



Sabre Jet Classics

Volume 7 Number 3

FALL 1999

A publication of the F-86 Sabre **Pilots** Association



*All Interceptor issue - F-86D/L°
The Yuma Rocket Meets, "Popeye intercept",
Winning At Yuma, More!*

SabreJet Classics ~

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 3

Fall 1999

CONTENTS

3.....	President's Notebook
4.....	from the editor
4.....	Folded Wings
5.....	Yuma by Larry Davis and Marty Isham
13.....	Popeye Intercept by David C. Montgomery
16.....	They Said The Sauce Did It! by James B. McCain
17.....	The 330th 'C' Flight jug Band by James B. McCain
18.....	Who Is It?
19.....	Sabre D Tales by Don Jabusch
20.....	Sabre Reunions
21/22.....	Sabres Around The World
23.....	Christmas Greeting by John Brown
24.....	What. Is It?

(front cover)An F-86D assigned to Col. Hugh Manson, Commander of the 406th Fighter Interceptor Wing at Manston RAF AB, England 1957. The "Liogle" emblem on the tail denotes the 513th FIS. (credit - Lee Holcomb)

*Next Issue; 56th FIS History,
French AF F-86Ks, B-29 Escort*

—————Duty, MORE!

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THE PRESIDENT'S NOTEBOOK

As I concluded my last column I had put the gaggle into spread formation and settled back for a bit of relaxation, which I did at our lake cabin in northwestern Wisconsin. While I played, our terrific group of volunteers in Las Vegas kept your great organization humming smoothly. Thanks troops, you're the best. Special Thanks to our indefatigable Deputy Group Lead, who provided the necessary leadership over the summer. Thanks Lon!

Exciting news! We now have our very own web site. For the past few years 'Bones' Marshall has been carrying much of our F-86 Sabre Pilot Association information in his Fighertown Web Site. But it was quite a burden for him and we really needed our own site. We mentioned this need at the last convention, and spread the word through other channels.

Fellow member Bill Weiger heard of our need and volunteered to set up our web site. It is in place and you can visit it at:

<http://Sabre-Pilots.org>

It is very well done and chock full of information, news and pictures. Thanks Bill. Thanks also to Bones for all the earlier work.

Another good deal. Our very own Flight Line Store. In addition to the items Mike Freebairn has carried

for quite some time, last year he was able to procure the original 'Mach Buster' pins, North American Aviation certificate and decal. How many of you still have your original? Now you can get authentic replacements. The pins and decal never fail to generate comments from the aviation buffs. Contact Mike at: F-86 Sabre Pilots Flight Line Store, PO Box 97951, Las Vegas, NV 89193

Dues: Always a problem, and perhaps we have been remiss in helping manage this problem. We always include your expiration date on the mailing label for the SabreJet Classics magazine. But we have not included the amount of your dues anywhere in the magazine. Thus it is not surprising that many of you do not know how much money to remit, and frequently send too little or too much. The 'too much' we can handle by just extending your membership. The 'too little' is a problem, as we have to get back to you, which takes time and expense.

However, the worst problem is when you completely forget to send in your renewal dues. We do not want to lose you as a member EVER. So we go to some pretty extraordinary lengths to get you to renew your membership. And we know that you don't want to miss a single issue of SabreJet Classics.

SOLUTION - check your mailing label. If it indicates your dues will expire within the next year, send in your money NOW. Don't put it off. HOW MUCH? \$25.00 for one year; \$50.00 for three years; and the really good deal - \$ 200.00 for a Life Membership. To further help alleviate the problem, all future

issues of SabreJet Classics will carry a box indicating the amount of the dues and the address where to send them.

ADDRESS CHANGES - Another continuing problem that only YOU can solve. We are helpless on this one. We are still a mobile group. And when we have an outdated address for you, it really starts the ball rolling to all sorts of bad things. You don't get vital information regarding Association activities that you need, as well as the magazine. We generate a lot of extra work and expense trying to find you. Let me quote from an e-mail that I received from Diane Weiland, - "Tuesday I picked up 21 magazines with change of address fees of \$18.32. (Note: Just one day!) The Post Office sends them to us at a nominal cost of 50 cents each. But if it is a 'Wrong Address', or 'No Forwarding Address', they charge us \$1.91 each!" I wonder if we could lower our dues if we never had a single bad address?

Finally some good news to end this column. Our former President, Bruce Hinton, was recently honored by the American Fighter Aces Association with an Honorary Membership. Congratulations Bruce!

That's all for now. I'm at BINGO fuel. However, don't forget to start planning for the 2001 Reunion. Information updates are included with every issue of the magazine.

Glenn L. Nordin

F-86 Sabre Pilot Association Dues

The mailing label on SabreJet Classics magazine shows the date your dues expire. Dues are \$25 for one year, \$50 for 3 years, and \$200 for a Life Membership. All dues payments are credited on the date we deposit your check, and handled like a subscription to a magazine.

Dues payments should be sent to the following address:

F-86 Sabre Pilots Association - Membership Dues

PO Box 97951, Las Vegas, NV 89193-7951

from the Editor

Hello again guys! Welcome to an issue that has been very long in coming. One totally devoted to the guys that stood alert against the red hordes coming from the north - the Air Defense Command guys that flew the F-86D/L. The main feature is a history of the rocket training that went on at Yuma County Airport in the mid-1950s. We hope you like it.

The staff at SabreJet Classics plans to do other issues similar to this one. An issue devoted to the guys that flew the F-86 in the Air National Guard. Or those that were assigned to USAFE in the 1950s. And of course, we'd like to do one just on F-86H operations.

But to do any of these, we need cooperation from you, the members. You are the guys with the stories. And most importantly, you're the guys that have the most photos, especially the personal ones showing crews and places. It is essential that you send photos to go with your articles, be they shots of you, your airplane, other airplanes in your squadron, or crews and guys that you served with. Our only requirement is that the stories and photos be connected to the F-86 in some way.

Another thing that we're starting to collect are unit patches. If you have a unit patch, or a patch or decal associated with a Sabre unit, we'd love to see it. You can either send the original patch or decal to us, or make a color xerox of it and send that to us. And Christmas



Darleen Craig, an employee at North American Aviation, poses with the F-95A, later redesignated YF-86D, at the rollout in September 1949. (credit - NAA)

cards. If anyone served in a unit that had it's own Christmas cards, we'd love to include them in future issues of SabreJet Classics.

If you have stories, photos, color slides, or F-86 oriented patches or decals that you wish to loan us, send them direct to LARRY DAVIS, EDITOR, SABREJET CLASSICS, 4713 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709: or call 1-330-493-4122. Let's keep *SabreJet Classics* the best it can be.

POLICY STATEMENT

The F-86 Sabre Pilots Association does not participate in any solicitation or endorsement not controlled by, or for the sole benefit of, the association. Readers are cautioned to be wary of any representation in conflict with this policy.

FOLDED WINGS

Richard B. 'Rick' Collins, June 8th, 1999
Donald J. Ferris, September 25th, 1999
Henry 'Bill' Goodman, April 6th, 1999
Edward F. Hodges, February 4th, 1998
Lloyd R. Irish, June 2nd, 1999
Walter C. Rew, September 4th, 1998
Stanley A. Rollags, December 11th, 1997
Nelson T. Weber, March 15th, 1998
Ellis D. Zahniser, March 26th, 1999



20th Air Division F-86Ds representing the Central Air Defense Force, lined up on the Yuma AFB ramp for the Air Defense Command 'Shoot-Off' in July 1956. Yuma AFB, later Vincent AFB, was host for both the ADC 'Shoot-Off' and the Air Force Gunnery and Weapons Meet (Interceptor Phase) from **1954 through 1957**. (credit - USAF)

YUMA

by Larry Davis & Marty Isham

(IvFarty Isham, known to his friends and colleagues as "Mr. Air Defense Command", is an unofficial historian of ADC and presently works at the USAF Weapons School, Nellis AFB. His knowledge of ADC operations is without question.)

Yuma, Arizona, is normally a sleepy little town in the middle of the Arizona desert about 200 miles west of Phoenix. But in the years during and after World War Two, Yuma was a bustling town filled with servicemen since the Army began using the local airport as a training base. Beginning in January 1954, it was the home of a large number of jet jockeys. And not your run of the mill fighter jocks, these were Air Defense Command interceptor pilots sent to Yuma to practice live-firing the primary armament of USAF's interceptor force, air-to-air rockets.

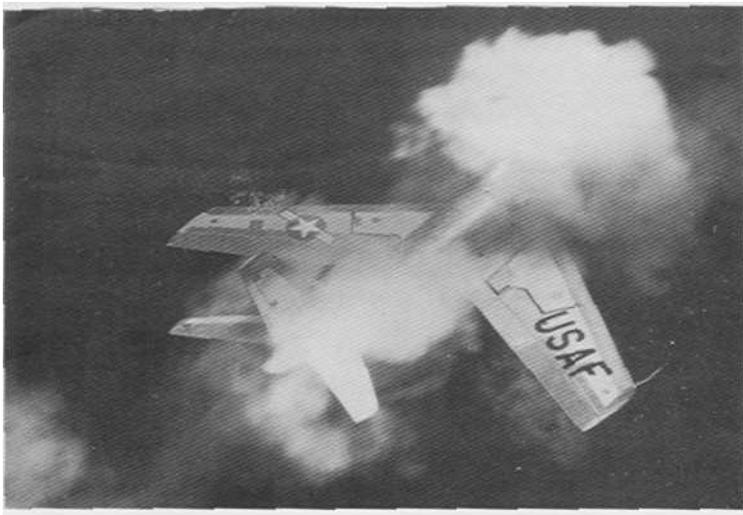
Air Defense Command rocket training operations began on 1 January 1954, after the 4750th Training Wing (Air Defense) was activated at Yuma County Airport. The 4750th had two major components, the 4750th Training Group (Air Defense) and the 4750th Training Squadron. Col. Robert Worley was the first commander of the 4750th TW. But there were many famous people assigned to the 4750th including Col. Glenn Eagleston as Group Commander, and Maj. Jim Jabara commanded the 4750th Squadron. The group had two flying squadrons assigned - the 4750th TS equipped with six F-86Ds and six F-94Cs: and the 4750th Tow Target Squadron equipped with twelve T-33As and eight B-45As used to tow targets for the live fire portion of the course.

Since Air Defense Command (ADC) was equipped almost solely with rocket-firing interceptors (or soon would be), Headquarters USAF decided they should have their own training base separate from the normal 'Gunfighter Air Force'. Yuma County Airport was chosen for the site. The last 'gunnery crew' left Yuma in December 1953.

And the first ADC squadron arrived at Yuma for the Rocketry Proficiency Program on 1 February 1954. ADC squadrons rotated through Yuma on a regular basis for a two week proficiency program that included 'live-fire' exercises over the Williams AFB and Luke AFB ranges.

The two week course included a controller course, many hours in the F-86D simulator and at least one 'live fire' mission flown each day. The targets, usually towed behind B-45A tow ships, were 9'x45' target sleeves, with two radar reflectors attached for the interceptor fire control systems to lock onto. Most of the TDY personnel were quartered in tents near the flight line, at least until April 1954 when the first permanent barracks buildings were finished and air conditioned. By June, seven ADC units had rotated through the Yuma program.





(upper) An F-86D is lost in the smoke after firing all 24 rockets in a 'volley fire' exercise at Yuma in 1954. The F-861) pilot used the Hughes E-4 Fire Control System to compute a 'lead collision course' to bring the aircraft within range of the target, which then fired the rockets automatically when the Sabre got within range. (right) George Welch, North American Aviation's Chief Test Pilot, in the cockpit ready to 'test fly' the new ERCO F-86D Simulator. Many hours were spent in the simulator both at squadron level and during the live-fire sessions at Yuma. (credit - NAA)



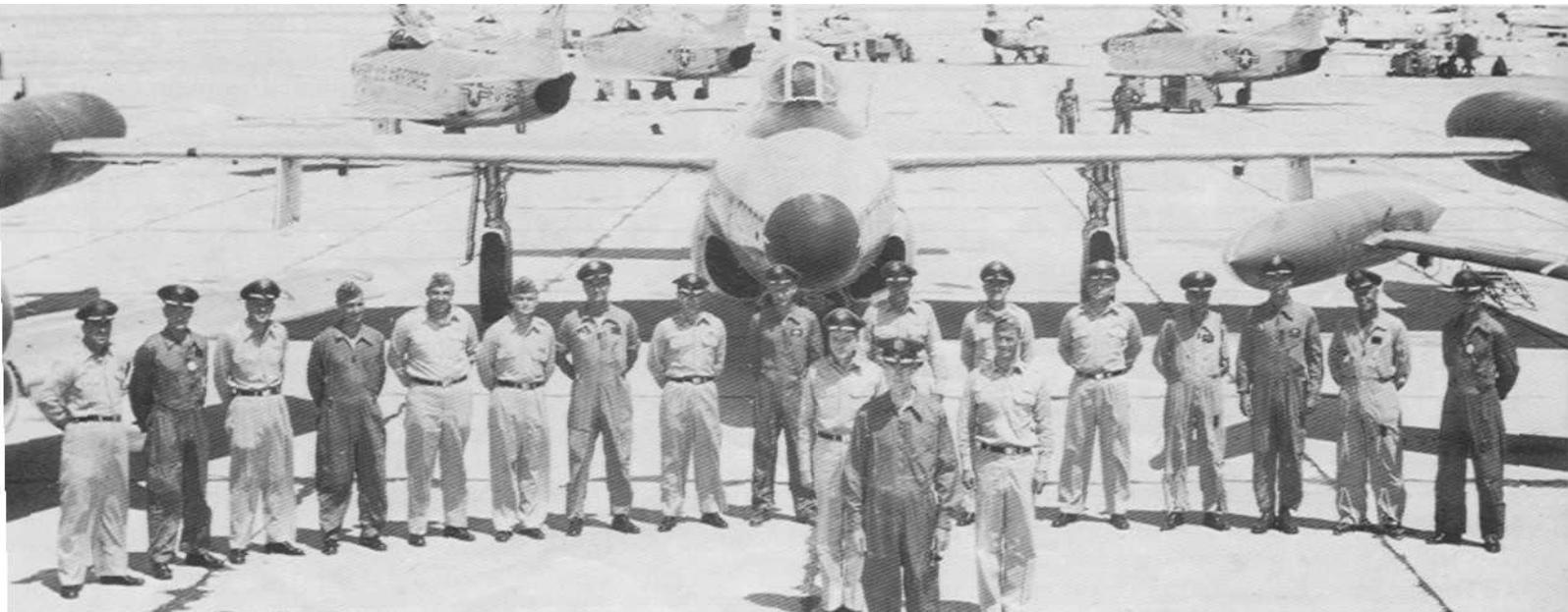
Also during the conference at Las Vegas AFB (became Nellis AFB in Spring 1950) that brought the ADC program to Yuma, Headquarters USAF decided to add a separate air-to-air rocketry competition to the annual USAF gunnery meet that was held at Las Vegas AFB. The Interceptor Phase of the competition would be held at Yuma between 20 June and 27 June 1954. Col. Worley chaired the rules committee meeting at Yuma in mid-January.

There were four teams involved in this first ADC rocket competition - two F-94C Starfire units from the Air Training Command squadron at Moody AFB, and a Western Air Defense Force squadron; and two F-86D

teams from the Eastern Air Defense Force (13th FIS) and the Central Air Defense Force (made up from elements of the 15th FIS and 93rd FIS). The first F-89D Scorpion squadron, the 18th FIS, also participated but did not compete.

Each team pilot and airplane flew three missions against the targets, first at 20,000' and then again at 30,000'. Scoring was done by a judge flying one of the T-33As - 1000 points for a hit on the first run, 800 for the second, and 600 for the third. Unfortunately for the 'good guys', the F-94C teams swept the honors, with the Moody team taking First with 10,400 points, followed by the WADF team. The EADF F-86D team was Third and

General Pat Partridge, Commander of Air Defense Command, assembles the commanders of the units deployed at Yuma for the first rocket competition in October 1955. Host unit for all the rocket meets held at Yuma was the 4750th Air Defense Wing. F-86 Association member Grover Wilcox stands 2nd from the left, when he commanded the 84th FIG at Geiger Field, Washington, home plate for the famous (or infamous) 498th FIS "Geiger Tigers". (credit - Grover Wilcox)





Members of the 94th FIS stand beside Col. Frank Rinn's "01' Rover" at the July 1955 'live-fire' practice session. (1-r) Col. Rinn, CO of the 94th FIS, **Capt. Harvey, Capt. Embrey, 1/Lt Crumpler, and Capt. Moore.** (credit - **Budd Butcher**)

the CADF team came in Fourth. Gen. B.J. Chidlaw, Commanding ADC, presented the trophies at the end of the competition.

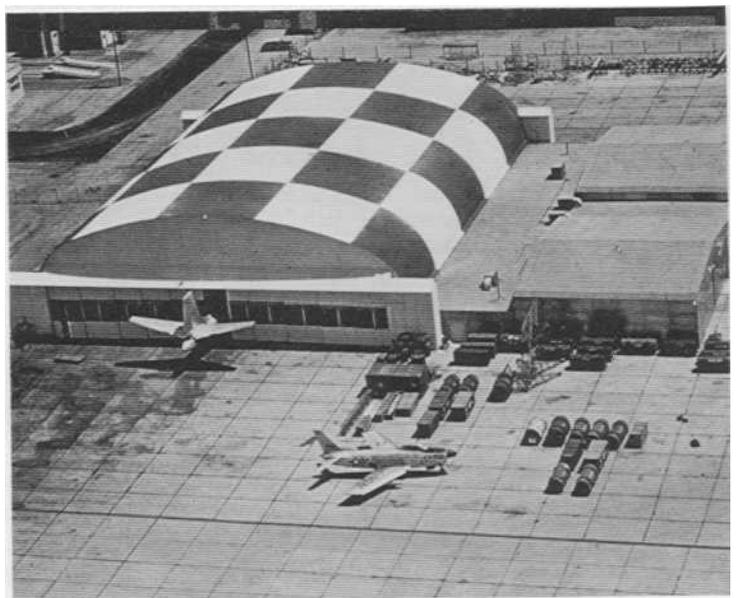
Several changes occurred during the last half of 1954. On 24 August, Yuma County Airport was redesignated Yuma Air Force Base. On 1 September, the 4750th Training Wing became the 4750th Air Defense Wing (Weapons). The 4750th Group and squadrons were also redesignated. And on 8 January 1955, the 4750th Tow Target Squadron became the 17th TTS. Between July 1954 and the end of the year, ADC rotated eleven more squadrons through the Yuma program - nine in F-86Ds, and one each in F-94Cs and F-89Ds.

One of the more interesting events was Exercise CHECKPOINT, a joint exercise between ADC and SAC units in July 1954, during which ADC units from Yuma successfully 'intercepted and destroyed' seventy-three out of seventy-four SAC inbound bombers, either B-47s or B-36s. In late 1954, USAF and ADC decided to open a second rocketry center at Moody AFB, Georgia. The 4756th ADG (Weapons) and 4756th ADS were assigned to the Moody Rocketry Center. Beginning 1 January 1955, only F-86D units would go through the program at Yuma. The F-94 and F-89 crews went to Moody. In November 1954, the first TB-29 tow target aircraft arrived at Yuma, and the first night 'live-fire' missions were flown.

By 1955, with Moody now training the '94 and '89 crews, ADC began rotating four squadrons through the Yuma program simultaneously. And in February, the 317th FIS set a new record for hits with 177 actual hits. In 1955, USAF established a three phase competition for the first annual World-Wide Fighter Gunnery and Weapons Meet - Phase One was for day fighters, Phase Two was the Special Delivery phase (i.e. 'nukes'). Both of these were held at (now) Nellis AFB. Phase Three was the Interceptor Phase, again held at Yuma AFB in October 1955.

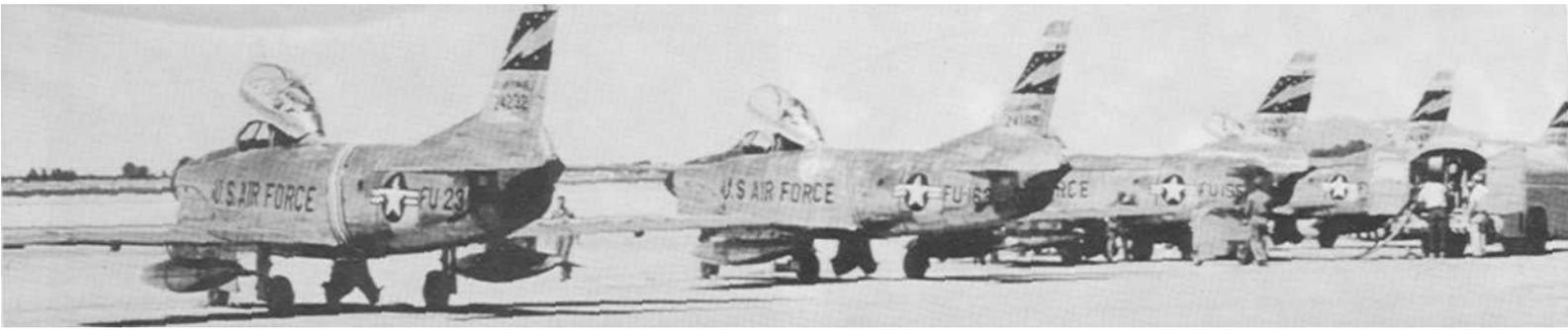


An F-86D pilot with the 86th FIS based at Youngstown Airport, Ohio, has the hood closed for a pass at the target sleeve over the Yuma rocket range in 1956. (credit - Major General H.E. 'Tom' Collins)



(upper) A hangar at Yuma AFB, with one of the B-45A target tugs inside. (lower) 1/Lt Xavier Guerra was "El Flying Wetback" with the 94th FIS at Yuma in July 1955. Sabre Pilot Association member Budd Butcher took the photos of the 94th FIS. (credit - Marty **Isham** & **Budd Butcher**)





The 62nd Fighter Interceptor Squadron represented the Central Air Defense Force at the 1955 WorldWide Rocket meet. Squadron and air division teams would vie for top scoring honors at the ADC 'Shoot-Off', which was held at Yuma in July, then return in October for the WorldWide Rocket Meet. (credit - Robert Wainwright)

But first ADC held a 'Shoot-Off' at Yuma from 8 August to 24 August 1955. Four teams from each air defense force (ADF) were invited to participate. At the end of the ADC Shoot-Off, one team from each ADF would represent ADC in the October interceptor competition. The Shoot-Off actually began on 16 August and had the same rules as the 1954 Rocketry Meet. At the end of the Shoot-Off, ADC crowned the WADF F-94 team from the 78th FIG the winner with 14,800 points. The 26th AD F-94Cs (EADF) were Second, and the CADF F-86D team from the 328th FIG was Third.

The first 'World-Wide' USAF Fighter Gunnery and Weapons Meet (Interceptor Phase) was held at Yuma AFB beginning on 2 October 1955. Eight teams participated, which included for the first time ever, teams from overseas units. The overseas units would borrow aircraft from stateside squadrons for use in the competition. Participants included the EADF team of 26th Air Division F-94Cs, ATC F-86Ds from the 3555th Combat Crew Training Squadron at Perrin AFB, USAFE F-86Ds from the 431st FIS at Wheelus AB, Libya, 78th FIG F-86Ds represented WADF, Alaskan Air Command F-89Ds

from the 18th FIS, Northeast Air Command F-89Ds from the 64th AD, Far East Air Force F-86Ds assigned to the 51st FIG, and F-86Ds from the 328th FIG/ CADF.

Most of the units had representatives from several squadrons within a group or wing, such as the EADF team that was made up of aircraft and crews from the 46th FIS at Dover AFB, the 96th FIS at New Castle County Airport, the 48th FIS at Langley, and the 332nd FIS based at McGuire AFB; and the top scoring crews from the three squadrons in the 78th FIG (the 82d, 83rd, and 84th FIS) represented the CADF.

The overall winner was again an F-94C Starfire team from the EADF 26th AD, led by Col. Milton Ashkins, who would later command the 4750th ADW(Weapons) at Yuma. Col. Ashkins' team would come from behind on the final day of the meet to beat out all the other teams. The ATC F-86Ds flown by 3555th pilots, took Second, while FEAF '86s finished Fourth, CADF finished Fifth, WADF was Sixth, and the USAFE team was Seventh.

In the first half of 1956, several changes involved the

A 17th Tow Target Squadron B-45A taxis past a TB-29A target tug and several 56th FIW F-86Ds to the active Yuma runway for another mission in 1955. (credit - Robert Wainwright)

A crew chief from the Western Air Defense Force team directs a pilot from the 413th FIS based at Travis AFB, CA, to his parking spot at the 1955 Yuma Rocket Meet. Note the five target sleeve 'kill' marks between the 'U' and 'S'. (credit - NAA)





The Yuma AFB ramp is filled for the 1954 WorldWide Rocket Meet with F-94C Starfires and F-86D Sabres. At the top of the ramp are the 17th TTS B-45A target ships and one of the new B-57s that would soon replace the B-45s. (credit - via Marty Isham)



A 13th FIS F-86D over Yuma in 1954. The 13th FIS, based at Selfridge AFB, MI, represented the Eastern Air Defense Force at the first Yuma rocket meet in June 1954. (credit - Ken Buchanan)

(right) An F-86D from the 31st FIS at Larson AFB, WA, fires a volley of 2.75" rockets at the target sleeve over Yuma in 1955. The special gun cameras used at Yuma can be seen under the outer wings. (credit - Robert Wainwright)



(lower) F-86D assigned to the 86th FIS at Youngstown Airport, Ohio, line the Yuma ramp in front of a TB-29A target tug during the summer of 1955. Squadrons rotated through Yuma on a regular basis for 'live fire' training prior to the actual WorldWide Rocket Competition. (credit - Maj/Gen H.E. 'Tom' Collins)



A Ryan Q-2A Firebee target drone under the wing of a 4750th ADS DB-26C launch aircraft at Yuma in 1956. Operations with the Q-2A drone began at Yuma in January 1956. (credit - J.R. 'Bud' Conti)





A 4750th Support Squadron Piasecki H-21 B retrieves one of the Firebee drones from the desert floor of the Yuma rocket range in 1956. (credit - USAF)

crews at Yuma. On 1 January, the 4705th Drone Squadron was established as part of the 4750th ADW(Weapons). They were equipped with the brand new Ryan Q- 2A Firebee drone, which was launched from GB-26C Invader aircraft. Although the drones were in place by Spring, the first GB-26Cs did not arrive until June, and the first Firebee flight took place in July. The Q -2A Firebees were recovered by H-21 s after landing on the desert floor. The first B-57 target 'tugs' were delivered to the 17th TIS on 6 July.

On 9 April 1956, Col. Worley, commander of the 4750th since it was organized in January 1954, was transferred to USAFE. Col. Milton Ashkins, who had led the EADF team to First Place at the 1955 interceptor competition, took over the 4750th that same day. By the end of June, ADC had rotated twenty-two squadrons through the Yuma Rocketry Proficiency Program. It was now time for the annual competition. No one knew at this time, but 1956 would be the final Yuma competition.

Once again, from 7 July to 21 July 1956, ADC held a 'shoot-off' with the winners representing ADC in the World-Wide Interceptor Competition. EADF was represented by teams from the 26th, 30th, 32d, and 35th ADs: WADF by teams from the 25th, 27th, 28th, and 9th ADs; and three teams from the CADF 20th, 29th, and 34th ADs. The results of the shoot-off were; First Place was the 94th FIS F-86D team with 12,400 points, with the 437th FIS F-89Ds Second, and the 13th FIS F-86Ds Third. All three squadrons would represent ADC at Yuma in October.

The Air Force World-Wide Fighter Gunnery and Weapons Meet (Interceptor Phase) was held between 13 October and 18 October 1956. Although the site remained the same, the name was changed. On 1 September 1956, USAF renamed Yuma AFB as Vincent



A 94th FIS F-86D during one of the Yuma 'live-fire' missions in July 1955. Many of the squadrons, such as the 94th FIS, painted special markings on their aircraft prior to deployment to Yuma. (credit - **Budd Butcher**)

AFB in honor of the late Gen. Clinton D. Vincent. His widow unveiled a memorial plaque at the renaming ceremonies held on 12 October 1956.

When the interceptor competition began on 13 October, no less than twelve squadrons participated in the nine teams that were entered, including an F-89D unit assigned to MATS! And for the first time, there were no F-94C Starfire teams entered. The first overseas teams began arriving on 29 September, and all teams were in place by 6 October. F-86D units included the 94th FIS representing EADF, the 40th FIS/FEAF, the 406th FIW/USAFE, the 3625th CCTW/ATC, and the 13th FIS/CADF. F-89D Scorpion units included the NEAC team from the 64th AD, the WADF 437th FIS, the 10th AD team from Alaska, and the 57th FIS, a MATS squadron based at Keflavik, Iceland.

General Thomas D. White, Air Force Vice Chief of Staff, presents the Outstanding **Support** Member to S/Sgt Donald Vorst with the 94th FIS, and a member of the 1st Place EADF Team at the 1956 Rocket Meet. (credit - USAF)





F-86Ds assigned to the 406th F1W Rocket Team on the ramp at Yuma in 1956. Normally, overseas squadrons and teams would borrow aircraft from stateside units to use in the competition. (credit - via David Menard)

On 18 October, Gen. Thomas D. White, Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, awarded the trophies. First Place went to Col. Norman Orwat's F-86D team from the 94th FIS. The EADF team had scored a total of 13,800 points for the victory. The F-89Ds from the 437th FIS placed Second with 11,400 points. F-86D teams placed Fourth (40th FIS), Fifth (406th FIW), Sixth (3625th CCTW), and Seventh (13th FIS). High Team Captain Event honors were split between Col. Donald Graham and his Radar Operator 1/Lt. Billy Thompson, an AAC F-89D crew; and 1/Lt Robert Long, a member of the 94th FIS F-86D team. Overall High Aircrew score went to Col. Graham and Lt. Thompson.

The 1956 meet was the last meet held at Yuma because USAF moved the Interceptor competition to Tyndall AFB,

Mrs. Margaret Vincent presents the Radar Controllers trophy to 1/Lt James Dorsey and 1/Lt Grameme Howard, members of the EADF team at the 1956 Meet. Mrs. Vincent also was present for the renaming of Yuma AFB to Vincent AFB in honor of her late **husband**, General Clinton D. Vincent. (credit - USAF)



Florida in October 1958 under Project WILLIAM TELL. The 1958 William Tell Meet was the last in which F-86Ds competed. But they went out with a flourish. All the F-86D/L teams flew in Category III competition. Category I was for Century Series interceptors, Category II being for two-place F-89 interceptors. For the first time, Air National Guard teams were allowed to compete. The F-86D team from the 125th FG, Florida ANG, shot a PERFECT SCORE, 40,800 points, to grab First Place. Second was the 526th FIS/USAFE, Third - the 3555th FTW/ATC, 322nd FIS/WADF F-86Ls placed Fourth, and 4th FIS F-86Ds from PACAF were Fifth. The weather at Yuma and the Century Series of advanced interceptors had relegated both Yuma and the Dog Sabre to reserve status. But it had been a good run.

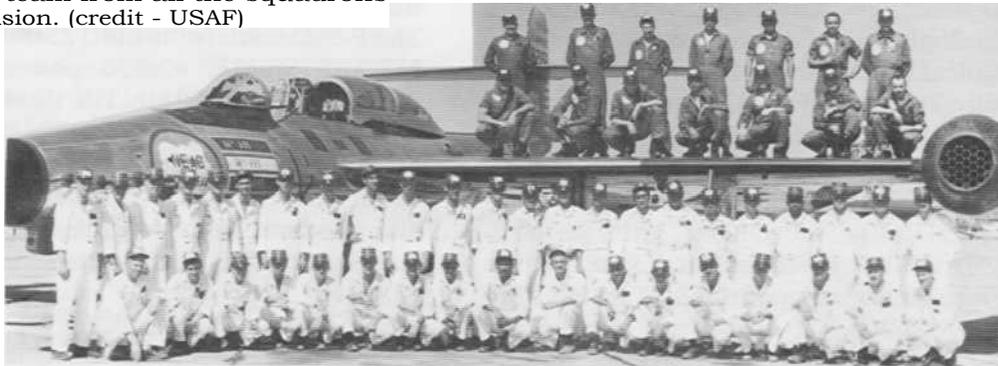
General White presents the First Place trophy to the captain of the EADF Team, Colonel Norman Orwat at the 1956 WorldWide Rocket Meet. The EADF team scored 13,800 points to edge out the WADF team with 11,400 points. (credit - USAF)





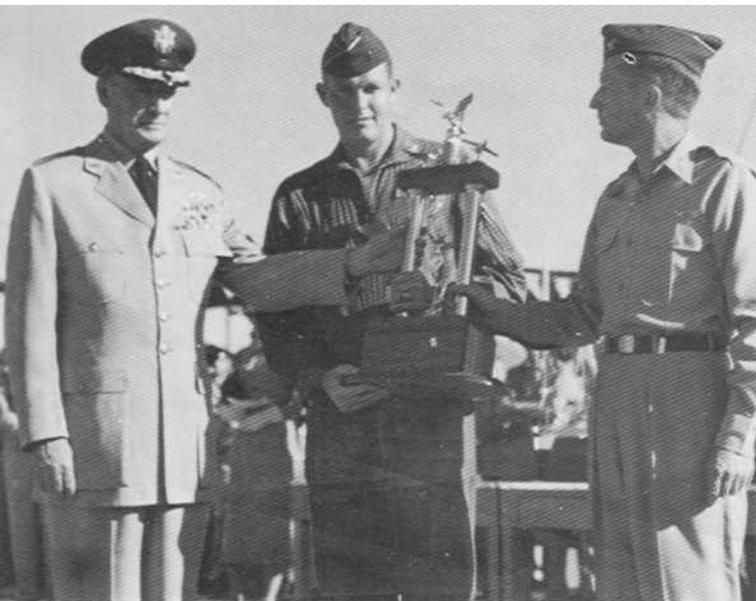
The Eastern Air Defense Force team won the 1956 USAF Gunnery and Weapons Meet (Interceptor Phase) at Yuma scoring 13,800 points. Team members included Capt. Robert Loeffler, 1/Lt. Robert Long, 1/1.t. Ronald Legner, with Capt. Charles Tabor and 1/Lt. William Clarke, Jr. as alternates. Team Captain was Col. Norman Orwat, Commander of the 94th FIS at Selfridge AFB, MI. (credit - (JSAF))

They didn't win but the NEAC F-89D team sure looked pretty with their white coveralls. NorthEast Air Command picked its team from all the squadrons within the 64th Air Division. (credit - USAF)



High Team Captain trophy at the 1956 World Wide Rocket Meet went to Col. Donald Graham and 1/1.t. Billy Thompson, an F-89D crew with the Alaskan Air Command team. (credit - USAF)

Mrs. Margaret Vincent presents the RCA radar controllers trophy to members of the NEAC team at the 1956 Rocket Meet. (credit - USAF)



POPEYE INTERCEPT

by David C. Montgomery

RAF Manston lies near the Straits of Dover in southeast England. It had only partially recovered from the ravages of World War Two when I arrived in May 1955. There were still makeshift bomb shelters, i.e. trenches with tin roofs, and many large circles of lush green grass where Luftwaffe bombs had cratered the runway. The familiar RAF control tower overlooked a bizarre hilltop runway, which was an extraordinary 750 feet wide and 9000 feet long. The runway had a 'crown' that was high enough that planes on opposite sides of the runway were largely hidden from each other.

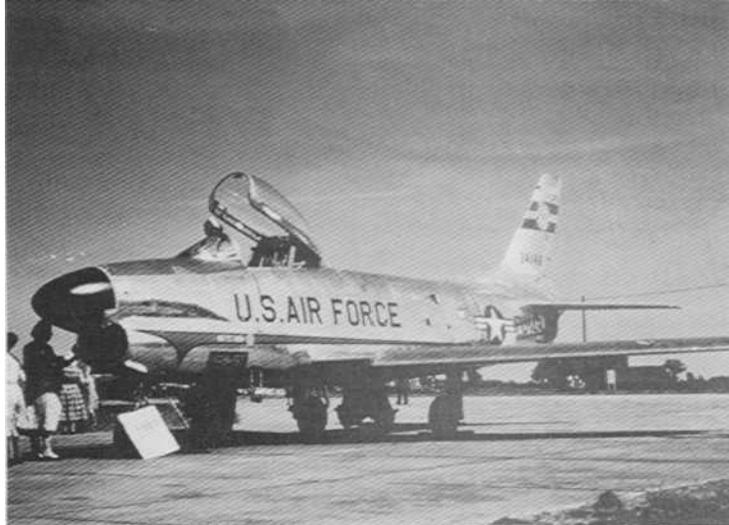
The runway was swept with a persistent cross-wind as its wartime builders had oriented it, not into the prevailing wind direction, but aligned it with the path of crippled bombers limping back to emergency landings from raids to Festung Europa. On the approach end of Runway 29 was the famous, old, experimental installation known as FIDO - 'Fog, Intensive Dispersal Of. Inside were big fuel storage tanks to supply fog dispersing burners mounted on large, rusty pipes. Towards the west side of the base and concealed from aerial view was an old, unused underground hangar with a ramp leading to the surface.

Down the hill to the south was the GCI site at Sandwich, Kent. And on the parking ramp of 'my' squadron, the 514th FIS gleamed the love of my life - nearly new silvery F-86Ds. These were the modified models of Project PULLOUT, that had all the improvements addressing the issues that fueled the black jokes about the "gear-up, flaps-up, blow-up Dog",

At the time of this tale, 1957, both Dog squadrons were operating as 'combat ready', and were undergoing a series of exercises that demonstrated the combat capabilities of Manston's 406th FIW. My story is about "an unusual plight during a non-routine flight in the all-weather intercept racket."

It was my turn to sit runway alert. Suddenly the balloon went up and the order came to launch. Within a couple of minutes I was airborne, checked into Sandwich GCI and was being directed to the northeast over the North Sea at Angels 40. I was the sole interceptor launched against a target reported to be at 50,000 feet and westbound. There was no doubt in my mind that an intercept would not happen at such an altitude, but I pressed on.

Weather! Manston reputedly had the most favorable weather in the UK. And we had been briefed long before that despite such an Advanta²el, the statistics on English weather suggested it to be more challenging to aviators than the worst anywhere in the US. So it was on this day



A 514th FIS F-86D on the ramp at RAF Manston during an Open House in 1957. The highly polished skin is not standard for English operations. (credit - M.J. Hooks)

as I climbed above 30,000 feet before clearing the overcast.

GCI vectored me for a beam attack with the target 100 miles distant as I continued the climb. But the controller's planned angle-off attack didn't lead the target's projected path sufficiently and the 'intercept' deteriorated into a tail chase. Now level at 40,000, I had closed on the target and 'locked on' from about 12 miles astern. The radar display in the lesser sensitivity of Phase 1, showed a measly 50 knot overtake rate! England's eastern shores lay unseen below and ahead and, as I had to go that way anyway, the pursuit continued.

My bird was making max speed, .94 Mach, and burning fuel at a gluttonous rate guaranteeing a flight of less than an hour. Far above me, and out of reach, the target was barely visible. As I watched, it slowly began losing altitude. After a conspicuous delay, the steering 'dot' drifted towards the bottom of the scope. Remember, this is 1957 and the computing power of the Hughes radar

^{1/1.t} David Montgomery in front of the crew quarters at Wheelus AB, Tripoli, Libya in May 1956. (credit- David Montgomery)





A 514th F-86D fires a volley of rockets at the target sleeve over Wheelus in May 1956. 11SAFE squadrons went to Wheelus for live-fire training and competition for the team that went to Yuma for the WorldWide Rocket Meet. (credit - David Montgomery)

Capt. Earl Bryant 'under the hood' of his 514th F-86D at 14,300 feet on the Wheelus rocket range over the Mediterranean Sea prior to firing on the target sleeve towed by a TB-29 target tug. (credit - David Montgomery)

was probably less than some of today's household appliances. Soon the target disappeared into the undercast. I continued the pursuit. No further instructions were made by the GCI controller and the ARC-27 radio was silent. The attack was now solely in my hands. I started down, balls-to-the-wall, and was soon on instruments.

a marker to rise up the jizzle band until merging into the radar blip.

Slowly the range decreased and he started to drift to starboard. After the 'jizzle band' (radar strobe) reached 30° starboard, I started a turn-in-trail, intending to again put the target at 12 o'clock. This was to be an ID run, and I sure as hell didn't want to come up booming on his wing while popeye in a turn with a big-time, unmanageable overtake.

The blended images twitched slightly as the radar lock-on was resumed and the attack display returned, which included two concentric circles. A segment missing from the rotatable outer circle was read against the overtake-rate markings on the scope face. Antenna angle-off was displayed as a multiple line vertical strobe, while the embedded blip of the target's return slid slowly down the jizzle band and revealed the decreasing range. Within the inner circle, a steering dot meandered around.

the maneuver went as intended, but surprisingly, the overtake rate jumped to 1200 knots! Apparently the Target was executing a jet penetration and had reversed course. The attack now involved converting a head-on pass into an ID run. It was a maneuver often practiced in the simulator and I felt confident of the conclusion. On instruments, my attack continued.

The F-86D was designed to intercept propeller-driven bombers at medium altitudes, and fast targets were a problem easily demonstrated with a vector diagram. But this target had descended to altitudes where I could maneuver to advantage. Plus the overtake rate was now a couple of hundred knots.

20 Seconds to go! The attack display upgraded to the increased sensitivity of Phase 2, with the target still at 12 o'clock and closing at 1200 knots. By now I was flying with the stick gently held between thumb and forefinger, holding the steering dot at just a smidgen of fly-down. I knew the fire control computer aimed for a splashtime intercept point about 40 feet higher than the target. And I wanted to see the target pass headon under me in the clouds. (CLOSE!) A quick blur as the target zipped past just beneath me.

I'd soon be on him and I reduced power to idle with speed brakes out to bleed off the excessive overtake rate. This time he was held on the scope at 60° to starboard, and stabilized at a range of 3 miles. The

A 514th F1S F-86D on the Manston ramp in late 1957 carries the new markings of the squadron commander. credit - via David Menard)



5G reversal put him again ahead of me, and a quick rearward pull on the radar hand control resumed the antenna's automatic, rapid back and forth sweep. Spotlighting the target by holding the 'trigger' on the hand control, I slewed the jizzle band over the fading target image. Slowly rocking the hand control made it bloom. Thumbing the control's range-gate switch caused



On 15 May 1958, the 514th FIS was transferred from the 406th FIW at RAF Manston, England, to the 86th FIW at Ramstein AB, West Germany. Both the duty and the weather remained the same for the crews of the 514th FIS - all-weather flying in the rain and fog when no one else could or would fly. **But** now they were a lot closer to the Iron Curtain and the MiGs. (credit - Ron Miller)

overtake rate decreased to 0. Positive vertical clearance was maintained by holding the steering dot to a little bit of fly-up. A bit of throttle and a small amount of overtake developed. Range decreased steadily.

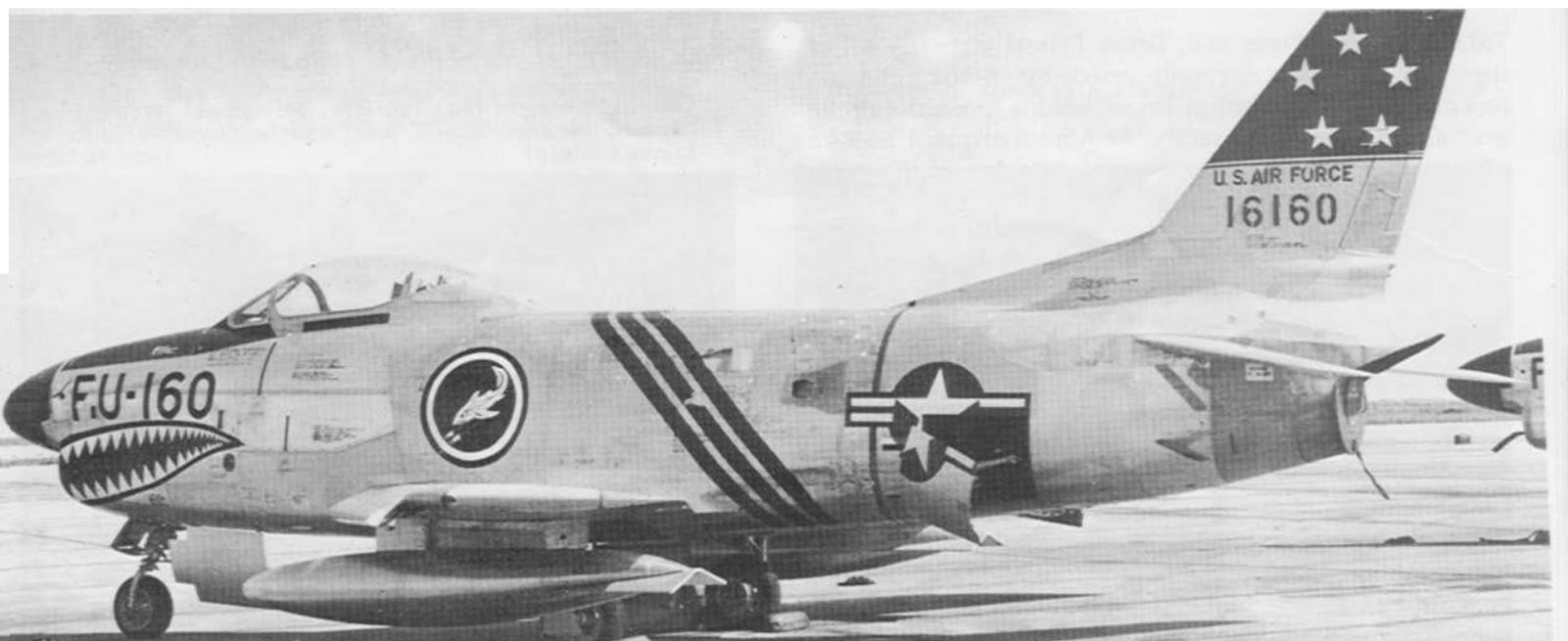
My Dog closed on the cloud-shrouded target from a position just below and at his 8 o'clock. As the distance closed to almost zip, a huge Vickers Valiant four-engine jet bomber materialized out of the mist. I closed in tight to a position within the span of the bomber's left wing and just below the tail. Finally, at an altitude of about 15,000 feet and descending with the target, I read off the bomber's tail number to the GCI controller!

"Roger" was the answer, then a command to climb back to ANGELS 40 for another target 100 miles east. I had to decline as my fuel was too little for a second intercept.

It was time for me to go to home plate as I was far below BINGO fuel. The controller gave me a vector north to RAF Sculthorpe, located near 'Thewash' in northern East Anglia, not all that far from Robin Hood's Sherwood Forest. My arrival in the traffic there caused something of a stir as my interceptor was armed with 'live' rockets and the Transient Alert crew was unfamiliar with that. After a couple of hours, I was refueled and returned to Manston.

The whole mission had been a technical challenge involving the most demanding instrument flying. I left the Air Force after my tour at Manston and flew various other airplanes. But I never had an ILS to compare with that long ago popeye intercept. I'll bet if that Valiant's pilot had seen what was being done at his risk, he'd still be PO'd!

An F-86D assigned to the 75th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Suffolk County AFB, NY in early 1955. The aircraft carries the famous sharks teeth decoration of the original American Volunteer Group 'Flying Tigers', from which the 75th FIS is descended; plus having three stripes on the rear fuselage signifying that it was assigned to the squadron commander. The AVG became the 23rd Fighter Group after the US entered World War Two, with three squadrons assigned - the 74th, 75th, and 76th FS. The 75th FIS flew F-86As, Es, and Ds from 1951 until July 1955. (credit - Major Emil Kotalik)



THEY SAID THE SAUCE DID IT!

by James B. McCain

When the 330th Fighter Interceptor Squadron returned to Stewart AFB, New York, from the Air Defense Command rocketry practice in Yuma, Arizona, on 20 April 1958, we were surprised to see a large banner in front of operations. The inscription read, 'Welcome Home Deadeyes!' We were met not only by our families, but the 579th Air Force Band and other well-wishers, including a lot of brass since Eastern Air Defense Force Headquarters was housed at Stewart. The party started when our squadron commander's wife cut a large cake.

The 330th FIS had broken all existing records at Yuma up to that time. Our percentage almost doubled the previous record set earlier that year. Our accuracy was evident in the fact that the squadron had downed twenty-two of the Del-Mar reflector targets in comparison with the previous high of nine. Many opportunities for hits were missed because the targets, which were being towed by other aircraft, kept being knocked down leaving nothing to shoot at!

Moving the squadron from New York to Arizona was not an easy chore to begin with because the F-86D was never built with cross-country flying in mind. Due to the limited range it was a number of short hops. I had a sick bird on the way out that would not give the required tailpipe temp, which greatly increased my takeoff roll. But to write it up would mean I would've been stuck somewhere awaiting maintenance and missing out on all the fun. So I became very determined to make it all the way to Yuma.

Taking off from Biggs AFB, Texas, I used virtually all of the big runway, normally used by B-36s, chasing jackrabbits for five miles or so before I could get the gear and flaps up with safety. At Albuquerque, I had an advantage. I just drug on out past the edge of the mesa where I had room to sink before cleaning up the airplane. Most of us stopped in Las Vegas for the night where I heard a fabulous concert by Nat King Cole at the Sands Hotel. The cost was an unbelievable \$4.00! A treat that was truly "Unforgettable."

When we all gathered in Yuma. actually Vincent AFB, the first thing I heard was that our commander. Major Steiner, had made a stop at Biggs, crossed the border and got a good supply of 'fire water'. Anyone who has ever been around an F-86D knows there is no place for luggage of any kind. But being the ingenious fellow that he was, Major Steiner managed to stash it all in the cockpit, behind the seat among the oxygen bottles and such. To my utter delight, when he reached altitude all the corks let go, and let go, and let go!



Our record was praised in the base newspaper with very high praise going to aircraft maintenance and radar specialists for getting everything back in shape. Those guys put in some very long night hours, and I'm sure that had a lot to do with our success. But the pilots had a different slant on things.

The first few days we hardly scored any hits and everyone was down and disgusted. After a few days of this, someone suggested a party. That night almost everyone got pickled. Next morning when the sun came up, there was great difficulty getting guys to the flight line and into the air.. But you know what? That was the day we started getting hits. Everyone would come in from the flight bragging on how great each run had been and describing graphically just how each run was accomplished.

It was truly a night for celebration! Naturally the main topic was why did we do so well when we had been doing so poorly? After much discussion, it was decided that the answer was obvious. We had always been taught that we were to make smooth corrections when following the steering dot on the radar, in order to make a successful run ending with the dot buried in the line when the rockets were fired. On that particular day, with everyone having an aching head from the night before's libations, no one wanted any unnecessary movement. Thus the flying was very, very smooth! Therefore, THE SAUCE GOT THE CREDIT!

The **night** before! (l-r) Us. Jerry McMichael, Wells, Don Dineen, Richard Bruce, and Charles Lord. (credit James McCain)



THE 330th 'C' FLIGHT JUG BAND

by James B. McCain

Entering Air Force flight school as a member of '56-N' was a unique experience for a country kid from Rosepine, Louisiana. It was even more unique since I received my commission out of the Army ROTC - anti-aircraft artillery branch! It was our first day at Malden AFB, Missouri, when the reality of just how strange I was hit me right between the eyes.

The colonel was briefing us on the program in which we were about to plunge. He asked, "How many of you have a degree in aeronautical engineering?" Several hands went up and he said, "You men won't have any trouble with this course." He continued on down through the various engineering degrees, the sciences, the math people. And always assuring each group that they would do well.

Finally, in a very disdainful voice I heard, "Do we have any *music majors* in here?" Well, I raised my lonely hand, not so much proud of being a music major, but sure that the colonel had gone through the papers on everyone and knew there was one of those critters in the room! Looking at me, the colonel said, "Mister, you're gonna have trouble with this course!" What a wonderful welcome. There's nothing like a good motivational speaker to get you started off on the right foot.

However, there was also a fellow in the class by the name of Snodgrass who was a member of The Society for the Preservation of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America. Gathering two fellows named Hamaus and Moriority, along with me, together, he organized a quartet, and the "Half-Flaps Four" soon made its debut. Thereafter, every time the base commander was invited to speak somewhere, he took us along. It was usually worth a good meal at least.

Later, after completing the F-86D school at Perrin AFB, Texas, my brand new wife and I were off for Stewart AFB, New York and the 330th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. After being there about a year, my new flight leader, Captain Thomas Miller, got around to looking over my 201 file and had a bright idea. He called me in and told me that since I was a music major, I was hereby directed to form a 'jug band'. Then he got all the guys together and told them what was about to happen. He expected 'C' Flight to not only be the best in the air, but also Number One at the O-Club.

I went about collecting bottles of all shapes and sizes over the next few days, all the while trying to figure out how I was going to get these guys, who only knew music



1/1.t James McCain, Williams AFB '56-N' (credit - James McCain)

by what came out of a juke box, to know when and which 'jug' to blow. Lt. Giles Desmond was the only exception as he played a pretty nice piano.

Our apartment became filled with bottles which I fine-tuned by filling them partially with water and marking the water line so they could be refilled prior to a practice session or 'performance'. I eventually came up with a 3x5 card system, and an 'arrangement' with some oom-pa-pa type accompaniment to go along with a melody played on the kazoo.

We met at Capt. Miller's home for our first rehearsal. It was a riot! The sound made by blowing over the top of the bottles in harmony, has to be one of the silliest sounds ever to fall on the ear of man or beast. We would play a few bars and all fall on the floor laughing. Just when we got going pretty good, we added the kazoo melody and all fell on the floor again. I don't know how one can describe the sound. But the 'music' from the bottles was a bit like hearing a steam calliope at half steam.

Members of the 330th FIS ground support crew also enjoyed the 'festivities' at Yuma. (credit - 330th FIS Assn.)





1/1.t James McCain, his wife Glenita, and son Gerald, at Stewart AFB, NY in 1958. (credit - James McCain)



A 330th FIS F-86D over Cape Cod in 1957. The 330th FIS was based at Stewart AFB, New York, from November 1952 to July 1959. (credit - Paul Andrews)

After a few rehearsals, we finally made our 'debut' at the O-Club - and got rave reviews! I added two racks of eight Coke bottles, which allowed two of our more adept pilots to play "Chop Sticks". Of course, that required a Chinese gong, so we took a steel shelf out of personal equipment that, when suspended on a small rope, rendered quite a good 'gong' imitation when struck properly with a commode brush. Add to this my dignified conducting using a "plumber's helper". We

were a group you could not soon forget, even if you wanted to!

The one regret of my short military career is that I have no pictures of the 'C Flight jug Band.' There is no doubt in my mind that it can safely be said that there were some experiences and accomplishments of 'C Flight' that will never be duplicated in the annals of military history.

An F-86D taxis away from its parking spot at the Interceptor Weapons School at Tyndall AFB in the late 1950s. (Can any member contact the SabreJet Classics Editor about the Interceptor Weapons School - i.e. what it was? How long did it exist? How long did the F-86D serve there?) Does any one have other photos of F-86D/Ls assigned to the IWS? (credit - via David Menard)

WANTED - CONTACT WITH FORMER MEMBERS OF THE 3555TH FTW/CCTW AT PERRIN AFB, TX DURING THE 1950S, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH TIME IN THE F-86D/L CONTACT THE PERRIN FIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO BOX 2152, SHERMAN, TX 75091-2152, OR E-MAIL <PERRINFIELD@TEXOMA.NET>

WHO IS IT? Can any member identify the unit this F-86D was assigned to, and the colors of the fuselage stripes. The name under the canopy looks like "Pilot - Lt. Earl Sheppard". (credit - Larry Davis Collection)





Colonel Thomas B. Whitehouse, commander of the 3558th FTS at Perrin AFB, TX, accepts the Second Place trophy at the 1955 WorldWide Rocket Meet. (1-r) Capt. Bill Turner, Capt. Don Jabusch, Col. Whitehouse, 1/Lt. Art Dennis, unknown, and Capt. Gus Sonderman. (credit - Don Jabusch)

SABRE D TALES

(Or How The Big One Got Away)

by Don Jabusch

Most of the stories we are prone to tell involve flying the Sabre day fighter, the A, E, F, or H. There are some of us who, although we may have been less than enthusiastic with the prospect, flew the F-86D with some sort of skill and perhaps even a bit of pleasure

I recall one day going in to McGee-Tyson with two eager young pilots for a weekend of fun. As we approached the field I asked the tower if we might do a pitchup type of pattern and we were promptly granted permission. We descended on the initial approach to about 100-200 feet, then, at the threshold of the runway, did a fan break up to the downwind and came in for our landing. Although my two wingmen had never done this sort of thing before (and neither had I!), their spacing turned out pretty well. As we were rolling out after touchdown the tower came through with "I haven't seen anything like that since World War 2!" It made me feel good that it was close enough that the guy could at least recognize what we were up to.

I was an aviation cadet from Class 50-B, and was assigned to Selfridge AFB upon graduation. Ten of my class went there, with seven going to the 61st Squadron, and the others going to the 62d and 63rd Squadrons. Doug Stewart was given the job of ascertaining that we could indeed fly jet fighters. We were not without some skill and I don't believe we crashed any airplanes. But it

was still a chore for 1/Lt. Stewart to make sure we did whatever the group thought was necessary to go on to squadron operations. For us in the 61st, it meant continuing to fly the F-80A Shooting Star as our squadron had yet to receive any Sabres. So we flew red-tailed rehabs from Alaska (ex-4th FG birds), and were happy to do that. We even took a few over to O'Hare, Orchard Park AFB then, to stand alert. We were to repulse any air attack that might be precipitated by the onset of the Korean War, which started around that time.

From Selfridge I went to Korea. And from Korea I was assigned to Nellis in mid-1952. There were two Training Command F-86D training locations for most of the life of the D - Tyndall AFB, Florida, and Perrin AFB, Texas. I soon found myself in the D program at Tyndall. At the time, engine problems with the D made each flight something of a challenge, or at least an adventure. However, I don't recall ever having a serious problem flying the D. I do recall vividly my first close up look at the D and thinking, "My gracious, that's a big machine!" I hope you realize I cleaned up that quote so it was printable.

When the D school was started at Perrin in early 1953, I went there to be an Instructor Pilot. (You may notice that I moved around a lot. It seems I couldn't hold a job!) By 1955, we (the gang at Perrin) had a rocketry team of

which I was a member. And we had outscored the team from Tyndall, which resulted in our representing Air Training Command at the WorldWide Air Force Rocketry Meet at Yuma.

The radar systems in our airplanes were all 'peaked up', and off we went to see if we could repeat our Tyndall win. As the meet went along, we got our share of hits on the rag (target sleeve), so that by the last day of the competition we were in second place, and only 600 points behind the leaders with one mission left to go - MINE!

I had been called off my last pass on a previous mission so I still had one chance to get us that needed 601 points. Those of you who participated in any of the rocketry meets may remember at you took off with a T-33 chase, and you raised the 'hood' shortly after takeoff, flying the gauges for the rest of the flight. I was flying the COs plane (Colonel Thomas Whitehouse), as it was deemed to have the best radar at that point in the game, being able to get 'Contact' and 'Lock-On' at a reasonable distance.

Steering seemed to be normal during the intercept. But when I called at the 20 seconds point the chase pilot delayed several seconds before giving me the "Clear!" signal. This bothered me a bit, but at least I was cleared to fire so I pressed on and waited until the fire control system was ready to fire the rockets.

It did in due time, and shortly thereafter the T-33 chase pilot called out, "He knocked the target off!" Since you scored a hit if one of your rockets hit the tow cable, I had gotten us the needed points and we were crowned the champs. Since the team we were trying to beat was a bunch of weenies flying F-94Cs, that made it all the better. I was sorely tempted to do a roll after hearing the chase pilot's excited call, but I was afraid he'd say I hadn't been 'under the hood'. So I gave up on that and headed for home.

SABRE. REUNIONS

18th Fighter Wing Assn.
April 13-16, 2000 in San Antonio, TX.
Contact 18th Fighter Wing Assn., 6713
—113th PI SE, Bellvue, WA 98006-6431

Pilot Class 53-A
April 5-9th, 2000 in San Antonio, TX.
Contact Ed Fox, 1620 Peach Leaf St.,
Houston, TX 77039,
e-mail <Reunion53A@aol.com>

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13TH REUNION, 1b-20 APRIL
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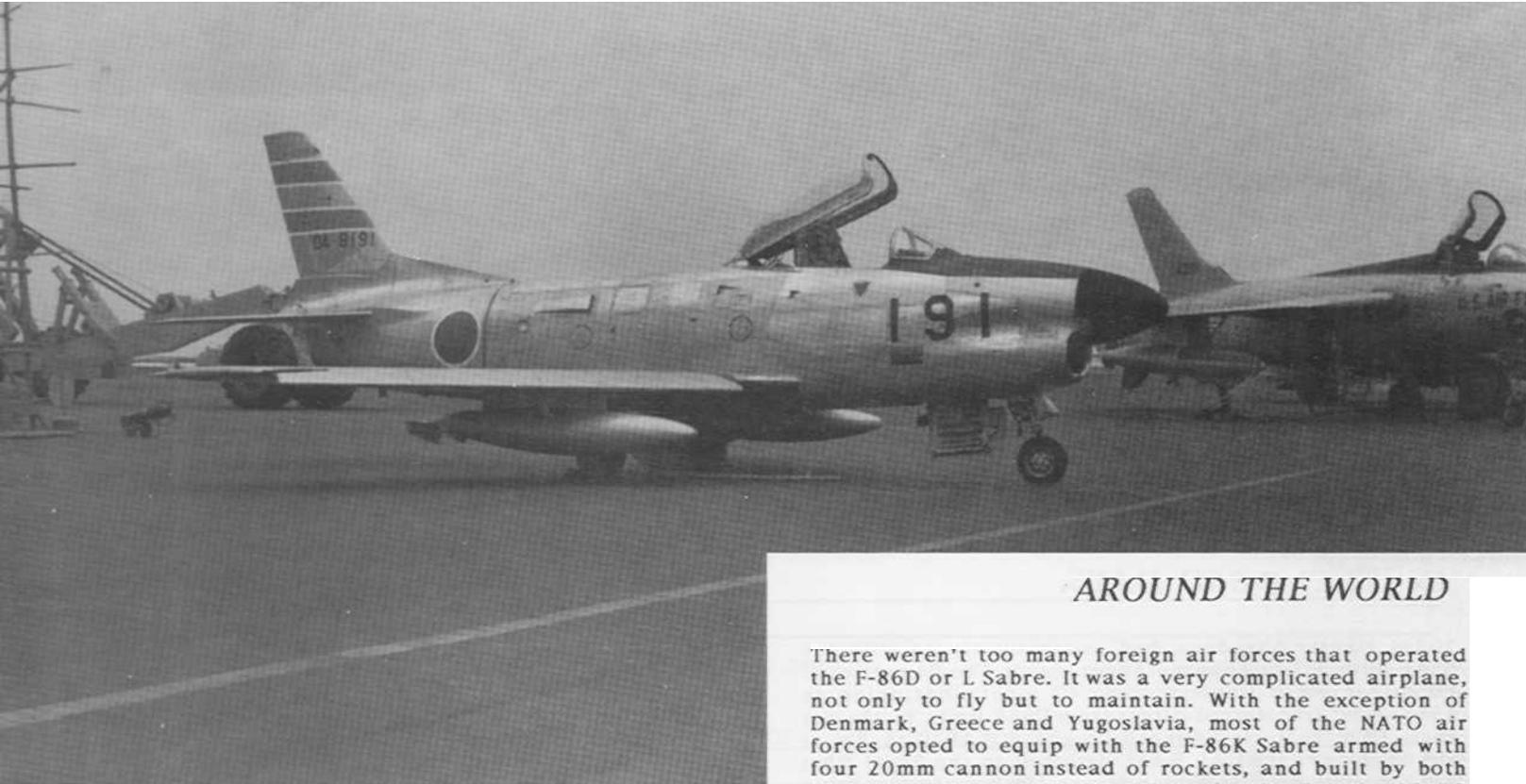
An F-861. assigned to the 3555th Flying Training Wing at Perrin AFB, TX in 1959. Perrin AFB was the primary advanced training base for the F-86D and 1. in the late 1950s, training both air and ground crews on the Dog Sabre. Note the Day-Glo painted areas on the nose and tail, called for when several air-to-air accidents occurred in late 1957-58. (credit - Stephen Miller)

Back on the ground, the team met me at the airplane with a fifth of scotch and much fanfare. However that was soon dampened by the chase pilot and a judge coming to look at my airplane. The chase pilot pointed up at the vertical tail of my Sabre. Lo and behold, there was a tear in the leading edge of the vertical stabilizer. According to the chase guy, I had clipped the tow cable with my airplane rather than shooting it off. With that obvious rip in the vertical tail, I couldn't very well argue about it. We got second place, which was pretty impressive. But it was a pretty glum bunch of jocks that returned to Perrin.

We got a rousing welcome from the base when we arrived. But it sure would've been nicer to have brought the big one home.

WANTED - Old F-86 squadron Christmas cards for display in SabreJet Classics. Contact LARRY DAVIS, Editor, *SabreJet Classics*, 4 713 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709 or e-mail <sabreclsx@aol.com>

WANTED- Photos and information on ADC, USAFE, FEAF, and ANG operations with the F-86D/L, especially rocket training deployments to Yuma and Wheelus. Contact LARRY DAVIS, Editor, *SabreJet Classics*, 4713 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709, or e-mail <sabreclsx@aol.com>



AROUND THE WORLD

There weren't too many foreign air forces that operated the F-86D or L Sabre. It was a very complicated airplane, not only to fly but to maintain. With the exception of Denmark, Greece and Yugoslavia, most of the NATO air forces opted to equip with the F-86K Sabre armed with four 20mm cannon instead of rockets, and built by both North American Aviation and Fiat of Italy. But the SEATO Pact nations had several air forces equipped with F-86Ds or F-86Ls. These included Japan, South Korea, Nationalist China, Philippines, and Thailand. (upper left) The Japanese Air Self Defense Force had four squadrons of F-86D aircraft beginning in 1958. This aircraft, with the





IN (THE) F-86D DAYS

103rd Fighter Squadron, had originally served with the USAF 40th FIS at Yokota. (upper right) The Republic Of Korea Air Force received some 40 F-86Ds beginning in 1958, most transferred direct from USAF units in the Far East. This '86D was assigned to the ROKAF 10th FW at Suwon. (lower left) An F-86L assigned to the Royal Thai Air Force takes off from Don Muang Air Base in November 1966. Thailand was the only non-USAF user of the F-86L. (lower right) In 1958, the Philippine Air Force received the first of 20 F-86D aircraft that were transferred from USAF inventories in the Far East. This F-86D served with the 6th FW at Basa Airfield. (credits - David Menard, Stephen Miller, USAF, and Anido Collection)



CHRISTMAS GREETING

by John Brown

It was near Christmas of 1958 and the weather had closed down the flying operations of the 440th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Erding AB, Germany. If the weather was at 300 feet, with a half mile visibility, the 440th FIS would usually have two flights of two F-86Ds flying GCA patterns to meet the squadrons required instrument flying time. At times we would use Marseille, France, or Aviano, Italy as alternates, even though both were at the extreme end of the Sabre Dog's range.

On this day the flight crews who were not sitting ready alert were receiving the standard training briefings: operations, intelligence, regulations, and other boring material. The ground crews were busy performing whatever necessary maintenance there was.

About 10 o'clock in the morning, a flight of jets flew very low and fast over socked in Erding AB. All the pilots ran outside to see what was going on. Who was it? And what were they doing up in this kind of weather?

As we looked up toward the fleeing jets, a bunch of cards were floating down all over the base. I picked one up and it read:

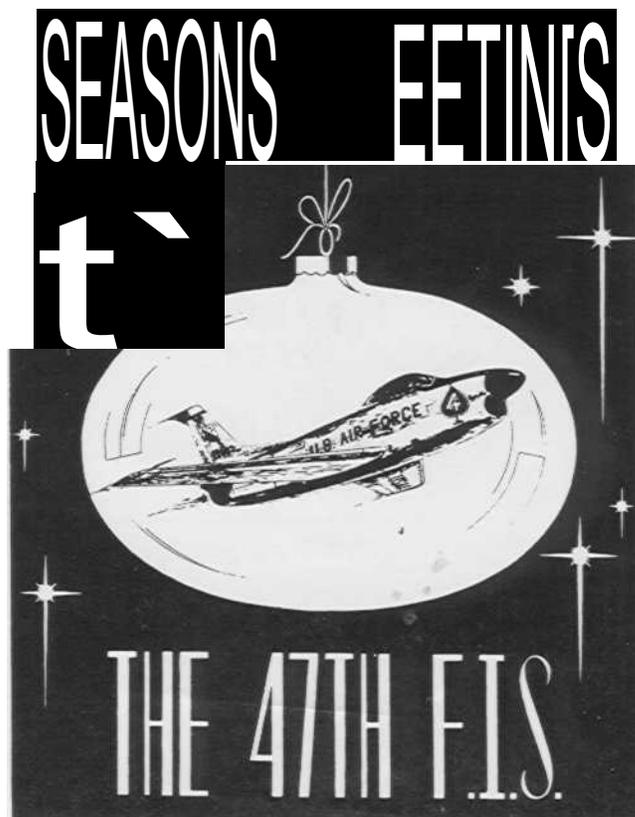
"The RCAF 440th Fighter Squadron wishes the US Air Force 440th FIS a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

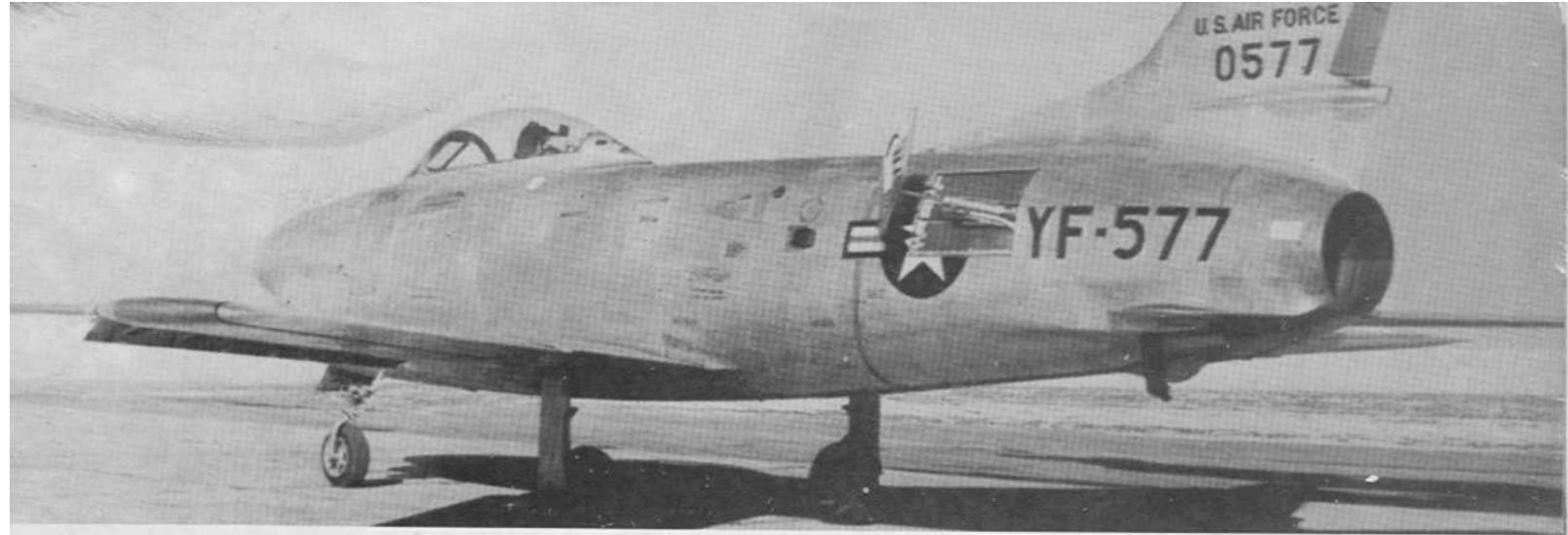
Our ground crews said that a flight of four RCAF F-86s flew over the base, and opened their speed brakes. The cards had been packed into the speed brake bays and came floating down. The guys gathered them all up (FOD you know!), and went back to the normal routine.

Our squadron Operations Officer, Major Dave Robb, called the Erding Base Ops and asked what flight plan the Canadians had filed to get here in such crappy weather. Remember, the RCAF flew Sabre day fighters, with a very limited all-weather capability. Base Ops checked and came back with the answer - they had filed a VFR flight plan from Zwiebrucken!



498" F. LS.





WHAT IS IT - This is a photo of the elusive "Sabre 45", the prototype of the F-100 Super Sabre series. Morgan 'Mac' Blair, one of the F-86 engineers at North American, sent the following information:

The "Sabre 45" was a North American Aviation in-house designation for various engineering design studies that were initiated in 1953, using various F-86 experimental developments that could be applied to an all-new airplane design.

Basically, using F-86D =60-577, the first YF-86D prototype, the following modifications were made, tested in the wind tunnel, then flight tested on -577:

The fuselage center wing box was swept 45°

A 7% thickness ratio wing had the aileron re-located to mid-wing to relieve wing roll tendencies

The horizontal stabilizer assembly was lowered from just below the fin/rudder assembly to the lower edge of the aft fuselage and used an all-flying stabilator assembly.

With the stabilator in the new position, the speed brakes were moved up further into the top side of the rat- fuselage.

By meeting the minimum requirements, this advanced F-86D model was submitted as a credible candidate for the Air Force 1954 Interceptor competition, which was won by the Convair F-102 Delta Dagger. However, the Air Force liked the improved "Sabre 45" well enough that a parallel contract was let for a day fighter that evolved into the F-100 Super Sabre.

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