



SabreJet Classics

Volume 3 Number 2

SPRING 1995

A publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association

ALL KOREA ISSUE
PROJECT ASHTRAY, CASEY JONES VS THE EAGLE,
1955 MIG KILL



A HONEYBUCKET RF-86A AT KIMPO

SabreJet Classics

SPRING 1995
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The #2 HONEYBUCKET RF-86A on the ramp at Kimpo after having the dicing camera installed in the upper nose. Note the lack of a fuselage fairing over the single camera in the right gun bay area. This aircraft was shot down by North Korean AAA, with Major Jack Williams, CO of the 15th TRS, being KIA. (R. Lamprecht)

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10th REUNION

F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSN.

September 17-20, 1995

SANDS HOTEL, Las Vegas, Nevada

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THE PRESIDENTS NOTEBOOK

In future issues, I will use this column to report to you important information about our association. The only other correspondence we'll send you will be the annual roster and a reunion registration package. This relieves us of the cost of preparing and mailing three or four newsletters each year. The savings will allow us to provide this magazine to our members as a freebie! It also means that this column is a **MUST READ** if you are to remain informed of our association's activities.

Our association enjoyed a banner year in 1994. Membership exploded with 372 new members, bringing the total to 1,416. Charlie Carr, Chairman of the recruiting committee, did an outstanding job. He personally accounted for 136 new members. We appreciate your work Charlie! Our reunion last April was a great success. And throughout the year, many long term goals were achieved. Yes, it was a *Banner Year!* There was one downer, however. Eighty Six members who were delinquent in their dues for more than three years, were dropped from our roster.

The financial status of our association is excellent, as evidenced by the accompanying report from our treasurer, Robert L. Stewart and his able assistant Jack D. Barnwell. The big improvement in our financial status is largely due to two factors. The large influx of new members (749) over the last two years has substantially increased our receipts. Yet, we cannot bank on continually adding new members. *They're not checking out many new Sabre pilots these days!* Payment of dues for future years is the second factor. Over a third of our membership have either paid for 3 years or have purchased Life Memberships. We are obligated to reserve funds to support these members for the period they have paid!

The accompanying chart illustrates the problems we face. All the funds for '95 and future years have been deposited and

reported in our 1994 financial statement. For those of you who would like to look over the financial records, they (1994-95) will be available at Reunion 95.

As an incentive to pay your dues on a timely basis, *SabreJet Classics* will only be forwarded as a freebie to those members whose dues are current for the year in which the issue is published. This policy will begin with our next issue. There will be a charge of \$4.00 per copy for back issues or additional copies of the *Classics*. This has been approved by the Board of Governors and will be discussed at our next business meeting. We intend to study the feasibility of selling *SabreJet Classics* subscriptions to non-members to defer some of the costs. However, before undertaking such an endeavor, we must be assured we are not endangering our tax-exempt status and that we have a quality product.

We are certainly indebted to Larry Davis, our Editor, and his staff for the marvelous job of launching our magazine. We consider it a Home Run. Thank you Larry, for the great effort. We know there were some 'birthing problems' with the first issue, but that's why production of a new aircraft has always been preceded by X & Y models. I'm sure you will see a steady improvement in the quality of our magazine. And don't forget, we still need your stories and photographs to make this project work.

Be sure to put Reunion '95 on your 'Gotta Do' list. Planning by our Reunion Committee is well ahead of schedule. It will be a GREAT party! Registration forms have been mailed. If you have not received yours, contact us at our PO Box in Las Vegas. See you in September!

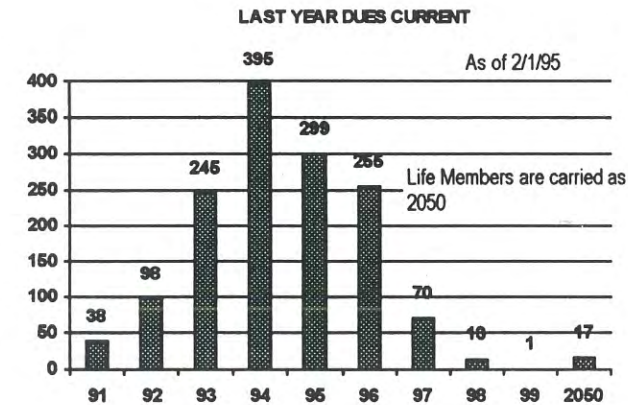
Dee Harper
President
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The Bulk of all Dues for 95 and Forward Years Paid in 94 or Earlier!!

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES

1 January to 31 December 1994

INCOME	
Dues Payments	\$28,916.00
Reunion Fees	\$65,400.49
Interest	\$ 1,423.31
Bank Accounts & T-Bills	
Total Income	\$95,783.80

EXPENSES	
94 Reunion Expenses	\$69,473.05
Sabre Jet Classics	\$ 394.00
Admin. & Supplies	\$ 7,668.58
Total Expenses	\$77,535.63

ASSETS	
US Treasury Bills*	\$35,000.00
Money Market Acc't.	\$20,571.59
Checking Account	\$ 2,775.32
Total Assets	\$58,346.91

* Reserves to cover Life Members & payment of forward years dues.

Respectfully Submitted, 1 Feb. 95
Robert L. Stewart, Treasurer
Jack D. Barnwell, Ass't. Treasurer

Please Note: The last line in your address label indicates the last year for which your dues are current. If it is earlier than Yr/95, you are currently delinquent.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS SENT TO MR. ED HORKEY, WHO FORWARDED IT TO THE EDITOR'S DESK

The North American F-86 SabreJet which we placed in Freedom Park this spring is the current top attraction. It looks absolutely splendid, and we get lots of rave reviews about how much the Sabre has added to the park.

Our goal is to eventually have each airplane that flew here at Nellis since activation in 1941.

Sincerely

Thomas R. Griffith
Major General, USAF
Commander
USAF Weapons & Tactics Center (ACC)
Nellis AFB, Nevada

Our first issue was indeed a success, but not without problems. We hope to have them ironed out with this issue. Please let us know if you have any corrections or additions to this issue.

Corrections to the Winter 1994 issue;

The Front Cover photo should have been credited to Nellis AFB Photo Shop

Computers sure goof up! We all know Col. Maurice L. Martin's nickname is 'Marty'.

Hank Buttelmann's name was misspelled quite often - Sorry Hank!

We promoted John Giraudo to the position of a past President of the Association, and transferred him into the 16th FIS when he was in fact, CO of the 25th FIS at Suwon.

The photos on page 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 should have been credited to Faingold Studios of Denver, CO.

Finally in the Folded Wings column, it was Lieutenant Colonel Robert H. Moore who died on 31 May 1994 in Austin, Texas.



We missed the guy in the back of this photo of Class 51H. (l-r) John Kumph, Fletcher Cook, Justin Livingston, Jim Low, and Jim Kumph. Sorry Fletch!



The F-86E in the WHAT IS IT column was not positively identified, and remains a mystery. John Henderson sent a page from a North American Service News showing a P-2 strike camera mounted on a F-86F. John mentioned that this F-86E might have been the test airplane for the installation. Lon Walter and Harvey Brown thought it might have been a camera bird used to record ordnance strikes. But no one was positive.

FOLDED WINGS

BERNARD A. BRUNGARDT, 1994

CHARLES R. CAMPBELL, MARCH 1995

JAMES R. COOK, NOVEMBER 1994

HANS W. DEGNER, MARCH 1995

GEORGE G. HUPP, MAY 1995

J. PHILIP RUHLMAN, JANUARY 1995

KOREA - Project ASHTRAY

by LARRY DAVIS

When the war broke out in Korea on 25 June 1950, one of the greatest initial needs for the Far East Air Force was reconnaissance of the Korean peninsula. Unarmed RB-17s from Clark AB and RF-80As from the 8th Photo Squadron (Jet) were sent to map and identify the North Korean targets, road net, and terrain. There was virtually no threat from the North Korean Air Force to these unarmed reconnaissance flights. But all of this would change in November 1950 with the introduction of the MiG-15 into the combat arena over North Korea. The MiG-15 was much faster than the best that Far East Air Force (FEAF), could put in the skies over Korea. To counter this threat USAF ordered the 4th Fighter Interceptor Group to Korea with North American F-86A SabreJet fighters. This move was effective, and FEAF fighter-bomber and B-29 strike forces were well protected by the Sabres.

But the reconnaissance mission remained highly dangerous whenever the mission went into north western Korea - in the area known as MiG Alley. The MiGs could easily single out the bulbous-nosed RF-80 recon jets and in spite of the Sabre presence, losses began to mount. What was needed was a high speed photo jet that could penetrate MiG Alley in relative safety. The re-activated 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing moved to Kimpo (K-14) on 22 August 1951. The 67th was made up of three squadrons - the 12th TRS in RB-26C Douglas Invaders; the 45th TRS in RF-51D Mustangs; and the 15th TRS(Jet) with RF-80As.

After moving to K-14 Major Bruce Fish and Major Ruffin Garay, the COs of the 15th TRS, and Captain Joe Daley, Operations Officer of the 15th, campaigned with FEAF for a reconnaissance version of the F-86.

Captain Joe Daley delivers the first RF-86A HONEYBUCKET, #48-187, to the 15th TRS at K-14 in October 1951. Captain Daley was the Operations Officer of the 15th TRS. (via Warren Thompson)



FEAMCOM bluntly told them it simply couldn't be done! But the two officers were just as adamant that they needed such an aircraft and began spending every free moment across the field in the 4th FIG hangars, checking all the possible locations where they could fit a camera. Finally, Colonel Harry Thyng, CO of the 4th FIG, got tired of seeing the 15th guys hanging around the hangars and allowed them to take the nose from a "Class 26" airframe across the field to the 67th side. Now they could really get down to the business of putting cameras in an F-86.

The gang at the 15th, working on the project in their spare time, found that by removing the lower two .50 calibre guns and ammo cans from the right side of the F-86A nose, there was enough room to install a single, small format camera. The camera had to be mounted horizontally, shooting into a small optical mirror set at a 45° angle. A small hole was cut in the bottom of the nose and a piece of optic glass was installed. The fuselage mockup was not bulged in any way to accept the camera installation. Colonel Edwin 'Chick' Chickering checked out the mockup, liked the concept, and authorized modification of two F-86As by FEAMCOM personnel at Tachikawa. The project was known as *HONEYBUCKET*.

FEAMCOM took a pair of tired F-86As from the 4th FIG, 48-187 and 48-217, ferried them to Tachikawa, and began the conversion. The two Sabres were modified the same as the mockup, i.e. a single high speed K-25 bomb scoring camera was mounted horizontally in the right gun bay area, shooting into an angled mirror assembly through a single camera port under the right ammo bay. Again, the fuselage

Lt. Frank Meyer taxis the first RF-86A HONEYBUCKET at K-14, 12-9-1951, still carrying the original 4th FIG black and white ID bands. (Frank Meyer)





The first RF-86A ASHTRAY on rollout from the Tachikawa modification hangers. The ASHTRAY airplanes had two cameras in the bulged lower fuselage, with a dicing camera mounted in the upper nose. Note they still had paint schemes similar to the 4th FIG F-86s. (USAFM)

KATHY, an RF-86A ASHTRAY aircraft carries the motto of the 15th TRS on the gun bay door - EVERY MAN A TIGER! (Bill Coffey)

The 15th TRS ASHTRAY pilots at K-14 in 1951 - (kneeling l-r) Capt Cowgill, Maj Vanderhock, Maj McKay, Capt Katauski. (standing l-r) Capt Rigsby, Capt Berry, Maj Wilson, Capt Chandler, Capt Voss, Capt Hesch, Lt Brown, and Major Jack Williams, 15th TRS CO. (via Warren Thompson)

was not bulged in any way. The aircraft looked exactly like a standard F-86A fighter unless you got under the nose and saw the camera port. The remaining gun in the right bay, as well as all three in the left gun bay, were completely operational - but rarely used. In fact, most of the time the guns weren't even charged as the conversion suffered greatly from vibration. Firing the guns could knock the camera completely out of its mounts. Plus, 5th Air Force didn't want its reconnaissance Sabres off hunting MiGs when they should be bringing the photos back.

86 Sabre was not only possible, it was highly desirable. FEAMCOM authorized six additional F-86A airframes, all '48 models drawn from 4th FIG inventories, to be modified. These were officially known as Project ASHTRAY conversions. The ASHTRAY airplanes were quite different from the HONEYBUCKET conversions.

Joe Daley brought the first HONEYBUCKET back to K-14 in the early Fall of 1951. The HONEYBUCKET F-86As retained the full operational markings as found on 4th FIG F-86As. So secret was the project that initially the two HONEYBUCKETs were even parked on the 4th FIG ramp, mixed in with the 4th FIG Sabres. When a mission called for the HONEYBUCKETs, they launched right along with the 4th FIG combat air patrol. The patrol area of the 4th that day just *happened* to be over the area the HONEYBUCKETs were tasked to photograph. One of the mission flights would have a HONEYBUCKET as Flight Lead. After arrival over the target area, the HONEYBUCKET would drop out of formation, get his photos, then beat it back to K-14 while the rest of flight went MiG-hunting. Joe Daley flew the first HONEYBUCKET mission within days after delivering the first aircraft to K-14.

The ASHTRAY airplanes had both the left and right gun bays emptied. Also removed was the APG-30 gunsight radar installation in the nose. In place of the lower pair of M2 .50 calibre guns in both gun bays, were a pair of horizontally mounted K-9 cameras, complete with a revamped mirror assembly to shoot through a pair of camera ports on the underside of the nose. The K-9s were larger than the K-25 in the HONEYBUCKET, necessitating a large, flattened fairing over the modified ammo bay area. This gave the ASHTRAY conversion its telltale 'cheeks'. In the upper part of the nose where the radar had been, a K-9 dicing camera was installed to take photos directly ahead, or in the flight path, of the photo aircraft. The dicing camera lens was mounted in the area where the gunsight radar antenna had been installed.

Although these HONEYBUCKET conversions did the job with only one camera, the results were barely adequate to fulfill FEAF photo needs of the targets at or near the Yalu River. However, both 5th Air Force and FEAMCOM now recognized that a reconnaissance F-

Each ASHTRAY airplane, now designated RF-86A, was literally hand built at Tachikawa. And each airplane was different from the others. Some had sliding doors over the dicing camera lens in the nose; some simply had the nose flattened where the lens was. Some had only the upper two .50 calibre guns with a full ammo load of 300 rounds. Some had four upper guns with modified ammo loads. Some had no guns or ammo. The camera controls were located on the old bomb/rocket selector panel located on the lower center console. The

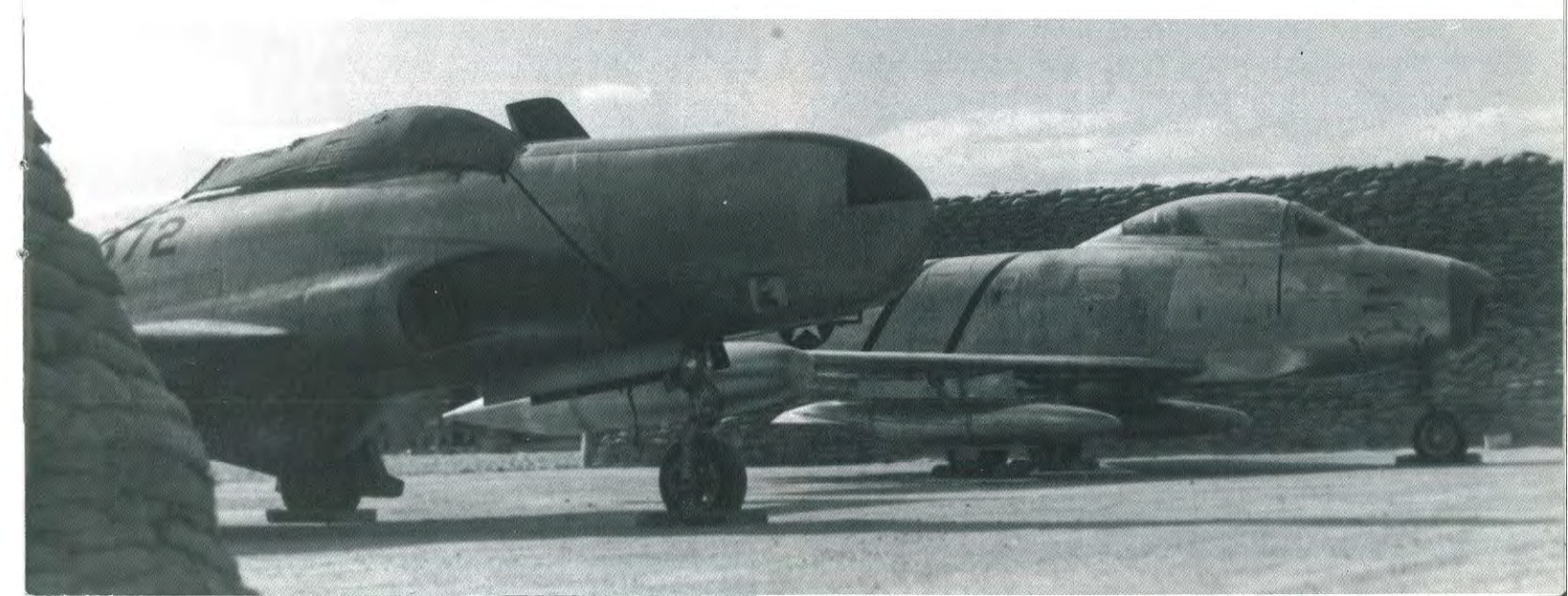
armed RF-86As, having no gunsight, used all tracer rounds to 'track' the target. The pilots said it was simply to scare the MiGs! The two original HONEYBUCKET aircraft were also modified to ASHTRAY specifications.

Only one RF-86A was lost in combat. Major Jack Williams, CO of the 15th TRS, was shot down by North Korean ground fire in 48-217. Clyde Voss recalls the mission; "The mission was a dicing run over the hydroelectric plant north of Wonsan. It was Major Jack Williams' first RF-86A mission. Entering the mission area I repeatedly had to tell him to increase his speed over the target area. He then took the lead in a single low level pass over the dam. But he was still too slow and accurate North Korean ground fire set his aircraft afire. I was flying about 1000 feet behind him for the purpose of suppressing any ground fire with the .50 calibre guns that remained in my HONEYBUCKET."

"I saw no heavy ground fire so assume it was small calibre. Major Williams' aircraft began streaming fuel from the wing roots. I called him on the radio to tell him about the fuel leak but he never responded. His aircraft began a right hand, climbing turn - away from home. I flew alongside Major Williams and noticed his cockpit was full of smoke so thick I couldn't tell if he was alive or not. While on his wing, his aircraft suddenly began a sharp roll into me. I had to pull up quickly and lost sight of him momentarily. I rolled over and caught sight of the Sabre diving toward the ground, with a nicely blossomed chute above. I turned on my dicing camera to get photos of Major Williams' chute and his location for use in a possible rescue mission later."

"I saw the airplane impact the ground and watched as Major Williams' chute also landed in a field. Calling

An RF-86A shares the revetment with the workhorse of the 15th TRS, the RF-80A. Ten F-86As, all 1948 models, were modified to RF-86A configuration. (George McKay)





NANCY was flown by Lt Dick Burkhardt during the summer of 1952. Some of the RF-86As retained the .50 calibre machine guns, but firing them was discouraged due to vibration. (George McKay)

for a helicopter rescue mission from the Navy helicopter scow standing off Wonsan, I CAPed the spot where Major Williams went down, strafing any locals that started toward him. Before I reached BINGO fuel I heard the Navy rescue boys coming. Some Navy F4Us relieved me as RESCAP just as I hit BINGO. Major Williams was picked up by a Navy chopper, but he was dead when they got to him."

There was one major problem with the ASHTRAY conversion - blurred photos. This was caused by the cameras themselves and the installation, which required a mirror. Captain Bill Coffey recalls; "The RF-86As were not a good photo bird, primarily because the camera lay flat pointing forward, shooting into a mirror and then vertical. The mirror setup was not the strongest and the pictures were affected by vibration. You would have the mirror vibrating in one mode and the camera vibrating in another. Result - blurred pictures. Lt Bill Cress did come up with a modified mirror mount that took out most of the problem. The other problem was that the cameras were not designed for that kind of aircraft speed. Consequently, the shutter speeds did not jibe with aircraft speed. It all resulted in some pretty poor pictures. Not always, but often enough. This wouldn't be solved until the introduction of the factory-built RF-86Fs with vertically mounted cameras."

The mission of the ASHTRAY RF-86A was high speed recon of the MiG Alley area - and beyond! Yes, sometimes it was necessary to cross the Yalu River to get the photos. Bill Coffey recalls one such mission; "It was about 1200 hours on a beautiful summer day in 1952. I was just coming back from lunch when a crew

chief ran by yelling something about Russian bombers coming! It sure scared the hell out of me. I ran to Operations to see what the hell was going on. Seems a returning 4th FIG pilot had reported Antung was loaded with IL-28s with red stars on them. The IL-28 was a high speed Russian jet bomber, something akin to our B-45 Tornado. Bombers meant only one thing - an offensive strike at the airfields in South Korea, possibly followed by a ground offensive."

"The whole wing, and probably the rest of South Korea, was immediately put on alert and contingency plans made. All photo birds were prepared for immediate departure for Japan. The escort F-80Cs we had, and all the RF-86As, were armed and towed to the edge of the flight line. Any aircraft unable to fly were prepared for destruction. Flyable airplanes had the pilots in them, ready to go at a moments notice."

Capt Richard Chandler tweaks Sylvester's tail as it was painted on his RF-86A at K-14 in September 1952. (USAF)



"In the meantime Captain Chandler launched in one of the RF-86s for a looksee at Antung. As I recall we sat on that hot runway for a long time waiting to hear from him. Anyway, Chandler crossed the Yalu on the deck, flew to Antung, and went straight down the runway shooting dicing pictures all the way. The pictures were great! MiG-15s lined up tip-to-tip, with very surprised communist ground crews in, on, and around the MiGs - all looking at this lone American Sabre coming straight down the main runway!"

"As it turned out, the 4th FIG pilot had apparently seen a batch of new MiGs that had arrived at Antung and were parked very tightly together. From altitude, they must have looked like IL-28s. Or someone was expecting the worst and jumped the gun. Anyway, before Chandler returned to base, he called in that the airplanes were just MiGs, not IL-28s, and everything went back to normal. But it did put everything in a tizzy for awhile."

Although the ASHTRAY airplanes were capable of mixing it up with the MiGs if they were jumped, they were under orders to get themselves and their photos back to Kimpø. But sometimes that rule was forgotten. Bill Coffey recalls one time that a new lieutenant was flying one of the RF-86s. He had just gotten the mission pictures and flew into some nearby clouds. When he broke out he found himself right on the tail of a MiG. His first thought was 'Oh boy, a chance for a

Note the 'doors' over the dicing camera mounted in the upper nose of RUBY PEARL, another 15th TRS RF-86A. (George McKay)

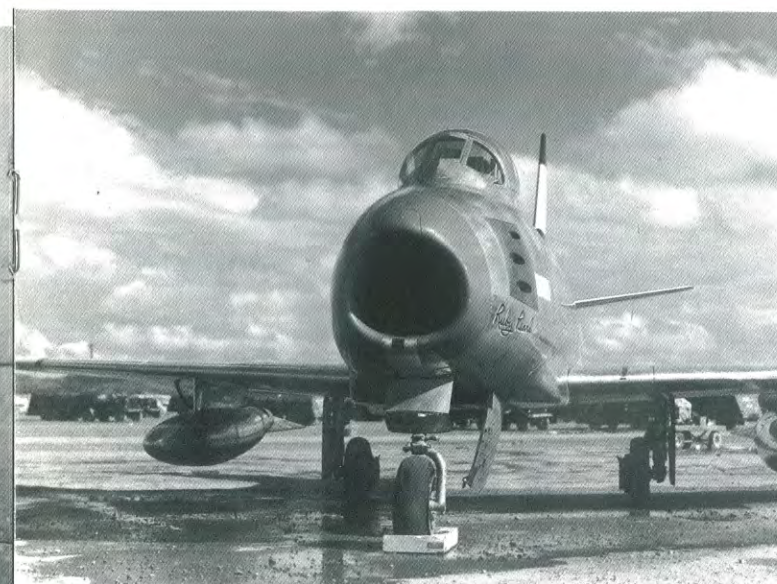


photo jock to down a MiG! Pull the trigger as he would, the loaded upper four .50 calcs would not fire! And since it only took a second for the MiG to notice the 86 on his tail, the MiG driver lit the fire and pulled away across the river. It was then that the Sabre pilot noticed that the selector switch was set on PHOTO instead of GUNS. The one chance for a photo jock to get a MiG was lost forever.

When the war ended the 15th TRS was beginning to re-equip with new RF-86Fs, some converted at Tachikawa and others built by North American. But that's another story. The RF-86A ASHTRAY airplanes that survived were brought back to the States and sent through the North American facility at Fresno, to be refurbished and upgraded with the other F-86A combat veterans. The refurbished F-86As were then delivered to Air Force or Air National Guard units. The RF-86As went to the 115th FIS/California ANG. Although still designated RF-86A, the airplanes were stripped of their cameras and flew a standard fighter mission. The California Guard pilots especially liked these airplanes for coast to coast flights since the empty camera bays could hold a lot of personal luggage. As with the rest of the F-86A inventory, the ASHTRAY conversions that flew one of the most dangerous missions in the Korean War were unceremoniously scrapped after release from duty with the Guard. Thus ends the story of the RF-86A.

When the war ended the RF-86As were transferred to the 115th FIS where they were rearmed and flown in the standard fighter mission. (Peter Bowers)



CASEY JONES AND The EAGLE

by BRUCE HINTON

There has been a tendency by those who write about the Korean War to portray the American fighter pilots as highly experienced, seasoned war veterans, who faced a passel of MiG drivers made up of a polyglot of Chinese, North Korean and whatever other nationality, who had come to Korea to peck away at UN airpower. I made the following observations about both sides during my tour in Korea during late 1950/mid-1951.

On the MiG side of the fence. Markings on the MiGs during that time were many and different. This variety of markings indicated a lot of different squadrons involved. A friend of mine stationed at Chodo, showed up at Suwon one morning in late Spring 1951, talking to us about the different *SOVIET* units from the Moscow defense ring involved in a rotational duty at Antung. Also the tactics employed by the MiGs changed repeatedly during this time. Most important though, was the daily expectation of an encounter with a MiG pilot we referred to as a 'HONCHO'. There was no doubt about a Honcho's skill and experience in aerial combat. Today's historians have uncovered the fact that there were several of these Russian combat leaders flying against us.

Now to the US side of the picture. During late summer 1950, after losing a bunch of pilots to other units in Korea, I received (in the 336th FIS) about eight replacement pilots direct from the flying schools, with several more coming to us before departing for Korea. When we left for the West Coast on 11 November 1950, I had one pilot who hadn't been checked out at night flying on my wing! We accomplished that enroute! We hadn't had any gunnery or bombing training since the squadron had transferred to Dover, Delaware in the summer of 1950.

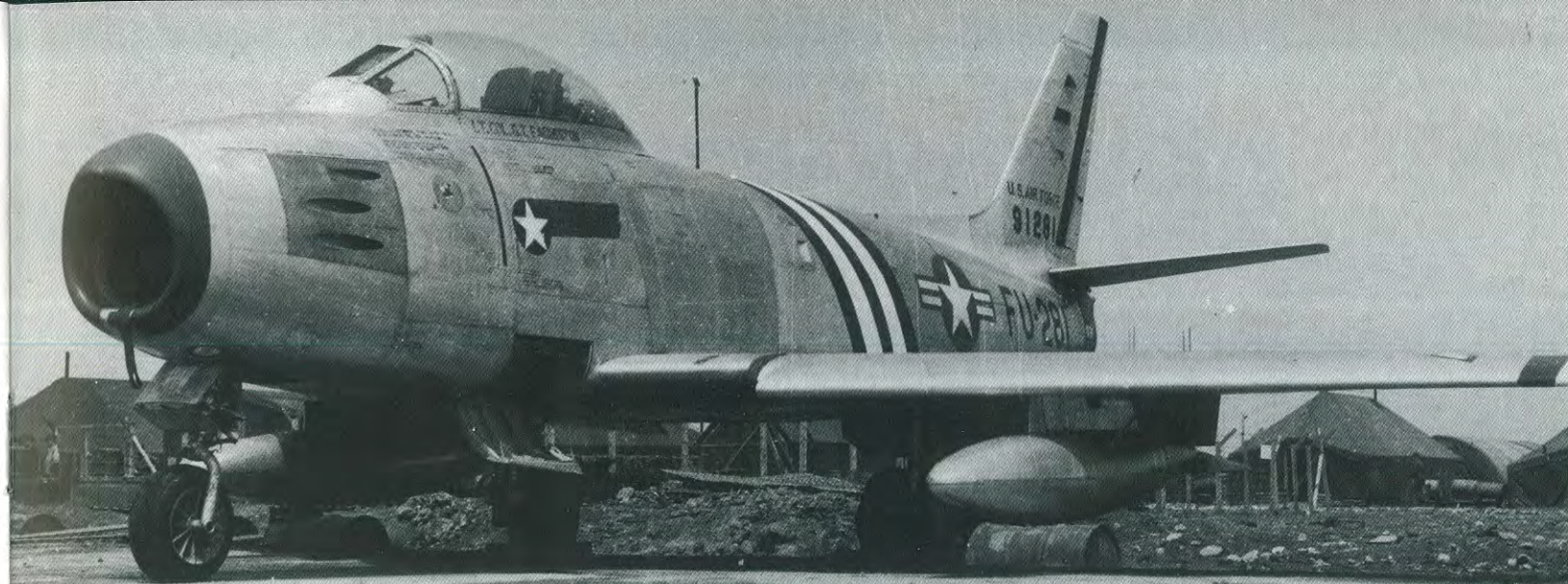
This inexperience really came to a head during the early operations in Korea. In fact, while briefing my pilots in the Ops tent at Kimpo on 14 December 1950, preparing for the upcoming combat operations, I told my guys that our SOP called for testing the guns over the Pyongyang area of North Korea, inbound to our patrol area. One of the new lieutenants stood up with a question, "Sir, how can I tell if my guns go off?" That was the 'seasoned combat veterans' that we took to Korea. Later on, some of these very same green lieutenants distinguished themselves in repeated air to air actions.

I would like to compare the MiG units with our own on purely the basis of level of experience. I believe that experience level was close to, if not right on par. I also

believe that the advantage the US pilots had was in air discipline, the over-riding importance placed on individual self-reliance in all our activity, and aggressiveness. The MiG pilots were imbued with the concept of direct control by ground radar and the requirement to follow directions that controlled all actions in the air, with de-emphasis on individual determination. On the other hand, our pilots were briefed everyday with the concept that NO MIG IS WORTH THE LOSS OF AN F-86 PILOT! That was an over-riding law while Col Eagleston and I were in Korea.

The skies over northwest Korea during the summer of 1951 were filled with the classic matchup - the best airplanes and pilots that two adversaries could pit against each other. On one side was the MiG-15, a Soviet-built jet fighter with extraordinary rate of climb and maneuverability. On the other side was the North American F-86A Sabre, a tough airplane with more speed than the MiG but not as maneuverable. The pilots were, for the most part, not an even match in any way. The MiG drivers were, it was thought, an inexperienced bunch of Chinese and North Koreans, with very little actual combat time, let alone in jet fighters. On the other side were pilots from the US Air Force 4th Fighter Interceptor Group, some with lots of combat time and many victories attained during World War 2. Usually the Sabre pilots had a field day over the Yalu, shooting down the MiGs with relative impunity. But every once in a while a communist pilot would break out of the cold Korean sky and give the Sabres a run for their money. This is the story of one such communist pilot.

Major Bruce Hinton and Lt Colonel Glenn Eagleston lead the 4th FIG pilots out of the operations hut at K-13 in the summer of 1951. (John Henderson)



EAGLE's F-86A before he met Casey Jones over the Yalu. LtCol Eagleston had to belly the airplane in at K-13 after his lucky escape, and his airplane was scrapped. (USAF)

It was a bright, clear, sunny day in late June 1951. We had a pretty heavy commitment this day, with two squadrons involved in the mission. Lt Col Glenn Eagleston - 'Eagle' - was leading the 334th Squadron, while I was leading the 336th. The mission was simple enough - a MiG sweep near the mouth of the Yalu River. On this day the MiGs came up to meet us. Part way through the patrol line we were on we encountered a large number of MiGs. With Migs all around us the squadrons had broken down into individual air battles involving 2-ship F-86 elements against the collective bunches of MiGs. I had a 2-ship element at about 25 grand somewhere east of the normal location of MiG Alley. The radio chatter indicated multiple MiGs in that general area.

Moving into the general area of combat, I came across a lone MiG maneuvering with the swirl of the fight. The MiG turned away from the battle, heading toward the Yalu. Using manual ranging, I began to close to within 1500' range. (There was no point in attempting to get a MiG kill outside that range.) Moving in to just under that range, pipper leading a tad in the turn, I was ready to hammer him. To borrow a favorite phrase from Eagle - 'I had this one saucered and blowed!' This one was mine!

Just as I started to press the trigger an F-86 appeared between me and the MiG I was about to clobber. He was traveling 90 degrees to my direction of flight, and he was all alone - well almost. About 500 feet behind the lone F-86 was a MiG, and he was pounding the F-86 with cannon fire. Both airplanes flew directly in front of me and between myself and the Mig I had staked out. For a split second I wondered how it was possible that a mid-air collision did not occur.

As the two aircraft were passing in front of me I noted that the MiG was firing his cannons and the rounds were hitting the Sabre with good results, with flame and fire

Lt Bill Taylor describes his fight with a MiG for (l-r) LtCol Glenn Eagleston, Maj Martin Johansen, Lt Roy McClain, Lt Taylor, and Lt John Odiorne at K-13 in April 1951. (USAF)



marking the strikes on the Sabre fuselage. Pieces of the F-86 were flying through the air, and some were very large pieces. One unassailable rule we had in the 4th was that no MiG was worth losing an F-86. The F-86 was now on fire and I broke off my certain kill to try and beat off the MiG that was hammering the Sabre. I had no idea who was in the Sabre, let alone that it could be Eagle.

It's surprising how quickly situations change during aerial combat. I pulled the nose around as hard as I could toward the guy in trouble. By the time I had my nose in the direction of the shot-up F-86, he was now about 1000 feet below me. The MiG had overshot the 86, made a quick climbing reversal, and was now coming



334th FIS F-86As on the ramp at K-13 during the summer of 1951. The 'winged star' was a squadron marking of the 334th. The B-29 in the background was used as an outdoor engine repair shop! (USAF)

down in a dive to finish him off. The F-86 had lost most of his airspeed, and appeared to be just hanging there. At that point the MiG driver apparently saw me coming and pulled his nose up, pointing straight at me. We passed head-on with no more than a plane length between us.

At that point we both used all we had in the crucial next turn to try and gain some advantage. We went into a Lufberry, in which I had a slight advantage. However it wasn't enough to put me into a firing position so I started a vertical yo-yo on the far side of the circle, using the slight reduction in airspeed at the high point to increase my cornering rate. It began to work. After a few more turns around the circle I was starting to get inside of his turn on the 'tight' place in the orbit. The maneuvering Gs were at the extreme. So extreme that my wingman left part way through, later saying that he had become airsick.

At this point I decided to try a high angle-off spray at him. Although I had a little inside turn advantage, the MiG was still crossing in front of me at about 60-70 degrees angle off. So, when we began to reach the 'tight' end of the circle, I watched over the leading edge of my left wing for him to appear, then hauled back tight on the stick. As he passed through my nose I held the trigger down and gave him a good burst. On the next orbit I did the same thing. This time the MiG had to fly through the spray from my six .50s. After he took that second burst, and at the far side of the circle (also closest to the Yalu), the MiG suddenly broke away in a high speed dive toward the Yalu and I couldn't catch him before he crossed the river. I broke off to return to the stricken F-86.

This MiG driver had been good, very good. He had been waiting above all the engagements going on between the MiGs and the F-86s. It was a well-known tactic that was commonly used by a single MiG pilot that we referred to as CASEY JONES. OI' Casey was an exceptional pilot, and

definitely not an oriental. His normal procedure was to hit fast from a high perch, diving down on any F-86 that was isolated from the on-going air battle, quite similar to a tactic used by von Richtofen in The Great War. Because of his tactics and flying, plus some close enough brushes with other 4th pilots - close enough for a visual ID - we thought the pilot might be an ex-Luftwaffe guy flying for the Reds. The name 'Casey Jones' came about because the MiG flights leaving Antung were referred to as bandit trains by the GCI radar site at Chodo. This MiG driver had a significant paint job with a red nose and fuselage stripes.

With Casey fleeing for safety across the river I began to search for the wounded F-86. I found him floating for home at about 20,000 feet. The fires had gone out, but he had holes in the engine aft section, and his left gun bay door and all three .50 calibre guns were gone. The guns had absorbed most of the impact of a MiG 37mm cannon shell and probably saved the pilot's life. I tried talking to the Sabre pilot but another cannon shell had entered the fuselage aft of the wing root, wiping out his radio. His airplane was moving at somewhere near .7 Mach and he was steadily losing altitude. About this time I heard a lot of chatter from some nearby F-86s, which made me fear attracting more MiGs, something we definitely didn't need right now. I called for the other F-86s to move away from this area until we could get out of danger.

I got the pilot's attention and signaled for him to head out toward the sea and get into position for a bailout over the Yellow Sea where we could get a rescue airplane to him. I'll never forget the pilot in that cockpit violently shaking his head "NO!" By this time I was sure I had a new lieutenant in there, and couldn't figure out his disregard of a possible life-saving recommendation. We continued south, gradually losing altitude, watching for flak, and trying to measure the angle of our flight path with the distance we had to go to see if our gradual descent angle was enough to get us over friendly territory and maybe back to Suwon.



LtCol Glenn Eagleston - EAGLE - scratches his head in wonder as he surveys the damage to his gunbay from Casey Jones' 37mm cannon, which also put many holes in his aft fuselage. The 37mm hit also took out his throttle and most of his instruments. (Bruce Hinton, and John Henderson)

It took forever, but we finally made it to friendly territory. I informed K-13 that we had a cripple, to clear the runway, get out the meat wagon and fire trucks, and prepare for a wheels up landing. Flying tight with the wounded F-86 around the pattern to check his airspeed indicator, I came down the final right beside him. The Sabre slowly settled to the runway, finally touching down with a jolt. I watched the pilot's head banging back and forth in the cockpit as he rode that airplane down the runway like a bucking bronco. The Sabre slid to a stop off the end of the runway in a gyration and a cloud of dust.

I poured on the coal and went around. After landing, I rolled to a stop by the busted F-86. The airplane was a wreck. Not only was the engine hit, but the throttle control was smashed. The left fuselage was a sieve, with some very large holes all around the cockpit. It was then that I learned that the pilot was my very close friend Glenn Eagleston. Eagle's life had been saved by the three .50 calibre guns that took the impact from the 37mm cannon shell, which also had taken out his throttle and smashed part of the instrument panel. It had been a close call. Eagle had been alone during the battle when he and his wingman became separated during some combat maneuvering. Casey Jones had been alone because that was his strategy.

Lt Chuck Loyd stands in the hole where a MiG 37mm cannon shell struck his flap. The damage looks extensive, but this Sabre would fly and fight again. (Robert Makinney)



INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT OVER THE YELLOW SEA

KOREA - FEBRUARY 5, 1955

by Bob Stonestreet

I was assigned to the 335th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS) in May 1954 at Kimpo Air Base (K-14). In the fall of 1954 the entire 4th Fighter Wing moved from Korea to Japan. The 336th FIS moved to Misawa Air Base on the northern tip of Honshu. The 334th and 335th squadrons moved to Chitose Air Base in the southern part of Hokkaido. The 335th was the last of the three squadrons to move from Kimpo on Thanksgiving day 1954.

During the winter of 1954-55 Red China was threatening to invade the islands of Matsu and Quemoy off the coast of mainland China. FEAF Headquarters deployed F-86 units from Okinawa to Taiwan, Korea to Okinawa, and from Japan to Korea. The 335th FIS deployed to Osan, Korea in late January 1955. I remember that it was very cold during that time. We slept by flight, about six or eight guys in quonset huts. Our source of heat was a fuel oil space heater in the middle of the room. Some guys slept under several wool blankets and some slept in their winter survival suit (Poopy Suit) liner. During our stay at K-55 we maintained an alert status with 4 Aircraft on 5 minute alert.

On February 5, 1955 twelve F-86s from the 335th were scheduled to escort an RB-45 on a photo reconnaissance mission up and down the west coast of North Korea to photograph the airfields. Under the truce agreements the North Koreans could not add additional air strength to their inventory, and of course, it was suspected that they did and we were trying to catch them at it. The plan was for the RB-45 to fly at 30,000 feet three miles off the coastline, with the F-86s flying 2000 feet above and behind the RB-45. The RB-45 flew at a lower airspeed than the F-86s and this required the fighters to almost continuously S-turn, or weave, to maintain a position behind the RB-45 and still keep their speed up around .82 mach.

The twelve F-86s took off at 1300 hours with the squadron callsign of "Harpoon". Our flight callsign was "Shark", led by Captain Jack Kimball (Shark 1), with Lt. Giles (Pockets) Charliebois as Shark 2, Lt. Chuck (Fish) Salmon (killed in 1959 with the Thunderbirds) flying number three, and I (Stoney) was flying Chuck's wing as Shark 4. The callsign for the RB-45 was Osage 111. Shortly after takeoff the fighters were passed off to a radar station with the callsign "Badger." During climbout and after crossing the coastline south of Inchon, we test fired our guns. As was always the case shortly after takeoff by any U. S. aircraft that appeared to be on a mission up the coastline, MiGs would take off and climb to altitude. On the several missions up the west coast (and at least one up the east coast) while I was stationed at Kimpo, there were always MiGs flying parallel with the F-86s, but they stayed over land. Most of the time contrails could be seen and the ground radar stations always maintained good contact. They could normally give a fairly accurate "Bandit" count. At a certain point after we turned north, the flight was passed from "Badger" to "Satan", another radar station located on an Island in the Yellow Sea.

As we proceeded north everything looked routine. Satan was giving us continuous information on the MiGs and the members of Harpoon flight were being very professional, very little chatter on the radio and using proper callsigns when something was said. The whole flight continued north to the mouth of the Yalu river, turned west for about 50 miles, made a 180° turn back to the Yalu, then turned back south maintaining a position off the coast and over international waters. At a point roughly parallel to Pyongyang, all hell broke loose!

Our flight, Shark flight, was in a shallow turn to the right in our weave and were just about to cross behind the RB-45 when somebody shouted "Hey, there are MiGs up here!" Almost immediately somebody (didn't use a callsign) said "The f---ers are shooting at us!" At this point I looked back over my right shoulder and saw four MiGs swooping down behind us at about 2000 to 3000 feet distance, closing fast. Their leader apparently firing at the RB-45 and their number three man firing at me! The first MiG element continued down under us going for the RB-45 and the second element broke off to their right. At this time our radio chatter changed from "highly professional" to using nicknames - except for one call that I distinctly remember. Fish Salmon said just as calm as can be "Shark lead this is Shark 3, may I take the bounce?" Jack said "Roger Shark 3".

Fish called to me "Stoney are my tanks clear?", as he punched off his wing tanks. I punched mine off as I answered him. He was already rolling over on his back and pulling down in an inverted dive. I was on his right side and immediately fell in trail with him to hang on to my position. As he rolled out behind the two MiGs they broke hard left

Lt Charles 'Fish' Salmon describes the fight to Capt George Williams and LtCol Chester Wine. Capt Williams was also credited with one MiG destroyed. (USAF)



335th FIS pilots at K-14 in October 1954 - (l-r) Lt Don Thiel, Lt Chuck Salmon, Lt Giles Charliebois, and Lt Ike Coleman. (Bob Stonestreet)

over land, but Fish was in good shape at this point and immediately gave the trailing MiG a burst! He hit him with his first burst. Both MiGs reversed and made a hard climbing turn to the right. This was not a smart move because now Fish could pull lead on him easily and he let go with another burst, which hit him all around the tailpipe. I could see little "blinks" all around the fuselage and he began to smoke! At this point both MiGs broke left again and rolled level in a shallow dive. Throughout these maneuvers Fish kept asking "Stoney are we clear?" I was constantly looking around and still concerned about the other two Migs. Shark 1 and Shark 2 remained with the RB-45 to protect it from any further attacks, which never came.

During these two or three minutes there was a lot of radio chatter going on among the other flights who were also attacked. We know that a minimum of eight Migs were directly involved. One F-86 (Lt. Don "Roundman" Phillips) had a bullet glance off his wing. Apparently the MiGs made a firing pass on the top flight and then made a climbing turn somewhat similar to the way gunnery patterns were flown in those days. I never knew exactly what happened to the other flights, but I remember there was lots of chatter! I might mention here that up until approximately two weeks before this mission the "Rules of Engagement" for that area prevented us from flying over land, even if attacked! But they had been changed to allow us to chase them all the way back to their base if necessary! We suspect that the North Koreans had not gotten the word through the grapevine, based on the way they broke back over land after the firing pass.

After the two MiGs rolled out over land, and headed east in a shallow dive, Fish continued firing. The MiG was really smoking now. I was now on Fish's right side in pretty good wing position as he kept asking if we were clear. I was now directly behind the other MiG and in good firing range! I looked up to our left and saw a fighter rolling in from 9 o'clock high! I was about to call out a "bandit" when I realized it was a lone F-86! It turned out to be Lt. Leroy

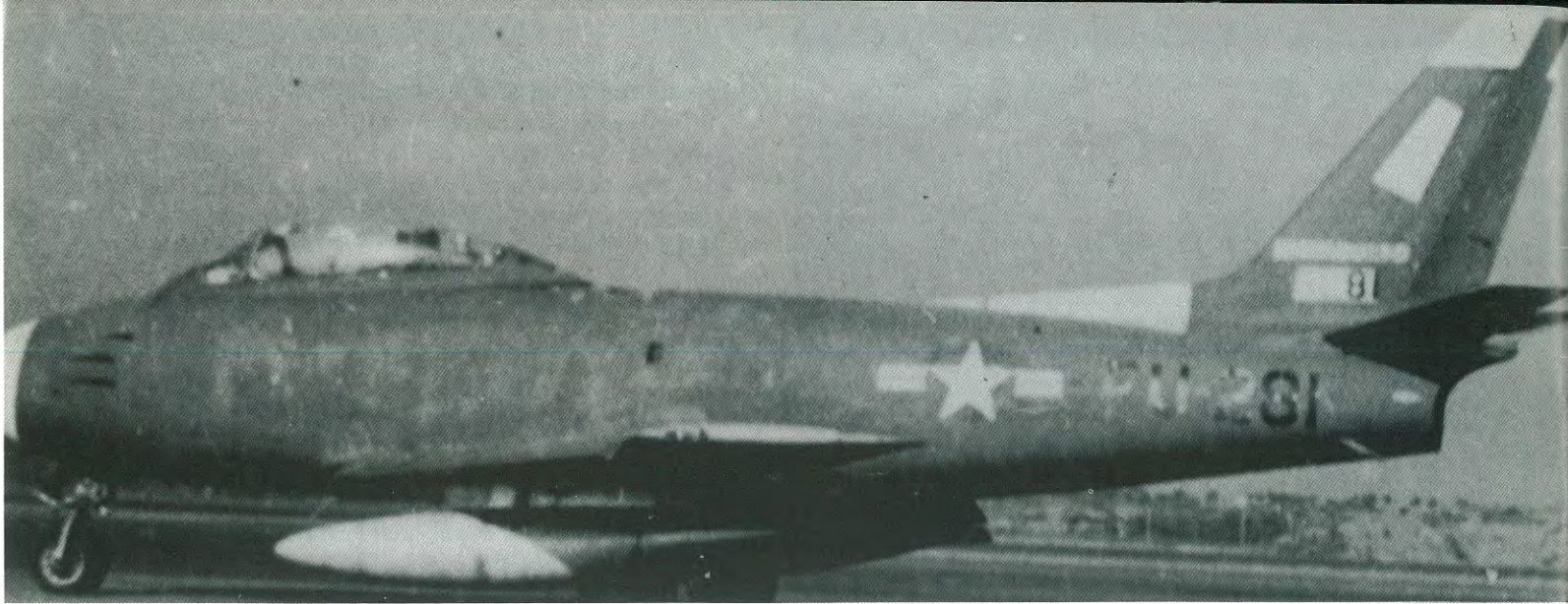
Crane and he swooped down almost directly in front of me and started firing at the other MiG! At this time I moved to the left and positioned myself between Fish and Leroy, trying to keep us all clear. I had a very sore neck for the next few days from looking around so much - especially toward the rear! Leroy was firing, but not hitting. I got a call from Fish saying that he had "fired out" and for me to move over and take the MiG. He hadn't bailed out yet, though he was still burning! I started to move to the left behind the MiG simultaneously as Fish moved out to the left to fly cover. At this time Leroy called that he had fired out - for some reason that we couldn't explain, he never hit the MiG, which left me a choice of either MiG. I remember thinking about which I should take. It turned out that it didn't matter anyhow, because Harpoon Lead called "Break it off and return to base" about this time. Fish and Leroy both immediately pulled up and to the right, and as a wingman I had to break it off too - without ever firing a shot! Sometime during the fight Capt. George (Willie) Williams shot down another MiG.

We had fought from above 30,000 feet to below 5,000 feet and approximately 50 miles inland over North Korea. The join up and return to base was uneventful. Fish and I returned as a flight of two and entered the traffic pattern in the normal fashion. As we approached the runway, Fish asked permission to do a victory roll. A voice came back with a "Negative" and I always thought it came "jokingly" from the Mobile Control Officer at that time, who was Lt. Dick McKibbean, and not from the control tower. A few years ago at a reunion I had a chance to ask Dick about it and he had no recollection of it at all. In any case Fish didn't make a victory roll.

Quite a celebration took place at the O-Club that night - somewhat akin to what they have after winning the Super Bowl! The guys were really on an emotional high and partied and told war stories until the wee hours of the morning! The RB-45 crew, enlisted men included, partied with us.

Lt Robert Stonestreet was the COTTON MOUTH when he flew with the 335th FIS in February 1955. (Bob Stonestreet)





WHAT IS IT! Several 4th FIG F-86As were painted olive drab during the summer of 1952. Some say as many as three (3) 4th FIG F-86As were camouflaged. Anyone knowing anything about this camouflage program please contact the EDITOR, SabreJet Classics, 4713 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709. No one came up with a firm answer to last issues WHAT IS IT!

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS: It is essential you keep us advised as to your current address if we are to keep you informed on your association's activities. We make about 6 mailings to all members each year via 3rd class mail. If the address is not valid, this mail goes into the trash can and we are informed. You are then removed from the mailing list until we obtain a valid address. The ball is in your court!!!

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