

Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 21, Number 1

Spring 2013



*Inside - F-86L/T-33 Collision pt. 2,
Joe McConnell - Triple Jet Ace,
Outrunning a Hurricane,
More!*

Publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

SabreJet Classics

volume 21, number 1
Spring 2013

Contents

- 3 president's notebook
Folded Wings
- 4 from the editor
email addresses
- 5to the editor
- 7 The Nylon Letdown
by Paul Kepler
- 10 Capt. Joseph McConnell
Triple Jet Ace
- 16 Outrunning A Hurricane
by RY Costain
- 18 this 'n that
- 19 Sabre Reunions
- 20 What Is It?

(front cover) A F-86D from the 496th FIS
based at Landstugl AB, Germany,
unleashes a volley of 2.75" HVAR rockets
during a live fire exercise in the late 1950s.
(credit - Jim Elliot)

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.

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the president's notebook

I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a wonderful holiday season. By the time this issue gets to you winter should be breaking around the country and we can look forward to nice Spring weather. With that it will be April and reunion time for 2013.

Later, I will talk more about our reunion in April. First I would want to say with sadness that many more of our brothers have made their last flight and folded their wings as you will notice in this Folded Wings section of our magazine. To see the magnitude of our members who have Flown West, look at the Folded Wings page on our web site sabre-pilots.org. When I wrote my comments for the Fall Issue of the Classics that was before Boots Blesse made his last flight on October 31, 2012. Since then Ralph Parr lost his battle with cancer and fought a great fight until December 7, 2012. They were two of the greatest fighter pilot warriors, leaders and true American Patriots our country, has produced! Their accomplishments may never be surpassed.

In another vane, Lon Walter has found it necessary to step down as a Director of our Board. Lon became a Director in 1994 and has served admirably for these many years. Additionally, Lon has been a very, prolific writer for our Sabre Jet Classics. He has written over eight Sabre stories: Checking

Out in the Sabre in the Old Days, Air-to-Ground in the F-86A, into the Eye of the Hurricane, Mission to Mukden, Who Were Those Masked Men and more. Additionally, Lon assisted Larry Davis for many years as an Assistant Editor for the Classics. Lon, we will miss your guidance on the Board and certainly your Sabre stories. Since you will still be an active member maybe you can come up with just one more Sabre story, for us.

As for our present Board of Directors, other than Lon, all have agreed they would like to continue for another term. When we lose a Director we always wonder who will step up and take the challenge to replace him. I am pleased to let you know that Dan Druen has expressed his desire to re-join us on the Board. Along with anyone else who would like to compete for Lon's position, we will vote on that at the reunion business meeting.

Now, to my next subject and one Larry Davis and I harp on continually. Gentlemen, we are getting into serious territory for lack of stories for the Classics. As I write this, I haven't read what Larry Davis has pleaded in his editors comments, but there is no doubt he is asking for help. He is down to his last story to publish. Without help from you we might have to make some major adjustments to the frequency of issues we publish. In my discussions with many of you, some tell me you have a story that should be told, but just haven't gotten it

written. If ever there was a time to write your story, it is now. As Larry has said over and over, you don't have to be a polished writer. Get it basically down on paper, send it off to Larry with some pictures and he will do the rest. You all have children and grand children who would love to read their dad's and granddad's fighter pilot stories. The Sabre Jet Classics is a great vehicle to make that happen. Don't let those great ideas and stories fade away and be forgotten.

By the time you receive this issue, we will be in the final lap before Reunion 18 is upon us. It certainly is shaping up to be a great one. Nellis is bending over backwards to make our "Aces Over Vegas" an outstanding event. Air Combat Command has approved the F-22 Demo Team to perform for us on Tuesday the 9th of April. With that said, we won't really know until our congressmen and administration resolve the fiscal cliff sequestration issue. A huge money cut will be a definite game changer. However, the Weapons School will still give us a great effort as they always do as the "Best of the Best."

Now, it is time for me to sign-off. Looking forward to seeing many of you at the reunion and for those I don't get to see have a wonderful Spring. Write a Story for us!

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

J.R. Alley
President

FOLDED WINGS

Robert P. Appel, November 12, 2011

Francis "Frank" L. Bates, November 29, 2012

MajGen. Frederick C. "Boots" Blesse,
October 31, 2012

Otis L. Bonner, 2012

Archie P. Buie, February 12, 2013

Jack G. Burwell, July 25, 2012

James A. Carter, April 7, 2010

William H. Champion, August 18, 2011

Thomas J. Colette, 2012

Ray Cresswell, January 1, 2011

John W. Dawson, February 21, 2013

Max P. Dean, September 21, 2012

Jefferson L. Dibrell, September 14, 2012

Richard P. Franklin, December 25, 2004

Ronald E. Jones, February 14, 2013

David W. Menard, February 5, 2013

John W. Oshant, December 25, 2012

Armand J. Parker, 2012

Ralph S. Parr, December 7, 2012

Harry Eldon Payne, January 10, 2013

Samuel R. Porter, June 11, 2011

Harry V. Runger, May 17, 2012

POLICY STATEMENT

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from the editor

Well guys, I have sad news and more sad news. First is the fact that I will miss all you guys at the Reunion this year. I have a new doctor and he was just a bit leary of my going all that distance alone. He's sure there's nothing wrong with me but.... So have a good time for me.

Second, we lost a lot more members since the last issue of Sabrejet Classics, including two that were very close to me over the many years- LtGeneral Frederick "Boots" Blesse, and Col. Ralph Parr. Ralph and I shared my times over the years and he was one of the closest of my friends in the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. I will miss them both.

Lastly, I lost my very good friend, and the guy known throughout the writing community as "Mr. Air Force" - David Menard. Many of you are familiar with Dave as he made contact with as many of you as possible over the years, to share stories and photos. Dave was an enlisted man during his 20 years in the Air Force. Then went on to work in Restoration and Research at the US Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson AFB in 1974. If there was anything you wanted to know about Air Force operations or organization, Dave was the man to talk to. Many times he would correct me on something that appeared in Sabrejet Classics. His knowledge and memory were impeccable. I have already needed his help with an item in this issue and was sad that I could not call on him for the answer.

And finally, after a computer crash that wiped out my hard drive and all the saved stories and photos contained there in, I now have virtually no stories for use in the next issue. Which is why this issue is so late. We, JR and I, had to do some scrambling to get this issue into print. So Please, send me any stories you might have been thinking about. We now need them more than ever.

That's all for now
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To the editor

from Drury Callahan

A few comments about the picture on page 10 (vol. 20-3) of the 514th FIS F-86s overflying Big Ben.

I was flying Left Wing in the lead flight. Lead was the CO of the 514th, LtCol. George Hubler. Flying the Slot was Capt. Harold Laroche. I don't remember the others. The flight on the left was from the 513th FIS. And the one on the right was from the unit at RAF Bentwaters. At the time of the flyby, we, the 514th, were still converting to the F-86D and didn't have enough aircraft to put up the full 12 ship formation, thus had to use other squadrons aircraft and pilots.

We practiced for 10-12 days. Timing over the IP, the end of the Southend-On-Sea pier, had to be within 30 seconds, as there were other flights ahead of and behind us at one minute intervals. The flyby was to take place regardless of weather. It went from the IP straight down White Hall past the reviewing stand where it was watched by the Queen, about 35 miles. Because visibility could be a problem, flare pots were spaced on the ground at 2-3 mile intervals. We made it right on time.

The photo of us passing Big Ben was taken by a British civilian in the crowd, who tracked us down and gave each of us a copy. We were told at the time that we were the first American unit to be honored by flying in the Battle of Britain Flyby. I can't verify that but certainly feel honored to have participated.

From Sue Overton

Sad news to report. Dolph Overton is in hospice here in Georgetown, SC, where we have planned to live. He had another stroke on January 25th, and was at Wake Hospital in Raleigh, NC for about five weeks. We moved to a rehab situation down here in Georgetown, where our son DD and his wife have settled down. Anyway, instead of getting better, Dolph's situation has worsened. We have a lot of support and we are in the right place with many friends and relatives nearby. All the best to you guys.

Dolph Overton and his wife Sue at the American Aces banquet. Dolph was an ace in Korea with 7 victories.





What Is It? This is the photo from vol. 20-3 on the back cover. The significance of the photo is the photo was taken in April or May 1949 and shows the lineup of the first F-86As that were assigned to the 4th Fighter Group at Langley Field, VA.. The 4th Fighter Group was the second unit to convert to the F-86 Sabre. (The first unit was the 1st FG that guarded the North American plant in Los Angeles.) Within eighteen months, the 4th would take many of these same aircraft to a "short TDY in a temperate climate" called Korea. Yeh Right! (credit- North American Aviation)

This photo is a close-up of the new plaque identifying the members of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association that contributed to making the new National Air & Space's new Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center's Wall Of Honor a complete success. Under the artwork is the list of Sabre Aces from the Korean War. Standing in front of the entire airfoil bearing all of our names, is (L-R) Glenn Carus, Gen. Jack Dailey- Director of the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum, Arnold Braswell, and Earl Brown. Credit - Conor Christian and Kelly Bloom)



Dedicated to all the F-86 pilots who, though heavily outnumbered, battled for and took control of the air over North Korea during the Korean War.

When the first MiG-15s appeared in the skies over North Korea in late 1950, they were vastly superior in performance to the United Nations aircraft then in use there. In response the U.S. Air Force rushed three F-86 squadrons to South Korea, later to be expanded to four wings. Vastly outnumbered in the beginning, the Sabre pilots took on their adversaries, flying fighter sweeps along the Yalu River border between China and North Korea, known as MiG Alley, and flying cover for fighter-bombers attacking North Korean targets. The MiGs flew from sanctuary bases in China, which were not allowed to be attacked.

The MiG-15 and the F-86 were roughly equal in air performance. The MiG could climb and accelerate faster and had a more lethal gun package. The F-86 was more maneuverable at high speeds, had a better gunsight and had much longer range. Sabre pilots were better trained, and they adapted to high altitude air combat better than their adversaries, devising air tactics that provided greater flexibility and initiative. By the end of the war the ratio of total confirmed F-86 kills to losses was exceptionally high.

The Sabre Pilots Association honors all who flew F-86 combat missions in the Korean War. Meriting special recognition are the following Sabre pilots who attained "Ace" status by destroying five or more enemy aircraft in aerial combat during the war.

Captain Joseph C. McConnell	18 Victories	Colonel Francis S. "Gabby" Gabreski	40 Victories
Major James Jabara	15 Victories	Lieutenant Colonel George L. Jones	31 Victories
Captain Manuel J. "Pete" Fernandez	14 1/2 Victories	Major Wilton W. Marshall	29 Victories
Captain George A. Davis	14 Victories	Major John F. Bolt	28 Victories
Colonel Royal N. "King" Baker	13 Victories	First Lieutenant James H. Kaster	6 Victories
Major Frederick C. "Boots" Blease	10 Victories	Captain Robert J. Love	6 Victories
First Lieutenant Harold E. Fischer	10 Victories	Major William T. Whittier	5 1/2 Victories
Colonel James K. Johnson	10 Victories	Colonel Robert B. Baldwin	5 Victories
Captain Lonnie R. Moore	10 Victories	Captain Richard S. Becker	5 Victories
Captain Ralph S. Parr	10 Victories	Major Stephen L. Bettinger	5 Victories
Lieutenant Colonel Vermont Garrison	10 Victories	First Lieutenant Charles G. Cleveland	5 Victories
Captain Cecil G. Foster	9 Victories	Major Richard D. Coughlin	5 Victories
First Lieutenant James F. Low	9 Victories	Captain Clyde A. Curtin	5 Victories
Major James P. Hagerstrom	8 1/2 Victories	Captain Ralph D. "Hoot" Gibson	5 Victories
Major Robinson Riser	8 Victories	Captain Ives C. Kincheloe	5 Victories
Lieutenant Colonel George I. Ruddell	8 Victories	Captain Robert T. Latham	5 Victories
First Lieutenant Henry Butelensson	7 Victories	Captain Robert H. Moore	5 Victories
Captain Clifford D. Jolley	7 Victories	Captain Dolphin D. Overton	5 Victories
Captain Leonard W. Lilley	7 Victories	Colonel Harrison R. Thyng	5 Victories
Major Donald E. Adams	6 1/2 Victories	Major William Wesscott	5 Victories



The 331st Squadron Commander's F-86L in May 1957. The 330th and 331st Squadrons were both based at Stewart AFB, NY at the time and had just completed conversion into the SAGE equipped F-86L. (credit - Marty Isham Collection)

THE NYLON LETDOWN

By Paul Kepler

(editors note: This article is in response to one printed in vol 20-3 - "Eight Seconds To Go!., regarding an inflight collision between a T-33 target tug and an F-86D interceptor. No sooner had that issue gone to press than we received this 'answer' from the pilot in the F-86D).

On July 17th, 1958, four of us in F-86L jet fighters took off for a practice mission just south of our base at Newburgh, NY. We followed each other off the runway, which provided 5 miles separation between aircraft. As was the practice at that time, we were carrying 24 live rockets in the tray. Due to a malfunction in the fire control system, my rocket pod dropped down into the firing position. With the rockets being 'live', I turned toward an unpopulated area and raised the pod back into the airplane. I then got back into trail behind the other aircraft and climbed on up to 40,000 feet.

Now our radar and fire control systems were tubetype and malfunctioned often and in numerous ways. One common problem was when the steering dot directed us on a so-called 'submarine course'. The radar display was located on the instrument panel with a rubber hood extending back toward the pilot. The pilots called it the "bucket". When the 'submarine course' occurred, the dot went down on the screen for a time and then back up. During this cycle, we steered the plane down and up to try and 'center the dot'. This was the problem I was having on this particular mission.

The target plane was a T-33 trainer flown by two pilots from my squadron. On my attack run, with my head in the 'bucket', it looked to the target plane like we were on a collision course. And because of my upward angle toward the T-33, they told me to break it off. When I looked up from my radar, I saw that we indeed were on a collision course. Since I was on a sharp upward angle in very thin air, I figured the quickest way to avoid hitting

the T-33 was to flip over and go under him. Unfortunately, they decided to push down on the stick at the same time I tried to go under them. BANG! we ran together. It was like walking down the street toward another person and you both stepped to the same side to avoid contact and ended up face to face. This occurred at about 38,000 feet My speed was about 600 mph.

As a result of the collision, my wings came off, my tail came off, and the cockpit lit up like a smoking Christmas tree. I was going through some hellish gyrations and remember thinking to myself that I was going down with the airplane. I knew I had to get out, but my arms, head and legs were all gyrating out of control. With great strength (Thank you God!) I was able to grab hold of the armrests and pull them up to blow the canopy. Then for a split second, I couldn't understand why the seat didn't eject. Again, with great strength, I got my hands back on the armrests where the ejection trigger was located, and pulled it. The seat and I shot out into the blue. I knew I had to use the parachute, but we were taught that opening at high speed could break our neck or tear the chute completely off your body. Furthermore, I knew the chute was supposed to open automatically at about 15,000 feet, so at this time I started worrying about other things.

Right after separation from the seat, which is automatic, I was spinning like a top. The natural reaction in this situation is to coil up into the fetal position - arms and legs tucked in tight as possible. That's how I was. To stop the spin, we were trained to stretch out the hands and legs like you see skydivers do. I thought, this is all well and good but what if the chute slips off when I do. I quickly realized that I had to stop the spinning or it would render me unconscious. It took more nerve to do this than anything I had ever done. But when I straightened out my arms and legs the spinning stopped. On my leg was an oxygen bottle which was supposed to shoot oxygen up through a hose into my face mask that was attached to my helmet. I activated it by pulling a little 'green apple' attached to the bottle.

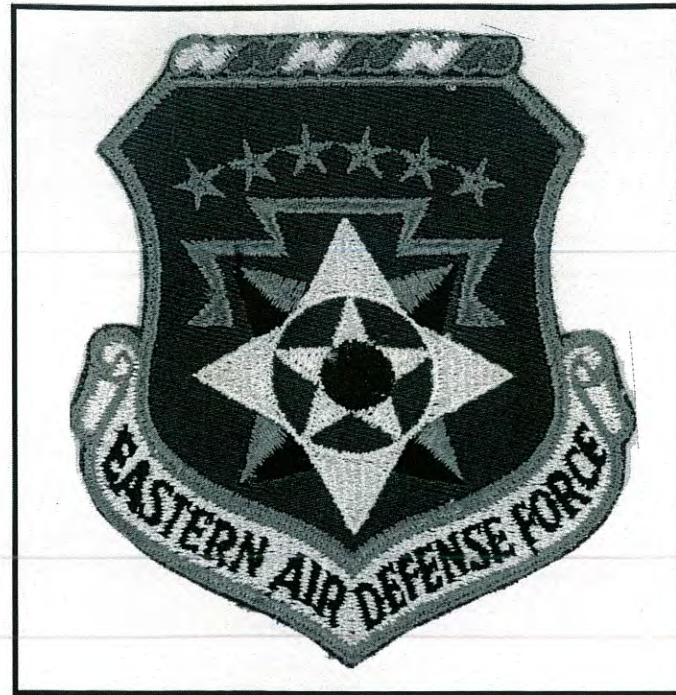
However, the helmet had blown off when I ejected. And I pulled the 'green apple' activator before I realized that my helmet was gone. And I didn't have the presence of mind to stick the hose in my mouth. I then began to worry about staying conscious long enough to open my chute in case the automatic feature didn't work. Maybe I better go ahead and open it now just in case I did pass out. Meanwhile, I'm freefalling through the air like a bullet. My rate of fall had declined since I'd stretched out my hands and legs, so the chute shouldn't jerk me too violently or tear off. I stuck my thumb under the D-ring to be ready to pull, and at that moment the chute opened itself.

It was absolutely the most beautiful sight in the world to look up and see that huge red and white canopy above me. All of a sudden, my 125 mph descent had slowed to 5-10 mph. And I had a pretty spectacular view for 50 miles in every direction. Then, out of the sky above me, came an object that looked like another person falling. I was sure it was one of the pilots from the T-Bird I had collided with. However, it went right on by and no chute opened. I felt sick. But I later discovered that it was my own ejection seat. I had beat it down to 15,000 feet.

My next concern was landing. There were trees everywhere I looked, except for a big lake - the Ashokan Reservoir. I didn't like the idea of landing in the trees since my family jewels could take a nasty beating if I ended up straddling a limb. After all, I'd only been married a scant few weeks. I tried to steer for the lake as I was still wearing my life preserver. But my steering efforts were in vain. I tried repeatedly to climb up the risers to spill air from one side to no avail.

There were a lot of people watching me descend. I could see them and hear sirens and see ambulances coming to where I was going to land. Of course, I landed in the woods. My chute caught a high branch and I was lowered to the ground very gently

F-86Ls on line at Stewart AFB in 1958. The tail markings are a combination of the 330th and 331st Squadrons that were used when the squadron maintenance requirements were combined into a CAMRON - Combined Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. (credit- USAF)



as if God were controlling the strings. I had a gouge on my leg from hitting something on the way out of the airplane. But otherwise was in good shape. Within seconds of my touching the ground, there were people asking if I was OK. I overheard one person exclaim - "Look how calm and collected he is." A Deputy Sheriff took me in his car to an old country doctor in Kingston, NY. He found very little wrong with me. About that time a stark realization came over me of what had happened and that there might be loss of lives. Now I was no longer 'calm and collected'. I became very nervous.

The doctor offered me a shot of whiskey but I told him I was still on duty and refused the drink. He then gave me a 'Milltown'



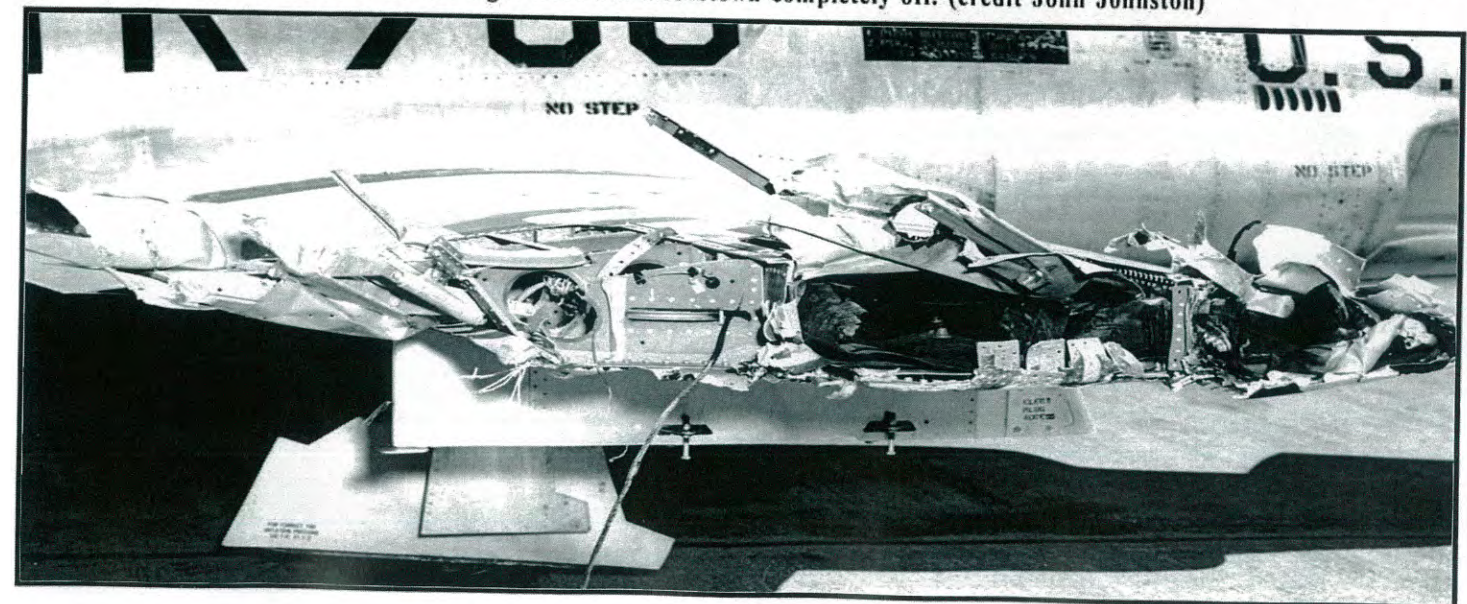
This is the photo of the T-33 trainer/target tug flown by John Johnston and reported in Sabrejet Classics vol. 20-3. The collision took off about 4 feet of wing but Johnston brought it back to Stewart for a safe landing. (credit - John Johnston)

(old type tranquilizer) which I took and which really worked. I became calm and confident. Then I called the base and was informed the target plane had returned to the field and landed OK. About four feet of one wing was missing but they were able to land. Within an hour a helicopter landed in a cloverleaf on the NY Thruway and returned me to base. Thanks to good training, a strong will to survive, and a lot of help from the Almighty, I returned home safely. My new wife was very happy to see me still in one piece.

Close up of the damage to the vertical and horizontal tail on Johnston's T-Bird. (credit John Johnston)



The right wing of Johnston's T-33A sustained most of the damage from the collision with Kepler's F-86L, losing over 4 feet in span as well as the right tip tank. The access door on the right nose was also blown completely off. (credit John Johnston)



Captain Joseph McConnell Triple Jet Ace

Joseph M. McConnell, Jr, 'Mac' to his friends, was born in Dover, NH on 30 January 1922. McConnell joined the US Army in 1940 and signed up for the fledgling Army Air Corps. But he ended up in the Medical Corps. He kept trying until he finally got into flight training in 1943. But again, he washed out and was sent to Navigator School as a 2nd Lt. in October 1944. He was assigned to the 448th Bomb Group in January 1945 in B-24s, where he flew 60 missions. Mac reapplied for Pilot Training in 1946 and became a Pilot at Williams Field, AZ, in February 1948.

When the war broke out in Korea on 26 June 1960, Mac was flying fighters in Alaska. He made several attempts to get orders sending him to Korea but didn't make it until September 1952, when he had 931 hours as a First Pilot. Mac was assigned to the 16th Fighter Squadron at K-13, Suwon AB, as part of the veteran 51st Fighter Interceptor Group. He was later transferred into the 39th FIS.

He would fly "wing" as one of the new guys, and wouldn't get a crack at a MiG until 14 January 1963, when he was credited with a Damage and a Victory near the Yalu River in Northwest Korea. A little over a month later, on 16 February he made Ace with 5 MiG kills. Everything seemed to be going Mac's way until after his 8th victory on 12 April. He got the MiG but a MiG also got Mac, who was forced to punch out into the Yellow Sea. He was rapidly picked up by helicopter and flown back to Suwon. His remarks - "Do you think we can make it back before the afternoon mission?"

Twelve days later, Mac, now a Captain, made Double Jet Ace when he shot down his 10th MiG-15 on 24 April. On 16 May, Mac had 13. On the morning mission of 18 May, Mac was credited with another kill and another Damage. That made 14. During the

The last Beauteous Bitch II on the parking ramp at Suwon on 19 May 1953, showing the full score of Capt. McConnell following his triple victories on 18 May that made him the first Triple Jet Ace in Korea. Note the worn paint on the nose after many high mach combats in MiG Alley. (credit Fred Chapman)

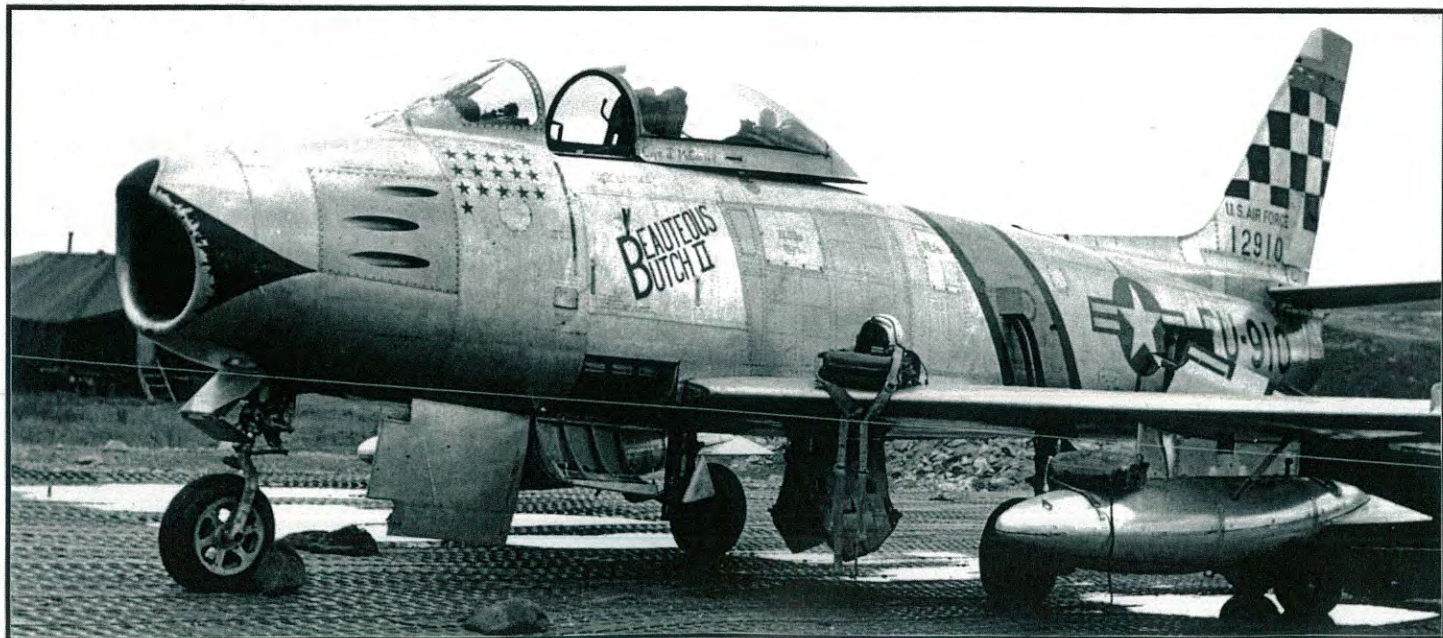


Capt. Joe McConnell, D Flight Commander, 39th FIS, Korea 1953. (credit Dean Abbott)

afternoon mission Mac scored twice more and landed back at Suwon with a total of 16 MiG kills. It had been a long day. Mac was the first Triple Jet Ace in Air Force history.

5th Air Force immediately grounded Mac from further combat, and ordered him home. His final score was 16 MiG-15s shot down, with 5 more Damaged. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and three Air Medals.

After a whirlwind tour of the United States, including a visit to the White House to be greeted by President Dwight Eisenhower,

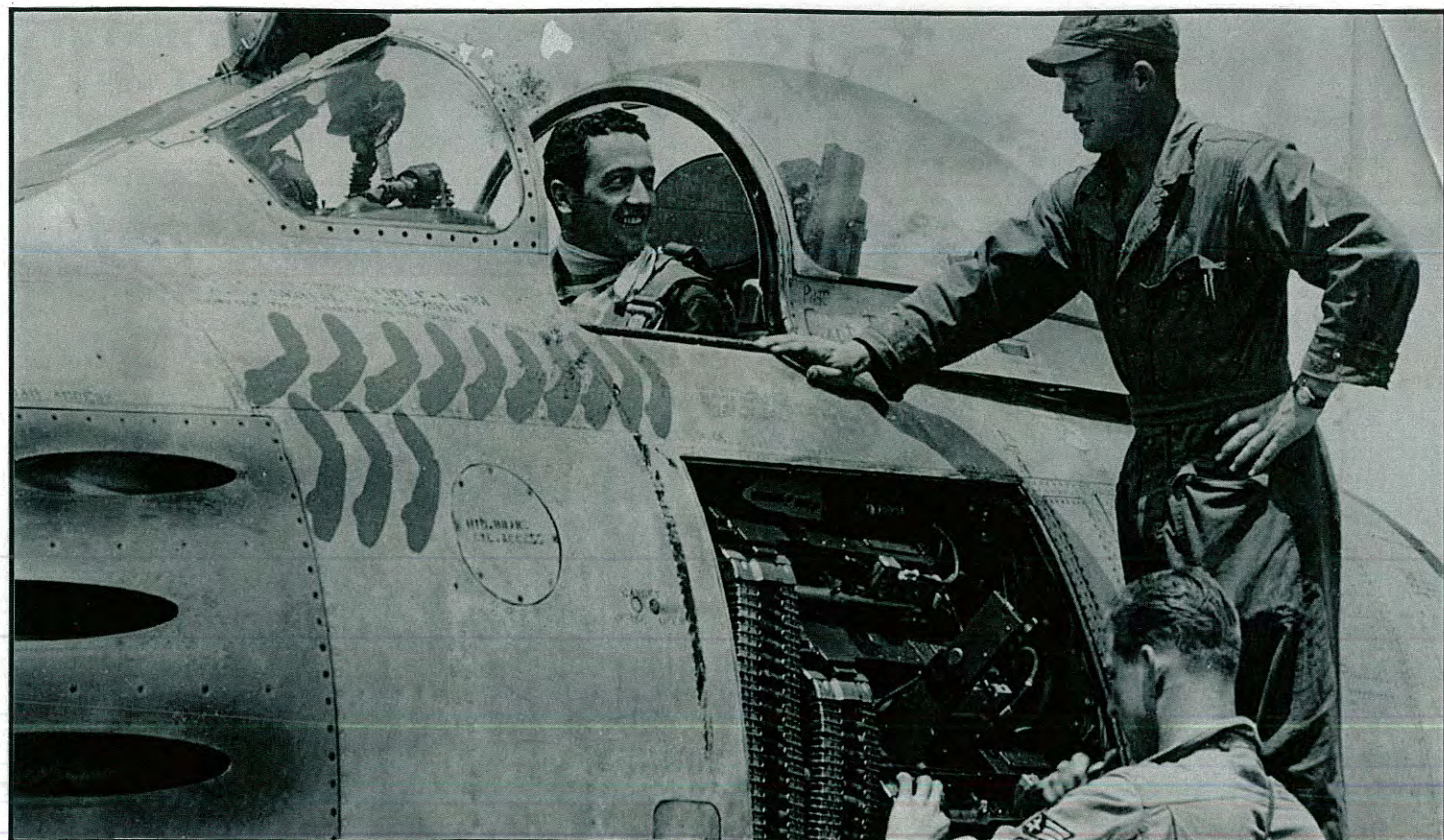


Joe McConnell about the enter Beautious Biutch on prior to the fateful encounter of 12 April 1953, when a MiG shot 'Mac' down. Note the different spelling of the name on the airplane. (credit - USAF)

Mac settled into his new home in Apple Valley, California, and went to work at Victorville testing the new F-6H Sabre, as well as training the new pilots at Victorville. Sadly, on 26 August 1964, while testing one of the new F-86Hs, the airplane became uncontrollable and crashed near Rogers Dry Lake on the Edwards AFB range. Captain Joseph M. McConnell was thirty-two years old.

An H-19A rescue helicopter pulls 'Mac' from the South China Sea on 12 April 1953. Many people say this is not Capt. McConnell but the photo appeared in Life Magazine with that identification. (credit-USAf)





'Mac' talks with his crew chief following the 18 May morning mission on which he was credited with two more MiG-15s to bring his score to 15 MiGs. Note the style of 'kill markings' and the fact the crew chief has not painted on the two from the morning mission yet.

(credit - Fred Chapman)

A very tired looking Capt. Joe McConnell leaves his F-86F following his third victory on the afternoon of 18 May 1953, bringing his total to 16 MiGs. 5th AF immediately grounded him and sent him back to the US along with the top scorer in the 4th Wing, Capt. 'Pete' Fernandez.

(credit - Fred Chapman)



Two aces talk over the results of 18 May 1953. -Mac' and LtCol. George Ruddell both got MiGs on 18 May. 'Mac' ended with 16 total, Ruddell got 8 MiGs. (credit- Fred Chapman)

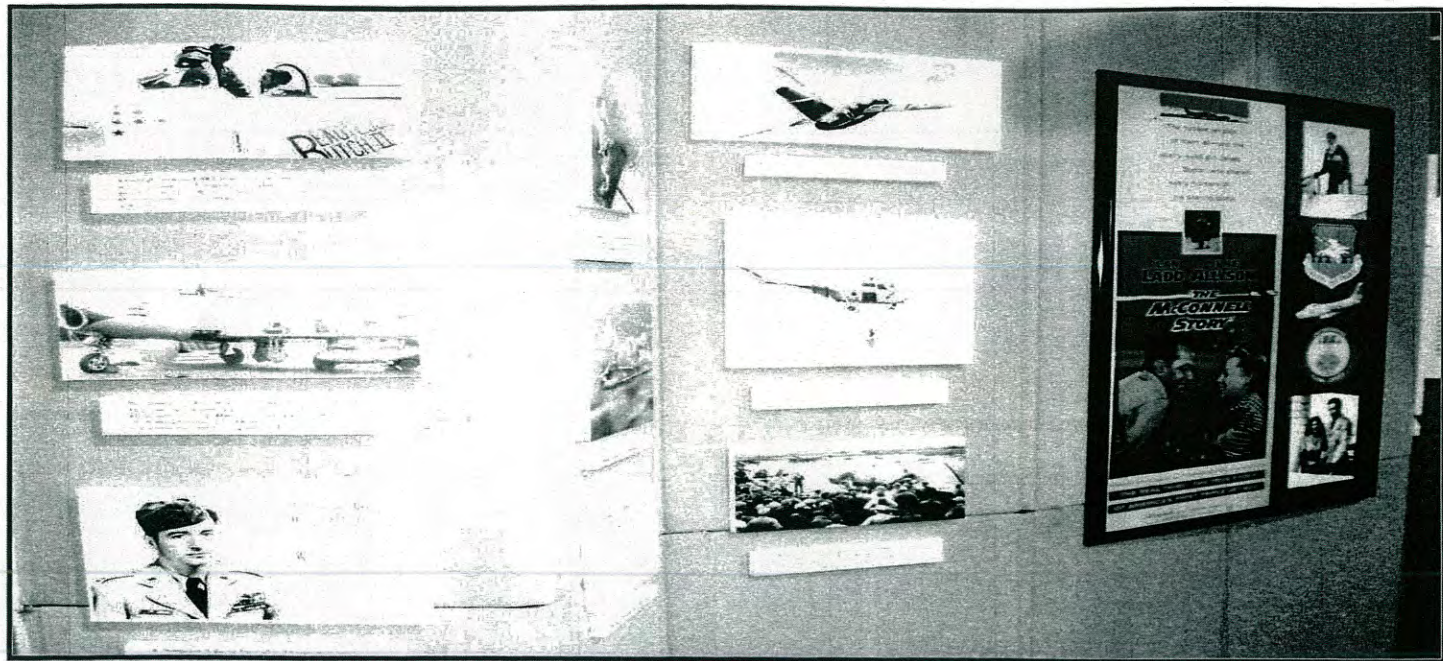
'Mac' in the cockpit on 19 May 1953 showing the newly repainted scoreboard. FEAF press people said the old MiG silhouette scoreboard looked sloppy so they had the airplane repainted - and misspelled the name on the gun bay door. (credit- Fred Chapman)



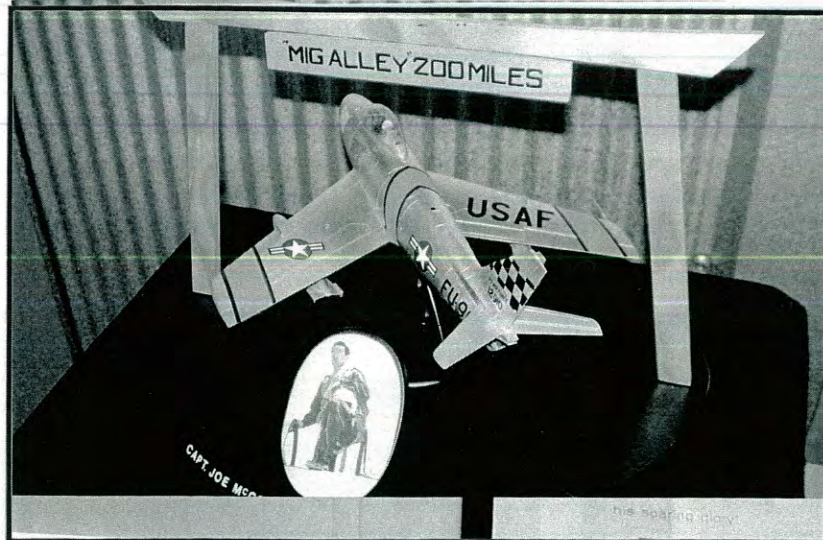
Capt. Joseph McConnell is congratulated by General O.P. Weyland, Commander of Far East Air Forces, after receiving the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star. (credit- USAF)

Capt. McConnell was grounded and sent home and made his last flight in and out of Korea in an L-20 liaison aircraft. (credit - Clem Kosalke)



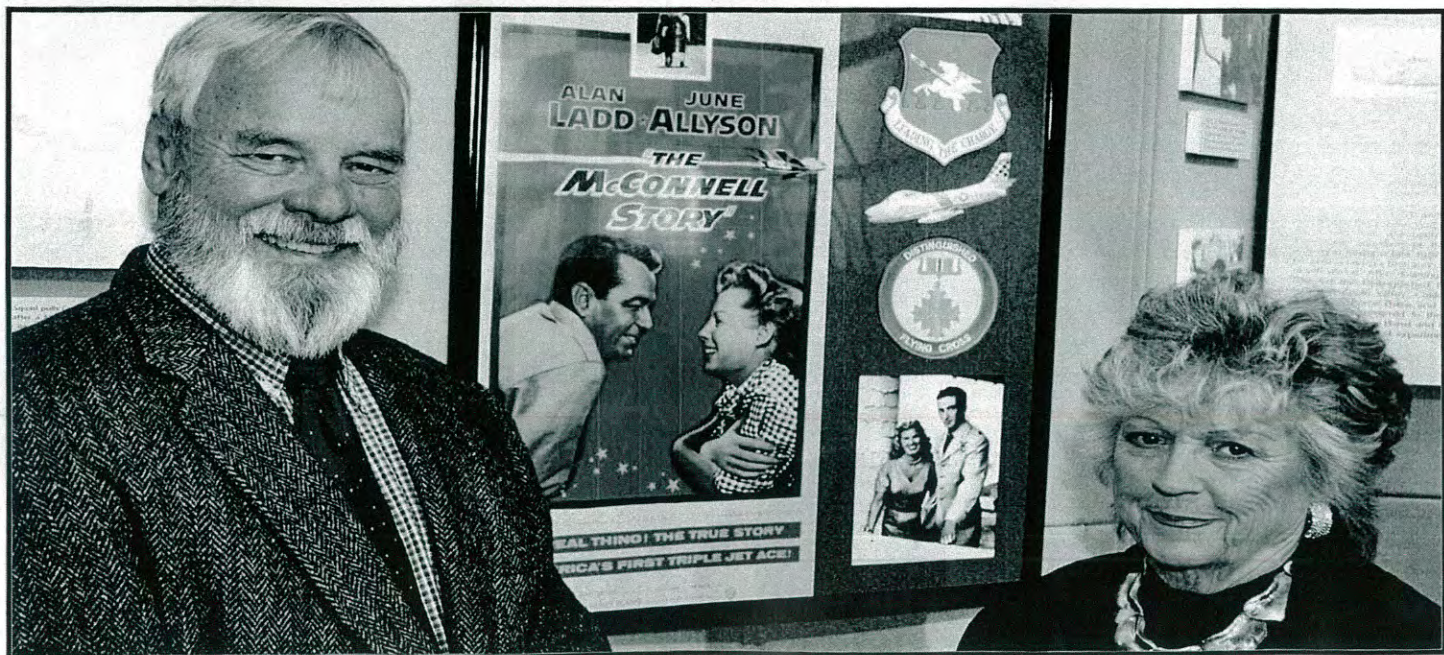


A view of part of the Joseph McConnell display in the New Hampshire Aviation Museum (credit - Dick Fortin)



A scale model of Mac's F-86F is on display as part of his memorial in the NH Aviation Museum (credit- Dick Fortin)

Patricia McConnell, 'Mac's' oldest daughter, in front of the McConnell display. For the ceremony honoring her father. Trisha flew in from Indio, CA., (credit - Dick Fortin)



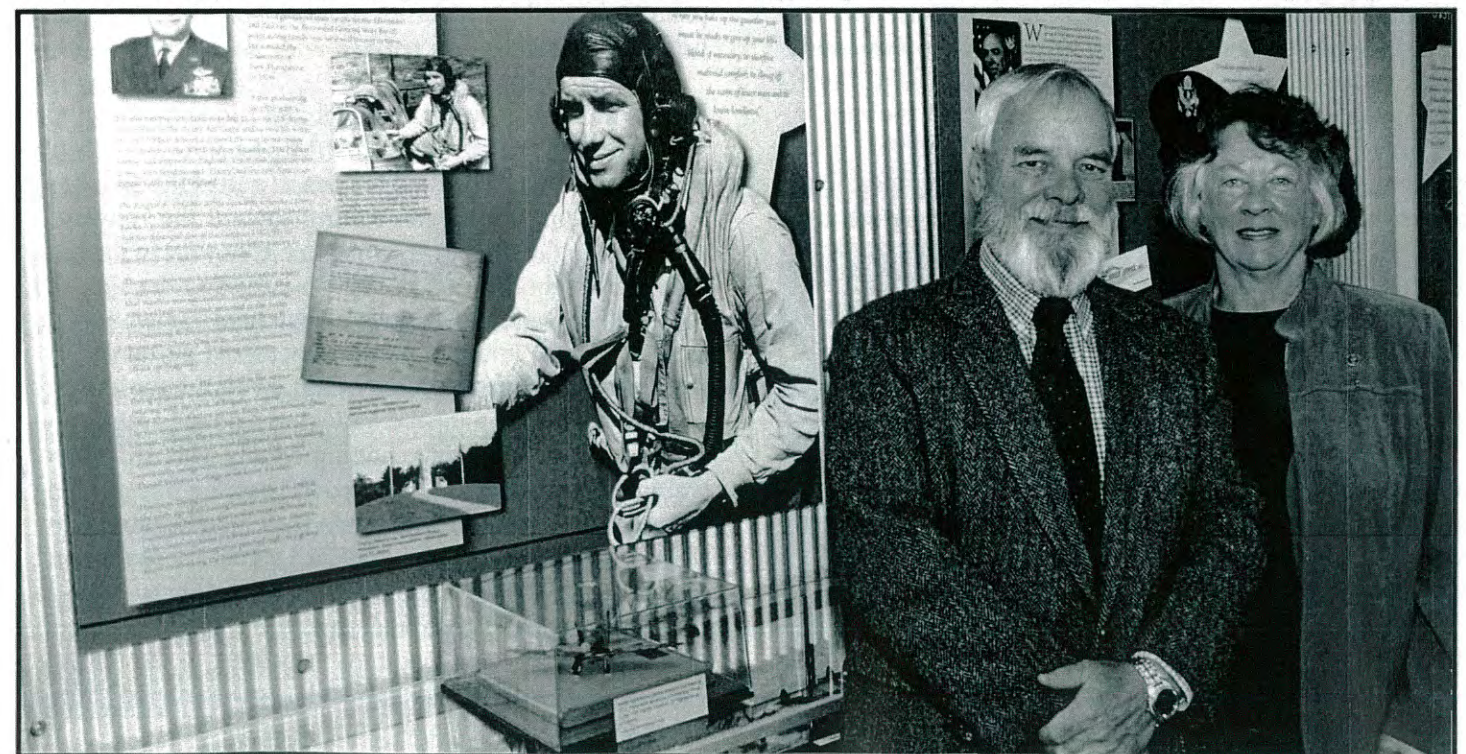
New Hampshire Aviation Historical Society Treasurer and ceremony M/C Patrick Duffy presents the NH Governor John Lynch's proclamation to Patricia McConnell. (credit- Dick Fortin)

On 10 November 2012, an event commemorating Capt. Joseph McConnell's service was held at the New Hampshire Aviation Museum, located at the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. An exhibit detailing Capt. McConnell's life was unveiled.

Present for the ceremonies was Mac's oldest daughter Patricia, who flew in from Indio, CA. Also present was a representative of

the South Korean government, Col. James Thyng, USAF Ret. and son of BrigGeneral Harrison Thyng. Over 100 people were in attendance, including other relatives of 'Mac'. The NH Aviation Museum honors other veterans with a New Hampshire connection, and since 'Mac' was born in Dover, NH, it was important that he be so-honored.

James Thyng and his wife Marilyn, stand in front of the display dedicated to his father, Harrison Thyng, who commanded the 4th FIG in Korea. Harrison Thyng was an Ace in WW2 as well as getting another 5 MiGs in Korea (credit Dick Fortin)





N89FS is one of the Flight Systems Inc. Sabre's that RY Costain flew. They were contracted to fly all types of missions for the US Air Force, including target tugs, ECM tests, and anything else the Air Force needed at the time. Nice job huh. (credit - Mike Fox)

OUTRUNNING A HURRICANE

By RY COSTAIN

The jangling telephone woke me from my combat nap, which I was taking in my room in the Tampa Bay Motel. As a Flight Systems, Inc. F-86 Mk. 6 contract pilot to Tactical Air Command, I had flown two earlier live-fire, air to air gunnery missions out of MacDill AFB, FL, against USAF F-16s, and wanted to get a recharge before flying the third and final sortie of the day.

The caller was a sergeant from MacDill Base Ops, and he had a note of urgency in his voice: "Sir, it took a while to find you. A hurricane is bearing down on the base, and we're evacuating all aircraft on the orders of the Base Commander. Your F 86 is the last aircraft on the ramp, and we want you to depart immediately." I thanked him for the call and hung up. A feeling of mission impossible gripped me as I thought of what had to be done - pack my bags, check out of the motel, tum in my rental car, get a ride to Base Ops, file a flight plan (to where, I didn't yet know!), find my crew chief Monty, fire up and depart before the savagery of the hurricane arrived.

During the high speed ride to Ops in an Air Force vehicle I had managed to flag down and board, I reasoned that since the six remaining missions on this deployment were no longer a factor, I'd head for home base at Holloman AFB, NM. I should be able to one-hop it to Barksdale AFB, LA, refuel, then on to Holloman.

But first I had to successfully escape the impending hurricane. Monty was waiting for me in a flight line van. By now it was already raining, which hampered the loading

of my baggage into the F-86s ammo bay and doing a pre-flight of the jet. Monty helped to strap me in, then I closed the canopy. After engine start, I noticed the Attitude Director Indicator (ADI) had an OFF flag showing. I checked the cockpit circuit breakers and finding none of them popped, motioned to Monty to climb back up to the cockpit. He was an aircraft electrician as well as an A&P Mechanic, and I was hoping he could fix the problem before the hurricane arrived. By now the wind was bending the palm trees, and I was aware of more airborne debris than before.

Monty took off a fuselage panel and did something and the OFF flag disappeared! Yes! Maybe now I could get out of here! He re-fastened the panel, pulled the chocks as I powered up, and began rolling toward the runway. I switched on the pitot heat, which melts any ice in the pitot tube that might obstruct the air flow feeding the airspeed indicator. I watched the electrical load meter needle, expecting N to jump, indicating increased current load - but N remained steady. Now I thought NO! I couldn't fly without a working airspeed indicator! I turned around and taxied back to the ramp, hoping Monty was still there, waiting to ensure that I'd taken off. There he was, running toward me. I gripped my extended left forefinger with my right hand, which was the standard signal for the ground crewman to touch the pitot tube on the right wingtip to feel for heat. He did so and gave me a thumbs-up, so I gave him a wave and made my way back to the runway. The tower didn't answer my calls, so I assumed they'd evacuated and I had the air base all to myself.

I made a rolling takeoff, pushing throttle up as I rounded the corner from the taxiway to the runway. Ahead of me was a black wall of clouds, with lightning flashing almost continuously. I could feel the powerful winds buffeting the jet as I rolled down the runway, getting closer to takeoff speed and the fearsome display I front of me. After becoming airborne, I started a tight right dimbing tum to try and outrace the oncoming hurricane. I was in the weather after just a few seconds, so I transitioned to instrument flight.

But something was terribly wrong! When I rolled to wings level, the heading indicator kept turning, indicating a banked condition. I looked at the Turn Needle, and it indicated a right turn. The ADI showed wings-level flight with no OFF flag displayed. It was unreliable when I need it most! I continued to climb, using other flight instruments to approximate controlled flight, and hoped to break out of the heavy clouds to on-top conditions soon. I did not have the luxury of a preflight weather briefing at MacDill, for all operations had been suspended, so I had no idea what lay ahead of me. I was however, able to establish contact with Jacksonville Center, explain my situation and file a flight plan to Barksdale before I entered the jet routes above 18,000 feet - a sure violation without clearance.

One of the unknown factors was the winds at altitude. I leveled off at my assigned altitude of 31,000, and began to sort out my situation. Time vs. distance flown calculations revealed that I had a strong headwind, and therefore probably could NOT make Barksdale. But Columbus AFB, Mississippi, wasn't too far off course, and was much closer. I requested vectors to Columbus, where the ceiling and visibility were reported by Approach Control to be 700 feet and one mile. They cleared me to descend to 1500, and then handed me off to GCA for a radar talkdown to landing. The runway finally came into view as I descended through 300 not the 700 I'd been expecting, which along with the unreliable ADI, added to the concern I already had.

Columbus to Holloman was too great a distance to attempt, given the headwinds at altitude I'd just encountered, so I filed to Barksdale where I would top off the tanks. The sky condition had gone from overcast to broken, and Barksdale was clear, so my ADO problem became minor at this point, although night wasn't too far off.

It was dusk when I landed at Barksdale. A quick turnaround and I was taxiing out to the runway for the hour and a half flight to Holloman. Hopefully it would be my last flight of the day. As I raised the landing gear after takeoff, both mains retracted and locked UP - but the nose wheel indicated down condition. The maximum speed with the gear extended is 195 knots, so I pulled the nose up sharply to keep the airspeed from exceeding this limit while at

the same time reducing the power. I advised the tower I was going to circle the runway while recycling the gear in an attempt to get it to retract. After two attempts, I gave up, lowered the main gear. and landed.

A telephone conversation with our chief of maintenance at Holloman wasn't much help other than to confirm that something in the gear linkage must be broken. By this time I had decided to attempt to fly the Sabre to Holloman with the gear down. I had no idea how high I could climb or how much fuel would be consumed in this configuration - and therefore, how far I could go. So I filed a flight plan on guesstimates, knowing I could re-file in the air as the situation became more clear. Dyess AFB near Abilene, TX, was about halfway, so that would be my go/no-go point based on fuel consumed and distance traveled. If fuel remaining was at all questionable, I would divert to Dyess.

It was dark as I taxied out for my second takeoff. I noticed my glasses were smudged a bit, so I pulled my handkerchief out and attempted to clean them. But the more I rubbed, the more the smears spread, to the point that I finally took them off. They were more dangerous than helpful. So here was yet another wrinkle in a day filled with things going wrong.

After takeoff I climbed out at 195 knots and made it to 26,000 feet, where I was forced to level off as the bird could climb no further. I was surprised that I made it this far up with a full fuel load and all three gear dragging down that plucky little jets performance.

As the brilliant lights of Abilene came into view I had my calculations complete - I would press on to Holloman. I landed at 10 pm, finally bring to a close a long, long adrenaline-filled day.

In this photo, you can see the tow target reel housing under the aft fuselage. This Sabre is a Canadair-built mk 5 as denoted by the aft fuselage additional cooling scoops and hard leading edge with fences (credit- JR Alley).



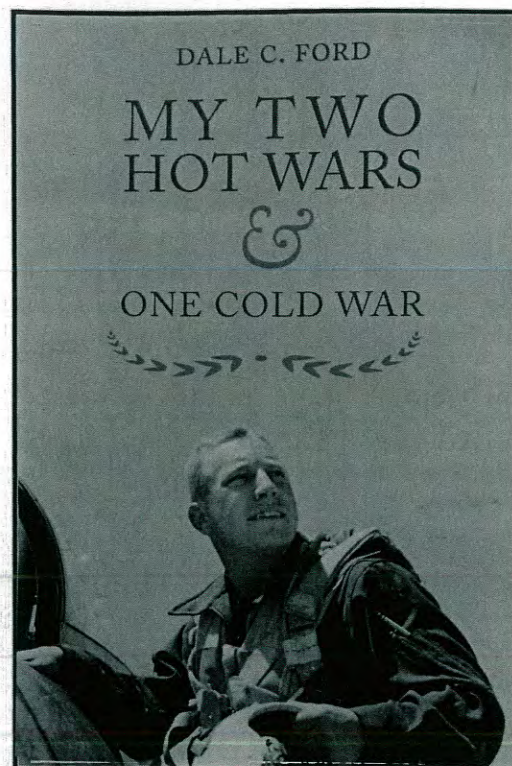
My Two Hot Wars & One Cold War

By Dale C. Ford

Tate Publishing & Enterprises, LLC

ISBN :978-1-61777-153-8

In 1949, Dale Ford joined the US Air Force. Two days after he graduated from Flight School, the war in Korea broke out. This book is his story, from Flight School, through the air war in Korea with the 4th and 51st Fighter Wings. In 1956, after getting an aeronautical engineering degree at Purdue, Ford joined Convair Aeronautical Corp., and was in one the ground floor in the flight testing of the double-sonic Convair B-58 Hustler jet bomber. Now that was an exciting time. A book highly recommended.



Was The LA-15 Ever Really In Korea?

Many, many issues of Sabrejet Classics ago, we did a little story about a pilot that claimed he encountered a funny looking jet with high wings. Was it an LA-15? Over the years, many people of disputed this on the internet and in print media. I recently came into the following notes which came from various CIA sources: The notes were found in the CIA FOIA - Special Collection Korean War link, where they note several instances of reported sightings and/or encounters with "Type-15" aircraft with 'shoulder or high mounted wings. Too many to support the "didn't happen" theory.

From CIA Current Intelligence Bulletin 14 July 1951; RF-80s attacked by 20 enemy jets of high wing type. FEAF comments they might be Type- 15 fighters. While 3 other encounters tend to confirm that the Type 15 has been committed to combat.

17 October 1951 Daily Digest: During an encounter with 80 MiG-15s and 32 F-86s in MiG Alley on 12 October, pilots reported: "One enemy aircraft was a shoulder wing type, possibly a Type 15" The Sabre pilot passed within 100 feet of the aircraft.

Daily Korean Bulletin OCI 4886, 2 April 1952: A total of 382 MiG-15s and 3 Type 15 jets were sighted.

OCI 4887 3 April 1952; FEAF aircraft destroyed 5 MiG-15s and one Type 15, and damaged 4 MiG-15s and one Type 15

OCI 4888; In 3 engagements over NW Korea, FEAF airplanes destroyed 2 MiG- 15s, probably destroyed one Type 15, and damaged 4 MiG-15s and a Type 15.

OCI 4801, 8 April 1952; The Type 15 jet has appeared again in numbers with some modification to armament.

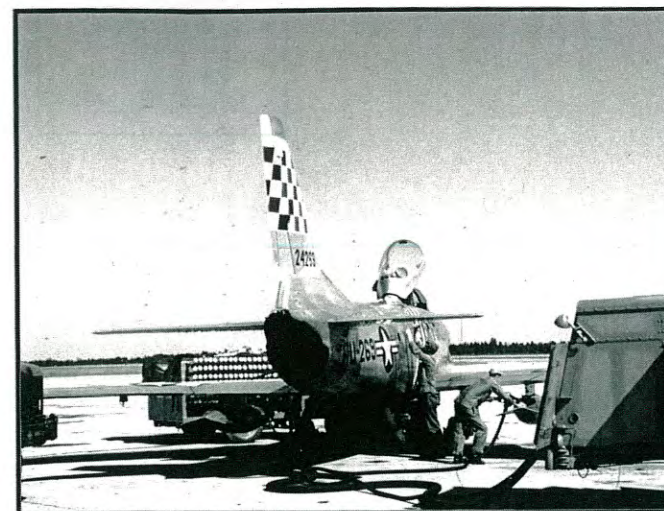
OCI 4902 21 April 1952; Within a 2-1/2 hour period, 63 F-86s had 8 engagements with 105 MiG-15s and 2 Type 15s over NW Korea.

OCI 4911 1 May 1952; 51 enemy jets were encountered, 6 MiG-15s were destroyed and 3 MiGs and 2 Type 15s were damaged. CIA.

Daily Korean bulletin 6049 5 July 1952; 84 MiG- 15s and 2 Type 15 jets were encountered.

16 Sept 1952; UN pilots observed 111 MiGs and one Type 15 near the Yalu River.

20 March 1952 was the date that Lt. Carey fired and damaged a 'high-wing jet. as shown on his gun camera film. So did the Russian deploy a squadron of LA-15 jet fighters for combat testing. You be the judge.



When SabreJet Classics did the article on Project Arrow and the problems of identifying some of the aircraft from photos, one of the questions regarding the tail colors of the 354th FIS- Was the tail checkerboard blue and white or green and white? The above photo in full color clearly shows a 354th FIS F-86D with green/white checks being serviced at Travis Field, Savannah, GA. While the second photo shows Capt. Clarence Blanz pre-flying his F-86D, clearly showing both the green and white stripes and Blanz's ball cap in green and white. That answers that question. (credit- Drury Callahan.)



Sabre Reunions

The 20th Reunion of the Sabre Pilots Association will be in 2015. Watch for full information and details in the next issue of SabreJet Classics, vol. 21-2.

388th FBW Reunion
30 May-2 June 2013
in Fairborn, Ohio,
site of the National Museum
of the
US Air Force.
Contact Don Rahn,
5902 Lynnaway Dr,
Dayton, OH 45419,
phone (937)278-4390

81st Fighter Wing Reunion
September 21-24, 2013, at the
Hyatt Regency River Walk in
San Antonio. TX.
Contact Harry Eckes,
phone (972)539-7259, or email
harryeckes@verizon.net.

**Pilot Training
Class 53Fox
60th Anniversary Reunion,**
September 16-19, 2013, at the Hope Hotel, Wright
Patterson AFB, Ohio All 10 bases are invited.
Contact Jim Mayton, 2000 Tynne Meadow Lane,
Prince George, VA 23875, phone (804)732-2225, or
email jjmayton@yahoo.com

F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

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

What Is It? This F-86 is one of many Sabres operated by various civilian contractors in the US. Can anyone identify the company and tell a bit about the significance of the this particular Sabre. Contact the Editor, Sabrejet Classics, 6475 Chesham Drive NE, Canton, Ohio 44721; or email sabrecisx@aol.com (credit - JR Alley)

