

A publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

# Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 15, Number 2

Summer 2007



*Inside: 16th Sabre Pilots Reunion,  
Crisis In Taiwan,  
Qualified, more!*

# SabreJet Classics

volume 15, number 2

Summer 2007

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(front cover) An F-86D from the 26th FIS on the alert pad at Chia yi AB, Taiwan in 1958. The 26th FIS was part of a buildup of FEAF assets to counter a possible Red Chinese invasion of Formosa. (credit - Ralph Mayton)



# SabreJet Classics

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the  
*President's  
notebook*

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The sixteenth reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association was a great success and was enjoyed by all who attended. We had 380 members and their guests this year, which was down from previous years, but not bad for a bunch of old geezers. The Super Sabre Society decided to have their reunion at the same time and also in Las Vegas, which unfortunately diverted some of our members, who also flew Hun, to the Gold Coast Hotel/Casino.

The Membership Meeting was conducted April 12, 2007. Treasurer Richard Geiger presented the financial position of the association. As of December 31, 2006 the Association had a balance of \$160,000 in cash and CDs.

Glen Carus then reported on the progress of filling the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association panels located at the Udvar/Hazey addition of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum at Dulles Airport. A

more detailed report is in this issue along with applications for enrollment. If you haven't taken advantage of memorializing your name on our panels for perpetuity you should reconsider.

Chairman of the Board of Directors presented the following items discussed by the Directors.

- 1) The need to find replacements for the President, Vice President and Treasure to take over after the 2009 reunion.
- 2) Change to the Constitution to allow the Board of Directors to change the location of the next reunion to another city, rather than by a vote by the General Membership. Article IX Paragraph A, Intervals was changed to read. "Reunions shall be held at intervals of eighteen (18) to (24) months in Las Vegas, Nevada or a location designated by the Board of Directors".
- 3) Close the Flight Line Sales shortly after the 2009 reunion. (Please note all items are for sale at reduced prices in this issue).

4) Web Master, Bill Weiger, is looking for a volunteer to take over the Web Site if required. If you are interested please contact Bill.

Before and during the reunion I received several suggestions that we should lower the prices by reducing the quality and location of the next reunion. I promised everyone that the Las Vegas staff would look around for a different hotel with less expensive pricing. We will do that but I will not lower the quality of service. My personal opinion is we have been treated very well by the Monte Carlo Hotel and staff. The location of the convention area, excellent food and positive attitude of the employees will be hard to beat. Since the reunion I have received several nice letters about the reunion. One in particular expressed my feeling when he said the Monte Carlo may not be perfect but it is darn close.

Check six

*Jerry R. Johnson*  
President  
F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn.

## Folded Wings

Lloyd 'Boots' Boothby, November 26th, 2006  
Calvin C. Fearon, unknown date  
Ronald J. Lang, unknown date  
Robert I. Marshall, June 2nd, 2007  
Elias Riggs Monfort III, January 27th, 2007  
Brig.Gen. Robin Olds, June 14th, 2007  
Gordon 'Jock' Savage, February 2nd, 2004  
Russell C. Snyder, March 1st, 2006  
John G. Stevens, September 17th, 2005  
Philip Tague, February 22nd, 2007

### POLICY STATEMENT

The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association does not participate in any solicitation and/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

I think I'll elaborate on what I talked about at the Membership Meeting, that is submissions for the magazine. And we do need them, not as badly as in previous years, but we do need them. Short or long, please flood my mail box.

What are we looking for? In reality, almost anything. As long as it pertains to the F-86 Sabre and men that flew them. It can be about a special experience you had, or a record that you set or knew about, combat flying of course, a history of the unit you flew the Sabre in (and that can be as short as the era the unit flew just the F-86 or the entire history of that unit), or you can just talk about flying the F-86.

Long or short? Again, that's up to you. In this issue you'll see a long article about the Formosa Crisis of 1958, and later you will see a short humorous article that was barely a note handed to me at the Reunion. It's entirely up to you. As Editor, I will take your article and remove material that I feel just adds words, or add words to flesh it out a bit. Or I may simply change a word with something better suited to the article.

I will almost always abbreviate things like rank or squadrons, i.e. Lt.Col. or 335th FIS. But I will NEVER change the meaning of an article, no matter the subject. And I often send articles to one of my Associate Editors - David Menard, John Henderson, et al - for historical or technical accuracy. But that's why they pay me the 'big bucks' to be editor.

Electronic submissions, i.e. email. I will always prefer submitted articles be sent to me via US mail. Email has a nasty tendency to lose things, sometimes an entire article. I had one guy that griped up a storm because he hadn't heard from me about his article. The reason was simple - it never got here! You can email it to me for reading, but please resend it via the postoffice.

Same goes for photos only more so. Yes, I know that you have nice photos that look great when you get them back from the drug store or pull them out of your printer. And your grand kids think they're 'super' when you email them across country. But in publishing, that doesn't always work, or at least work well. The problem is the size of the photos sent via email, and the type of printer used to print them after downloading.

If the scanned photo is too small in DPI, the photo lacks quality. If it's too big, I may not be able to download it at all. And if I use my very good but not laser printer, there will be a minute 'dot pattern' within the image, which will show up during publishing. Please, please, please, send me either the original prints or slides, or go to one of the Kodak photo copiers in most Wal-Marts or drug stores, and make me a hard copy of any photo you want used in the article. Front cover shots are almost always made from someone's color slides or an absolutely stunning print made from a slide.

And that's it. Oh one other thing. If you have a unit reunion coming up, whether it's a Pilot Class, squadron, base, whatever, make sure you send me the information, which can be emailed, and I'll put an ad in the magazine to draw attention. And don't forget to try and tie your reunion in with the main Sabre Pilots Reunion, which will benefit all parties concerned. See you next issue.

*larry davis*  
editor

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## letters to the editor

Associate Editor David Menard was excited to see the photo of Anne Francis that appeared in *SabreJet Classics*, issue 10-3, Fall 2002. She was one of Dave's favorite actresses. So he did a little research (he's very good at that!) and somehow came up with an address for Ms. Francis. He contacted her and sent her a copy of the photos that were taken by Wm. J. Balogh. She was excited enough that she answered Dave. Her letter is printed in it's entirety:

Dear Mr. Menard,

Thank you for the photos taken in '55 at the Detroit Major Airport! I really got a kick out of seeing them. I had wanted to be a test pilot when I was a teenager. But of course in those days, such a thing was not heard of. So greeting the pilots was the closest I got! Good heavens! That picture was taken fifty years ago! Nope...fifty two years ago! We were all cute kids then.

My son-in-law is a Lt.Colonel in the Air Force, and a squadron commander at the moment in Minot, North Dakota. I still haven't gotten there to visit. It is quite a jaunt with three flights!!!!!!!!!!!!

I will treasure the photos which remind me of when I was a young woman enraptured with the glamour of the military. What days those were.

Happy Landings to you and yours, and I am glad you survived your tenure in the Air Force. I pray Rob (my son-in-law) will do the same.

Warmly,



re: "What Is It? vol 15-1

from Garry Willard

In response to the then home of #265, it was based at Seymour Johnson Air Patch with the 533rd FDS, 83rd Ftr Group. Major Chuck Cathcart was Sqdn. CO. We had 3 squadrons - 532nd, 533rd, and 534th. Of all the fighters I flew (lots), the F-86H was the "funnest"!!! We had Hs throughout 1957 and then started flying them to the Guard. We started getting F-100Cs as we kissed the H goodbye. It was a great era for those of us lucky to be in TAC at the time.

The 83rd was deactivated and we became the 'Fourth But First', which remains at Seymour. The 83rd opened the base in 1956 with one ancient



LtCol James Poston, CO of the 166th FBS, Ohio ANG, gives his all during an encounter with actress Anne Frances at the 1955 Armed Forces Day celebration at Detroit Metro Airport. I wonder if he ever got that smile off his face. (credit - Wm. J. Balogh)



wooden hanger, a few concrete block support buildings, and no housing. But that all changed with new everything in the next four years. Tempus Fugit or something like that.



The following is an excerpt from *Air Force Magazine's* Letters

from Leslie Waltman

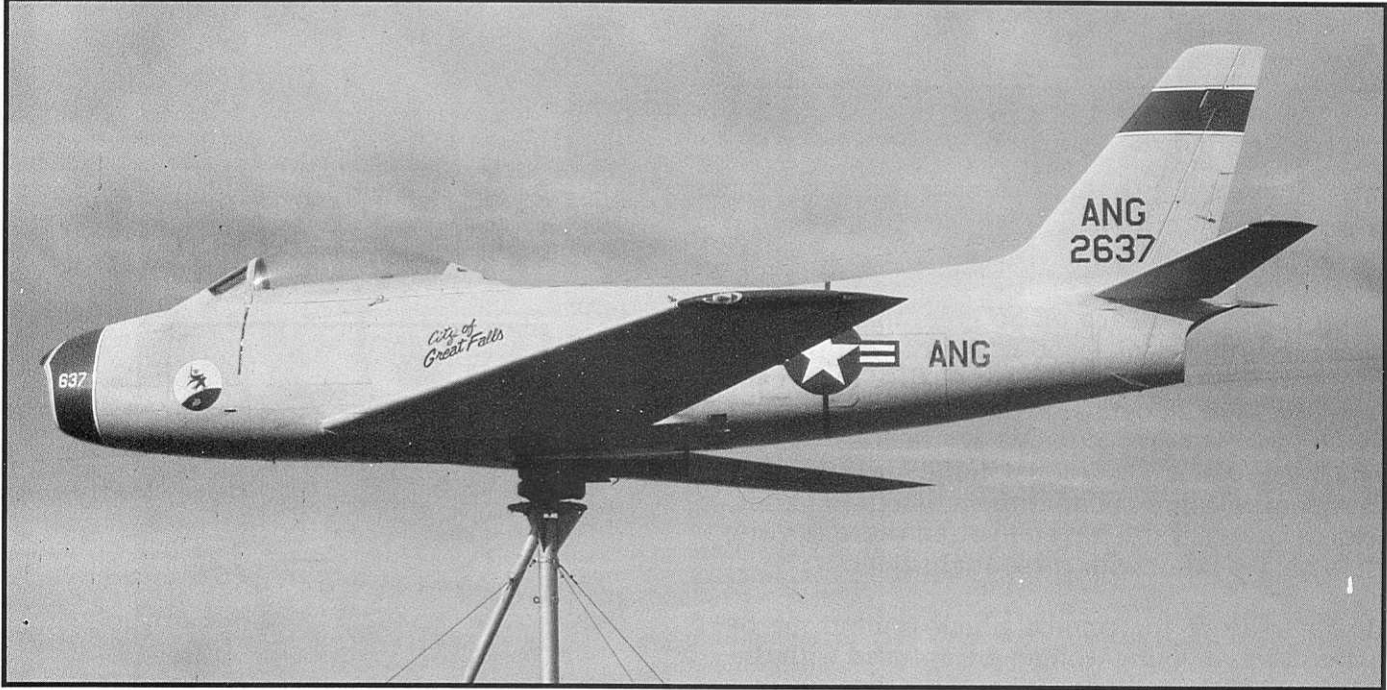
In late 1969, LtCol Jos. Maisch and I, members of the 175th TFG, MDANG, were given orders to proceed to Nellis to participate in a program code-named HAVE DRILL. It lasted three days and involved a series of maneuvers between our aircraft, F-86Hs, and a captured MiG-15 or -17.

*SabreJet Classics* has contacted Col. Waltman and he has promised to write an article about the HAVE DRILL program.

from Florian 'Cliff' Higgins

Enclosed is a picture of an F-86A as flown by the 186th FIS, Montana Air National Guard in the early 1950s. This aircraft is on a rotating stand near the entrance to the National Guard base at Great Falls, MT.

I used to tell my kids that it really dates a fellow when they take your favorite airplane and make a wind sock out of it!



(above) The "City of Great Falls", an F-86A with the Montana Air Guard, is mounted on a rotating pedestal at Great Falls ANG Base, Montana. (below) A 186th FIS, Montana Air Guard F-86A parked at Gowen Field, Idaho during the Guard's annual Gunnery Meet in October 1954. The 186th flew the F-86A from November 1953 through June 1955. (credits - Cliff Higgins and P. Paulsen)





A/3c Bruce Haggood talks to his Nationalist Chinese counterpart as the two stand guard over 25th FIS F-86Ds at Chia-yi AB, Taiwan during the Formosa Crisis of 1958. All three squadrons within the 51st FIW, rotated in and out of Taiwanese air bases during the Summer and Fall of 1958, guarding against Red Chinese aggression against the island nation. (credit - USAF)

## CRISIS IN TAIWAN

by John Oshant

My 4 year tour at Moody AFB as an instructor ended in May of 1958, with orders assigning me to the 26th FIS at Clark AB. There were two squadrons at Clark - the 26th FIS equipped with F-86Ds, and the 72nd TFS, later changed to the 510th, flying F-100's which had recently received their target assignments for nuclear war. Both squadrons were directly under 13th AF operational control.

Various mysterious events occurred around Clark Field during this time. Some bordered on genius, others were amazing but questionable. The ones I describe may have some details missing. However those I describe will give you examples of the no threat-country club attitude that prevailed around Clark in 1958.

The two fighter squadron operations buildings were similar flat roofed masonry buildings, located a short distance from the flight line. Early one morning, the 510th CO is going to work very early. He unlocks the front door, enters and turns on the lights. The room is vacant! All the furniture and safes are gone! As it was getting lighter outside, someone discovers furniture on the roof. They soon realize the furniture arrangement on the roof is almost an identical arrangement they occupied inside. Safes containing top secret

information were still locked and standing in the same position they occupied inside. It's amazing that classified data was removed and placed in an unsecure area without any repercussions. To my knowledge no one was charged with any offense or disciplinary action taken. The suspected perpetrator was a well-known pilot in the 26th.

Tail marking seen on some 26th FIS F-86Ds at Chia-yi AB in 1958. Many of the Sabres carried the traditional checkered tails of the 51st FIG. (credit - Merle Olmsted)





Chia-yi AB, Taiwan during the Formosa Crisis of 1958. Note all the alert parking stubs, many of which had USAF aircraft parked on them. (credit - Bill van Dine)

Next is the story about the night the F-100 crash-landed on Clark's parade ground. To set the stage for the next happening, imagine you are viewing the parade ground at Clark. At the right was 13th AF HQ, and on the left was Wing HQ. In-between was the parade ground over a half mile long, with the O-Club located centrally on one side.

The story begins one Saturday night. The Ops Officer drives to the alert pad and 'borrows' some crew chiefs. Next they go to the base salvage yard, which contained an F-100 that had crash-landed previously. It was beyond repair but appeared intact except for broken-off landing gear, doors, torn flaps and a few other pieces. Somehow they commandeered a very large flatbed trailer, a truck to pull it, and a device powerful enough to lift the F-100.

Meanwhile, back at the parade ground there's a bulldozer scraping the parade ground turf on a heading that points towards 13th Hq. The loose turf is piled up just short of the 13th AF Hq. as it might appear if the F-100 was sliding to a stop on its belly. That's the spot where they 'plant' the F-100. Then, for added effect they position the broken-off gear, flaps and other pieces along the scraped path.

Every Sunday morning at 06:00 sharp the 13th AF Information Officer rode his scooter to his office to file his weekend report. When he turns the corner it brings into his view the 'crashed' F-100. The IO must have felt that his assignment to report timely and accurate news to PACAF in Hawaii was in jeopardy. His reaction to seeing the 'crashed' F-100 which stopped short of damaging 13th AF Hq.



A group of 26th FIS F-86Ds begin the takeoff roll at Clark AB, Philippines, for the 540 mile flight to Taiwan on 8 August 1958. (credit - Bob Burns)

probably included disbelief, confusion, panic, anger and amazement before returning to normal.

8 AUGUST 1958  
THE SECOND STRAITS OF TAIWAN CRISIS

With the exception of December 7th and 9/11, I recall the date 8 August 1958 more than any others. I was scheduled as alert pad commander beginning at 0800 the day before. There were four of us on alert, two on 5 minute and two others on 15.

Very early on the morning of the 8th, the peace and quiet in the alert shack ceased when the scramble phone rang. One of my pilots answered the call. I was half awake in my bunk and heard just bits and pieces of the conversation. It was definitely not a normal scramble order. It was a request for a flight of six of our 86 Dogs to fly to Chia-yi, Formosa - a scramble order none of us had ever heard of - to fly to another country and land. We didn't have any passports or special entry papers. I don't recall if we used an authentication code for verification.

At that time the CO and Ops Officer of our squadron were in Okinawa at the PACAF rocket meet, and not available for advice. After some delays by 13th AF, it was after noon before I landed at Chia-yi AB, a flight of 514 miles. Five other pilots from my flight, plus our ground support and crew chiefs, made up the detachment.

At Chia-yi I was met by a senior officer of the Chinese Nationalist Air Force (CNAF), and he informed me that he was my Liaison Officer. His



first instructions were where to go and what to do when the air raid sirens sounded. I noticed he said "when", not "if", which certainly added realism to the situation. In any case, he wanted me to accompany him to their Ops Center. Our immediate task then was to establish a communication line from their ops center to our detachment. Then I was met by a USAF colonel from 13th AF(Advanced), located in Taipei. He said his staff would brief my men on the situation as soon as I could make them available.

At the briefing the colonel said that the Chinese Communists had moved IL-28 medium bombers to airfields opposite Formosa. Also the Chicoms were shelling the islands of Quemoy and Matsu whenever re-supply ships approached.

The new plan was to re-supply the two islands at night using CNAF transport aircraft to drop the supplies by parachute. The CNAF provided top cover in the daylight hours. Our six F-86D's would provide top cover at night and protect the transport aircraft if they were threatened.

A question about Rules of Engagement with the Chicoms provoked a blank stare from the 13th AF colonel. Specifically, the question was "Could we chase an enemy aircraft into China and fire our rockets at them?" Within a few days the question was answered by the highest authority - President Eisenhower. Basically his message was, "If they fired at us we could fly in 'hot pursuit' of the attacker and fire at them, and if necessary, cross the border into China to do so."

A few days after our arrival my CNAF liaison officer gave me a tour of Chia-yi airbase. There was plenty of evidence they were expecting an attack. Anti-aircraft weapons were positioned all around the airfield. Every gun position was fully manned with troops and ready to fire.

Back to the briefing with 13th AF (Advanced). "Additionally," he said, "Chi-com troops are massing along the coast and an invasion of Formosa was expected at any time." After the briefing, the 13th AF Colonel took me aside and told me they really didn't know what the situation was. I was surprised when one of his staff asked if we carried bombs with our F-86's! I thought this guy should be clued in. It might prevent some F-86D jock from being sent on a wild goose chase.

The D carried just 24, 2.75" rockets in a retractable pod located beneath the pilot. This all means the D's 'one G/wings level' requirements make it a sitting duck in day VFR combat. My assessment of the situation was that the temperature of the cold war was rising rather rapidly and our all-weather Interceptors were not exactly the weapon of choice in the current situation.



The flightline 'taxi' at Calesa in 1958. This is typical of the atmosphere during the pre-Crisis times in 1958. I hope this wasn't the transportation for the alert pilots! (credit - Bill van Dine)

After the briefing, my new liaison showed us where we would operate from and where to park our aircraft. Then we went about activating our scramble communication system. The CNAF was standing strip alert on the warm up pads next to the active runway. We couldn't use their scramble communications for two reasons. One was no space for our aircraft and the second one was very uncommon. My CNAF liaison said it was because of defecting pilots in the CNAF. In the past, some CNAF pilots had defected to the mainland at night using stolen CNAF aircraft.

To prevent reoccurrences, every evening before dark they put barrels full of cement across the runway to prevent night takeoffs. So our scramble system had to include an order to remove the

Major Frisbie briefs the wives of 26th FIS pilots stationed at Clark AB soon after their husbands had deployed to Chia-yi in a real combat environment. Bob Burns' wife Pat, sits in the front row. (credit - Bob Burns)



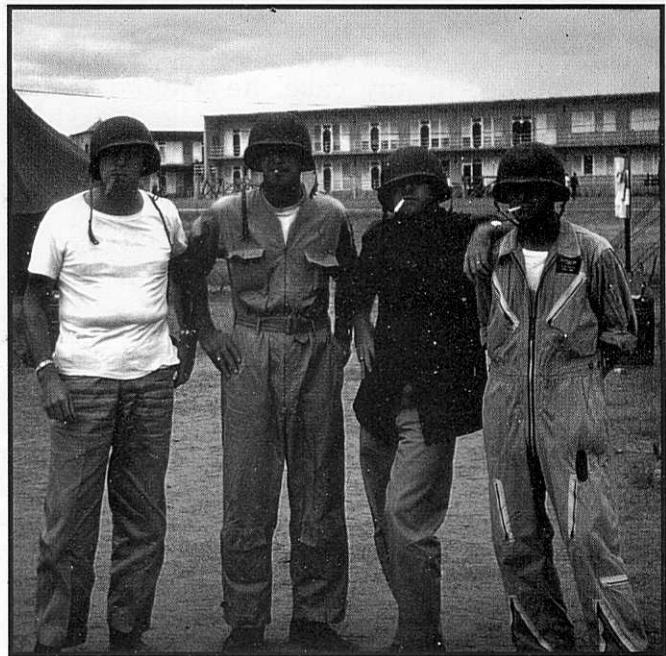


A 26th FIS F-86D shares the ramp at Chia-yi with a Nationalist Chinese Air Force F-86F during mid-1959. The ChiNat AF had no all-weather capability in 1958, which is why the 26th was deployed to Chia-yi. (credit - Larry Davis collection)

cement barrels. Our scramble times seemed in jeopardy because my Liaison Officer said another vital communication line was required. CNAF had placed guards at both ends of the runways at night with orders to shoot the pilots of any aircraft not designated in the scramble order. We checked the system thoroughly before we put it to use. The final test was when I taxied out for my first night take-off. I slowed my taxi speed as I neared the area where the guard was positioned. He suddenly appeared in my taxi light, saluted my aircraft and I breathed a sigh of relief, returning the salute as a chill ran down my spine.

After take off and climbing to our assigned altitude, usually 30,000 feet, the wingman would position his Dog five miles behind Lead. We called it 'in-trail position.' Ma-kung, our ground radar site, would direct the flight leader to a position just east of Quemoy where we would set up a race track pattern. On some nights, when there were thin undercuts, city lights were visible glowing beneath the clouds. The bandits usually remained on the ground when clouds were present.

On some missions it became more exciting when the weather on the mainland was clear. Shortly after we arrived on station the runway lights of an airfield on the mainland would come on just long enough for their fighters to take off. Within a few minutes, Ma-kung radar would advise; "Agony 88, bandits at 10 o'clock, 15 miles climbing thru angels 13." After acknowledging, I continued flying a racetrack pattern and Ma-kung would advise us the Migs were doing the same. Occasionally we had them on our airborne search radar. Neither of us made a pass at the other. The rules of engagement



26th FIS pilots clown around at Clark AB, Philippines in the mid-1950s. (credit - John Moran)

wouldn't permit us shooting first. The bandits were usually flying close to our same altitude.

My first night mission was uneventful. We returned to Chia-yi without hostile contact with neither enemy aircraft nor their anti-aircraft artillery. The MIGs didn't come up very often. Weather was undoubtedly the primary reason.

Some mornings while still on pad alert, we would fly a 'Dawn Patrol' checking the weather over the straights and passing it to Chia-yi tower. After departing Chia-yi very early one morning when the weather was low stratus overcast, the bad guys to the West turned on a powerful radio beacon emitting Chia-yi's frequency non-directional beacon from a location west of Chia-yi, attempting to lure us to land in mainland China. I think we used Chia-Yi's D/F steer facility to return to land at Chia-Yi after their GCA picked us up. The date was July 21, 1956 which was 2 years earlier.

We began rotating flights back to Clark every week. A pilot shortage in the squadron resulted in hectic scheduling of activities. A few weeks later, 13th AF Ops asked the 26th if the F-86D could shoot rockets effectively while dog fighting. Somehow I became the person to answer the request. We scheduled a couple of flights loaded with rockets. I briefed how we would conduct the flight. One would lead and fire while pulling G's; the other would observe the rockets flight paths from a very loose wing position. Then we switched positions to give the other pilot a view. We flew out over the South China Sea gunnery range. It didn't take long to see what was happening. The answer to 13th Air Forces question was; "Firing rockets un-



A 26th FIS F-86D on one of the alert pads that surrounded Chia-yi AB. Without drop tanks, the airplane was almost certainly on alert against Red Chinese aircraft attempting to attack the bases on Taiwan. Most of the missions flown by 26th FIS pilots were night Combat Air Patrol over Matsu and Quemoy Islands. (credit - Bill van Dine)

der G forces greater than one G result in flight paths well below and behind the target. Some rockets had erratic flight paths probably due to damaged folding fins.”

After my report Major Harrison Fisher from 13th Air Force ops asked if I'd like a transfer to the interim TAC Provisional Group in the Air Defense section. I said yes after being assured I would still be flying the 86D. The Commanding General of 13th Air Force, Major General Thomas Morman, believed his staff that told him 13th Air Force had a good Air Defense System. Major Fisher told me my job was to convince the General with the facts. I was directed to plan, and conduct many air defense exercises, both large and small, of the Philippine Air Defense system, record the results, analyze the data, and present the summary to the General, all in less than six months.

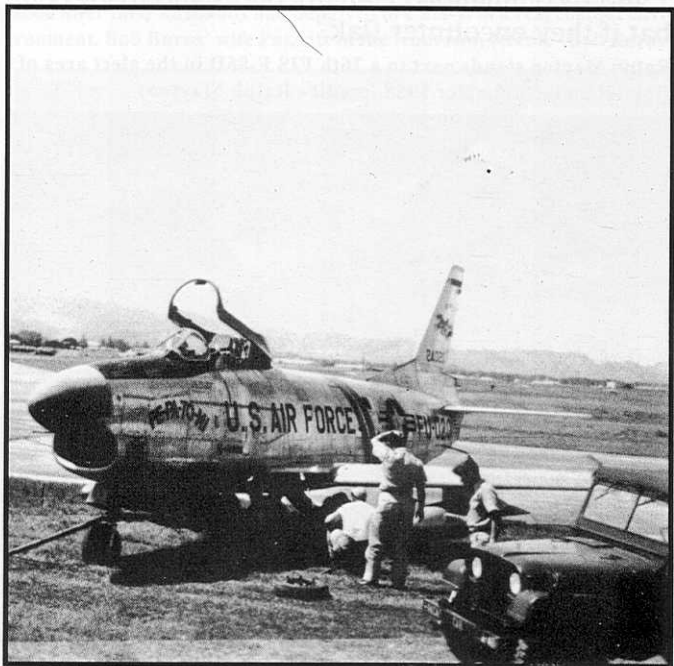
Before beginning duty as the new Air Defense Ops Officer, I rotated back to Taiwan to fly more missions. Hsin Chu AB which is further north on the western Taiwan coast, became our new base of operation. The Chinats had a F-86F wing at Hsin Chu. I cannot recall the number of trips or rotations I made during the situation. However, this next trip to Hsin Chu remains in mind because another Dining In was scheduled and this time it actually occurred.

Primarily though, I recall the event because that same day the ChiNAT Air Force, flying F-86Fs out of Hsin Chu, shot down 10 to 12 MIGs with the GAR 8 Sidewinder missile. No one realized the significance of it at the time, but they were the FIRST

successful air to air guided missile victories on this planet. That evening at the Dining In, our hosts certainly were not reluctant to repeat the fact many times that night that Gars were credited with the victories. That was the first and only time I heard of any claims by ChiNAT personnel.

As those years passed, questions kept popping into my mind concerning that Dining In and the first GAR victories and both events occurring on the same day. Was it co-incidental or pre-planned? I consider it as the most significant historical date in manned aerial combat. I label it as 'The beginning of the end of air to air combat using bullets'. I

“Pe-Pa-To-Me”, a 26th FIS F-86D that ran off the runway into the grass at Clark. The pilot lost his nose wheel steering as he was showing off to a C-130 crew in the run-up area at Clark. (credit - bob Burns)





The 26th FIS Commander's F-86D was put on display at the Hong Kong International Airport in October 1955 during a Far East Air Force air show. Royal Air Force Air Police guarded the aircraft during the show. (credit - USAF)

also reminded myself it was the beginning of the era when a pilot can get a guided missile up his tailpipe with little or no warning. Also aerial victories will no longer be determined primarily by the victors flying skill.

On one trip to Hsin Chu I relieved our Asst. Ops Officer, Captain Floyd K. Taylor, as detachment commander. During our discussion on events and changes in operations and procedures he told me he'd encountered flak the previous night. He said it wasn't very accurate and appeared to explode at his altitude but at some unknown distance to the west. This was a first time event for us. He said he logged combat as the mission symbol on the Form 1 and recommended I tell my pilots and to log combat if they encounter flak.

Ralph Mayton stands next to a 26th FIS F-86D in the alert area of Chia-yi in late Summer 1958. (credit - Ralph Mayton)

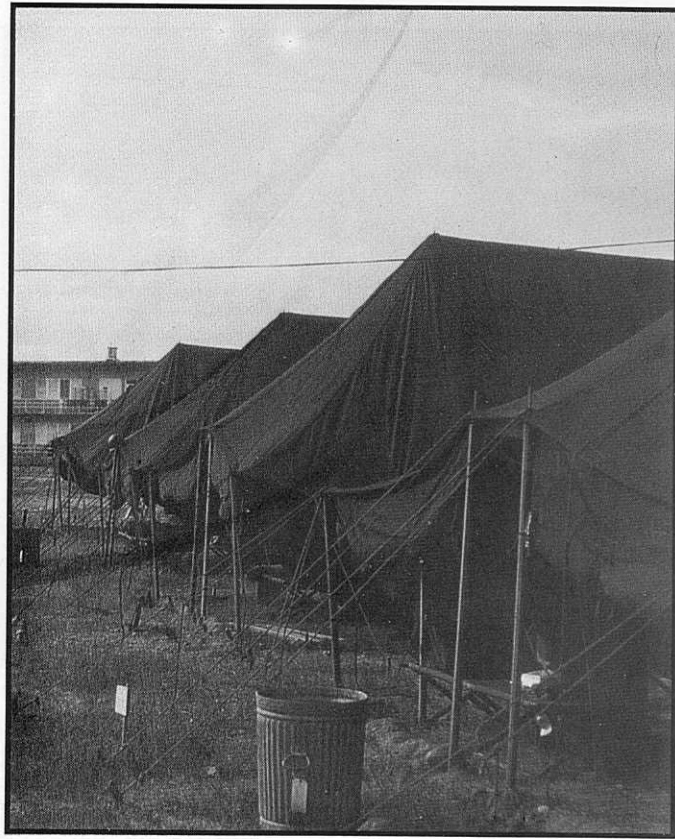


I was quite anxious to get on with the missions after my arrival and Captain Taylor's update of the operation. On my next night scramble my two ship also encountered some flak near Quemoy. It didn't appear very close. After returning to Hsin Chu I began replaying the experience in my mind. I was curious about the distance where the bursts had detonated and devised a way to find that out.

We encountered flak again on my next flight. My #2 was 1/Lt. Bill Van Dine who was five miles in trail. After the first detonations I asked Bill where the bursts appeared. He replied 9 o'clock. That same burst appeared to me near my 7:30 position. My geometry is a bit rusty but good enough to recall the meaning of our observations. With Lt. Van Dine 5 miles in trail that places the bursts approximately 5 miles off his left.

One final tale. This occurred in Las Vegas at the 1997 Sabre Pilots reunion. After signing in, the receptionist told me to get in line to receive some freebies. The line was quite long. I got in line behind the last guy noticing he was very tall. We struck up a conversation which eventually got around to the F-86. Soon after the tall guy begins to talk about the 'Dog'. Tall guy: "Most F-86 pilots think the 'Dog' never experienced any combat." I paused with my reply saying "just a minute there". I hadn't discussed this with any former F-86 pilot for eons.

After I had my thoughts gathered I replied. "I experienced hostile action in the Dog." He asked where and when?. "I was out of Clark in the 26th FIS on TDY in Formosa". I replied. He leaned down and looked at my name tag and I looked at his. It



The quarters at Clark weren't the best for the 26th FIS crews. But it was like a Hilton compared to what they encountered at Chia-yi. (John Moran)

was Bill Van Dine. He very excitedly replied "John Oshant! You were lead and I was your #2 when they were shooting at us." It'd been 39 years since

(L-R) Lts. Storrie, Mehaffie, van Dine, and Harlow, members of the 26th FIS Rocket Team, try to motivate the "26th FIS Ball Bearing Lawnmower" mascot. (credit - Bill van Dine)



"Womp Bird II", a 26th FIS F-86D, is undergoing some work on the troublesome afterburner of the J47-GE-33 engine. (credit - Merle Olmsted)

our last conversation at Clark AFB. I guess that's what reunions are for. It sure made my day and Bill's too.

Bob Burns stands by the nose of his 26th FIS F-86D "The Red Knight", which carries nose art by fellow Sabre pilot Phil Janney. (credit - Bob Burns)



# 16th REUNION AFTER ACTION REPORT 9-12 April 2007

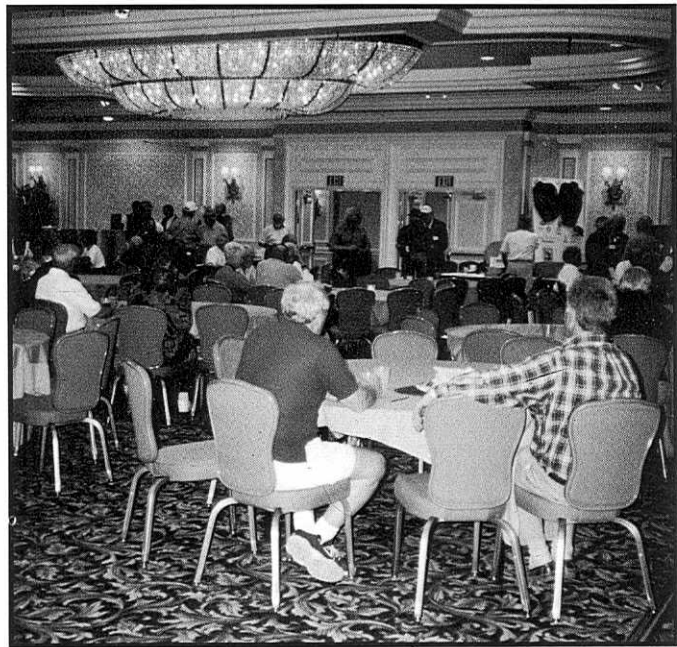
Well, it's here and gone again. And if you didn't attend the 16th Reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots, then you missed a good time and a chance to renew old acquaintances with class and squadron mates. It was four fun-filled days in Las Vegas.

The doors opened at 1pm on April 9th, and after signing in you received your 'goodie bag' which contained one of the new Challenge Coins, as well as all your tickets for the Brunches and Banquet. And of course, your six free drink tickets. All the attendees, there were 380 of us, made good use of those.

Entering the Hospitality Room, you are greeted by loud voices, laughter, and the always moving hands that fighter pilots use while talking about flying. On your left is the Flight Line Store, ably manned by Jack Seaman and several 'volunteers'. You did volunteer, didn't you Dick? The Flight Line Store has all the latest fashionable hats, jackets and shirts for the well dressed Sabre pilot and his lady. And this will be one of the last times you'll be able to purchase items like these as it is slated to be phased out following the 17th Reunion.

But checking out the Flight Line Store can come later. Right now it's time to meet and greet your old friends, who are yelling at you to come and sit at their table. The dozens of tables are already full of old pilots and their 'significant others'. Many of us stayed long into the night as the Hospitality Room, and the bar, were open until 11:30pm.

Tuesday dawned clear and more than a little crisp as the temperature in Las Vegas dipped into the lower 50s overnight. But all was warm and cozy in the Hospitality Room which opened at 9am, with wonderful aromas emanating from within. It was the first of two Breakfast Brunches. And it was delicious as all the food is at the Monte Carlo.



The Hospitality Room was always crowded, no matter what time of day or nite. (credit - Larry Davis)

The best part? The Brunches are included in your registration fee. In other words, all that delicious food is FREE to anyone attending the reunion. Many of the attendees gathered at tables adorned with signs stating that a certain squadron had claimed that table for their own.

After the Brunch you were free to roam the Casino or take in the Las Vegas sights, or just to hang out and shoot the breeze with your old flying buddies. At 1pm, several of us had to leave to attend the Board of Directors meeting and discuss the many issues that have come up since our last reunion.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 1257. Members present included: Lt.Gen. Dan Druen - Chairman, Col. Jerry Johnson - Association President, Cdr. Robert Smith, Col. Sam Hollenbeck, Col. Glen Carus, Lt.Col. Hank Buttlemann - Past President, 1/Lt. Robert Matasick, Col. Bill Weiger - Webmaster, and Col. Richard Geiger - Treasurer.

Gen. Druen opened the meeting with a discussion of the future of the Association, i.e. "What do we do when membership drops to a number that doesn't make it viable to have an association?" With approximately 1800 being the present average of the membership, a plan is needed to downsize or close the organization in a timely manner.

Included would be a plan to disburse any monies left in the treasury if closedown is necessary. Col. Carus suggested we might make a terminal donation to the National Air & Space Museum when the time comes. It was decided to defer this problem to the 2009 Reunion.

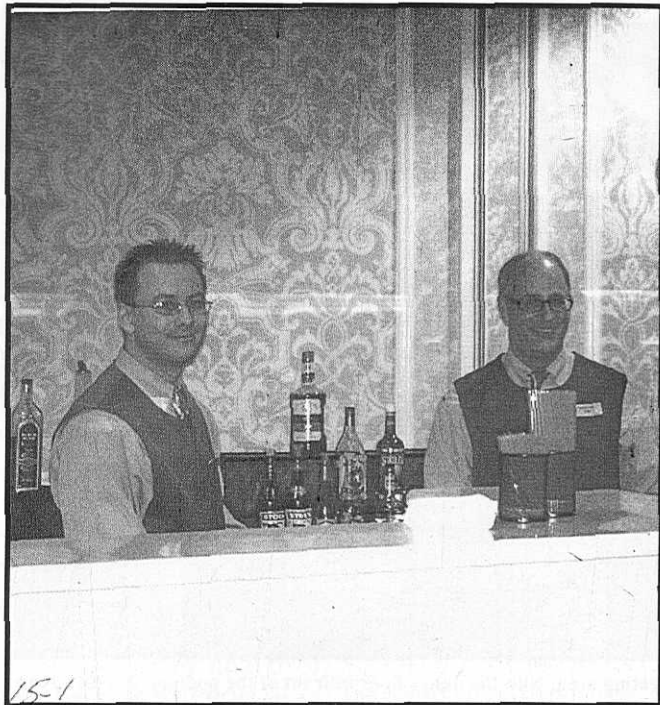
Another problem will be replacement of the current slate of officers. The current president, vice president, and treasurer will stay until the 2009 Reunion and then step aside. Several ideas were offered including locating the association in another area. Out of town Board members aid it might be difficult to find members willing to take over.

If a decision is made to change the location of the Association or the reunion, then the Constitution must be changed. The Board decided that a resolution be presented to the membership to change the Constitution, Article IX, paragraph A, so the location can be changed by the Board of Directors vice the general membership. However, the consensus of the Board was that the organization should

WELCOME TO THE  
F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION  
SIXTEENTH REUNION  
APRIL 9-12, 2007



GOD BLESS AMERICA  
GOD BLESS OUR TROOPS  
&  
KEEP THEM SAFE



The bartenders were always busy as each attendee had 6 free drink tickets, which were usually gone at the end of the second day. (credit - John Martin)

stay in Las Vegas. Lt.Col. Buttlemann said he will canvas Las Vegas members for volunteers to take over.

Finally, it was decided not to order any more items for the Flightline Store and try to sell all the remaining items at reduced prices between now and the 2009 reunion. Anything left after the 2009 reunion will be given to an out of town worthy charity. The meeting adjourned at 1424 hours.

Wednesday was golf day and a briefing at Red Flag, both at Nellis. I do not golf so do not know what went on but heard it was a lot of fun. However, the Red Flag briefing was always awesome. The ladies were treated to a luncheon with entertainment by the Happy Hoofers tap dancers. The end of the day was highlighted with a cocktail party and light hors d'oeuvres in the Hospitality Room.

President Jerry Johnson greets attendees at the Banquet. (credit - John Martin)



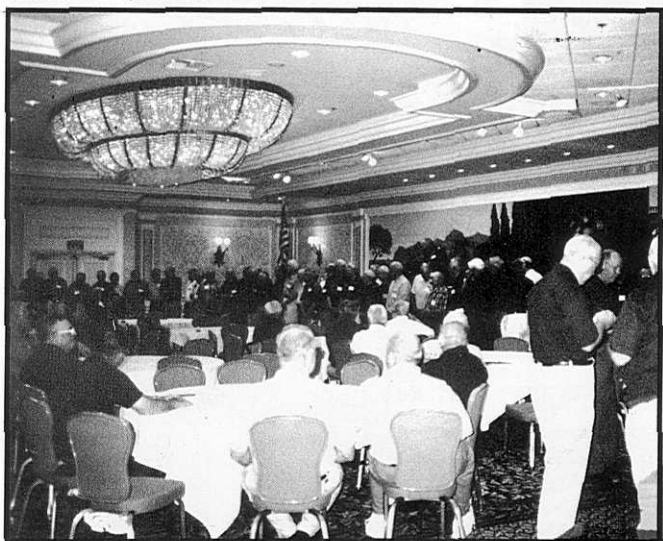
The 44th Squadron was well represented. The 44th probably has more people attend the reunions than any other unit year in and year out. (credit - John Martin)

Thursday was the last day of the 16th reunion. It started out with the second Breakfast Brunch - again included in your registration fee. At 11am, the membership meeting took place.

### MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Membership Meeting was held at 11am on 12 April. Treasurer Richard Geiger presented the financial position of the Association as of 31 December 2006, showing a balance of \$160,000.00 in cash and CDs. An updated accounting reflecting reunion expenditures and the resulting balance will appear in a later issue of *Sabrejet Classics*. Glen Carus reported on the progress toward filling the F-86 panels to be displayed at the Udvar-Hazy addition of the Air & Space Museum at Dulles Airport. Approximately 200 spaces are still available.

The Membership Meeting was crowded and many worthwhile topics were discussed, including a possible move of the reunion to another city. (credit - Larry Davis)





Accommodations at the Monte Carlo were as plush as usual. This is the Banquet seating area, with the dance floor in front of the podium. (credit - John Martin)

SabreJet Classics Editor Larry Davis described how to prepare and submit articles for the magazine. It is recommended that all submissions be done by other than e-mail. Color prints of patches, etc., should be included with any submissions.

Lt.Gen. Dan Druen presented the items that were discussed by the Board of Directors. Included was the need to recruit new members to fill the new slate of officers that will be elected at the 2009 reunion. The Board has decided to close the Flight Line Store during the next two years, and/or shortly after the 2009 reunion.

A change of location of the next reunion to a different city was discussed. The consensus of the membership was that the reunion should stay in Las Vegas, with a possible change of hotels for the 2009 reunion. President Jerry Johnson said he and the Las Vegas staff would investigate different locations.

The Flight Line Store was always busy. Those of you wishing to obtain new shirts, jackets, and hats are urged to do so as the Store will be phased out following the 2009 Reunion. (credit - Larry Davis)



However, currently Article IX, paragraph A, Intervals, of the Constitution requires a vote of the membership to change the location. The President recommended that this be changed to allow the Board of Directors to change the location if desired. The membership voted and approved the change which will now read "Reunions shall be held at intervals of eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) months in Las Vegas, Nevada, or to a location designated by the Board of Directors."

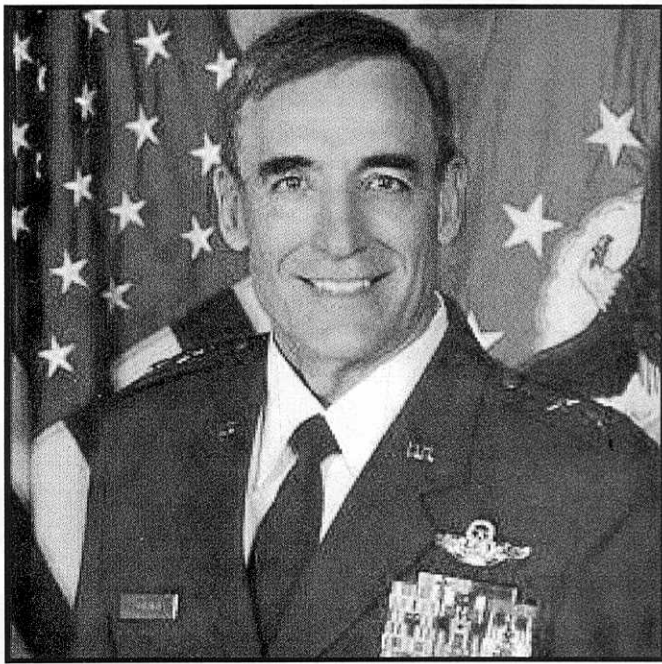
Web Master Bill Weiger, of SABRE-PILOTS.ORG, would like a volunteer to take over the web site if required. The meeting adjourned at 11:40am.

The rest of the afternoon was open to do as everyone pleased. Then it was on to the Banquet. The doors opened at 6pm for an open cocktail bar. By 7pm most

Editor Larry Davis and his wife Susan sat the Special Guests table during the Banquet. We both enjoyed ourselves very much. (credit - John Martin)





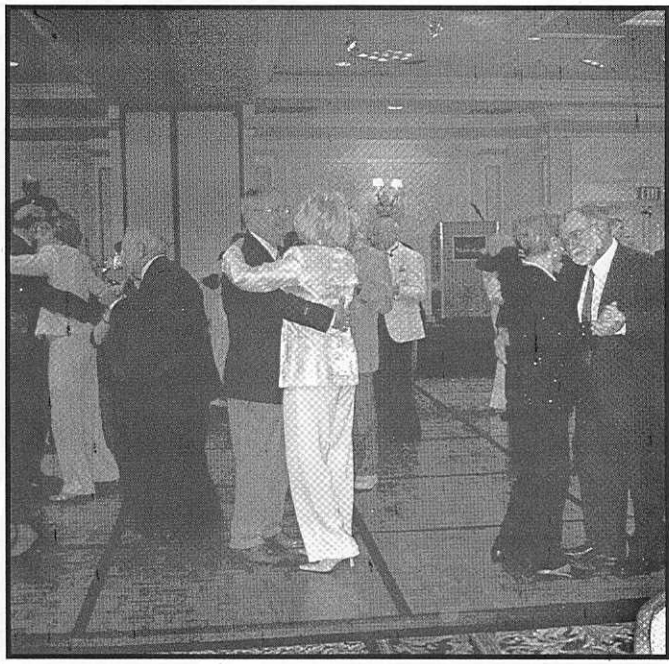
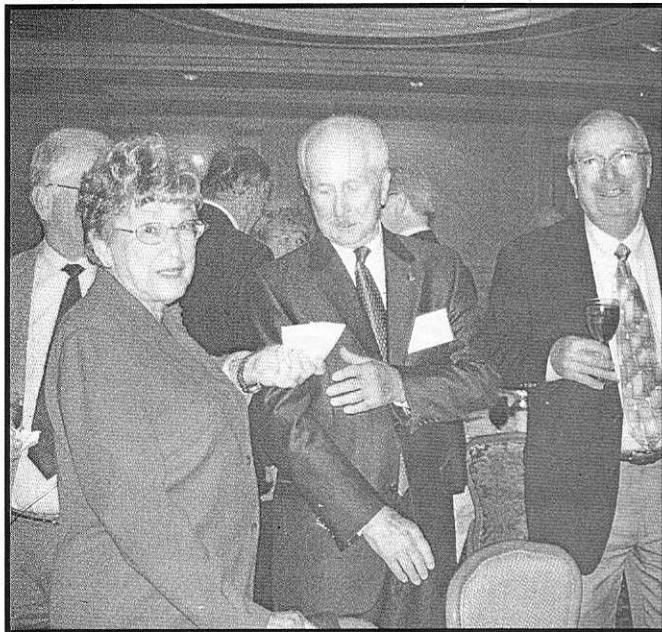


Major General R. Mike Worden, Commander of the Air Warfare Center at Nellis, was the Guest Speaker at the Banquet. (credit - USAF)

of the attendees had picked out their tables. Many again were decorated with squadron insignia to indicate where their members were sitting. Some squadrons had so many attendees that they needed two tables! The menu was a scrumptious choice of Filet Mignon or Chicken Roulade.

After dessert, the group was treated to a talk by Major General R. Mike Worden, Commander of the Air Warfare Center at Nellis. Maj.Gen. Worden talked at length about the history of the United States Air Force, with emphasis on the role played by the F-86 Sabre and its pilots. President Jerry Johnson presented Maj.Gen. Worden with a wooden model of the F-86 Sabre which will adorn the generals desk proudly.

(L-R) Dorothy Johnson, wife of Jerry Johnson, Bob Smith, and Dick Geiger enjoy themselves during a break in the activities. (credit - John Martin)

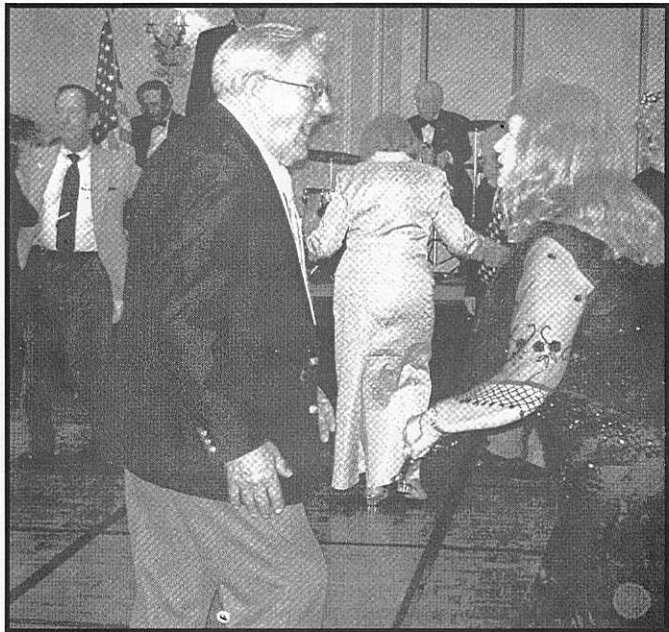


Dick Geiger and his lovely wife Helge dancing to the music of the Carl Grove Combo following the end of the reunion. (credit - John Martin)

Jerry Johnson then officially closed the banquet and the 16th Reunion. But the night was still young and it definitely wasn't the end of the show as the Carl Grove Combo then played several sets of easy listening and dance music to the enjoyment of all that were present. I didn't know some of you could still move that well as several were seen doing the jitterbug.

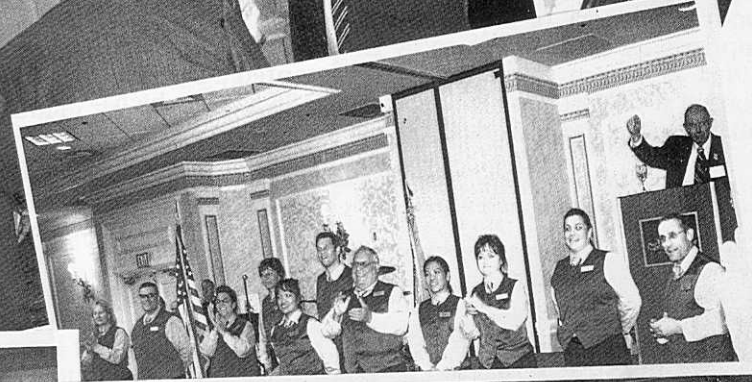
We can't close this without mentioning the many members that did not attend due to health reasons, including 'Dee' Harper, Bruce Hinton, Ralph Parr, 'Bones' Marshall, Lon Walter, and John Henderson. All were missed and we expect to see them at the 17th Reunion in 2009.

Reunion couples enjoyed the Carl Grove Combo immensely as they danced long into the night following the end of the Banquet. (credit - John Martin)



# Seen at the Banquet

(credit all photos - John Martin)



# QUALIFIED!

by Bob Ingalls

My good friend Col. Jack Best told me this story which Ralph Parr later confirmed for me.

At one point during Jack's thirty year Air Force career, he was Commander of the 94th 'Hat In The Ring' Squadron. Members of the squadron included 'Boots' Blesse, Joe McConnell, and Ralph Parr.

The general commanding the wing to which the 94th Squadron belonged, issued an order that stated a "squadron commanders in his wing must qualify in all phases of gunnery in the F-86. Unqualified commanders would be reassigned!"

Jack Best had never been able to score more than a few hits on the aerial gunnery target. So Blesse, McConnell, and Parr worked out a plan that was guaranteed to get Jack qualified. Ralph would go on the aerial gunnery mission with Jack. But one of Ralph's guns would be loaded with ammunition colored the same as Jack's ammunition.

Guess what? After the mission, Jack was found to be qualified in all phases of gunnery in the F-86!

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book review

## To Begin Again

by Terence Finn

*To Begin Again* is an interesting book. Not exactly a combat flying book, although it is set during the Korean War, and the main character is a Sabre pilot, it is a far more personal look into the events that found the main character pulled away from his job as a history professor and put back into the cockpit of an F-86 during war time.

The book traces his life as a squadron CO in Korea and all that that brings about, both good and bad. Historically, the book is quite accurate, whether in the cockpit or catching the news on the ground. The author did a good research job in its creation. But there is a lot of romantics in the book, both between the main character and the two women in his life; or between the main character and the 'other woman' that controls his life - the F-86 Sabre and flying.

If you're looking for a strictly 'in the cockpit, guns blazing' book about combat in Korea, you probably won't like *To Begin Again*. But if you want to read a book and remember everything that was going on during Korea, this is a book for you. I recommend it. LHD.

Available from Ivy House Publishing Group at (800)948-2786, or [www.ivyhousebooks.com](http://www.ivyhousebooks.com).

## sabre reunions

### 51st FIW 18th Reunion

September 6, 7, & 8, 2007 at the Marriott West, Middleton, Wisconsin.

**Contact** Curt Faust, 702 Raymond Rd, Waunakee, WI 53597, ph (608)849-8304 for further details.

### Pilot Class 55D

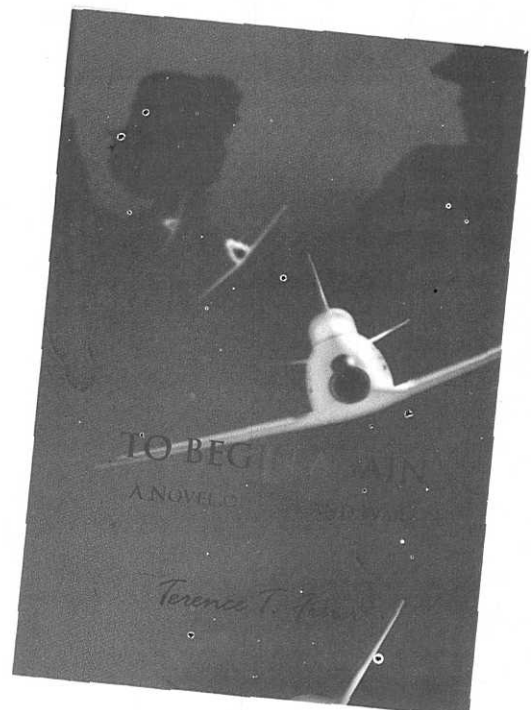
October 3-7, 2007 at the Staybridge Hotel, Colorado Springs, CO.

**Contact** Lars Larsen (239)334-7386, email [roland22@ix.netcom.com](mailto:roland22@ix.netcom.com)

### 39th Fighter Squadron

and members of the 40th and 41st squadrons of the 35th Fighter Group. Reunion in Boise, ID, 19-22 September, 2007.

**Contact** Roger Rehn, email [rolo7346@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rolo7346@sbcglobal.net) or (530)644-7346 after 7am Pacific time.





*WHO IS IT?* Members are asked to try and ID the unit of the F-86E in this photo. The photo was shot in the early 1950s in the midwest United States, possibly Michigan or Indiana. The tail and fuselage bands are red with small white stars. If you have knowledge of the markings and/or unit, please contact Larry Davis, Editor - SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721, or email at [sabreclx@aol.com](mailto:sabreclx@aol.com). Thanks

## ATTENTION MEMBERS!!!

Please check the mailing label. If the address is incorrect or outdated, please send the changes to the Las Vegas address - SabreJet Classics, P.O. Box 97951, Las Vegas, NV 89193. If the date above your name is previous to the current date, then your dues are due. Dues are \$25/year, \$50/3 years, and \$200 for Life Membership, unless you're older than 75, at which time Life Membership dues are \$100. Send your check to: F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn., P.O. Box 97951, Las Vegas, NV 89193.

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