

# Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 20, Number 1

Spring 2012



*inside -Reunion 19 Registration / Info,  
Sabre Down 85 Miles Out,  
Triple Nickel Sabre,  
Pakistan Sabre Team,  
RAAF Team, Bill Wescott, more!*

A Publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

# SabreJet Classics

Vol. 120, number 1

Spring 2012

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(Front cover) Four F-86Ds from the 86th FIW fly formation over Europe in the mid-1950s. All are Commanders of the four squadrons in the 526th. Lead is the 440th FIS, Lt Wing is the 526th FIS, Rt Wing is 525th FIS, and in the Slot is the 496th FIS.(credit- Richard Michaud)

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# SabreJet Classics

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## the president's notebook

Spring is upon us and I hope you all survived the winter in good shape where ever you encountered it. Much of the country was spared a harsh winter and had a much lighter snow fall than normal. For us in the Las Vegas area and the Southwest, it looks like the long drought is not over. I feel fortunate to be writing my column in this issue due to the fact that Larry Davis is recovering well from his heart attack surgery. He has diligently pursued his efforts to keep our magazine coming to you and this Spring edition will put it back on track, chronologically, in publishing fine Sabre stories we all enjoy so much. Many of those stories are the ones you write and send to Larry or me, but; we need more, so keep prodding the mind and put the pen to work.

Speaking of Sabre stories, "When the Navy Flew Sabres", by Lee, 'Thumper', Griffin in issue 19-3, it is not only a great Sabre story, but one that is interesting to me personally. Lee became a member of our Association a couple of years ago; the same time we made Rick Clemens, the owner of the Cactus Air Force Museum at Carson City, Nevada, an honorary member in our Association. Lee is Rick's Chief Pilot. Rick is, as of yet, not an F-86 pilot, however; he owns a Canadair Sabre 5 that he is working hard to get back in the air again. Rick purchased that Sabre from BEA Systems, at Mojave, California, formerly Tracor Flight Systems, who I flew with for nineteen years. That Sabre, tail number 300 (see photo pg ?), was one of the many QF-86s I flew and

remotely controlled. It survived all the missile attacks employed against it. It will be great to see "Old 300" back in the air again, even if I won't be flying her. Lee will have that great pleasure. Now, on to other things. In issue 19-3, Larry wrote about a Korean War Memorial that the Planes of Fame Air Museum at Chino, California will be adding to their already tremendous air museum. As you saw, the artist's concept drawings of the proposed memorial on a quarter acre site is impressive; a real Sabre on a pedestal looking down at a real Mig 15 on the ground after being shot down. P.O.F already has the Sabre and Mig to display. They hope to get enough financial support to have the project completed within the year. If any of you are interested in learning more about this worthy project, contact Steve Wallace, the memorial project manager at Planes of Fame Air Museum, Chino Airport, 7000 Merrill Ave., #17, Chino CA 91710, [steve.wallace@planesoffame.org](mailto:steve.wallace@planesoffame.org)

Looking through this issue, you will see I have included the registration form and the explanation of events for "Reunion 19", 7, 8 and 9 April, 2013 at the Gold Coast Hotel Casino in Las Vegas. On the registration form, you will notice the price increases from the last reunion. The price of food, including the gratuity and sales taxes, has boosted the cost over twenty percent. We held off increasing your costs for the last reunion, but felt the Association could sustain part of the additional costs, but not all, to make up the difference again for 2013. On the good side, the Gold Coast is giving us a premium room rate of \$48 per

night (\$36.00 per night for the deluxe room). By the way, those upgraded premium rooms they thought they would have for us in 2011 and didn't are being converted at this time and will be completed before our reunion. Back to the registration form; the times for the "Aces Over Vegas" event at Nellis have not been determined as yet. They will be listed in the Summer issue of the Classics magazine.

As to our events at the reunion, having Bob Hoover with us in 2011 was tremendous and a hard one to beat for 2013. We have been to Red Flag several times, and the Neellis Weapons School did a great job of showing us what they do. Well, I mentioned to some Weapons School fighter pilot instructors that we have in our Association a significant number of Korean War Aces and many members who shot down Migs, but were not aces. At the present time, the total number of Mig Kills by our members is 102. That watered their eyes as the present generation of fighter pilots only read about those types of numbers. That sparked the idea of a get-together of our Korean/WWII generation and the Weapons School instructors and students to exchange and pass on our experiences to them as well as them doing the same to us. They came up with a theme for the exchange as "Aces Over Vegas." What a great event that could be. After more enthusiastic talk about "Aces Over Vegas," we realized that the year 2013 would be the 60th Anniversary of the end of hostilities of the Korean War in 1953. What a combination! Following that discussion and talking with Chick Cleveland, Hank Buttellmann and others here in Vegas, Hank and I had a follow-

up meeting last Nov. with the F-15/22 Weapons School Operations Officer and Weapons Officer to further discuss the feasibility of having this exchange. They are in full agreement that they would do all they can to make it happen. Along with the exchange of experiences and ideas format, I expressed my desire to include some flight line activities other than just a couple of static displays. They said they would take my request into consideration when developing the event. So, that's what is in the early stages of planning for 2013. I am confident "Aces Over Vegas" will be a tremendous event for us, the Weapons School fighter pilots and

one that you would not want to miss. I will have all Reunion 19 info provided in this issue and presented again in the Summer issue with updates. My comments for this issue have been lengthy and I hope you will bear with me. I would like to recognize one of our members who recently received special recognition at an event that I was privileged to attend. Harry Spannaus, who flew with the 25th Squadron, 51st Fighter Wing in Korea, was inducted into the Commemorative Air Forces American Combat Airman Hall of Fame October 7, 2011 in Midland, Texas. He was recognized for his 239 combat mission in Korea and Southeast

Asia Wars and forty three decorations for distinguished and heroic flight and exemplary service to his country. Let me wish you a wonderful Spring and Summer. Think Reunion 19 and "Aces Over Vegas." By the way, the Super Sabres will dove tail their reunion with us as they did in 2011.

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

*J.R. Alley  
President*

## from the editor

Well Spring has sprung here in Ohio. Actually it was several weeks early as it was 80 degrees a couple of weeks ago. Of course, this is Ohio and so it was in the teens last weekend, today it's in the 40s but this weekend might see 85!! That's Ohio weather folks.

In this issue you will find the first of two segments regarding the Sabre Pilots Reunion in April 2013. Please read them carefully and fill out the Registration Form asap. Rooms at the Gold Coast go pretty fast so....I'll be looking forward to meeting all you guys again depending on my health.

My health? Well everything seems to be going fine. The doctors say it and I feel it. Thanks to all that said prayers for me and wished me a speedy recovery.

A few people have caught some typo mistakes and such in the last couple of issues, so I thought I'd tell you guys a bit about the running of the magazine.

Basically this is a two-man show - one that sets it up and one that prints it. I set it up. Everything goes through my fingers. I edit every line, sometimes writing an entire story, choose all the photos, many of which come from my files, then lay out the entire magazine. It usually takes about 3-4 days for layout. Then I deliver it to Zephyr Press here in town.

Bob at Zephyr Press then sits down and attempts to straighten out what I give him. He makes any corrections he finds, takes the photos and shoots them, then makes everything fit into my layout pages on a professional manner. When it's ready, he calls me and I proof the text layout, and then proof it again to make sure the photos and the captions fit together. That usually takes about 10 days. It then goes to press, followed by the mailing place.

Regarding missed typos and other mistakes, if you've ever written anything professionally, you know that after you've proofed something several times, that you often get ahead of yourself because you KNOW how it's supposed to read. Thus you miss something, and never notice it until someone says - "Why does that say that? And you, or rather I say to myself -

"Boy is that dumb." It can get pretty hectic sometimes.

Anyway, hopefully you guys will enjoy this latest issue and there won't be too many mistakes.

All for now.

*Larry Davis, editor*

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## FOLDED WINGS

**George S. Arbuthnot, February 29th, 2012**  
**Robert B. Beveridge, December 7th, 2011**  
**Ray M. Burgess, March 11th, 2012**  
**Curtis M. Burns, January 15th, 2012**  
**Donn A. Byrnes, January 23rd, 2012**  
**Herbert C. Ferlmann, March 18th, 2012**  
**Emmett L. 'Sam' Herron, January 19th, 2012**  
**James W. Leatherbee, December 7th, 2011**  
**Wayne 'RW' Morrow, November 19th, 2011**  
**Leslie J. Prichard, August 14th, 2010**  
**Randall L. Steffens, December 7th, 2009**  
**George M. Vaughn, January 8th, 2012**  
**Stanley L. Wiggins, February 2nd, 2011**

### 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.

**To the editor:**

From Richard Fortin, Docent, NHAHS

I'm attempting to get in touch with the Sabre Pilots Assn to advise you of an activity we are planning.

The Aviation Museum of New Hampshire is located at the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, is preparing to honor Capt. Joseph McConnell, a native of New Hampshire, with an exhibit in our Museum, and we are looking for anyone that might have known him and some artifacts that we could include in our display. Check our web page at [www.NHAHS.org](http://www.NHAHS.org) to get a look at who we are.

Our Museum is dedicated to preserving Aviation with a New Hampshire connection and we want to include an area dedicated to Capt. McConnell and his career.

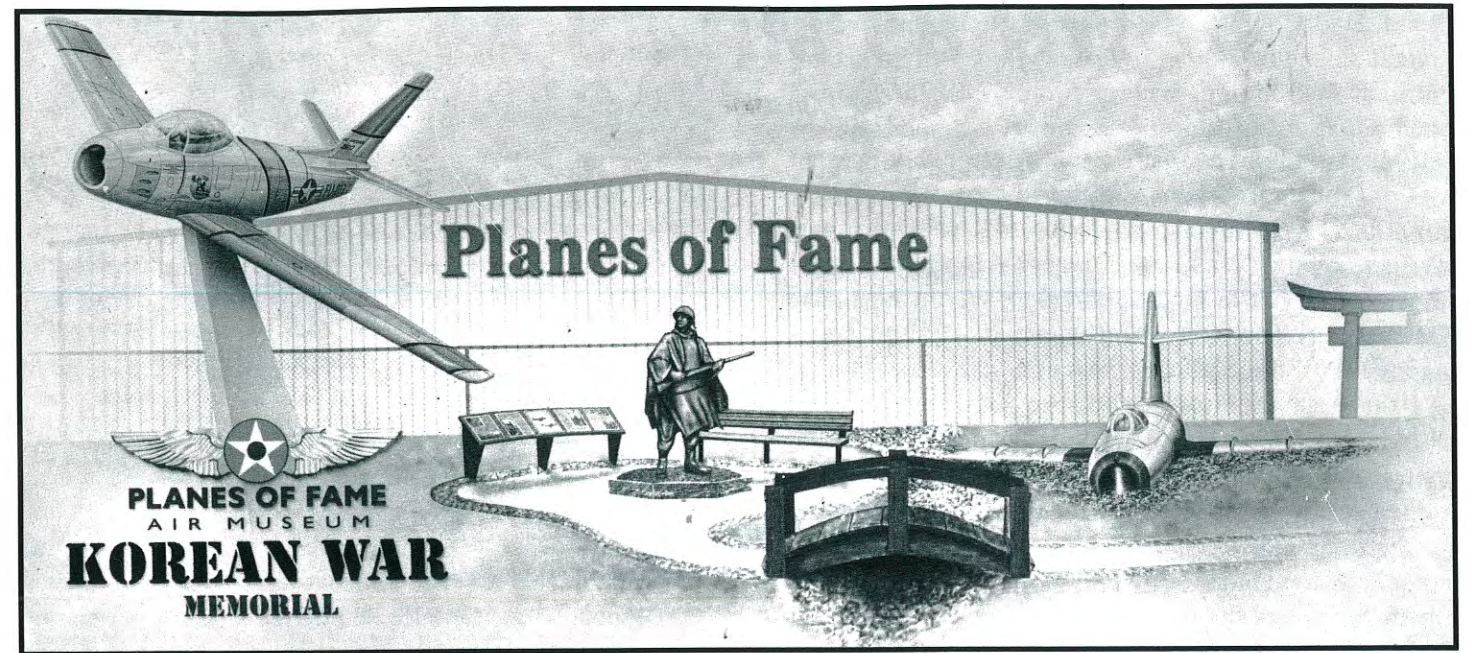
Please help spread the word through your Association about our efforts.

From Andy Meyer

6 March 2012. I just talked to Margeret Parr and Ralph is in the Christus Santa Rosa Hospital in New Braunfels, TX. He has a mass in one of his lungs and they are performing a biopsy in the morning. It could be up to 72 hours before they know if it is cancerous. Margeret will give me an update as soon as there is information to pass along. He cannot have visitors at this time.

**Sabres Around The World**

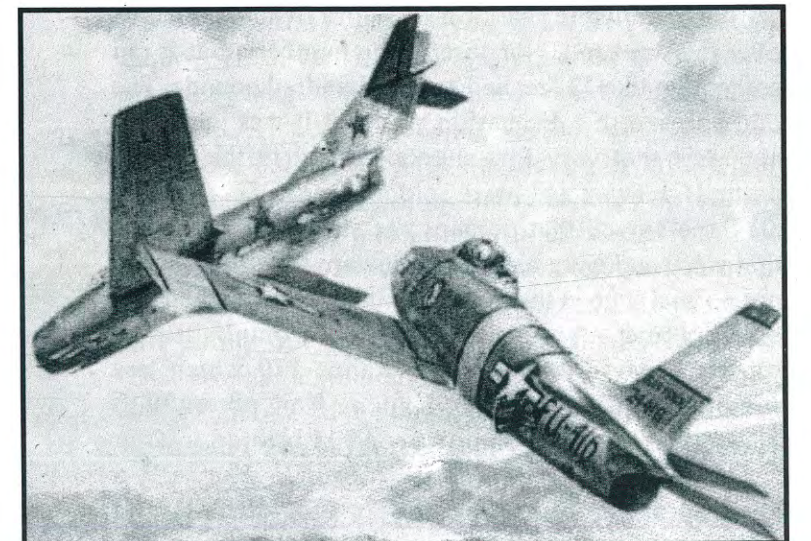
This F-86F-30 With the Republic of Korea Air Force is seen at Osan AB in 1959. The Sabre was originally delivered to the 51st FIW in late 1953 and then transferred to the ROKAF after the end of the war in Korea. The airplane has the extended 6-3 slatted wing that was fitted to all Sabres beginning in 1957. The ROKAF received at least 122 F-86Fs and Rf-86Fs between 1955 and 1959. (credit- Larry Davis coll.)



Two views of the proposed Korean War Memorial for the Planes of Fame Air Museum in Chino, CA. Anyone wishing to donate for the memorial, should contact Steve Wallace at [steve.wallace@planesoffame.org](mailto:steve.wallace@planesoffame.org).



This is the brand new proposal for the F-86 foil at the Wall of Honor at the Smithsonian. It shows member Frederick 'Boots' Blesse scoring a MiG kill in Korea. Gorgeous huh!



# DOWN 85 MILES AT SEA

by Don 'Dumpy' Wyrick

It all started out as just another routine day in what was one of and perhaps the world's best job. There might have been others, but flying MK-6 Sabres, as a civilian, towing Darts out of Kadena AB, Okinawa, for 13 years plus has to rank up there among the best. The Kadena Dart Tow Operation began in 1982 and was manned with three pilots, six maintenance personnel, and three Canadian Mk-6 Sabre jets with the big Orenda-14 engine. The operation was designed for the contractor, Flight Systems, Inc. (FSI), to take the service to the user (USAF). The contract called for FSI to tow for the three F-15 Squadrons at Kadena, and later was expanded to include the two F-4 Squadrons in Korea, one at Taegu and the other at Osan. FSI also towed for the F-16 Squadron at Osan and the other at Kunsan and for the two F-16 Squadrons at Misawa. So, in effect it was a road show with FSI home based out of Kadena with TDYs to Korea and Misawa about three to four times a year. The operation had a great track record with an approximately 98 % plus success rate in successfully launching Dart missions. Monthly Dart tow missions usually ran anywhere from about sixty (60) to eighty (80) F-86 missions per month. The operation marched smartly along with very few problems and the user was extremely happy with the product. However, the operation experienced its only aircraft loss in 1990, resulting from a catastrophic engine failure and had all the earmarks of becoming a bad statistic.

My recall of that day started with the three F-86 pilots, Randy Krumback (the boss), myself, and Al Munsch all having lunch in the Kadena Officers Club. The afternoon schedule called for two tows with an 1330 launch. Lunch time conversation drifted around to an article that had just been printed in one of the local Japanese papers about the capture of an almost record setting great white shark off of White Beach, Okinawa over the weekend. Not sure of the numbers, but it ran something like 13 feet and several hundred pounds. The odd point to this discussion was that it was generally accepted that very few sharks existed in the waters around Okinawa and were seldom seen. Of course, we all three agreed that perhaps the sharks had not read that story and were basically unaware that they should not normally be in that habitat. Lunch was finished and briefing and subsequent launches accomplished on schedule. My mission was to Range-179 which lies roughly west-northwest of Kadena from about 70 to 150 miles. My mission proceeded as briefed towing for two F-15s on a Combat Dart Profile, basically a head-on set up at approximately 25K altitude and

full grunt until the fight is joined. The Combat Dart Profile is essentially a turning maneuvering fight where the tow maintains 350 knots or as much as he can get and 4 Gs giving up the altitude to maintain the parameters cited and normally lasting approximately five minutes. The shooters maneuver in an off the dart in an effort to score hits. The engagement continues until the shooters are fired out, the dart is shot off, or the ground rule floor of 10,000 feet altitude is reached.

The fight was joined and the engagement proceeded. The two shooters had made several passes and had called Winchester (fired out) at just about the time that I reached the altitude floor. I called a "Cease Fire" and received an acknowledgement from both shooters and rolled out of my turn at about 10K and about 100 miles on the DME from Kadena TACAN. Just as I completed the rollout on the recovery heading to Kadena, with the shooters joining up with the dart to air score it I experienced a loud explosion, similar to a bad F-100 compressor stall, but not one that would blow your feet off the rudder pedals. I quickly noticed that the RPM was decaying and the other gages were basically unwinding. F-15 lead came up on the radio and ask if I was OK as he had just seen a fireball out the aft end. I informed him that I'd just lost the engine and if they were clear of the dart that I needed to cut it. They acknowledged they were clear and I activated the primary cut system. I also recognized that the aircraft was not going to make it back to Kadena, and I made my initial "Mayday" call while trying to determine what was wrong all the while trying to establish best glide speed.

**A Flight System Inc. Sabre very similar to the one that 'Dumpy' Wyricks went down in 85 miles from Kadena. This is one of the actual Kadena tow birds with a Dart Target. (credit - Randy Krumback)**



**The initial photo taken by the Japanese (JASDF) pararescue crewmen (PJ) from approximately 6 feet away. Dumpy's smile is "I want to be rescued - not photographed!" (credit - Don Wyrick)**

It was then that I realized that the dart had not cut and here I was tugging a dart with a dead jet trying to glide as far as possible. I then initiated the alternate dart cut system and the dart fell away. There were several radio calls, some from the shooters, some from the Kadena SOF as they were responding to my Mayday call, and some of mine again transmitting my difficulty and establishing my position on the Kadena TACAN. I attempted an airstart, but as soon as I started to advance the throttle there was no RPM response but TPT went to approximately 1,000 degrees. Again, I stop cocked the throttle and took a quick survey of the engine instruments and decided on trying one more airstart. It was immediately met with the same results. I then indicated on the radio that I was going to have to eject and began preparation. I always flew with a knee board so I removed it and attempted to stow it in the map case. The F-86 map case isn't that big and with the associated let down books and nav charts I could not stow it, so I decided to place it up in the right wind screen. I also flew with eyeglasses and thought I needed to remove them as I was afraid they would break and I would get glass in my eyes. I raised my visor, removed the glasses and stowed them in the map case. There were several radio calls to me at this time that I did not respond to as I was very busy doing other more important things. Randy Krumback had heard the Mayday call (he was working in another range area), and was asking the shooters if they had me in sight and if I had ejected yet. They acknowledged they had me in sight, but could not tell if I had ejected.

Back in the cockpit the tempo was picking up as I was now passing about 6-7,000 feet descending and still preparing to eject. I always intended to use the alternate canopy jettison handle, located on the bottom right of

the instrument panel. This served two purposes; one, it got rid of the canopy and in the MK-6 when it jettisoned explosively, the canopy moved straight back and then off so secondly, it forced the pilot to lower his head. Those folks that flew the F-86 remember that you always had to duck your head to close the canopy. So that gets you forward in the cockpit, and head down before jettison. About this time I became concerned about my knee board in the right wind screen striking me in the face when the canopy was jettisoned. I then decided to reattach it to my right leg as I was concerned about loose debris. The Mk-6 had an ejection system very similar to the F-100 as raising the armrests jettisoned the canopy and raised the triggers to the firing position. We also had a sort of Rube Goldberg item called a "Harley Buckle" which fit into the seat belt and gave us an automatic parachute activation system. More about that later. Now I am all set and I see the altimeter passing 3,000 feet and I know it is time to go. However, for some reason that I still do not know, but I really think I became concerned about not being able to find the handgrips and triggers after the canopy departed so at the last second I elected not to use the canopy alternate jettison system. I then leaned forward in the seat to get my head down and raised the armrests. I think that I started to move into the proper ejection posture as I rotated the seat handles. The canopy fired, a large blow to my forehead, but I had the triggers and I squeezed and was on my way. I realized I was out of the airplane, but had lost my vision because of the blow to my head. I did not grasp that the canopy had hit me in the head, but I felt the tug and knew that I was in the chute. After an undetermined period the cobwebs started to clear and my vision started slowly to return as I could see the water below and the chute above.

Now I realized that I had to get ready for the water entry. I grasped the survival kit lanyard and pulled. There it was — I had the lanyard and barrel keeper in my hand but the kit had not deployed. I quickly tried to get it loose with my heel trying to get it to separate and deploy. However, it soon was apparent to me that it was not going to work and I was rapidly approaching the water. I abandoned any further efforts in that direction, and prepared for water entry by inflating my water wings and releasing the riser latch covers so I could place my thumbs into the quick release rings. Just a short distance above the water I felt something hit my heel and I looked down and it was the raft falling out of the kit as it had finally split open. That brought a moment of relief just as I went into the water. I activated the quick releases and the chute was gone and I was never dragged. Things were looking up now as I searched around for my raft, but none was in sight. However, I could feel a tug and realized it was the survival kit lanyard tugging. I then started hauling



**JASDF CH-46 helicopter hoisting Dumpy Wyrick from the sea. The photo was taken by the PJ in the water. (credit- Don Wyrick)**

it in, hand over hand, and sure enough here comes the kit with the raft still attached. Unfortunately, it was only a yellow blob and about one to two feet or so underwater and just sort of unfolded, but not inflated. So much for that — no wonder the kit did not deploy as the raft inflating is what breaks the kit apart. Not to worry because all you need to do is find the oral inflation valve and blow it up manually. The water entry scene consisted of the following. I was 85 miles at sea, water temperature was estimated to be 72 degrees, and the sea state was 6 - 8 feet. The water was completely black it seemed, and I later learned the depth there was 6,000 feet. I knew where I was roughly, distance wise, from Kadena and I looked at my watch and told myself that I needed to survive for at least an hour and a half before any help would be able to reach me. The waves were gigantic and I always seemed to be in a hole. Six to eight foot waves are normally not thought of as being big, but in my circumstances they were huge. I would crest up on a wave briefly, but then I would be back in the hole. That was somewhat distressing as my visibility seemed to be limited to cresting up on the next wave and otherwise all around me was this wall of water.

Now back to the business at hand. After retrieving my raft I found the oral inflation valve and proceeded to blow it up. Now that the raft was inflated I initiated my efforts to get into the raft. Those efforts met with repeated failure because when I would just about get aboard the next wave crest would dump me. After several attempts to board, I am not sure how many, but all without success, I realized that I was rapidly

exhausting my strength so I opted to just cling onto the side of the raft for awhile, and take a breather. The next thing that got my attention was that there were no airplanes buzzing around overhead. That was a very disconcerting event and one that I could not quite understand. Then as I crested up a couple of times I noticed a couple of F-15s in a low orbit at about 5-6 miles away. Not to overstate the obvious, but I now knew that they did not have me in sight. I opened up the survival kit package which I had placed in the raft and removed the radio and then carefully re-closed the kit. However, after removing it from the kit I could not see the various controls or read the instructions nor the survival manual instructions relative to the other pieces of equipment as I did not have my glasses. I think the radio was preset to "Guard" channel and I turned it on and called the shooters. They immediately responded and I ask if they had me in sight. Their response was "negative".

I then started giving vector instructions to the low man. I used turn right - turn left - roll out now instructions until I had him lined up on me. As he approached I told him that when I called "now" to roll up on the wing tip and that I would be directly below him. This all went as advertised and the low man stated he had me in sight and went into a low orbit while the high man acted as a radio relay and Rescap Director. There were some radio transmissions primarily asking about my physical state, and if I had sustained any injuries. I told them that I was pretty exhausted from my failed attempts to get in the raft and that I was currently just hanging on to it to conserve my strength. Other than that I was doing alright. That information was passed and they told me help was coming just to hang on. The F-15s called a short time later and indicated that they were in a low fuel state and needed to RTB, but they were passing the Rescap to a new flight just entering the area. The new flight checked in and indicated they had me in sight. A short while later I called the Rescap and told them that I was turning off my radio to conserve the battery and that I would be back up in 15 minutes. One of my concerns was that I had a tremendous urge to urinate, but the very thought of that brought to my mind that somewhere I'd read or heard that human waste attracts sharks. I don't know if this is true or not, even to this day, but it made me think of my earlier lunch conversation that day. I was in no shape to deal with sharks especially if they were a mate or a sibling to the great white captured off White Beach on Okinawa over the weekend. So, I opted to think about other things and forego taking the risk to urinate. I'd now been in the water for approximately 45-50 minutes and I realized that it now being mid-afternoon that rescue might not happen that day. I came to grips with

the fact that somehow I had to figure out how to get into my raft before dark. It occurred to me that when I first retrieved my raft it was under about a foot or two of water and only slightly inflated. I thought if I would deflate my raft to a similar state that perhaps I could get it under me in a prone position, and then re-inflate it with me in it. I thought that I would have to contort my body to something like an Indian snake charmer to do this, but what the heck. I had a plan! I do not know if I could have made it work or not, and probably not, but I felt a little more secure.

Shortly thereafter I became aware once more that there were no airplanes in sight. Some panic set in and I scrambled to retrieve the radio from the kit and after a few crest ups I spotted the F-15s again about 5-6 miles away. They acknowledged they had lost sight of me. We did the vectoring process all over again and the low man came across at about 500 feet, marked my position, radioed he had me in sight, put the aircraft on autopilot and sat there, in an orbit, with eyes on me until the rescue. Now after just a little over an hour in the water my radio failed most likely as a result of the considerable salt water that it had been exposed to. I could not coax it back to life no matter what and now I truly hoped that they would not lose sight of me again. A few minutes later I heard the distinct sound of aircraft engines and a few seconds later this turboprop MU-2 Mitsubishi arrived on the scene with this big Japanese meatball flag on the side of the aircraft. I waved and they set up a rectangular pattern around me, and showed up every few minutes and each time I would wave.

Time continued to pass without any contact other than the visual with the low F-15 and the intermittent appearance of the MU-2. As the hour and a half mark passed from water entry time I thought I heard a very distinct sound and in a few seconds I knew that I was hearing the WHUP-WHUP-WHUP-WHUP of a chopper and as I crested up right out in front of me and coming dead on was this gorgeous two engine, two rotor, banana shaped chopper. I quickly found one of my day smoke flares and ignited it and saw that the chopper was descending to about 15-20 feet and approaching a hover directly above me. Again, I spotted a big Japanese meatball insignia on the belly of the chopper. The Japanese Air Self Defense Force had arrived. The noise was tremendous from the twin engines and the rotors and the associated downwash was unbelievable, but standing in the open doorway were two Japanese Para Rescue troops in very colorful wet suits. One was purple and white and the other red and yellow with aviation helmets and flippers on.

The chopper pulled into a direct overhead hover and the purple suited PJ jumped into the water. He started toward me and stopped about three feet away. Then in

typical Japanese fashion he brought out a camera and started to photograph me. Well, that brought a smile to my face even though I grasped how ironic it seemed. I wanted to be rescued not photographed! He then stowed the camera and approached me saying something. He didn't speak English and I didn't speak Japanese so we were somewhat at a loss in our efforts to communicate, and the whole situation was exacerbated by the twin jet engines and the rotors and associated downwash. In retrospect, he was asking me if I was hurt and primarily how the raft was attached to me. Communication was impossible with the language barrier, the noise, and the downwash as I was giving a pretty decent replication of "Old Faithful" every few seconds as I was guiping and expelling seawater. Then to my complete amazement he pulled out this 10 inch survival knife, swam over to the raft and started stabbing it. Of course,, he never heard any of my loud shouts of protestations like "that is my raft"! Then he dove under the water found the survival kit lanyard and sliced it in two and disconnected the remaining MD-1 kit latch. Now the chopper and the other PJ had lowered their rescue harness and he was trying to fit me into it without any success, and all the while saying "Too big, Too Big, Too Big"! There equipment is somewhat different than ours and with my inflated water wings he could not get me into the harness. Now we both are taking on water at a great rate from the downwash so he calmly un-hooked the harness from the cable and visually signaled the chopper to back off. The chopper withdrew about 200 to 300 yards and the downwash was gone and now only the sea state and getting me into the harness were issues. After a few minutes he managed to get me in the harness, secured, and then he signaled for the chopper to return. However, without the rescue harness the dangling lift cable was like a piece of limp spaghetti and was all over the place as the chopper returned to hover. We both were attempting to grab the cable, and after several attempts the PJ grabbed it, snapped the harness to it, and signaled for them to hoist me out of the water. I was winched up into the chopper almost immediately, removed from the harness and motioned to the back. Soon the purple-suited troop was back in the chopper and the crew set course for Kadena. I looked at my watch — it had been one hour and forty minutes since water entry. The red suited PJ ripped open a plastic bag and withdrew some GI style dry fatigues while motioning for me to remove my flight suit and don the dry clothes. They then started pointing at my right arm and I noticed it was bleeding rather profusely. Sometime, in the course of events, I had lacerated my arm just above

the elbow. I think I probably hit the canopy rail on the way out at ejection. They then strapped me on to a litter and performed first aid on my arm while the other PJ examined the rest of me. The purple suited troop told me "go to sleep— Kadena one hour - Kadena one hour". Then from a state of complete elation and probably more likely exhaustion I drifted off to sleep. Later on I felt someone shaking me and it was the purple suit troop trying to awaken me by telling me "Kadena five minutes — Kadena five minutes".

My arrival in front of base ops at Kadena brought out quite a large entourage. The 18TFW Commander was there as was the Wing DO, Devil Mueller, an ambulance from the Kadena Clinic with an Air Force Flight Surgeon, some Med Techs, my boss Randy Krumbach, Al Munsch, the FSI maintenance personnel and others that I am unaware of. It seemed to take quite awhile after the chopper touched down before there was any effort to remove me. However, when I was brought off on the litter and placed on the ramp the Japanese rescue crew was taking pictures again. I later came to the conclusion that they were not so much hero shots for the good work they had done, but rather a matter of documentation that showed my condition in the water when they found me and again when they delivered me. The Flight Surgeon ask if I was injured and I told her about my arm and that I had a terrible headache as a result of being hit in the forehead by the canopy. I had now realized what had happened and my helmet showed signs of significant impact. The medical types gave me a cursory check while everyone else was doing the welcome back thing. After some discussion it was determined by the flight doc to immobilize me on a board before transporting me to the clinic. I tried to tell them that was not necessary, but they insisted. I later learned from some of the FSI folks and Devil that they thought I did not look too good. After the preparations were complete and I was immobilized on the board they loaded me in the ambulance and took me to the clinic. Just after arriving at the clinic I told one of the med techs that I really had to urinate. I called him by name as he was in my bowling league and that was the first time he recognized me. Anyway, he quickly got me a relief bottle and I finally took care of that issue. What a relief — no sharks either!

The medical personnel ask me more questions and further examined me and came to the conclusion that they needed to transport me to the U. S. Naval Hospital at Camp Lester. The board I was on



**JASDF PJ administered first aid to Wyrick aboard the CH-46 chopper. (credit - Don Wyrick)**

was extremely uncomfortable and transport took about 30 minutes until I arrived at the hospital. I was immediately taken to x-ray with numerous shots taken and then a long winded consultation between the various doctors and then more x-rays were taken. All the time I was complaining that I really, really wanted to get off that board and be freed up. Then one of the docs told me that they didn't want to do that as it looked like I had a neck injury that they could not quite discern the significance of. I then told them that I had a previous ejection from an F-100 and that I thought they were looking at an old injury. Another round of x-rays with still no solid conclusion. I knew a Navy Surgeon who was assigned to the hospital and had met him a number of different times previously. Our common connection was that he had been an instructor of my son, Brett, during his surgical residency. I requested that they find him and he showed up shortly. I explained again that I thought it was a former injury they were looking at and I thought I was OK. Also, I stated that my recent activity in the big pond supported my well being. There was some more consulting and it was finally agreed to remove me from the board. There were several more questions, extremity tests, and all seemed to think that I really was OK and could be moved to a room for an overnight stay and further observation and treatment, if needed. The rest of my hospital stay was uneventful and I was released the next day and returned to flight status the following week.

There were some interesting things that accompanied this event.

(1) Al Munsch was going over my personal equipment that I brought back and the "Harley Buckle" was still on my chute harness. I knew it had

**REGISTRATION FORM  
F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION  
NINETEENTH REUNION, April 7, 8, & 9, 2013  
GOLD COAST HOTEL & CASINO, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**

**19<sup>th</sup> F-86 Sabre Pilots Association**

**Reunion April 7, 8, 9, 2013**

**Gold Coast Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada**

The 19<sup>th</sup> F-86 Sabre Pilots Association Reunion will be held again at the Gold Coast Hotel & Casino. Register early and avoid the rush. If you register after March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, a fee of \$25 will be charged. If you have to cancel, please contact President J.R. Alley at (702) 363-9880, email [alleyoop3@cox.net](mailto:alleyoop3@cox.net); or Vice President Jerry Johnson at (702) 458-7863, email [jerdot56@cox.net](mailto:jerdot56@cox.net); or Chairman of the Board Pat Hughes at (702) 870-4600, email [hugpat@aol.com](mailto:hugpat@aol.com). You may cancel up to 10:00am PST Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and get a full refund. No refunds after that date.

Making and canceling of room reservations is YOUR responsibility. You can book the room reservation by calling the Gold Coast Hotel at (888) 402-6278; or go online at <http://goldcoastcasino.com/groups>. Identify yourself as a member of the "F-86 Sabre Pilots Association" and use the group code "AF86SPA". Cut off date for room reservations using our guaranteed group discount of \$48 per day for the newly remodeled premium rooms, and \$36 per day for the Deluxe rooms, is Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013. After that date the room may cost more.

The cost of food and service has increased significantly since the 2009 and 2011 reunions, which has forced us to increase your costs. Please note the Registration Form included in this issue. There will be pay-as-you-go bars. Drink tickets will not be provided.

Sign-in starts at 10:00am, Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, followed by a Cocktail Party from 5pm to 7pm. For other events, see the Registration Form.

We will be voting on a new Board of Governors and Association President on Tuesday afternoon, so please attend the Membership Meeting. If you are interested in being on the Board of Directors or running for Association President, contact Pat Hughes at (702) 870-4600

The Super Sabre Society reunion will again be held at the Gold Coast following our reunion, beginning on ( April 2013, and continuing through April 10, 11, and 12. This will allow our members that belong to both Associations, to participate in both events.

LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
 SPOUSE/GUEST, (FIRST & LAST) \_\_\_\_\_

| EVENT   | FEE     | NO. IN PARTY | TOTALS     |
|---|---------|--------------|------------|
| <b>SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2013:</b>   |         |              |            |
| REGISTRATION: Starts at 10 AM (REQUIRED FOR ALL)                          | \$55.00 | x _____      | = \$ _____ |
| RAFFLE TICKETS (6 for \$5)  | \$5.00  | x _____      | = \$ _____ |
| COCKTAIL PARTY (5PM to 7PM)<br>Hors D' Oeuvres & Cash Bar                 | \$18.00 | x _____      | = \$ _____ |
| <b>MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2013:</b>   |         |              |            |
| NELLIS: "ACES OVER VEGAS" ( TBD)<br>(Be at Bus for Departure @ TBD)       | \$15.00 | x _____      | = \$ _____ |
| LADIES LUNCHEON ( 11:30 to 2PM)   | \$25.00 | x _____      | = \$ _____ |
| BUFFET (6PM TO 8PM) cash bar  | \$35.00 | x _____      | = \$ _____ |
| <b>TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2013:</b>  |         |              |            |
| BRUNCH (9AM to 11AM)  | \$18.00 | x _____      | = \$ _____ |
| BANQUET (6:30PM to 11pm) cash bar<br>Petite Filet Mignon & Chicken Breast | \$48.00 | x _____      | = \$ _____ |

**REUNION FEES - TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**MAKE YOUR TRAVEL AND ROOM RESERVATIONS EARLY.** Call the GOLD COAST room Reservations @ 1-888 402-6278 or web site <http://www.goldcoastcasino.com/groups>. Identify yourself with the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association and use GROUP CODE "AF86SPA" to receive the Premium \$48 room rate (Deluxe room rate - \$36.00). All reservations must be received by the GOLD COAST by Wednesday MARCH 6, 2013. Mail completed form and check to:

F-86 Sabre Pilots Association  
P.O. Box 34423  
Las Vegas, NV 89133-4423





**JASDF PJ administering first aid and making Don Wyrick comfortable for the flight back to Kadena AB, Okinawa. (credit- Don Wyrick)**

been fastened and my crew chief verified that it was fastened. Somehow it had become disconnected and thus my auto chute opening feature had been negated. We ran some tests in the cockpit and we found that while doing certain movements in the cockpit that it was possible to inadvertently disconnect the buckle. Most likely this is what happened while I was preparing to eject while attempting to stow my knee board etc. This information brought a quick modification to the securing of the "Harley Buckle".

(2) Al also found the rip cord missing. This then meant that I had activated my chute as the "Harley Buckle" was intact. I have absolutely no recollection of pulling the rip cord. Munsch gave me a ration of stuff because I had not retained the handle. I guess that is some sort of tradition. I believe it all went back to previous training of trying to beat the system and pulling the rip cord was just a reflex action. It saved being a bad statistic.

(3) The MD-1 kit was current inspection wise as was the raft inspection and inflation check. FSI maintained precise records on chute repacks, kit repacks, and water wing inspection. These items were all accomplished routinely by the 18TFW Life Support Squadron. However, the raft had not inflated properly and consequently precluded kit deployment until late in the sequence. The only explanation was a faulty CO2 bottle. However, during inspections and repack the bottles were weighed and annotated. However, the raft was long gone and no other logical conclusion was evident

(4) The aircraft sank in approximately 6,000 feet of water and was not recoverable. It was assumed that the most likely cause was a compressor



**On arrival at Kadena and awaiting the arrival of the ambulance. (Left side, top down) Don 'Devil' Mueller, 18th TFW DO; the Kadena Flight Surgeon; Kadena hospital tech. (Right, top down) Al Munsch, FSI pilot; PJ kneeling with helmet; in blue flight suit, Randy Krumbach, F-86 Det Commander; Skip Hall, 18th TFW crew chief, and me on the litter. (credit - Don Wyrick)**

rotor blade failure that catastrophically wiped out the engine. Our engines had a 400 hour life cycle time change requirement and were rebuilt by the Orenda folks in Canada.

(5) The Kadena rescue Jolly Green was being used in a training exercise at the time of the accident and did not have sufficient fuel to make the rescue. Makes one think — is there really a dedicated rescue chopper or not. I think some of their procedures were also changed subsequently.

My ejection and subsequent rescue by the Japanese Air Self Defense Force was somewhat unusual in a lot of respects. I felt deeply indebted to the rescue squadron out of Naha, Okinawa. As I learned later, there had been some conversations between the folks at Kadena and Naha over whether or not and how soon Kadena was going to launch a rescue attempt. Not that Kadena was not going to launch a rescue effort, but their chopper had to be recovered and the Jolly Green refueled before it could launch. Finally someone in the hierarchy of command at Naha seized the situation and gave the green light and launched their resources. Their responses were extremely professional in all aspects.

My gratitude prompted me to throw what I chose to call the "Dumpy Wyrick Glad to be Alive Party"! The following week I tried to contact telephonically the rescue squadron at Naha, but finally gave up



Another shot of the same individuals as the previous photo. Note the JASDF CH-46 in the background. (credit- Don Wyrick)

when the language problem became unmanageable. I then approached Mr. Jack O'shiro, the Japanese Manager of the Kadena Skooshi KOOM. The Skooshi Koom was and is, for those that are unfamiliar with it, an officer's club annex, and one of the most if not the most popular watering hole on the island. Today it is known as "Jack's Place". I explained to Jack that I wanted to throw a party for those involved in my rescue and ask him to coordinate it and set it up. I wanted all the F-15 types that had been involved, the FSI troops, and an invite to all members of the Japanese rescue squadron and their wives to attend. I told Jack that I had no idea about what kind of a menu they might like, but it was to honor them. He told me that he knew what they would want — "Steak and good Scotch"! Jack was able to coordinate the date and time and the party took place at the Skooshi KOOM about one month later. The JASDF arrived in a large military bus from Naha. Only one Japanese wife attended for whatever reason, but the rest of the squadron was there including the Para Rescue troops, aircrews, crew chiefs, et al, that I will never know. The squadron commander spoke virtually no English, and the Operations officer had a workable grasp of the language and other than that only a very few Japanese spoke any English. Of course, we, on the American side were no better at communicating. However, communications in that type of environment evolves anyway and it was a fun evening, with wonderful food, unlimited booze berries, numerous toasts, hand flying, tales of daring do, and yes I am sure some aviation exaggerations on both sides, but no one could call the other! They were wonderful guests and expressed extreme gratitude for being honored. The "Glad to be Alive Party" was a great success and I was more than happy to pay every penny of the bill. It was a cheap price to pay for what I got in return with the total tab running approximately \$1,600.00 and some change. When our FSI Corporate boss back in Austin found out about the party he said that he would spring for one half of the bill and I graciously accepted.



The Kadena flight surgeon and hospital tech preparing Don Wyrick for transport to the hospital. I am on a back board and immobilized as their were suspicions of head and neck injuries. (credit - DonWyrick)

The ejection had some residual effects on me and possibly some of it is cumulative from my previous F-100 ejection. I have some pretty significant back and neck problems, and after retirement I went to a neurologist here in Florida to see if there was anything that could be done to give me some pain relieve. He ordered a CAT scan and scheduled an appointment to review the results. At the review, he opened the discussion with you definitely have some problems and your back and neck look terrible. What happened to you? He said that my type of injuries were normally only seen in professional sports and found in mostly football players. Then came the bomb shell when he ask "how long ago did you break you neck"? So, in retrospect, the doctors on Okinawa were most likely correct that the blow to my forehead by the canopy had in fact broken my neck. The neurologist stated that I was very fortunate that there was no damage to the spinal cord and that the vertebrae had calcified and healed on their own over time without any further damage. He cautioned me to avoid any future blows to the head or auto accidents. Great medical advice ~ I can assure everyone that I endeavor to pursue that advice each and every day! However, I am indeed fortunate! One other small bit of information here. I think that I may be the oldest to eject from a jet and be recovered from a real world no bull survival situation. I was 56 years old at the time of my ejection. It had also been 19 years from my F-100 ejection to this one, and I felt with that time span I could continue with the odds on my side. I flew in that program for another five years as well as the program in Germany towing with the F-100 again.

One last note and I have told people before about this so I have no qualms about saying it here. I recognized that I was in deep trouble before my ejection with the distance from Kadena, the sea state, and the fact that I am not a strong swimmer — I can swim, but not well nor far, and 85 miles is out of my league. My very last thought and vocal expression just before I raised the handles was a short prayer— "Lord I am in thy keeping"! I think he heard me, I believe he answered!

## TRIPLE NICKEL (Aircraft #555)

By Chuck Lomax

The time was 1956. The place - 56th FIS at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. The ramp was full of shiny new F-86D-55s. The most beautiful was 'Triple Nickel'. It was General Von R. Shores personal airplane and had a 58th Air Division paint job. Triple Nickel had one serious flaw however - the engine would fail once in approximately every dozen takeoffs. She was like a very beautiful woman who had serious personality flaws.

Maintenance changed out everything - power plant, fuel controller, ect. But still the engine would fail on takeoff. I think the only thing that was original was the airframe. Needless to say only the junior pilots flew this airplane. Triple Nickel was truly cursed.

When you flew the Nickel you expected the worst and were pleasantly surprised if all went well. One dark night, on a practice intercept, taking off from runway 23R, in afterburner at low altitude, the engine failed. When an engine fails in afterburner, it feels like the airplane stops in midair. This causes ones heart to beat rapidly. Minimum altitude for ejection was 775 feet. I pushed forward on the stick to keep flying speed, then simultaneously ran through the drill - throttle to idle, emergency fuel controller On, airstart switch On. There were some tall trees off the end of 23R and a building that appeared to be some kind of warehouse. Of course, I couldn't see them in the dark but I knew they were down there somewhere lurking.

I got a 'light off' after what seemed like eternity since the ground was coming up rapidly, and brought the throttle up ever so slowly to avoid a compressor stall as the emergency fuel controller didn't have all the good stuff to avoid a compressor stall. I climbed above high key altitude (the altitude at which you could glide safely to a dead stick landing) and turned back towards Wright Patterson and landed.

56th FIS



Chuck Lomax, 56th FIS 1956. (credit - Chuck Lomax)

As I taxied to the ramp I opened the canopy and the cool night air felt good. I was very lucky. I wondered if the engine failed to start if I would have remembered to jettison my underwing stores and blown the canopy prior to a crash landing - would I have survived.

Sometime later Triple Nickel was transferred to another base where the engine failed on takeoff and killed its young pilot. Some broken, scorched trees and burnt debris marked the final resting place for Triple Nickel.

Many years later, after retiring from a major airline, I was working as a test pilot for a large airplane manufacturer. We were on our way to do some high altitude tests in a new airplane when Air Traffic Control told us to level at 14,000 for traffic. I was in autopilot and we captured our level-off altitude at a low rate of vertical speed when the airplane went into a violent porpoise. Autopilot Off, auto throttle Off and Idle, and positive 'g' forces and everything went normal. My fellow pilot had some choice comments!

As we continued to altitude I tried to duplicate the porpoise but everything was smooth as silk. The next day, during flight tests, another violent porpoise. Re-rigging and all the normal fixes didn't help one bit. It was a long, long time and a lot of tweaking before the porpoise stopped. eventually we were able to deliver the airplane to the customer. The whole experience brought back memories long ago of Triple Nickel. Do airplanes have souls? Yes, some do!

# THE PAF LOOPS 16 SABRES

By Air Chief Marshal Jamal A. Khan, PAF (Ret)

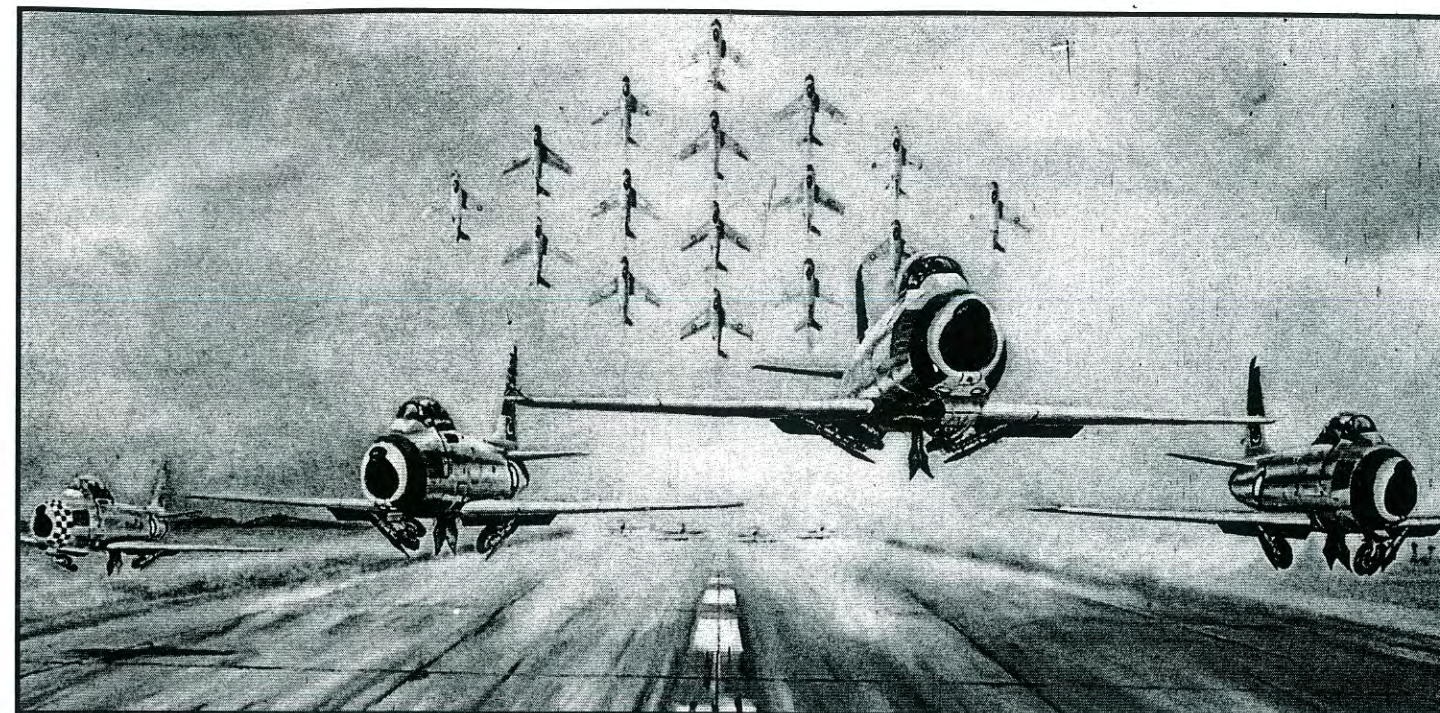
In another story for the Sabre Jet Classics, I made a mention of the "Falcons," for ten years the F86F formation aerobatic team of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). The Falcons were originally just four Sabres in 1956 but over the next two years, the team grew their number to seven and then to nine for all maneuvers including barrel rolls. I had already had the pleasure of flying as No. 2, 4 and 6 and I flew the loop as Falcon 6 - slot to the leader's right wingman. In December 1957, our air force chief asked the Falcons leader, Wing Commander (Lieutenant Colonel) "Mitty" Masud, if he could expand his team to a really impressive number for an air display that was planned to welcome the King of Afghanistan on February 2. That gave Mitty little less than four weeks of flying days but he said yes. The air chief approved his plan for flying a 16-Sabre loop as the show opener in the grand firepower and aerobatic air display for the monarch's state visit; the loop would be followed by the full sequence of aros by the core seven, when the other nine would break off. Mitty felt that he had the advantage of an already existing and well-practised team of seven around which he could expand the formation to fly the centerpiece maneuver - with a little bit of luck. Mitty happened to be a popular but hard task master and was pretty sure he could call in the luck factor by his leadership. Our special guest on the occasion, King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan, was a kindly and air-minded gentleman and a great unifier of his tribally structured country. Sadly, he was overthrown in a palace coup by his cousin in 1973 and immediately exiled, setting up events that soon installed a Soviet puppet government in Kabul and eventually triggered Moscow's 1979 Christmas invasion of his country. The U.S.-Pakistan-aided Afghan resistance eventually secured the most stunning and world-changing victory of the Cold War. But the unfilled vacuum after the defeated Red Army's ouster in 1988 also triggered a genocidal civil war, religious extremism and warlordism. A faction of former freedom fighters (Taliban) then burst upon the scene and ruled with widespread excesses in the name of religion while a horrified Pakistan appealed for moderation. Along with their U.S. and NATO allies, Pakistan and Afghanistan



**Jamal A. Khan, PAF at the time of the writing of this story. (credit - Jamal Khan)**

are today fighting a complex and hard counterinsurgency war that began with the 9/11 outrage on American soil but is actually embroiled in the competing interests and conflicting objectives of 8-10 regional and major powers. Now back to the air show for King Zahir Shah.

**Showtime, Each of the Sabres in this lineup has barely 100 hours airframe time. Several generations of PAF pilots following these young men would fly these same Sabres for another 21 years and two wars! (credit - Jamal Khan)**



**Artists rendering of the Falcons loop showing the lead elements takeoff with the symbolic 16 Sabres rising in the background. Painting by the PAF's Off-cial Aviation Artist, Group Captain M.A. Hussaini.**

For the Falcons, another advantage was that all four newly equipped F-86 squadrons were temporarily stationed at one air base near Karachi, the same at which the air display was to be held. This made it easier to pick pilots and there were virtually no logistic problems. All our Sabres had been recently delivered (complete with their 'new cockpit' smells) and the 95% in-commission rate for the 16+4 Falcons Sabres gave us the confidence to drop the (already knotty) idea of having a "master" reserve pilot. However, two additional planes were started up near each F-86 cluster to hop into if needed by any of the team pilots having trouble with his Sabre. We started engines fifteen minutes before taxi time.

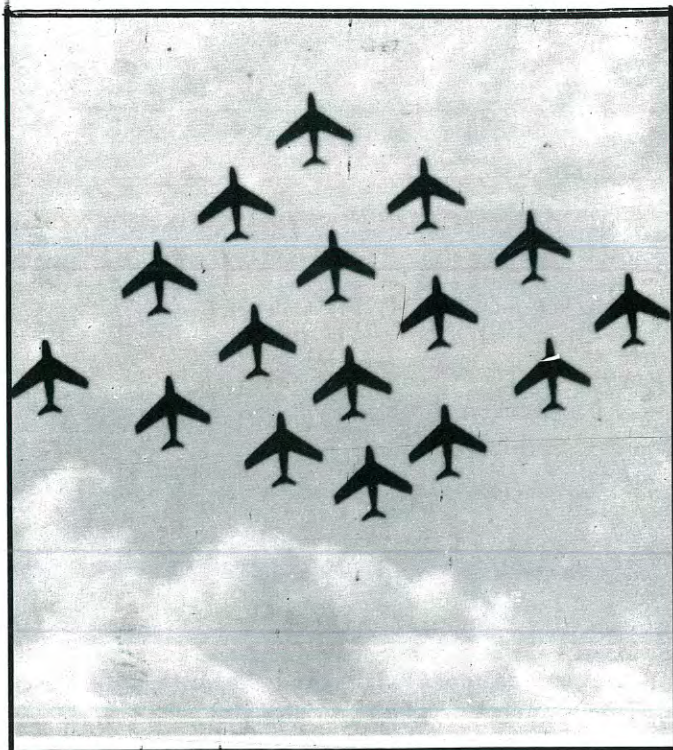
All sixteen aircrew were experienced fighter pilots but for half of them the F-86 was their first jet fighter. Their ranks and numbers ranged between Wing Commander/Lieutenant Colonel (1), Squadron Leader/Major (5) and Flight Lieutenant/Captain (10).

After a week of cluster practices in four to six F-86s by the newly inducted pilots in separate pieces of sky and after disciplining the original core of seven into rock-steady flying that could induce maximum stability within the larger formation, the sixteen flew together for the first time with just two weeks remaining for the air show date. The experience was awesome for some of the pilots,

especially those who had never flown formation aerobatic maneuvers with other planes surrounding them in all directions. The wingmen at the right and left wingtips of the large diamond of sixteen had (besides enjoying the best view, and possibly because of it) to concentrate the most for keeping well tucked in. And to power the bigger arc he was required to fly behind all his team mates, Falcon 16, the rear-most slotman of the diamond, had routinely to use 98-99% rpm to the leader's 91%. The Group Commander of our F-86 wing, himself a highly admired ultra-low level aerobatic pilot, frequently accompanied us in an RT-33, taking

**Not quite ready, the Falcon's practice the loop in January 1958. (credit - Wing Commander F.S.Hussain)**





The Falcons at the top of the loop. It is the last week in January 1958 and the Falcons team is ready.  
(credit - Wing Comander F.S Hussain)

pictures with the nose camera for the debriefings and to provide us with some very useful tips and occasional growls.

An interesting problem arose when, during one of the practice loops, a 120-gallon tank departed one of the Sabres. Spewing fuel, it rolled along the slat of the owner F-86 and then was thankfully seen to disappear in a trajectory away from the formation. The subject pilot could easily control the asymmetry through the remainder of the loop and the pilot flying his wing did not have the time even to bounce around a little because it all happened so fast. Although our sortie times would thenceforth be cut down a lot, Mitty decided we would fly even the work-up sorties in the clean configuration till show day. Mitty's briefings were characteristically crisp and very executive. We had a few exciting near misses with birds, so it was an SOP for him before each practice to scan and choose an area with the lowest bird strike potential, but he ordered us not to worry about or look for birds (a normally ingrained habit) because he was responsible for preventing bird strikes on the entire formation. While covering emergency procedures, he had briefed us early that except for the extremity wingmen, the best emergency break-away SOP for every Falcon during maneuvers should be easing forward on the stick to get clear as the first step,

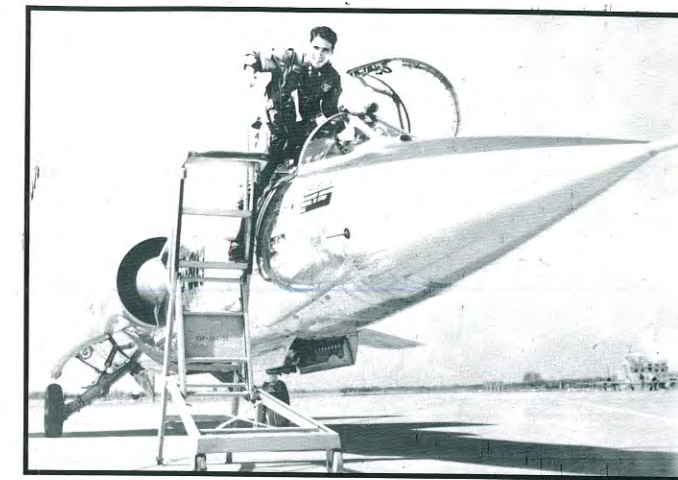
regardless of the airplane attitude or altitude. After a fruitless crewroom debate to find a better alternative to this separation policy, one of the pilots asked Mitty the next morning what maneuver he should perform if the formation happened to be still headed down out of a loop. "One," shot back Mitty, "Push on the stick to separate. Two, orientate. Three, use good judgment," as he turned with barely a withering pause to other matters.

After the 50-plane firepower and aerobatic display before 20,000 spectators was over, King Zahir Shah insisted on meeting the air show pilots in visible and happy acknowledgement of the honor accorded to him by Pakistan. I too shook hands with the king at the formal lunch. I did not know then that I would meet him again thirty years later in Rome (but more regularly and discreetly), where he lived in exile under the protection of the Italian government, and I served as my country's ambassador. The King returned a frail 87 to Kabul in 2002, still fervently beseeching his people to shun religious intolerance and to return to peace and stability. He died in 2007 and many Afghans told me they were convinced that their country's misfortunes began with his exile.

The correspondent of London's Flight International magazine who attended the air show later wrote in an illustrated article that the PAF's 16-aircraft loop was a first but many of us felt instinctively that the honor would be short-lived. Sure enough, Britain's RAF set out immediately to better our record and its 111 Squadron's Black Arrows did so with twenty-two Hunters within the year.

The pilots of the core Falcons' team continued to fly in their periodic air shows in combinations of four-to-nine Sabres in the years that followed while their other loop colleagues returned to their squadrons. Later many of them were to fly the much loved F-86 in two wars, in which they achieved a dominating cumulative kill ratio of 1:5.6 in air combat. Sadly, the last of the PAF's Sabres had to be retired by 1979. In 1982, Pakistan purchased through a commercial contract its first F-16As and Bs, arguably the only fighters that could rightly be called the Sabre's true incarnation in compactness, agility and sheer pleasure of piloting. The fleet has recently grown to include some F16Cs and Ds as well, and the PAF pilots are flying them in a highly unconventional and intensely challenging counterinsurgency environment in alliance with the United States and its other NATO partners.

**Note:** The contributor (at the time of this story holding a captain's rank) had checked out in the F-86F in 1956 at Williams AFB, AZ, and would fly the F-86 for the next eighteen years, including (on weekends) the three years that he was an F-104 Squadron Commander. Such bargains were usually struck by offering his F-86 counterparts Mach 2 rides in his F-104Bs! The air marshal was the operations chief and the commander of the PAF during the most intense period (1982-1987) of the anti-Soviet resistance in Afghanistan. He retired in 1988.



The author as Squadron Commander of no. 9 Squadron, flying F-104s, in 1964. (credit - PAF Official)

The Best of Times - 30 July 1953 at Kimpo AB. Major Foster Lee Smith (L) and Capt. Ralp Parr ~ celebrate the news of the Truce being signed in Korea, with Capt. Clyde Curtin in the cockpit. Capt. Parr had 10 victories by that date, Capt. Clyde Curtin had 5, and Maj. Smith ended with 4 \_ . (credit - USAF)





The Black Diamonds team going to their aircraft for a demonstration at RAAF Pearce. Note the smoke pipe extending from mid-fuselage of the near Sabre. (credit - Joe Turner)

## FLYING WITH THE BLACK DIAMONDS

By: Joe 'Turkey' Turner.

The Black Diamonds were the official air demonstration team of the Royal Australian Air Force from November 1962 until sometime in the Fall of 1964. In the fighter squadrons of the RAAF there had been several unofficial, but sanctioned teams in the past - but none had existed for several years.

At the time the Black Diamonds were formed, I had been on Exchange Duty since April 1962, holding the position of A Flight Commander and Operations Officer. B Flight Commander was Squadron Leader Vance Drummond, with Wing Commander C.D. Murphy as RAAF Base Williamstown, New South Wales, Australia. Unlike the USAF Thunderbirds and US Navy Blue Angels, the pilots in the Black Diamonds practice sessions and air demonstrations were in addition to their regular duties in the squadron. The Acrojets, the first USAF Jet acrobatic team at Williams Field, Arizona in the late 1940s operated the same way. I know because I flew with them in Lockheed P-80s.

In mid-October 1962, RAAF Operational Command directed no. 81 Wing to put a team together and give a local "test demonstration" about 1 November! No. 75 Squadron selected SqdnLdr Drummond as Leader, and I was made Solo Pilot. All the squadron pilots were offered the chance to volunteer for tryouts as wingmen. SqdnLdr Drummond flew each volunteer through a full show routine at a safe altitude, one at a time. Selections were made after a week. Then the team went on a 'three-a-day' for the next week, working the altitude to a lower level.

During this time we were issued new flying suits and my wife and I dyed them black in our washing machine. She then sewed the diamonds for the front of the suits.

Operational Command approved the routine without any changes. During the next 19 months, we flew 35 to 40 shows from Hobart, Tasmania in the south, to Darwin, Northern Territory, and to Sydney, New South Wales on the east coast, to Perth, Western Australia. The most memorable show was for Queen Elizabeth at Hobart during the Queen's Regatta. I didn't meet the Queen (I did see her drive by in town three times.), but did meet her husband on two different occasions at Hobart and again at Perth.

In April 1963, Wing Commander Murphy was transferred out and I was honored by being given the duty of Temporary Officer Commanding. In April 1964, I was replaced by Wing Commander C.G. Thomas, and finished the remaining three months of my tour as no. 81 Wing Operations Officer. No. 75 Squadron started conversion to the French Mirage later that year.

Major Joe 'Turkey' Turner, USAF at RAAF Williamsport 1962 (credit - Joe Turner)



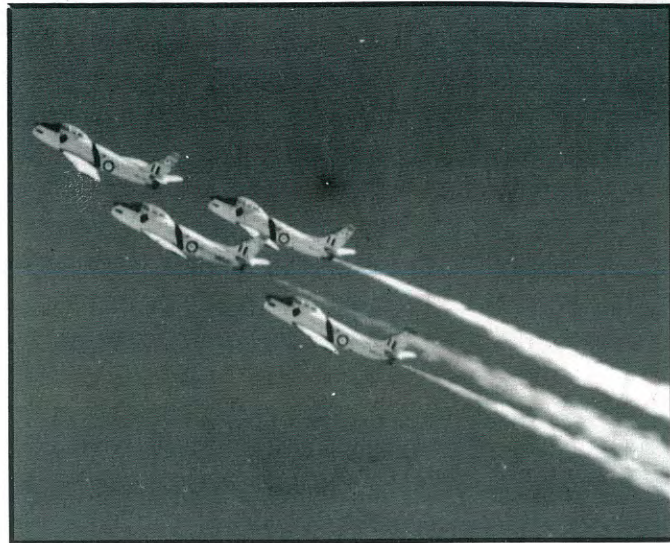
The Black Diamonds team in July 1963. (L-R) F/O Roger Lowery - Left Wing; F/O Dick Waterfield Right Wing; Sq/Ldr Vance Drummond - Lead; Major Joe Turner - Solo; F/O Bruce Gramson - Slot; and F/O Bruce Carter - Narrator and PIO. (credit - Joe Turner)

Major Joe Turner's Sabre with the Black Diamonds. A good set of eyes can read his name under the windscreen. (credit - Larry Davis coll.)



The Black Diamonds team get ready to enter the cockpit at RAAF Pearce in September 1963. Note the RAF Vulcan strategic bomber in the background. (credit - Joe Turner)





The Black Diamonds entering a tight Diamond Roll to the left. Everyone viewing the Diamonds said they put on a great show. (credit - Joe Turner)

The Black Diamonds aircraft was the Avon Sabre mk. 32, manufactured by Commonwealth Aircraft Co. in Australia. It was slightly larger in the fuselage than a standard F-86F, with a longer wingspan, no slats, and was powered by the British Orenda engine that had a 7500 lb. thrust engine, with a self-contained starter and the tach was in RPM instead of percent. Armament was two 30mm cannon and the Aim-9 Sidewinder missile. It was a very nice machine to fly and superior to the F-86H according to the stats.

I know there were F-86 aerobatic teams in the USAF, USAFE, and Air Guard back in the good old days. Maybe someone will remember and tell us about them.

The Black Diamonds at Kalgoorlie, W.A. on the way west to Perth for Air Force Week display at RAAF Pearce in September 1963. (The Diamonds flew at least 40 demonstrations before being disbanded in late 1964. credit - Joe Turner)



The Diamonds coming down on the backside of a loop at RAAF Richmond on 20 June 1963. The Diamonds put on the show for the USAF Air Academy students. (credit - Joe Turner)

## Korean War Aces

*Major William H. Wescott*

Major William Wescott - Five MiG-15s destroyed and two damaged. During World War 2, Wescott flew A-24s in the Aleutian Campaign, and then flew A-20s with the 417th BG(L) in New Guinea. In February 1952, Maj. Wescott arrived at Suwon and was assigned to the 25th FIS. On 1 April 1952, Maj. Wescott shot down two MiG-15s near Sinuiju. He got his second double victory on 13 April, when he shot another pair of MiG-15s down near Anju. He made Ace on 26 April with his 5th MiG-15. In June 1952, he became 39th FIS Commander. In 1955, he joined North American Aviation as a test pilot.

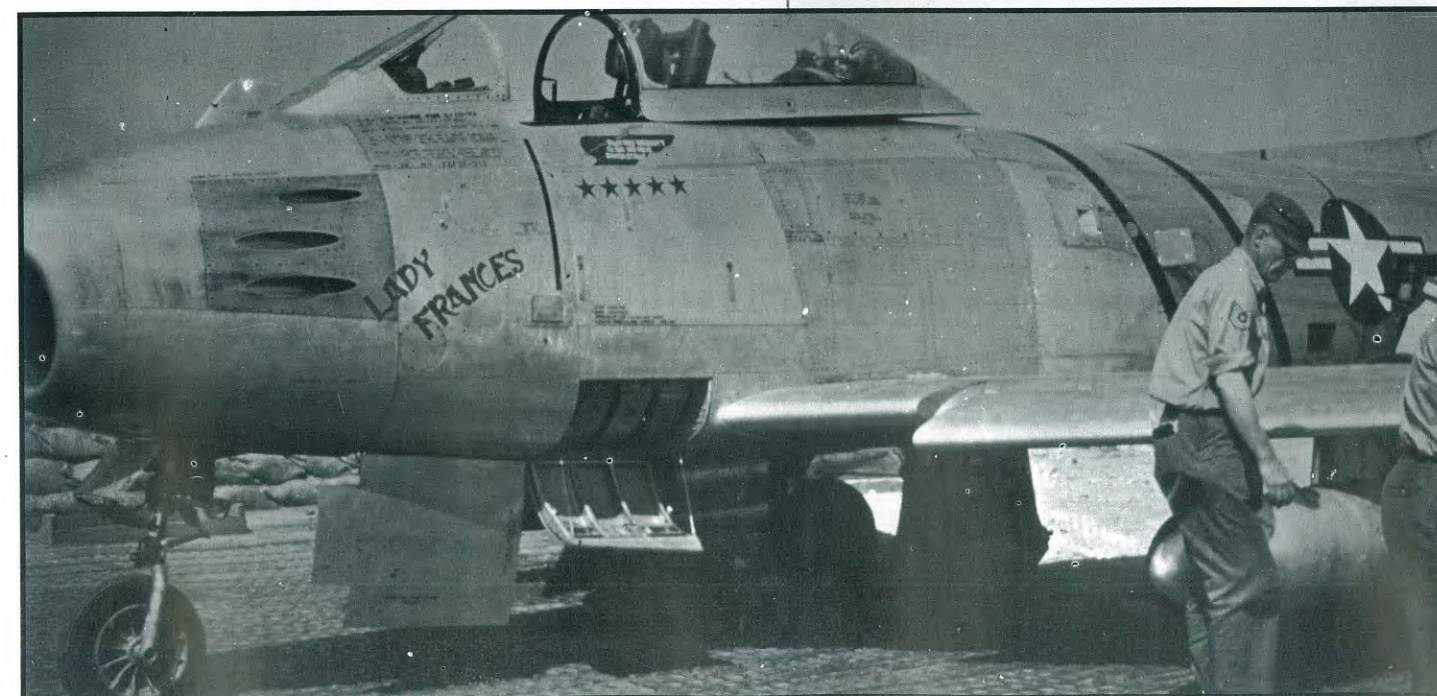


Maj. William Wescott, Suwon 1952 (credit - USAF)

Major Bill Wescott talks with Maj. Crabtree and Capt. Robinson following a mission in May 1952. (credit- Larry Davis coll.)



Maj. Wescott flew F-86E #51-2746 named "Lady Frances" when he made Ace in Korea. It must have been a good Sabre as Col. Francis Gabreski also flew the "Lady" to Acedom. However, the airplane carried Maj. Wescott's name on the crew block under the canopy and the five victories belong to Bill Wescott. (credit - H. Ross Colins)



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**What Is It? This F-86A-5 is one of the first Sabres delivered to the 1st Fighter Group at March AFB, CA in early 1949. With the tail markings of the "Sabre Dancers" aerobatic team, the aircraft might belong to either the 27th, 71st, or 94 Squadrons, as it is unclear what squadron the Sabre Dancers were assigned to. This Sabre now belongs to the Golden Apple Trust. (credit - John Henderson)**

