so up to 12:00 noon PST April 3, 2005 and get a full refund of your reunion fees. Hotel and flight reservations must be cancelled separately and may impose a penalty.

The next Membership Roster will be printed in Jan. 2005 and mailed shortly thereafter. If you have the 2003 Roster and it is not correct let us know now. Mail your changes to the Associations post office address or e-mail to pawinesett@c-aol.com Thanks to all you members who send us change of address notices. It saves us time and the Association money. Due to had addresses forty members did not receive their latest Sabre Jet Classics. Thirteen were labeled "Temporarily Away". If you are going to be at another address

for awhile we can handle that. Just let us know the other address and the dates.

I want to thank our Editor Larry Davis for taking the time to alphabetize the names listed on Air Museum tablet. After the Spring 2004 issue of Sabre Jet Classics came out I received several request for applications from members who wanted their names on the tablet. There is still room for more names. If you are interested call, mail or e-mail me and I'll send you an application and instructions.

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

**JERRY R. JOHNSON**  
President  
F-86 SABRE P11.OTS ASSOCIATION

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## FOLDED WINGS

Willis D. Boone, February 14th, 2004  
Raymond Berg, May 24th, 2003  
Scott Callier, March 13th, 2004  
Robert M. Doyle, June 2004  
Douglas K. Evans, July 13th, 2004  
Edwin L. Heller, May 17th, 2004  
Justin W. Livingston, January 17th, 2004  
Donald E. McClure, August 30th, 2003

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## from the editor

Many thanks to all of you that have offered to help with new photos and/or loan of color slides for future issues of your *SabreJet Classics*. Several sent some quality material. Everything is valuable in one way or another. It's just that some photos cannot be used due to the format they were sent to the magazine. I hate to beat the subject into the ground but we simply cannot reprint photos that are sent e-mail or scanned. We need original photo prints or loan of slides so that we can have them printed for the magazine.

Hopefully you will appreciate what we have done in compiling the story of Manuel J. "Pete" Fernandez. A lot of the material in the article comes from private sources such as Charlie Cox and John Lowery, who served with Pete. Our material is accurate and corrects some things that the official web site has wrong. There are several other Sabre pilots that we would like to cover in just this manner, but we are lacking material, either biographical, anecdotal, or photographic to complete their article.

One such pilot is Colonel Vermont Garrison - "The Grey Eagle", who flew with the Eagle Squadron and the 4th FG in World War 2, returning to the 4th in Korea to become a double ace, and commanding a wing in the Vietnam War. His story needs to be told. Please help us fill in the gaps. Anyone that flew with Col. Garrison at any time, or has photos of him in any unit, please contact the Editor of *SabreJet Classics*.

We are adding a new column to this issue. This will list any books that have been written by members of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn. Additionally, we will review new books written by or about Sabre pilots. We've done this in the past but missed a few books. Anyone that has written a book about anything, please jot down the title, author's name, and complete information about how to obtain it, and forward it to the Editor for inclusion in the next available issue of *SabreJet Classics*.

Lastly - REUNIONS. We will make every effort to advertise free of charge, any F-86 unit reunion, including pilot training class reunions - if we know about it. I go through other publications such as *Air Power History* and *Air Force Magazine*, looking for F-86 reunions. But my resources for this are limited. Just drop me a note and give me details on the 'when and where', and who the contact person is. We will run your notice in as many issues as possible. And don't forget, you can 'piggy-back' any and all reunions with the 15th F-86 Sabre Pilots Reunion in April 2005. Double the fun at half the price.

That's all for now. I look forward to hearing from you guys again in the near future and meeting with you at the 2005 Reunion.

Larry Davis  
Editor

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## NEWS FLASH!!

For those that have been waiting for eons, information has been passed to my desk that the 1958 movie "The Hunters", starring Robert Mitchum, Robert Wagner, and the F-86 Sabre, has been released in DVD format. The story isn't the best but the flying is GREAT! It's available at any good video store. Hooray! Now I can trash that old copy on VHS tape. Specific information will be provided as soon as it is known.

## HELP! Sabre pilots under attack - again!

Well either I was completely wrong or you guys don't care about this. I did receive a little bit of information regarding the fact that the Russian claims of 630 Sabres shot down during the Korean War is incorrect, but very little. C'mon guys, this is important. Historians are starting to use the Russian claims as gospel, and questioning all of the "Credits Claims" by our plots about any MiGs shot down.

I want to hear from any pilot that was involved in either a MiG credit - Kill, Probable, or Damaged - and/or the loss or damage of an F-86 in combat. We need these facts to refute the claims that are certain to come forward. As I mentioned in the last issue, if a Sabre was lost to operational causes, the Russians are claiming it as a 'kill' for one of their pilots. One F-86 pilot suffered anoxia in the Summer of 1951 and crashed into the Sea of Japan on a ferry flight from Johnson AB to Suwon. And their's a Russian "ace" that claims he shot the guy down and that 5th AF records are lies.

I need to hear from you guys that scored in Korea, or flew wing for "scores" in Korea. What happened that day, details, details. How was the kill confirmed? Why wasn't it confirmed as a victory? And more importantly, if a Sabre was lost for any reason, I want to hear about that. What was the cause of the loss? Were their any MiGs in the area, or the possibility of MiGs in the area? Where did the F-86 crash? Just write up an after-action report and send it to the Editor.

Also, I am compiling a full list of serial numbers for Sabres in Korea as to who flew what airplane, what personal markings the airplane carried for a certain pilot, and what happened to that airplane. Some airplanes transferred in and out of a squadron and even a group. If you know your airplane serial number and the approximate time that you flew that bird, send it to your Editor. Help us keep the record straight!

THANKS

Larry Davis, Editor

What is it? Well, this was certainly a dud! No one commented about the subject of last issues "What Is It?". The Air Force boat was assigned to one of the 5th AF rescue squadrons that operated in the waters between Japan and Korea. The boat was a converted Higgins PT Boat from World War 2 that was assigned to the 2nd Rescue Squadron at Miho, Japan. The rescue boats were assigned to detachments at various points along the northern coastal ports. Anytime any 5th AF aircraft would launch and head out to sea, whether for a strike or a ferry flight, the rescue boat detachment would put to sea so as to be in position in case of any type of emergency. The boats were equipped with radar and direction finders to help locate any aircraft in trouble. The reason for the no. 2 Squadron, SAAF, badge on the bridge is unknown.

## Smithsonian Wall of Honor

A large number of members have contacted the Editor and/or President Jerry Johnson regarding the list of names that we posted in the last issue. First off, that list was as complete as we had at the time. I tried to alphabetize the list to make it easier to find your name but may have skipped one or two names on OUR list. That doesn't mean your name was not inscribed on the tablet.

As I mentioned in the last issue, we, anyone in the Sabre Pilots Assn., have no way of checking on whether or not your name has been added to the inscribed plaque at the new Udvar-Hazy Museum complex. You need to contact the Smithsonian to check on that. However, you should have received a Wall of Honor Acknowledgement such as is shown below. Or you can contact the Wall of Honor Director, Mr. Joseph Suarez (202)633-2614. Hopefully every member will get his name on the "Wall".

### EF-86Ds

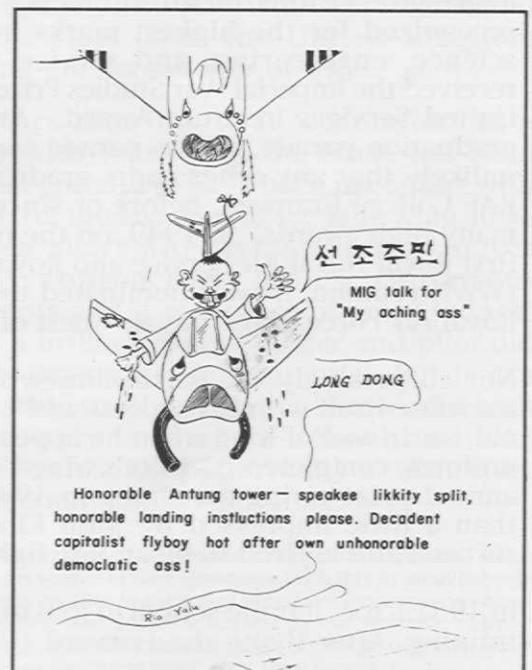
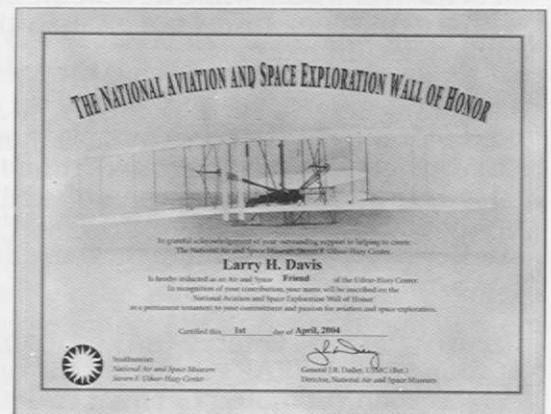
In the Spring 2004 issue of SabreJet Classics (vol 12-1), we posed the question "What is an EF-86D. Member Gordon Peters, who flew with the 513th FIS, explained that there were 9 pre-December 1955 F-86D aircraft assigned as "temporary test aircraft" with the designation of "EF-86D. The serial numbers were: 50-458, -459, -464, -472, -477, -516, and 51-6146, -6225, and -8282

Thanks Gordon

### CAF F-86Ds

Member George Howell also mentioned that since the Chinese Air Force operated F-86D aircraft with Sidewinder missile launch capabilities, they had to be GAR-8 missiles, not AIM-9. GAR-8 being the initial designation for the Sidewinder missile.

Thanks George



## FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JOHN KING, RAF

by Charles Keil

Shortly before the end of World War II, in February, 1945, at the age of eleven, I was a pupil at St Bartholomew's Grammar School, an all-boys school in the county of Berkshire, England.

Only a few weeks into my first term, having broken the rules by talking to a fellow pupil during morning assembly, I was sent to the prefect for summary punishment. In those days, the prefects (senior boys appointed by the staff to discipline the younger brethren) in English grammar schools had enormous power over other pupils.

I stood trembling before the 18 year old senior prefect, John E.Y. King. He was my judge, jury and executioner. My "trial" lasted at least five seconds, and he found me (justifiably) guilty. I was required to bend over a desk while he beat me on the backside with a gym shoe. It was not excessively painful, but my pride suffered most.

John King left St Bartholomew's in April 1945 to embark on a short course at St Catherine's College, Cambridge, where he joined the University Air Squadron. At the end of the university course, he graduated with a "Distinguished First" for academic studies and was selected the best University Air Squadron cadet.

In early 1946, he entered the Royal Air Force College at Cranwell (the RAF's academy for career officers). He was soon promoted to Flight Cadet Sergeant and later to Flight Cadet Under Officer. When he graduated on 7 April 1948, he was first in Order of Merit, was awarded the Sword of Honour for being the best all-round cadet, the King's Medal (George VI was still on the throne at that time) for the highest aggregate grades in all subjects. He was also recognized for the highest marks in aeronautical science, engineering, and service subjects, and received the Imperial War Studies Prize and the Royal United Services Institute Award. At the Cranwell graduation parade, he was parade commander. It is unlikely that any other cadet graduating from the RAF College Cranwell, before or since, ever won so many high awards. In 1949, on the occasion of the first Royal Naval Air Service and Royal Flying Corps (WWI) reunion, he was nominated to represent the Royal Air Force of the day as Guest of Honour.

Not surprisingly, St Bartholomew's was keen to associate itself with his success and I, now 15-years old, sat in awe of King when he appeared in his RAF uniform, complete with pilot's wings, at the school's annual prize-giving ceremony in 1948. I was more than a little impressed by John King's incredible success, and aspired to be an RAF fighter pilot.

In 1951 I, too, left the school to join the RAF for pilot training. After flying the Harvard (USAF T-6) with



Flight Lieutenant John King, RAF. (credit - Charles Keil)

the RCAF in Ontario, I went on to deHavilland Vampire jet fighters in the UK before being posted, in late 1953, to No 26 Fighter Squadron at RAF Oldenburg in Germany. Throughout most of my two years with No 26 Squadron I flew the wonderful Canadair-built Sabre Mk 4 (F-86E).

At RAF Oldenburg, I took my turn in 1954 to keep the squadron diary - a mix of operational and social events with photographs where appropriate. I found past entries fascinating and was surprised to find a 1950 picture of squadron pilots all lined up in the nude at a beach on the North Friesian island of Sylt, to which the squadron deployed periodically for air-to-air gunnery over the North Sea. And there, unmistakably, in the middle of the picture, was John King. It was after leaving Cranwell and completing conversion training in 1948 that John had been posted to No 26 Squadron, where he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant and spent three years. I had followed in his footsteps to No 26 Squadron.

Returning to John King, he was briefly back in the UK during 1949-50 for an air-to-ground attack course which he finished with the highest marks ever obtained there; and he became an instructor. In 1951, he was posted to the RAF's Central Fighter Establishment with special interest in night fighters. In January 1953, he was chosen to train with the USAF on F-86 Sabres, before serving in the Korean War.

In Korea, John flew with the 25th Fighter Squadron, 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing, from Suwon (K-13). On 3 June 1953, he participated in a fly-by to mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The next day, 4 June, he set out on his eighteenth operational mission - from which, sadly, he never returned.



Korean War pilots visit with Miss Dinah Shore at the **Brown** Derby restaurant in Hollywood **during** 1953. (L-R) Fit Lt Dickie Dickinson, **RAF, Flight Lt John King, RAF, Dinah, unknown USAF officer, and Flg Of Andy Devine, RAF.** (credit - Peter Sawyer)

At the time of his death, in 1953, I was undergoing jet conversion training at RAF Merryfield in the UK, and was unaware of his demise. Much later, at RAF Oldenburg, two of the No 26 Squadron F-86 pilots who had flown Sabres with the USAF in Korea (Spud Murphy and Andy Devine) confirmed that they had known John King and that he had simply disappeared on a mission.

Fast forward now - 50 years - to 2003. A letter of mine, published in *The Times* newspaper, led me to put a brief request on the web site of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association inviting any former Sabre pilot who knew anything about John King to contact me.

On 2nd January 2004, the following e-mail arrived on my computer screen from Bob Lysgaard, 2717 Billy Casper Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada:

"John King was my roommate in 'A' Flight. We were assigned to the 25th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 51st FIW, USAF at Suwon in Korea in February 1953. What a great guy! John King came from the RAF as an all-weather pilot. On this mission I was flying No 4 through an awful thunderstorm over North Korea, north of the DM7. John was No 3 and suddenly hauled back on his stick. I tried hard but could not keep up with him and that erratic maneuver. He did not respond to any radio transmissions and I was lucky to return with the formation to K-13, Suwon. No one could contact him from the formation or from the base. The (accident) investigation considered severe vertigo, oxygen failure or a heart attack. Personally, I never considered the wildest rumor, which was possible deflection to North Korea or Vladivostok in Russia."

As a Las Vegas dentist, I had the opportunity to talk with Ial Fisher. He shot down 10 Mig-15s in Korea before getting shot down himself deep in China. Hal was held as a prisoner of war for three years. Naturally, the Russians also interrogated him. He did learn enough Russian to read a book that claimed that John King had been shot down by a Russian pilot. This I do not believe because John King's aircraft remains were recovered along with his dog tags from a mountain nearer the DIM. in North Korea. The area is south of the range of Russian fighter aircraft and near where we encountered that terrible thunderstorm.

I shall never forget John King. He, John Lovell, and Jacko Maintland were wonderful compatriots from the United Kingdom during the Korean War of 1953."

So, 59 years after my first 'encounter' as a schoolboy with John King, the circle has been closed. I am grateful to have been in contact with Bob Lysgaard: the last man to see John King alive. In my own short RAF flying career, I never remotely approached John's illustrious achievements and it is a cause of great sadness that such a brilliant young officer and pilot did not live to satisfy his full potential. But it is a matter of some small satisfaction that we did both share not only a common school and RAF Squadron but also the opportunity to 'dance the skies' in the inimitable F-86 Sabre.

(As with most great men and women of history, stories abound which shed light on the source of their greatness. With this in mind Sahrjct Classics presents another in a series of anecdotes from you, our members. Charles Kell, who posted a request on our web site, <http://sabre-pilots.org> tells the following story. We invite others to share their memories of the "great ones" they have known.)



**Capt. Manuel J. 'Pete' Fernandez, Kimpo AB, May 1953. (credit - Larry Davis collection)**

## The Unknown Ace

Manuel J. "Pete" Fernandez

by Larry Davis

**Quick now, name the top THREE aces in the Korean War. You probably got the first two right away - McConnell and Jabara. But the third is elusive to most people. This is the story of that man - to a point. There are questions about the circumstances surrounding his death which may be answered in the near future.**

**I met Pete back in the late 1970s when I was interviewing Korean War pilots for my book 'MiG Alley'. He was always a joy to talk to and we spent many an hour on Ma Bell's phone lines talking about flying. I thought he was great. And in talking with many of you about this article, I found out that everyone that flew with him thought he was truly great.**

**The author thanks the many people that helped in putting this quick biography together. These include; Mr. Robert Blurton, cousin of 'Pete' Fernandez, members Jim Escalle, John Lowery, Charlie Cox, and many others that supplied tidbits about Pete's life.**

Manuel J. "Pete" Fernandez was born in Miami, Florida in 1925. He graduated from Miami Jackson High School and enlisted in the US Army in 1943, applying for and being taken into the Army Pilot Training program. The end of the war and his teaching kept him out of combat and he remained in Texas as an instructor pilot.

In February 1948, Charlie Cox and Pete were serving together in the 23rd Fighter Squadron, 36th Fighter Group at Howard AB in the Panama Canal Zone. Later that same year, the 36th was transferred to Furstenfeldbruck, Germany. Many of the pilots, including Pete, were transitioning from the F-47N Thunderbolt into the new jet-powered F-80B Shooting Star. The 36th Group was transported from the Canal Zone to Glasgow, Scotland, by Navy aircraft carrier, and on 13 August 1948 began the flight to Furstenfeldbruck.

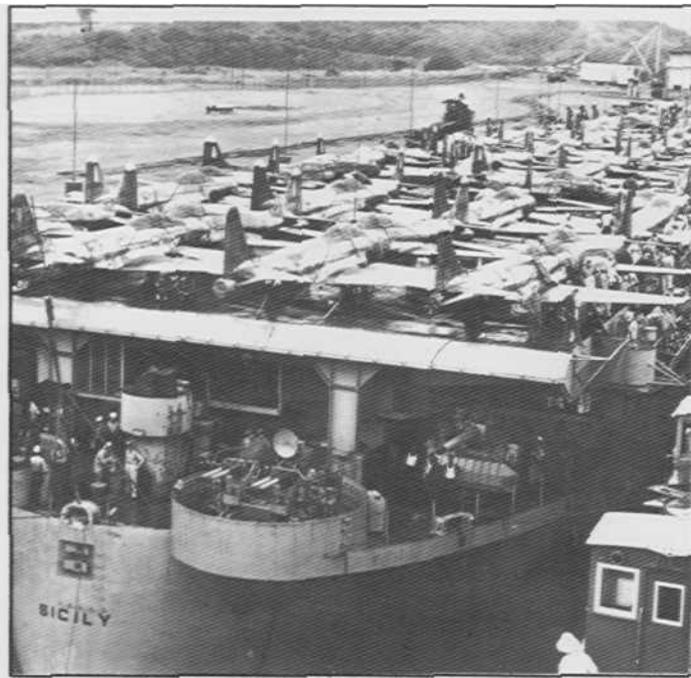
Charlie Cox recalls: "The first leg went to Manston where the RAF threw a big party, with each side trying to outdrink the other. Pete and I tried to blend in. The next leg went to Weisbaden, Germany, where we got to see first hand the destruction that air power could bring. It was amazing to see all the large building that were gutted and all the streets were still piled with rubble."

"The last leg took us to Fursty and we arrived with no losses. Our overseas tour that had begun in the Canal

Zone, ended with eight months at Fursty. It was the Winter of 1948-49 and our mission was support for the Berlin Airlift. As much as possible, we became 'combat qualified' and that was the first time that I witnessed how strong a pilot Pete was. Although without any combat experience, Pete could handle the F-80 with the best of them. And we were loaded with combat veterans."

"In May 1949, Pete and I rotated back to the States at the same time. We were bound for Las Vegas AFB, now Nellis AFB, we stopped at Williams AFB to upgrade into the F-51 D. At Las Vegas, we were split into different flights. Later, Las Vegas was converted from advanced flying training to a gunnery training base and became a pipeline that sent pilots to the war in Korea. It was clear to me and many others that the pilots trained by Pete were getting the best there was (Joe McConnell was one of Pete's trainees!)"

Lon Walter recalls; "Pete Fernandez was one of my advanced flying school instructors in the Spring of 1950. One moonlit night, towards the end of my T-6 phase, Pete was in the back seat of the T-6 and I was up front. My assignment was to navigate from Las Vegas to Silver Lake, California, then to Needles, CA, before returning the Las Vegas. It was a piece of cake and we both knew it. But it was part of the course."



**USS Sicily passes through the Panama Canal with a deck full of 36th FG F-80 Shooting Stars bound for Germany in August 1948. Among the 87 officers and 300 enlisted men, were its. Pete Fernandez and Charlie Cox. (credit - USAF)**  
**A flight of 36th FG F-80s over Germany during the 1948 Berlin Crisis. Pete and Charlie Cox transitioned into the F-80 during these crucial times, flying top cover for the 'airlift'. (credit - USAF)**

"Between Silver Lake and Needles, I looked in the rear view mirror and noticed that Pete was snoozing. The turn back to Las Vegas at Needles was a little more than 90°, so I thought I'd have some fun with him. When I made the turn, I racked it in, pulling about 3 g's. I watched in the mirror as Pete really came awake with a start. He laughed over the intercom, knowing exactly what I'd done, and said something to the effect, "...smart ass!" I got my wings in June and went directly to the 4th Wing at Andrews. I hoped our paths would cross again but it didn't happen."

Charlie Cox: "Pete not only could teach by talking, but he could demonstrate it in flight as well. (When Major Vermont Garrison formed his Nellis Acrobatic Team "The Mach Riders", he had Pete flying Heft Wing. Bill Wescott flew Right Wing, Wendell Brady was Slot, and Bill Craig was the Solo man.) In the late Summer of 1952, Pete and I went to Korea. Pete was assigned to the 334th Squadron at Kimpo, and I went to the 51st Wing at Suwon. We never served together again."

Pete arrived at Kimpo in September 1952, scoring his first victory on 4 October. He became an ace on 18 February 1953 when he shot down two MiGs for his 5th and 6th kills. Coincidentally, his 'student' Joe McConnell also made ace that same day. Pete was a natural fighter pilot.

John Lowery recalls: "Pete got most of his kills at high altitude. Many of the old heads from World War Two had difficulty getting in range of the MiG-15 at high altitude. LtCol. Bill Cosby, our commander in the 334th Squadron, asked Pete what his secret was. Pete replied that he always cruised at 45-48,000 feet, running at .9 Mach."

"Then his flight would turn off the IFF and head directly into Manchuria for a few miles before making a carefully



**Capt. Pete Fernandez taxis to the active runway at Kimpo in September 1952. Pete was assigned to the 334th Squadron at Kimpo, scoring his first victory on 4 October, becoming the 28th jet ace of the war on 18 February 1953. (credit - USAF)**

**Capt. Pete Fernandez talks with Maj. James Jabara about his 9th and 10th victories on the ramp at Kimpo, 21 March 1953, making Pete a 'double ace'. (credit - USAF via John Lowery)**



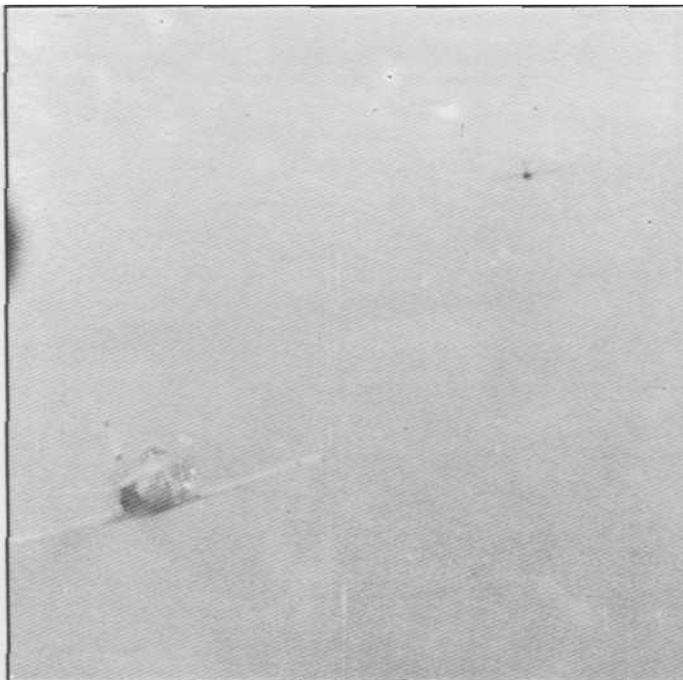


Capt Pete Fernandez leads his wingman from Kimpo for another 200 mile flight to the area in NW Korea known as MiG Alley in April 1953. The long flight would leave the Sabres enough fuel for about 20 minutes of patrol time on the Yalu. (credit - USAF)

executed turn (never more than a 15° bank) back to the south. This would often put him at the 6 o'clock position on the MiG flights coming out of Antung as they were climbing and heading south. They wouldn't even know he was there until he hit them. Pete said that occasionally, he wound up IN the MiG formations. He emphasized that by cruising at .9 Mach, he had never had a MiG get on his tail. (The MiG was limited to .92 Mach)"

On 18 May 1953, Pete Fernandez had flown 124 missions. He was scheduled to fly one more mission. He'd put in a request to fly 25 more for a total of 150, but 5th Air Force had turned him down. On this day Pete looked at the schedule board. He wasn't on it, not even as 5 minute alert. Lt. Gen. Glenn Barcus, commander of 5th AF, invited

Capt. Pete Fernandez coming home from another Yalu River patrol. The lack of underwing tanks meant that MiGs had been sighted. The 8 stars on the right side of the nose are kills 'credited' to the airplane but not necessarily the pilot. However, in this case, all the victories belonged to Pete. (credit - USAF)



Gun camera film from Maj. Foster Lee Smith showing Capt. Pete Fernandez firing on a MiG. Maj. Smith had already hit the **MiG but Pete** had to finish him off. Smith and Fernandez shared the kill, which made 13 1/2 for Pete. (USAF via John Lowery)

Pete down to Headquarters to listen in on the action - if there was any.

Pete watched as the plotters moved the little airplanes up into MiG Alley. Flight reports started coming in. The air was full of MiGs and Pete had to bite his lip and wait. Suddenly the phone rang and General Barcus answered. He listened for awhile and then said: "I can't tell him that! If I do I won't be able to keep him on the ground." Then the general hung up.

"Pete", General Barcus said, " McConnell got two this morning." They were Mac's 14th and 15th victories, putting him one ahead of Pete. Pete smiled but his smile was thin. When he spoke he could hardly be heard. "Good show!" Before the ideal flying of 18 May was finished,





Pete uses his hands to make his 'after-action report' to Col. James K. Johnson, Commander of 4th FIW, following his 9th and 10th victories, 21 March 1953. (credit - Sylvia Johnson)

Major James Jabara, 1st Jet Ace in Korea, and Capt. Pete Fernandez pose for the 5th AF cameraman in front of 4th Group headquarters in March 1953. Jabara had recently returned to Kimpo for a second tour, while Pete had just scored two victories making him a 'Double Ace'. (credit - USAF)

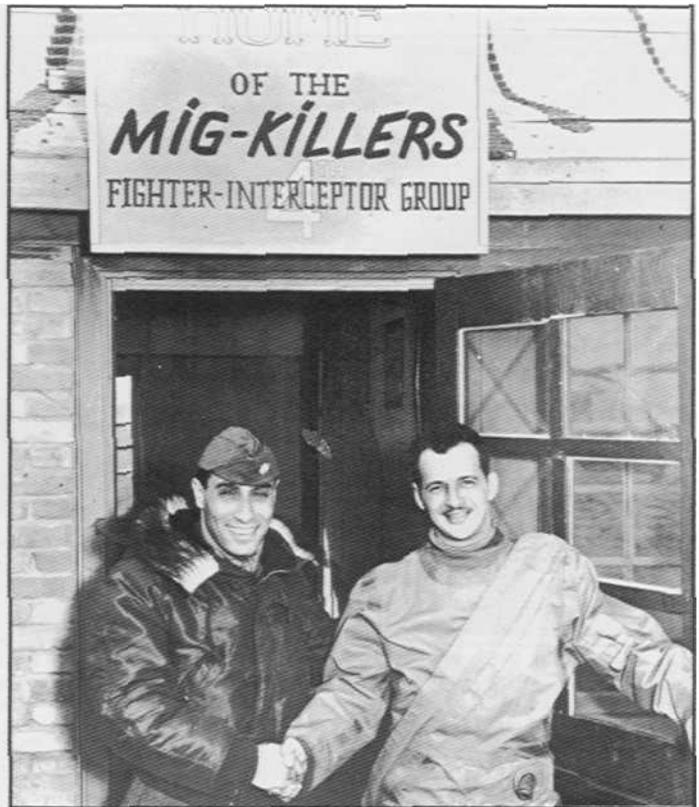
McConnell had downed a third MiG, putting his total at 16 victories.

It was bitter medicine for Pete as General Barcus had already told him that both he and Mac were grounded and were going to go home. What made it worse was that he had to share one of his victories with Foster Lee Smith, which left him at 14 1/2 victories. Pete sullenly packed his bags and; both he and Mac flew out of Korea on the 19th.

On 27 May, Pete and Mac were invited to the White House for a special luncheon with President Dwight Eisenhower. Ike wanted to hear all about the fighting in MiG Alley from his top two aces. During the Summer of 1953, Pete and several other aces from Korea, made a tour of various Air Force bases to inspire the folks back home. Following the tour, Pete went to George AFB, where he was assigned to the 479th Fighter Day Group.

It was during his tour at George that several important things occurred. First was his marriage in November 1953. Joe McConnell was one of the special guests at the wedding. In early 1954, Pete was invited to be Technical Advisor on a Hollywood movie being made about McConnell's life. He met and became lifelong friends with Jane Allyson and her husband Dick Powell. In 1958, Powell would produce and direct another Hollywood film about the Sabre pilots in Korea. The movie was "The Hunters", starring Bob Mitchum and Bob Wagner. Pete flew in many of the aerial scenes.

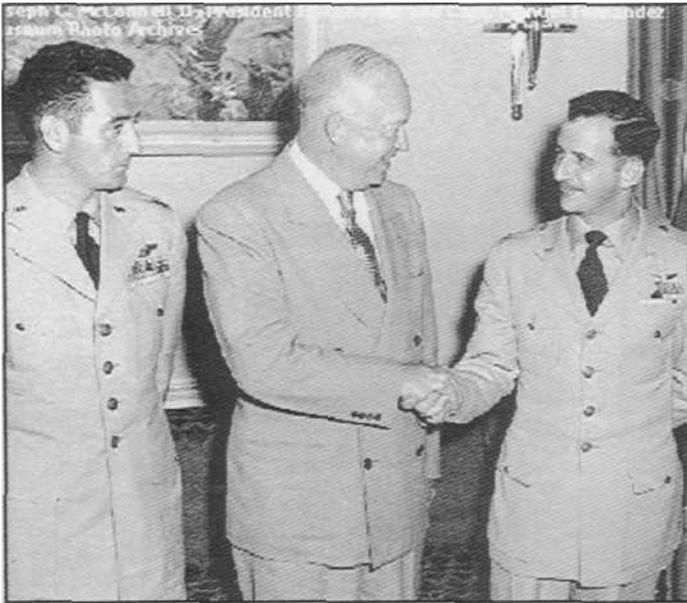
In 1956, following the transition of the 479th FDG from F-86Fs to F-100A/C Super Sabres, Pete got another crack



Pete Fernandez discusses his 12th victory with his wingman, Capt. Eugene Kemp, on the Kimpo ramp in May 1953. (credit - ISAF)

This was Pete's F-86F-1 in which he scored his last 8 victories of the war for a total of 14 1/2. The scoreboard actually shows 11 kills, 1 probable, and 2 damaged. (credit - Curt Francom)





4th AF rotated both of the top scoring aces in Korea on 19 May 1953, Capts. **Joseph McConnell** (16 kills) and **Pete Fernandez** (14 1/2 kills). The first stop was a meeting with President Dwight **Eisenhower** at the white house on 27 May. (credit - USAF)

at military history. He was going to be the first Air Force pilot to fly a supersonic aircraft in the Bendix Trophy Race. Pete would fly an F-100 from George AFB to Oklahoma City. Air Force wanted a supersonic flight but strong headwinds prevented Pete from averaging more than 666.66 mph. Yet Pete still won the Bendix Trophy, landing his F-100 at Oklahoma City with barely two minutes of fuel left in his tanks.

Pete, now a Major, left George and went to the Test Pilot School at Edwards. One would think that with his experience and skills that he would have been a natural with the test pilot mission. But such was not the case and Pete spent 1958 to 1960 as the Chief Recruiter for the Air Force in South Florida. In 1960, Pete was a Military Advisor to the Argentine Air Force as they converted to F-86 Sabres. Based at Mendoza AFB, Pete was both an instructor pilot and advisor. He even formed the first Argentine AF gunnery team in F-86 aircraft, which won the Top Gun trophy at Nellis AFB that same year. Pete retired from the Air Force in 1963 with the rank of Major. But his flying days were far from over. At Miami International Airport he flew old rust bucket cargo aircraft from what became known as "Corrosion Corner", pioneering many new routes throughout Latin America. He was quite adept in this as his Latin heritage and language skills allowed him to go places other pilots could not.

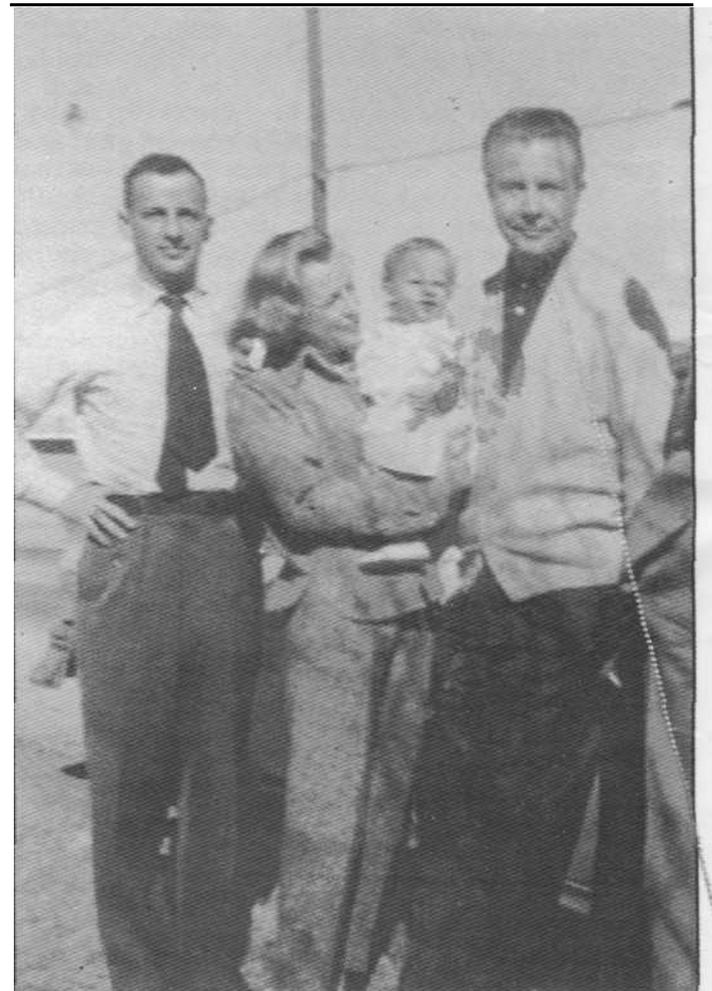
In 1972, these same skills became the basis of a CIA operation. The CIA came to "Corrosion Corner" looking for a pilot to "borrow" a specific aircraft that the Peruvian Air Force had just obtained from the Soviet Union, an Antonov 26 with a special guidance system and Pete said that he could.

He spoke fluent Spanish, had the 'Latin look', and had made many friends during his flights with Corrosion Corner. The Antonov was located on the military side of Lima International Airport. Pete simply strolled over to the airplane like he owned it. He got in, fired it up, and



**Seven Korean War veterans equals 75 MiGs! (L-R) Maj. Dick Creighton, Capt. Pete Fernandez, Lt. Jim Low, Lt. Col. Royal Baker, Capt. Hoot Gibson, Capt. Joe McConnell, and Maj. Boots Blesse. All but McConnell were assigned to the 4th FIG. (credit - Jim Low)**

**(L-R) Pete Fernandez, June Allyson, and Dick Powell, during a visit to the Powell ranch while filming 'The McConnell Story'. Pete was Technical Advisor on the film and flew many of the aerial scenes. (credit - Larry Davis collection)**





Pete was assigned to the 21st FDS, 413th FDW at George AFB in 1956, when he won the Bendix **trophy** for a flight from Victorville to **Oklahoma** City. The time was 1:40:38.8 **hours**, with an average speed of **666.66** mph. Pete's **airplane** was also **number '6'** - **an omen?** (credit - David **Menard** collection)

flew off to the north with no flight plan. Peruvian interceptors gave chase but Pete evaded them and flew back to Florida. The escape maneuvers had burst all the blood vessels in his eyes and he had to be hospitalized for a short time.

The CIA paid him enough to buy a new home in the Miami area, and Pete went back to Corrosian Corner. This is where the story gets dark murky. What is known is that Manuel J. "Pete" Fernandez died in the crash of a Piper Geronimo on Grand Bahama Island on 17 October 1980. The facts surrounding the crash have never been fully documented and are being investigated.



One of Pete's last assignments was as an instructor pilot to the Argentine Air Force, which were **being re-equipped** with F-86F Sabres. Pete is shown **standing** by an MS 760 trainer aircraft. (credit - Larry Davis **collection**)

'Miss **Marlcen**' a 25th FIS T-33A taxis to the active runway at Suwon in 1953. All the jet fighter **units** in Korea **had** at least one T-33A Shooting Star assigned for proficiency **training**, as a 'hack' aircraft for flights to **headquarters** meetings, and for use as a fighter director aircraft in combat **along** the Yal River. (credit - USAF)





**A pair of new Canadair Sabre Mk. 6s during delivery to RCAF squadrons in 1953. The Sabre 6 was the equivalent to a USAF F-86F and early Sabre 6s had the hard wing with fences. (credit - Larry Davis collection)**

## FLYING THE RCAF SABRE MARK 6

### By George L. Schulstad

Some experiences you never forget. Such was the case in 1956 when I reported for a NATO exchange tour with 414 Fighter Squadron, 4th Fighter Wing, RCAF Station Baden Soellingen, FRG. Because some military pilots may find my indoctrination into that great organization somewhat unusual, I'd like to share the story with fellow F-86 Sabre pilots.

**ARRIVAL:** My orders stated: Arrival 1200 hours - via [JSAF L-20 Beaver from Landstuhl Air Base. I was met planeside by the OOD (Orderly Officer of the Day), who "jeeped" me to the Officers' Mess. There I was welcomed at curbside by #4 Wing C.O., Group Captain B.C. Christmas, C-OPS-O (Wing Chief Ops Officer); the 414, 422, and 444 squadron commanders, and pilots of the group who lined the path to the bar and dining room for lunch and introductions. After this, my new squadron commander ("OC", or Officer Commanding in Canadian parlance), Squadron Leader Lloyd Liggett, took me in his jeep on a scenic base tour en route to 414 Fighter Squadron. He pointed out "important" places such as Wing Headquarters, the procedures training building, and so forth, commenting that my checkout in the Sabre 6 would be in strict compliance with NATO and 4th Allied Tactical Air Force (4ATAF) regulations and directives! My thoughts turned to dreary days of ground school and a long delay before I would fly the vaunted Mark 6 Sabre, which dominated the "busy" skies over western Europe during those tension-filled times of the Cold War.

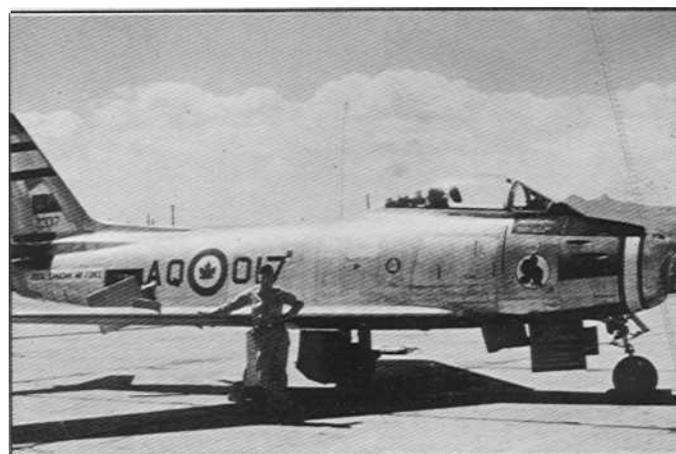
**CHECKOUT:** As we continued our tour, we came upon the sleek camouflage-painted Sabres of 414 Squadron, dispersed among the trees. Suddenly we heard the powerful crescendo of Orenda 14 engines. We looked up to see the flashing shapes of sixteen Sabres in close formation directly overhead. I was thrilled! Then - speed brakes open! - and the sky was filled with falling, unfurling rolls of white toilet tissue which wafted toward the ground' -

some snagging on tall pines. What a sight!

The OC went to "war emergency power" on the jeep and called to all within earshot, "Scramble the squadron!" As we approached the door of the squadron ops building (And I must say I wasn't sure if the jeep would stop or we'd drive right in.), pilot Bob Little emerged - just in time to duck away from the charging jeep. "Scramble the squadron" the OC shouted again, "and take him (meaning "moi") with you!"

Fly that one", Bob said, pointing to the nearest Sabre! Grabbing my helmet and g-suit from the jeep I raced to the Sabre, asking the ground crew to start the engine and help me with the unfamiliar cockpit harness. Sabres were already taxiing, and Bob and I became numbers 15 and 16. Engine fumes and wake turbulence hung on the runway, but we joined up smartly, and minutes later we

**A Canadair Sabre 5 assigned to no. 414 Squadron, 'Black Knights' on the ramp in Germany in 1954. 414 Squadron aircraft had the code letters 'AQ' before camouflage paint was applied. (credit - Robb Satterfield)**





**Canadair Sabre Mk. 5 aircraft on the ramp at Riyand, Saudi Arabia, during Operation MORNING STAR, a display of NATO airpower, 30 January 1955. (credit - USAF)**

were 50,000 feet above the vineyards of western Europe. What beautiful Sabres and terrific fighter pilots! A perfect checkout. Take that, 4ATAF!

"Two sorties later a sort of "quid pro quo" had been visited upon the "toilet paper raiders" from 42 Air Wing, and rumor held that a "Cease and Desist" order from Air Division resulted from a few shattered window panes and some cracked concrete accompanying the sonic booms and "white stuff" showered on their base at Gros Tenquin, France.

DEBRIEFING: Later, the O'Cluh buzzed with chatter about the day's events. I, "The Lieutenant from Landstuhl", was totally unaware that my REAL initiation to 4 Fighter Wing and the RCAF was about to begin. The chaps from Wing, 4-14 and 422 introduced themselves amid a noticeable accumulation of drinks on the bar in front of me. Suddenly, "Squirrel" Davidson leaped onto the bar shouting "Magic Hour!..Magic Hour!" and the doors to the courtyard burst open. All the chaps hurriedly assembled around the lily pond, and began trying to raise the water level while taking careful aim at one of the decor swans, painted in the colors of another squadron.

### *Sabres Around the World*

Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. "Thumper", a Canadair Sabre Mk. 6 aircraft formally assigned to a squadron in the Royal Canadian Air Force, is now assigned to the US Army missile test unit at White Sands Proving Ground as a target drone aircraft. The Sabre has already evaded one missile but would eventually be shot down. (credit - Larry Davis collection)

As we reassembled in the bar minutes after this precision exercise, a new friend, Ed Lowery, coached me to an end position near the courtyard doors. He directed my attention to a chap who was allegedly buying a round of drinks for the entire wing because he had been "last out". My new friends cautioned me 'to avoid this fate - and thereby suckered me in for part two of the little drama.

Because I was in a high state of readiness, when the next "Magic Hour" sounded, I was first into the courtyard, taking a position so as to spray the swans! Moments later, the press of dashing fighter pilots eased me into center pool! The swans remained unscathed this time because I was the sole target!! Finally, I was pulled from the pool and cleansed with a garden hose. The subsequent brandy toasts let it be known that I had truly been initiated into a rarefied and select group of fighter pilots - The Sabres of Canada's superb contribution to NATO's air umbrella, whose mission statement was "TOP COVER FOR NATO!". The very best of the best! And to this day I remain truly impressed and deeply honored!

**&L Brig. Gen. George Schulstnd. USAF (Ret), logged 6250 hours during twenty-three years on active flying status. He was a flight commander, squadron commander, and wing commander.**



# F-86 SABRE Aircraft Films

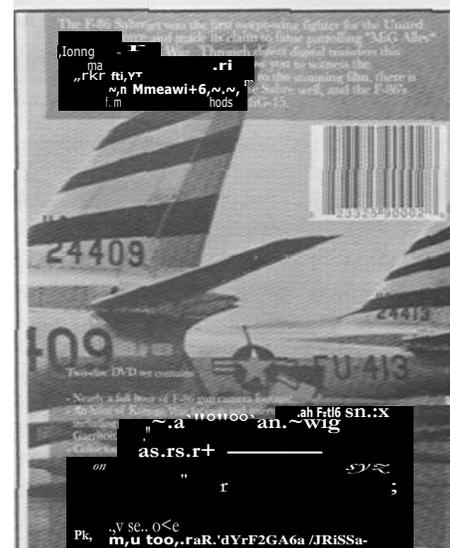
The US Air Force's F-86 Sabre is accepted as one of the great fighter aircraft of all time. Examples of this beloved aircraft are still flying and can be seen at air shows and museums in the USA and UK. Previously, its development and long career have been well-documented by such well-known aviation authors as Larry Davis, Bob Dorr, and Warren Thompson, to name a few. Now there is a two-DVD set which presents beautiful motion and still pictures of the Sabre - in all of its variants - with commentary by men who were there when the pictures were made. Jonathan Strickland, of Aircraft Films, presents material from the National Archives as well as extensive footage and still photos obtained from private sources. Much of the material falls in the category of "rarely seen" - particularly in recent time.

The quality and variety are excellent, and even Korean War interviews with all the Sabre Aces (and F-86 pilot & Astronaut Buzz Aldrin) show little or no evidence of aging. There are shots of the F-86 in its development phase (first flight, etc.), and even an unforgettable demonstration by legendary test pilot Bob Hoover. The Sabre is followed throughout its long career around the world, and gun camera film includes a Sidewinder firing by a Taiwan Air Force Sabre in 1958. A 200 photo slide show is an unexpected treat. Additionally, there is rare coverage of the Sabres' arch-foe, the MiG-15, which was flown to South Korea by a NKAF defector, and its subsequent evaluation by USAF pilots. This DVD set runs almost six hours in length, but can be viewed in logical and easily-accessed segments using TV or computer DVD controls.

This is a MUST HAVE for those who flew the Sabre and who want to insure that their progeny will understand what it was like. At the present time, the set is available only on-line (529.99) at <[www.aircraftfilms.com](http://www.aircraftfilms.com)>, and in some museum stores. Aircraft Films is a division of Red Pepper Creative, Inc., 11540 N Community House, Charlotte NC 28277.

## ***Sabres Around the World***

The Portuguese Air Force began receiving the first of fifty F-86Fs in 1958. This is an ex-531st FBW F-86F-35 assigned to no. 201 Squadron. Seen during a weapons display in the early 1960s, this Portuguese F-86F was retrofitted with the longer -40 wing, wing slats, and provision to carry the GAR-8 Sidewinder air-to-air missile. (credit - Portuguese Air Force)



## *book list*

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

"F-86 Sabre In Action", "F-86 Sabre Walk-Around", and "MiG Alley", by Larry Davis and published by Squadron-Signal Publishing, 1 115 Crowley Drive, Carrollton, TX, 7501 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## *book preview*

"Destination Clifford", ISBN #1-4140-6360-1 (Paperback), a new novel by Dan Druen based on the Civil War activities of the author's Great Grandfather. Available from Author House/ 1st Books, 1-800-839-8640, or go to [www.civilwarstory.lafm.com](http://www.civilwarstory.lafm.com) and click on [1stBooks.com](http://1stBooks.com).

## *book preview*

"The 4th Fighter Wing in the Korean War", by Larry Davis, ISBN : 0-7643-1315-0. The complete history of the 4th Fighter Wing from 1946 through 1957, with special emphasis on operations during the Korean War. Available from Larry Davis, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721

### **Sqdn/Ldr Graham Hulse**

Member John Lowery is looking for photos and info about Sqdn/Ldr Graham Hulse, who served in the 336th F1S during the Korean War. Contact John Lowery at [john.lowery3@comcast.net](mailto:john.lowery3@comcast.net)

### **Fighter Bomber Sabres in Korea**

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

### **67th FBS in Korea**

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

### **Patches Wanted**

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

### **F-86 Sabre Christmas Cards**

Wanted - Christmas cards from any F-86 Sabre squadron or wing. Anyone with old Christmas cards, please contact Larry Davis, Editor, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at [sahreclsx-0.aol.com](mailto:sahreclsx-0.aol.com)



An **F-86A** from the **116th FIS** gets a final check before **departing** for its base at Shepards Grove in 1951. The 116th FIS, an activated ANG **squadron** from **Washington**, was **part of** the 81st FIW, the first Sabre **unit to deploy to England** in the post-War **period.** (credit - David Menard collection)

*on the light side*

## Lucky Day At Rhein Main

by Howard Meyers

The first Sabre unit to be based in England was my outfit, the 81st Fighter Wing. This was while the Cold War was increasing its intensity. We activated several bases in East Anglia, primarily Bentwaters and Shepards Grove. Neither of these RAF bases had been operational since World War Two, and the accommodations were quite primitive.

After settling in and achieving combat readiness, flights were allowed to visit other locations in Europe for short vacations. During one of those, I was authorized to take an F-86 to Rhein Main Air Base at Frankfurt, Germany, for several days.

After gorging myself on all the tasty food and drink that we couldn't obtain in England (there was still some rationing), I headed back to the base and filed a flight plan with a stop at Manston to clear United Kingdom customs. With this completed, I suited up and proceeded to my trusty steed, climbed in, started up, and taxied to the active runway.

After receiving clearance to take the runway, I completed my checklist and was cleared to depart. Upon applying full power and checking the fuel boost, I experienced a sudden, excessive loss of power accompanied by lots of smoke. I shut the thing down and exited the airplane as quickly as possible.

Standing there, I noticed that a Pan Am DC-6 had taxied up close to allow the passengers to view one of the magnificent, new F-86 Sabres that we were flying. But the unexpected compressor failure and a burning Sabre prompted the Pan Am captain to hastily depart the area. He no doubt, wished he hadn't given his passengers something to think about on their long flight. Needless to say, I was most fortunate to have had that compressor come unglued while still on the ground instead of in the air, which might have caused severe damage to life and property - especially mine.



What is It?

According to most Air Force/Air Guard historians, the Arizona Air National Guard never flew the F-86D/I Sabre. **But** here we have a photo of one with the distinctive "rattlesnake" motif painted on the fuselage. Anyone with information and/or photos of Arizona Guard F-86D/L operations, please contact Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics.

15th Sabre Pilots Assn. Reunion  
4-7 April 2005,  
at the Monte Carlo Hotel  
Las Vegas, NV.

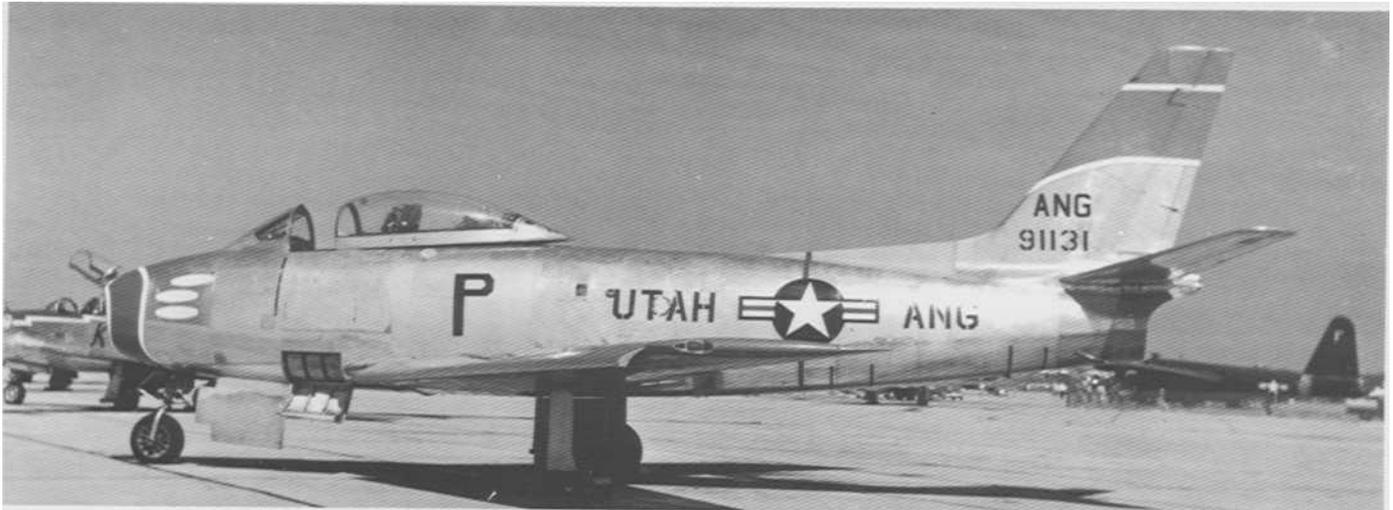
5th FIS/331st FIS  
4-7 April 2005 at the Monte Carlo Hotel (with  
the F-86 Pilots Reunion in [as Vegas]). Contact  
Don Manthei (801)942-2345, or Paul Kallmeyer  
(631)324-3856

51st FIW  
9, 10, 11 September 2004  
in Albany, NY. Contact Harry Bauser, 8 Red-  
wood Rd, Saugerties, NY 12477, (845)246-5818,  
or e-mail truharalocalnet.com

Pilot Trng Class 52F  
16-19 September in Ft. Worth, TX. Contact JC  
Buehrig, 8105 Knottingham, Waco, TX,  
(254)399-8308, or e-mail jjbuehrig@juno.com

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

Pilot Trng Class 54N  
9-12 September 2004 in Nashville, TN. Contact  
Jerry Fowler (214)352-2563,  
e-mail jfowlera'msn.com; or Dick Slegman  
(813)681-9601,  
e-mail pltrng54n@juno.com



Your Air Guard In Action

(upper) A Utah Air National Guard F-86A Sabre with the on the ramp at Selfridge AFB, MI **during July**  
1955. The 191st FIS, Utah ANG, transitioned from F-51Ds to F-86As just prior to this air show in  
Detroit. (lower) A trio of F-86L interceptors from the South Carolina Air National Guard over the  
Smoky Mountains in 1959. The 157th FIS, South Carolina ANG, converted from F-80As to F-86Ls in  
early 1958. The white painted areas on the nose and tail are Day-Glo paint, which appears white in  
photos. (credits - David Menard and Jim Sullivan collections)





Rather than a photo of something obscure, I thought you guys would appreciate this gorgeous color shot of Captain "Pete" Fernandez standing in front of 4th Fighter Group Combat Operations at Kimpo. The date was 11 May 1953 and "Pete" had just gotten his 13th confirmed MiG kill, actually the previous day 10 May 1953. The 13 victories made "Pete" the leading scorer in Korea. It was his 117th mission. Captain Fernandez would score another 1 1/2 victories before being grounded and sent home after his 124th mission. (credit - O.C. Wilkinson)

## ***IT'S COMING!!***

15th Sabre Pilots Reunion, April 4th thru 7th, 2005, at the Monte Carlo Hotel, Las Vegas. Start making plans.

It'll be a blast!

Dear Member, if the date at the top of the address label is less **than** today's date, your dues are due. Dues are \$25 for 1 year, \$50 for 3 years, \$100 for Life Membership for 75 and older, \$200 for Life Membership for less than 75 years of age. Send your check to — F-86 Sabre Pilots Association, P.O. Box 97951, Las Vegas, NV **89193**. Thank You.

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