

Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 14 Number 1

Spring 2006

A publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

INSIDE: AVON "SUPER SABRE", FEAF
ID BANDS, More!



*SABRE PILOT COINS
ARE HERE*

the
president's
notebook

Good news! We were finally able to have a meeting with group sales manager, Michael Catalano at the Monte Carlo, and have a confirmed date for the 2007 reunion. The bad news is we didn't get the dates I wanted. The next Sabre Pilots Association reunion will be April 9-12, 2007.

Easter week is April 1- 6 and Easter is April 8. The last day to file your income tax is on Monday April 16, so you will have plenty of time to file your income tax. I tried to have other dates but several conventions, including the National Broadcasters, starts April 14 and he wouldn't talk to me about the following week. Anyway we'll have a good time, with good food, drinks and a lot of reminiscing with old friends.

If you haven't been to one of our reunions and are thinking about coming, don't put it off. You never know, there might not be a next time. Make your travel arrangements early. The registration form will be printed in the Summer and Fall 2006 issues of *SabreJet Classics* (vol.14-2 and -3) and will be posted on our Web site SABRE-PILOTS.ORG.

The F-100 Super Sabre pilots have started up their own organization. If you flew the Hun and would like to join, contact Les Frazier. Check the 2005 Sabre Pilots membership roster for his address, phone number and e-mail.

While you are looking in the membership roster check your own data. If you want a change let us know. The last changes will be accepted no later than Dec. 31, 2006. We go to press after that so we

can have it in you hands before the reunion.

I want to thank Larry Davis for consistently publishing a great magazine. I receive a lot of notes thanking us for a great publication and I appreciate them but all the work is done by Larry. If you have something good to say, send Larry a note.

I also want to thank Bill Weiger for the great job in setting up and running our web site. If you haven't visited the web site check it out.

Lastly, if you are interested in being on the Board of Directors contact Chairman Dan Druen.

Check 6.

JERRY R. JOHNSON
President
F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION

FOLDED WINGS

Henry M. Arbuckle, July 16th, 2005
Ralph H. Ashby, March 12th, 2006
Charles C. Carr, March 9th, 2006
Donald G. Hayes, January 23rd, 2006
Donald S. Johnson, December 12th, 2006
John 'Jack' G. Stevens, September 17th, 2005
Frank Wedge, April 5th, 2004

POLICY STATEMENT

The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association does not participate in any solicitation or endorsement not controlled by, or for the sole benefit of, the association. Readers are cautioned to be wary of any representation in conflict with this policy.

from the editor

Greetings from your editor once again. Once again, thankfully, you guys have responded regarding the subject matter in the last issue, vol. 13 #3. I really do appreciate all the compliments that were sent to Jerry Johnson, who then passed them along to me. My one and only goal with regards to *SabreJet Classics*, is to produce a quality publication that gets better with each issue. With your continuing help, I will achieve that goal.

My apologies must go out to all of you for the tardiness of this issue. It should have been in your hands by early March. But things kept piling up on this end and the timeliness of the *Classics* took the hit. Sorry guys!

The big news is that we now have a confirmed date for our reunion. It will once again be at the Monte Carlo Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas. The date has been confirmed as April 9th through the 12th, 2007. Hope to see all of you there again.

There's one item that is recurring issue to issue. Many of you contact me regarding problems with your membership, i.e. dues updates, missing magazines, address and other roster updates. Some come in by phone, some by letter, most are by e-mail.

While I can usually handle all the problems by forwarding them to the right people, it all adds time to answering your questions. Any questions *you have regarding dues updates and roster corrections, should be directed to the Las Vegas address of our association.* Missing magazines, or those damaged either by the printer or through the postal system, are things I can and will handle.

Another question I often receive and sometimes have no answer for, is "What happened to the story I sent you?" Often I am at a total loss, not recognizing your name or the story that you mention. That means that it got lost either in the mail or the electronic monster that lives in the e-mail airwaves.

I would ask that you follow up with either a phone call, e-mail, or note in the mail, asking if I received your package. If you have sent personal photos and/or color slides, please make sure you send them at least Certified Mail. It's much safer than just First Class or even Priority Mail.

But another answer as to why your article hasn't been published is photos, or a lack of same. Although my photo collection of F-86 aircraft and units is quite large, there are many units that I do not have any coverage on. What I'm looking for specifically are photos of the author and other persons mentioned in the article, and photos of the aircraft from the unit being talked about. All personal photos will be returned.

Finally, the front cover photo. All front covers are generated from color slides loaned to me by members of the association, usually in the form of a color slide. If you have a particularly super color photo that you feel would make a good front cover, even without a story to go with it, send it along to me. E-mail photos cannot be used due to the fact that they have to be printed on a laser printer, which is outside the scope of my budget.

I take your slides (or even good color prints) and send them to the professional lab that does my books. Once they're printed 8x10 minimum size, then they're checked for color corrections by the man that does our printing, Mr. Bob Janson of Zephyr Press here in Canton. He can usually correct almost anything. That last cover showing the *MinuteMen* Sabre came to me from a car racing photographer that was in the Colorado ANG as a flightline grunt - with his camera. After he found out that I was a Sabre fanatic, he just sent me those gorgeous color slides, which made that cover great.

Well, that's all for now. I look forward to hearing from you guys.

Larry Davis
Editor

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The Sabre Pilots "Challenge Coin" is here!

President Jerry Johnson has received the first F-86 Sabre Pilots Association "Challenge Coin" and is rightfully, very proud of our coin. The idea of "challenge coins" started during World War I when military challenge coins were issued to battalions as symbols of comradery and unity. Over the years many different commemorative or "challenge coins" have been highly prized by veterans, and many veterans groups have issued them to their members. Over time, the 'challenge' came in a veteran or service member having a coin to show proof of membership in a campaign, battle, group, or an event.

As a result of writing definitive history's of their groups, your editor has coins from both the Wild Weasel Society and the Association of Old Crows, and they're quite nice. Recently the River Rats issued their own "challenge coin". My most prized coin is one I received from North American Aviation on the anniversary of the building of the F-86 Sabre.

But all those were rather plain, basically just a large silver coin showing the group's name and the emblem of the group. Ours is much different and quite outstanding in both color and quality. So how did this all come about? Here's the story of how the F-86 Sabre Pilots "challenge coin" came to be as related by President Jerry Johnson.

"The son of a deceased member of the Sabre Pilots Association called and asked if our association had a "challenge coin". He wanted to give them to the pall bearers for his father. Sadly, we did not. I had received a few from various local organizations and thought it would be good idea to give them to reunion attendees. But the idea had lay dormant until now."

"I approached a local coin manufacturer, after all we are in Las Vegas and coins of various shapes and sizes are constantly in demand. I described to them what I wanted to see in regards to "our" coin. I wanted the logo of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association, a single F-86 Sabre, and the words "F-86 Sabre Pilots Association on one side; and a four-ship flyby of F-86 Sabres passing in front of the US flag on the other side. Other than



that, they were on their own."

"What they came up with is a very beautiful, impressive coin to say the least. Rather than a plain silver coin like most of the other 'challenge coins', the F-86 coin would be gold, with the association name in gold against a dark blue background. The four-ship flyby is gold against a full color US flag on a sky blue background. The coin measures 1.5 inches in diameter."

All I can say about it is - "When you see one, you'll want one!" So how do you get one you ask? It's easy. Just grab your checkbook and pen and paper. The coins are \$5.00 plus shipping. Shipping runs \$4.00 for up to \$20.00 worth; \$6.00 covers \$20.01 to \$50.00; and \$8.00 for \$50.01 to \$90.00 worth.

Send your order and your check to the following address:

Challenge Coins
c/o F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn.
P.O. Box 97951
Las Vegas, NV 89193

That's all there is to it. I know everyone will want at least one just so they can answer the "challenge" whenever and wherever it occurs.

Reflections on the "Minute Men" aerobatic team.

No sooner did the last issue (vol. 13-3) hit the mail than I started receiving more photos and information regarding the Colorado Air Guard's "MinuteMen" team. Two of our members supplied a large number of photos which are included here. Enjoy!



Captain J.T. Ferrier flew the slot with the Minute Men until he was killed in a crash at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio in June 1958. It was the only accident suffered by the team in its history. (credit - Gobel James)

Minute Men mechanics (L-R) L.R. Skinner, L.R. Williams, C.R. Beauflis, K.F. Johnson, A.D. Lucero, L.L. Marshall, D.W. Cutshall, and D.E. Smith. credit - Gobel James)





Top Left:
MinuteMen F-86F-2 Sabre on the ramp at Buckley ANG Base. Note that the Sabre has only two gun ports due to the fact that the F-2s were armed with four 20mm cannon originally. (credit - Chub Trainor)



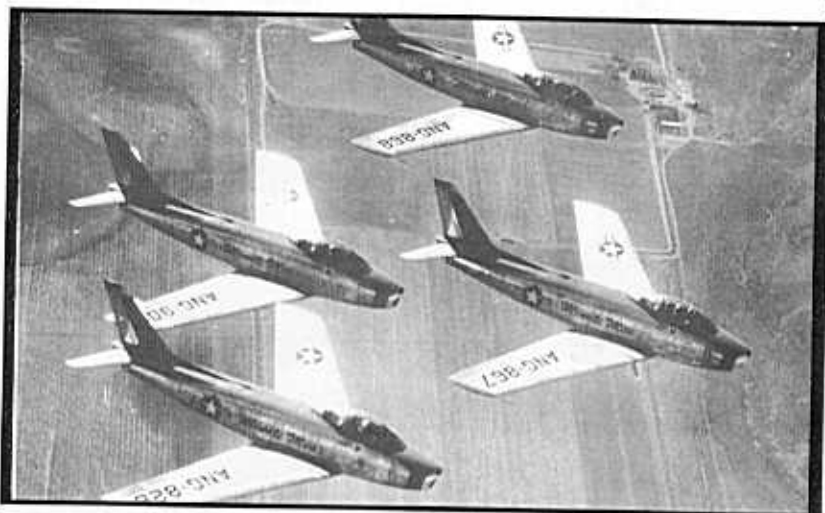
Top Right:
Closeup of the Minute Men emblem and scroll showing the countries that the team performed in. (How did they get the Sabres all the way to Hawaii?) (credit - Chub Trainor)

Middle:
The team F-80Bs had the same color ful markings as the Sabres. The Minute Men traded their Shooting Stars for Sabres in early 1958. (credit - Chub Trainor)



Bottom Left:
Now that's precision flying. (credit - Gobel James)

Bottom Right:
Reunion photo of former Minute Men pilots took place in 1998. (credit - Chub Trainor)



"SUPER" SABRE

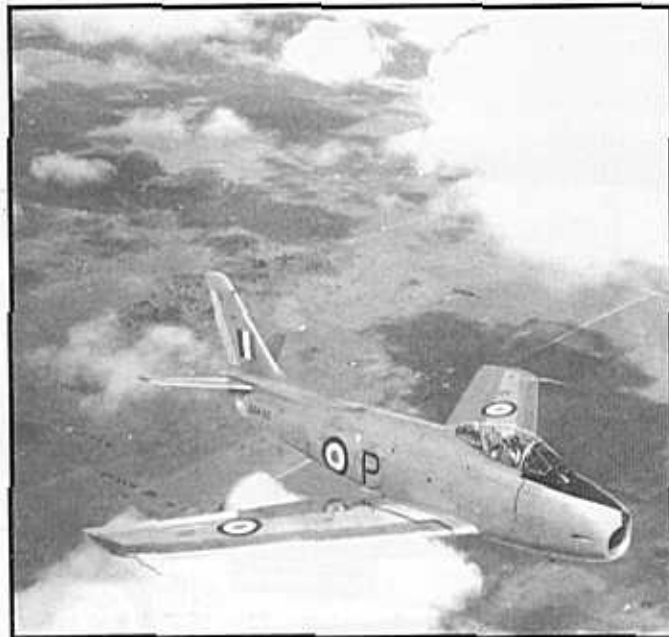
The RAAF Avon Sabre
by Jim Flemming

As early as 1949, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) began planning for a replacement jet fighter for the locally-built Commonwealth Aircraft Company (CAC) version of the North American P-51D/K Mustang and DeHaviland Vampire, then in service with the RAAF. Several designs were under consideration including the Grumman F9F Panther, Hawker P.1081, and their own CA-23 twin-jet, all-weather interceptor. However, none of these designs would win out in the end.

When the Korean War broke out on 25 June 1950, the Australian government committed No. 77 Squadron to the conflict as part of the United Nations forces. The squadron was equipped with Mustang fighters. Because of the growing threat from Soviet MiG-15 jet fighters in the skies over Northwest Korea, the Mustangs were soon replaced with Gloster Meteor Mk. 7 twin-jet fighters. But the Meteors were no match for the speedy MiG-15 either.

The answer that the RAAF found was the same one that the US Air Force realized during the late months of 1950 - the North American F-86 Sabre. In May 1951, plans were finalized for the CAC, who already had a good working arrangement with North American, to build a modified version of the (then) brand new F-86F Sabre. The redesign would feature two major changes - the engine and the armament.

In place of the standard General Electric J47-GE-27 engine, which offered 5910 lbs. of thrust, the CAC



The Commonwealth Aircraft Company CA-26 Sabre prototype, serial A94-101, made its first flight on 3 August 1953. The Sabre prototype now resides in the CAC museum at Melbourne. (credit - Larry Davis Collection)

engineers installed a Rolls Royce Avon RA-7 engine, which was rated at 7520 lbs. of thrust. However, the installation of the Avon engine called for enlarging the intake opening. To preserve the aircraft center of gravity, the engine was moved further aft in the fuselage due to the fact that it was some 400 lbs lighter in weight. Movement of the engine installation also meant that the rear fuselage engine service 'break' had to be changed.

In addition, the cockpit layout was modified and the fuselage fuel tankage was changed. CAC engineers estimate that some 60% of the airframe

A CAC CA-32 Sabre from No. 3 Squadron on the tarmac in Singapore in September 1966. The CA-32 differed from the prototype in having the 6-3 'hard wing', which was strengthened to carry ordnance. (credit - Jim Sullivan)



had been changed over the original F-86F design. And that didn't include the new armament.

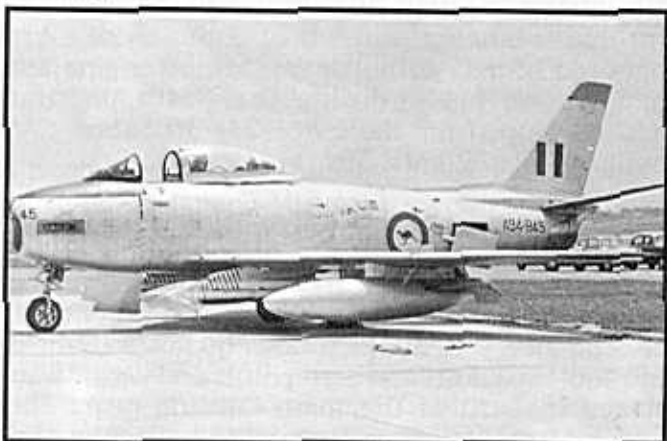
The F-86F was armed with six M3 .50 caliber machine guns. But pilots in Korea complained that the .50 caliber guns weren't heavy enough to knock down the MiGs they encountered, despite the final 10-1 victory ratio in favor of Sabre pilots. The CAC engineers opted to install a pair of Aden 30mm cannons, which had a rate of fire of 1200 rounds per minute. There was one problem, which was also encountered with the re-armed F-86F-2 GUNVAL Sabres that had T160 20mm cannons installed - a lack of space for ammunition. The small Sabre fuselage would only hold 162 of the 30mm rounds. A type A-4 gunsight was used, which was very similar to the one in the F-86F.

Flight controls remained as on the F-86F, including the 'all flying tail' as well as the standard F-86F wing with leading edge slats. The '6-3 hard wing' came later. The new 'super' Sabre prototype known as the Sabre Mk. 30 and designated by CAC as CA-26, serial A94-101, was completed in July 1953. RAAF Flt Lt W. Scott made the first flight on 3 August 1953. A94-101 went to the Air Research Development Unit in 1955, and later was used at Wagga for airframe instruction, before finally being used to test ejector seats. A94-101 now resides in the CAC museum at Melbourne.

Production aircraft were designated CA-27 Sabre. The first production aircraft, serial A94-901, flew on 13 July 1954. This aircraft was my personal aircraft when I commanded No. 76 "Black Panther" Squadron at Williamstown. Twenty two CA-27 Sabre Mk. 30s were built. All were powered by imported Avon RA-7 engines, and had the standard Sabre wing with leading edge slats. The Sabre Mk. 31 was



Squadron Leader Jim Fleming commanded No. 76 Squadron, "Black Panthers", at Williamstown. (credit - Jim Fleming)



All CAC Sabres were brought up to Mk. 32 standard in 1960s, including addition of underwing launch rails to carry and fire the AIM-9 Sidewinder missile. (credit - Mike Fox)

A CA-27 Sabre from No. 75 Squadron, on the ramp at Williamstown in the mid-1960s. Note that the Sabres have been painted in overall silver lacquer for corrosion control. (credit - J.A. Vella)





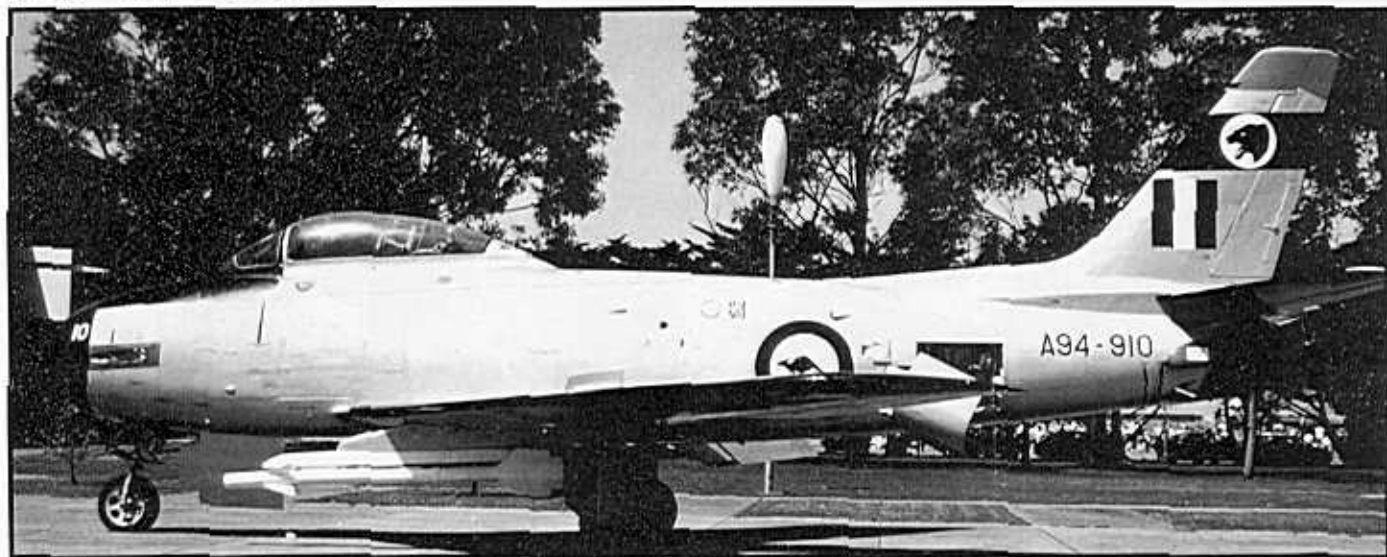
A CA-27 Sabre from No. 75 Squadron, on the ramp at Williamstown in the mid-1960s. Note that the Sabres have been painted in overall silver lacquer for corrosion control. (credit - J.A. Vella)

powered by a CAC-built Avon Mk 20 engine and had the new '6-3 hard wing' that North American had developed for the F-86F-25/-30 Sabre. CAC built a total of 20 Mk. 30s.

The final version of the CAC Sabre was the Mk.32. The major difference was introduction of the strengthened wing that had an additional pair of 'hard points' to carry extra underwing fuel tanks or ordnance. CAC built a total of 69 Mk. 32 Sabres. In 1960, two additional hard points and wiring were added inboard of the main landing gear. This allowed installation and capability to fire the AIM-9 Sidewinder air to air missile.

The CAC-built Mk. 26 Avon engine was retrofitted to all Sabre Mk. 30/31/32 models, along with the

A No. 76 Squadron CA-32 Sabre on the alert pad at Williamstown, is armed with a pair of AIM-9 B Sidewinder missiles. (credit - Larry Davis Collection)



A No. 75 Squadron Mk. 32 Sabre sits alert at Williamstown in 1963. (credit - Brian Baker)

new wing, which effectively brought the entire force to Mk. 32 standard. The last of 112 CAC Sabres, serial A94-973, was delivered on 19 December 1961. The entire CAC Sabre production was delivered to RAAF forces.

The first production aircraft were delivered to the Sabres Trial Flight that was part of No. 2(F) OTU based at RAAF Williamstown on 1 November 1954. The first squadron equipped with the Sabre Mk. 30 was No. 75 Squadron, that became combat operational on 4 April 1955. Before the end of its career with the RAAF, six squadrons were operational with the Avon Sabre - five fighter squadrons and an Operational Conversion Unit.

When the communists attempted a takeover in Malaysia in the late 1950s, the RAAF committed several squadrons to the conflict under the provisions called for in the SouthEast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) agreements. Beginning in early 1959, Nos. 3 and 77 Squadrons flew ground attack and counter-insurgency missions, ending their involvement in mid-1960.

On 1 June 1962, eight Avon Sabres deployed to Ubon Royal Thai AFB to counter the growing communist threat in Southeast Asia. The detachment was formed into No. 79 Squadron, and remained on alert status at Ubon until August 1968. Their mission was flying top cover over the Thai air bases that were supporting the ongoing war against North Vietnam.

Beginning in 1964, the Avon Sabre squadrons were phased out and replaced with Mirage III aircraft. As the Sabres were phased out, several were put up for sale, with both Malaysia and Indonesia purchasing many of the Avon Sabres from RAAF inventories. Finally, on 31 July 1971, the RAAF officially retired the Commonwealth Aircraft Company CA-26/-27 Sabre from service.



The restoration team poses by Sqd.Ldr. Jim Fleming's Avon Sabre, which carries the full markings of No. 76 Squadron. They are (L-R) Graham Ross, Peter McHugh, Kevin Camper, and Project Foreman Keith Warth. (credit - Jim Fleming)

A pair of CA-32 Sabres sit 'Ready Alert' armed with Sidewinder missiles at Williamstown RAAF base in 1965. (credit - Brian Baker)



No. 3 Squadron, RAAF, lined up at Williamstown in 1959 just prior to deployment to Malaysia as part of the SEATO force that was fighting the Communists in that country. (credit - Mike Fox)





Williamstown, September 1966. No. 2 OCU had an air demonstration team called the "Marksmen". The 'Marksmen' team flew air shows throughout the Far East as far north as Japan in the mid-1960s. (credit - I. MacPherson)



When the RAAF phased out the CAC Sabre in favor of the Dassault Mirage III, many of the Sabres were sold to Malaysia, and then were passed on to Indonesia, which promptly formed an aerobatic team with four of the aircraft. Indonesia purchased at least twenty-three CAC Sabre Mk 32s in the early 1970s. (credit - Mike Fox)

16th Sabre Pilots Assn. Reunion

April 9th thru 12th, 2007, at the Monte Carlo Hotel & Casino,
Las Vegas, NV.

START PLANNING NOW!!!

DAWN FLYBY FOR "ALLEY CAT ZERO"

by Phil Janney

'Alley Cat Zero' joined the 62nd Fighter Interceptor Squadron at O'Hare AFB, IL, on a freezing winter morning in 1953. She arrived ingloriously, sputtering and yowling, under the hood of a Pontiac convertible, which was making some terrible noises. The early bird pilot was amazed to find the grimy-white, six-toed stowaway kitten when the hood was opened. How she got there and avoided a gruesome end were never discovered. But her presence was regarded as a sure omen by the men of the Fighting 62nd, whose call sign was "Alley Cat". Promptly dubbed "Alley Cat Zero", the newest member of the squadron was quickly mollified by a warm saucer of milk and assumed her duties as squadron mascot.

Soon she settled into life in the Operations building, even with the early morning scrambles and the roar of jet engines. At the time the 62nd was in the process of changing from F-86As to F-86Ds, so everyone could see both aircraft streaking white trails across the clear blue Illinois sky.

Alley Cat Zero, her huge misshapen feet leaving unmistakable clues to the scope of her wandering, marked as 'her' new territory, the vast fields and runways of O'Hare. Locals learned her name when they irately phoned the base to complain about the 5am practice scrambles that began soon after her arrival.

Initiated by enterprising pilots miffed by the ongoing hostility displayed by the locals disenchanted with the nearness of the thundering jets, the scrambles were justified as "scheduled flybys for 'Alley Cat Zero'". Further questioning by the fuming civilians inevitably dead-ended with "Sorry, that's classified!" It wasn't until three months later when some industrious civilian managed to reach higher Headquarters, that the F-86 flybys were discontinued.

Alley Cat Zero, never shy about notoriety, soon made history again when the squadron CO took



her up in a F-86D, and calmly broke the sound barrier with her on his lap. The story was leaked to the press with the following results:

- 1) Puss & Boots cat food company awarded Alley Cat Zero a medal as the 'First Supersonic Cat!'
- 2) The CO was fired!
- 3) The ASPCA was determined to charge the squadron with cruelty to animals, and
- 4) Alley Cat Zero thought it was all great fun and had to be prevented from sneaking aboard future outgoing flights.

After a year of faithfully serving as mascot for the 62nd FIS, Alley Cat Zero disappeared as mysteriously as she had arrived. It was the custom in those days to change squadron call signs on a yearly basis. When the 'Alley Cat' call sign disappeared from the air waves, so did the little kitten. The pilots, while regretting her loss, seemed to feel that she'd done her duty to the 62nd and moved on to bigger and better things.

The drawing depicts the last F-86A flyby for "Alley Cat Zero"

STARS AND STRIPES OVER KOREA

by Larry Davis & Many Others

During those dark early days of the Korean War, the US 5th Air Force F-80 Shooting Star pilots encountered a new and very menacing jet fighter in the skies over North Korea - the Mikoyan Gurevich type 15 or MiG-15. It was a small silver jet fighter with swept back wings and tail. Almost overnight, the MiG-15 obsoleted every other type in the theater and for the first time in a long time, the US Air Force did NOT have air superiority over a battlefield.

The Pentagon's answer was simple - "Send our own little silver jet fighter with swept wings to Korea", the North American F-86A Sabres of the veteran 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing. In early December 1950, the escort carrier USS Cape Esperance docked in Yokosuka Bay and unloaded the first of 75 F-86As. A few days after unloading, the first seven Sabres were ready for combat against the MiG-15.

But there was one little problem. In conversations with 5th AF pilots that had flown against the MiG-15, and after viewing gun camera film of some of the encounters, LtCol. John Meyer, CO of the 4th FIG, came to the conclusion that the resemblance between the MiG and the Sabre was such that it might be possible to mistake one for the other during combat.

Present during one of these meetings was FltLt J.A.O. 'Omer' Levesque, an RCAF pilot that was TDY with

The 51st FIG converted from F-80Cs to F-86Es at Suwon in the Fall of 1951. They marked their aircraft with large black and YELLOW bands as a unit identifier. (credit - USAF)

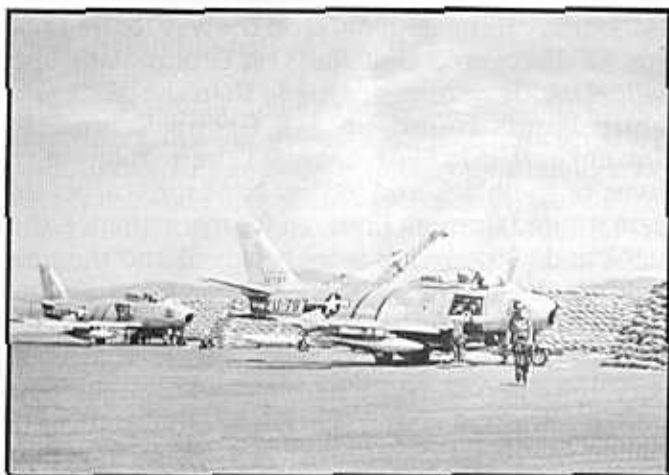


When the 4th FIG arrived in Korea, they had these very distinctive black and white bands painted on the fuselage and wings as an aid to distinguish the Sabre and the MiG-15 during the fast-paced combat in MiG Alley. (credit - 'Bones' Balogh)



Proof that F-86Es from the 4th FIG initially had the black and white ID bands is shown on 'Bones' Balogh's Sabre at Kimpo in November 1951. (credit - Larry Davis Collection)





A 51st FIG F-86E in the revetment area of K-13 in July 1952. At this time the 51st Group had only the black and yellow bands as a Group ID marking. No tail markings were used. (credit - James Kumpf)

the 4th Wing when they were alerted to go to Korea. Omer Levesque had been an ace during World War 2, quickly got permission from RCAF Headquarters to accompany the 4th Group into combat in Korea. As he sat listening to the conversation about the similarities between the MiG and the Sabre, he suggested that perhaps they could apply some quick identification marks like the D-Day bands that were applied to all tactical aircraft flying over France that fateful day in June 1944.

He made a quick sketch of the side profile of an F-86 and drew on the same vertical black and white bands that had been applied in June 1944 - three black and two white. He also suggested that they be applied to the wings, again just like 1944. But this was Korea and the Sabre was much more aerodynamic than anything flown in 1944. LtCol Meyer looked at Levesque's drawings and ordered it done - with one change. The fuselage bands would be angled toward the front of the airplane. It fit the profile of the Sabre to a "T".

25th FIS F-86Es on the alert pad at K-13 in 1953, showing the full unit markings. The silver and black checks were added to the vertical tail in the Summer of 1952, with a band at the top in the squadron color, in this case red for the 25th Squadron. (credit - John Winters)



Even the T-33s carried the required FEAF ID bands. "Rice Paddy Daddy" crashed in September 1952 at K-13 and carries both the FEAF ID bands and the 51st FIG black and silver checkerboard on the tail. (credit - Fred Chapman)

Thus it was that before any airplane left Kisarazu, Japan, for Kimpo AB, Korea, all previous unit markings were removed and the new black & white stripes were added to the fuselage and wings. In addition, a thin black stripe was added to the leading edge of the rudder as a group marking.

In September 1951, the first F-86E Sabres were unloaded in Japan. Although several made their way to the 4th Group at Kimpo, the majority of the new E model Sabres were bound for the 51st FIG based at Suwon AB, about 50 miles south of Kimpo. The 51st Wing was commanded by the greatest living ace in the US Air Force, LtCol Francis Gabreski, known to everyone as simply "Gabby". Gabby had flown with the 56th Group in World War 2, which were readily known to be non-conformist in every way including aircraft markings.

When it came time for the 51st Group to paint stripes on their airplanes as per Far East Air Force (FEAF) regulations, Gabby wouldn't hear of their



Looking rather dapper, our own Julius Hegler stands next to his personal F-86E in 1953. The sharks teeth were for 'Tiger Flight' in the 25th Squadron, with the small 25th FIS insignia under the windscreen. (credit - Hank Buttlemann)

airplanes looking like those of the 4th. They opted to paint their ID bands black and YELLOW. This would differentiate them from both the MiGs and the 4th Group Sabres. The 51st Group would have large yellow bands with thin black borders, painted on the fuselage and wings. No other unit markings would be carried, except for some small squadron badges under the cockpit.

In the Spring of 1952, the 4th Group added large black and yellow bands to the tails of their aircraft as a unit identifier, plus adding a large squadron insignia to the gun bay door. The black vertical stripe on the rudder is a carryover from the earlier black and white markings. (credit - Don Stewart)



But a funny thing happened on the way to the Yalu. 5th AF discovered that the 51st Group black and yellow bands were easier to see than the black and white bands found on 4th Group Sabres. In November 1951, FEAF changed the regulation in favor of the black and yellow bands. As airplanes were rotated through Kisarazu for maintenance, the black and white bands were removed and the new wide black and yellow bands were applied.

Now all the Sabres looked alike, which displeased both units' personnel. Something had to be changed so that pilots knew who was flying around them in the hostiles skies over Korea. The 4th decided that if they HAD to have black and yellow bands, why not have them on the tail also. Not to be outdone, the Suwon gang decided to really get gaudy and applied large black checks to the silver tail. Squadron identification was done by adding a large squadron badge to the 4th Group Sabres; while 51st Group squadrons painted a small color band on the tail just above the checkerboard.

Enter the 18th Wing. In January 1953, the 18th Fighter Bomber Group converted from F-51Ds to F-86Fs. Even though their primary mission was fighter bomber, the FEAF regulations still called for their airplanes to carry the black and yellow ID bands. Originally, the 18th adopted a tail band that was exactly the same size and shape as the 4th FIG Sabres, except that it was dark blue with red or yellow borders in the squadron colors. Later they adopted a variation of the tail stripes used on No. 2 Squadron, SAAF, Sabres, except the colors were red, white and blue.

In May the 8th FBG also converted to Sabres. They retained their old "sunburst" tail stripes in the squadron colors, to go with the FEAF black and yellow ID bands. And the FEAF regs went for all Sabre aircraft operating in the Far East. Just in different colors. One F-86D squadron in the 35th FIG even had polka dots!!! on the fuselage bands, which were in dark blue. (Does anyone have any color shots of these F-86Ds?) Even in Europe, some units adopted the FEAF ID bands for their Sabres which were operating very close to the Iron Curtain, just in different colors.

So there you have it. At least everything that we know to this point. We still can't put a definite date on exactly when FEAF ordered the 4th FIG to change over to the black and yellow bands but we have narrowed it down. Anyone with a firm answer for this can contact the Editor.



A highly polished F-86E from the 334th Squadron in a revetment at K-14 in 1953, showing the full normal markings painted on 4th Group Sabres. The seven red stars are 'kills' credited to the airplane, one of which belongs to 'ace' Bill Lilley. Kills assigned to the pilot were painted directly under the windscreen. (credit - Curt Francom)

The 8th FBG carried over their sunburst tail markings, in the appropriate squadron color, to their F-86Fs when they converted to Sabres in May 1953. (credit - Charlie Cox Collection)

The 8th FBG COs airplane had three-color sunburst bands, plus three-color 'command bands' around the nose to signify command status. (credit - Charlie Cox Collection)

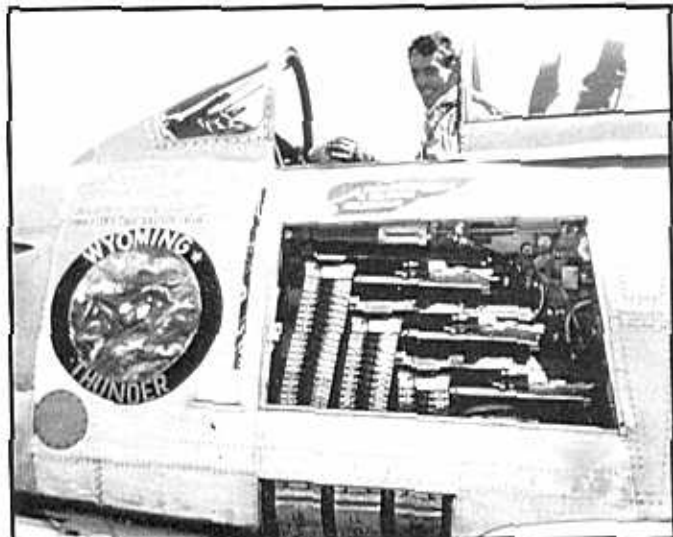


When the 18th FBG converted to F-86Fs in January 1953, initially their tail markings were similar to those of the 4th Group, just a different color. The tail bands were dark blue with four white stars and borders in the squadron color; in this case yellow for the 12th Squadron. (credit - Don McNamara)

In the Spring of 1953, the tail plumage was changed on 18th Group Sabres to red, white, and blue angled stripes, which was based on the tail bands of No. 2 Squadron SAAF Sabres. 67th Squadron Sabres also had the Fighting Rooster emblem on the gun bay. (credit - James Sullivan)



More Sabre Nose Art



Major 'Hap' Harris flew "Wyoming Thunder" with the 25th FIS in 1952. (credit - Don Porter)



"Have Guns, Will Travel" was an F-86H with the Maryland Air Guard. (credit - Howard Chilton)



Lt.Col. Herman Vischer flew "Henrietta/7 Come 11" when he commanded the 25th Squadron. Sharks teeth were a symbol of 'Tiger Flight'. (credit - Joe Weber)

"Twenty" was an F-86D assigned to the 25th FIS at Naha AB, Okinawa in 1955. (credit - Marty Isham Collection)





"Father Dan" was named after the 51st Group chaplin, and was flown by Capt. F.B. Salze. (credit - George Howell)



"Sherdanor II" was flown by Squadron Leader Ralph Gerneke, Commander of No. 2 Squadron at K-55. (credit - SAAP)



Marilyn Monroe's Playboy Image adorned the nose of "Miss Minooky", a 25th FIS F-86D at Naha in 1955. (credit - F. Silva)



Lt. John Winters' personal F-86E was named after his wife "Marge", when he flew with the 25th Squadron at K-13. (credit - John Winters)

Lt.Col. Al Kelly flew Karen's Kart when he commanded the 51st Fighter Group at K-13 in 1952. (credit - Herb Goldstein)



SURPRISE ATTACK!

by Gene Mechling

I wrote this for the 401st and 366th TFW troops that were stationed at England AFB, Alexandria, Louisiana, from 1952-1955, and later flying the F-86. I thought some of you clowns might get a laugh out of it.

It was the Summer of 1954, the scene was Friday evening after work at the O Club. Suddenly we hear the roar of 4-8 engines at very low altitude. We all rushed outside to see Alex being bombed by a couple of B-17s! Not real bombs, but beaucoup rolls of Charmin's finest. There were toilet paper rolls streaming down all over the place. What the hell is going on and WHY? What did we do to deserve this unceremonious dumping on innocent and 'always innocent' fighter pilots and their illustrious base.

Unbeknownst to all of us, another similar scene had been played out earlier in the day. It appears that there was an early warning radar air defense test going on at Eglin AFB, earlier that morning. Lt.Col. Carroll McElroy's 391st Squadron was on airfield defense at Eglin Field #9, ready to scramble and intercept Lt.Col. John England's 389th Squadron, which was the 'attack force' from Alexandria.

The 389th's mission was to get in under the radar and attack the defending 391st Squadron and their base at Eglin #9. The 391st was to intercept them if forewarned by the early warning radar.

Lt.Col. John England taxis back to his parking spot at Alexandria AFB, LA during the Summer of 1954. Lt.Col. England was the CO of the 389th FBS during the "Surprise Attack". (credit - C.W. Summerville)

The problem was that the 389th got in under the radar okay, but their navigation was a bit off track and they bombed the wrong Eglin auxilliary field with Charmin's finest. The rolls had been stuffed into the speed brake wells of their F-86s and they hit the target right on the nose. But surprise, surprise - and horrors, it was thw wrong target! The unsuspecting target was a B-17 drone squadron at Eglin Auxilliary #7. OUCH! The 389th got the 'Mickey' on the wrong bunch this time and it backfired big time.

Consequently, it was now payback time! And that's what hit Alex and the O Club that afternoon in retaliation. B-17s have a large bomb bay and there were miles of Charmin streaming down when the big B-17 drones came over. Touche big time! The B-17s then calmly turned around and droned back to Eglin without incident. And I'm sure there was more than a few guffaws around the bar at Eglin #7.

The humiliation of it all! To be bombed by unknown and unsuspected BOMBERS, and DRONES no less - that was to much. And John England, our squadron CO and a big ace in World War 2, didn't take lightly to the laughter and the ribbing, particularly from the 391st squadron and another ace, Carroll McElroy. Thus one Squadron Ops officer, the fingered navigator, found gainful employment in another squadron occupation.



NO TACAN, NO IFF, NO JOY! BUT NOT LOST!

by Dan McGrath

In the middle of a wretched winter in 1959, hard on the Missouri River at Sioux City AB, Iowa, flying the all-weather F-86L at night would probably classify as a dangerous challenge to the casual observer. But for the young pilots in the 14th FIS, it was what we did every day. Breaking 100 and 1/4 was a routine operation, but one that dictated that you and your airplane quickly became one. You were essentially a middleman connecting the radar system to the controls. And you soon developed a sense of confidence that your partnership was effective, efficient, and SAFE.

Hence, I launched one December night leading two other Sabres in the normal 5 mile in-trail radar formation. The fact that my TACAN was inoperative during the ground check was only a minor problem. The weather was basically VFR in the vicinity. In any case, we'd be under GCI control, so getting back home wasn't given a second thought.

Another slight 'hiccup' occurred when the GCI controller repeated his request for my IFF squawk. After I recycled the IFF a couple of times, it was apparent that it was inoperative. Because ADC rules dictated that the Flight Lead have an operating IFF, I reluctantly broke out of the practice intercept and #2 took over Lead.

With nothing better to do, I motored around the area for awhile to burn off fuel before returning to Sioux City. The F-86L was limited to about 45 minutes worth of JP-4 on intercept missions, so this process didn't take long. When it was time to recover, I spotted the 'glowing lights of the city', and headed home. I planned to land VFR, and although technically still under GCI control, I didn't ask for recovery instructions.

When I arrived over the 'lights', I told GCI that I "was above Sioux City", and indicated my intent to recover at the base some 5 miles south.



This three ship flight of 14th FIS F-86L Sabres served as the cover of the Sioux City AB directory in 1959. 1Lt. Dan McGrath is flying #3. (credit - Dan McGrath)

Then came the ominous words from another F-86 (as it turned out the Squadron Safety Officer): "If you see the lights, you're not over Sioux City! Sioux City's under heavy clouds! Over?!"

"So now what?", I thought. "I can't be lost. I'll just get a TACAN bearing. Whoops, no TACAN. OK, I'll just get a GCI fix. Whoops, no IFF either!" I checked with GCI and asked for a skin paint. But they had no idea where to look so that didn't work either. In fact, it merely made two of us who now had absolutely no idea where I was!

1Lt Dan McGrath and the F-86L that he flew with the 14th FIS in 1959. (credit - Dan McGrath)





Squadron photo of the 14th FIS at Sloux City AB, Iowa, in 1959. Dan McGrath is 3rd from left in the back row; Capt. Stephens, the very anxious Flight Safety Officer, is 5th from right in the front row. (credit - Dan McGrath)

But I remained confident that there was no problem, for I could definitely see the lights of Lincoln, Nebraska, some 75 miles to the south. I'd surely be able to land at Lincoln. By now, the 1100 pounds of fuel remaining made that option somewhat tenuous. But seeing no alternative, I reported my plans to GCI and headed south.

"Don't do that!", came the pleading voice of the Squadron Safety Officer, probably anticipating how he was going to report a flamed out F-86L crashing on the way to Lincoln. Just at that moment, the blinking lights of a descending Sabre flashed by going north. "Aha!", I thought, "If that's no. 2, I can follow them home."

Sure enough, another airplane appeared in

A pair of 14th FIS F-86Ls stand alert at Sloux City AB. The F-86L was an upgraded F-86D equipped with SAGE equipment and had the extended wing. (credit - David W. Menard)



trail with the first. I immediately pulled a 180 and joined up on a most-startled squadron mate. They were on a different frequency so I couldn't make radio contact, but there was no way he was going to lose me. I probably should have tried Guard Channel, but we had strict instruction not to use Guard except in an emergency. In this case, I was safely joined up. And making a weather approach on the wing of another F-86 was easy. So, with that bit of dumb luck, there was no emergency.

On the ground, a somewhat flustered #3, one of the new guys, was wondering who the hell had flown his wing home without saying a word. At the same time, the Squadron safety Officer, having counted noses, was on his way to the Club for a drink, where he found me trying to avoid talking about the jerk who almost got lost that night. ALMOST!



Edward A. Smith, 336th FIS

"Skeet" Vaughan wants to hear from anyone that flew with Lt. Edward A. Smith, 336th FIS 1953-54. Contact Otha "Skeet" Vaughan, 10102 Westleigh Dr, Huntsville, AL 35803, (256)881-2566, or e-mail skeetv@knology.net

SUPER SABRE SOCIETY

Attention Hun Drivers!
If you are interested in starting up an F-100 Super Sabre Society, let me know. Contact Les Frazier, Life Member of the F-86 Sabre Pilots, at 702 River Down Road, Georgetown, TX, 78628-8240, ph. 512-930-3066, or e-mail supersabresociety@cox.net

F-106 Photos Wanted

Your editor is currently researching the Convair F-106A/B Delta Dart for a new book. This will be a follow-on book to my recent F-102 Delta Dagger In Action. Anyone with photos of F-106A/B aircraft is asked to please contact Larry Davis, Editor, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at sabreclsx@aol.com

Pilot Training Class 52-F

Reunion september 12-14, 2006, in Dayton, Ohio.
Contact J.C. Buehrig, 8105 Knottingham Dr, Woodway, TX 76712, ph. (254)399-8308, e-mail jjbuehrig@grandecom.net

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

from Nydia Martinez

"You love a lot of things, if you live around them. But there isn't any woman, there isn't any horse, not any before or after, that is as lovely as a great airplane...man has one virginity to lose in fighters and if it is a lovely airplane he loses it to, there is where his heart will forever be."

Ernest Hemingway

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 aerobic team patches such as the "Silver Sabres" and the "Mach Riders". All to be used in SabreJet Classics magazine. Please contact Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721; or e-mail at sabreclsx@aol.com

F-86 NOSE ART

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

POPULAR PINUP





QUESTION OF THE MONTH Does anyone know when the "U.S. Air Force" logo on the fuselage began to appear on F-86s operating in Korea. Source can not confirm a date. Most say no 5th Sabres operated during the war with the fuselage logo. And was it repeated above and below the wings. I have one photo supposedly taken of the last landing, on the last day of the war, by a 5th FIG Sabre - and the airplane has the "U.S. Air Force" logo on the fuselage. Anyone with photo and/or information regarding this subject is asked to contact the SabreJet Classics Editor, Lar Davis, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721, (330-493-4122, or e-mail sabreclsx@aol.com) (photo of 25th FIS Commanders F-86F credit - USAF)

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