

Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 21, Number 3

Fall 2013



*Inside - Tribute to Boots, Kumpf Twins,
The Sabre Knights Team, More!*

A Publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

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(Front cover) – The 25th FIS ramp is full of Sabres during the Summer of 1953 prior to the next mission into MiG Alley. Pilots of the 25th FIS are credited with 110.5 victories in Korea.
(credit – Hank Buttelmann)

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the president's notebook

We're coming to the close of another year and thirty two years since the F-86 Sabre pilots had their first reunion and began the process of forming an Association. Over the years, it's membership was built up to nearly 2000 members worldwide. Now, we're still hanging tough with over 1200 members. In spite of losing a significant number of our brothers each year we are still gaining a few new ones. Of special interest, Butch Bester, a new member from South Africa went back home after attending our reunion this past spring and recruited eleven former Sabre pilots from the South African Air Force. Including Cappie Broderick, now living in Victoria B.C., we have a contingent of thirteen South African Sabre pilots on board. Thanks Butch for your tremendous enthusiasm and efforts

At the reunion I said I would start listing our expired members in the Classics for you to review and maybe contact and

try to bring back into the Association. I couldn't get it in the summer issue as the list is quite long and that issue had a lot of reunion info in it. Things didn't work out well for this Fall issue either. We had printing problem that required too many pages for our size of magazine. I will work out the kinks and try to get it going in the Spring issue.

Larry Davis had brought to my attention that he gets a lot of calls that pertain to our Association that should be directed to me. If your interests or concerns are with a story for the magazine or a particular article, Larry is the guy to talk to. For membership, address changes, Folded Wings notifications, ect., please write, email, or call me. I will get the info to the right people. My notification information is listed on the second page opposite the inside cover page. My telephone number was missing in the Summer issue, but will be in this issue.

The F-86 Sabre hats we had at the reunion and the eighty or so we had left over as shown in the Summer

issue went like hot cakes. Those who thought they might want a hat and flinched didn't get their request and checks in on time. I had to send over thirty member's checks back as they were too late. Getting another order of hats in a timely manner is not easy. There are minimum buys, normally 200. I am working on getting more hats, but I won't have them soon. When I am confident of getting a new order I will put the word out

As a final note and one I continually have to keep mentioning is; please keep us informed if you are changing your mailing addresses and phone numbers. We still get a lot of magazines back that the P.O. could not forward. At a couple dollars apiece, that adds up to a considerable cost to our Association in a year.

With the Holiday Season upon us, have a wonderful and safe Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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

J. R. Alley, President

FOLDED WINGS

Louis N. Allard, August 6th, 2012
Robert J. "Andy" Andrews, August 8th, 2013
Edgar H. Lamb, July 27th, 2013
Clarence Langerud, August 28th, 2013
James O. Miller, June 27th, 2013
Robinson "Robbie" Risner, October 22nd, 2013
Richard D. River, January 4th, 2013
Robert L. Russell, January 11th, 2013
Julian D. "Buzz" Sawyer, July 1st, 2012
Charles E. Williams, April 30th, 2013

POLICY STATEMENT

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from the editor

Good Fall afternoon guys. It's Ohio so one day it's 75 degrees and the next is 30. Such is Ohio weather.

Well the Fall issue of Sabrejet Classics is here and we salute several people in this issue including "Boots" Blesse, the Sabre Knights F-86D team, and many others. Sadly we lost one of the great heroes of Air Force history when 'Robbie' Risner passed away. He will definitely be missed.

Because of the passionate plea of our President JR Alley, I have received several really good stories for both this issue and the next. But not nearly enough. I will again be out of material following issue 22-1. So please, if you have a story or even a photo that might lead to a story (especially photos), put them down on paper or email them to me. Photos can be put on a disc and forwarded to my address.

Happily, the new hat is back in stock and can be ordered from the Las Vegas address. This great looking hat is just \$15 plus \$7 postage. Get 'em while they last.

And that's about all I have for now. Have a Happy Holiday and I hope to hear from you guys throughout the upcoming year.

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To the editor

Well guys we didn't get any takers on the "What Is It?" photo that appeared on the last page of vol. 21-2. All we know is that it has several distinctive changes to the airframe, notably the elongated canopy, obvious and VERY strange elongated camera bulges on the side of the fuselage. Anyone knowing anything about this airplane, please contact the editor, Sabrejet Classics, 6475 Chesham Drive NE, Canton, OH 44721; or email sabreclsx@aol.com. Thanks

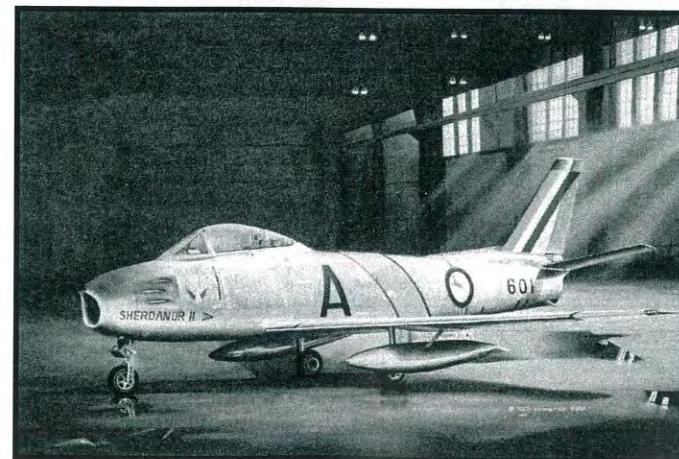
Fred Du Toit

I was a fighter pilot in the South African Air Force, retiring in 1997. I flew Sabres in the early 1970s. We were equipped with the Canadair Mk 6. The Sabre was the stepping stone to the mach 2 Mirage jet. I am now privileged to be a proud member of your association through the dedicated efforts of one of our previous Sabre Squadron Commanders, Butch Bester. Butch attended your reunion in Las Vegas earlier this year, along with a couple of other ex-SAAF Sabre pilots. As you probably know, 2 Sq, SAAF, supported the

Tiro Vorster stands next to his painting titled "Remember Korea 1953", during the unveiling in September 2013. (credits - Fred Du Toit)



Tiro Vorster's gorgeous painting of "Sherdanor II", an F-86F assigned to 2 Squadron, SAAF in early 1953. 2 Sq was based at Osan AB in 1953, when they were attached to the 18th FBG.



UN forces fighting in Korea. S Sq, Flying Cheetahs, was attached to the 18th FBG, first in F-51Ds and then in F-86Fs. A good friend of mine, the South African aviation artist Tiro Vorster, who lives near Cape Town, recently completed a painting of a Sabre in the 2 Sq markings. The title of the painting is "Remember Korea 1953". I thought you might publish a copy of the painting in your magazine. Butch Bester has asked me to convey his best wishes to President JR Alley and the other members of the F-86 Assn. Butch said it was a wonderful experience at your reunion.

DON'T START WORLD WAR 3!

By Wally Gladney

In 1954 I was stationed at England AFB, LA, with the 613th FBS, 401st FBG. Lt. Dave Hinton and I filed a flight plan to Biggs AFB, TX, to return after sunset. All went well going to Biggs. At Base Ops, we changed into our civilian clothes we'd brought with us, and headed for Mexico. Our military ID was proper in those days to pass in and out of Mexico. We headed for the cantinas for tacos, tamales, and etc., all with the rule of no drinking before flying.

We saw a few street shows, did a lot of walking, and bought as much as we could afford and carry back to our Sabres. Among my items were a gallon of rum, 4 bottles of champagne, and the biggest plaster piggy bank I'd ever seen. My wife Blanche and I saved our change in one that was almost full and I knew this would be perfect for her.

The afternoon sun was setting low as we packed our purchases in the Sabres. The 4 champagne bottles went in the forward radio bay. But the only place for the piggy bank was on my lap. It didn't impede the travel of the stick, but it did take up all my lap even with the seat all the way back and down.

After Preflight, we fired up the birds birds, taxied out and took off, climbing to 36M ft. The sun had already set but we still had some twilight at altitude, when everything electrical went OUT! I checked the circuit breakers, the engine was purring but all other systems were dead. I was able to use hand signals to my wingman and slipped onto his wing for the trip home. I'd already practiced some blackout landings so I just followed Dave in, put down the gear manually. The final was a mess with no flaps and jet wash. I flared too high, dropped in toooo hard, jerked the stick back toooo hard – and broke that big piggy bank into 5 pieces.

After reaching the ramp, I shut it down, and climbed out to find what went wrong. The crew chief put his big spotlight on the open radio bay, "I see your trouble sir." The champagne had popped open and shorted all the electrical boxes. And the piggy bank was irreparable too. So much for the perfect gift.

In 1955, the 613th was sent to Chaumont AB < France for 6 months TDY. We were encouraged to name our Sabres so I named mine the "B&B" for my wife Blanche and daughter Beverly. During our tour, 4 planes and pilots were sent to Munich for 2 days ZULU duty, stand alert at Firsty with one pilot in the cockpit, APU plugged in while the other 3 pilots were in the Ready Shack playing cards and/or killing flies. The Germans raised sheep on the airbase grass, and sheep dung attracted flies, which rested in the Alert Shack by the hundreds. On the walls were hash and slash marks indicating thousands of flies killed by the previous alert pilots.

During the two Sundays I was on alert I killed over 400



Wally Gladney standing next to his 613th FBS F-86F when the squadron was based at Chaumont AB, France during the mid-1950s. The airplane was named after his wife and daughter. (credit – Wally Gladney)

and was not Top Gun – not even close. When the alert sounded, we dropped our cards and fly swatters and jumped into our Sabres. We had 5 minutes to get airborne, head west to 20M, then turn toward Czechoslovakia and 38M. The MiGs were always waiting above us at the border but we were told "Do Not Start WWII! Thank God we didn't.

Sunday was the day German civilians were allowed to fly their gliders. There were two 6 ton trucks with winches and long ropes to pull the gliders along the runway until they were airborne 200 feet. The thermals from the concrete runway did the rest. And Firsty had a lot of concrete runways. Many of the gliders got high enough to catch an uplifting breeze from the foothills of the Alps.

Lt. Mike Adams (killed in the X-15 program) and I asked if we could get a ride while our alert birds stood down for two hours.. Using 'sign language', two glider pilots agreed. I climbed and realized there was one seat, so I sat behind the German pilot., legs straight forward with my head looking around his. IT WAS TIGHT! The excitement kept me from being too uncomfortable. We got hooked up behind the 6 ton, which pulled for a few hundred feet and we were airborne Then we pulled up to 200 feet at a 30 degree angle, release noise, and then all I could see was concrete.

We suddenly went nose down until we gained enough air speed and thermal. WOW! It felt like the start of a roller coaster but more abrupt. The thermals got us to above 3000 feet. The only instruments were air speed, altitude, compass, and temperature gauge. In about 20 minutes we returned to the field, made a nice soft landing on the grass. The most difficult part was getting out of the cockpit. The pilot had to pull me out as I pushed up from behind his seat. I was wedged in and sopping wet with sweat. Highly Recommended!



Lt John Birt and his crew chief stand next to his 84th FIS F-86F at Hamilton AFB during 1952. The Sabre Knights were part of the 84th and flew F-86Fs at the time. Lt. Birt flew Right Wing in the Knights. (credit – NAA)

THE SABRE KNIGHTS

From information submitted
by Jim "Dad" Low

The Sabre Knights were an aerobatic team of Sabre pilots, commonly referred to as The Official Air Defense Command Aerial Demonstration Team. Major Vince Gordon actually formed two teams called the "Sabre Knights". He had been a team leader of the Skyblazers team with the 36th Fighter Group in the late 1940s flying F-80 Shooting Stars. When Major Gordon went to the 84th FIS at Hamilton AFB, CA, one of the first things he wanted to do was create another aerobatic team.

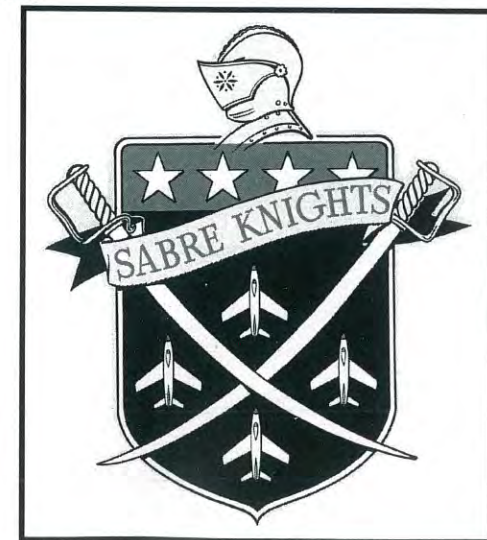
In August 1952 he got his wish. The 84th was flying a mixed bag at the time, F-89 Scorpions for the night interception mission, and F-86Fs for the daylight mission. Gordon chose several pilots to form the first Sabre Knights team, flying the F-86F. Gordon was Lead; with Capt. Wayne Hellwege on Left wing, Lt. John Birt on Right Wing, and Capt. Jere Lewis in the Slot. The team flew its first show in October 1952.

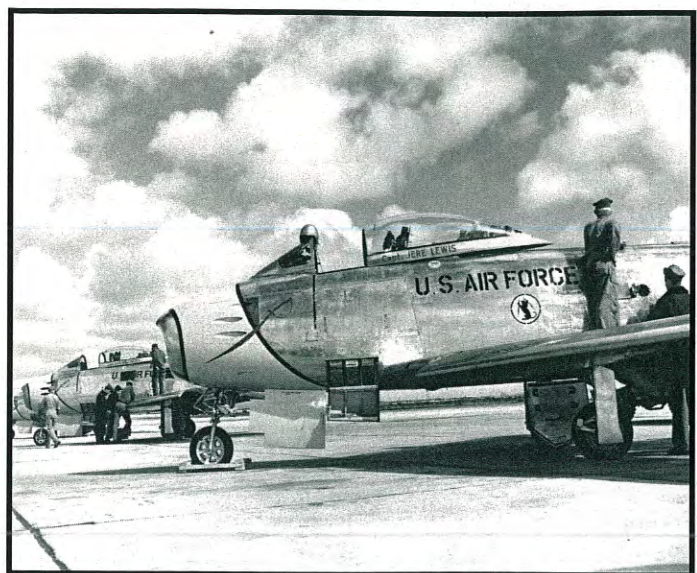
In April 1953, the 325th FIS was formed at Hamilton AFB as a pure air defense squadron. Major Gordon was Commanding Officer. They were flying older veteran F-86E Sabres until their new aircraft arrived. The new aircraft would be brand new F-86D Sabre all-weather interceptors. Eventually, the Sabre Knights team also transitioned into the F-86D.

But the D model was not known for its aerobatic maneuverability. It was much bigger than the E or F, weighing in at over 9 tons – 2 tons heavier than the F-86E. Plus the fuel control was very tricky, often

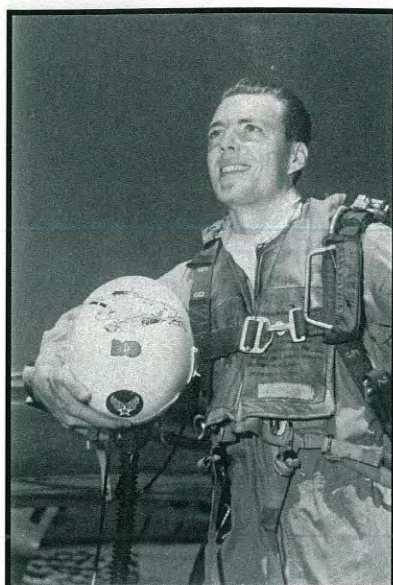
resulting in engine fires and/or explosions. And the flight control system was also very touchy which could result in vertical oscillation, commonly referred to as a 'yo-yo'. The D model was not well liked in the fighter pilot community, and was called the "Sabre Dog" for good reason.

Major Gordon formed a new Sabre Knights team with himself as Lead, Dick Hellwege on Left Wing, Bruce Jones on Right Wing, and Jere Lewis in the Slot. Unfortunately, Lewis was killed in a flying accident. His replacement was Korean War Ace Capt. Jim "Dad" Low, who joined the team in November 1953. The first F-86Ds began to arrive in March 1954. And the first F-86D Sabre Knights show was flown in the Summer of 1954.





The Sabre Knights flew to Yuma AFB for the 1953 Air Defense Command Gunnery Meet. This is Capt. Jere Lewis' Sabre Knights F-86F when he flew Slot with the team. (credit - USAF)



Capt. Jim "Dad" Low flew with the 335th FIS during the Korean War. He was an Ace with 9 MiGs credited. (credit - Jim Low)



The Sabre Knights team shortly after the unit was renumbered the 325th FIS, and initially still flying the F-86F. (L-R) Maj. Vince Gordon, Lead; Bruce Jones, Rt Wing; Dick Hellwege, Lt Wing; and Jim Low, Slot. (credit - via Jim Low)

The 325th FIS transitioned into the F-86D Sabre in the Summer of 1953, and the Sabre Knights team did likewise. The colorful F-86Ds had red and yellow nose and tail bands. This photo was taken at one of the final Knights performances at Detroit Airport in July 1955. (credit - David Menard collection)



The Sabre Knights lined up on the ramp at Detroit Airport in July 1955. Air Defense Command liked the idea of an F-86D aerobatic team and sent them to all the F-86D bases to show the troops what the D model Sabre could do. (credit - David Menard collection)

Major Gordon had a two-fold mission - show off the prowess of the ADC pilots and aircraft to the civilian crowds, and try to change the attitudes of the fighter pilots that were flying the F-86D. For those reasons, all the team aircraft were drawn from regular squadron aircraft, and except for the paint job, were regular combat-ready F-86Ds. Initially, the aircraft were standard F-86D-40s, but following Project Pullout, which standardized the entire F-86D fleet to -45 specs, the Sabre Knights were equipped with a mixed bag of F-86D-36s.

The team visited every F-86D base within flying distance of Hamilton AFB, in an attempt to show the disgruntled ADC pilots how good an aircraft the F-86D could be. Interestingly, the 325th FIS also won the ADC 'E' Award while supporting the Sabre Knights.

However, in the Summer of 1955, Air Force made the decision to eliminate all unauthorized aerobatic teams

The F-86D was much maligned by Air Force pilots. It was too big, not enough power, was unreliable, and just plain not liked by pilots not aware of the airplanes capabilities. But in the hands of the Sabre Knights, it was a truly remarkable show. (credit - David Menard collection)

except for the Thunderbirds. The only exception being the Skyblazers team who performed in Europe, which was well outside the range of the Thunderbirds aircraft.

The Sabre Knights made their last show appearance at San Francisco International Airport on 31 July 1955. And they made that last show a memorable one. The final maneuver was an "Orange Blossom", which was similar to the bomb burst that the Thunderbirds did except in the 'Blossom' the Knights would continue down the back side of the loop and cross over the crowd from four directions at 50 feet and over 500 mph. But on this day, they split up at the top of the loop and simply went off in four different directions never to perform again.

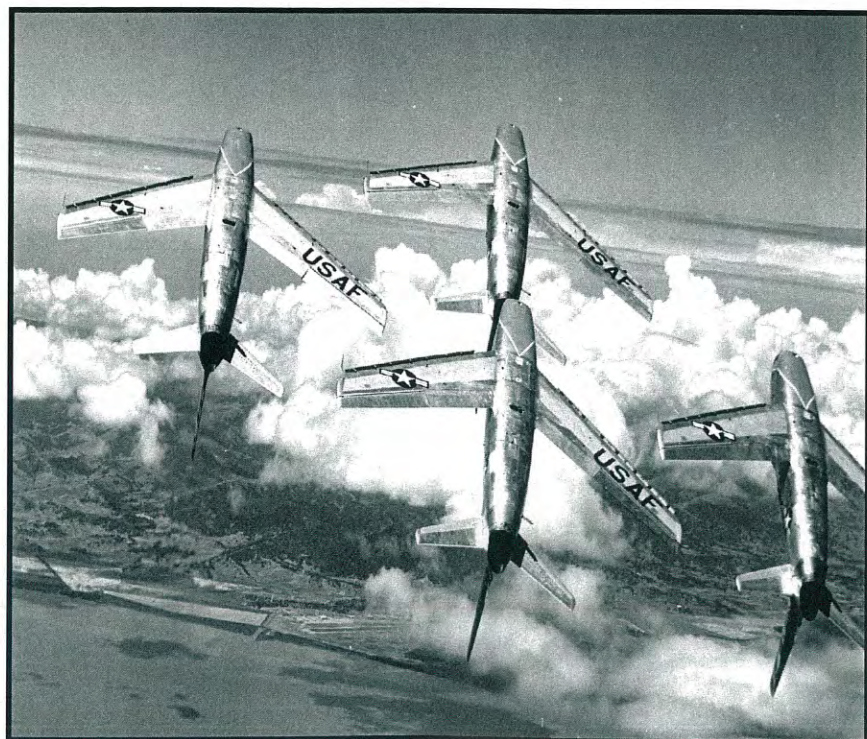
The Sabre Knights had been together approximately three years in both the 84th and 325th Squadrons. They never had an accident or cancelled a show through an aircraft problem. And their shows were the equal to any flown anywhere - in an airplane that many considered to be a "Dog".





The Sabre Knights fly a close diamond formation over Edwards AFB during the Open House of 1955. Jim Low is flying Slot. (credit – Marty Isham)

The Knights go ‘over the top’ of the loop during a practice session over Hamilton AFB in late 1954. Note the overlap of the wingtips and closeness of the Slot aircraft to Lead. All of the Knights F-86Ds were regular duty F-86Ds and assigned to the squadron alert mission. (credit – NAA)



A Farewell to Boots

Blesse, Major General, USAF

By William “Earl” Brown Jr.

Major Frederick “Boots” Blesse in the cockpit of his 334th FIS F-86E at Kimpo AB, South Korea in 1952. Maj. Blesse was credited with his 5th MiG victory in September 1952. He ended the war as a Double Ace with 10 MiG credits. (credit – USAF)



(22 August, 1921-31 October 2012)

Fighter pilots everywhere must feel a sense of sadness today. The greatest of the breed has died. We called him “Boots” and there are a ton of stories about the exceptional things he could do with an airplane.

Here is one example.

KOREA- 1952

Boots made ace by shooting down his fifth kill on 4 September 1952. I was his wingman on that mission.

Four days later, on 8 September 1952, Boots shot down two MIGs on one mission. I was assigned to fly Boots’ wing again. We entered the combat zone and almost immediately spotted a group of about 12 MIG-15s. Boots pressed the attack and the flight dissolved until there were just two planes ahead of us. After some maneuvering, Boots called it a “a half loop and some turns”, he shot the lead aircraft down. Since we had plenty of fuel, he began looking for the wingman and soon had him at twelve o’clock. As he poured 50 caliber bullets into the fuselage, the MIG abruptly slowed down because a jet engine doesn’t run well with bullets inside. As wingman I had my throttle at 100% while I maneuvered from side to side looking primarily

to the rear to keep enemy attackers in sight. Suddenly I was overtaking the MIG. With my throttle at idle and speed brakes out, I drifted past Boots who was still sitting at 6 o’clock to the MIG. I found myself right along the left side of the MIG. I looked over at the pilot who was hunkered down in his cockpit. Then he turned his head and looked directly at me. In a flash, he turned back and looking forward, he ejected! Boots had done something very rare in the air battles in Korea, shooting down two enemy aircraft on one mission. And he added kills number 6 and 7 to his score. He finished his tour with a total of nine MIG kills and one LA-9 prop plane.

This was his second tour in Korea. All together he flew 67 missions in the F-51, 35 in the F-80 and then 121 in the F-86. When you add his combat time from Vietnam it totals over 650 Combat hours.

On another occasion I was with Boots when he out-maneuvered another MIG pilot. This guy tried to escape Boots by snap-rolling into a spin from over 30,000 feet. Boots had gotten some hits on the MIG and any other pilot would have declared a kill and continued to seek another prey. Instead of leaving the spinning MIG, Boots set up a wide orbit around the descending enemy plane. I was on the outside of the orbit so I could see the MIG spinning, spinning down. After the vigorous maneuvering to

get to the six o'clock position on the little bent wing opponent, the orbit was very easy on me as the wing man. Boots was almost leisurely descending keeping the MIG in the center of the orbit. I did keep monitoring the altitude and as we went through about five thousand feet, the MIG suddenly stopped spinning, leveled his wings and started to hightail it towards the Yalu River and safety. Boots slid gracefully into the six o'clock position again and just hosed 50 calibers into the fuselage of the fleeing aircraft. The MIG pilot soon ejected, deciding he would rather be somewhere else than in front of that persistent Sabre pilot.

I heard that Boots was asked how he felt about killing an enemy pilot. According to the story, he responded "I don't want to kill him. I want him to go back to the base, get another MIG so I can shoot him down again."

His competitive nature was not confined to the combat zone. There was a ping-pong table in the 334th Squadron Operations and the pilots were encouraged to exercise their hand-eye coordination by hitting the little white ball where opponents couldn't return it. Major Blesse would be passing through the area and would challenge our best players. First Lieutenant Chick Cleveland (Lt. Gen Charles Cleveland later) was one of the best of the pilot ping-pong players and would often be the preferred opponent for Boots. My recollection is that Chick seldom won. And even when he won, Boots would not let him leave the table until he had defeated Chick again.

I am not a golfer so I never had the chance to see him play, but I have been told by reliable sources that his approach to the game of Kings was very much the same as his attitude towards the game of ping pong. It was a competition and he intended to win.

After the war Boots was assigned to Nellis AFB as a fighter gunnery instructor, Squadron Operations Officer and Squadron Commander of a Combat Crew training squadron. There he finished writing the famous tactics manual, "No Guts, No Glory. This was the manual used by the entire fighter community of fighter squadrons worldwide. Soon the phrase became well known by fighter pilots everywhere. While in Korea at the 334th FIS, he had written someone liners for the pilots on a yellow sheet of legal size paper and it was the first time I had seen "No Guts, No Glory". I remember that there was also a corollary in the list of one-liners. It went like this: "Guts will do for brains, but not consistently"

In the 1955 Air Force Worldwide Gunnery meet he won six Individual Trophies scoring in every category of the meet while competing against the best fighter pilots in the world.

When the Vietnam war began, it wasn't long before Boots was back in the saddle again. At the DaNang Air Base in Vietnam he joined the 366th Tac Fighter Wing as Operations Officer. He flew 156 missions when the standard tour was 100 missions. He initiated the addition of Gatling type gun pods to the F-4 fighters that previously had only missiles for weapons to use in the Air Battles up north. Of course he was eager to use the gun against

the North Vietnamese MIG-21s. It turned out that wasn't to be. The MIGs flew in- frequently and usually avoided plane to plane combat. Even though he scheduled himself to fly every other day for a year and, as always, he went to the place where the risks were highest, the MIGs were not there. Other pilots in the Wing benefitted from the decision to hang the SUU-16 Gatling Gun Pods on the F-4 and the DaNang Gunfighters downed more enemy fighters than any other Wing in Vietnam.

In early October, 2012, Boots invited my wife, Gloria, and me to attend a black tie gala celebration here in Washington, D.C. where Boots received the prestigious Raymond G. Davis award for distinguished military service in the United States military during the Korean War. The award was presented here in Washington, D.C., by the American Veterans Center at their 15th Annual Conference and Awards Gala. It was a few days after he returned home to Florida that he died on the Golf Course while playing the game that he loved so much.

I attended his funeral on Friday, March 22, 2013. The skies over Arlington National Cemetery were grey and a cold wind had dropped the chill to the shivering levels. The Air Force Chief of Staff, Mark Welsh, was there to pay his respects to Mrs. Blesse. He had authorized a four ship fly-by, a very unusual step in these days of the mandatory sequester. The Thunderbirds have been restricted from their show schedule, but four F-15s flew in honor of this great fighter pilot. As they passed over head, Number 3 pulled up, lit the burners, and disappeared into sky. General Welsh took the folded flag and presented it to Betty, Mrs. Blesse, with some quiet words of comfort. In the distance, the bugler sounded Taps. I was standing near Chick Cleveland, another great fighter pilot, and neither of us looked the other in the eye. It's hard to see while the tears are flowing.

Major General Frederick "Boots" Blesse retired in 1975 with more than 650 combat hours. Boots flew a tour in Vietnam with the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing at DaNang, where he was instrumental in adding the 20mm Gatling Gun pod to the ordnance of combat F-4s. (credit - Elizabeth Blesse)



ANY PORT IN A STORM

by Rod Beckett

It was mid-morning on June 22, 1987. I was about 65 miles out, in the Eglin Gulf Range, having just completed an engagement with the second of two flights of F-15 shooters. I was working for Flight Systems, Inc. (FSI) at the time and was on a dart-tow gig out of Tyndale AFB, Florida in support of the F-15 weapons schools. Suddenly, my F-86 Sabre 6, N80FS began to vibrate violently which drew my attention to the engine gauges.

I noticed the exhaust gas temperature (EGT) increasing through 900° C. I pulled the throttle back to try to lower the EGT. It appeared that the EGT was directly connected to the throttle. Remembering the max starting EGT for the Orenda 14 engine was 850° C, I retarded the throttle until the EGT was below 850 degrees, thinking that might make the engine last longer. That gave me an rpm of 55%, a high idle, which would keep the hydraulic pressures up and the generator on the line. (What more could I want except possibly a runway on the horizon?) I immediately informed the shooters of the engine problem and declared an emergency which terminated the engagement.

Not being a good long distance swimmer, I began to descend to the west which would get me closer to land. The F-15 pilots immediately did just as we had briefed in case of an emergency. The element leader got on my wing and the wingman climbed to altitude and went to guard channel to get a rescue helicopter on the way. I assumed the best glide speed, 185 knots indicated air speed. The weather was clear with a thin scud layer below me that obscured my slant range vision towards the shore. The high man told me that he thought he saw a runway ahead and that if I turned about 10° right it would be on my nose. I "Rogered", that and took his vectors. I continued my descent at best glide speed. By this point I was probably descending through 15,000 feet above ground level. Since our procedure was just like the Air Force -- i.e., if a bailout was imminent we would eject at a minimum of 2,000 feet above the ground -- I needed to be thinking about that. I decided it was time to dip down below the scud layer so I could see the coastline, which I did, and picked up what I thought could be a runway. At that point, all I could see was a clearing in the Southern pines beyond the coastline.

I was a little high for a straight-end approach but not high enough to set up a high key for a simulated flame outlanding (SFO). But as I got closer, sure enough, there was a runway. Not the kind I was used to but it was a clearing in the Southern pines. I decided it was time to get rid of some altitude since the decision had already been made that I was not going to go the SFO route. I put the speed brakes out, lowered the gear and flaps, and knowing a go-around was out of the question, shut the engine down not wanting any thrust. I dumped the nose toward the clearing in the trees and did a little S-turn to lose some of the altitude. I dove toward the runway and made probably as good a landing as I've ever made in the F-86! The end of the runway was looming up quickly, so I got on the binders as hard as I could without blowing a tire, and came to a stop short of the end which was well-marked by pine trees. I heard the F-15 pilots tell range control that I was

on the ground safely, so I figured that was taken care of. Clearly, those guys were way ahead of me! I slid the canopy back and climbed out of the airplane to survey the situation.

Hearing a little 'putt-putt' noise behind me, I turned around to see two young boys pull up beside me on a three-wheeler. Their eyes were as big as saucers. I asked them where I was. Obviously being puzzled by my question, one of them drawled in his Florida accent: "Well, Mr., you're at Apalachicola, Florida." They got off their three-wheeler wanting to take a good look at the airplane. Because the overheated brakes were smoking, I was worried about the tires exploding, so I told the boys to stay away from the wheels and tires. I was very thirsty and asked them if they had any water. They said "no" but they would get me some. They got on their three-wheeler and disappeared into the pine trees. A little while later they returned with a jug of water, which I thanked them for, and proceeded to drain dry. I asked them where they lived. They replied that their dad had a saw mill back in the woods, pointing to the pine trees.

A few minutes later, a man drove up in a car and seemed as surprised to see me as the boys were. I asked him if he could take me to a telephone. We drove to a little shack that turned out to be a closed FAA flight service and weather observation station. The man informed me that the runway had been closed for several months and was in disrepair. He was surprised that I didn't wreck my airplane. I used his telephone to call my office at Holloman AFB, New Mexico. Our secretary told me that my crew chief at Tyndale who would have been awaiting my return had already been told by the Air Force where I was. He and our maintenance supervisor, Jay Featherstone, had decided that the airplane would need an engine change. This would be a two-man job. The maintenance supervisor asked for a volunteer mechanic to travel to Tyndale to assist with the engine change.

In the meantime, my crew chief had already arranged for the spare engine which we kept at Tyndale for an emergency. Those FSI maintenance guys were always resourceful in planning ahead, and obviously didn't need me making decisions. They had everything well under control.

The following day, the crew chief and his newly-arrived maintenance man, proceeded to look around for a means to remove the aft-section and install the new engine. In an effort to put that act together, they located the saw mill that belonged to the boys' parents. They arranged to borrow a forklift to use for the engine change. By the time they had the aft-section off, the spare engine had arrived. The new engine was subsequently installed and the faulty engine was placed in the engine can which was soon on its way to the FSI engine shop at Mojave, California. The guys at the engine shop were as anxious as I was to find out what caused the engine failure.

The ground crew had the spare engine installed and the airplane ready for a ground run -- within about 24 hours! After a drive down the runway I decided a clean F-86 could get airborne with no problem. The runway was basically concrete slabs with the edges lifted up by tree roots, so that if I'd been anywhere but right down the middle when I landed, I would have knocked the landing gear off the airplane. Three days later, on June 25, 1987, I FCF'd the airplane from Apalachicola, and recovered at Tyndale AFB, where I completed eight more sorties that week with the new engine.

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Epilogue: For this little adventure, Flight Systems, Inc., awarded me with a letter of recognition and a \$50 gold piece, which I still have. It was found that the center bearing had failed and allowed the compressor to shift forward to the point that the compressor blades were rubbing on the stators. To prevent subsequent failures of this type, Bob Laidlaw, the FSI owner, immediately arranged to have new center bearings made out of a more heat-resistant material than the original ones. These new bearings were installed in all the F-86 dart-tow engines.

I later heard a little after-story from one of the weapon school instructors, Lucky Eckman, a friend of mine, whom I had flown F-105s with in Southeast Asia. He told me he heard some of the young students standing around one day discussing my Apalachicola landing, and one of the students said to the group: "Did you see the guy flying that thing? He was older than dirt!" I calculated my age at the time: I was 51. Any one of them would love to have a retirement job like the one I had with FSI!

Reflection: Needless to say I've had to purge the word "luck" from my vocabulary. In recalling this event, and my

two combat tours, one in the F-105 and one in the F-4 in Southeast Asia, plus 20 years with Flight Systems, Inc., my take-offs and landings all came out equal. I can only reflect on what has become my favorite psalm, Psalm 139:1-6, which speaks to God's hand in our lives:

"1 O LORD, Thou hast searched me and known me. 2 Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; Thou dost understand my thought from afar. 3 Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, Thou dost know it all. 5 Thou hast enclosed me behind and before, And laid Thy hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high. I cannot attain to it."

This is a postscript to the story:

I recently visited with Tom Dedmore. It turns out that he was the crew chief at Tyndall AFB along with Marty Irwin, the crew chief that came out from Holloman. So it was these two who did the magic engine change at Apalachicola. Tom said that the forklift was provided by the sawmill owner. The sawmill owner insisted that he operate the forklift, which he did very well. When the job was complete, he wouldn't take any money. But Tom and Marty felt like he should be paid so they each gave him \$20 out of their own pockets.

Prior to my takeoff, Tom and Marty made a FOD walk down the runway, and told me to be sure and stay in the middle of the runway, which I'd already decided to do as I mentioned in the article. Tom said he and Marty breathed a sigh of relief when I cleared the pine trees at the end of the runway. Tom then immediately returned to Tyndall to receive the airplane after the FCF, and to crew it for subsequent missions that week. Now we know who deserves the letter of commendation and the \$50 gold piece. I always said if you gave those FSI mechanics a nameplate and a few parts, they could build an F-86!

A pair of Flight System Incorporated Sabre Mk. 5s on the ramp at Mojave in May 1982. FSO flew a number of Sabre variants for use in many USAF programs, including F-86Fs, Canadair Sabre 5s and 6s, and many Mitsubishi-built F-86Fs. (credit - Bob Shane)



Sabre One and Two

John (author) and Jim Kumpf

Like most identical twins Jim and I tried to maintain our independence, and we were very competitive. But when the opportunity occurred to enter pilot training, we both agreed.

We had just started our third year in the business school at the University of Minnesota. It was in the fall of 1950. Our father could not afford to pay tuition. We paid for college and other expenses by shoveling coal on a dredge digging a channel in the Mississippi River below Minneapolis. It was a dirty, back breaking job, but it paid well. The Korean War had begun. We were facing the draft.

One day we ran across an U.S. Air Force recruiting desk in the student union. It was time to sign up. So we were both off to Randolph AFB, TX to fly the T-6. Six months later Jim was assigned to jet training in the F-80 at Williams AFB, AZ and I had orders to Vance AFB, TX to train in the B-25. We informed our parents. Unbeknownst to us our father called his congressman with a request: "I want my boys together." The next day we were assigned to Craig AFB, AL for advanced training in the F-51. We graduated on December 15, 1951 - class of 51-H.

Our adventures continued. We checked out in the first operational jet, the F-80. And then from Williams to Nellis, NV for gunnery and air-to-air training in the F-86 SabreJet. What fun. We began flying the very best. Timing and luck!

In April 1952 we headed to Suwon, Korea K-13 airfield to join the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing. We both were assigned to the 25th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. As was the practice, we flew on the wing of the element lead or the flight leader for over 40-50 missions. Jim shared a MIG with L/Col Albert Kelly. I went without.

Finally we started leading the element or the flight. Because of the Sullivan Law (the five brothers from Iowa who went down in a ship during WWII) Jim and I were not supposed to fly together. But we had a squadron commander who reasoned, "If one gets shot down, the other one is no damn good anyway." So sometimes Jim would fly lead and I would fly the element lead, or vice-versa. This worked well because we anticipated the others moves.

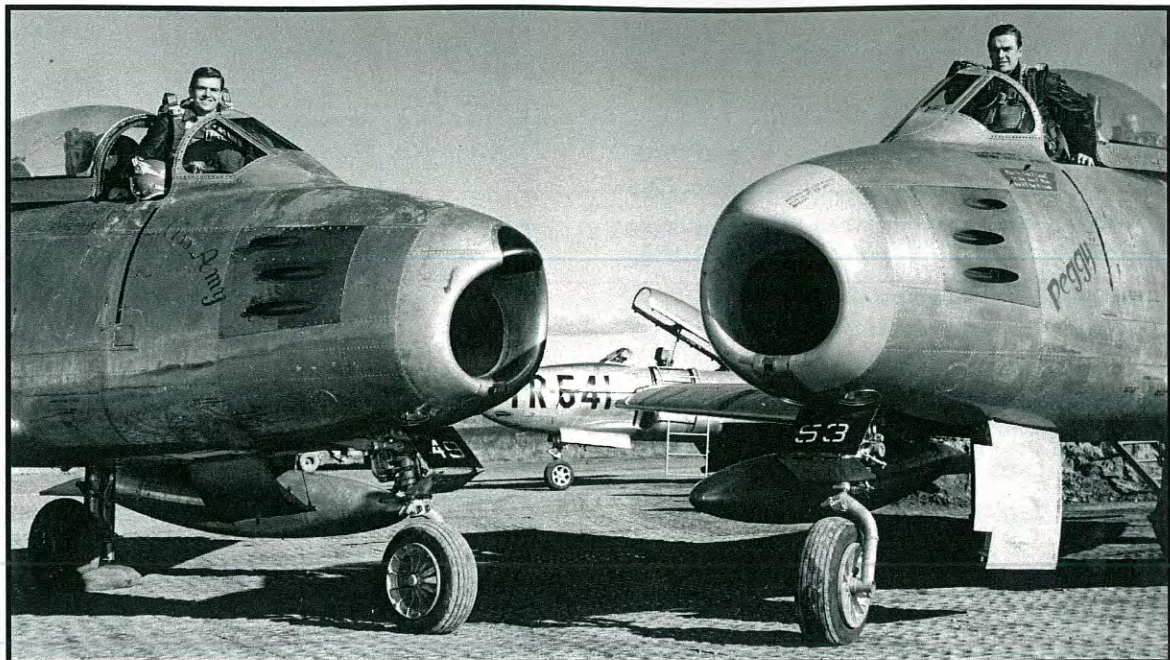
When we flew together we both had visions of getting a MIG or two or more. No such luck. The MIG's weren't flying, and regretfully, perhaps naively, we didn't cross the Yalu into the forbidden Chinese sanctuary to find them.



The Kumpf brothers, Jim and John, at Williams AFB, AZ, in early 1952. The Kumpf twins joined the Air Force in mid-1951, graduating with Class 51-H in mid-December. In early 1952, both brothers went to Nellis AFB and The Fighter School, home of the F-86. (credit - USAF)

2nd Lt. James Kumpf on the ramp at K-13, Suwon AB, in June 1952. Both brothers were assigned to the 25th FIS. (credit - Jim Kumpf)





The Kumpf twins celebrate as both have flown 100 missions with the 25th FIS at Suwon, December 1952. (credit – USAF)

I have other memories like: S turning above B-29's on the last daylight bombing of North Korea; escorting fighter bombers who in June 1952 hit the Sui-ho Dam power plants that provided much of the electrical grid for the north. And the evening raid on the whore houses north of Pyongyang really pissed off the North Koreans. Opposition was intense. We completed the required 100 missions in December 1952, and received orders to report to the AF Instrument School, Moody AFB, Georgia. What a bummer! Deliberately we took a few days checking in before reporting to the commander. His first comment was, "Where-in-the-hell have you guys been? Your assignment has been changed to Nellis." Timing and luck struck once again. In less than a day we checked out, and hit the road going West.

At the time Nellis had F-80's and F-86's. Before long we became instructor pilot's, a dream job. Then Las Vegas had seven hotels on the strip - from the Thunderbird to the Flamingo. There was no cover or minimum at the shows.

September 9th, 1952, was a good day for these Sabre pilots as the MiGs came up to play. (L-R) John Petzen – _ credit, Simon Anderson – 1 MiG, Tom Moore – 1 MiG, John Kumpf – 0. (credit – John Kumpf)



We flew almost every day. Over the years it's been nice to hear compliments from former students. Memories are many. I'll cite a couple that occurred circa 1953.

When Col. Clay Tice was Wing Commander the USAF proposed centralized aircraft maintenance. Tice was opposed and favored individual squadron maintenance. So to prove his point he put 160 airplanes in a massive formation flyby - eighty F-80's and eighty F-86's. Jim and a few others had been out on the strip late the night before. The ops officer grounded them before the briefing.

What a gaggle. We flew a racetrack pattern to the southwest. On the way back to Nellis we flew through a DC-3 going in the opposite direction. I bet the airline captain is still talking to himself. Landing was exciting. As we passed the field the leading Sabres pulled up to land and they slowed down. This created an accordion effect as the airplanes squeezed together. Somehow we all got down without an incident.

Another fond memory Involved Operation High Flight. Things were getting hot in early 1953 during the Iron Curtain period. The USAF decided it was time to get fighter interceptors to Europe as soon as possible. A classified briefing was held in the base auditorium all asking for volunteers to ferry airplanes. Almost everybody raised their hand, so names were drawn. Both Jim and I were fortunate to be selected for the first wave. Passports were expedited. We were fitted with immersion suits, and off we went to Warner-Robbins AFB, GA to select a brand new airplane. We had the pick of all the airplanes available. Then we met B/G George Cassady, MATTS, whose job was to make sure the Sabre's were delivered safely. During the briefing he mentioned that while landing in a C-54 an 86 did a roll on takeoff, and after the meeting he wanted that pilot to confess. Jim pulled me aside and said he was the one, asking what he should do? I said something like you dumb s ___, it's up to you. He coped out.

Then off to deliver the airplanes along the North Atlantic route. A few days later while leaving Greenland (never understood how it got that name) Bob Latshaw couldn't get his landing gear up. I was flying his wing, and Jim was flying the element lead. Bob asked me to take the lead. Soon after we picked up a stray.

We headed for Iceland. A few minutes later number four called saying his engine was running rough. I said something smart like, "They all run rough with icebergs below." Then I asked Jim to take him back to Greenland. Two of us ventured on. During briefings I had written the frequencies of the weather ships below. I called my wingman to ask if had the headings and maps. His voice went up an octave as he replied, "No, don't you?" I headed east tuning the radio compass to the next ship.

After a long nervous time I looked to the north and saw land on the horizon. A hard turn left brought us to an airfield. Wrong one! We landed at Keflavik instead of Reykjavik 25 miles to the east. After being straightened out we finally got to the right field.

I went to the bar. About two hours later I was paged. General Cassady wanted to see me in his quarters. I entered with a salute. He asked what I wanted to drink. Then he said I had saved an airplane and probably a pilot by sending Jim and his wingman back to Greenland. The Sabre had a major engine problem. He went on to tell me he heard about landing on the wrong field, that he had been a fighter pilot. "You just smelled your way, didn't you? I said, "Yes sir." As I left the room he said, "By the way I know it was your brother who did the roll on takeoff at Warner Robbins." Finally we delivered the airplanes to Landstuhl, Germany. When I parked a friend from Korea jumped on my wing with a bottle of champagne. It was Charlie Gabriel who 20 years later became CSAF.

In December 1954 Jim and I decided to become civilians. We returned to Minneapolis and joined the AF Reserve

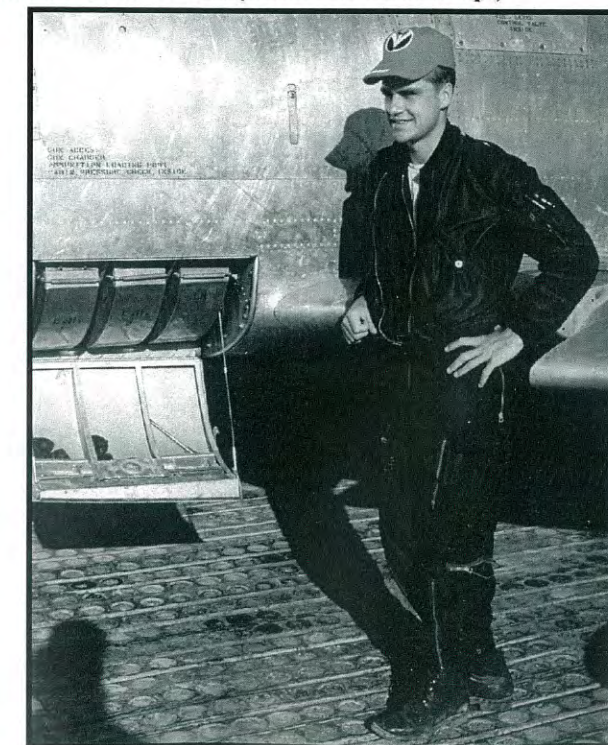


In early 1953, the Kumpf brothers took part in Operation High Flight. Seen here on Greenland are the pilots that took part. BrigGen. George Cassaday is 2nd from Left, Bob Latshaw, an ace in Korea, is front row Right, John Kumpf is 3rd from Left, Jim is 3rd from Right. (credit – John Kumpf)

flying F-80's again. In 1955 there was an world-wide reserve fighter gunnery meet in Casper, WY. I led the team, and we won first place. Jim won individual honors firing over 90%. We both retired from the Reserve and Guard as Lt/Col's in the mid-seventies.

What a ride! Jim died at 81 in September 2010.

Lt. James Kumpf on the PSP ramp at K-13 in late 1952. Jim was officially credited with a shared MiG credit for the mission of 11 June 1952. (credit – James Kumpf)



this 'n that

THE NEW HAT IS BACK IN STOCK! Get 'em while they're hot – and available. That great new hat that was unveiled at the 2013 Reunion and sold on a very limited sale, is again available. The price is the same - \$15 plus \$7 postage. Send a check to the Association and they will get as many as you need in the mail just in time for Christmas. Send your check to F-86 Association Hat, PO Box 34423, Las Vegas, NV 89133-4423.

Record Setting Roll for an F-86D – Maybe!

By Hal Wade

In the late 1950s I was a Flight Instructor in the All Weather Interceptor School at Perrin AFB, TX.

Our flight commander horse-traded with other flight commanders until we were owed several weekend cross country birds in addition to our normal weekly allowance. As a result, all of "A" Flight was able to leave on a Friday afternoon for Las Vegas on a weekend "navigational proficiency flight". Yeh, right!

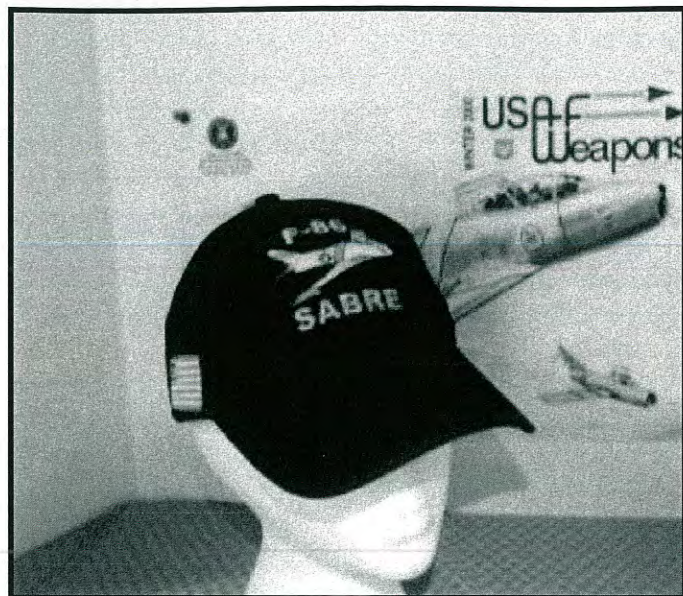
Sunday, on the return trip, we stopped at Albuquerque for fuel. We agreed we would do a non after-burner takeoff to conserve fuel. After all, Albuquerque had 11,500 feet of runway. So we lined up with 'Big Jim' Bothwell in the lead. Lee Rousey on his right wing and myself on the left.

At Jim's bidding, we began the takeoff roll. Acceleration was terribly slow, with high elevation and no A/B. A lot of runway distance markers were going by – FAST! Somewhere around the 7,000 foot marker, my machine felt like it was ready to fly. So I lifted off and skimmed along, maybe a foot off the runway, but keeping a good position on lead.

With my peripheral vision, I could see that Rousey was doing the same thing, but 'Big Jim's' main wheels were still solidly on terra firma. His nose wheel was off the ground and he raised it a bit more. The numbers on the runway distance markers were getting big and I knew there would not be many more.

Finally, just as the asphalt turned to grass, Jim horsed the nose up some more and staggered into the air. Fortunately, the terrain slopes down off the end of the runway to the southwest, and Jim was able to lower the nose and pick up some airspeed.

As he finally got to a comfortable flying speed, he looked around at me and asked – "Why didn't you tell me that my flaps weren't down!!"



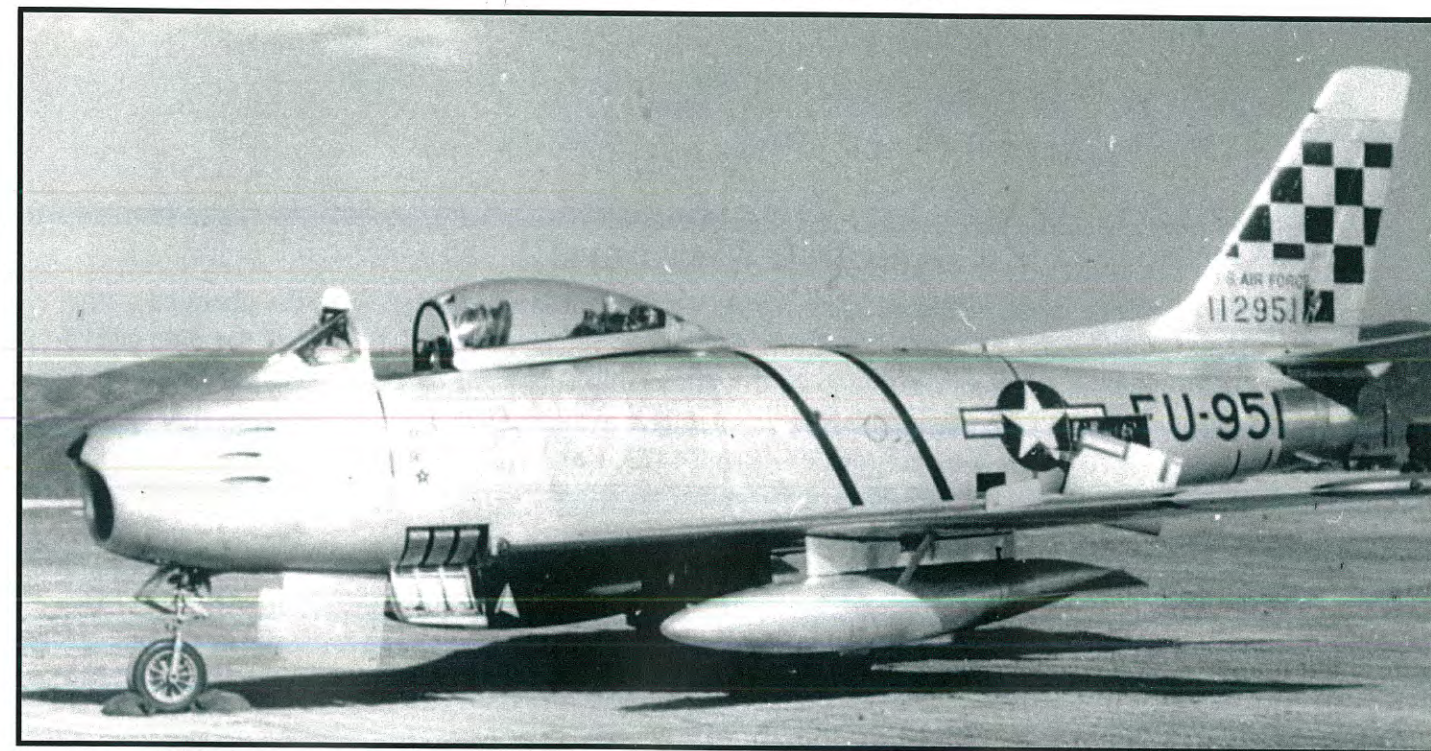
Hal Wade at Perrin AFB, TX during the late 1960s. Perrin was home to the USAF Interceptor Weapons School. (credit – Hal Wade)



Sabre Reunions

Sabre Pilots 20th Reunion April 26/27/28, 2015 in Las Vegas. Start planning now to make the trip. More details to follow in future issue of *SabreJet Classics!*

The Super Sabre Society will be holding their 2015 reunion on April 9-12, 2015, in Dayton, Ohio. Contact: Duane Clawson, 611 Andersen Rd, Enon Valley, PA 16120, (724)-336-4273, or email deweyclawson@hotmail.com



The King and his mount. LtGen Glenn O. Barcus was the Commander of 5th Air Force in Korea. Although he was not supposed to fly combat missions, he had a 51st Wing F-86F assigned to him and flew a number of missions, including the infamous raid against the Pyingyang Radio station that had been broadcasting a number of lies regarding the pilots in 5th Air Force. His Sabre was named "Barcus Carcus" and carried his rank painted on the gun bay door. Of course, only the best pilots were assigned as his escort on any mission that he flew. (credit – Larry Davis collection)



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What Is It? Does anyone know anything about this trio of F-86As. They have DayGlo scallops on the nose and appear to be taking of 'in formation'. The photo was taken at Wright Patterson AFB in the early 1950s. That's all we know for sure. Anyone with information and/or other photos of any of these F-86A-1 Sabres please contact your editor, Sabrejet Classics, 6475 Chesham Drive NE, Canton, Ohio 44721, or email sabreclsx@aol.com.

