



SabreJet Classics

Volume 5 Number 2

Summer 1997

A publication of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association



**THE GEIGER TIGERS, 11th REUNION
REPORT, 7 IN ONR DAY, MISSION TO
MUKDEN, MORE!**

SabreJet Classics

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2
SUMMER 1997
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Next Issue
50th Anniversary of the
XP-86 1st Flight, Last Active
Duty Sabre, Duty On Formosa,
More!!

Start Planning!!
12th Reunion in Spring 1999
at Monte Carlo Hotel, Las Vegas.
See You There!

The SabreJet Classics is published by the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association, PO Box 97951, Las Vegas, NV 89193. The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association is a non-profit veterans organization, with membership limited to individual pilots who have flown the F-86 Sabre aircraft. A goal of the association is to 'perpetuate the history of the F-86 Sabre, the units to which it belonged, and to the men that flew the Sabre'. A second goal is to 'link Sabre jocks with their old comrades'. The 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 Editor of the magazine. The SabreJet Classics is published three times a year. Extra copies of SabreJet Classics can be ordered at \$4.00 per copy, providing copies are still in stock. Since this is an all volunteer, non-profit organization, there will be no monetary reimbursement for submitted materials.

THE PRESIDENTS

NOTEBOOK

Our 11th Reunion, conducted in conjunction with AFA's "Air Force Fifty" celebration, is now in the history books - and what a party it was! Without a doubt, it established a new standard of excellence for all future reunions by any association. We had it all, including a big turnout by our members and great accommodations at the Monte Carlo Hotel. (See Lon Walter's Reunion Report on pg 5) We have identified some areas for improvement next time, but we are not aware of any serious glitches. To the best of my knowledge, all problems or special requests by attendees were resolved expeditiously - a small miracle in view of the number of attendees. My thanks to all those who volunteered, and to my staff for service beyond the call of duty. They produced this small miracle.

Yes, we raised the funds necessary to support the Sabre vs. MiG portion of the airshow. Thanks to each of you who supported and donated to

this production. It was expensive. But I believe all of us want to help keep the Sabres flying for years to come. Scheduling problems limited the Sabre/MiG performance on Friday. Our birds consumed the bulk of their fuel prior to launch. This was corrected on Saturday and the show followed the mock battle script we wanted. Unfortunately, most of our members only attended Friday's airshow and missed the best performance. For my part, it was great to again see a Sabre on a MiG's butt!!

Our association today is a large, classy, well-financed organization. Each succeeding administration has added to the building blocks of past administrations. When I became President in 1994, I was beneficiary of Hank Buttlemann's aggressive recruiting program and financial management. From April 1992 to April 1997, our membership jumped from 500 to 1800 members! Just the increase in sheer numbers insured that assets were available to finance new projects such as the *Sabrefet Classics* magazine. While some might consider this as 'window dressing', the magazine adds class to our organization and attracts new members. (During our reunion, over

28 F-86 jocks walked in 'off the street' to join the association.) We achieved our objectives, but our volunteer administrative staff has been almost overwhelmed by the workload. To remain in control and prepare for the reunion, we began contracting for data entry into our computer base in January 1997.

As Bob Ashcraft takes over the presidency, we are again in a transition phase. As discussed at our business meeting, actions will have to be taken to reduce the workload even further by contracting for more services previously performed by volunteers. I am sure the resources are available to support this approach and hope everyone will give Bob their full support. I am confident that our association has the strongest administration we've ever had and our future is bright. As your out-going President, I want to thank you, the members, the Board of Governors, and my staff for the great support I have received during my term in office.

DEE HARPER

MAY 2, 1997

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS OF THE F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION.

YOU DID ME A GREAT HONOR WHEN YOU ELECTED ME AS YOUR PRESIDENT. WE CAN MAKE THIS A GREAT YEAR BY JUST HAVING A FUN TIME TOGETHER. YOU HAVE MY PROMISE TO DO MY VERY BEST TO CONTINUE THE FINE TRADITIONS SET BY OUR ASSOCIATION.

LET ME RE-EMPHASIZE THE WORD WE. EVERYTHING THAT WE DO, WE DO BEST BY WORKING TOGETHER. PLEASE LET ME KNOW YOUR IDEAS HOW TO IMPROVE ON AN ALREADY TOP NOTCH OUTFIT. LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU AND WORKING WITH YOU FOR THIS TERM.

YOUR NEW PRESIDENT

BOB ASHCRAFT

FOLDED WINGS

John R. Boyd, March 9th, 1997
John P. Dow, November 9th, 1995
Jeffery L. Ethell, June 6th, 1997
Henry C. 'Hank' Gordon, September 1996
Colonel George Jones, February 18th, 1997
Vance T. Leuthold, June 1st, 1997
Colonel Jack M. Rosamond, May 31st, 1997

Jack M. 'Smiling Jack' Rosamond

Jack Rosamond, better known as 'Smiling Jack', was killed at Westminster, Colorado on June 1st 1997 while doing what he loved best - flying his F-86 Sabre in an air show. Jack spent several years supervising the restoration of his Sabre, which was certified for flight by FAA about two years ago. He then hit the air show circuit with a gusto, flying in the Oshkosh air show and many others last year.

Jack is an old member of our association and took over responsibility for contacting participants and coordinating with Nellis AFB officials for the Sabre/MiG performance at the "GOLDEN TATTOO" air show during the "AIR FORCE FIFTY" celebration. Jack was very grateful for the support exhibited by our members in both sponsoring and financially supporting the Sabre/MiG performance in the "Air Force Fifty" airshow at Nellis. He had expressed his intent to forward a letter of appreciation to our editor for publication in this issue of SabreJet Classics. We will miss Jack's smile and enthusiasm. Our association has lost a great friend.

John R. Boyd, 1927-1997 *A Legend In His Own Time*

Most pilots of the F-86 era were well-acquainted with the reputation of John Boyd, both as a pilot and a teacher. In the Fifties and Sixties he was a founder of the Fighter Weapons School, and he developed and taught the "Energy Maneuverability Theory" as well as other now widely accepted tenets of fighter combat.

Colonel John R. Boyd, USAF (Retired), died March 9th, 1997, in a hospital in West Palm Beach, Florida. He succumbed to cancer.

Although some of his advanced ideas were controversial within the Air Force fighter community, the soundness of his fundamental approach to fighter design and operations led to the development of the superb F-16 Fighting Falcon.

Generations of young fighter pilots will benefit from the lessons taught by this pioneer of jet fighter tactics. In the annals of Air Force history, the name of John R. Boyd walks in the footsteps of Rickenbacker, Chennault, Lemay, Zemke, and Meyer.

Jeffrey L. Ethell

It is with much sadness that we must report the untimely death of aviation historian and author Jeffrey L. Ethell. There are many within the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association that knew Jeff, and many more that knew him through his many aviation books. Jeff was the consummate historian, accurate to the final degree.

Jeff died in an airplane crash on June 6th 1997. He was doing what he loved to do most - flying. The world has lost one of the greatest historians of the modern era. We will miss him.

QUESTION: What do you call a bunch of fighter jocks who:

- Turn out 562 members and 376 guests for the 11th reunion?
- Had superb accommodations at one of Las Vegas' premiere hotels?
- Were the only reunion group with private busses to & from the AF 50 Airshow?
- Had special vans at Nellis to assist members needing an early return to the hotel?
- Were the only reunion group with private bleachers for the airshow?
- Kicked in about \$32,000 to sponsor a special demo at the airshow?
- Were the only reunion group mentioned - by name - by the airshow narrator?
- Turned out 755 members and guests for their banquet?
- Had eight Korean War Sabre aces present?
- Had one of their members, a U.S. Congressman, speak at their banquet?

ANSWER: You call them THE F-86 SABRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION!

The superlatives just listed are only the highlights of our association's 11th Reunion, held April 22-26, 1997 at the Las Vegas Monte Carlo Hotel. It was, by any measure, the best ever held by the Sabre Pilots, and arguably the best of the more than 150 unit reunions held during the Air Force 50 celebration.

The business meeting held on Wednesday, 23 April, was marked by its brevity and many unanimous votes. The Association's new constitution was approved, subject to any member submitting a proposed change within 30 days. A new Association President, Bob Ashcraft of Las Vegas, was elected by acclamation, as was the new Board of Governors (see inside cover of this issue), headed by former President Dee Harper. The membership authorized hiring administrative support for the President, to include secretarial and data base services. It was agreed that future reunions would be held in Las Vegas, the next one being in the Spring of 1999. A vote of confidence was given to the Monte Carlo Hotel. But the President and Board were given the flexibility to change the site if necessary. The President was authorized and encouraged to seek a joint reunion at some time with RCAF Sabre pilots, known as SPAADS (Sabre Pilots Association of the Air Divisions). The Association treasurer reported that our finances were in good shape, and his report was approved.

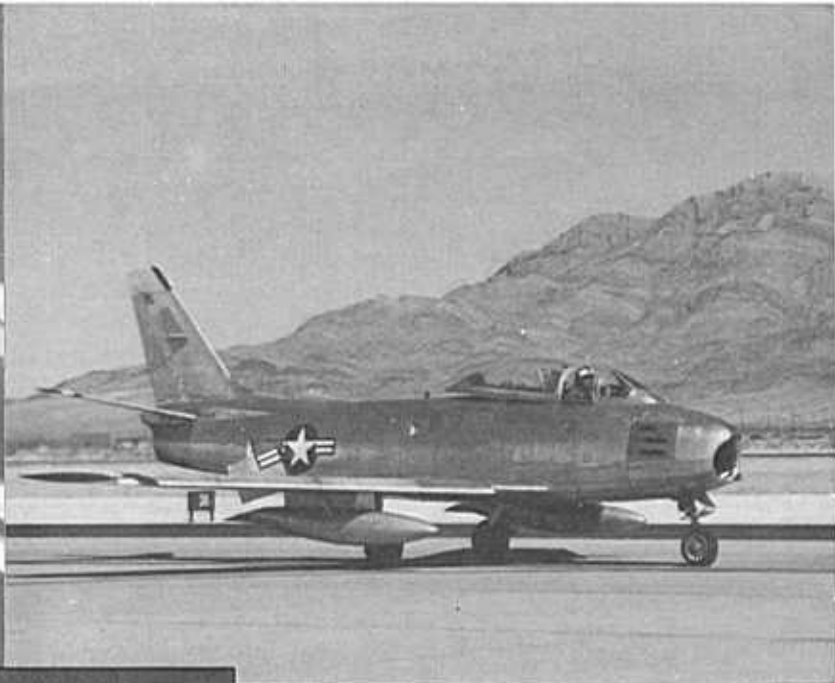
The reception and buffet on Wednesday evening was well attended by 730 members and guests, and featured a delicious array of entrees. Sweet music suitable to our age group was provided by the famous Si Zentner orchestra. Thursday was a time for meeting old friends in the hospitality room, a mammoth, yet elegant, location which doubled as the buffet and banquet site.

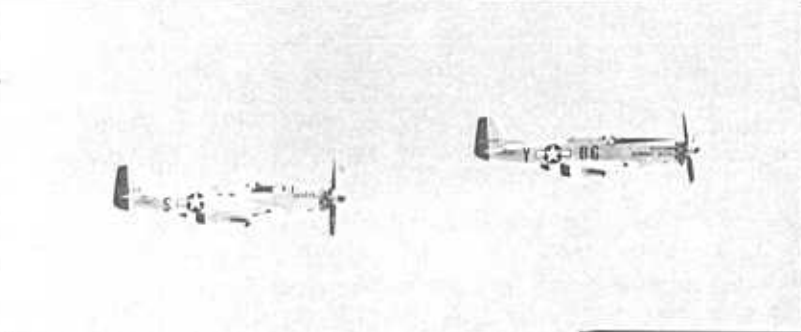
Friday dawned clear, windy, and cool (it warmed up fast) as most of our group boarded comfortable busses for transportation to & from the Golden Tattoo Airshow at Nellis. The busses delivered us to within easy walking distance of our private grandstands, and the show was on!

From 0900 to 1630, there were continuous flying performances by virtually every aircraft type flown by the World War 2 USAAF and USAF since its birth in 1947. Demonstration teams from Chile, Brazil, Italy, Canada, Japan, and our own Thunderbirds, were a highlight of the day. But the BIG attraction for our members was the "Sabre vs. MiG" performance - featuring four F-86s, a MiG-15, and two F-51D Mustangs. This portion of the Tattoo was funded mainly by contributions from our members. It was indeed memorable, and more than a few tears were observed in sharp fighter pilot's eyes. The entire show was repeated on Saturday, and even went smoother than the Friday show (practice makes perfect?) Many of our members attended both days.

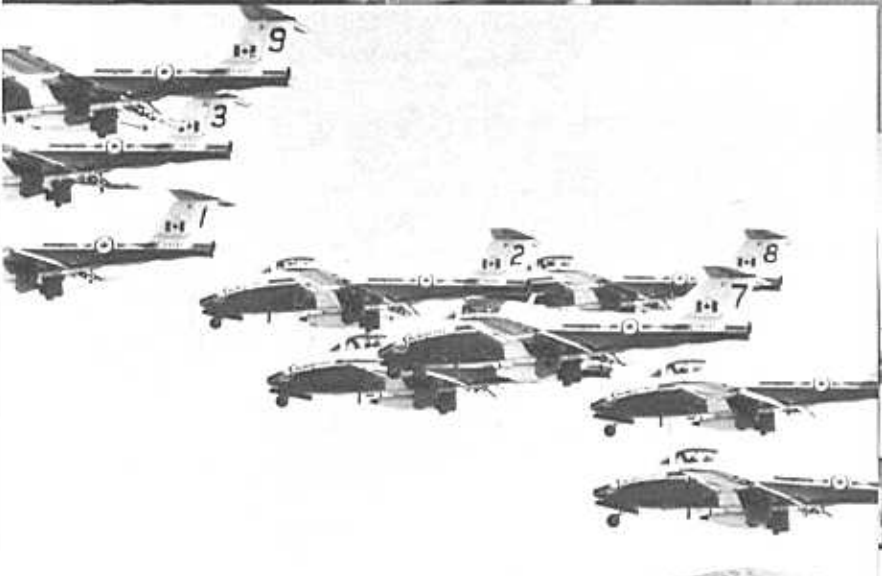
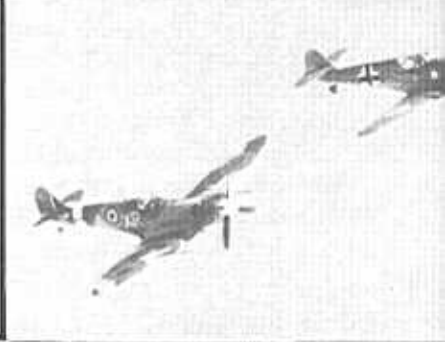
The banquet on Friday evening filled the large ballroom, and the Monte Carlo staff outdid themselves with a mouth-watering menu and superb service. Sabre Pilot and Congressman Sam Johnson (R-Texas), was our guest of honor and featured speaker. Congressman Johnson delivered a most informative talk on current political events in Washington, D.C. Sam is a staunch conservative and advocate of a strong defense establishment. His words were greeted with several standing ovations. Outgoing President Dee Harper presented the Congressman with a beautiful model of an F-86, with markings as he flew it in Korea. Later, special recognition was given to Dee Harper for his tireless work as Association President (another standing 'O'), and to Larry Davis, Editor, and Lon Walter, Associate Editor, for their work on *SabreJet Classics*.

Following the airshow on Saturday, an elegant pool-side cocktail and dinner party was held in beautiful 'Las Vegas weather'. It was a fitting close to the best reunion ever held by the Sabre Pilots. With best wishes to Bob Ashcraft for the future, and heartfelt thanks to Dee Harper, Mike Freebairne, and the entire supporting cast in Las Vegas who worked so hard to make the 11th 'THE BEST', over 900 members departed Las Vegas with happy memories.





*Article By
Lon Walter
Photos by
Dick Keener & Tom Slee
MANY THANKS!!*





Major Garth Reynolds flew this F-86D when he commanded the 520th FIS at Geiger Field in early 1955. MAJ Reynolds, General Electric Tech Rep Tom Dozier, and CAPT Bud Sherman designed the elaborate squadron markings. The 520th FIS was re-designated the 498th FIS under Project ARROW on 20 June 1955. (credit - Marty Isham)

The Making Of

"THE GEIGER TIGERS"

by LARRY DAVIS

With help from Colonel Garth Reynolds, Colonel Warney 'Bing' Crosby, and Mr. Tom Dozier of General Electric

During the Fall of 1954, Air Force found itself with enough additional funding to create several new squadrons. One of the new squadrons was the 520th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Geiger Field, Washington. Major Garth Reynolds, "Gabby" to his friends, was the first CO of the 520th. Brigadier General Harrison Thyng, Commander of 9th Air Division and an ace in both WW2 and Korea, gave Gabby only one condition when the squadron was activated - they had to be combat ready by April 1955.

Major Reynolds took up the challenge and the 520th FIS was activated on 8 December 1954. And what a challenge it was. Air Force had funds only to create the new squadron, not equip it. The complete inventory of the 520th in early 1955 included two T-33s and three old, tired F-86D-25s. But Gabby did get one advantage over the other new units, he could hand pick his personnel. His first pick would be his 'right hand man' - MSGT Flynn. Flynn was every inch a First Sergeant, from his immaculate uniform to his complete mastery of Air Force regulations. Flynn commanded respect from those above and below him in rank. Flynn chose the NCO cadre, while Gabby picked his pilots.

By the April deadline, Gabby had the 520th not only combat ready, they were chomping at the bit for action, any kind of action. An example of the squadron's spirit came when one of Flynn's crew

chiefs read an article about how Major General Spicer, CO of Air Training Command, had recorded over 1,000 flying hours in one month using three T-33s. The air and ground crews of the 520th told Gabby they felt that they could break that record easily, even with the equipment they had. General Thyng gave the 520th his blessing, and Gabby's crews began planning the operation.

Now everyone knows the -86D was a maintenance nightmare - the E-4 Fire Control System was erratic at best, and the automatic fuel control on the after-burning J47-GE-17 was full of problems. Add to this the inexperienced crews attempting the record, and using three old F-86Ds to accomplish it, and you can see that not too many people gave the 520th much chance at the record. Normal flying time per month in a 'Dog' squadron was 400-600 hours. And that was with new airplanes.

With complicated pilot scheduling of 24 hour shifts, 'hot refuelings', instant maintenance, running inspections, and close coordination between the GCI radars and the pilots, the 520th soon had results. Outstanding results! At the end of the first month of the accelerated operations, the 520th FIS had flown over 1200 hours! They bettered that time the second month with 1300+ hours. Setting the record led to a squadron motto - **"WE CAN BEAT ANY MAN FROM ANY LAND, AT ANY GAME HE CAN**



498th FIS

NAME, FOR ANY AMOUNT HE CAN COUNT!

Gabby was promoted to Lt Col that spring, and he began building the squadron into tigers. The men needed more than just a motto. Gabby wanted his squadron, to be recognized wherever they went. He authorized a flamboyant paint job for the airplanes. The squadron color was Medium Blue; and Gabby, Tom Dozier (GE Tech Rep), and Bud Sherman designed a paint scheme. The tail, canopy rail, wingtips, and scallops on the drop tanks would be blue with white stars. The star pattern on the tail was 9 stars shaped like an 'N', which stood for 9th Air Division. This was repeated on the canopy rail. On the nose was a fierce looking tiger mouth, a natural for the F-86D. Now the squadron aircraft looked like tigers - GEIGER TIGERS!

COL 'Gabby' gave the squadron an attitude of cocky professionalism - very cocky! When the Tigers deployed to Yuma for their first rocketry training in 1955, they did it in style. Taxiing in, the pilots opened the canopies and donned black 'derby hats' and blue scarves. Attached to the wingtips of each airplane was a plywood cutout of a Geiger Tiger, complete with black derby and blue scarf blowing in the breeze. It was quite an entrance. And one not appreciated by the other squadrons deployed to Yuma.

The other squadrons, not too impressed with the 'entrance', promptly made it known that the Tigers better be able to back up the show. The Tigers wore their derbys wherever they went, even the NCOs. When the NCO Club manager asked them to remove their derbys, the Tigers calmly replied - "The Geiger Tigers don't take their hats off to anyone!" That promptly got the entire squadron banned from the club. SGT Flynn rapidly organized a venture across the border for booze, returning with literally gallons of rum. The



The single star on the nose door indicates the Sabre of BrigGen Agee, CO of 9th Air Division. Armourers are loading 2.75" FFAR rockets in the weapons bay on the ramp at Vincent AFB, Yuma, AZ in 1955. (credit - King Lotz)

Tigers set up their own 'club' in one of the squadron tents, which was soon out-selling the bar at the club they were banned from!

It was about this time that a short black and white movie entitled "The F-86s Are Here!" began circulating through the bases. It was a neat little comedy effort made by the members of the 86th FBG at Landstuhl AB, Germany. The film, about 20 minutes long, in black and white and with no sound, used stop action and speeded up film for certain scenes. "The F-86s are Here!" was a satire on the daily routine at Landstuhl when the F-86s arrived.

Upon viewing the film, the Tigers, led by CAPT Bud Sherman, said they could do as good a film as any fighter-bomber outfit. All the Tigers were asked for input regarding the script, characters - right down to production and editing. Bud Sherman was the project

'Up close and personal' with a pair of Geiger Tiger Dog Sabres in close formation. All Geiger Tiger F-86Ds had the tiger teeth decoration. (credit - King Lotz)





"TEXAS TERROR" was flown by COL Grover Wilcox when he commanded the 84th Fighter Interceptor Group. The "TERROR" was one of the stars of the movie. (credit - COL Grover Wilcox)

officer. The script was written around a 'typical' deployment to Yuma - and how the Tigers blew away the competition.

The main characters included COL Gabby as 'Papa Tiger' and the Coach, MAJ 'Bing' Crosby was the Ops Officer, 'Kelly' Marinkovich was the Engineering Officer on the scooter, and Bud Sherman was the eager beaver pilot that never 'got into the game'. The female attraction in the movie was played by Bud Sherman's lovely wife.

Using out-dated black and white gun camera film and several spare gun cameras, production began during the second deployment to Yuma in the late spring of 1955. Since the film was silent, all 'talking' was done with white cards that were hand-written by SGT Flynn.

Our story begins as the Tigers depart from Geiger bound for Yuma. One of the pilots has to make an 'emergency stop' at, where else, Las Vegas. He then promptly gets lost, and has to use highway signs to find his way to Yuma, sometimes having to stop on the road and read the signs.

Meanwhile, the rest of the squadron has arrived at Yuma.. Some of their antics include landing backwards, 'inspecting' their aircraft by climbing into the intake and out the tailpipe. They even bring their mascot flying a 'Puppy Dog'. All the other squadrons run and hide at the mere mention of the Tigers.

Most of the segments are shot at Vincent AFB, Yuma, AZ. But the 'lost pilot' segments showing him stopping to look at highway signs and flying under highway bridges, were shot in Tom Dozier's car with a cameraman shooting over the windshield. When LT McCain finally gets to the outhouse at Yuma, it is actually near the All-American Canal about 9 miles west of Yuma. 'Inflight' close-ups, including the eager beaver pilot in his coonskin cap, were all filmed on the Yuma ramp. All actual flying was done by Bud Sherman and Gabby.



Three Geiger Tiger F-86Ds enroute to Yuma for rocketry training in late 1955. Nose 'art' was added to many of the aircraft during the movie production. (credit - King Lotz)

After production ceased on the original film, a background was added to the silent movie by using speeded up versions of some orchestra music, 'played by' THE SAN LOUIE ORCHESTRA. Released in early 1956, "The Geiger Tigers" was a hit at all the bases. One copy was sent to North American Aviation, builder of the F-86D, who, upon seeing the very funny amateur film, hired a Hollywood camera crew to re-do it.

The new camera crew had recently won Oscars for cinematography while working for the legendary Jack Webb. This time the filming was in full color, using professional camera equipment. And there was a voice track. When the squadron, re-designated the 498th FIS on 20 June 1955, deployed to Yuma for live-fire rocketry training in 1956, the camera crew went with them.

The gaudy Geiger Tiger paint job was further accentuated by the addition of personal markings. The aircraft were all named - "TIGER DEE", "TEXAS

Two 498th FIS electronics specialists work on the Hughes E-4 Fire Control System of LT A.K. Lotz's "KING'S QUEEN", on the Yuma ramp in November 1955. (credit - King Lotz)



F-86D Sabre Dog



Artist rendering of "BIG VIV", a 498th FIS F-86D from the movie "The Geiger Tigers". All the 'Tiger' Sabres appearing in the movie, had some type of nose art or personal markings. Renowned Squadron/Signal Publications artist Don Greer, did the painting for the book "F-86 Sabre In Color". (credit - Squadron/Signal Publications)

TERROR", "THE BIG WHEEL". My personal favorite was "BIG VIV", with a 4 foot tall brunette in a red bathing suit painted on the nose. The tiger mouth was modified to make it even more fierce. And a small tiger face (from the cartoon Pogo) was added to the tail.

One of the most amusing scenes was the actual competition scene. The pilots sit on a bench like a football team - in full flight gear of course. Gabby is the Coach, and he keeps sending his Tigers into 'the game', only to have them miss the target every time. And each time the eager beaver pilot, played by Bud Sherman, jumps up and begs the coach to "Put me in Coach!" To which Gabby replies - "Get back on the bench rookie." Finally the new kid is all that's left.

Coach tells him to get in the game. He dons his coonskin cap, jumps in the nearest airplane (Gabby's personal aircraft "THE BIG WHEEL.") and taxis for takeoff - minus the entire aft section. Finally taking off, he finds the target, calmly raises the canopy in flight, pulls out a Kentucky long rifle, and nails the target. OUR HERO! It's a very funny scene.

North American printed and re-printed the film, Everyone in the Air Force seemed to want a copy. And the Geiger Tigers were famous. Oh yes, even with all the movie nonsense going on, the squadron still won their competition. The Tigers converted to Convair F-102s in 1957, leaving their beloved Sabre Dogs behind. But they would always remain THE GEIGER TIGERS.

*THIS ARTICLE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
COLONEL GARTH "GABBY" REYNOLDS,
WHO MADE HIS LAST FLIGHT ON 25 NOVEMBER 1996.*

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U.S. Representative Samuel Johnson, (R) Texas.

(credit - Tom Slee)

REPRESENTATIVE SAM JOHNSON, (R) Texas, 3rd District

Sam Johnson has so many friends in the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association that recounting his illustrious career may be somewhat like 'gilding the lily'. Our association was honored and pleased to welcome him as featured speaker at our 11th reunion. Yet it is possible that some members may be unaware of the full scope of his many accomplishments.

Born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1930, Sam graduated from Southern Methodist University in 1951. As an AFROTC grad, he soon found himself in flying school at Bartow, Fla., and Bryan AFB, Tex.; followed by Combat Crew Training at Nellis AFB in the F-80. His friend, Buzz Aldrin (another well-known F-86 pilot and moonwalker) was a flying school classmate.

Arriving in Korea in December 1952, Sam was able to get in 62 missions in the F-86 with the 39th FIS before the war ended; scoring one kill, one probable, and one damaged MiG. He advanced to flight leader as a first lieutenant, and it was a natural for him to return to Nellis as a gunnery instructor and Stan-Eval pilot.

The Air Force knew it had a nugget in Sam Johnson, and selected him for a tour with the Thunderbirds, flying both Solo and Slot positions during 1957-58 in the F-100C Super Sabre. This began a long association with the 'Hun', which took him next to Chaumont, France, and Lakenheath, England. He returned to Nellis in December 1961, where he flew the F-100, F-105, and the earliest models of the F-4 with the Air Force Fighter Weapons School.

Following professional schooling at the Armed Forces Staff College, Sam was once again flying the F-100 - this time at Homestead AFB, Fla., in support

of the build-up during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He helped form the first DASC (Direct Air Support Center) with the US Army, going to Ft. Bragg where he earned his parachute wings.

Sam served two tours in Vietnam. The first tour was very short, while the second was very, very long. In September 1965, his DASC experience resulted in assignment to MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) headquarters, where he helped put together the first B-52 strikes. Unfortunately, he injured his knee and was sent home in December. Rehabilitation was at Carswell AFB, Tex., and he was back on flying status in February 1966.

He headed right back to Vietnam, flying F-4s with the 8th TFW at Ubon. Selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel in March 1966, Sam was shot down and taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese in April. His 'pinning on' was delayed until he returned home, which did not occur until February 1973. Of the six years and ten months he was held captive, half of that time was spent in solitary confinement, and he lost partial use of his right arm from beatings he received. In 1992, Sam wrote his account of this difficult time in his book, "Captive Warriors".

After repatriation, it took three operations on his arm to finally get him back on flying status. Meanwhile, he attended the National War College along with a POW friend, John McCain, now a US Senator from Arizona. His operational career resumed in May 1974, when he became Deputy Commander for Operations, and later Vice Commander of the 4th TFW at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC.



LT Sam Johnson flew "SHIRLEY'S TEXAS TORNADO" when he was assigned to the 16th FIS at Suwon AB, Korea in 1953. (credit - Samuel Johnson)

In 1976, Sam was chosen to command the 31st TFW at Homestead AFB, again flying F-4s. His last active military assignment was as Air Division Commander at Holloman AFB, NM, where he headed an F-15 fighter wing, and an F-5/T-38 aircrew training unit.

Sam retired from the Air Force in October 1979, and returned to Dallas, going into the home-building business until he made his political debut in 1984. Sam was elected to the Texas House of Representatives, representing the suburbs of Collin County, Texas. Well known as a law-and-order conservative, Sam won a special election as U.S. Representative for the 3rd Congressional District, which includes the North Dallas/Plano area, well-remembered as the site of the long-running TV show "Dallas".

As a Republican stalwart in the U.S. Congress, Sam has seats on the influential House Ways and Means Committee, and the Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee. His staunch conservative



LT Sam Johnson is credited with shooting down one MiG-15 during the Korean War on 23 May 1953. Johnson also had one Probable and one Damaged to his credit. (credit - Samuel Johnson)

record resulted in voters returning him to Congress in 1992, 1994, and 1996 by landslide margins.

Of special interest to the Sabre Pilots Association, Sam Johnson strongly opposed the Enola Gay exhibit in the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) as originally conceived. Because of his efforts and an outcry from veterans groups across the nation, the exhibit now correctly reflects the historic contributions of the B-29 and her crews, the nuclear bombings of WW2, and airpower in general. Sam now serves on the Board of Regents of The Smithsonian Institution, parent organization of the NASM.

The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association takes special pride in focusing its radar beam on the Honorable Sam Johnson, fighter pilot and patriot. We are proud to count him in our numbers, and we are thankful for his representation in the Congress of the United States.

AROUND THE WORLD IN (THE) F-86 DAYS

A Canadair Sabre Mk 4 wears RAF camouflage and USAF markings prior to being delivered to the Italian Air Force in 1958. (credit - Merle Otmsted)



A Royal Netherlands Air Force F-86K armed with AIM-9B Sidewinder missiles, sits alert at Hahn, Germany in the early 1960s. (credit - RNAF)





A mass takeoff of 4th FIG F-86As from Suwon in the summer of 1951. It was not unusual to have 16 Sabres take off at this time. Later in the war, flights of four departed at five minute intervals so as to keep a constant MiG CAP near the MiG bases along the north side of the Yalu River. (Lon Walter)

KOREA MISSION TO MUKDEN

by LON WALTER

It didn't start out to be a mission to Mukden, but if you'll take a look at a map of Korea, and follow my explanation, I think you'll understand how it could have happened. By way of background, at the time of this mission, going north of the Yalu River was strictly prohibited TABOO, VERBOTEN - DON'T DO IT! The peace talks had just begun at Kaesong (later moved to Panmunjom), and crossing the Yalu by our forces might have caused a problem. Funny, though, as it was OK for the Russians and their buddies to cross to the south side. Oh well... In any event, I must tell you from the perspective of a first lieutenant, we just didn't go across, - intentionally. Close, sometimes, but...

On this particular summer day in 1951, the 335th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (call sign AWNING) was to put up sixteen Sabres on a combat air patrol just south of the Yalu, in hopes the enemy would challenge our right to be their. LTC Ben Emmert, 335th squadron CO, was to lead the mission (AWNING ABLE LEAD). The plan was to patrol to near 'bingo fuel', at which time the 335th would be relieved by the 336th FIS (call sign PINTAIL). It had the makings of an interesting mission, but one never knew.

Now, Ben Emmert was a respected and beloved squadron commander. He was a WWII ace and was always aggressive in combat, but considerate of the men he was leading. I always felt privileged to fly in his flight, and I think everyone else did too. He didn't make many mistakes - but he was human.

As we departed K-13 (Suwon) and climbed out to the north (330 degrees to be exact), we anticipated the normal 25 minute flight to MiG Alley in northwest

Korea. Now is a good time, dear reader, to look at the map of Korea. There are three major river inlets along the west coast of Korea along our flight path, which normally made navigation a snap. The first river leads to Pyongyang. Then further north, the second river goes to Anju/Sinanju. The third river leads directly to Antung on the north bank, and Sinuiju on the south. That one is the Yalu, and Antung is the home of the MiGs. My cockpit map didn't cover much to the north of Antung simply because you weren't supposed to go there.

Continuing our climb and cruise, we discovered that there was a blanket of clouds under us, but it was beautiful where the AWNING flights were cruising. After a while, we could see that stright ahead the

A pair of 4th FIG F-86As lift off the PSP plank runway at Taegu in early 1951. The black smoke trail was a signature of the J47-engined F-86 in Korea, leaving a trail the MiG drivers could easily follow at low altitudes. (credit - Larry Davis)



clouds stopped abruptly, and it was CAVU from there north. Just beyond the edge of the clouds, we noted one of the river inlets. The key word here is ONE. As we crossed over it, the four flights began taking their combat spacing. And just south of the second river, we began patrolling back and forth.

It was a beautiful day, and I figured we must have had quite a headwind on the way up as it had taken about 30 minutes to get to our patrol point 'south of the Yalu'. I also enjoyed an unusually good view of the ground, because it was so clear. But somehow, the terrain looked a little different to me. We were well into the contrail level, and Colonel Ben had briefed us that we would be able to see any MiGs that came up to our level as they, too, would be conning. Soon (sooner than usual it seemed), someone called "Bingo", and AWNING ABLE LEAD wheeled the sixteen Sabres to a heading of 150° for the return flight to Suwon - no action this day. But where was PINTAIL?

Just then, and because we were listening to PINTAIL squadron coming north to relieve us, we heard, "PINTAIL LEAD, this is FOUR. I've got bogies making heavy contrails and heading south from across the river!" PINTAIL ABLE LEAD replied, "Rog, I've got 'em. Looks like about sixteen. They must have formed up north of the Mizu (Yalu)."

Immediately, all eyes in AWNING squadron began rotating in every direction, scanning for the MiG flights that MUST be out there. Colonel Ben, heading south, came on and said, "PINTAIL, AWNING, where are they? We're heading south and we don't see them!" (Are you getting the picture here?)

I think thirty two Sabre jocks suddenly figured it out all at the same time. There was a massive silence on the radio as the two squadrons neared each other. The silence was broken with Colonel Ben's greeting, "Good hunting PINTAIL!", as AWNING passed directly over

WANTED - Information and/or photos of **ROBERT H. MOORE**, 9th ace of the Korean War. Bob Moore flew with both the 4th and 51st FIWs in Korea. CONTACT **LARRY DAVIS**, EDITOR, *SABREJET CLASSICS*, 4713 CLEVELAND AVE. NW, CANTON, OH 44709 (330)493-4122

WANTED - INFORMATION AND PHOTOS OF USAF F-86 AIRCRAFT AND CREWS. CONTACT **DAVID MENARD**, ASC. EDITOR, *SABREJET CLASSICS*, 5224 LONGFORD RD, DAYTON, OH 45424 (513)236-8712



Five 335th FIS F-86As on the PSP parking ramp at Suwon in the summer of 1951. Suwon, 25 minutes from "MIG Alley", was so under-developed that landing Sabres were on the runway at the same time as aircraft taxiing back to their parking spots! (credit - Larry Davis)

PINTAIL. It was silent all the way home for AWNING squadron. And not much was said during debriefing either. Just another MiG CAP with no MiG response.

Of course, what had happened, is that we had overflowed the first two river inlets that were hidden by the cloud deck, and LEAD had mistaken the third river (the Yalu) for the second. (Please check your map again.) The river we had been patrolling the south side of was the river that leads to Mukden, Manchuria (inlet #4!), some 50-75 miles north of the Yalu. Colonel Emmert, God bless him, had made an honest navigation error. The good news is that, as far as I know, nothing more was said about this mission by friend or foe. Perhaps the 'bad guys', watching their radars and listening in to our RT, were having a good chuckle. Who knows?

KIMPO AB (K-14) 1952. (credit -Larry Hendle)



7 IN ONE DAY

by GEORGE KINNISON

The morning of May 29, 1957, started out as many other days in Los Angeles. The sky was clear, the sun was bright, and a gentle west wind came in from the ocean. A good day for flying out of the Los Angeles Airport. It was the end of the month, and there were aircraft production schedules to be met (40+ F-86s and 20+ F-100s). A lot of flying as North American prided itself in meeting a schedule.

As I changed into my flight gear, several other pilots entered the locker room ready to go to work. I walked up the stairs of the line shack and checked in with the flight dispatcher, Bob Gallahew. I walked past Jack Bryant's office, Chief Test Pilot, and he was already shuffling papers and putting them in his personal file - a stack of papers already a foot high on the desk.

Bob asked if I would fly the first target flight, and I readily agreed. It was an F-86H-10. The 'H' was my favorite '86 type. With 8900 lbs of thrust and 20,000 lb takeoff weight, the 'H' would get to 40,000' as quick as a 'D' model in afterburner. It had a pronounced drag rise, and if you kept the nose down at altitude, you could get on the back side of the drag curve, reduce power to 92%, and still maintain .92 Mach.

Brian Lauffer, personal equipment specialist, drove me down to the flight line at the southwest end of Los Angeles Airport. We passed several rows of F-86s and F-100s, even a couple of B-45s - all ready for flight. The B-45 was a true 'fighter pilots bomber' You sat in

George Kinnison, North American Aviation Test Pilot.
(Credit - George Kinnison)



a cockpit by yourself, and it had a control 'stick'. It was a great flying machine. But when you were light and made a quick let down, it didn't want to slow down enough to put the gear down - no speed brakes! A smartly executed 4G turn solved the problem (A fighter pilot solution.)

Frank Maple, production foreman, met me by the 'H', which was parked and already hooked up to the APU. A quick preflight and into the cockpit. Starting an 'H' was always interesting. With variable-inlet guide vanes, the compressor loaded up as the RPM increased, sounding like marbles rattling in a tin can. It always got your attention in the traffic pattern as you pulled off the throttle to reduce speed, about 75-77% RPM.

I was soon heading down the runway, lifting the nose, and I was airborne. Gear and flaps up. The speed increased rapidly to the desired mach number. Within minutes I was at 40,000. Dropping the nose, I got on the back side of the drag curve, dropped down to 35,000 and set up a target course. At 92%, the airspeed indicated about 260KTS, about .91Mach. I flipped the ARC-27 to company frequency, stating I was ready for company.

The speed was ideal to check out the E-4 fire control on the F-86D. Within minutes, the 86D pilots started their intercepts. The E-4 computer needed .80+Mach to check the system. With me at .91 and the 86Ds coming in at .8+, the situation was ideal.

I soon started getting calls from Joe Kinkella, Harry Hoch, Bill Yoakley, and Pete Kennedy as they made passes from alternate sides at 30 second intervals. As they completed their checks, other pilots would join in. It was always a heads-up situation as the E-4 was set to miss a collision by 200', when working properly.

Sitting at altitude with little to do between runs, it was a challenge to see what you could coax out of the J73, RPM versus fuel flow, without losing altitude. At 1200 lbs, and with no more intercepts, a split 'S' was the way to depart the area. The 'H' easily slipped through the Mach, with only an occasional slight rudder buzz at about .98.

Off the coast of Catalina Island, I saw an F-100 at high 'Q' on the deck, setting up for an 'auto labs' check. The procedure was 550KTS, hit the auto-pilot, stabilize the reference gyro, and push the auto-labs button. The



Three of the F-86 types that George Kinnison flew in one day, are lined up on the ramp at Edwards AFB in 1953. (back-front) The first F-86F-5 (51-2928), the second YF-86D (50-456), and the prototype F-86H (52-1975). (credit - Larry Davis)

F-100 would make a rapid 4G pull-up to the 120° point, release the weapon, and continue over the top inverted. Rolling out, you headed away at 180° from entry - right sporty in those days!

The old 'H', at less than 20,000 lbs and with 8900 lbs of thrust, could build up a 'Q' that was quite respectable. Back in 1954, Gus Sonnenberg had set a speed record at the National Air Races of 692 mph.

I hit the shoreline at 250KTS and 2500', and entered the downwind leg. Traffic at LA could be a three ring circus with North American, Douglas, and civilian aircraft all in the pattern. North American pilots used 250 KTS and 2500', to have 'dead engine speed' over the populated areas and still make the runway in an F-100. Douglas pilots used 160 KTS and 1500', flying the typical Navy 'power-on' approach. It was indeed, a dual traffic approach.

On the down-wind leg, I saw an F-100 inside the inner marker at about 180 KTS, with an F4D Skyray on cross wind in the normal nose-high attitude and engine smoking. The F-100 released his chute, and taxied in as the F4D touched down, made a short rollout, and pulled into the Douglas flight line. I had a clear runway, touched down, pulled into the North American area and parked the 'H'.

My next two flights were in an F-86D and an F-86L. The 'L' was a D model with SAGE equipment and an extended wing. It was my turn to hit the target. It took about 45 minutes to get to 45,000', check out the E-4, and complete the flight test profile. The 'D' checked out fairly well, but needed a re-flight. The 'L' had an erratic steering dot, so the E-4 fire control needed a complete recheck.

Time for lunch, then back into the air. This time in an F-86F-40, a real fun machine to fly. The old adage of kick the tire, strap it on, light the fire and go, was certainly true of this beautiful flying machine. The flight was uneventful, relaxing, and fun. Up to

45,000', split 'S' and feel the slight roll off to the right as you passed through the Mach and then back out. Back into the traffic pattern and land 45 minutes later. No squawks, a one flight acceptance.

During lunch I had noticed an Air Guard 'A' model on the board. I told Galloway I wanted to fly it. The pilots didn't fight over flying an 'A'. But I had always wanted to fly an 'A' back to back with an 'F' for comparison.

I had flown the 'A' in the Air Force as my check ride in the Sabre. In the check ride, I was sitting at 35,000', fat, dumb and happy, and made the mistake of attempting a hard turn without 'unlocking' the slats. As advertised, it snapped right smartly over the top, and entered a slow spin to the right. Again, as advertised, releasing the controls allowed it to wallow a bit, staying nose down in a right turn. Message here - don't attempt a shudder turn without unlocking the slats!

After the 'F' flight, I called dispatch and headed for the 'A'. Preflight took a little longer but then I was in the cockpit. It did seem a bit smaller than the 'D' or 'H', and it took some time to check out the cockpit. It was strange to see the old 'inverter out' lights, the ARC-33 UHF, and the old A-1CM gun sight with manual ranging on the throttle. It was a good memory test. I was finally ready to hit the master switch, battery switch, advance the throttle slowly after the ignition switch and watch that old J47-GE-13 come to life. It was soon purring like a kitten. I pulled the seat pins and taxied out for take-off.

The nose lifted off after using more runway than I had ever used at LA. Finally I was airborne. With a thrust/weight ratio of .67 with 2 120 gallon tanks, it certainly was no 'H'. As the speed built, the flight control forces increased rapidly (strange feeling using 15-20 pound forces to control an F-86). Even with a mechanical advantage of 17-1, it kept your attention. At 350 KTS indicated, I started my climb.



This F-86E, 50-579, the first E model built, was used by North American as a chase aircraft for the YF-100 program, having this gaudy red paint scheme. (credit - NAA)

During the climb I remembered that we used to 'tweak the tailpipes' by making little mouse bumps to get a little more TPT. I finally got to 35,000 and was indicating about .7 mach at 190 indicated. As the speed decayed I unlocked the slats and started maneuvering. A true appreciation of the '6-3' slats on the 'F' and you really wanted the hydraulic flight controls as the stick was mushy and all over the cockpit. Yes indeed, the Sabre had obtained dramatic engineering changes for the better.

It was during this flight that I realized I had flown a different model Sabre on each of my five flights. The thought occurred to me, 'Why not get a 'K' for the next flight?' They were usually scheduled for later in the day as they didn't require a target. I concluded my 'A' flight, which would require a re-flight. The flaps needed a change in rigging as it wanted to roll off to the left as speed increased.

I called dispatch, and indeed, there was a 'K' on the board. We were on Daylight Savings Time, and the sun was still well above the horizon. The 'K' had a North American designed MG-4 fire control system. It connected the Hughes radar to four M-24A 20mm cannons. The system was developed for MDAP-NATO countries not cleared for the E-4 FCS with the tunable magnatrons in the F-86D. Art Debolt, a North American pilot and liaison between North American, DoD, and Fiat in Italy, was the man who pushed the program.

The 'K' flight was uneventful. It was a good clean bird with only minor discrepancies. I landed and taxied back to the flight line, then headed for the flight shack to close out my day. After closing out my day with the dispatcher, I remembered a conversation with Silky Morris, Chief Test Pilot of Autonetics flight facility. Silky had stated he was going to take their flight test Sabre up to Palmdale in a few days. Yes, it was an F-86E.



As F-86As rotated back to the US from Korea, they were modernized to F-86A-7 at North American's Fresno plant before being delivered to Air Guard squadrons. (credit - NAA)

I talked to Silky and told him I had just flown six of the seven series of F-86s. If he would let me take his 'E' up to Palmdale. I would be 'seven for seven.' He thought it was a reasonable request as it saved him from dispatching one of his pilots for such a mundane task. He told the flight crew to get the 'E' ready. I jumped in the cockpit, and in 30 minutes I was in Palmdale - "Seven For Seven". It had made my day. The 'seven for seven' flights received little attention, not even in the North American newspaper. After all, they were just F-86s and it was F-100 supersonic time.

The next day, May 30th, 1957, the sky was clear, sun was bright, a gentle breeze from the ocean - a good day for flying. I headed for my first flight of the day, an F-100D. Things were back to normal. As I taxied out and passed the line of F-86s, I realized the F-86, like the P-51, was probably the last of the 'strap-on' fighters. Supersonic technology had passed them by. It was time to go to work and get some of that supersonic flight time.

Several years passed by. I was in Bob Hoover's office one day. He was Director of Customer Relations. We had been discussing the F-86 that had recently flown through an ice cream parlor. In the discussions, I mentioned the 'seven for seven' flights. Bob thought it was quite unique. The conversation ended and I went back to work.

Two weeks later I was called back to Bob's office. This was unusual since Bob had an open-door policy. I arrived on time, but Bob was talking to Bill Bergen, Aerospace Group President. I naturally sat down and cooled my heels. Bob looked out and asked me to come in. Mr. Bergen presented me with a plaque. It read;

"A TEST PILOT'S DAY"

On May 29 1957

George Kinnison - A Test Pilot At
The Los Angeles Division, Flew All
Seven Models Of The F-86 Sabre.

The significance of that day had not been totally forgotten.

Sabre Reunions & Information

Due to the efforts of Hank Buttelman, our raffle at the reunion was a big success. The association made some money, many members walk off with great prizes and some members still have to claim their prizes!!! Please Note, the following items have not been claimed. If you have the winning ticket, please forward it to us with your name and address.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Ticket No.</u>	<u>Name of Winner</u>
Lithograph	2581482	Unknown
Lithograph	1324735	Unknown
Life Membership	2582248	Unknown
Jacket	2582008	Unknown
Shirt	0060398	Unknown
Shirt	0060579	Unknown
Shirt	5129497	Unknown

If your winning ticket is for a shirt or a jacket, mail your winning ticket to Mike Freebairn, and include the size, color and logo desired. Mike's address is 9905 Cozy Glen Circle, Las Vegas, NV 89117. Please give Mike about 60 days to respond since our inventory is low and he may have to reorder.

Korean War Veterans Assn.,
Delaware Dept.
27th Annual Fly-In, Oct 10-12, 1997 at the
New Castle County Airport. Featured
speaker is 'Gabby' Gabreski, WW2 and
Korea ace. Contact; Andy Alvarez, 57 Leader
Drive, Newark, DE 19713-1765.

38th TacReconSq Reunion
Sept 4-7 1997 in Dallas, Tx. For full
information contact Jack Murdock or Dick
Cathriner, 2800 Regal Rd, Suite 108, Plano,
TX75075-6314.

A-1 Skyraider Assn.
1997 Reunion October 3, 4, 5 1997 at Holiday
Inn Downtown, San Antonio, TX. Full info
contact A-1 Skyraider Assn., PO Box 633,
Randolph AFB, TX 78148

4th Fighter Interceptor Wing -
Korea
Reunion to be held Sept 17-10 1997 at
Holiday Inn Capitol, Raleigh, NC. Tour to
Seymour Johnson AFB Sept 19th. Full
information contact Tom Moneypenny,
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WHAT IS IT? OK guys, here's a real strange creature for you. This F-86E-10 (51-2719), the second E-10 built, was photographed at the North American plant in 1952, following extensive modifications. The rear sliding portion of the canopy, has been replaced with a solid fairing, and the canopy has been changed to that of a lift-up type similar to that found on the Republic F-84F Thunderstreak. The wing is a modified '6-3' unit having a 'gloved leading edge' extension, and extended trailing edge flaps. Does anyone know anything about this airplane and the tests or programs it was involved in. Contact your Editor, Larry Davis, SabreJet Classics, 4713 Cleveland Ave. NW, Canton, OH 44709, (330)493-4122.

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