

Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 14 Number 2

Summer 2006

A publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association



Inside: Project GUN-VAL, 16th Reunion Info, Sabres With Tip Tanks!, more!

the President's Notebook

This issue contains the Registration Form and Explanation of Events for the 16th reunion. If you are undecided about attending then keep this issue handy so you'll have it when you do decide. However, please try to make your plans and reservations early. If you have to cancel your reunion reservations at the last minute we have a very liberal cancellation policy. You may cancel up to 12:00 noon PST April 8, 2007 and get a full refund. You are responsible for canceling your hotel and transportation reservations. Make a copy of your Registration Form and bring it with you. Also contained in this issue is an order form for the Flight Line Sales Store. Show it to your family to give them ideas for Christmas.

I think we have the glitches in

our data base squared and every body should receive their Sabre Jet Classics. If you do not, give me a call, send me an e-mail, or send me a note. A note to the Post Office box is the last resort because with gas prices over 3 bucks a gallon I only do the 45 mile round trip twice a month.

The response for Challenge Coins has been overwhelming. I've been busy mailing 163 orders for coins. Don't worry, we'll have enough for the reunion. I ordered 500 more. I received several notes concerning the coins. The most interesting was from Bruce Campbell. Bruce was in the 87th FIS at Lockbourne AFB Ohio in 1956. Challenge Coins were made from the inner tube of the main tire. Woe unto the Jock that showed up at beer call without his black spot.

Our country is at war and our troops are in harms way. Over 2500 have been killed and over 19000 injured. If you can find

it in your heart and financial capability to support a reliable Veterans support organization please do so. These guys are putting their lives on the line for us and our way of life. Show them you care.

Several life members have expressed displeasure about having the number 2050 showing in the dues date position on the mailing label rather than Life Member. The problem is the data base is on Microsoft Access and the Dues Expire column is numeric and will not permit letters in it. If any of you computer experts have a better idea let me know and I'll be happy to make the change.

Looking forward to see you at the reunion

JERRY R. JOHNSON
President
F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION

Folded Wings

Donald S. Johnson, December 12th, 2005
Omer LeVesque, RCAF, June 2nd, 2006
Frank B. Merrill, September 14th, 2005
Albert H. Wuerz, June 12th, 2006

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 guys. Hope you enjoy this issue of SabreJet Classics as much as you did the last issue. From comments relayed to me by President Jerry Johnson, the last issue must have been a great one as a lot of you voiced that opinion. Many thanks for all the nice comments.

The 14th Reunion is fast approaching and I'm really looking forward to meeting you guys once again. Please feel free to stop me and talk. Bring your photos along and any story that you might have written. Many of you relate stories to me as we sit but then do not follow up on that with a letter or email containing the story. I can't scribble as fast as you guys can talk so please make a hard copy of your stories and get it to me one way or another.

Some photos I can copy right there in Vegas - as soon as I find a WalMart with one of the magic Kodak copiers. They're also in some food stores and drug stores. Maybe someone in Vegas can locate one close by. That way I can make copies of your photos while I'm there. Slides are a bit different. Those I have to bring home and have out lab make prints from them. This is also true of Air Force photos. Most commercial labs won't touch them as they think they're copyrighted by the stamp on the back. Not true but also not worth arguing about. So I bring them home and use my own copy equipment.

Roster changes. VERY IMPORTANT! Please check the last roster to make sure all your data is correct. Any changes - i.e. address, phone numbers, email address, spelling, etc - you can forward it to me but that'll delay the process. You're better off sending it to either President Jerry Johnson, or better yet, to our resident computer person Polly Winesett. Her email address is posted on this page. All data corrections MUST be received no later than 15 December 2006 for inclusion in the new roster.

REUNION REGISTRATION — VERY, VERY, VERY IMPORTANT. In this issue of *SabreJet Classics* are the registration forms to fill out if you plan to make the 16th Reunion in April 2007. Please fill out your form and send it back to the Vegas address as soon as possible. **Do NOT** send them to the editor! We will repeat this message and the form in the Fall issue of *SabreJet Classics*, vol 14-3.

See you guys in the next issue and in Las Vegas at the 16th Reunion.

Larry Davis
editor

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from Julius Hegeler

I received a phone call from Julius Hegeler informing me that we have misspelled both his name and Hank Buttlemann's name in past issues. Our apologies to both Julius and Hank.

Julius also informed me that "Tiger Flight" and the sharks teeth were applied to all the 25th FIS Sabres in Korea. However, photos of 25th FIS Sabres at Suwon show many more aircraft without the sharks teeth than with, including the personal airplane of Hank Buttlemann. Plus our own Dick Geiger had sharks teeth on his airplane and he was assigned to the 16th FIS at Suwon. Can anyone comment on "Tiger Flight". One of the photos I have is from Fred Chapman, the PIO photographer for the 51st FIG in 1953. The photo shows a single F-86 from the 25th FIS with the note - "Pilot and airplane from Tiger Flight, 25th FIS".

from Tom Slee

Member Tom Slee has been talking about wooden models ever since I first met him back in 1992. He now has information regarding a possible model of the F-86D for all you 'Dog' jocks. I say possible because he needs to hear from everyone interested in buying a large scale model of the F-86D to contact him so he can tell the manufacturer how many models he will have to make. You can contact Tom via email at F86pilot@mindspring.com or call him at (253)584-1223. Tom lives in Washington state so please take that into consideration.

The 25th FIS flightline at Suwon in Spring 1953. "Jackie's Jag" wears the sharks teeth of 'Tiger Flight', while the other Sabres of the 25th do not. Close examination of the photo reveals that "Jackie's Jag" has Julius Hegeler's name on the canopy. (credit - Fred Chapman)



Lt. Hank Buttlemann walks away from the F-86 that he scored his 5th MiG in. Note that the airplane carries the logo "U.S. Air Force" on the fuselage and the date is 30 June 1953. Hank Buttlemann was the youngest ace in the Korean War. (credit - Larry Davis collection)

from Hank Buttlemann

Just a note on your request for info on the logo "U.S. AIR FORCE" in the last issue of *SabreJet Classics* (vol 14-1). I've looked at my pictures and the last dated photo of an F-86 with the logo is 30 June 1953. The picture was taken when I got my 5th MiG. They might have put the logo on sooner but I can't prove it. Thanks for all the hard work you're still putting into the *SabreJet Classics*.



from David Menard

These photos were taken by William J. Balogh, Sr. at the Detroit Air Show, 4 July 1955, showing actress Anne Francis, Lt.Col. James Poston (winner of the Ricks Race), and Maj. Gen. W.P. Wilson, Air National Guard Commander from the District of Columbia. This puts a date to that photo in one of the past issues of *SabreJet Classics* showing Miss Francis.

from Sr/M/SGT Ken Siddons

It's been a long time since you asked about the day the Chinese ran the 4th FIG out of Kimpo, 2 January 1951. (The story was in *SabreJet Classics*, 13-2)

My recollection of that day was someone from the orderly room running into our tent. We were already sacked in for the night. The CG told us to get out right away - take nothing out our clothes and carbines. The Chinese were coming in force. There was a lot of confusion, no one knew what to do.

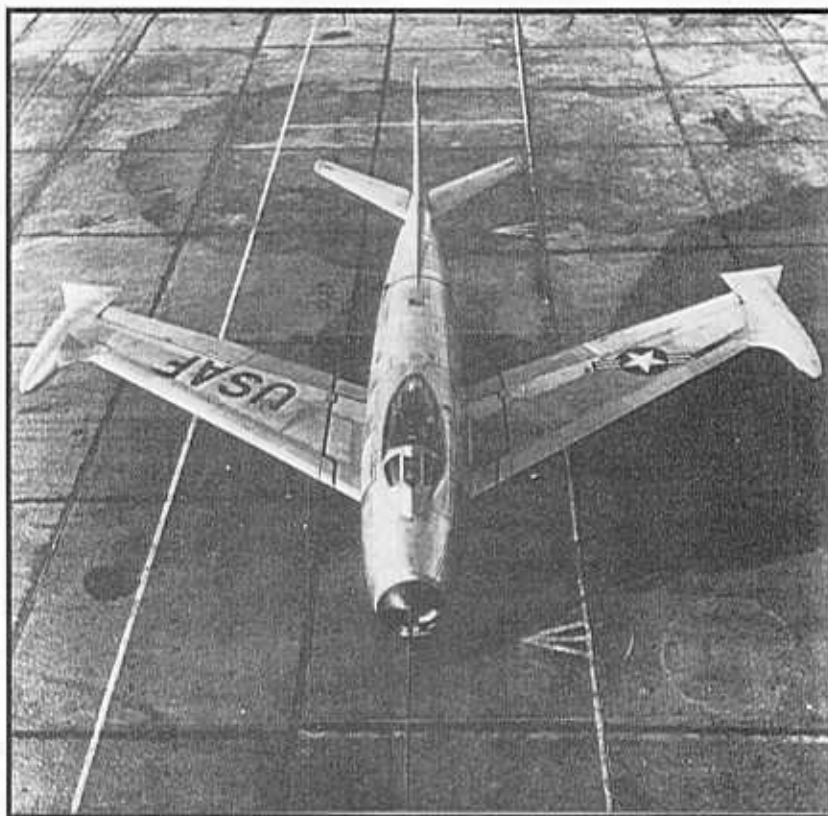
Looking out I said, "What's all the Army trucks doing down there on the road?" The reply was that the Army was abandoning camp also. So several of us went down and hitchhiked on one of the Army trucks that were heading south toward Suwon. The best I can recall, the next morning I woke up walking in Seoul with another guy. We flagged down another Army truck and got them to take us to Suwon, where we got our first good meal in the mess hall. From there we caught a hop to Johnson AB, Japan. It was a crazy couple of days.

51st Group pilots and crew chiefs wave as the last F-86 mission returns to Suwon on 27 July 1953. The last Sabre landed just before sundown. MiGs were encountered on the last mission and one Sabre was shot down. Note that this F-86F also had the "U.S. Air Force" logo on the fuselage, which seems to indicate that it began showing up on F-86 aircraft during late Spring 1953. (credit - Fred Chapman)



Actress Anne Francis shares the ladder and other goodies with Lt.Col. James Poston, winner of the Ricks Race trophy, and Maj. Gen. W.P. Wilson, Commander of the Air National Guard at Andrews AFB. The date is 4 July 1955. (credit - Wm. J. Balogh, Sr.)





F-86A-5 #49-1301 flew 5 tests with 120 gallon "Beaver Tail" wingtip tanks in February 1951. The wingtip tanks were modified combat tanks with the stabilizing fins mounted upside down. The official note on the photo said - "Wing tip mounted external fuel was aerodynamically advantageous, but not on swept wing aircraft." (credit - John Henderson collection)

WHAT IS IT?

This months "What is it?" is something I've been trying to track down for many years. About 10 years ago a Navy historian sent me a nice photo of the Douglas XF5D Skylancer sitting on the ramp at Edwards AFB. The photo was taken in early 1950. I commented to myself - "Nice photo but who cares! I'm into Sabres, not Skyrajs." Then I read his note. It said "I know you're not into Navy stuff but look under the right wing in the background." There it was, a fuzzy image of a definite F-86 day fighter that obviously had wing tip fuel tanks!, very similar to those on the Lockheed XF-90.

"What the hell is that?". I looked at the image several times with various magnifiers. Yes, it definitely was a Sabre. And yes, it definitely had wingtip fuel tanks. I immediately asked everyone that I knew about it, from Air Force historian David Menard (one of the most knowledgeable people on Air Force equipment you'll ever meet); to John Henderson, North American Tech Rep for the 4th FIG in Korea; to member Lon Walter, who flew various tank tests at Eglin during this time frame (mid-1950s). No one knew anything about it. Over the years at Sabre Pilot reunions, I would ask various pilots that I knew were into flight test, about the 'Sabre with the wing tip tanks'. They all looked at me very strangely.

Then out of the blue comes the enclosed photo from John Henderson with a note - "Larry, What is this?" I was stunned to say the least. I studied the photo for hours. It was obviously an F-86A or early F-86E as it had the V-shaped windscreen. But the angle of the photo hid the serial and/or buzz number. The wing tip tanks *looked like* standard 120 gallon combat drop tanks; i.e. the ones that were normally attached under the wings. But the fins were upside down and the tanks were angled away from the wing tip. Plus there was this large fairing on the wing leading edge. I still had no clue as to what I was looking at, or when or where.

About a week later, I received another letter from John Henderson. It included a small view of the original photo, which was a North American Aviation photo dated 2-12-51 and carried the caption "120 gal. Beaver Tail tip tanks, F-86A #49-1301". Along with the original photo was the caption - "F-86A-5, S/N 49-1301, flew five (5) 120 gal combat wing tip drop tank test flights before delivery to Wright-Patterson AFB 1 May 1950. Wing tip mounted external fuel was aerodynamically advantageous but not on swept-wing aircraft."



Another early attempt at aerodynamics and underwing fuel tanks were these 200 gallon ferry tanks that were 'faired in' on the underside of the XP-86 prototype. Tests revealed that the tanks were mounted too close to the wing. (credit - Air Force Museum)



F-86A #49-1301, the wing tip tank test airplane, was delivered to the Wright Air Development Center where it was used to test various armament loads. (credit - David Menard collection)

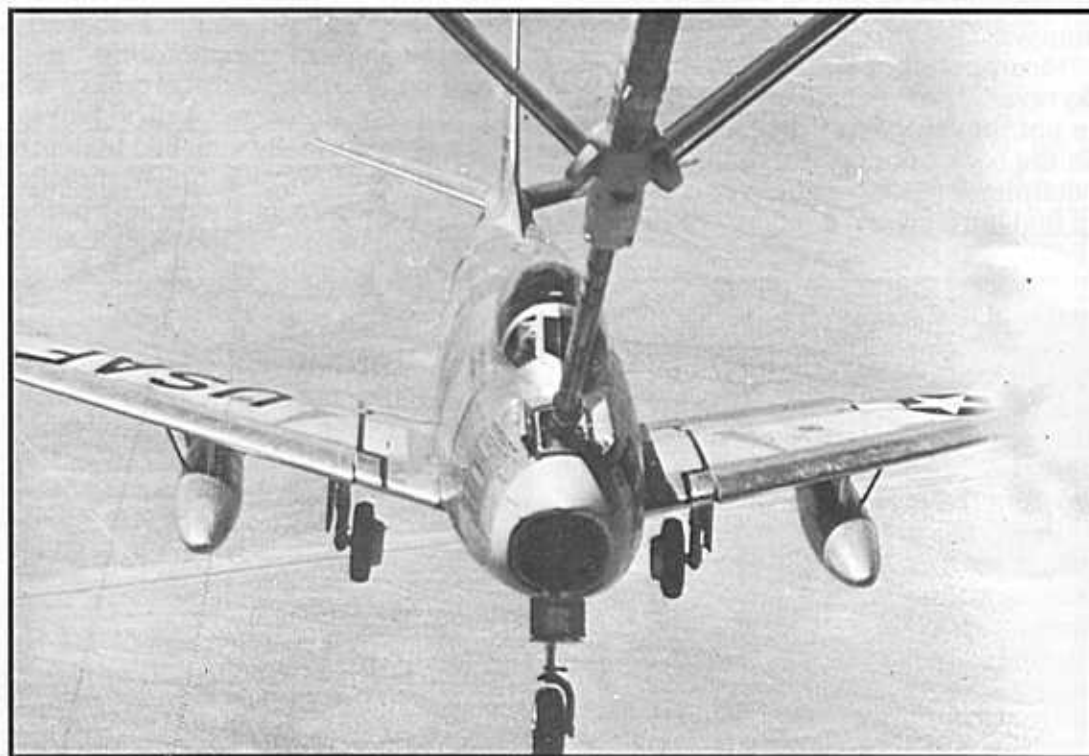
So now I know what it was, and where and when. We just don't know anything else about the tests. If anyone has any information, anything at all, about strange F-86 Sabres that were modified for some kind of tests, please contact the editor. I still have photos of an F-86E with a "gloved wing" and faired in canopy like that used on the F-84F, and an F-86A with a strange underfuselage fairing and what looks like a gun port in the front, plus the F-86A with RF-86F camera bulges on the gun bay doors

and a wild multi-color stripe paint scheme that covers the entire fuselage. Maybe I'll rerun those photos once again and see if anyone knows anything about them.

Thanks for any help you can provide.

Larry Davis
editor

There's more than one way to increase the range of an F-86. This F-86A has been equipped with the Boeing 'probe and drogue' inflight refueling system. Although successful, the Sabre never did get inflight refueling on a production airplane. (credit - North American)





Rollout photo of an F-86F-2 GUN-VAL Sabre at North American Aviation's Inglewood plant. All GUN-VAL Sabres had the '6-3 hard wing' in addition to the 20mm cannon armament. Note the holes drilled in the ammo bay doors to relieve gun gas buildup. (credit - NAA)

PROJECT GUN-VAL

Combat Testing The Cannon-armed Sabre

by John Henderson in collaboration with Lon Walter

It didn't take long for the pilots in Korea to realize the MiG-15 had more firepower than the F-86. In January 1951, Lt.Col. Bruce Hinton, 336th FIS Commander, briefed the 4th FIW staff on the 21 days of combat recently flown out of Kimpo. His briefing included the admonishment THAT THE FIREPOWER OF THE F-86 IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY DESTRUCTIVE, AND SHOULD BE MODIFIED WITH A CALIBER HEAVY ENOUGH TO INSURE STRUCTURAL DAMAGE WITH A MINIMUM NUMBER OF HITS.

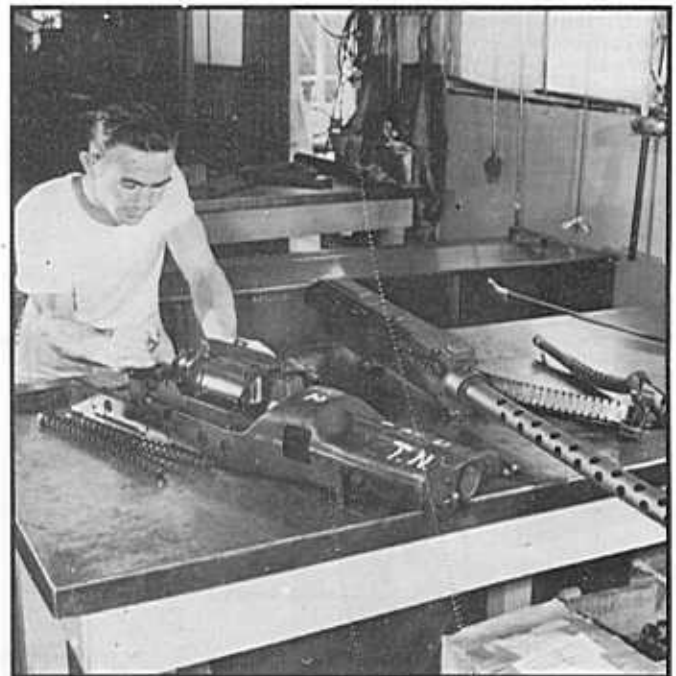
By September 1951, experienced Sabre pilots who had returned to the US brought with them the news that the F-86 needed heavier firepower. These included America's first three jet aces - Jim Jabara, Dick Becker, and Hoot Gibson; as well as WW2 aces John Meyer, Ralph Taylor, Billy Hovde, Glenn Eagleston, Bob Rankin, Jim Brooks, and Ben Emmert. Their reports also included other improvements that were needed, such as a more powerful engine and better gunsight - both of which were already being developed.

At Headquarters USAF, Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Chief of the Fighter Branch, Directorate of Operations, was given the overall job of solving F-86 gunnery system problems. This would eventually lead to the replacement of the A1CM gunsight with the type A-4; and the M3 .50 caliber machine gun with a more potent weapon. The latter program was to become Project GUN-VAL.

Under Lt.Col. John England, Chief of the Fighter Gunnery Section, a Gun Evaluation (GUN-VAL) Committee was formed - which included many 4th FIG combat veterans. Among the evidence they reviewed was a paper written by Maj. Martin Johansen, which was supported by his gun camera film showing a MiG-15 absorbing multiple

hits from .50 caliber bullets without any evidence of mortal damage to the pilot, airframe, or engine. A decision was made to proceed immediately with a test of two 20mm cannon capable of high rates of fire. These were to be installed in specially modified F-86s. When available, they were to be combat tested if the Korean War was still on-going.

A North American armament technician works on one of the T-160 20mm cannons used in the GUN-VAL program. Each gun was required to fire 10,000 rounds to qualify the system as suitable and test the structural integrity of the rebuilt gun bays in the F-86F-2. (credit - NAA)

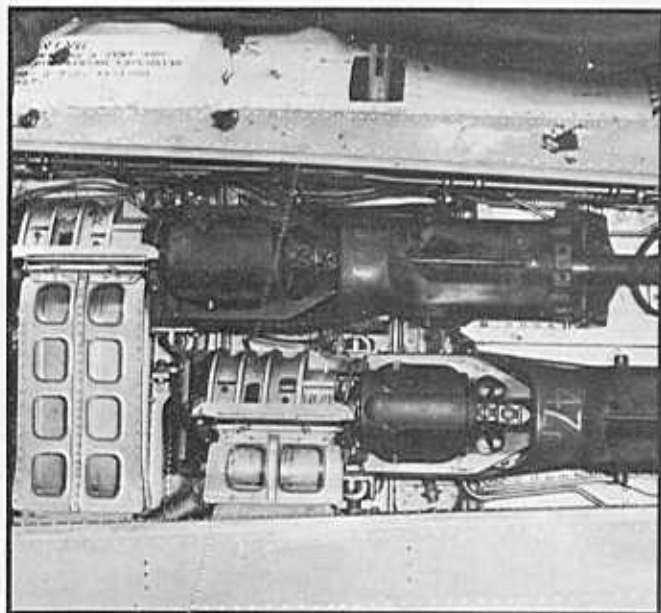




Robbie Robertson, NAA Armament Engineer, loads a 20mm ammunition canister into a GUN-VAL F-86F prior to delivery of the airplanes to the Eglin AFB Armament Test Center. Robbie personally made many of the hardware improvements on the T-160 system. Note the elongated and thinner gun bay. (credit - NAA)

The Los Angeles Division of North American Aviation was contracted to modify 12 undelivered F-86s with rebuilt gun bays and four 20mm guns. These were to be tested by NAA pilots before delivery to the USAF. 10 of the Sabres were to receive Mauser guns designed in Germany during WW2 but never installed in combat aircraft. Much later, the remaining 2 aircraft got Swiss-designed Oerlikon guns that had been successfully used in WW2. The Oerlikon installation eventually proved unsuitable; and after testing at Eglin AFB, that portion of GUN-VAL was terminated.

Photo of the test sled nose mounting a pair of T-160 20mm cannons. Problems on the GUN-VAL installation included ammo feeding, firing mechanisms, a lack of sufficient 20mm ammunition for the firing tests, and insufficient replacement barrels on the T-160 guns. (credit - NAA)



The F-86F-3 was a test of the Oerlikon 20mm cannon installation in an F-86F air frame. Similar in design to the T-160 installation, the Oerlikon guns were much larger and protruded through the fuselage. The Oerlikon installation was scrapped. (credit - John Henderson collection)

The Mauser cannon design had been captured from the Germans during the waning days of WW2, finding its way to the Springfield Armory, then to Ford Motor Company (FMC) for further development. For the GUN-VAL Sabres, FMC provided NAA with models designated as T-160 20mm cannon; a gas operated, electrically fired, belt fed, revolving cylinder gun with a cyclic rate of 1400 rounds per minute. The ten F-86s with T160 guns were re-designated F-86F-2, while the Oerlikon-equipped models received later, became F-86F-3.

Two of the key personnel involved in the GUN-VAL program were (L-R) B. Lyle Rayner from Wright Field Armament Systems; and Paul Peterson, the North American engineer that designed the GUN-VAL installation, and came up with the 'fix' to the high altitude flameout problems. (credit - Paul Peterson)





Project GUN-VAL pilots climb into the cockpit of four of the 20mm armed F-86Fs at Kimpo in Spring 1953. Eight GUN-VAL Sabres were sent to Korea for combat evaluation, and were assigned to the 335th FIS at Kimpo. Two were lost to inflight accidents involving gun gas ingestion. (credit - Paul Peterson)

Major structural modifications were required to enlarge the Sabre's gun bays to accommodate the 170 lb., 6 foot long cannon. The prototype guns received by NAA from Ford required improvements to the gun feed and firing mechanisms before they could be used in the F-86. The NAA Armament Department, headed by Paul Peterson (who designed the GUN-VAL installation) and engineer Jim Robertson, identified and corrected these problems.

As planned, NAA test pilot George Welch flew the inflight firing tests. He pronounced the guns to be functionally reliable. But there were no tests of gun gas purging or ingestion at high altitude, a problem that would surface in Korea. All 10 F-86F-2s were delivered in 1952; 8 were destined for Korea, and 2 went to the Armament Center (AFAC) at Eglin AFB for engineering tests. Three USAF pilots flew firing tests at Edwards AFB in the Korea-bound aircraft, before the Sabres were flown to McClellan AFB for processing and shipment to the Far East.

The three pilots, Lt.Col. Don Rodewald (Air Research & Development Command), Maj. Ray Evans (APGC Detachment Commander), and Capt Lonnie Moore (APGC), were joined in Korea by Lt.Col. George Jones (Air Training Command, Nellis AFB) and Lt.Col. Clay Peterson (Tactical Air Command). Under the Aegis of APGC, these five pilots comprised the "dedicated" GUN-VAL pilot team in Korea. Additionally, pilots from the 4th FIG would also fly the GUN-VAL Sabres in Korea, including Lt.Col. Vermont Garrison, Maj. Bob Moore, Capt. Murray Winslow, 1Lt Dan Druen, and 1Lt Jerrold Bradley.

Once in Korea, the GUN-VAL detachment, including the aircraft, 5 pilots, a 12 man armament specialist team from Eglin, and 4 civilians, were hosted at K-14 by the 335th FIS, commanded by Lt.Col. Garrison. The 335th provided maintenance support and a secure flight line for the GUN-VAL aircraft.

The combat program kicked off in January 1953 and ran for 16 weeks, ending in April. GUN-VAL airplanes were often flown in mixed flights with .50 caliber Sabres

so as not to 'advertise' the presence of the cannon-equipped F-86s. At other times, a flight of four cannon-armed Sabres was part of the overall mission schedule. It has been learned that Russian pilots who flew against the F-86 in Korea often derided the standard .50 caliber armament as "pea-shooters". But once the 20mm cannons were fired, a MIG pilot quickly realized that he was not up against a normal Sabre.

Although 8 GUN-VAL airplanes arrived in the Far East, one was held at Tsuiki AB REMCO center, and remained there until late January. At that time, one of the F-86F-2s was lost. Gun gas ingestion caused a compressor stall and flameout, resulting in Capt. Murray Winslow's ejection when he was unable to get an airstart. Winslow was rescued from the Yellow Sea. The Tsuiki bird replaced this first loss.

Lt.Col. Clayton Peterson was commander of the GUN-VAL Test Detachment that went to Korea in January 1953. His assigned aircraft was F-86F-2 #52-2819. (credit - Paul Peterson)





GUN-VAL F-86F-2 #51-2836 returns to K-14 in the early Spring of 1953 with blackened gun ports and no underwing tanks - a sure sign that MiGs were encountered. Maj. Ray Evans had one confirmed kill, one probable, and one damaged in -836. The airplane was also the only GUN-VAL Sabre to be shot up by a MiG. (credit - Larry Davis collection)

While the lethality of the T160/F-86 combination was proven early on, the problem of compressor stalls and flameouts caused by gun gas ingestion, particularly at high altitudes, was a serious problem. Combining data obtained from combat missions and 55 non-combat test flights over Inchon Bay, it was finally determined that the gun gas 'envelope' that the airplane was flying through, was the culprit. Gun gas secondary explosions were occurring around and ahead of the aircraft nose. The resulting air-gas mixture, when ingested into the J47 burner cans created a compressor stall.

To reduce the size and effect of the gun gas envelope, an

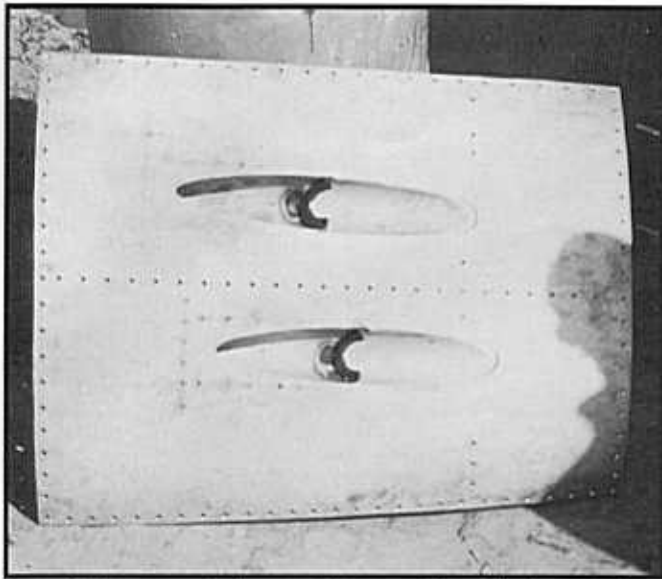
The 335th FIS lines up for takeoff from Kimpo in April 1953. The nearest Sabre, FU-803, is one of the GUN-VAL aircraft. GUN-VAL flights were often integrated with regular .50 caliber Sabres so that the MiG pilots would not be able to pick out the new cannon-equipped Sabres. (credit - USAF)



Lt.Col. Don Rodewald rests on one of the T-160 gun crates prior to a mission in 1953. Lt.Col. Rodewald was assigned to Air Research & Development Command and went to Korea with the GUN-VAL tests team. (credit - Paul Peterson)

interim fix (unpopular with the pilots) was devised. It consisted of installing a switch in the cockpit that limited the number of guns which could be fired simultaneously. Pilots were instructed to fire all four guns ONLY below 35,000 ft., and two guns between 35 and 40,000. There was to be no firing above 40,000 ft.. Although the project aircraft were never grounded, there was a hiatus on air-to-air combat while the non-combat tests were flown. During this hiatus, six air-to-ground missions were flown to test the effectiveness of the 20mm guns.

Armed with the findings from Korea, NAA's Paul Peterson returned to NAA to 'find a fix' that would allow firing all four guns above 30,000 ft. without fear of a flameout.



One of the reworked gun blast panels with the stainless steel horseshoe-shaped gun gas deflectors welded into the recessed gun port. Paul Peterson came up with the idea and patented the deflector, which eliminated gun gas ingestion and compressor stall flame-outs in GUN-VAL Sabres. (credit - Paul Peterson)

Working in NAA's Armament Lab, he found that a means of deflecting the gasses away from the critical intake area was needed. This was accomplished by installing a small horseshoe-shaped deflector in the gun troughs. This forced the gasses away from the aircraft, yet allowed the projectiles to exit without deflection. To assist Peterson, the Air Force sent one of the AFAC GUN-VAL airplanes to NAA to finalize the design of the deflectors. Test flights on this aircraft confirmed the effectiveness of the 'fix'. There were no high altitude firing-induced engine problems.

As soon as possible, Peterson hand-carried deflector 'kits' to Korea for installation on combat Sabres. There were no flameouts in the final month of GUN-VAL flights in Korea. Although a few secondary gun gas explosions were

(L-R) Major Ray Evans, APGC Detachment Commander, Paul Peterson, NAA Armament Engineer, and Lt.Col. Don Rodewald from ARDC, walking to the flightline at K-14 in Spring 1953. (credit - Paul Peterson)



GUN-VAL armorers work on one of the 20mm cannons in the restricted area of the 335th FIS flightline. Note the deflector has already been welded into the gun port. Paul Peterson hand carried the deflector kits to Korea and had them installed on the seven remaining GUN-VAL Sabres at K-14. (credit - Paul Peterson)

observed in front of the aircraft, there were no compressor stalls. By the end of April 1953, the Korea GUN-VAL test was completed and the remaining 6 aircraft were returned to the US. (A second GUN-VAL Sabre was lost in April when the J47 turbine wheel failed. Capt. Lonnie Moore ejected and was rescued.)

The final engineering to cure the gun gas ingestion problem continued long after GUN-VAL ended as a project. Eventually, a satisfactory design was patented that would allow the deflector to be adapted as required for other aircraft. Project GUN-VAL had a lasting and beneficial effect on the safety and effectiveness of future Air Force fighter aircraft. In production, the prototype T160 became the M39 cannon, and served many years in the F-86H, F-100, and F-101 fighters.

Armorers from the GUN-VAL test team remove one of the T-160 20 mm gun barrels on 52-2819, parked in revetment #15 on the 335th FIS restricted flight line that was reserved for the GUN-VAL team aircraft. (credit - Paul Peterson)





Although armament maintenance and support was performed on the 335th FIS restricted flight line, normal maintenance of all other systems, including the engine and flight controls, was performed in the maintenance shops at K-14. GUN-VAL Sabre #52-2836 is about to receive a new J47 engine.. (credit - Norman Green)

Project GUN-VAL Scoreboard

total flights.....	368
combat missions.....	307
MiG-15s: fired upon.....	41
hit.....	22
destroyed.....	6
probables.....	4
damaged.....	13-18

pilot	destroyed	probable	damaged
Maj. Evans	1	1	1
Lt.Col. Jones	2.5	1	1
Lt.Col. Peterson		1	1
Lt.Col. Rodewald			1
Capt. Moore	1.5	1	
Lt.Col. Garrison	1	1	
unknown			8-13
totals	6	4	13-18



F-86F-2 #51-2900 was one of the GUN-VAL Sabres that spent its early career at the Eglin AFB Armament Test Center, and did not go to Korea with the combat evaluation aircraft. After serving at Eglin, -2900 was sent to Nellis AFB and assigned to the Fighter School. (credit - JoAnn Kilpack)

In 1958, the Colorado Air Guard formed an aerobatic team using several airplanes retrieved from the bone yard. All four team airplanes were ex-GUN-VAL aircraft. The story of the Minute Men team appears in Sabrefet Classics, vol 13-3. (credit - Tom Hall)



Although only ten F-86F-2s were built, two of which were lost in Korea, several remain, including this aircraft (#51-2836) being restored by a private collector on the East Coast. The airplane was painted in bogus 51st Group markings at the time this photo was taken. (credit - Larry Davis collection)

THE AIR ASIA F-86 PROGRAM

by Sid Yahn

The North American F-86F was the first jet fighter aircraft to undergo IRAN (Inspect and Repair As necessary) at the Air Asia facility located at Tainan Air Base, Taiwan. At the time I was flying Republic F-84Gs with the First Fighter Wing of the Chinese Air Force, which was also located at Tainan AB.

In late 1955 or early 1956, Air Asia obtained the F-86 IRAN contract. However, they had no qualified jet pilots available to test fly the aircraft. Fortunately, I was given the opportunity to perform this task.

Air Asia was not a U.S. military organization. Therefore, U.S. Air Force authorization had to be obtained before I could fly these aircraft. On 27 December, 1956, I received the required authorization along with the additional AFSC of 4331 - Flight Test Maintenance Officer.

On 31 December 1956, the first F-86F, no. - 040, which had completed the IRAN program at Air Asia, was test flown. In total I flew sixty one Air Asia test flights. In addition I had the good fortune to fly the acceptance check flights for the Chinese Air Force. After an aircraft was accepted, it was then flown to the appropriate Chinese air base and assigned to a squadron.

I was active military, therefore no additional monetary compensation of any kind was received for these flights. Initially, a few flights proved to be 'interesting'. But after several flame-out landings, an inflight fire, a high altitude canopy separation, etc., things began to smooth out.

As the program matured, and the workers moved down the learning curve, the Air Asia IRAN facility turned out an excellent product. It was not difficult to look at F-86s on a Chinese Air Base flight line and point out the aircraft that had been through the Air Asia IRAN facility. They looked like new aircraft, they smelled like new aircraft, and they flew like a new aircraft!

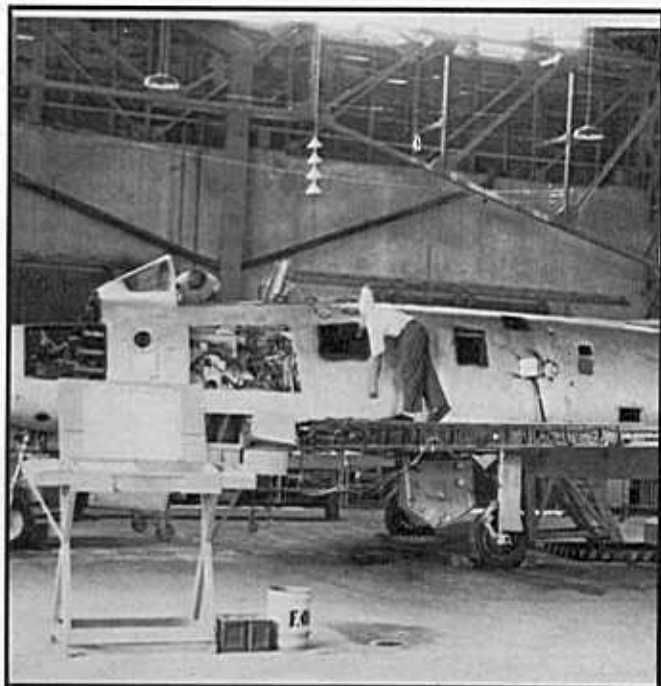
My association with the Air Asia IRAN program ended in the Spring of 1958 when they hired



Sid Yahn at Tainan, Taiwan in 1957. While flying with the CAF, Sid Yahn accumulated more flying time in Chinese fighters than any foreign national. (credit - Sid Yahn)

a former military jet pilot and I returned to the United States. At the time, few if anyone, could foresee the significant role that Air Asia IRAN activities would play during the period of the Vietnam conflict. I like to think the 1956 F-86 IRAN program helped to form the foundation of this larger Air Asia effort.

An F-86F in the shops at Air Asia in 1957. Most of the aircraft were ex-US Air Force Sabres that had flown combat in Korea. (credit - Sid Yahn)





Inside the Air Asla shops at Tainan in 1957. One of the operations performed at Air Asla was bringing the F-86Fs up to the latest standards, including installation of the 6-3 wing as well as the "F-40" wing extension. Installation of AIM-9 Sidewinder launch capabilities was also done at Air Asla. (credit - Sid Yahn)



The finished product is ready for delivery to one of the Chinese Air Force F-86F combat units in 1957. (credit - Sid Yahn)

Chinese Air Force F-86Fs participated in the Flying Brothers Weapons Meet held at Clark AB, Philippines in May 1959. The sharks teeth and checkered tails were applied specifically for the Flying Brother Meet. (credit - USAF)



Sabres Around the World Certainly one of the gaudiest F-86 Sabres to ever fly was the personal aircraft of Colonel Clay Tice when he commanded The Fighter School at Nellis AFB. Each color band around the fuselage indicated a squadron under Col. Tice's command. (credit - Ron Kelly)



Ongoing Restoration - Western Museum of Flight

from David Hart

The Western Museum of Flight (WMOF), located at the Hawthorne Airport in Southern California, currently has four aircraft in the process of restoration, including this F-86F Sabre. Member David Hart sent us the information and a few photos that were taken at the Hawthorne Air Faire held on 13 August 2005.

The F-86F SabreJet was manufactured at the North American Aviation plant in Inglewood, California. This particular F-86F was number 122 in a series of 280 aircraft built for the Japanese Air Self Defense Force (JASDF), and was the last F-86 in the JASDF inventory. The Sabre was used in the retirement ceremonies that the JASDF had for their F-86's, 15 March 1982.

The WMOF obtained the aircraft in November 1997 and is in the final stages of restoration. Presently, work is going on to eliminate corrosion and polish the metal skin. At the time of the Air Fair, the Sabre had no engine, but the cockpit instruments and switches had been fully restored.

When restoration is complete, the aircraft will be marked to replicate the F-86F that Jack Simpson flew as a member of the 35th Fighter Bomber Squadron based at Suwon AB, South Korea. Christened "Suitcase's Appleknocked", Simson flew most of his 61 combat missions in the aircraft.

Marked as a 35th FIS F-86F with the serial 52-2401, the WMOF-restored Sabre is actually an F-86F from the Japanese Air Self Defense Force that had taken part in the retirement ceremonies of JASDF Sabres in March 1982. (credit - David Hart)



"Suitcase's Appleknocker", the restored F-86F on the parking area of Hawthorne Airport during the 2005 AirFaire. The Western Museum of Flight is performing the restoration on the ex-JASDF Sabre. (credit - David Hart)

David Hart sits in the cockpit of an F-86 for the first time in almost 40 years. (credit - David Hart)



My Last Day At War

by Dean Abbott

27 July 1953, Suwon AB, South Korea. I was one of four or five guys rounded up that morning in the 51st Group, and put aboard a Gooney Bird headed for Tsuiki, our rear echelon maintenance base in Japan. The mission was to bring back to Korea any and all the Sabres that the Tsuiki maintenance crews could make ready to fly.

The Armistice agreements were to go into effect at midnight of the 27th. And they were specific in that no additional equipment could be moved into Korea after that hour. If an airplane touched down in Korea by 2200 that night, they could stay. If not, they had to remain in Japan.

The Tsuiki crews worked through the day. As they got a Sabre ready, a pilot was assigned and immediately flew the airplane to the nearest base in South Korea, K-2, Taegu AB, where he'd be logged in and certified by "referees" from the Armistice Commission. One after another, as the Sabres became available, that is what happened.

Finally, there were only two Sabres left. But now it was late in the evening and thunderstorms were forecast over K-2. The next to last one was finally ready and away it went in the dark. We shortly got word that the pilot had ejected over the Straits but had been picked up by a fishing boat. I had the very last bird and it became "ready" with just one hour left.

With a very dry throat, I climbed in, started the engine, and taxied to the active runway. Knowing that K-2 was in a valley surrounded by high hills, and that it was going to be poor weather with thunderstorms, and that I was going to have to make an ADF let-down and probably shoot a GCA landing, I was none too excited about the flight since I'd never done any of the above before!

Luckily for me, as I approached the runway, a jeep sped out in front of me and an airman jumped out and stopped me with crossed flashlights. I'd been spilling fuel and hydraulic fluid all the way down the taxiway. I gratefully shut down and called it a day.

Next morning, I called (with great difficulty) back to K-13 and talked to Col. Bob Baldwin, the Group Commander. I said, "Sir, I'm stuck here at Tsuiki with only my flying suit and no money. What do you suggest?" He replied, "Well Abbott, normally I'd suggest you go to the chaplain and ask for a loan. But as a combat aircrew, you're just like the aircraft - no longer welcome in Korea! Do the best you can and stand by for further orders." So that's exactly what I did for a week, living from pillar to post with my hard luck story.

Finally I ran into a guy I knew who got to ferry a T-33 (not a combat aircraft) back into Korea. I sweet-talked him into smuggling me back to K-13. I put my chute and helmet in his back seat and snuck out to a ditch alongside the taxiway. When he arrived, up went the canopy, in I climbed, down went the canopy and we were quickly off for K-13.



Dean Abbott sitting in 'his' area at K-13 in 1953. Abbott served with the 39th FIS. (credit - Dean Abbott)

Upon landing at Suwon, up went the canopy and I slithered out and into another ditch. I snuck back to my squadron thinking I'd beat the system and was proud of it. The squadron quickly brought me back to reality. I'd been in WONDERFUL Japan, where I could have remained for who knows how long. Now I was back in crappy Korea with no war to fight. Well, live and learn! Even Col. Baldwin thought that was pretty damn dumb as I recall.

Base Ops at K-13 in 1953. This is what Dean Abbott wanted to see again. (credit Larry Davis collection)



16th Sabre Pilots Assn.

Reunion April 9th thru 12th, 2007, at the Monte Carlo Hotel Casino, Las Vegas, NV. **FILL OUT YOUR REGISTRATION SHEETS AND GET THEM IN NOW!**

Pilot Training Class 52-F
September 12-14, 2006, in Dayton, Ohio.
Contact J.C. Buehrig,
8105 Knottingham Dr, Woodway, TX 76712;
phone 254-399-8308;
email jjbuehrig@grandecom.net

4th FIW
Reunion October 4-7, 2006
in San Antonio, TX.
Contact John Drucker,
PO Box 2281, Red Bank, NJ 07701,
ph: (732)933-1030

Pilot Training Class 56-U
Reunion, September 14-17, 2006
at the Hope Hotel,
Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH.
Contact Pete Kopecky,
106 Elizabeth Dr, Washington, GA 30673,
ph. (706)678-2787,
or email PKOPECKY@NU-Z.net

50th FBW
Clovis-Hahn-Toul. Reunion
Sept 28th - Oct 1st, 2006
in Hampton, VA.
Contact Fred Crow,
PO Box 5403, Williamsburg, VA 23188,
ph: (757)345-0922, e-mail fredcrow@cox.net

51st FIW
17th Annual reunion,
September 14 thru 16, 2006,
in Marietta, Georgia.
Contact Jerry Young,
2011 Nancy Circle, Smyrna, GA 30080,
ph. (770)435-5705,
e-mail JEYOUNG65@aol.com

388th FBW
Clovis AFB and Etain, France. Reunion
Oct 5-8, 2006 in Kansas City, MO,
Contact J. Blumer,
4813 Jarboe St, Kansas City, MO 64112,
ph: (816)531-4050

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

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, 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

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



WHO IS IT?

This F-86E was photographed on the hardstand at the 1951 National Air Races held at Cleveland. The Sabre was part of a team of F-86Es that attempted to break the World Speed Record. It was assigned to the Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB. Does any member know anything about these record flights as to who was flying which aircraft, how many Sabres were involved, dates of the record attempts, records set, etc., please contact the editor, SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721, email sabreclsx@aol.com.

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