

Publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 22, Number 2

Summer 2014



*Inside – Tiger Tales, Sabre Pilot Visits The Front Lines,
South Africa and the Sabre,
Sabre Pilots Reunion Registration, MORE!*

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Front cover – A 514th FIS F-86D on the ramp at RAF Manston. The 406th FIW moved to Germany in 1958 due to “noise objections” from the British civilians. (credit-Drury Callahan)

SabreJet Classics is published by the F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn. The F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn. 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 was assigned, 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 website or at the Las Vegas address. Dues are \$25/year, \$50/3 years. 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 Assn.”, and sent to the Las Vegas address.

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the president's notebook

We are well into the summer as you read this edition of the Sabre Jet Classics. Normally, I start with some admin items such a dues, keeping us updated on your current location and more. You've all read that over many times. However there is one item I want to address. I must apologize for not listing the price of the hats in the last Classics. I needed to clarify the cost of shipping and since I had listed the price before, I failed to do it again. Before I leave the hat issue. The 200 hats I ordered are all sold and another order of 200 has been requested. If not already in, they should be shortly. The price is still \$15.00. Now, let's get into the subject of REUNION 20 coming up 26, 27, and 28 April of next year.

We are putting together another great reunion for 2015. We will be at the Gold Coast Hotel Casino as in past years and they have served us well. Previously, the food prices have always increased. This time, they have reduced their prices in most instances. On top of that, we, the Association, have reduced the prices even more. Room rates are still as cheap as one could expect in Las Vegas close to the Strip. On top of that we have reduced the registration fee back to

\$50.00 with an added benefit of charging a spouse or guest \$25.00 instead of the usual \$50.00. See the details in the reunion explanation of events.

As for what we will be doing, the 64th Aggressor Squadron at Nellis will host us for our Nellis Day. The Warfare Center Commander has agreed to be our guest speaker on banquet night. As an added feature, during our buffet dinner evening, when we never had any entertainment in the past, Dick Jonas will perform for us by singing many Korean War ballads as well as his own from the Southeast Asia times. That should be a fun evening.

There are still a few things to do, but this will definitely be an event that I urge as many of you as possible to attend. I recently ran across a writing by an unknown person who penned a great thought of why men who have served in the military yearn to reunite that I would like to share with you.

“Not to just tell stories or look at old pictures. Not just to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once gave their best. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate, but, I know them in a way I know no other person. I have never given anyone such trust. They were

willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to sacrifice for one another. I cannot say where we are headed. Ours are not perfect friendships; those are the province of myth and legend. A few of my comrades have drifted far from me only sending back an occasional word. I know that each day some of them fall silent. Some of the men will stay close, a couple, perhaps always at hand. As long as I have memory I will think of them every day. I am sure that when I leave this world my last thought will be of my family and my comrades Such good men. As for those of us who have been to war and fought for freedom, our gift of life has a special meaning. ONE THE PROTECTED WILL NEVER KNOW AND MOST WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND!”

There is no better time to reunite with old F-86 buddies than, at our reunion next year. Hope to see many of you then.

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

J.R. Alley, President

TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

June 26th, 2014, was a sad day for us as Board members, associates, and friends, as that morning Sam Hollenbeck made his last flight. Sam will always be remembered as a great fighter pilot and one who helped make the Sabre the best day fighter of our time. As a long time Association Board member, Sam contributed much to our organization through his enthusiasm and sound judgment that he so conscientiously presented to our Association's business. Sam will truly be missed by all of us.

Our Highest Respect

J.R. Alley
President

FOLDED WINGS

W.B. 'Tex' Badger, September 26th, 2013

Gabriel P. "Bart" Bartholomew,

January 30th, 2014

Harmon A. Dungen, December 30th, 2013

George M. Fox, January 12th, 2012

Ronald T. Golan,, January 23rd, 2014

Edison P. 'Phil' Janney, January 17th, 2014

William H. Lewis, February 1st, 2014

Robert K. McCutchen, December 2013

James C. McGrath, December 1st, 2012

Donald A. McNamara, January 7th, 2014

Charles M. McSwain, June 11th, 2012

James W. Miller, November 7th, 2013

Robert R. Moxley, January 29th, 2014

Lothar 'Andy' Olman, January 13th, 2013

Chris J.A. Prins (SAAF), January 10th, 2014

James D. Smith, March 16th, 2014

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to the editor

(editor's comments)

Well we certainly didn't fool anyone with our "What Is It?" photo in issue 22-1. It is indeed, the F-86F on display at the Armament Museum at Eglin AFB. It is NOT the actual aircraft flown by Capt. Joe McConnell, top scoring ace in Korea. That airplane went to the Nationalist China Air Force in 1956.

The markings are completely bogus as the real airplane never had the "US Air Force" logo on the fuselage, and the name "Beauteous Butch II" was painted in very large letters on the gun bay door. Plus the tail checkerboard was not black and white, but simply black checks on the silver tail. Oh well.....

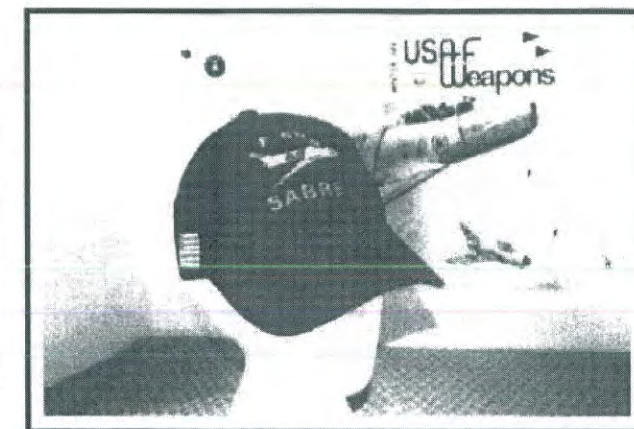
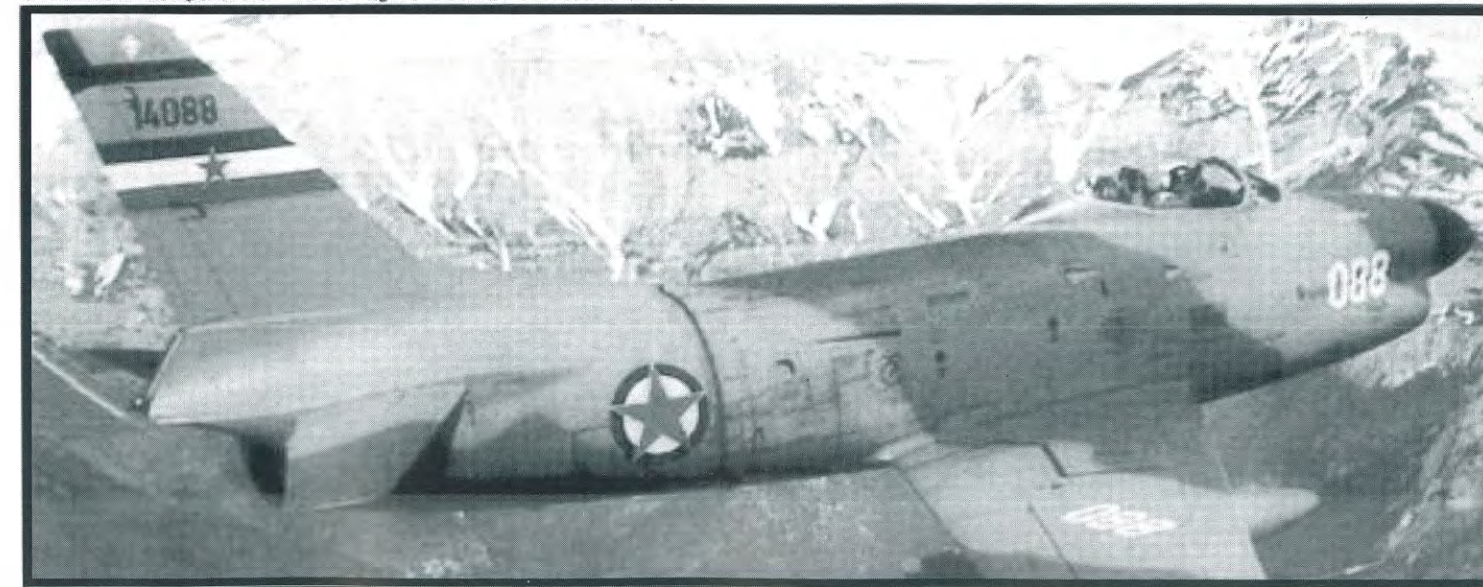
Thanks to all the guys, and there were a great many, that correctly answered our query of "What Is It?" We'll get a tougher one for this issue.

F-86 Association Hats

As I mentioned in my Presidents Notebook comments, we have ordered another 200 hats that should be on hand shortly. There will be a slight difference. The tail flash will be the checker board of the 51st Wg. The price is still \$15.00 per hat plus \$7.00 for shipping. If ordering more than three hats, another \$7.00 will be required for S/H.

Send your hat orders and your check made out to F-86 Sabre Pilots Association to: F-86 Sabre Pilots Association, attn.. Sabre Hat, PO Box 34423, Las Vegas, NV 89133-4423.

The files finally have a photo of an operational F-86D of the Yugoslavia Air Force. We still do not know how many F-86Ds were sent to Yugoslavia but it was at least one full squadron of the all-weather interceptors. They were painted in the standard NATO colors of green and grey on the upper surfaces, and PRU Blue on the undersides. (credit - Sabrejet Classics collection)



NEW PHOTOS
*We received a lot
of new photos over
the past few months.
Here are a few
for your pleasure.*

From David Russell

I am attaching a photo I took in June 1956 at RCAF Station Chatham (New Brunswick) on Air Force Day. The aircraft shown was a visiting aircraft. I could be mistaken but I cannot relate the number 2365 on the tail fin to the FU-658 'buzz number' on the fuselage. Do you have any idea what unit FU-658 was serving with in June 1956? The aircraft behind it is a Royal Canadian Navy F2H-3 Banshee based at Halifax.

David Russell's photo appears to show a different serial on the tail than the buzz number on the fuselage. It is however, an anomaly either with the aircraft painters, they forgot the last "8", or the angle of the camera. One thing of note, is the different 'font' used on the buzz number than the normal North American font. (credit - David Russell)



At the time, RCAF Chatham was the base for the Canadair Sabre mark 6s serving in Europe and had about 60 Sabres on site.

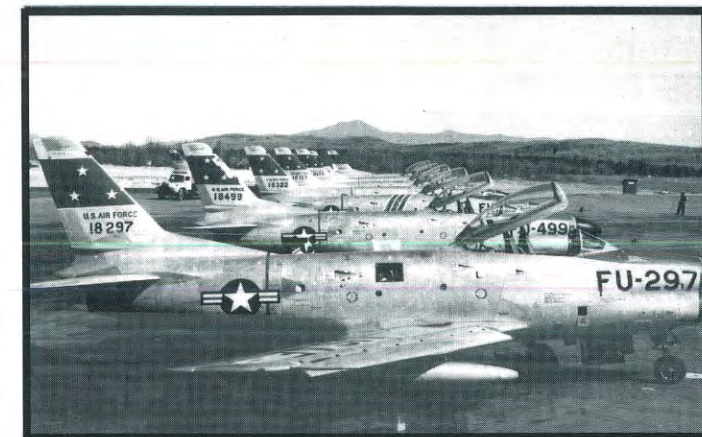
(editor - I pointed out to Mr. Russell that the actual tail number is "23658" and the camera simply did not capture the "8". He later mentioned that he thought it was from the 49th FIS because of the tail band with 3 stars on the field. I told him that both the 49th and the 37th Squadrons had similar tail markings. But the 49th FIS was green and the 37th was blue. However, the real thing that IDs this as the 37th are the Arctic Red markings on the aft fuselage.

ONLY the 37th FIS had those Arctic Red bands on the fuselage and tail operationally. Others carried them when they were TDY over a cold climatic region but they were removed on final destination. The 37th FIS, being based at Ethan Allen AFB, Vermont, was constantly flying intercept missions over the cold climate of Vermont, Maine, and lower Canada)



The 37th Fighter Interceptor Squadron was based at Ethan Allen AFB, Vermont. As such their mission required them to overfly the cold regions of lower Canada and their aircraft received the standard Arctic paint job of red tail and wingtips. (credit - E. Schultz)

The 37th FIS received F-86Ds in 1953, replacing their veteran F-51Ds, and moved from Burlington Airport to Ethan Allen AFB. The blue tail band is similar to other aircraft in the 4711th ADW. (credit - Marty Isham)



Fine inflight photo of a 37th FIS F-86D clearly showing the Arctic Red markings. The 4711th Air Defense Wing had a colored tail band with three white stars. The 37th FIS had blue for the tail color. (credit - E. Schultz)



TIGER TALES

Saving an F-86D
By Grover Wilcox

Air Defense Command had a policy of evaluating a unit on very short notice – VERY SHORT! Whenever this happened to my units, I always stated you have to tac the commander first. I chose one of the aircraft from the 498th Squadron to fly this mission, with a flight commander from this squadron as my #2. The #3 man in the flight was one of the inspectors from Western Air defense Headquarters at Hamilton AFB, Capt. Scotty Ferguson. Major Howard Hayes was the other inspector and was flying the T-Bird which was our 'target'.

Everything went fine from gear up to L.O.P. (Line of Position) about 25 miles from the target, where the T-Bird was locked on. Myself and #2 were 'under the hood' from gear in the well. Near the 20 seconds to go signal on the radar, all hell broke loose in the form of an explosion in my aircraft. The temp gauge pegged at over 1000 degrees. You would think that the first thing one would do was to chop the throttle, but I jerked the hood back first. I thought "If I'm going to blow up, I want to see it."

"Texas Terror" was the personal aircraft of Col. Grover Wilcox when he commanded the 84th Fighter Interceptor Group at Geiger Field. Col. Wilcox chose this F-86D from the 498th FIS as "his" aircraft and it wore his command bands on the fuselage. (credit – Grover Wilcox)



Then I chopped my throttle. My two wing men came up at my request and checked for damage. They didn't see any but I didn't want to take any chances so I shut the engine down. I was at 35,000 feet and 68 miles from base. My wing man and the T-Bird pilot stayed close.

I thought seriously about attempting an air start (something not really welcomed in the F-86D),



General Jimmie Doolittle visited Geiger Field in 1955. (L-R) BrigGen. Sam Agee, 9th AD Commander, General Doolittle, Col. Wilcox, and Col. Harrison Thyng, Vice Commander of 9th AD. (credit – Grover Wilcox)

but not knowing what caused the explosion, thought I'd leave well enough alone. Things were awfully quiet in the airplane. I stayed in contact with the GCI site until about four miles out on low key; and didn't establish a high key contact because of my position NW of the base. I planned to land on Runway 03, which was 6900 feet long. Incidentally, I flew over Fairchild AFB which had a 10,000 foot runway. Calling Geiger tower on low key, their replay was "Tiger One, you are landing downwind!" I replied – "Sorry, I'll pull up and go around." But I didn't and landed without incident using about 2/3 of Runway 03, coasting off at the intersection and stopped.

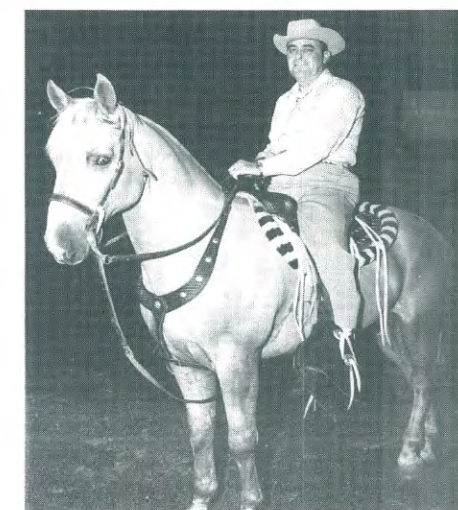
BrigGen. Stan Agee picked me up in his staff car and dropped me off at Base Ops for a critique with the

Armorer's load 2.75 FFAR rockets into the tray of B/G Agee's F-86D (note the one star on the gear door) at Yuma for the annual Air Force Rocketry Meet. (credit – King Lotz)



Inspection Team. Capt. Kelly Marinkowitz, Maintenance Officer, after checking the aircraft, said he could not find any damage and was going to fly it for a few minutes. When he landed, I was there to take a look at the aircraft. The lower fuselage had four holes in it the size of salad plates! The problem? The afterburner 'D' ring had not been torqued correctly and was thus leaking. At MY speed (around .9 mach) on the approach to the target T-Bird, the fuel would vaporize and explode. At Kelly's slower speed, the fuel puddled up and burned. The squadron had been 'gigged' for not torquing 'D' rings previously. All the squadron aircraft were immediately grounded,

Col. Wilcox was the Grand Marshall of the Diamond Spur Rodeo held in Spokane in 1958. The stars of the show were Gene Autry and Annie Oakley. Gene fell off his horse Champion, Col. Wilcox almost fell off, and Annie missed her first two shots that evening. That was enough toasts for the evening. (credit – Grover Wilcox)





Col. Wilcox, CO of the 84th FIG, and Col. Harrison Thyng had a good day hunting near the Colleville radar site with two deer and a black bear, which completely covered up Col. Wilcox's wife's Nash Metropolitan. (credit – Grover Wilcox)

inspected, and re-torqued.

General Hutchinson, the SAC Division CO at Fairchild, called me that evening and asked why I didn't use the longer runway at his base. I replied, jokingly, "You bomber pilots don't know anything about these fighters!" (He actually was an old fighter jock.) "Besides", I told him, "there were 1500 people all lined up on the runway to watch the Old Man bust his butt, and I didn't want to disappoint them!"

The question was later asked why did I land down wind? Answer – Off the approach end of Runway 21, there were 70 foot high pine trees; off the approach end to Runway 03 was a wheat field. Now which one would you want to land in if you ended up short? The

Proving the F-86D was a true all-weather interceptor, this Geiger Tiger gets ready start engine on the snow covered Geiger Field ramp in the winter of 1956. (credit – Tom Dozier)



onlookers said it had been a "perfect dead stick landing."

Other memories of Geiger Field

My telephone number rang at 5am, repeat AM. A sleepy colonel – ME, picks up the phone and says "Hello!" The voice on the other end isn't quite so sleepy as an angry Mess Sargeant shouts "Aren't you supposed to be down here on KP?"

My reply very patiently, "Well, if you are using 'full birds' for KP now, I'll be right down!" I later remarked that I was well aware of a severe personnel problem in the Air Force, but didn't think it was acute enough to require commanders to pull KP. Note to early rising Mess Sargeants: Check the phone number before you dial it!

Gate guard at McChord AFB is an F-86D painted in the markings of the infamous 498th FIS Geiger Tigers. (credit – Larry Davis collection)



**REGISTRATION FORM
F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION
TWENTIETH REUNION, April 26, 27, & 28, 2015
GOLD COAST HOTEL & CASINO, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**

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

EVENT FEE NO. IN PARTY TOTALS

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2015:

REGISTRATION: Starts at 10 AM MEMBER \$50.00 x _____ = \$ _____

SPOUSE/GUEST \$25.00 x _____ = \$ _____

RAFFLE TICKETS (6 for \$5) \$5.00 x _____ = \$ _____

COCKTAIL PARTY (5PM to 7PM) \$15.00 x _____ = \$ _____

Hors D' Oeuvres & Cash Bar

MONDAY, APRIL 27:

NELLIS DAY WITH THE 64TH AGRESSORS \$15.00 x _____ = \$ _____
 (Be at Bus for Departure @ TBD)

LADIES LUNCHEON (11:30 to 2PM) \$18.00 x _____ = \$ _____

BUFFET (6PM TO 8PM) cash bar \$30.00 x _____ = \$ _____

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2015:

BRUNCH (9AM TO 11AM) \$22.00 x _____ = \$ _____

BANQUET (6:30PM to 11pm) cash bar \$36.00 x _____ = \$ _____
 Petite Filet Mignon & Chicken Breast

REUNION FEES - TOTAL \$ _____

MAKE YOUR TRAVEL AND ROOM RESERVATIONS EARLY. Call the GOLD COAST room Reservations @ 1-888 402-6278 or web site <http://www.goldcoastcasino.com/groups>. Identify yourself with the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association and use GROUP CODE "AF86SAB" to receive the Premium \$48 room rate (Deluxe room rate - \$36.00) except Friday and Saturday nights. All reservations must be received by the GOLD COAST by Wednesday MARCH 23, 2015. Mail completed form and check to:

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

**20th F-86 SABRE PILOTS
 ASSOCIATION REUNION
 26, 27 and 28 April, 2015**

GOLD COAST HOTEL CASINO, LAS VEGAS NEVADA

The 20th F-86 Sabre Pilots Association reunion will be held at the Gold Coast. Register early and avoid the rush. If you have to cancel please contact J.R. Alley at 702-363-9880 email alleyoop3@cox.net, Jerry Johnson at 702-458-7863 email jerdot56@cox.net, or Pat Hughes at 702-870-4600 email hugpat@aol.com. You may cancel up to 10:00AM PST Saturday April 25th, 2015 and get a full refund. No refunds after that time.

Making and canceling of room reservations is your responsibility. You can book your room reservation by calling the Gold Coast Hotel (888) 402-6278 or on-line, <http://goldcoastcasino.com/groups>. Identify yourself as a member of the "F-86 Sabre Pilots Association" and group code "AF86SAB". Cut-off date for room reservations using our guaranteed group discount, \$48 per day for the newly remodeled premium rooms and \$36 per day for the Deluxe rooms is Wednesday, March 23, 2013. After that date, the rooms may cost more.

The Board has agreed to reduce the costs of the reunion to our members by: reducing the registration fee to \$50.00 for the member and \$25.00 for the spouse and/or guest (note the registration form). The menu prices for food always increase. This year, we have reduced all buffet and dinner prices. There will be pay-as-you-go bars. Drink tickets will not be provided.

Sign-in starts 10 AM Sunday April 7th, followed by a Cocktail Party 5PM to 7:00 PM. For other events see the registration form.

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

Sabre pilot visits front lines

By Harold Morton

My pilot training class was 52-H. I trained at Marana, Williams AFB and Nellis AFB. I arrived in Seoul, Korea from Tokyo in April 1953 aboard a C-47, a twin-engine transport affectionately known as the Gooney Bird. As passengers, we sat in floor-level seats strapped against the sides of the aircraft. Not very comfortable.

We deplaned at K-14 (Seoul), lined up immediately outside of the bird where we were greeted by an unhappy officer from the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing at Suwon. "Not more pilots!" was his welcome speech. The 8th had been hoping for jet engine mechanics to get some of their birds back in the air. FEAMCOM (Far East Air Material Command) had sent them a propeller specialist for their all-jet outfit on the last flight from Tokyo.

We boarded a bus for the 20-mile trip to Suwon and K-13, our home base for the next year.

Suwon wasn't much of a town in 1953. The only permanent building was what we would call a power & light building but they didn't have many customers. Most of the residents lived in mud huts. My impression was one of great poverty. The indigenous people were mostly agrarian. Their fields were terraced so that the water ran down from one level to the next. I remember seeing a papasan walking toward Seoul where he hoped to sell the rice stacked on the A-frame tied to his back.

The atmosphere smelled bad. Hell, it stank. There were "honey pots" outside each "residence" where family and guests would deposit their excrement which would be used to fertilize their fields. Mostly we couldn't wait to get into the air and breathe the 100% oxygen provided in our birds.

Our planes were F-86F Sabres, the latest version of that famous swept-wing jet built by North American. The main difference between these and the F-86As we flew at Nellis AFB was the power - J-47 GE-27 developed 5,910 lbs of thrust compared to 5,200 for the J47-GE 1 - and the leading edge of the F-86A's wing was slatted. That means the leading edge would be forward and down for take off and landing to ward off stalls; then it would retract as airspeed increased. The newer version had a hard leading edge requiring slightly higher speeds for takeoff and landing.

K-13 served as an airfield for the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing as well as the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing. We were billeted on opposite sides of the field. I flew for the 8th



Lt. Howard Morton's FU-400

and my buddy, Chuck Simmons, flew for the 51st. Our taxiways and parking areas were covered with PSP (Perforated Steel Platforms). I don't remember if the runway was also PSP or paved but it was 10,000' long.

We lived in Quonset Huts, 10 pilots to a hut. This is where we slept and kept our clothing and personal articles. Toilets and showers were outside. Larger Quonset huts also served as the mess halls and officers club.

These Quonset Huts were made of corrugated steel and had a semi-circular cross section. For some reason I still don't understand, I was made flight commander of Roger Flight; our ten pilots had our own hut as did the three other flights that made up the 35th Fighter-Bomber Squadron.

We were each issued a 45 calibre pistol for a side arm. They weren't very accurate and, as far as I could determine, were of little practical use.

I was there for a year. Mostly it was hurry up and wait. We needed to get in flying time to qualify for flight pay and combat pay (a total of about \$300/month). While waiting for my orientation flight I flew right seat in an unarmed C-47 to Japan and back to retrieve supplies for our officers club and mess halls. A boring experience.

My orientation flight was in an unarmed T-33 jet trainer. A Captain flew in the front seat and I was in the back. We flew over the front lines and he pointed out the colored panels that marked location of our troops. The Captain had me

take the controls while he checked his maps. We were east bound at 20,000 when I noticed a few white puffs of smoke off our left wing. I called this to the Captain's attention. "Holy (expletive)" he yelled as he grabbed control and peeled off to the right; "they're shooting at us!"

I thought about Winston Churchill's quote, "There is nothing so exhilarating as to be shot at and missed." I didn't feel exhilarated.

Talks were going on in Pammunjom between the UN, China and North Korea and the ceasefire was eventually signed there on July 27, 1953. But there was fierce fighting during those last three months as both sides sought to improve their position.

Another phenomenon of that period was the number of field grade Air Force Officers who showed up and flew a couple of missions so they could add a Korean combat tour to their military resumé. I remember one Lt. Colonel who lead a flight of our pilots to the Yalu River and skip bombed the dam there with little result other than damage to his aircraft from enemy fire. Upon his return to K-13, he directed our squadron awards officer (a second lieutenant) to put the Lt. Colonel in for the Distinguished Flying Cross.

These intruders pushed my introduction to combat back about a couple of weeks as I was only a 2nd Lieutenant at the time. Nonetheless, as a flight commander, I got to see my name painted on the side of the canopy of my bird, FU-400.

The F-86F is often depicted in air-to-air combat with the Russian-built MIG-15 which was one of its missions. That mission was being carried out by the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing across the airfield from us among others. The other F-86F mission was as a fighter-bomber in close support of our troops as well as interdiction of enemy supply lines. This latter mission was the job of the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing.

We carried a 500 lb bomb and an external fuel tank under each wing and a "nose full of 50s," six 50 calibre machine guns for strafing. I remember well the smell of cordite that filled the cockpit each time those machine guns were fired. I remember too the daring sorties of high-angle dive bombing of suspected enemy ammunition dumps behind the lines of the North Koreans. And the anti-aircraft fire against us as we bore in on those targets; and the compliments of the forward air controllers who witnessed, then reported, the impacts of our bombs.

Those were brief but riveting moments as we engaged the enemy. They didn't happen every day. We might stand down for several days in a row for weather (we had to be able to see a target to attack it) or because of a limited number of targets being identified.

I heard from the folks back home in Kansas City that a buddy of mine, Roger Partnoy, was serving with an artillery outfit in the Chorwon Valley. I tracked him down, reached him on a land line and arranged a visit. I think I am the only fighter pilot in the

Korean War who took a three-day pass to go to the front lines and see the war up close.

I got a bottle of Scotch from the Officers Club, took a jeep to Seoul (K-14) and visited the forward air controller squadron. These guys flew modified Cessna aircraft and spotted targets for us. I went to the Squadron Commander and asked for a ride to the dirt strip near where Roger's outfit was tending a 155 mm mobile Howitzer. Lo and behold, this officer was the same guy who inducted me into the Air Force in Kansas City. Talk about a small world! He agreed, accepted the bottle of scotch as a token of my appreciation and off we went.

Roger met us at the agreed time and took me (in a jeep) to his outfit. This is what I saw!



These troops were billeted in tents in case they had to bug out. Roger, a PFC, had left his rifle on his cot in a corner of his tent. That was a no-no. The result: He was assigned guard duty that night. I sat guard with him in a revetment above the area where the Howitzer was deployed. We were talking about good times in Kansas City when we received incoming rounds from enemy artillery. We hid behind the sand bags of the revetment until the explosions stopped. The next morning, we saw the shrapnel damage including the corner of the tent where Roger's cot had been located.

For the next two days I experienced the deafening noise and earth shaking of that 155 mm Howitzer as our Army troops carried out their mission. This experience earned my respect for these ground pounders but reinforced my decision to join the Air Force instead of the Army.



"Imp VIII"- J, and "Black Dick" - K, lift off the Osan runway in April 1953 with a pair of 750 lb. bombs under the wings. The primary mission of no. 2 Squadron Sabres was interdiction of North Korean road and rail traffic. (credit - NAA)

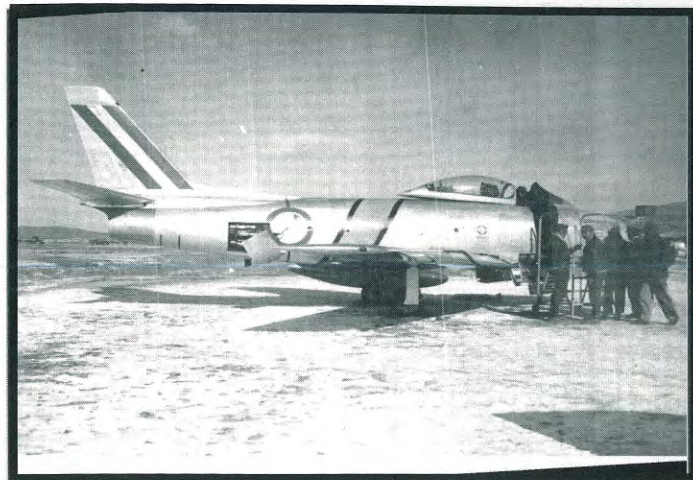
The South African Air Force and the Sabre

From Butch Bester, SAAF

When the Korean War broke out on 25 June 1950, one of the many nations that offered to help the UN forces to turn back the tide of Communist aggression, was South Africa. They offered to commit one squadron of fighter pilots to the UN effort. The unit that committed was no. 2 Squadron, SAAF. The squadron began operations in F-51D Mustangs taken from USAF inventories, and based at Pyongyang, North Korea, flying their first missions on 22 November 1950.

A pair of no. 2 Squadron Sabres returns to their parking area at K-55 in early Spring 1953. The Sabre to the right wears the early tail colors of the 67th FBS. Both units were assigned to the 18th FBG at K-55. (credit - Dick Kempthorne)





This is the first Sabre assigned to no. 2 Squadron in January 1953 – 601-A. No. 2 Squadron transitioned into the new F-86F-25 Sabres in January 1953. (credit – SAAF)



Squadron pilots toast the end of the days missions at Rorke's Inn, the squadron O-club at K-55 in the summer of 1953. (credit – SAAF)

Squadron pilots toast the end of the days missions at Rorke's Inn, the squadron O-club at K-55 in the summer of 1953. (credit – SAAF)



P/O Ralph Gerneke in the cockpit of the squadron Cos airplane "Sherdanor II" at K-55 near the end of the war. (credit – SAAF)

They flew their first Sabre sortie on 25 February 1953, a MiG Sweep with the 4th FIG. They flew several fighter interceptor missions with elements of the 4th FIG. MiGs were encountered on 11 March with no results. However, on 13 March, Capt. Pienaar, flying as #2 with a USAF Leader, was able to claim a MiG Damaged.

But their mission remained interdiction and ground support. However, they could and did, now venture into 'MiG Alley' in Northwest Korea, as they were now flying the best aircraft in the world, the F-86F Sabre, and they had nothing to fear if they were jumped by MiGs.

Of the 22 F-86F-30s delivered to no. 2 Sq., 5 were written off for various causes, but none to combat actions. On 28 October 1953, no. 2 Squadron was



withdrawn from Korea and returned home. The next stop was Zwartkop Air Station in South Africa. Their veteran F-86Fs did not go with them. The remaining Sabres were returned to USAF inventories, which were then transferred to the Nationalist Chinese Air Force. But it was not the end of SAAF operations with the Sabre.

But that wasn't the end of South African Air Force involvement with the Sabre. In 1953-54, the SAAF was equipped with a variety of aircraft such as the Spitfire and Vampire in front line service, both of which were obsolete at the time. In 1955, the South African government signed a contract to receive brand new Sabres. And not just any Sabre. These would be new Canadair Sabre Mk 6 aircraft with the much more powerful Orenda 14 engine rated at 7,275 lbs of thrust.

Two squadrons would be equipped with the Mk 6 Sabres, nos 1 and 2 Squadron, with 17 aircraft each. The first aircraft was test flown in February 1956, with deliveries being made beginning in June of the same year. By August, SAAF had taken delivery of 16 Sabres and both squadrons were assigned to AFS Waterkloof beginning in September. But a delay in Canadair production saw the inventory of the two units to be 16 Sabres, 12 Vampires, and 12 Harvards (Texans) at the end of 1957.

Both Sabre squadrons had their own aerobic teams in the early 1960s. However, in early 1962, the SAAF began receiving Dassault Mirage III supersonic interceptors, and no. 2 Squadron transitioned to the delta winged Mirage III in 1962. The remainder of their Sabre Mk 6s were transferred into no. 1 Squadron at that time.

No. 1 Squadron remained in the Sabre Mk 6 until the mid-1970s when they finally transitioned to a more

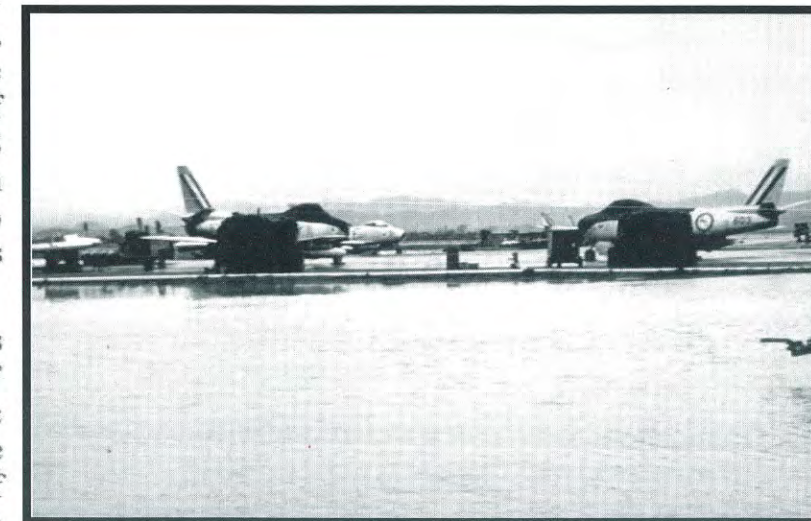


Armament technicians fuse a 1000 lb. bomb for installation on the underwing pylon 619-M. The aircraft was lost on 19 May 1953. (credit – SAAF)

Photo (upper left)

No. 2 Squadron crew chiefs attempt to hide from the monsoon rains that came throughout the year to Osan. Crew chiefs made the transition from F-51Ds to Sabres along with the pilots. (credit – NAA)

When the rains came to Osan, it really poured and flooded vast areas of the parking ramp. It was nothing for the standing water to be over 6 inches deep. But the missions went on despite the weather. (credit – Bill Grover)

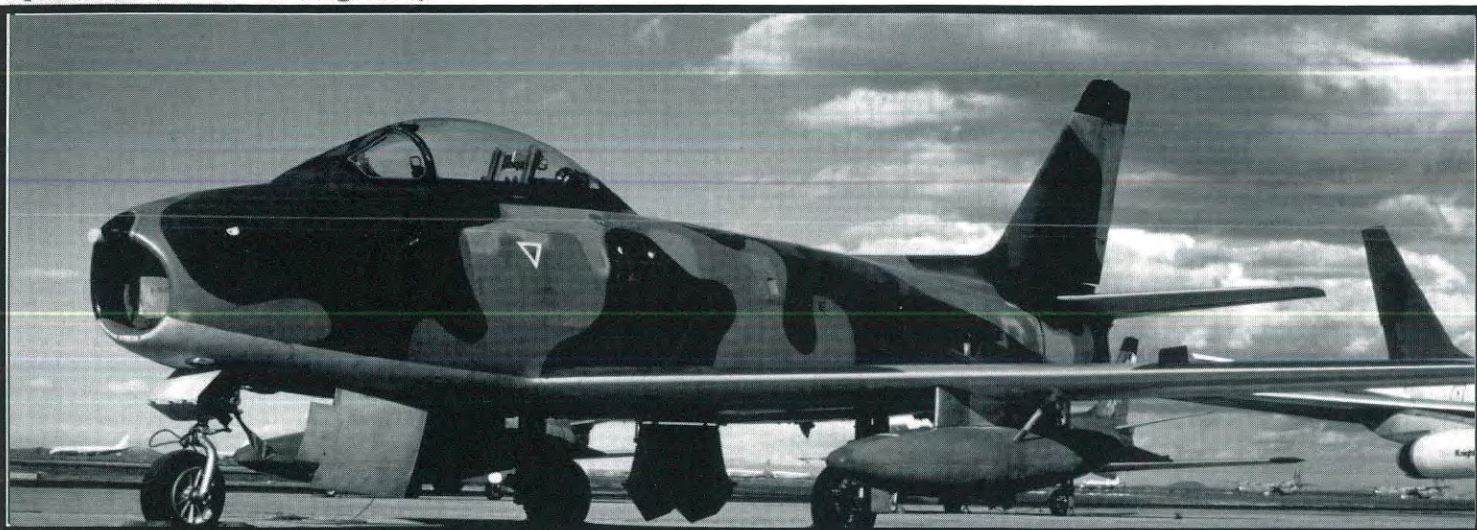




A Sabre 6 with the South African Air Force wearing the new style national insignia, sitting for an Open House display in 1970. The SAAF began receiving new Canadair Sabre Mk. 6 aircraft in 1955, equipping two squadrons. (credit - J. Magendie)

modern aircraft, the Mirage F1. On 31 October 1975, no. 1 Squadron flew their final Sabre sortie. The remaining Sabres were transferred to 85 Advanced Flying School, which flew the type until 25 February 1980 when all remaining aircraft were officially grounded.

Of the total of 34 Sabre Mk. 6 aircraft delivered, 17 were destroyed in accidents. The remainder were put in storage at AFS Snake Valley and awaited disposal. Most of those were purchased by Flight Systems Inc on 12 January 1981, where they would be rebuilt and flown as target tugs by such notables as our very own President JR Alley. Following service with FSI, the Sabre fleet was parceled out to various museums, with a few being still airworthy and flown by warbird operators.



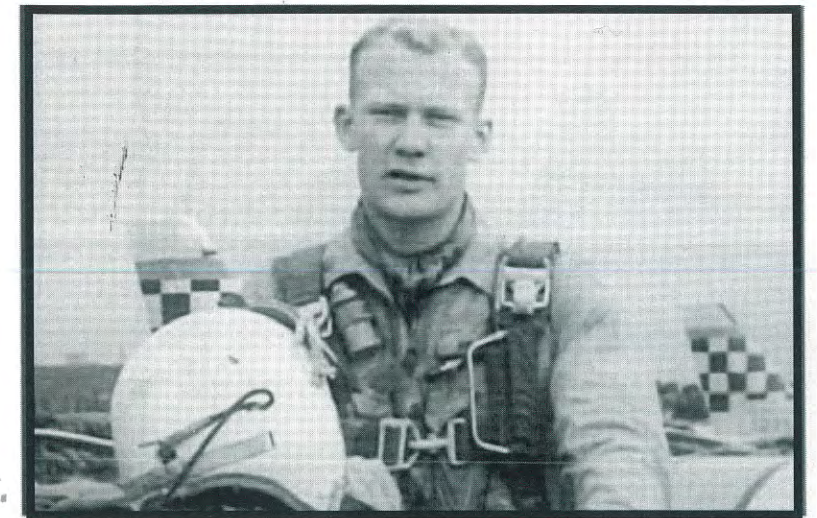
An ex-SAAF Sabre 6 sits on the Mojave ramp in March 1985, wears the new brown and green camouflage adopted for tactical missions in the early 1970s. (credit - Bob Shane)

Now assigned to the US Army as a target drone, the same airplane now wears sharks teeth. Flight System Inc. pilots would fly the airplane for various missions before it was eventually shot down by a SAM missile in 1986. (credit - Larry Davis collection)



Still more new photos.

Lt. Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin when he flew with the 16th FIS at Suwon in Spring 1953. Lt. Aldrin shot down two MiGs during his tour in Korea. (credit - Sabrejet Classics)



An F-86D assigned to the 85th FIS during an Open House at Scott AFB in 1955. The 85th FIS flew the F-86D/L until 1959. (credit - Wm. J. Balogh Jr)



An F-86D assigned to the 514th FIS at RAF Manston, sits "Ready Alert" in the not-often-seen sunshine of 1957. In 1958, the entire 406th FIW moved to Germany, with the 514th going to Ramstein. (credit - David Menard collection)





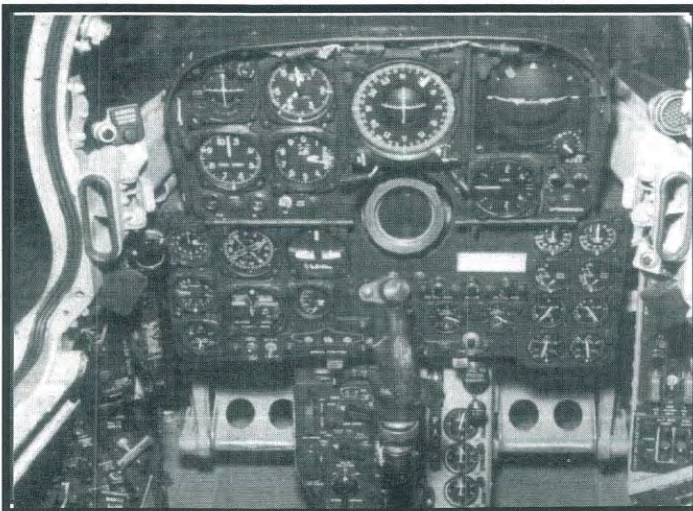
A not often seen photo of the Korean War's Top Ace, Joseph McConnell with his first "Beautiful Butch" Sabre #51-12971. Capt. McConnell made 'ace' in this airplane which was then shot down and he had to eject into the Yellow Sea on 12 April 1953. At the time 'Mac' had 8 MiG kills. (credit - USAF)



Elvin Knotts flew the F-86D with the 444th FIS. On the day of this photo, 25 February 1954, Knotts flew through the Sound Barrier to receive his coveted Mach Buster pin. (credit - Elvin Knotts)



Ground crew prepare to load 2.75 inch FFAR rockets into this 37th FIS F-86D on the Yuma ramp in 1955. Yuma was the home for the live-fire USAF Rocket Competition as well as regular "live fire" exercises. (credit - Replica In Scale)



The Office. Instrument panel of an F-86D with the hood removed from the scope. (credit - NAA)

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!

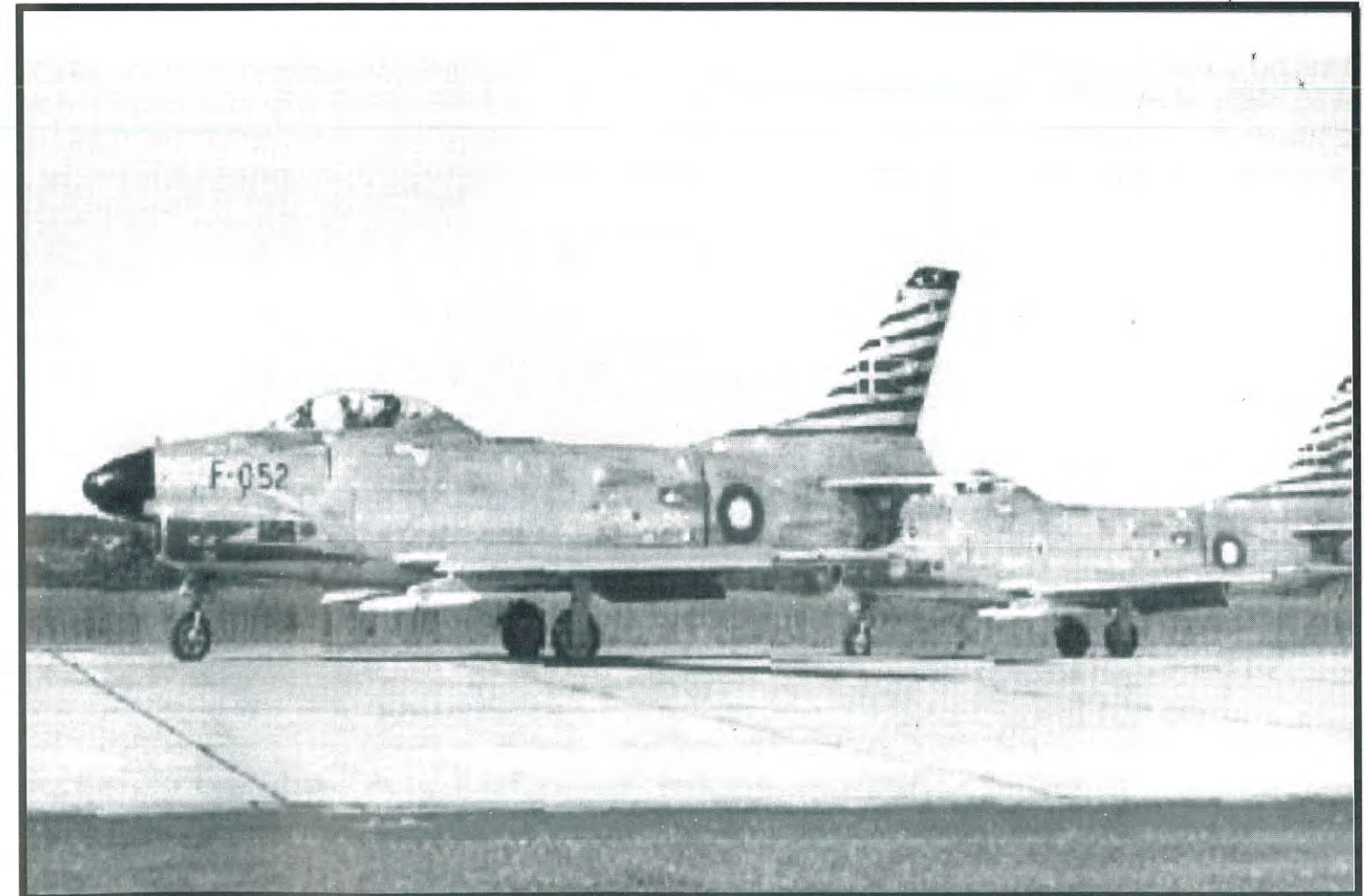
526th FIS

Reunion on October 7-9 in Savannah, GA.

CONTACT Monte Johnson (815)347-7353

or email monte.j@att.net

Sabres Around The World. A pair of Danish Air Force F-86Ds with newly mounted Aim-9 Sidewinder missile rails attached, taxis back to the parking spot at Aalborg AB. No. 726 Eskadrille converted to the F-86D in 1958 and flew them for the next six years. (credit - Sabrejet Classics)



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What Is It? Does anyone know what the significance is of this photo taken on 15 September 1948 at Muroc AFB. Please contact the editor, Larry Davis, Sabrejet Classics, 6475 Chesham Drive NE, Canton, Ohio 44721; or email at sabreclsx@aol.com

