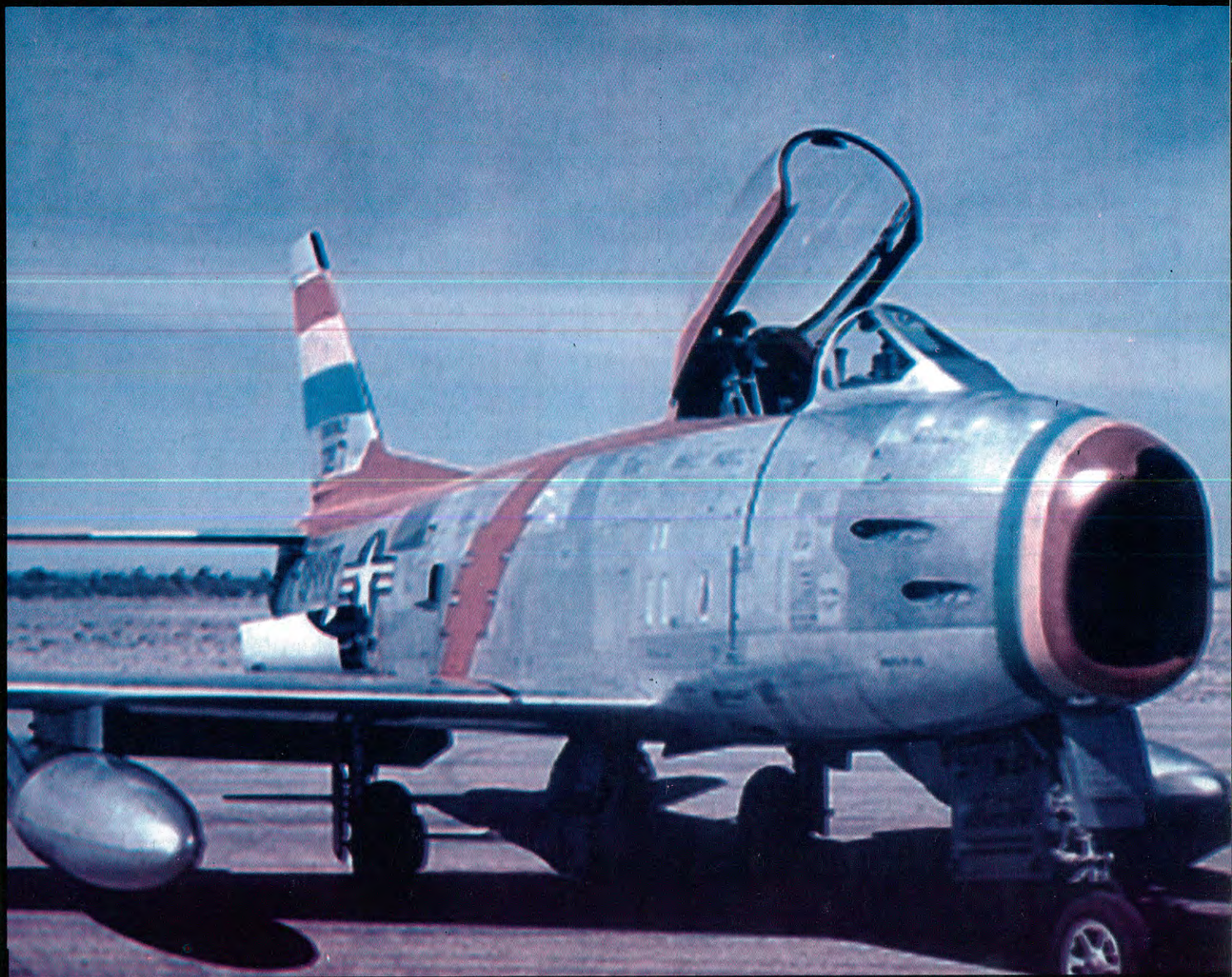


# Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 19, Number 1

Spring 2011



*Inside - Project Arrow part One,  
F-86D ejection, Spaghett Run,  
97th Mission, More!*

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

# SabreJet Classics

Vol. 19, number 1  
Spring 2011  
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**Centerfold - Foreign Members  
Roster Wall Of Honor form**

**(Front cover) Member Frosty Sheridan  
sent this great shot of the 1st FDS COs  
F-86H at George AFB in 1956. The Sabre is  
painted in DayGlo colors as ordered by  
Col. George Lavin Jr, the legendary CO of  
the 41 3th FDW. (credit Frosty Sheridan)**

SabreJet Classics is published by the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association is a non-profit, veterans organization, with membership limited to individual pilots who have flown the F-86 Sabre aircraft. The goals of the association is "to perpetuate the history of the F-86 Sabre, the units to which it belonged, and the men that flew the Sabre"; and to perpetuate an accurate, patriotic portrayal of our national, military, and Air Force history and heritage. If you are NOT a member, but meet the membership qualifications, you are invited to join. Application forms are available on our web site, or from the Las Vegas address. Dues are \$25/1 year, \$50/3 years, and \$200 for a Life Membership, \$100 for those over 75 years of age. SabreJet Classics is published solely for the private use of association members. No portion of SabreJet Classics may be used or reprinted without permission from the President of the association and the Editor of the magazine. SabreJet Classics is published three times per year. Extra copies of an issue can be ordered at \$3.00/copy. Subscriptions for non-members are available at \$25/year. All payments should be made payable to "F-86 Sabre Pilots Association", in care of the Las Vegas address.

# SabreJet Classics

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## the president's notebook

Happy New Year to all! I hope you had a great Christmas Holiday season in spite of the record breaking and near record breaking winter weather conditions in some parts of our country and others. We're well into another year and hopefully the economic situation will improve for all of us.

It is always a pleasure to receive and read each Sabre Jet Classics magazine. I don't see mine until it arrives in the mail just as everyone else's. Larry Davis puts a tremendous amount of time, effort and expertise into each issue and I cannot commend him enough. With that said, he cannot do it all himself. He needs your support by writing your Sabre stories for him to publish for all of us to read and enjoy. Put your pens to work and produce a story.

I have a question for those of you who have a computer and get on the internet. When was the last time you brought up our web site [www.sabre-pilots.com](http://www.sabre-pilots.com)? It is a great site to browse and find info concerning our organization, read through a long list of fighter pilot stories written by our members in past Classics

editions and read News, Notes and Comments. Bill Weiger deserves our kudos for providing us a wonderful vehicle to search and explore so much.

Also, this month you should be receiving your copy of the 2011 Membership Roster. When you do, besides scanning through to see your member friends, take some time to see who isn't listed any more. If you know anyone who was a prior member and you know how to contact them, do so and urge them to renew their membership. We do not charge back dues to those who have let their memberships fall behind.

On the subject of keeping your dues up to date; if you aren't sure of when your dues expire, we have made it easy for you by printing your expiration date on the mailing label of your Classics magazine. Not only do we have a fairly significant number of delinquent members, but we have some who send in dues payments when they are already paid up for several years. Before you send your payment, recheck your magazine label for your expiration date. Also, for those of you who pay twenty five dollars each year, you might consider paying fifty dollars for three and get one free. That helps us a lot in the way of admin work. If your dues slip over

six months, we send out a delinquent letter as a reminder. That takes a lot of time and costs our Association a considerable amount of money. Naturally, a life membership takes care of all those problems.

With all the above said, it is time to talk 2011 reunion. We are moving closer to that mid April reunion time and your attendance response so far has been outstanding. Above, I mentioned using your 2011 roster to help find former members who have drifted away. Do the same with those you know and urge them to come to Las Vegas and have a great three days getting together once again as well as meeting and spending some time with other great fighter pilots of our times. One of those greats will be Bob Hoover. He will be right amongst us for all three days and he will be spending a lot of time telling us about many of his spectacular experiences. For the finale, Bob will have the floor on banquet night to top off our event. It will be an exciting time. I urge everyone one of you who can see your way to coming to this reunion to come and have a great time. Hope to see you in April.

**God Bless Sabre Pilots,  
God Bless Our Troops,  
God Bless America**

**JR Alley,  
President**

## FOLDED WINGS

**Major General Rudolph G. Bartholomew, September 7th, 2010**  
**Louis G. Borgman, March 11th, 2011**  
**Joe L. Cannon, February 27th, 2011**  
**Robert K. Cassatt, September 22nd, 2010**  
**Daniel P. Creager, October 25th, 2010**  
**David Cronin, October 4th, 2010**  
**Robert Delaney, September 25th, 2010**  
**William E. Haynes, August 15th, 2010**  
**Charles W. Jackson, January 19th, 2011**  
**George W. Kronsbein, January 28th, 2011**  
**Robert G. Mollring, January 18th, 2008**  
**Gordon F. Peters, January 30th, 2011**  
**Robert D. Scott, January 30th, 2011**  
**Harold R. Wheeler, December 16th 2010**  
**Sandy A. Zevin, April 2007**

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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

Well as usual lately, I must apologize for various things, not the least of which is the tardiness of both this issue and the publishing of the 2011 Roster. But some of it is not the fault of the magazine per se.

The 2011 Roster was delayed for over 6 weeks thanks to our friends in China. Seems that the printer had to order new photographic plates and paper to print the roster. He did this in December, long before we would need it. (The Roster comes out in mid-January - usually!) But both the plates and the paper were held up in China for who knows what reasons. They just were.

I held up the magazine until after the Roster was printed, which was fine. But then we had a problem with one missing page of Foreign Members that was not included with the printing. We decided that rather make a very expensive separate printing and mailing, we would include it with this issue of the magazine. Then that was delayed until we figured out what to do with the extra 3 pages that would be blank to cover the one page of Foreign Members. Finally everything was in place and we finally have a magazine.

Lastly, I will apologize for not making it to the 2011 Reunion. It's only the second time I missed a Reunion in the almost 20 years I have been your editor. But it couldn't be helped as there were 'problems' here at home that required me to remain in Ohio. I wish I could've made the Reunion as I always have a good time meeting and greeting all you fine guys. Hopefully 2013 will be a better time for me.

That said, I think you'll enjoy this issue of your magazine. It begins a series on what was Project Arrow and how it affected the F-86D pilots that were forced to be part of it. One of our members wrote a nice little article about his time at Selfridge AFB which just happened to coincide with the Project Arrow happenings. So off we go.

With that, I must begin an appeal for more stories. We are almost at the end of the backlog of stories that we had built up over the past few years. Thanks to all the guys that waited patiently for their article to appear in SabreJet Classics.

If you have a story, jot it down, email it to me, or send it by mail. But get them to me. You don't have to 'polish them up', that's my job. As I told you before, I once took a three paragraph 'note' and turned it into a six page article. But now I'm even running out of 'notes' to work with. And don't forget the photos. You can email them to me but please put them in a PDF format. It's much easier to work with or from.

Hope to hear from all of you about anything.

All for now.

Larry Davis  
editor

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A Texas Air Guard F-86L on the ramp at Meridian NAS in the late 1950s. Note the SAGE antenna just in front of the wing leading edge. The Texas ANG converted from F-80Cs to F-86Ds in 1957, then to F-86Ls in 1959. (credit - Bob Mikesh)

## THE GREAT SPAGHETTI SORTIE

In 1960, I'd left the 181st Texas ANG, for a job in Indiana and was flying F-84Fs with the Indiana ANG out of Terra Haute. The Ops Officer of this outfit owned an Italian restaurant and the food was outstanding. After about two years, I got a job back in Dallas and the 181st was nice enough to let me come back 'home'. The unit was still flying the F-86L and all I had to do was read the -1, fill out some paperwork, fly the simulator, and I was "cleared to crash again".

I'd flown a couple of local missions and was ready to start building up some flying time and looking for any excuse to go cross country. Jack Saltee heard of my plight and when I told him about the great Italian food in Terra Haute, he suggested we fly up there and get lunch. This sounded logical to me so we scheduled a couple of '86s for the weekend and took off on a Friday afternoon. The weather was great and it looked like the ideal way to get in some flying time. The '86L was good for about an hour and a half flying time if you were careful with the throttle. We departed NAS Dallas and I was hanging on Jack's wing without a care in the world.

We'd been airborne about 40 minutes when I thought, "This doesn't look like the way to Indiana to me." I radioed Jack and commented on the scenery and asked him if he was on course. There was a slight pause and he allowed as how his compass appeared to have 'stuck' since any way we turned, the compass showed the same heading.

At this point, we decided we weren't sure where the hell we were, since all of Arkansas, Missouri, and points East all look pretty much the same.

We fished around with the VOR to see if anything familiar would tune in, without results. At this point, we decided to contact Air Defense Command's radar net and see if they could identify us. Sure enough, they 'painted' our 'squawk' and said we were near Blytheville, Arkansas. What Ho! There was a SAC base there and running a little light on fuel, Jack called the tower at Blytheville and advised we were requesting landing information. They didn't have a flight plan for us, obviously, so Jack told them we were changing to their base. SAC didn't like surprises and it took a little B.S. to make the story sound plausible.

Landing and taxiing in were uneventful. They parked us in an area about a half mile from their B-52s and the alert crew brought us a fuel truck. The fueling went fine and now that we knew where we were, finding Terra Haute should be a piece of cake. My airplane got a start and I looked over at Jack's and he apparently was having some kind of problem. He advised me by radio that his starter wasn't engaging. (The J47s starter and generator are the same unit and for some reason, it couldn't figure out which one it wanted to be!).

After much discussion and butt scratching, it was obvious that a SAC base couldn't and wouldn't fix his airplane. We looked around and decided that

Blytheville was a miserable place to spend the weekend and drastic measures were in order. While sitting in the maintenance shack, I remembered reading a story about some guys in Korea starting an F-80 by using one's exhaust to motor over the other guy's jet and getting it to light after it had windmilled enough to make an air start procedure. We got my airplane started again and taxied in front of Jack's.

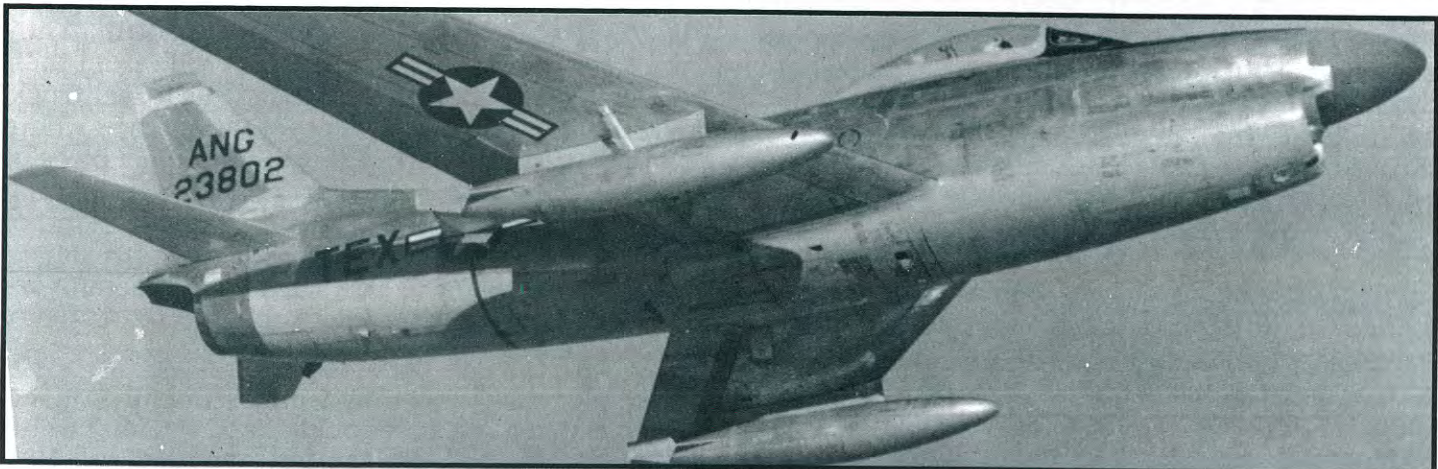
About this time, the Airdrome Officer drove up in his little blue sedan with the orange and white checker-board flag on it and asked "what the hell are you guys up to?" I described our plan to him and he opined that there had to be some kind of regulation against that sort of thing. I told him we were Texas ANG and it really wasn't his problem and why didn't he go off somewhere and count bombs or something. He thought about that for a minute and decided that was a good idea. I told the alert crew chief to watch Jack's airplane and wave his arms if things looked like they weren't working as advertised. I couldn't talk to Jack on the radio because when you are in 'air start' mode, all essential electrical equipment is off the main bus bar.

After running my engine up to 100 percent, I saw the crew chief waving his arms after a couple of minutes.

An element of F-86Ls with the 182nd FIS, Texas ANG, over South Texas in the early 1960s. The 182nd was based at Kelly AFB. The 'white' painted areas are DayGlo Red that appears white in photos. (credit- Larry Davis coll.)



A Texas Air Guard F-86D assigned to the 181st FIS at Love Field, Dallas in the late 1950s. Tad Foran was assigned to the 181st during the "Great Spaghetti Sortie".



He crawled up the side of my airplane and advised that Jack couldn't get enough rpm to get the engine to light off. While all this was going on, a flight of Marine FJs had landed and the pilots were all standing on the ramp watching this bizarre activity. One of them crawled up the side of my airplane and suggested we push my airplane back to where the jet exhaust was closer to Jack's intake. This sounded reasonable so all the Marines and a couple of enlisted alert crew guys pushed my airplane closer to Jack's.

I told the crew chief to watch Jack's radome and make sure I didn't blister it! He concurred. I ran the engine up to 100 percent again and after a short time, the crew chief frantically waved his arms and jumped up and down. I could see the Marines laughing and slapping each other on the back.

I released the brakes and rolled forward and turned slightly and What Ho!, I could see the heat waves pouring out the back of Jack's airplane. We'd done it! Now I was low on fuel. I quickly got a center point connection and topped off and we were out of there! We decided "to hell with the spaghetti", and headed back to NAS Dallas. We also decided that we would just write up the starter and not go into detail as to how we got the airplane back home.

# #97

by Jim Fosdick

19 Feb, 1952, the morning I flew my 97th combat mission over N. Korea, started out like most mornings in S. Korea: up & out before dawn & down to the OP's hut for the morning briefing. After the briefing was target assignment, if you were on the flight schedule. I drew my old favorite; the rail and road line between Sinanju and Sinuiju. I checked the Frag. Order to see when the fighter/ bombers were due on target. I added two hours to their TOT and had my take off time. This would be a low level dicing mission in one of the "Honey Bucket", RF-86A's - classified Top Secret. The squadron had two of these airplanes, which were parked on the other side of the airfield (K-14) with the 4th fighter wing aircraft. I arrived at the aircraft approx. 30 minutes before scheduled take off. It's not good to rush a pre-flight!

Airborne and climbing to 22,000-24,000 feet, well above ground fire but below the con level. As I recall its about 25 minutes till you pull the throttle back and start a slow let down over the mud flats - keeping your head on a swivel for obvious reasons. I'd flown this mission several times: either SE to NW or NW to SE. Today I was coasting in looking at the mouth of the Yalu River, which separates N. Korea from China. At about 6-7000 feet I'd click off a few pictures of the airfield just across the river in China and then slowly pull the nose in an arc to get pictures of all the bridges. After that, roll the aircraft into a steep glide, pick up the railroad line and head S.E. at 1000-2000 feet at 550-600 knots. About 2/3 of the way down, there is a small town where the rail line makes a 75-80 degrees right turn going through a small tunnel. When I knew I had the tunnel entrance, I would pull the aircraft up sharply to about 1500' and then roll over to near vertical to try and get the tunnel exit. The photo interpreters never gave me 100% on that rail line saying "we couldn't see into the entrance" knowing I'd never go back for a second pass over the target.

On this mission, as I was pulling out of the dive, at about 500 feet in a slight right turn, when I felt a solid jolt to the airplane and my right side. I knew I'd been hit but not how bad. I dropped the tanks and headed out over the mud flats at 1000-1500 feet, jinking left and right checking for MiGs. I was pretty sure it was ground fire and I saw no MiGs. When I was sure I was clear of land, out over the mud flats, I started a slow climb headed for Chodo Island just in case!

As I was climbing I checked all the gages and everything seemed normal. I couldn't see any fuel streaming out the back, which was a good thing. I was pretty sure the left wing had been hit, the top had many dimples showing. They later decided it was some sort of explosive shell. I was lucky that wasn't the one that came into the cockpit with me. There was a fair sized hole just under the right panel & into the seat under my elbow. I felt some blood on my flight jacket & wondered how or if you could put a tourniquet around your waist. It didn't seem like a good idea and I was pretty busy! I tried the radio & no click in the head set. I checked for MiGs all the way to Chodo but didn't see any. I leveled off about



22,000 feet & made a wide turn cutting across the Sarawan Peninsula heading for K-14. My fuel gage was going down normal. Great, I'd have plenty of fuel. When I was back over water I pulled the power back & started a slow let down. I made a wide entry to initial about 7-8 miles out. As soon as I rolled out in-bound, I rocked the wings as a nordo and to my surprise I received an immediate green light. Never had that happen before!

About half way down the runway I rolled into a normal break. As I applied back pressure to the stick everything went black & I realized there was a problem. I leveled the aircraft & let off the back pressure on the stick & my vision came back quickly. I found myself in a shallow

Lt. Jim Fosdick at Kimpo in 1952. (credit - Jim Fosdick)





A pair of 15th TRS RF-86As in the revetments at Kimpo in 1952. The RF-86A Ashtray aircraft had a single camera mounted in the underside of the right fuselage, and were converted from ex-4th FIG F86As. The Ashtray Sabres were painted identical to 4th FIG Sabres. (credit - George McKay)

dive towards a rice paddy near the Aussi 77th squadron. I eased the stick back gently & made a very wide down wind. Next hurdle, would the gear come down. It was great to see three green lights. I started a shallow turn to base & put the flap handle down. I kept my hand on the flap lever just in case one wasn't going to come down. Once again it was nice to have both flaps come down together. I touched down in the first few feet of the runway & held the nose off as long as I could, not knowing if I'd have any brakes. I started applying brake pressure, but didn't get much braking? I put both hands on my knees & was able to slow down & turn off the runway. I stopped the aircraft in front of the tower & motioned I needed chocks under the aircraft. No reaction from the tower so I let the aircraft roll again-no parking brake! The nose steering worked so it was simple to roll in a large arc to my parking spot. I cut the engine as I completed the last turn knowing if I couldn't get the aircraft stopped, the crew chief would chock the wheels. I am not sure if I did get it stopped or the crew chief stopped it.

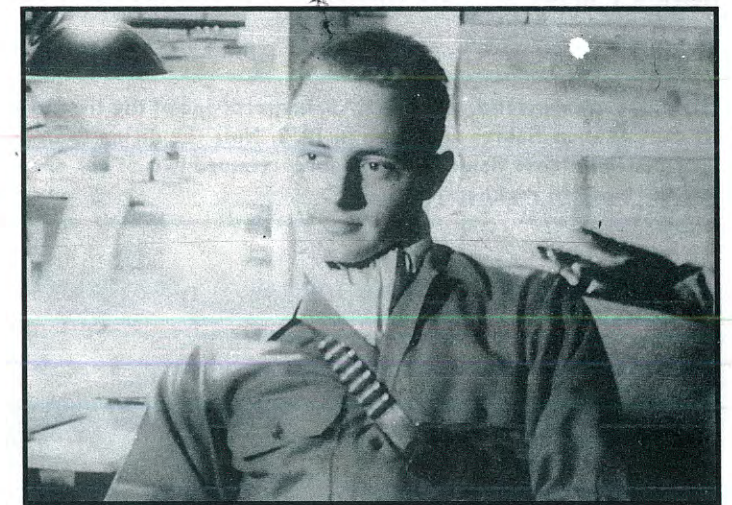
The first man up the ladder was SSgt Ray Keesling, he took one look at me & the cockpit floor at which time he lost his grip on the ladder or passed out. He started to fall & fortunately a couple of burly crew chiefs caught him. He had one leg through the ladder rungs & most likely would have broken it had he not been caught. He came up the ladder again & took my photo log along with film & headed for the photo lab. He must have said something to the ground crew. Up came a second ladder on the starboard side & I vaguely remember someone putting the pin in the ejection seat & someone else unbuckling my seat belt & parachute. There was a slight pause & I felt like, it was time to get out of the airplane. I remember putting my hands on the arm rests to push myself up & out. It was the strangest feeling, I knew I was pushing but nothing happened! It was only a second or two & the crew chiefs lifted me up out of the seat & lowered me over the port side to more men. When I was being lifted out of the aircraft I realized there had been a crewman straddling the canopy behind me. From this point on I don't remember much.

Note: a couple of days after I was out of the hospital I talked with Ray Keesling & he said when he came up the ladder my face looked like grey ashes in a dead campfire & when he looked in the cockpit the floor was a pool of blood. That's when his legs got rubbery. Later in the day the crew chiefs put a solid rod through the hole in the right side of the A/C then through the hole in the seat. With a man in the seat it appeared the bullet would take out the spine. However, as the bullet came through the side it hit the D-Ring on the parachute, slightly aft of center & went into the back pack chute & then lodged in the wood block in the seat back. Somebody was looking out for ME!! The Personal Equipment people said if I'd ejected I would have had a fast let down - the chute was full of holes!

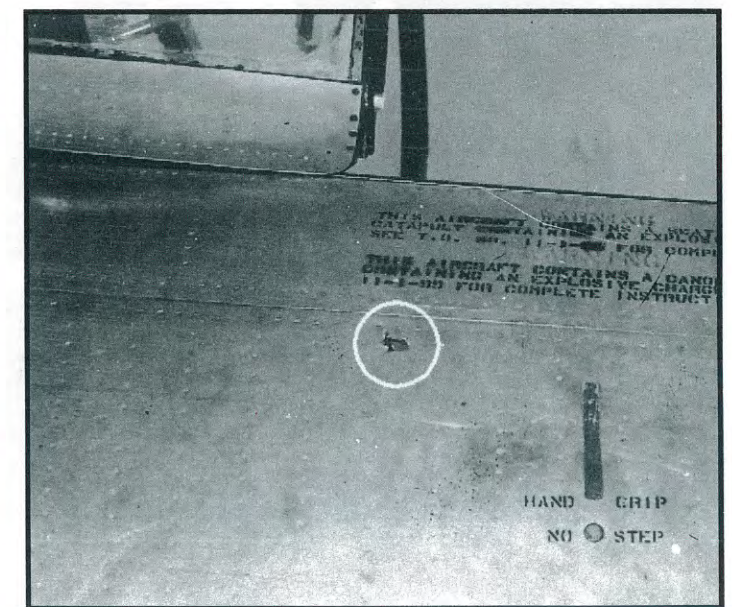
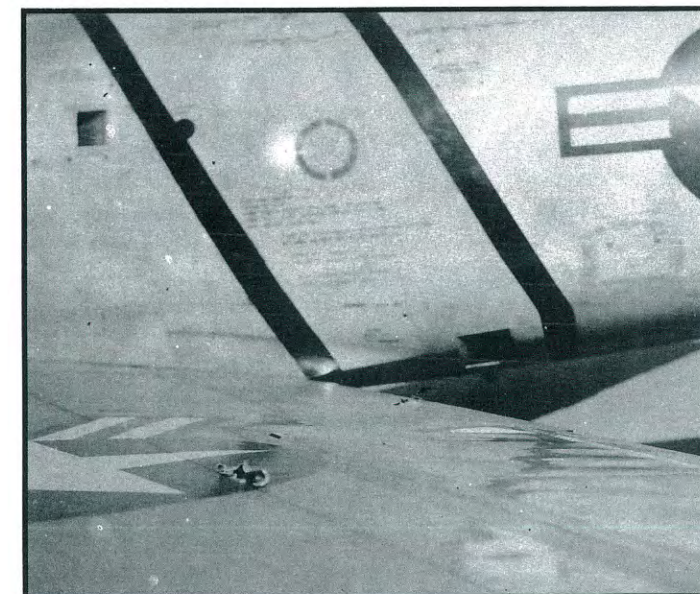


RF-86A #48-217 is the Ashtray Sabre that Lt. Fosdick flew on his 97th mission. The Sabre was lost on a later mission with the 15th TRS Commander, Major Jack Williams, listed KIA. Note the modified upper intake housing the dicing camera. (credit - Robert Lamprecht)

Lt. Jim Fosdick at ease in his quarters at Kimpo during 1952. Lt. Fosdick went on to fly a total of 117 missions in Korea. (credit - Jim Fosdick)



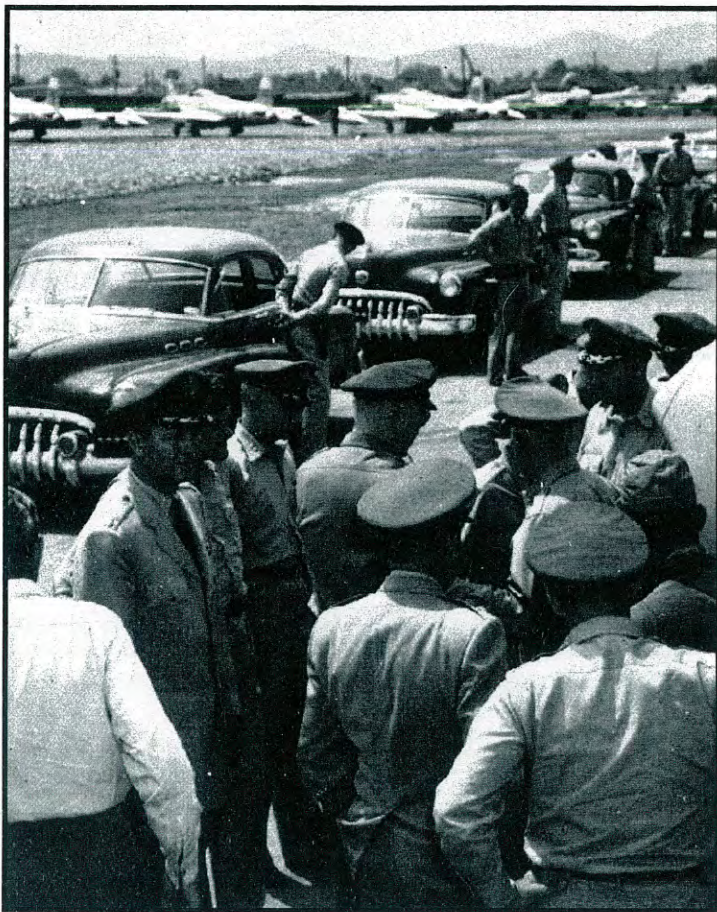
Battle damage suffered by Jim Fosdick on his 97th mission of 19 February 1952. The flak that passed through the right gun bay door into Lt. Fosdick's left side. The damage to both the Sabre (#48-217) and to Fosdick, was repaired within a few days and the aircraft and Fosdick were both back in the air. (credit- USAF via Jim Fosdick)





Members of the 15th TRS next to an Ashtray RF-86A in 1952. (L-R standing) Cecil Rigsby, Houser Wilson, Richard Chandler, Clyde Voss, Hesch, E.T. Brown, Maj. Jack Williams. (kneeling) John Cowgill, Vanderhouk, George McKay, Tony Katauski. (credit - John Cowgill)

General O.P. Weyland, CO of FEAF, inspects one of the first two RF-86A Ashtray Sabres at Kimpo in 1952. Note the dicing camera mounted in the nose. Some Ashtray Sabres retained two .50 cal. guns. (credit - Howard Peckham) photo



Lt. Jim Fosdick is congratulated on the completion of his tour in the 15th TRS after 117 missions. (credit- Jim Fosdick)



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WALL OF HONOR

F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION ACCEPTANCE FORM

YES, I wish to inscribe a name on the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association airfoil on the Wall of Honor at the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center and be part of a permanent memorial to the people who have contributed to our aviation and space exploration heritage.

WOHF862011

First Name Last Name Address 1 Address 2 City State Zip Phone Email

NAME OF HONOREE The honoree is: Self Other Please inscribe my name or the name I am honoring exactly as shown below: (note that the F-86 Assoc. uses a format of First Name Middle Initial Last Name for the engravings on their foil; there is a limit of 30 characters)

If you would like the certificate mailed directly to an honoree other than yourself, please complete the information on the reverse.

I have enclosed a special gift at the following level:

- \$100 Air and Space Friend \$500 Air and Space Sponsor \$1,000 Air and Space Leader \$5,000 Air and Space Benefactor \$10,000 Air and Space Patron Other \$

Method of Payment (Please select one):

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CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRY AND PROFILE

For a gift of \$100 or more, you will receive a personalized Certificate of Registry that authenticates your place on the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association airfoil on the Wall of Honor at the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center. In addition, you will have the opportunity to submit a profile and photograph of your honoree. Email your profile (limited to 350 words) and photo to walloffhonor@si.edu.



Please return to: National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, PO Box 98171, Washington DC 20077-7130 You may also make your gift online at www.nasm.si.edu/walloffhonor.

ROSTER OF FOREIGN MEMBERS F 86

Table with columns: LAST NAME, FIRST & INITIAL, RANK, SPOUSE, STREET ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP, COUNTRY, TELEPHONE, E-MAIL. Lists names like DAILEY, DIEUDONNE, DUINN, FLEMING, HERNES, ISLAM, KHAN, LUEDERS, MAWHINNEY, SHIEHAN and their contact information.



"Kathy" was an RF-86A with the 15th TRS at Kimpo in 1952. Note the motto of the pilots in the 15th painted on the gun bay door - "Every Man A Tiger". (credit - Larry Davis coll.)

If you remember, we were parked on the 4th fighter side of the held. When they put me in the ambulance, the driver didn't know I wasn't a 4th pilot, so he took me to their hospital. The hospital staff couldn't figure out who I was - no chart. While this was taking place, Ray Keesling had delivered the film & log to the photo lab & then proceeded to the COs office to report on my condition. The CO & OPS Officer jumped in their jeep & headed for the 67th Hospital. When they arrived and asked about me, no one knew what they were talking about. It didn't take them long to realize what had happened and they were back in the jeep & headed for the 4th Wing hospital. When they arrived they found me lying on a cot & no one knew what to do about me?

In short time they had me back in the ambulance & on the way to the 67th hospital. I was told they brought the ambulance with them? You need to remember - what I'm telling you now is what I was told later. I was out! Somewhere along the line someone put an IV in my arm. After arriving at the 67th Hospital, the hospital commander told my squadron CO not to hold out too much hope, he had not seen too many make it after losing all their body fluids!

When I woke up it was about 1000, the sun was shining and I was in a hospital bed. I thought was the next day but was told by several people I was out 2-4 days- take your pick! I don't know. It didn't seem very important to me and I didn't check the dates with the hospital. I just wanted to get back to flying! About 2-3 days later they took me off the morphine so I'd wake up. I looked around the hospital ward & noticed there were a lot of hurt & sick people that needed attention. I just had a small hole in my side. Someone came by each day, took off the dressing, cleaned the wound & put on a clean dressing.

There was a metal locker next to my bed with all my gear in it, including my bloody flying suit. I got up, got dressed and walked out the back door and over to the squadron.

I guess I should have asked to check out, but if you can't stand no for an answer, don't ask.

It wasn't long after I got back, the Cotton Pickers Club opened. About 2 drinks into the evening the door opened & there stood the flight surgeon with a black bag in his hand. He stood there for a minute and said "I figured I'd find you in here. Why do you think you could just walk out of the hospital without telling someone?" He didn't wait for an answer but said "Get your ass down here so I can clean that wound" When he finished he said "now I'll have a drink, & the next thing I want you to do is get that bloody flying suit off & get a clean one on. Not very sanitary!" A few days later I was put back on flying status but was told by my CO I was taking a 10 day R&R to Japan. They didn't want me flying combat until my wound was healed, just in case!

I went on to fly 117 missions, at which time I was grounded from flying combat. I'd set a new record. I didn't even know they had a record! 5th Air Force policy was! Up to that point, if I were shot down they could tell my folks I was after a new record. It would have been false at that point, but after I'd set a new record, they would have no reason not to send me back to the U.S.

Cheers in the Cotton Pickers Club at Kimpo 1952 - Rear: R & L Neil Baird & Wayne Billings, Front: Aussie Pilote & Willy Williams





# Fire In the Hole

By BrigGen. Harold Rudolph  
Michigan ANG Retired

I did my F-86 flying out of Selfridge AFB, Michigan in the early 1950s. We all had the opportunity to hre rockets from the retractable pod of the F-86D "Dog" into Lake Huron, a few miles north of the base. I'm pretty sure they were 'live, but maybe they were just training rockets. The exercise went something like this:

A flight of two Sabres would have six rockets each loaded in the pod and 'journey' up to Lake Huron. My particular flight was in the early part of April 1955. Most of the ice was gone from the lake by this time of the year. The 'rocket orientation rides were just blasting the rockets into the lake. No target, just an opportunity to 'see the smoke' and feel the pod go down and back up again. That's why we usually did it in the winter when there was little chance of a boat being around.

I was #2 in this flight. After two or three passes about 5-10 miles offshore top make sure there were no stray boats around, we lined up on a northerly heading and armed up the switches. Lead would announce "Ready to fire!, and the wingman would take a last look to make sure the area was still clear. After my 'last look', I confirmed - "Clear to fire!"

Down came the pod with six blazing rockets. However, none of the rockets left the pod! Back up it went, into the aircraft, with all the rockets blazing engulfing the entire nose of the aircraft in flames! My call was: "Ron!" (Ron Legner) ... "you're on fire!" He immediately radioed: "I'm getting out.", and ejected from the burning Sabre.

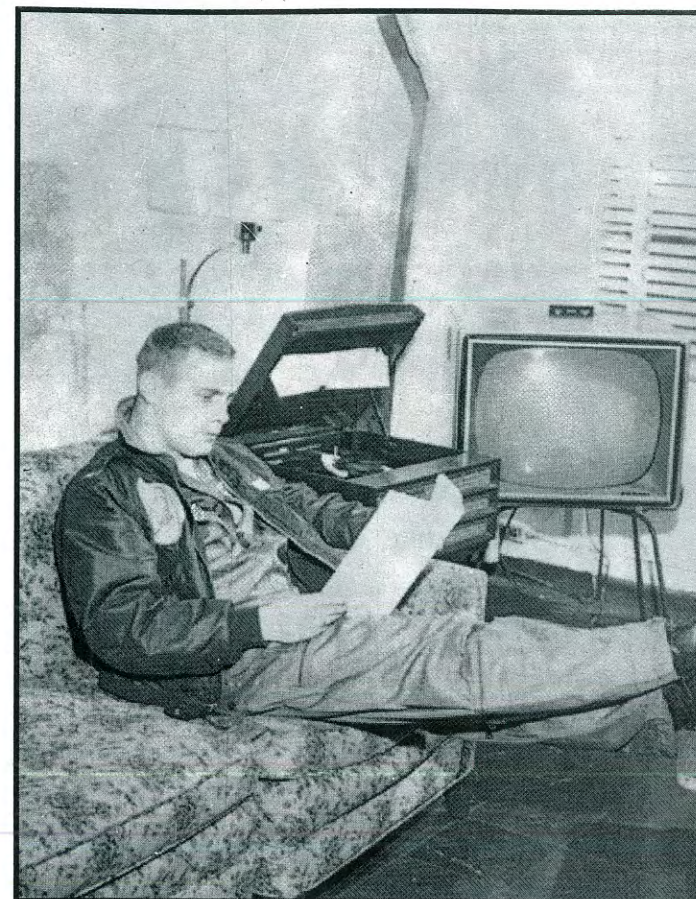
An F-86D assigned to the 56th FIS at Selfridge AFB, Michigan in 1955. In August 1955, Project Arrow moved the 56th Squadron on paper, to Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio, with the 94th FIS number taking their place at Selfridge. (credit - Brian Baker)



He hit the water and inflated his life jacket. As I circled above him descending in his chute, I immediately went to Guard channel to alert the base in initiate a rescue attempt. I saw Ron hit the water, and he waved at me after he inflated his Mae West and got rid of the chute.

But the water temperature was still about 35 degrees. I figured it would take about 30 to 40 minutes, at best, for a rescue from Selfridge. I thought my only chance to save Ron was to try and get help from one of the many cottages along the lake, most of which had boats.

After 10 to 20 LOW! Passes, most of which got immediately reported to the base, I noticed a cabin cruiser launching from one of the docks and heading out into the lake towards Ron. I made a number of passes to guide the boat to him, as they, of course, had no idea where he was. In about ten



Ron Legner reads a magazine while waiting for the next scramble at Selfridge AFB in 1956. Following his ejection into Lake Huron, Legner would fully recover and then obtain that old ejection seat years later from the same guy that had pulled him from the lake. (credit - B/G Harold Rudolph)

minutes or so, the boat located Ron and pulled him on board. Saved!

Now the 'rest of the story.' Ron never flew again without wearing THAT Mae West, the exact same one. He even wore it during rocket firing exercises at Yuma, in the middle of the Arizona desert! The aircraft was later recovered, but the ejection seat was never found - until about eight years later. The same man that had rescued Ron from the lake - Guy Wiltsie - was out fishing, and yes!!!, he hooked onto that seat and managed to pull it on board his boat! Probably had a few barnacles on it by then. When Ron heard that the seat had been recovered, he went up to Port Sanilac and the guy the seat back to him. He finally mounted it on a frame, with a stick complete with trim wheel, nose wheel steering, trigger, etc that all work. His son used to charge neighborhood kids 10 cents to sit in it!

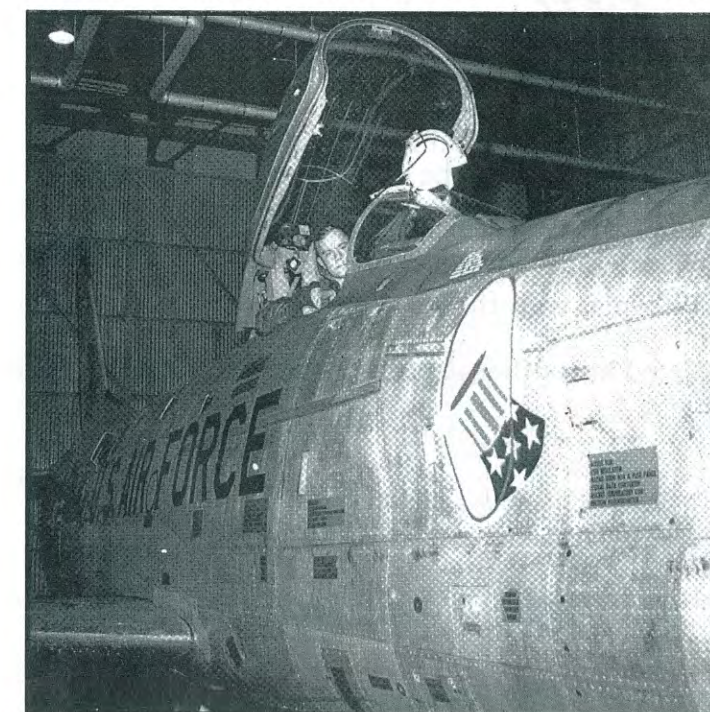
When I got to Selfridge after instrument training in a T-bird at Moody, the Selfridge unit was just transitioning into the 'Dog' from the "real F-86!" My ten hours 'D' time were more than most of the guys in the unit had at the time. So... I'm a brand new gold bar with ten rides in the 'Dog' and



Ron Legner and his family at home at Selfridge AFB in the mid-1950s. (credit - B/G Harold Rudolph)

it was: "Rudolph, you're leading a flight of two today. Go up and fly around and get used to the area. And show your wingman what the airplane will do." Oh, those were the days!!

Ron Legner in the cockpit of a (now) 94th FIS F-86D in one of the alert barns at Selfridge AFB in 1956. (credit - B/G Harold Rudolph)





A 71st FIS F-86D makes a night 'Scramble' takeoff from Pittsburgh Airport in 1954. The 71st located at Pittsburgh in October 1950 flying F-86As, transitioning to the F-86D in 1953. Project Arrow sent the 71st number to Selfridge AFB reuniting the unit with the 94th FIS. (credit - William Shields)

## Project ARROW

### Part One

Since we have the story from BrigGen. Harold Rudolph in this issue, I thought this would be a good starting point for the history of Project Arrow and the consequences of this directive from Air Defense Command. Hope you enjoy it and it brings back some memories.

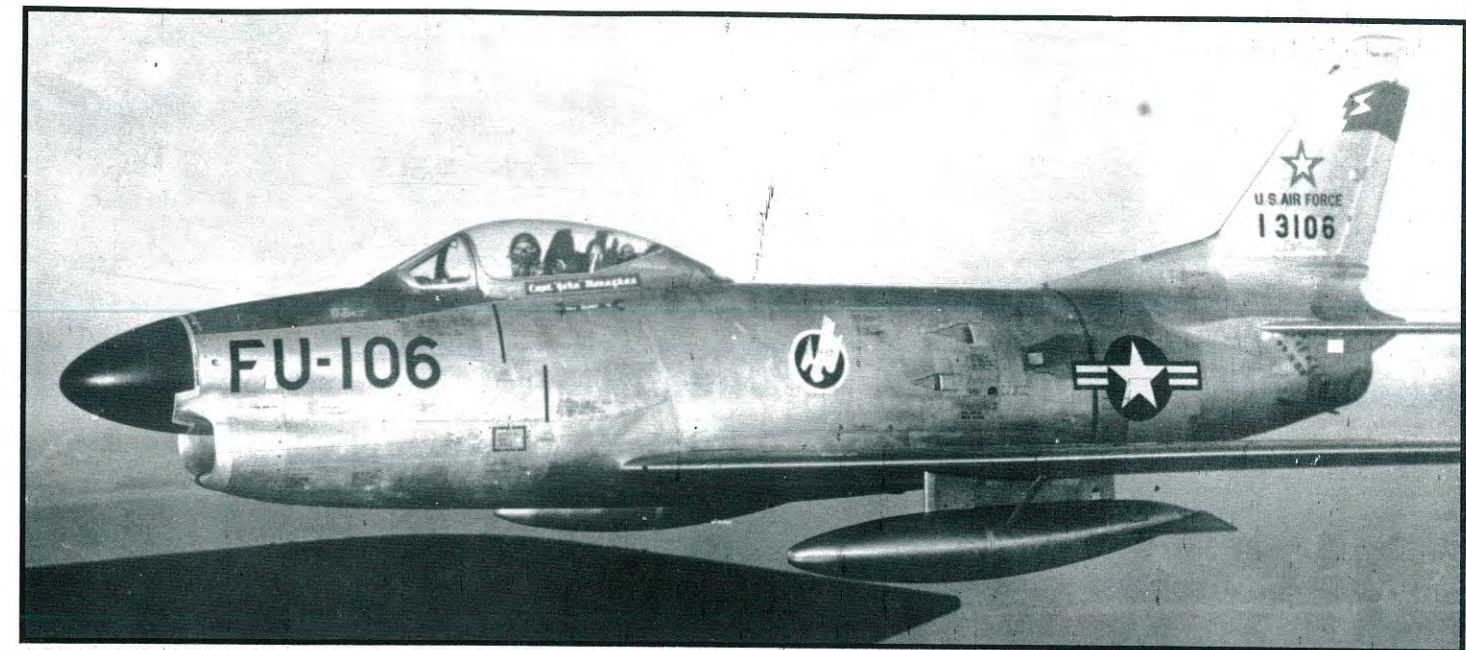
We'll start with Selfridge AFB, Michigan. This is going to get confusing but we'll start with the time frame that Harold Rudolph was assigned there, which was 1954-1957.

Project Arrow was a reorganization of Air Defense Command units that took effect on 18 August 1955. With the rapid growth of the Soviet Union's bomber forces, the USAF had activated or moved various squadrons all over the continental United States to protect vital areas of manufacturing and/or government resources. For instance, the 1st Fighter Interceptor Wing was based at George AFB, California, with three squadrons - the 27th, 71st, and 94th FIS to guard the many aircraft plants located in Southern California.

However, in August 1950, the 27th and 71st FIS moved to Griffiss AFB, NY and attached to the 103rd FIW. While the 27th remained at Griffiss with their F-86A/E aircraft, the 71st was moved to Greater Pittsburgh Airport in October that same year. The 94th FIS remained at George with the 1st FIW, with other units and interceptor types filling the mission left open by the departure of the 27th and 71st. Confused yet?

It all changed on 18 August 1955. Someone in ADC made the decision to restore various historic units to the wing or group that they were attached to during World War Two. Thus the 71st and the 94th Squadrons were reunited, this time at Selfridge AFB, Michigan. But only on paper! The personnel and aircraft that had previously been assigned at Selfridge in the 13th and 56th FIS would remain at Selfridge.

But now they were in the 71st and 94th Squadrons! Overnight, all the personnel had to change every patch on their uniforms from the old squadron to the new squadron. The airplane markings remained the same except that the old squadron badges were removed. Some were replaced with the new

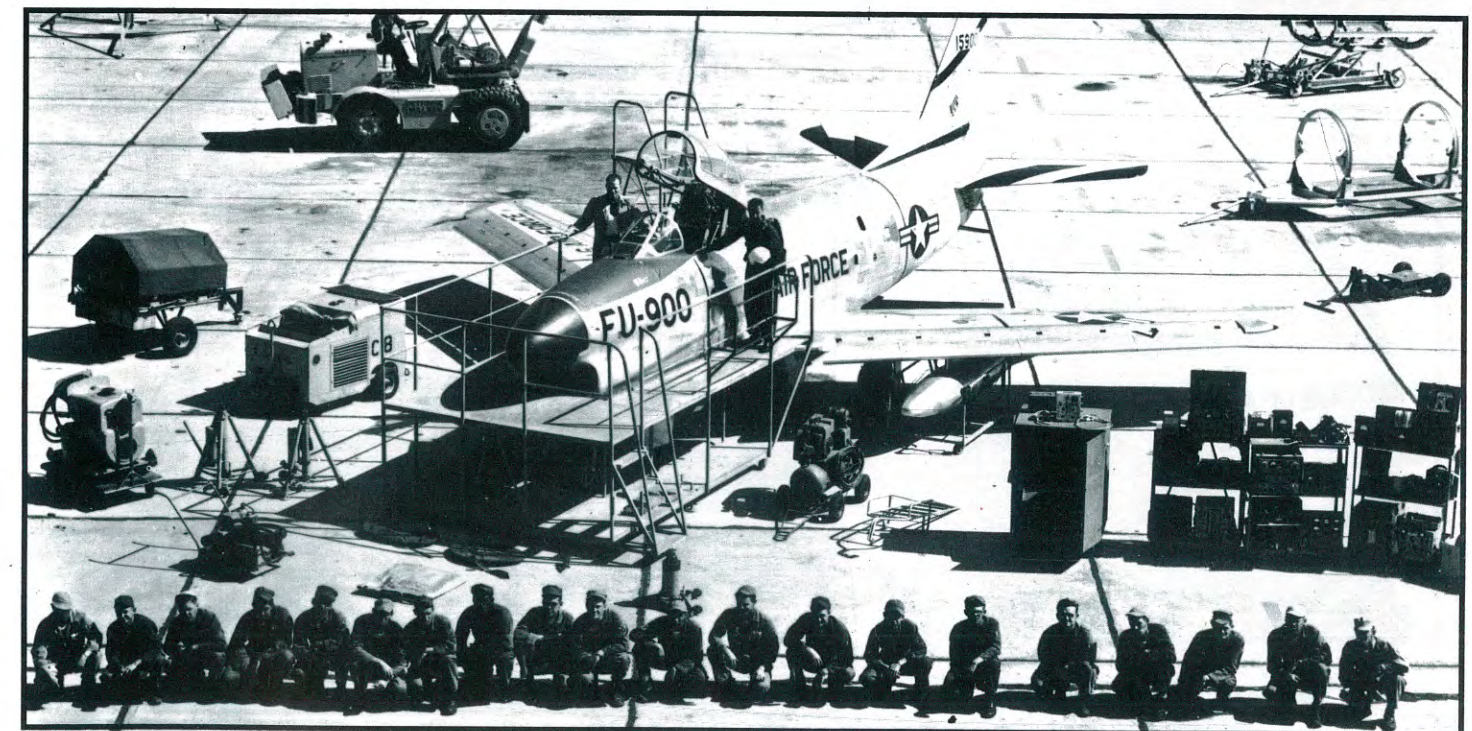


A 71st FIS F-86D after Project Arrow moved the unit number to Selfridge. The 71st simply adopted the unit markings of the old 13th FIS and painted the 71st FIS emblem on the fuselage. (credit Marty Isham)



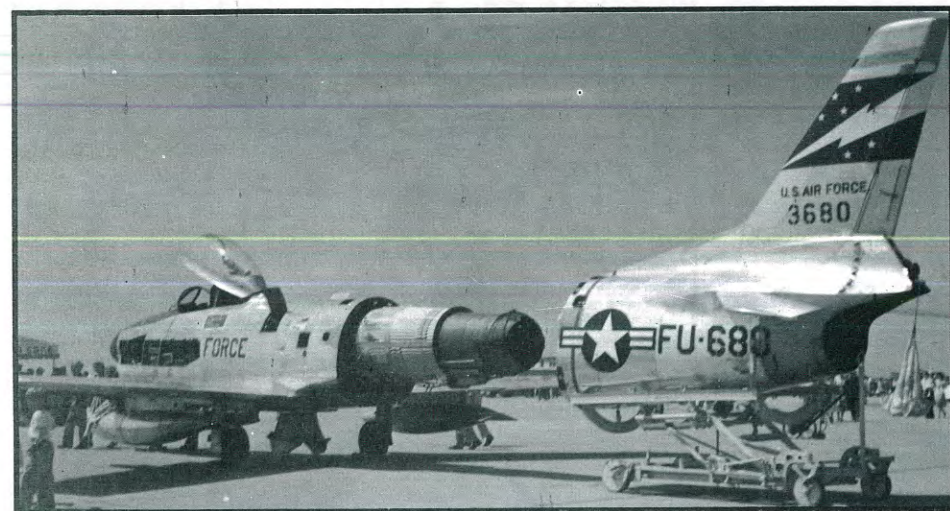
A still later photo of a 71st FIS F-86D but now having the 4708th ADW shield on the tail. The 71st was initially assigned to the 4708th ADW until the 1st FIW arrived in October 1956. (credit - USAF)

A 94th FIS F-86D showing the men and equipment needed to keep the airplane in the sky. The tail markings indicate the photo is at George AFB prior to Project Arrow. (credit - USAF)





Project Arrow moved the 94th Squadron number to Selfridge AFB in August 1955 to reunite with the 71st FIS. The tail emblem is that of the 30th AD, and the markings are symbolic of those used by the 94th in mid-1956. (credit - Wm. J. Balogh, Jr.)



An F-86D assigned to the 42nd FIS at O'Hare Field, Chicago, during the May 1955 Open House. Four months later the airplane would be in the 63rd FIS with the star pattern changed to 6 and 3 stars to reflect the new unit. But the rest of the markings would remain the same. (credit - David Menard)

When Project Arrow moved the 42nd number to Pittsburgh Airport, the crews simply adopted the old 71st FIS unit markings, a black lightning bolt on the fuselage. (credit - Ken Vernon)



The 4708th ADW Rocket Team in 1954 next to a 13th FIS F-86D (Kneeling L-R) Jim Smith, Richard River, Wm. Schauer, Ralph Cassada. (Standing L-R) Walter Waclawski, William Tope - Grp CO, George Greene - Wing CO, Richard Wood, Thomas Pierce, Ray Janaczek - Squadron CO. (credit - Wm. Schauer, Jr.)

squadron badge right away, some weren't. And tail markings were often not changed until later, if at all.

So what happened to the previous squadron number? It went to another squadron at another base, and that squadron number went to another base, and so on and so forth. The 13th FIS number went to the unit at Sioux City, Iowa, taking over the aircraft and personnel of the 519th FIS. The 519th FIS number was inactivated. The other squadron at Selfridge, the 56th FIS, went to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

The 71st number moved to Selfridge from Pittsburg Airport. The 42nd FIS moved to Pittsburg from O'Hare Airport, near Chicago. And the 63rd moved from Wurtsmith AFB, Michigan to O'Hare alongside the other squadron in the 56th Wing, the 62nd FIS.

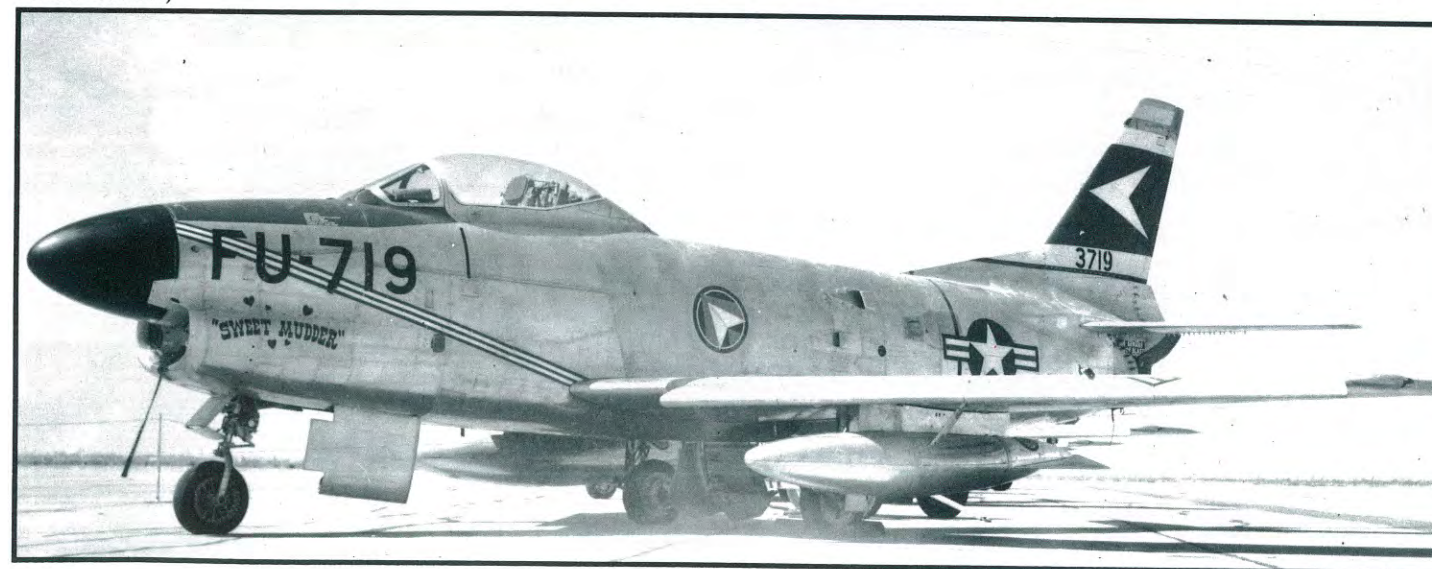
So what happened to the squadrons at George AFB, CA after Project Arrow? USAF activated the 327th FIS and 329th FIS at George AFB. "Sweet Mudder" was the 329th FIS CO's F-86D at George. We do NOT have any Photos of 327th FIS F-86s in the SabreJet Classics files. (credit - Peter Bowers)

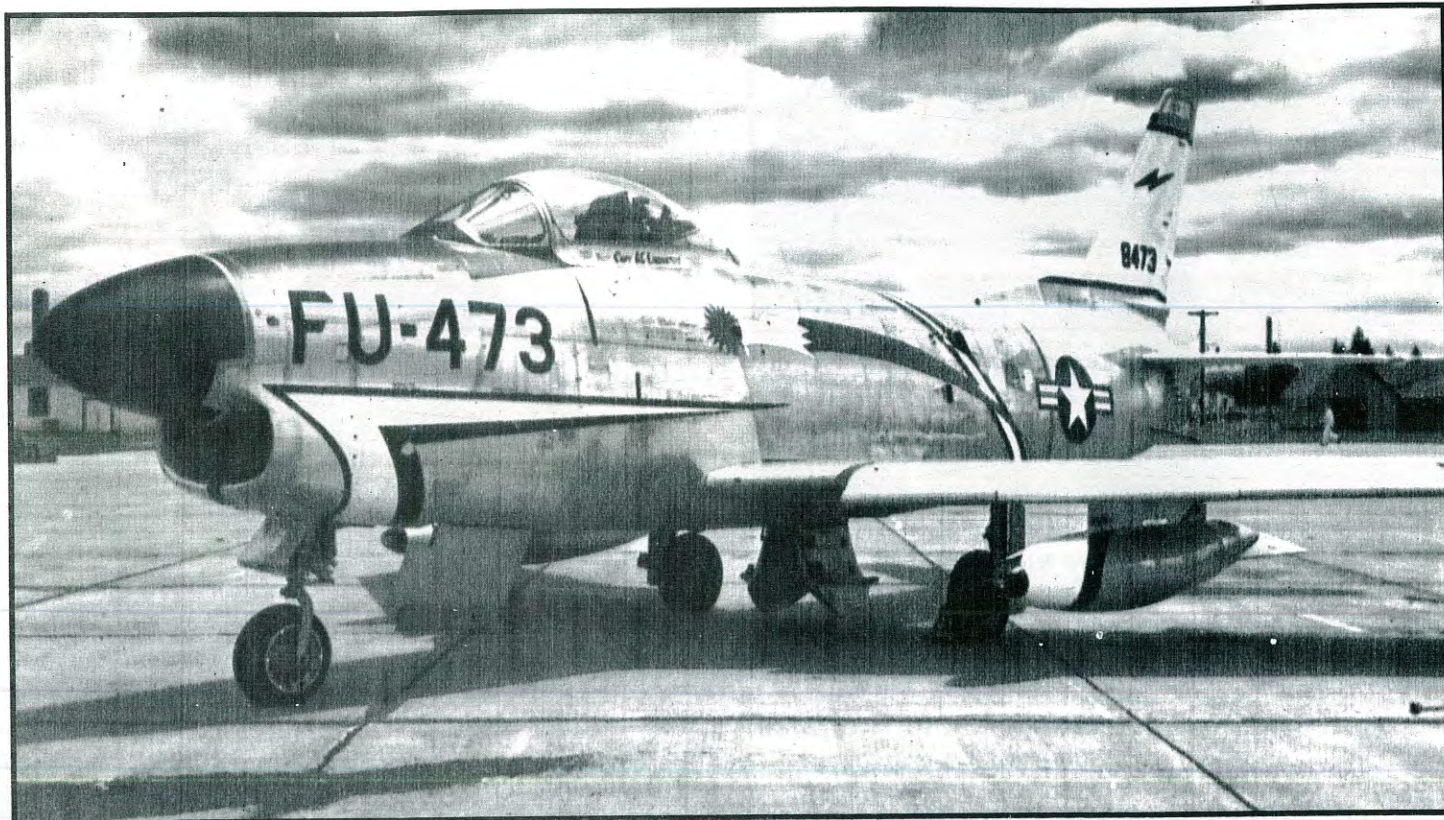


The 94th Squadron came all the way from George AFB, California, and brought the 1st Wing Hqtrs. With it. The 327th and 329th Squadrons were activated at George at the same time.

The 445th took the place of the 63rd at Wurtsmith. They had been at Geiger Field, Washington. We'll cover the Geiger Field units in another issue.

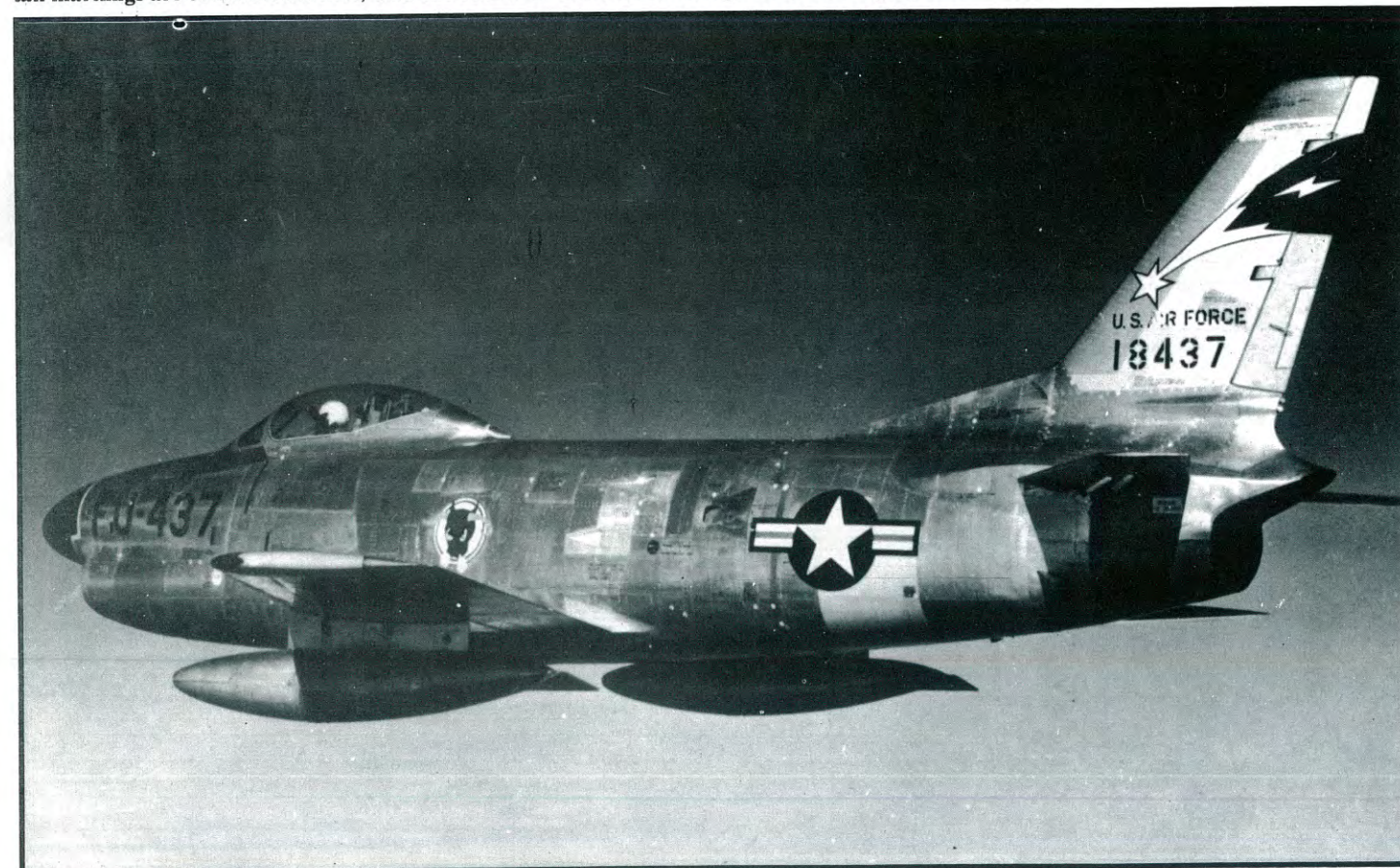
The problem that's been messing with air force historians over the years is who are we looking at in a particular photo if there isn't a squadron badge evident. Many units simply adopted the markings and colors of the previous unit. But some, like the 42nd FIS at Pittsburg, adopted all-new unit markings. We'll try to show you some of the various unit markings and how they changed with the Project Arrow moves. It's both interesting and a dilemma.





When the 63rd FIS number was moved to O'Hare Airport under Project Arrow, their place at (now) Wurtsmith AFB, MI was taken by the 445th FIS, which had been at Geiger Field, Washington. The 520th FIS took over at Geiger when the 445th left. (credit - A.G. 'Lumpy' Limpansis)

Compare this photo of a 13th FIS F-86D taken in 1954, with that of the 71st FIS F-86D taken in Fall 1955 after Project Arrow (page 15). The tail markings are of the 575th ADG, with the 13th FIS 'Brown Bull' badge on the fuselage. (credit- USAF)



A plaque that was presented by members of the French Air Force Association of French Air Cadets to the US Air Force. (credit - Jean Marie Deudonne)

This is a magazine called Aviation Classics and is issue #9. It is devoted to the history of the F-86 Sabre and includes 128 pages packed with photos and information about your favorite airplane, the F-86 and all its variants. Many of the photos are in full color and the history is written by noted F-86 historian Duncan Curtis. It is available at [www.aviationclassics.co.uk](http://www.aviationclassics.co.uk) at 5 pounds, roughly \$8.00. Highly recommended.



### Sabre reunions

**19th Reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association will be in Las Vegas in early April 2013. Watch for full information and details. Start making plans NOW!**

#### Sewart AFB Reunion

June 2-5, 2011  
at the Nashville Airport  
Marriott, Nashville, TN.  
Contact Don Dallenbach  
(615)826-2212  
email - [dondbach@comcast.net](mailto:dondbach@comcast.net)

#### Class 53A Reunion

November 10-13  
in New Orleans, LA.  
Contact Tom Calkins,  
(941)792-8723  
Email [Reunion53A@ao.com](mailto:Reunion53A@ao.com)

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The last photo is that of a non-Air Defense Command F-86D squadron airplane. "The Imp" was the squadron commanders Sabre with the 40th FIS based at Yokota AB, Japan in 1957. None of the units in the Far East were changed under Project Arrow as most had remained assigned to their 'historically significant' parent organization. In the case of "The Imp", it was the 35th FIW. (credit Larry Davis coll.)

