



Sabre Jet Classics

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KOREA
ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



SabreJet Classics

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(front cover) A flight of 25th FIS F-86Fs over North Korea in 1953. The 25th FIS totaled 117.5 enemy aircraft during the Korean War. (credit - Keith Johnson)

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. The 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'. A third goal is to perpetuate an accurate, patriotic portrayal of our national, military, and Air Force history and heritage. If you are not a member, but meet the membership qualifications, you are invited to join. Application forms are available on our web site or from our Las Vegas address. Dues for one year are \$25, three years \$50, and a Life Membership is \$200. The SabreJet Classics is published solely for the private use of Association members.

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PLAN NOW
13th REUNION, 16-20 APRIL
2001 IN LAS VEGAS.

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THE PRESIDENT'S NOTEBOOK

As I write this chapter of the President's Notebook, we are well into the NFL playoffs. So paraphrasing one of the more popular broadcaster's of the games, "Are You Ready For Some Good Fun?" Of course I am referring to the upcoming XIIIth Reunion of the Sabre Pilots. It may seem a way off to you, but the hard working staff in Las Vegas has been working, negotiating, and preparing for it for oh so many months.

It is going to be as good as any we have ever held. It may even set a new mark for camaraderie and fun. The "Legends In Concert" event will be a special highlight. Jerry Johnson has done a fantastic job of getting a special deal on that. He doesn't want me to spill the beans about it, but he drives a hard bargain. And we F-86 pilots are going to be specially recognized. You don't want to miss it.

If you haven't already registered, why don't you put down this magazine, dig out the registration form found either in this issue or the Fall issue (8-3), fill it out and mail it in NOW? We'll try our best to accomodate late registrations, but those of you who have planned any group event know how much nicer it is to receive all the registrations

in a timely manner. The response to our early registration call was pretty good. But we know there are a lot more waiting to come in. Please help Jerry and our staff and get them in as soon as possible. And while you're at it, why don't you contact some of your old buddies and remind them? If they're not members, encourage them to join and attend the reunion. Several groups use the F-86 reunion to get together with other old squadron mates - always a good idea.

The Membership Meeting will be on Thursday, 19 April, at 1030 hours. We will give you a report on the status of your organization, entertain any new business as appropriate, and elect a new slate of officers. You will recall at the last reunion that the Board recommended a change in the normal way that we administered the Association. Recognizing that there was much talent throughout our membership, and in an attempt to broaden the base of leadership whilst relieving some of the burden on the people in Las Vegas, it was decided to select a President who did not live in Las Vegas. I was greatly honored to be the person chosen for that position.

Now after two years we have found that the system works fine, but it just makes more sense to have the President live in the same area

where the rest of the staff is, where all the records and files are kept, and where the mail arrives daily. Those of us who served in Southeast Asia know that the people who run the d—n war should be in the area, not thousands of miles away. Well this 'war' is being run in Las Vegas. So the Board of Directors has wisely recommended that we return to our former practice of selecting a President from the Las Vegas area.

This will be my last President's Notebook. It has been a high honor indeed to serve you as your President. One of the more gratifying experiences has been to find that nearly all the correspondence/communications that I have received has been both positive and supportive. It just verifies to me that those of us that flew the greatest airplane ever built are the greatest people in the world. Finally, let me thank the great people in Las Vegas for all that they do for our association. Without them this organization could not exist. I'll see you at the reunion. And please make a special effort to thank all those people who make the organization run.

Let The Games Begin!

Glenn L. Nordin
President

FOLDED WINGS

Martin J. Bambrick, September 29th, 2000

James D. Burkett, December 9th, 2000

Richard L. Davis, May 9th, 2000

Ralph S. Heard, RCAF, October 8th, 2000

William T. Huen, July 23rd, 2000

George M. Lake, August 4th, 1999

Joseph D Myers, August 21, 2000

Frank W. Sullivan, 2000

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.

news from the Chairman

If you haven't yet made your reservations for the 13th reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association, 16-20 April 2001, you're running out of time. You might miss another great party. Your reunion committee has arranged an affordable package that you can tailor to your specific wants.

If you haven't been to Vegas since the last reunion, believe it or not, it's still growing. Three new Strip hotels have opened - the Paris, which has the Eiffel Tower; The Venetian, with canals and gondolas; and the all-new Aladdin, which is built around the Theater of Performing Arts. All of these are within walking distance of our reunion headquarters at the Monte Carlo. And all have good restaurants, a lot of nice shops, and their own distinctive motifs. There are also several new golf courses, and Nellis now has 36 holes. So bring your clubs and sign up for our tournament.

Registration begins on Monday this year because April 15th is Easter Sunday. I hope this doesn't cramp your schedule. It was difficult to pick another date due to weather considerations, other conventions, and room rates. Flights coming into Las Vegas on the Monday after Easter, and leaving the following Friday, should be readily available.

The registration fee includes a lot of goodies - plus Brunch on Tuesday and Thursday. The Buffet and Banquet will be first rate. We are doing something new on Wednesday night. The producer of the "Legends In Concert" show at the Imperial Palace, will have a special performance dedicated to the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association. The price is right and it should be a lot of fun. Be sure and sign up.

Thursday features a brunch and the banquet. Following our

banquet dinner, we'll get an Air Force update by the Nellis Center Commander. Then we'll have the lottery drawing for about \$1200 in prizes. Also, Ardith Freebairn will have a lot of prizes for the ladies Treasure Hunt Raffle.

Before I close, I'd like to discuss another subject that is close to my metal valve heart. In my humble opinion, our SabreJet Classics magazine is the glue that holds our organization together. We all like to read the stories in the magazine and reminisce about when we were young, dumb, horny, and flying that sweet little fighter. Larry Davis, Lon Walter, Dave Menard, and John Henderson do an excellent job of editing and publishing three issues a year. These guys can check the facts and edit your stories. But they can't write your experiences. Every one of us has an interesting tale that would make good reading. So get out your old photo album or box of slides, pen, paper, and an adult beverage or two, and start writing. Remember those pre-dawn, hung over scrambles to intercept a Canberra flying at 50,000 feet? Or during your after landing check, you discover that your seat pins were already installed! How about the gun camera film with the rag and tow ship both in the same firing frame! We're looking forward to reading your stories - soon - in SabreJet Classics.

Finally, if you can't find your registration form, or can't download it from <SABRE-PILOTS.ORG>, call me at (702)458-7863, and I'll mail you one.

See you in Vegas!!!

Jerry Johnson

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**Next Issue;
Operation
STOVEPIPE,
13th Reunion,
F-86Ds
with the
25th FIS, More!**

Letters to the editor

Several stories in the past few issues have generated a lot of response from the readers. Much of this has centered around the "Three Sabres Down" article, which, it was thought, was the worst Sabre accident in history. That proved to be incorrect as told by Reg Adams in the last issue. The following notes have been received regarding large numbers of Sabres involved in accidents.

The reason I am writing is to comment on Lon Walter's article, "Three Sabres Down", in which he states he knows of no other incident in which more than three Sabres were lost in a single accident.

In June 1953, our squadron, the 45th FIS, left Suffolk County AFB for Sidi Slimane, arriving about 30 days later. Immediately behind us was the 357th FIS, arriving at Nouasseur AB, French Morocco, a few days after the 45th.

Sometime in 1954 (I don't recall the exact date), the 357th had a flight of four up on a night training mission in a close formation. Evidently the flight leader misread his altimeter and all four went practically straight in near the base. I don't know what the accident investigation board ruled. Sadly, the 357th had lost two others in a mid-air collision during their letdown into Blue West 1.

Arch K. 'Jake' Jacobson

I was with the 94th FIS at George AFB in November 1954. We were the first squadron to fly the F-86D operationally.

We were involved in an operational alert out over the Pacific on the night of the 23rd. Instead of returning to George, we were vectored to Oxnard AFB for refueling. It gave their crews experience in servicing the F-86D since their squadron was equipped with F-94s. After refueling and having some food, we were directed to return to Home Plate.

Since Air Force had a requirement for Night Formation flying, the three of us briefed on flying back in formation to fulfill that requirement. We didn't take off in formation, but planned a join-up in our swing around east toward Victorville. I was leading the formation. The #2 man slid into formation OK, but #3 had problems on join-up.

#3s problems were probably because after we departed from Oxnard, there were no lights on the ground, and no moonlight at all. And when we got out over the desert, it was 'blacker than the inside of a cow'. On the radio we agreed that it wasn't a problem. We'd proceed to George with #2 in formation, and #3 following along. As we approached Victorville, #3 made his move to slide into position in echelon. That's when all hell broke loose.

As #3 slid into position, he wondered why

#2 suddenly made a hard turn INTO HIM! (Actually we were descending straight ahead. But in #3s head he thought the formation he was joining was in a 300 bank away from him.) #3 slid into the radar dome and flamed out #2. Then his left wing broke off my right wing, which in turn took off part of my tail and saved my life. I instantly blew the canopy and started squeezing the trigger to eject. But the seat wouldn't go. And I knew we were only at about 2500 feet.

The impact that broke off my wing had knocked the nose up in the air, slightly nose-high. So as the good wing flew around the aircraft, I was first positive G force, then negative G force. After several trigger pulls and still NO EJECT, I slapped open my seatbelt. As the negative G force came, I threw my arms up in front of me as was thrown out of the airplane. I jerked the D-ring. I must have been going about 250 knots because it really slammed me into the harness.

#2's engine was flamed out and maybe he was injured as he also did not use his seat. #2 was killed because when he tried to go over the side of the airplane and the tail clipped his head. #3 threw up in his mask on impact, and in his confusion, blew off the canopy and THOUGHT he had ejected, so he opened his chute. He landed near where I had landed. They found that his seat had also not fired out. All three seats didn't work, and the two of us that got out did so because our air frames were all broken up.

Karl Fechner

Re: "The First and the Last" - The 81st Wing Deployment to the UK in 1951

I was based at RAF West Raynham, home of the RAF Central Fighter Establishment, then the center of RAF fighter development and tactics. I had been assigned to the 1st Fighter Group when we traded our F-80Bs for brand new F-86A Sabres. I was privileged to check out in one of the first four F-86As to arrive at March AFB, on 17 February 1949, flying #47-627

In 1950, the USAF provided the RAF with two F-86As for tactical evaluation. The two loaned F-86As were shipped to Burtonwood and made ready for flight. I had the good fortune to deliver one of the two Sabres to West Raynham. That date was 14 October 1950, and the tail number was 48-279. The second aircraft was collected by, if my memory holds up, Capt. V. Henderson, a USAF pilot on exchange with the RAF, and also an ex-1st FG pilot. His airplane was 48-296.

On arrival at West Raynham, I was given permission to demonstrate to best effect, the F-86 over the field. Most of the base personnel came out on the ramp to watch and look over the Sabre after engine shutdown. The tactical trials took several months to complete and I checked out several RAF pilots at the same time. My part in the trial was minimal for the somewhat

peculiar rationale that as an experienced F-86 pilot, "I could be prejudiced!"

On departure, the two Sabres went to either Boscombe Down or Farnborough for further evaluation. The 81st Fighter Group arrived in August 1951, some ten months after the first F-86 arrived at RAF West Raynham. This fact would relate Col. Garrigan somewhat down the list as the 'first Sabre to land in the UK'.

AVM William Harbison

This last letter is in regards to the "What Is It?" Sabre appearing on the back cover of vol 8-3. The F-86F aircraft had what appeared to be rocket pods in place of the normal .50 caliber machine guns.

I can't give you any information on the test program or the results. I do know that there were two of these aircraft built. I believe it was 1956 that Ken Coffee and I went to North American in LA and picked up the two aircraft. We were assigned to the 6522nd Test Squadron at L.G. Hanscom Field, Bedford, MA.

On the return flight to Hanscom, we had to stop at Hamilton AFB to get my radio compass repaired. That's when we found out about the additional length of the airplanes. They were 10 or 11 inches longer than a normal F-86F. When the mechanics took off the access panel to get at the radio compass equipment, it wasn't located in the right position. Changing out the equipment was a real bear. But the airplane cruised a bit faster because of the extra length.

The rocket pods were completely retractable, and could be extended in flight using a switch on the armament panel. In a rat race, when you wanted to slow down, you would usually pop the speed brakes. Or you could pop the pods out also. This really slowed the bird down. The armament was a special 1.5" air to air rocket and not the 2.75s referred to. Looking closely, it looks as though each side pod holds about 53 rockets.

We used the aircraft as a normal air frame for whatever tests and proficiency flying we did at the time. I don't recall how long we kept the birds at Hanscom or what their final disposition was.

Arthur McNay





Sabres Over Korea. A pair of bomb-laden F-86Fs from No. 2 Squadron, SAAF, lift off from K-55 in 1953. No. 2 Squadron converted from F-51Ds to F-86F fighter bombers with the 18th FBG in January 1953.

KOREA THE FORGOTTEN WAR NO MORE

Korea, the Land of the Morning Calm. But in the early morning hours of a sunny Sunday in June 1950, that calm was shattered by the crash of artillery shells and the clanking of tank tracks. All-out war had come to the slender peninsula jutting out from the Asian mainland just east of China. Three years and one month later, the fighting would cease. But in those three years of war, as many US personnel would be killed in action as in the eleven years of war in Vietnam.

Korea has long been known as the most conquered nation on earth. From the Mongols of Kublai Khan to the Japanese at the turn of the century, Korea has almost never been Korean. The reason was simple, the Korean people were a peace-loving nation with no ambitions other than to be left alone, which they rarely were.

After the end of World War Two, Korea was 'temporarily' occupied by Allied forces - Soviet forces in the north, US in the south. Geographically and politically, Korea was divided along the 38th Parallel. The north was a rugged mountainous terrain, with heavy industry. The south, with its flat lands and rolling hills, was primarily agricultural in nature. The north, being occupied by Soviet forces after the war, had a totalitarian, communist government. While the south, being under the influence of American forces, was close to a democratic nation.

The Cold War had already begun, and confrontations between the Communists and the US had already made headlines. But cooler heads always prevailed and the world had averted war more than once since the end of World War Two. Both sides wanted to unify Korea, but under far different types of government. The Communists wanted to extend the Bamboo Curtain to the tip of the Korean peninsula; while the United Nations wanted to give Korea

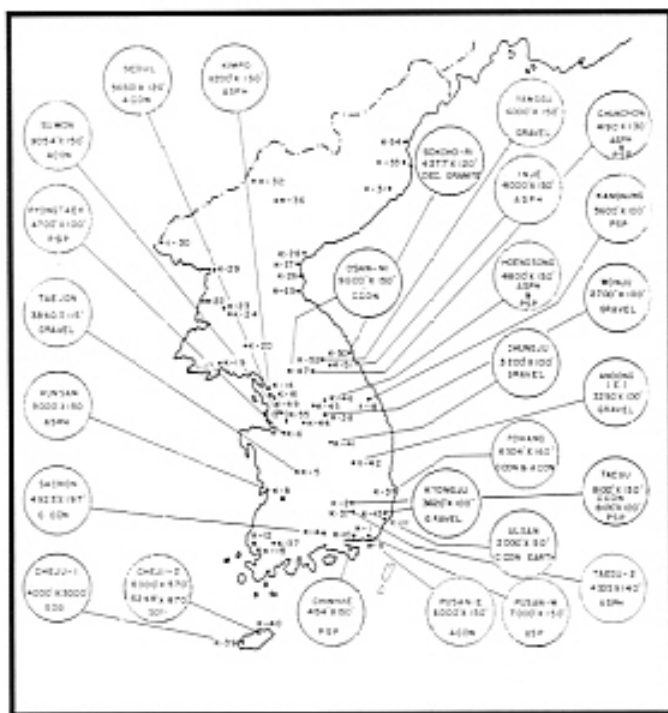
back to its people under its own government.

On 25 June 1950, the Cold War went 'hot' when North Korean forces equipped with Soviet tanks and trained by Soviet military men, sought to reunify Korea by force. The South Korean military, which was little more than a 'police force' equipped with small arms, was quickly overrun, and fell back in full retreat down the peninsula. The only American forces in Korea were advisors to the Korean military.

President Truman quickly organized an airlift to remove all American personnel not vital to the military mission. He ordered the Far East Air Forces into action, initially to cover the evacuation ports at Kimpo AB and Inchon Harbor, then went to the United Nations to seek help with countering the attack. For some reason, the Soviets did not attend the Security Council meeting on Korea and President Truman's plea for UN assistance was unanimously accepted. A full UN military response was ordered.

A trio of 19th BG B-29 Superfortresses over the snow covered mountains of North Korea during the winter of 1950. B-29s from six bomb groups were used for strategic attack and long range recon missions.





Map of Korea and UN air bases

But the nearest forces were the US occupational forces in Japan, which had been significantly reduced in the five years since the end of World War Two. Congress had been cutting back all the military budgets, leaving little money for the training and re-arming of stateside troops, much less those on occupational duty in Japan. Because of that, the first US forces were rushed to Korea piecemeal, with very little equipment, and nothing to stop the North Korean juggernaut led by Soviet T-34 tanks.

Little by little, and day after day, the small American forces were being chopped up along the roads in South Korea. American air power from land bases in Japan and aircraft carriers in the Yellow Sea, swept the skies clear over the entire peninsula. But the American ground forces kept falling back until they were surrounded in a small corner of southeastern Korea. But it was here that the Americans and South Koreans held their ground.

With the UN forces holding on by their teeth inside the Pusan Perimeter, General Douglas MacArthur called for a brilliant, but very bold and dangerous, invasion at Inchon. Within days, the South Korean capital of Seoul was recaptured and North Korean forces that had been on the offensive for three months, were in full retreat. It was now time to unify Korea under the UN flag.

The invasion forces joined with the forces that had broken out of the Pusan Perimeter, and crossed the 38th Parallel heading north. Their destination was the Yalu River border between Korea and Manchuria. The North Korean forces fell back in full retreat. By late October 1950, the North Korean capital of Pyongyang was in UN control. Some US Army troops were already looking across the Yalu at

Manpojin. Then suddenly, everything went south.

Throughout early October, UN troops had been encountering some strange soldiers in the march north. They were dressed differently, were armed differently, and spoke a strange dialect. These soldiers were Chinese, Red Chinese. Red China had been warning that they would enter the war in Korea if UN forces attempted to occupy North Korea. The threat became a reality when bugles suddenly broke the calm of the cold Korean night, and hundreds of thousands of Red Chinese troops swarmed out of the hills and attacked the unsuspecting UN forces.

UN ground forces were quickly overwhelmed. Many went into a retreat that was chaotic to say the least. The First Marine Division was completely surrounded along the west side of the Chosin Reservoir, and had to fight their way to freedom some 40 miles away. But fight they did, bringing all their wounded and dead out with them. But the Red Chinese were advancing all along the front, retaking Pyongyang and Seoul before finally being slowed and stopped south of Suwon.

The air war had also taken a sudden change in course. 5th AF F-80 Shooting Stars had kept the skies clear of North Korean fighters and bombers from the first days of the war. In early November 1950, several 5th AF flights had encountered a new swept wing jet fighter in the skies over northwest Korea - the MiG-15. The MiG-15 was some 75 mph faster than anything in the theater, and quickly took control of the skies. For the first time since early World War Two, US forces did not have air superiority over a battlefield!

But that would change in mid-December 1950 with the introduction of the F-86 Sabre into the conflict. With the Migs controlling the skies, the Defense Department ordered the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing

(l-r) 2Lt. Lyn Clark, Capt. Robert Scott, Capt. Bart Thomas, and Maj. J.B. Fishburn walk away from their 49th FBG F-80Cs at K-2 in May 1951. The Shooting Star was the primary fighter bomber flown during the early stages of the Korean War.





A 98th BG armorer is assisted by a Japanese civilian in preparing 1000# bombs for loading aboard "All Shook" at Yokota AB, Japan in September 1952. The MiG threat forced FEAF to abandon daylight bombing in October 1951.



An F-51D from the 39th FBS splashes through the puddles at K-47 in September 1951. Rocket and bomb carrying Mustangs flew both ground support and ResCAP missions during the war.



An F-80C from the 9th FBS carries a pair of 1000# bombs as the pilot taxis for takeoff at K-2. The F-80Cs flew all the interdiction missions until replaced by F-84 Thunderjet and F-86F fighter bombers.

ROKAF F-51D Mustangs over the mountains near the Main Line of Resistance in 1951. Trained by Col. Dean Hess' BOUT ONE pilots, the ROKAF Mustangs flew ground support of UN troops engaged in combat along the MLR.



to take their F-86A Sabres to Korea and regain air superiority. The first mission was flown on the morning of 17 December 1950. No MiGs were encountered. But on the second mission, LtCol Bruce Hinton shot down the first MiG-15 that would fall to the guns of 5th AF Sabres in Korea. Air superiority would never again be lost over Korea, although the Migs did make it interesting for the next 2 1/2 years.

During that time, the ground war would move up and down central Korea along the 38th Parallel. By 1952, the ground war had stabilized into a conflict that looked more like World War One than a modern, mechanized conflict such as had been seen just seven years earlier in Europe and the Pacific. Both sides settled into trenches and bunkers dug deep into the hillsides, exchanging artillery fire over the next year and a half. Each side would attempt to take a more advantageous hill across the valley. If successful, the other side would immediately launch a counter-attack to retake what they had just lost. As in World War One, this type of warfare was very costly in terms of lives lost. Even as the peace talks were ongoing at Kaesong and Panmunjom, the generals kept ordering the hills to be taken and retaken to have another bargaining 'chit' at the peace table.

In the skies, it was a slaughter. Even with the advantage of being able to attack when they wanted from a safe haven across the Yalu, and being able to withdraw to safety whenever they wanted back across the Yalu, the Mig forces were decimated. It is now admitted by the Russians that Soviet Air Force pilots were flying against the Americans beginning in November 1950. Initially, the Soviet pilots were thrown into the fray to wrestle air superiority away from 5th AF. When they couldn't accomplish this on their own, they began training both Red Chinese and North Korean pilots how to fly and fight with the Mig-15.



11t. Casey Cameron loads the clip into his .45 automatic prior to another Mosquito mission from K-47 in 1953. The LT-6G Texan was a purpose-built aircraft for the Mosquito mission in Korea.

By early 1953, they had trained enough Chinese and North Korean pilots that many of the Soviet pilots were withdrawn. But not before losing a great number of experienced pilots. By their own admission, the Soviets lost four Soviet-piloted MiGs to every F-86 shot down. Their archives also note that Chinese MiGs went down at a ratio of almost 8-1. No figures have come out regarding North Korean MiG losses.

It has always been a thorn in the side of many non-American historians that the 5th AF pilots were credited with a 10-1 kill ratio over the Mig-15s in Korea. But the real number is actually closer to the legendary '14-1' ratio reported by 5th AF communique on 29 July 1953. That total was based on 820 MiGs going down, as opposed to a loss of only 58 F-86 aircraft in air to air combat. 5th AF revised that count in late 1953 to 792 MiGs shot down for a loss of 78 F-86 Sabres, revealing the 'official' ratio of 10-1. However, with Soviet archives material admissions of 4-1 in Soviet MiGs, and 8-1 in Chinese MiGs, the legendary 14-1 ratio seems closer to the truth. Does it really matter? 14-1, 10-1, even the revisionist historian claims of 7-1 and 4-1; it was still a slaughter.

But on the ground, the battles for the hills took a tremendous toll in lives. Few in the media note that in the three years and one month of the Korean War, 54,246 US personnel were killed in action. Over 100,000 South Korean and UN troops also were killed. Losses to the Red Chinese and North Korean armies are estimated to be over three million men. And that doesn't count a single civilian casualty, of which there were millions.

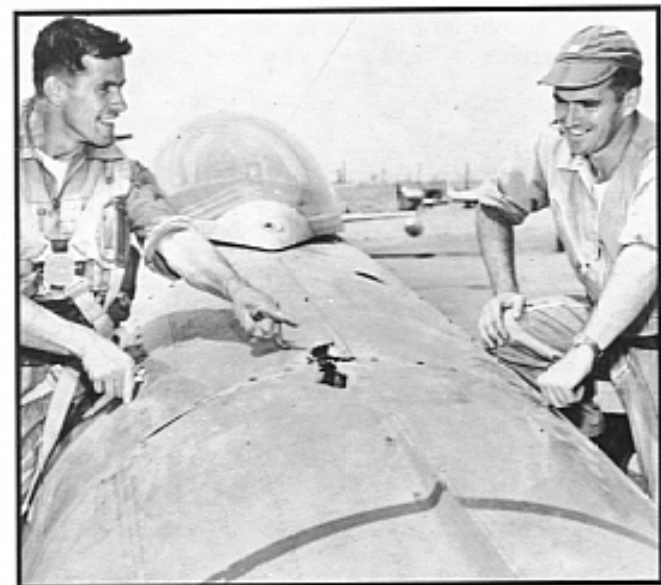


Air Force pilots from the Mosquito squadron were used as ground forward air controllers with these radio jeeps. The ground controller could contact either a Mosquito or one of the roving fighter bomber flights that were in the area.



The fighter bomber mission was quite hazardous even without the MiG menace. This F-84E from the 136th FBS, caught fire after an emergency landing at K-2.

"Mosquito bite!" Capt. Tony Katauski shows Capt. George Aiken where a MiG 23mm cannon shell struck his 15th TRS RF-80A in August 1952.





F9F-2 Panthers from VF-781 launch from USS Bon Homme Richard in November 1951. The primary Navy jet aircraft in Korea was the F9F-2 Panther, for both the interdiction role and ground support of UN troops in contact, and flying from land bases and the aircraft carriers that roamed up and down both Korean coasts.

And the result? Korea today is basically the same as it was in June 1950, roughly divided along the 38th Parallel, with a communist North and a democratic South. The trenches are still there and still filled with troops, including thousands of Americans. Each side takes turns probing the others defenses just to see if they can. Every US President

A flight of 39th FIS F-86Fs bank away toward the Yalu River and the MiGs that could be waiting there. As soon as the MiGs were sighted, the Sabre pilots would "Drop tanks!" and engage the enemy aircraft.



since Harry Truman has attempted to moderate a peace of some type for the Korean peninsula. All have failed. And on both sides of the barbed wire that criss-crosses the DMZ, men watch the other side through binoculars, with one finger on a trigger. Only today, that trigger is a nuclear one. Let us pray that no one gets an itch.

A 15th TRS pilot prepares to board his RF-80A at K-14 in 1951. The RF-80A was the main reconnaissance aircraft flown for any mission into North Korea even after the introduction of the RF-86 Sabre.



HOT PURSUIT

by Paul Kauttu

This is a story about killing MiGs on 'the other side of the river'. The motivation to cross the Yalu looking for a fight wasn't to keep the MiGs from "being there the next day". It was simply to put another "W" in the win column - a victory. Fighter pilots somehow are able to divest themselves of the horror of war, becoming totally immersed in achieving credibility through their skills with an airplane. There is no thought of taking an enemy pilot's life. If you shoot him down once, let him rise to challenge you again. Chances are you will win again. The exact same rationale is offered concerning any so-called threat of the MiGs being there the next day. Let them be there, the more the merrier. So some of the guys flew across the river in 'hot pursuit'. Maybe, and maybe not! Either way, they were playing out the role of a well trained, very aggressive fighter pilot. Even me.

There are two Chinese airfields on 'the other side' of the Yalu River. The airspace above them was, of course, off limits during the Korean War. In 'hot pursuit', many Sabres strayed across this line of demarcation. I was involved in one such incident. My first encounter with the MiGs was within a few miles of Sinuiju. They had just taken off, turned south across the Suiho Reservoir, punched off their tanks, and begun their climb to altitude. We hit them from out of the sun, catching them completely by surprise. My claim for a kill was downgraded because the film showed inconclusive results, and the other members of the flight were also unable to add confirmation. That was mission number one - almost across the river, but not quite. A long time later, in the same locale, another engagement took place.

7 September 1952, towards the end of my tour; I was leading Tiger Flight, Bill Powers was #3, the element leader. Two younger pilots were flying wing. We were in a fluid four formation at about 40,000 feet, swinging westward on what would have been our last look at Antung and Sinuiju before returning to K-13, Suwon By The Sea. My #4 had already called 'Bingo', signifying that his tanks had about 700 lbs left, enough to fly the return route of 250 miles and still have a couple hundred pounds left for the traffic pattern. Fully intending to RTB, I scanned the airfield across the Yalu one last time.

From the east, six MiG-15s flying in trail formation were approaching Antung at about 1500 feet. I called, "Tiger 2 & 4, head on back; Bill, follow me." We chopped the throttles to idle and rapidly descended toward the airfield. My tactics became evident as I watched the MiGs approach the pitch. They were of varied paint schemes, as though they had been on an operational test and evaluation of the different colors. The MiG leader was bright polished aluminum, #2 was camouflaged like a lizard, #3 was robin's egg blue. #4 and 5 were olive green, while #6 was a dark forest green.

MiG #6 seemed like a good choice. He not only was the easiest to keep in sight - dark green against the light brown hue of the rice fields - but he would be the last to pitch out. As an element, we closed within firing range just as #6 lowered his gear and began turning for final. I opened fire and continued to close to point



(l-r) Lts. Charles Gabriel and Paul Kauttu were assigned to the 16th FIS at K-13 during 1952.

blank range, with an overtake of probably a couple hundred knots. MiG #6 went out of control just as Bill called, "Break right!", and at the same instant I heard, then saw the 37mm cannon of another MiG pounding at my 6 o'clock! Pom! Pom! Pom! His range was no more than 30 feet. But somehow the guy missed me clean. I broke hard, narrowly missing the lizard (#2 MiG) as he touched down, then I flew but a scant few feet over the top of the silver leader.

Across the taxiway and down the ramp toward a revetment complex full of MiGs I roared, looking almost level into the eyes of a ground crewman who was riding a tug towing a MiG minus its aft section. "You OK, Bill?", I asked. "Roger that, 'cept low on fuel." "Me too. Let's get out of here." "Rog."

Bill and I had become separated during the excitement and had to proceed home singly. To have attempted a rendezvous in that hostile airspace was out of the question, not to mention the need to conserve every last drop of JP-4 for the landing. Bill put down at K-14 on fumes.

As I accelerated across the rice paddies on the west 16th FIS scoreboard at K-13. Author Kauttu's name appears in the 11th spot.

16th MiG CLAIMS	
1. BOSTON 1st CAPT	27. TOLSON 2nd CAPT
2. GARDNER 2nd CAPT	28. JAMES 3rd CAPT
3. HARRIS 1st CAPT	29. LINDSEY 1st CAPT
4. HULL 1st CAPT	30. JOHNSON 1st CAPT
5. DUFFY 1st CAPT	31. FORD 1st CAPT
6. BOSTON 1st CAPT	32. HAYES 1st CAPT
7. HARRIS 1st CAPT	33. RUTLAND 1st CAPT
8. SOMMERHORN 1st CAPT	34. WATTS 1st CAPT
9. WOODLEY 2nd CAPT	35. HOPKINS 1st CAPT
10. HARRIS 1st CAPT	36. LINDSEY 1st CAPT
11. KAUTTU 1st CAPT	37. PERKINS 1st CAPT
12. JONES 1st CAPT	38. LASTER 1st CAPT
13. WOODLEY 2nd CAPT	39. THOMAS 1st CAPT
14. TOLSON 2nd CAPT	40. CONNOR 1st CAPT
15. HARRIS 1st CAPT	41. WATTS 1st CAPT
16. JONES 1st CAPT	42. THOMAS 1st CAPT
17. HARRIS 1st CAPT	43. HULL 1st CAPT
18. LINDSEY 1st CAPT	44. SCHMIDT 1st CAPT
19. SOMMERHORN 1st CAPT	45. FINCH 1st CAPT
20. WOODLEY 2nd CAPT	46. BOSTON 1st CAPT
21. HARRIS 1st CAPT	47. HARRIS 1st CAPT
22. WOODLEY 2nd CAPT	48. STEWART 1st CAPT
23. WATTS 1st CAPT	49. WATTS 1st CAPT
24. WOODLEY 2nd CAPT	50. BOSTON 1st CAPT
25. HARRIS 1st CAPT	51. WATTS 1st CAPT
26. WOODLEY 2nd CAPT	52. WOODLEY 2nd CAPT



Lt. Paul Kauttu taxis to the active runway at K-13. He is flying his regularly assigned aircraft which bore the name of his wife "Gloria Beth". Kauttu scored a total of 2 1/2 victories in Korea.

side of Antung, heading for the sanctuary of the Yellow Sea, two MiGs rolled in from a perch position as though to initiate a pursuit curve. When they made their reversal, bringing them into lethal range, the MiG leader suddenly (and unexpectedly to me) broke off their attack. They chandelled back toward the MiG field, probably also low on fuel.

My fuel tank registered something over 200 pounds, maybe closer to 300. I was on the deck doing about 450 knots, and approaching the mud flats at the Yalu River estuary. A bailout over water seemed imminent, especially if I was attacked by more MiGs. My throttle was clobbered as I turned south along the coast, and "Gloria Beth" (the name of my F-86) clawed for altitude. No tanks, no ammo, not much gas left. Only a 150 pound jock with a parachute, helmet, .45 automatic and a hunting knife - hardly more than 'Gloria Beth's' gross weight EMPTY!

Cold air, a favorable wind, and a humming J47 took us to over 20,000 feet as we passed Cheju-Do. The fuel gauge registered empty. I stop-cocked the throttle,



Another member of the F-86 Pilots Association that flew with Paul Kauttu was Cecil Foster (16th FIS), who ended the war as an ace with 9 victories.

decelerated to 180 knots, and began a descent, hoping to glide across the DMZ, then eject into friendly hands. The clean and very light Sabre did more than that. She coasted to K-14 at 8,000 feet, more than enough to continue on to my home plate at K-13.

At 1000 feet and about a mile out, I airstarted the engine, which provided both warm air to clear the fogged up windscreen, and a solid 3000 psi to power the flight controls. Cleared by the tower for an emergency, straight in landing, I lowered the gear and flaps and touched down. On the roll-out, the engine began surging and I shut it down. Ground crews towed "Gloria Beth" and me back to the 16th Squadron revetment area.

The MiG kill was confirmed by sightings from other pilots who reported a crashed MiG just short of the east end of the Antung main runway. It was obvious to me, that I too would have bought the farm in the same spot had it not been for Bill's timely call to "Break right!". We therefore, shared the victory. I got the MiG, but Bill earned his share by saving my life.

The main street of Kimpo village in 1952.





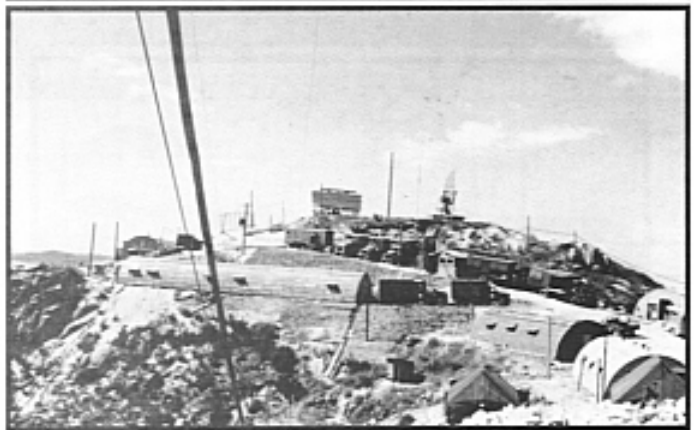
Korea (upper left) Rice paddies were everywhere in Korea, including these that were photographed near Seoul. (upper right) A destroyed North Korean T-34 tank sits outside the Suwon City gate following the Chinese retreat from the town in early 1951. (center top) 5th Air Force Headquarters was in Seoul in August 1951. (center middle) Papa-san and the honey wagon on the streets of Kimpo village in 1953. (lower right) Seoul 1951. (lower left) The destroyed remains of the Jo Hung Bank building in Seoul during August 1951.





APO-970, Kimpo AB (K-14) (upper left) The Kimpo Airport terminal building was destroyed many times over the course of the first year of conflict. (upper right) The Mess Officer at Suwon took the Life Magazine description of his food very hard. The 4th FIG moved from Kimpo to Suwon in February 1951, then back to Kimpo in August. (center left) Sunset over the "Witch's Tit" at K-14 in 1951. It was a known fact that "If you could see the 'Tit' in the morning, you were flying!" (bottom left) Enlisted mens tents at K-14 in 1952. (bottom) The 335th FIS alert shack at K-14 in 1952. (bottom right) Betty Hutton brought her troupe to K-14 in 1952 and delighted the troops. (Page 15, upper left) The main gate at Kimpo in 1953. (upper right) The 4th FIG scoreboard that was posted in front of Combat Operations in 1953. (center left) A 336th FIS pilot under the torii that led to 336th Operations in 1953. The reverse side said "MiG Alley - 200 Miles". (center right) The Officers Club and outdoor theater at K-14 in 1952. (bottom left) LtCol Ralph Keyes, 336th FIS, outside of "Swig Alley", the Officers Mess at K-14 in 1953. (bottom right) Boy-san and Pup-san at K-14 in 1953. (bottom corner) The Radar Hill complex at K-14 in 1953.







(top) Korean laborers sweep the ramp at K-14 in 1951 prior to the lengthening of the main runway. (bottom) Tom Lowery under the 335th FIS scoreboard in 1953. (left center) MSgt O.C. Wilkinson, NCOIC of the 4th FIG, on his bicycle outside Base Operations at K-14 in 1953. (left bottom) Inside the Kimpo Officers Club in 1952. (left bottom) The first and last sight for many of the personnel in Korea was the Seoul City AB passenger gate.



THREE'S COMPANY

The Last Checklist Item

by 'Red Face' Broussard

This is not exactly a flying story. But it is about F-86 pilots. It concerns an incident which some might consider distasteful. For their sake, the author has endeavored to relate it in language appropriate to this august publication. If by chance, the reader finds the story inappropriate, and would like to lodge a complaint, be advised that the author's name is a 'nom de plume' - but a fitting one for a cajun boy from a little South Louisiana town, whose ancestors really were named 'Broussard'.

K-13, Suwon, Korea, Spring 1951. It doesn't take an experienced fighter pilot to understand the importance of not suffering gastrointestinal pains or full bladder agony while piloting a single seat fighter on a combat mission. In case the latter occurs, there is always the recourse of the 'relief tube'. But using this instrument during a fight is, for all practical purposes, impossible. But for the former, which is always exacerbated by the lowered air pressure of high altitude flying, there is no clean cut option.

In the Air Force of today, aircrews are provided high protein, 'low residue' meals prior to a mission. But in Korea during 1951, the standard menu for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, consisted of Spam, reconstituted powdered potatoes, powdered eggs, powdered milk, and possibly a canned entre from a K ration. Gastrointestinal distress was predictable following such a sumptuous repast. For this reason, one of the last items on a fighter pilot's personal checklist before a mission, was a visit to a 'facility', aka latrine, head, outhouse, chicksales, privy, etc..

Being a child of the depression, and having spent several years living in a house with no modern plumbing, I was no stranger to such a facility. My memories of cold winters and hot summers in Louisiana, always included trips to the 'facility'. By 1951, the state of the art in 'facility' design and construction had not advanced one iota as far as I could tell when I viewed the one near our squadron tent area at K-13. It was a three-holer within a small wooden structure. Since the term 'hole' may upset some readers, I shall henceforth use the term 'position' as a synonym. The 'facility' was always smelly to the extreme, dark, hot during the summer and very cold in the winter - and inhabited with hundreds of flies. Yet, there was no alternative when one sought relief.

I should add that whoever designed the flying suit never conducted field tests in a 'facility'. To this day, the fundamental problem is that there is no 'trap door', such as is found in many styles of long Johns. The result is that in order to use the facility, the wearer must virtually disrobe, and secure the

flying suit somewhere around his knees to prevent it from contacting the filthy floor. Not an easy task at any time. And made significantly more difficult just prior to a mission when the pockets are loaded with a wide variety of emergency items, like spare ammunition, matches, knife, flashlight, rations, survival radio, etc.. (This was before the invention of the survival vest.)

So it was that I found myself, a second lieutenant with a handful of missions and a greasy breakfast under my belt. And only a scant few minutes between the end of the briefing and 'Start engines!' time for a mission to the Yalu River. It was now time for the last item on my personal checklist. An onerous job, but essential to my comfort on the mission I was about to fly.

As I approached the 'facility', I could detect the unmistakable odor, and began dreading the gymnastics that I knew I had to perform. Opening the door, I peered into the darkness. The light from the open door revealed two other pilots with their flying suits secured around their knees - also accomplishing the last checklist item. One of them occupied position #1, while the other had #3. I recognized them immediately. #1 was the group commander, a full colonel with 24 kills in World War II. #3 was the deputy group commander, a lieutenant colonel with 18.5 kills in World War II.

I was in awe of both officers, who I now observed under rather delicate circumstances. I considered whether or not I should salute them. Thinking it would be presumptuous of me to occupy the #2 position, while they were on either side, I began to close the door and back away, saying, "Oh, excuse me!" They shouted, "Come in here. You don't have much time before 'start engines'." So I did. And I suddenly found myself with no feeling of urgency (if you catch my drift), but I took my place at #2 position. In short order, the two aces completed their 'checklist' and departed. My urgency suddenly returned, and I too, finished my checklist.

It was about as close to these two famous men as I ever got. Years later, when the colonel was wearing four stars and had become USAF Vice Chief of Staff, I sometimes recalled the accommodations we had once shared. It was a rite of passage, I guess, and I never again had a problem with that last checklist item.

(Editor's note: In reality, Red Face Broussard is none other than our Associate Editor, Lon Walter - a genuine Cajun, who notes that "No Photos Are Available!")

THE ENGAGEMENT

by Reg Adams

It was a beautiful flying day in Korea with unlimited visibility as the 39th Squadron launched a full blown Yalu Sweep in June 1953. No less than forty-eight Sabres from the 16th, 25th, and 39th Squadrons were lined up on the runway at K-13 (Suwon) in central South Korea. The air to ground boys across the field (the 8th FBW) were scheduled to launch soon afterward.

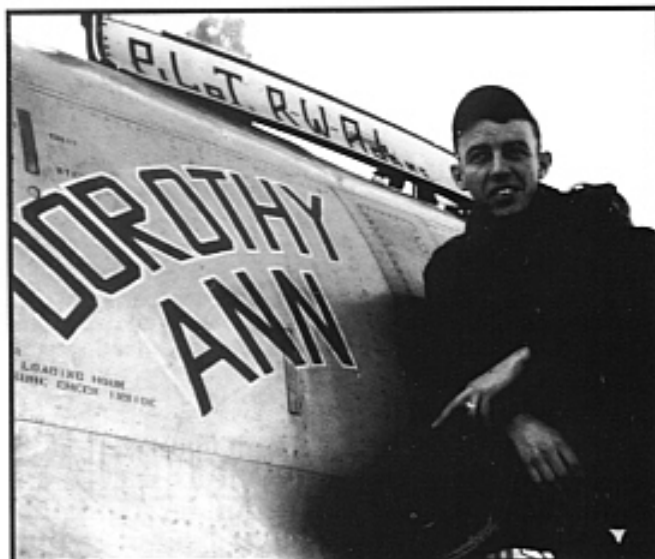
Leading my flight was Colonel (later General) George "Shakey" Ruddell, 39th Fighter Squadron commander. I was flying number 4 as wing man to Lt. Wade "Killer" Kilbride. We were 'Cobra Flight', which coincidentally was also the emblem of the 39th Squadron. Flying with the squadron commander was not exactly every pilot's dream, because he was always the most demanding. We also suspected that the engine in his F-86 was a little 'souped up', so to speak. The only setting that Col. Ruddell knew on the throttle was full forward from takeoff to landing.

Our mission was to intercept any MiGs attempting to cross the Yalu River and attack the F-84 and F-86F fighter bombers that were working targets in North Korea. Soon after arriving at our patrol station on the Yalu River, we spotted six MiGs in formation attempting to slip into North Korea at low altitude. Col. Ruddell immediately began a dive which put us right on top of and directly behind the MiG formation, i.e. the perfect 'bounce' from 6 o'clock high.

The Colonel and his wing man took on the MiG leader. Kilbride set his sights on the leader of the second element. The other two MiGs broke their formation and disappeared for the moment. Though we lost sight of Ruddell, he eventually shot down the MiG that he had engaged. He was already an ace and this was his eighth victory of the war.

Kilbride, my leader, engaged his MiG in a tight turn, firing continuously and scoring numerous hits on the Russian fighter. I attempted to stay on his wing, protecting his tail and watching the MiG Wade had staked out. Thank God for the 'G' suit, because I was holding a constant '4 Gs' trying to stay with Wade and the MiG in the turns. In the course of all this action, the enemy wingman appeared on my left side attempting to get into a firing position on Kilbride. As the MiG pulled up on my left, I held my 'G' forces until I felt that it was time for me to do something to prevent his firing on Wade.

I relaxed just enough stick pressure to put me in position to fire. My .50 caliber tracers laced through the canopy of the MiG, which immediately did a



Epilogue: Sabre pilot, Lt.Col. Reginald W. Adams folded his wings on 31 July 2000. His story, "The Engagement" was provided to Sabrejet Classics by his wife Dorothy.

lazy roll and headed for the ground. In spite of my gun camera film confirming this part of the action, I didn't see any type of explosion. I suspect that my bullets may have killed the MiG pilot, as my tracers penetrated the fuselage where the MiG had very little armor protection.

However, the intelligence people would not confirm the victory. Many times I have wondered if I should have broken off and followed that MiG down to get the confirmation. But, needless to say, as a wing man I was committed to staying with my leader and protecting his tail. Shortly thereafter, Kilbride 'fired out' (expended all his ammunition) and called on me to continue the engagement with 'his' MiG. I pulled in behind the MiG Wade had been firing on. The MiG pilot, thinking the engagement was over, rolled out straight and level, turned north and headed for the Yalu and safety.

I very deliberately pulled in right behind the MiG, put my piper on his tailpipe, and almost counted a kill. Suddenly I noticed what appeared to be flaming ping pong balls floating past my Sabre. Cannon shells! Really big 37mm cannon shells! I heard a frantic call from Wade, "Cobra 4, break right NOW!" I had no choice but to break off from a certain victory and head for home.

Later Wade and I determined that the two MiGs we thought had abandoned the fray after our initial bounce, had decided to come back and help their comrades. We also figured they had received a bit of 'encouragement' from the MiG that Wade and I were firing on, i.e. Chinese for "Get these guys off my tail!" My hard right break saved my life as the MiGs didn't give chase, which allowed us to return to Suwon safely. There were a lot of hairy stories floating around the bar that night because we, the 51st group, had several confirmed kills that day. Kilbride bought me a drink!

TSUIKI BY THE SEA

by Howard Weston

Most of us finished our 100 mission tour and departed for some stateside assignment. When I found myself being sent to the 51st M&S Group (Maintenance & Supply) located at Tsuiki, Japan, I thought I was being discriminated against. Little did I know that it would be the best non-combat duty for a single, 25 year old 1st Balloon. I knew things were looking up when a 'boy-san' named Junior met my flight and carried my chute back to Ops - a duty he performed conscientiously for the next five months.

The periodic as well as most of the major maintenance on all the F-86s in the Far East was done at Tsuiki. I believe there were only three of us to fly the test hops as the aircraft came out of the shop. One of those turned out to be a fellow '52B classmate, Ed Hepner. The 335th FIS where I had flown my combat tour, had only been equipped with F-86A and E model Sabres. Now I was flying the F model as well.

These were aircraft that had been with the 335th Squadron, as well as several of the South African squadron planes (No. 2 Sq., SAAF), that I remember as being some of the newest and best of the aircraft in Korea. A recent review of my old form 5, shows that I was getting about twenty-five flights a month, including a ritual ferry flight to one of the Korean bases to qualify for that month's combat pay. (Some things never change in the boondoggle world!) Also, about once a month, there was a ferry flight to Tachikawa for some reason that I forget. So we went from permanent R&R at Tsuiki to TDY R&R in Tokyo. As I recall, the test flights all lasted at least one hour. But as soon as it was obvious that everything was working correctly, you were pretty much on your own to do such rewarding exercises as 'bouncing' the F-84s from Itazuke.

Many of the readers undoubtedly got to Tsuiki on occasional ferry flights, either delivering or picking up aircraft. I am sure there are many who have fond memories of the local bistro appropriately named the "Sabre Dancer". In order to protect the 'innocent', I won't go into further detail regarding the Tsuiki social scene. But suffice to say, I felt terrific pressure to entertain all the visiting 'firemen' in from Korea, with complete disregard for my own health and well being. It was a great life from March 1953 to June 1953. But then it was back to reality, which ended up to be Tyndall AFB, FL, to my dismay.



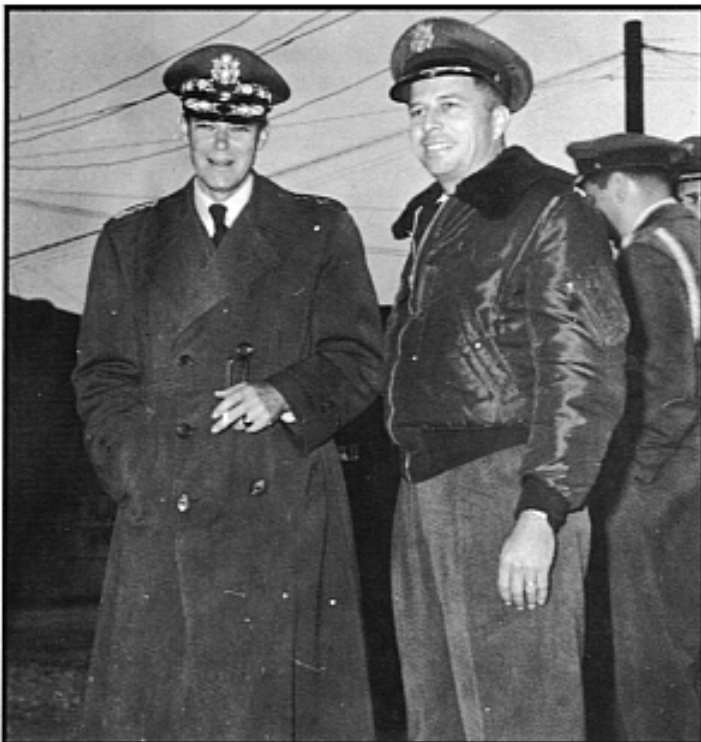
Howard Weston at Tsuiki AB, Japan, 1953.



Flight testing an F-86F from the 36th FBS at Tsuiki in 1953.



The Tsuiki REMCO Parking ramp in 1953.



K-13, Suwon AB, South Korea (upper left) 51st Fighter Group Headquarters at K-13 in 1953, showing the Group scoreboard. The 51st Group scored a total of 308 victories in Korea. (bottom right) Checking the test results of a modified fire control system are (l-r) Maj. J.E. Collins, Capt. Robinson, Maj. Bill Wescott, and Maj. Crabtree. Maj. Wescott was an ace in Korea with 5 victories. (center left) BrigGen. Glenn O. Barcus commanded 5th AF in 1953, and flew missions with the 51st Group in "Barcus' Carcus". (bottom left) General Hoyt Vandenberg and Col. John Mitchell at K-13 in 1952, during one of Vandenberg's trips to the Far East conflict. (top right) (l-r) Lts. Hank Buttlemann and Julius Hegler, pilots in the 25th FIS, at K-13 in 1953. (Page 21 top left) An unidentified pilot with umbrella sitting alert at K-13 in Maj. John Glenn's F-86F. (top right) Sign at K-13 in 1953. (center left) "The Bottom of the Mark", the 51st Wing Officers Club at K-13 in 1952. (center right) Wally Durst and Father Dan on the occasion of Durst's 100th mission, K-13 1953. (bottom) Sandbag revetments at K-13 in 1953. Revetments were constructed after the continuing attacks by Bedcheck Charlie destroyed several aircraft.



WHEN A PILOT IS LOST

The Government Loses a valuable aircraft;
The Fighting Team Loses an important member;
The Wife Loses a husband;
The Children Lose a father;
The Mother & Father Lose a son;
Then there are Sisters & Brothers, Uncles, Aunts, Cousins,
Classmates & Friends.
Let's resolve that no pilot will be lost NEEDLESSLY due to
our failure to keep his Equipment in "Perfect" Condition.

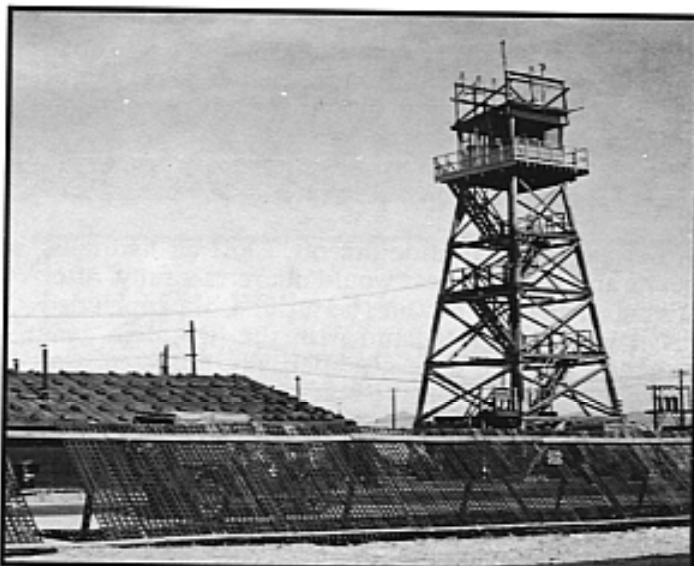
"REMEMBER THAT WHAT WE LOSE-THE ENEMY GAINS"







(page 22, top) Suwon was the home of both the 51st Group and the 8th Fighter Bomber Group. (l-r) The 8th FBG COs aircraft with the multi-color bands around the nose, and Col. George Ruddell's Sabre when he commanded the 39th FIS. (left center) Welcome sign at K-13 Base Operations (right center) Awards and decorations ceremony on the 25th FIS ramp at K-13 during May 1953. The 51st Group received the Distinguished Unit Award and several Korean Presidential Unit Citations. (bottom left) Horseshoe pits on the side of the 39th FIS alert shack at K-13 in 1953. The man with his cap on backwards is Capt. Joe McConnell, top scoring ace in Korea with 16 victories. (bottom right) (l-r) Four aces in the summer of 1953 - Maj. John Bolt, USMC (6), Col. George Ruddell (8), Col. Bob Baldwin (5), and kneeling, 1Lt Hank Buttlemann (7), for a total of 26 victories. (page 23, top left) Combat Operations building for the 8th FBG at K-13 in 1953. (top right) Overhead view of the 80th FBS revetments at K-13 in 1953. The entire ramp at K-13 was PSP. (center) The control tower and Base Ops at K-13 in 1953 with the new PSP blast fences in the foreground. (bottom left) Lt. Jim Carter stands in front of the 8th FBW Officers Club at K-13 in 1953. (bottom right) On final at K-13.



GETTING INTO COMBAT

(Stories I probably Shouldn't Tell)

by Dick Merian

As a college senior and an avid light plane pilot, I wanted some excitement before settling down to a civilian career. It was peacetime, and I was tired of school, so I decided to join the Air Force and fly fighters - jet fighters.

I graduated from flying school at Williams AFB two days before the Korean War started. Originally slated for Japan, my orders were changed to the 4th Fighter Group at Langley AFB. With my thirty-five hours of jet experience in T-33s and F-80s, I became part of the 335th Fighter Squadron in July 1950. Shortly thereafter the squadron moved to Andrews AFB. Now it was up to our flight commanders to make fighter pilots out of us. The 4th Group was an interesting mixture of pilots with WW2 combat experience (including a number of aces), and youngsters like myself who were as green as green apples and knew nothing of fighter pilotage.

In October, on a routine takeoff, I lost all hydraulic power and the nose gear would not retract fully. After talking to our fellows on the ground, we concluded that I would have to land with the two main gear extended and the nose gear partially retracted. Not knowing what to expect, I braced for the crash after touchdown by putting my feet up on the instrument panel. To my amazement, the Sabre went gently onto her nose and gracefully slid to a stop. I was rushed off to the flight surgeon, and he took a look at me, gave me a couple of shots of booze, and sent me on my way.

In November 1950, the 4th Wing received orders (secret at the time) to K-26, Pyongyang, North Korea. Unfortunately, by the time we got to the Far East, the Chinese had pushed down to central Korea, and our destination was changed to Johnson AB in Japan. I was fortunate to be airlifted to Japan, and celebrated Thanksgiving in Fairbanks, Alaska. The initial combat with the MiGs was flown around Christmas time from K-14 by the older heads with combat experience, while the rest of us remained at Johnson. There, our flight leaders continued to train us, mostly concentrating in how well we protected their 6 o'clock during mock combat. Unfortunately, none of us greenhorns had ever fired a gun! This was remedied by loading one gun, one time, and permitting us to make two passes on a sleeve (ammunition was needed for the war). Needless to say, I didn't score on the sleeve.

Johnson AB was loaded with fighter units recently pulled out of Korea as the Chinese advanced. As a consequence there were some wild parties in the O-Club with guys letting off steam. I recall South Africans who were gifted as 'wall walkers', i.e. with enough to drink one would run at a wall and demonstrate how far up and across he could run. The championship was conceded to the guy who walked across the top of the fireplace. Following one such party, after returning to



Lt. Dick Merian's 4th FIG F-86A lost all hydraulic power which didn't allow the nose gear to fully retract or extend and lock. Merian carefully landed the airplane and it slid to a stop on its nose.

the BOQ, a small earthquake shook us up quite a bit. Lon Walter came streaming out of his room in his under shorts with his .45 strapped on and shouting, "The Chinese are coming, the Chinese are coming!"

Billy Hovde was our squadron commander. Unfortunately, he was involved in a buzzing incident over the golf course while the base commander happened to be playing. Billy went to the maintenance group, and Ben Emmert became our squadron commander.

Thus prepared, we went to war. Part of the squadron was sent to K-2 (Taegu) to fly air to ground missions to stem the Chinese advance. The front lines at that time were between Seoul and Taegu. We were armed with two five inch rockets and our six .50 caliber machine guns. My ignorance of how to fire the rockets was complete. I asked Capt. Ernie Mack, our armament officer, two questions: How do I arm and fire the rockets? And, How does one aim them? Ernie was very helpful.

The first time I ever fired all six guns was in combat. It was awesome! I was really impressed with the power of those guns and the racket they made in the cockpit. On one mission, flying with J.O. Roberts, he spotted some gun emplacements at the end of a bridge. We strafed the area, and I tried to aim where J.O. had fired. After the mission debriefing, I told J.O. that I hadn't seen the guns he said were down there. His response was, "Dick, look back over your shoulder when you pull off the target. That's when they shoot at you!" On the next mission, I did just that, and was absolutely amazed that so many guns were all shooting at me.

As I taxied in after another mission, my crew chief started jumping up and down to tell me to shut down. A hydraulic line was leaking and had blackened the aft fuselage. That was the only real problem I had on any combat mission - a real tribute to my crew chief, who's name was Gus Miller. A recalled reservist, he had owned a restaurant in Poughkeepsie, NY, and candidly told me he knew nothing about taking care of an F-86. Gus turned out to be a real jewel. What he lacked in experience, he made up for with dedication. After the first uncertain weeks, my airplane was maintained as well or better than any of the others. Gus liked scotch, so I made sure he always had an ample supply.

End of Part One.



Lt. Dick Merian holds a 140 lb 5" HVAR rocket at Taegu in late January 1951. The 335th Squadron flew many air to ground missions armed with rockets and .50 caliber guns in February 1951.



The 4th FIG moved back to K-13 (Suwon) in March 1951 following the retreat by the Chinese. This is the tent city that all the crews lived in at K-13.

SABRE REUNIONS

3555th FTW/CCTS Perrin AFB Reunion scheduled for June 2001.

For a reunion package, send your name, address, phone, e-mail, and dates assigned to Perrin AFB, contact Perrin AFB Research Foundation, PO Box 1998, Pottsboro, TX 75076 e-mail @ <perrinafb@texoma.net

335th FDS, Chitose 1955-58

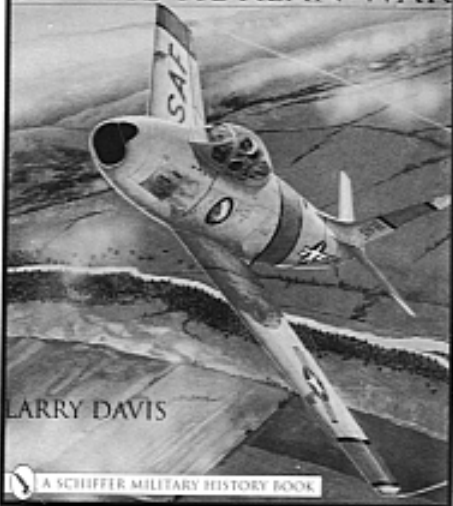
Reunion in conjunction with the 13th Sabre Pilots Reunion in Las Vegas, 16-20 April 2001. Contact Joe Haycraft (941)263-0106, e-mail <jhaycraft@aol.com>, or Larry Vied (602)488-0657, e-mail <jolare@aol.com>

330th/331st FIS Reunion

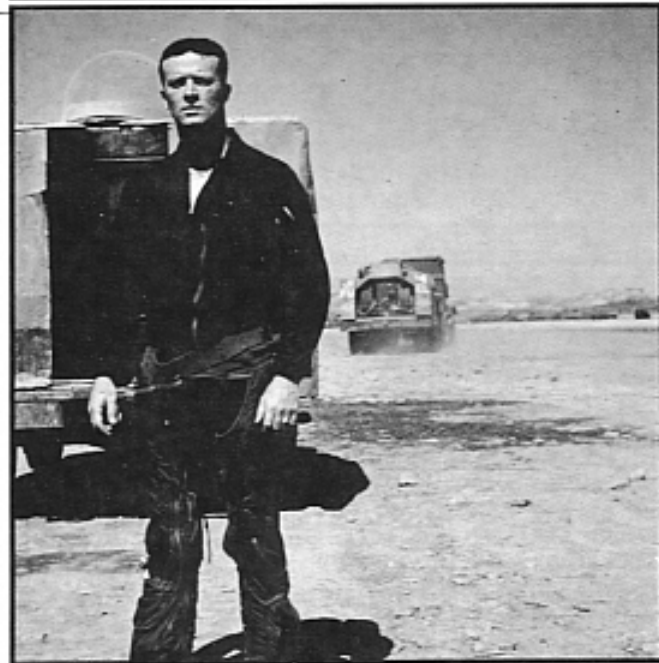
in Tucson, AZ May 23-27, 2001.
Contact Mike Collymore,
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**Next Issue; Operation
STOVEPIPE, 13th Reunion,
F-86Ds with the 25th FIS,
More!**

THE 4TH FIGHTER WING IN THE KOREAN WAR



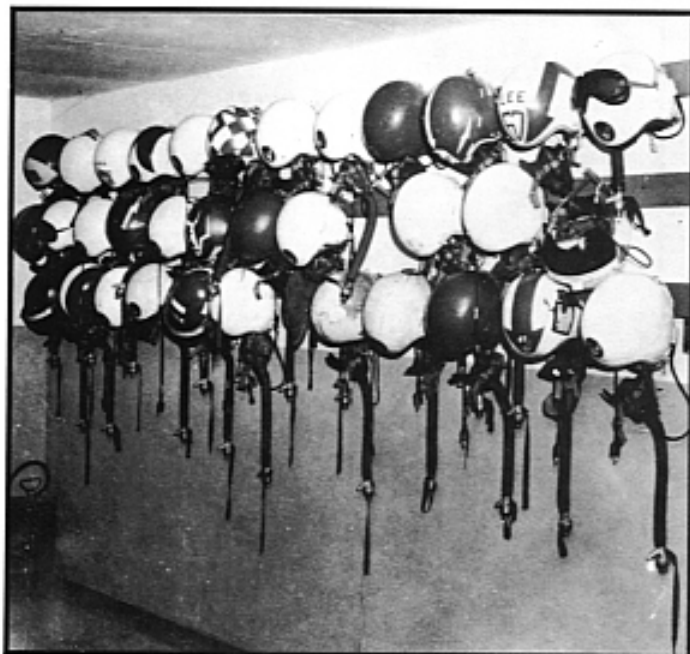
The history of the 4th Fighter Wing in Korea will be available at the end of April 2001 at a cost of \$45.00 per issue. It can be ordered direct from Larry Davis at the SabreJet Classics address in Canton, OH; or can be found at any good bookstore.



Osan AB (K-55) (top) Aircraft of the 18th FBG taxi to takeoff positions at K-55 in 1953. The 18th FBG had three squadrons assigned - the 12th and 67th FBS, plus No. 2 Sq, SAAF. The main mission of the 18th Group was interdiction deep into North Korea, but they also mixed it up with the MiGs whenever the opportunity arose. (center) Two F-86Fs of the 67th FBS on take-off from K-55 in early 1953 showing the early markings of 18th Group Sabres. (bottom left) Don McNamara in full combat gear in front of the mobile control truck at K-55 (bottom right) Every group had several T-33s assigned for training, hack or VIP flights, and for use as fighter directors on a combat mission. That is, when the Korean weather cooperated.

(page 27, upper left) Roger Sprague (left foot on fence) and other 67th FBS pilots in front of Base Ops at K-55. (upper right) "Die Suikerbossie Sit En Dink Klub" (The Sugarbush Sit and Think Club) at K-55 in 1953. (center left) Bill Grover was the North American Tech Rep to the 18th FBG at K-55 in 1953. (center right) A pair of 67th FBS F-86Fs on the snow-covered ramp at K-55 during the winter of 1953. The 18th Group converted to F-86Fs in January 1953. (bottom left) The helmet rack in the 67th FBS personal equipment building at K-55 in 1953. The air and ground crews built most of the buildings at K-55 from scratch. (bottom right) Headquarters of the 18th FBG - "The Worlds Best Damn Fighter Group"





RETROSPECT

Korea Today

by Harvey Brown

A few years ago, my son and I went to Korea for a visit. The trip took a week. One of the interesting things we did was to take a very wild taxi trip from Seoul to Osan and visit my old base at Osan. The whole area was hardly recognizable. Suwon looked like a rice paddy again, from all appearances. However, it was hard to really tell as we barely slowed down, much less stopped, going through Suwon at Mach 1 on a two lane road. The old K-13 is a Korean Air Force base.

Osan wasn't much better. But the strip at K-55 was a real eye opener. The ONLY thing I recognized was the beautiful 11,000 foot strip to which I came home sixty-three times between March and November 1953. All else was like a scene out of some real estate development.

Building construction, crude at best in 1953, now included Pizza Huts, Macdonalds, shopping centers, permanent Air Force structures, hangars, etc. The squadron 'diamonds' were recognizable. But there were hangars built on them now. ALL of our beloved(?) tin huts and other tin buildings were gone. It was difficult to orient myself due to the new construction.

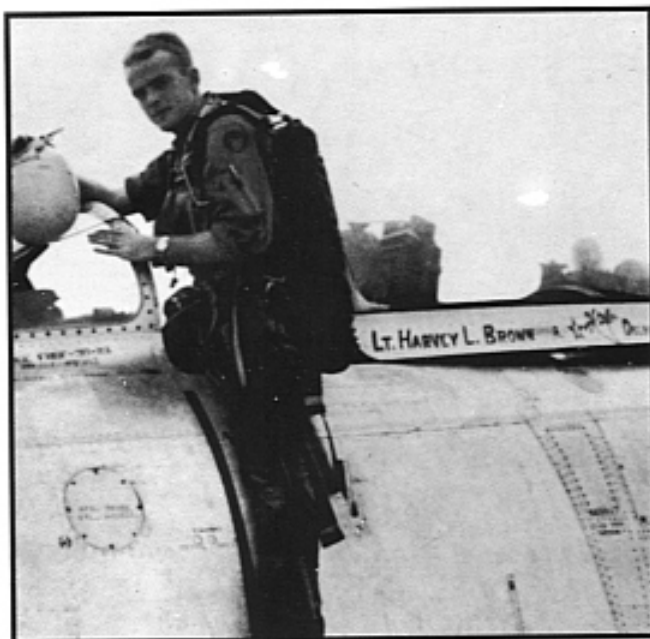
K-55 is now an Air Force 'town' of over 7000 souls - Osan Air Base. They live very much like they would on a base in the states, except that they know they're in Korea. Get this!!! None of the Air Force personnel with whom we spoke, had any idea that the base was once known as K-55!!!! We spent some time with the base Public Affairs Officer, and even he didn't know about K-55.

Initially, we were denied access to the base. But after a lot of time cultivating (BSing is closer to the truth) the heavily armed gate guards, they agreed to allow us to drive around with the PAO, who finally came to the gate to get us. They even let the Korean taxi driver go onto the base with us. Needless to say, he was in Hog Heaven, or whatever the Koreans call it. I think he enjoyed the ride even more than we did.

We visited the Ops of one of the fighter squadrons, and shot the bull with some of the F-16, U-2, and A-10 pilots there. I felt like Eddie Rickenbacker describing the olden days at K-55, flying combat with the 18th Fighter Bomber Group, with the 67th Squadron leading the way and the 2nd South African bunch. Now that was a real wild gang!

These guys today have no concept of the air war that we waged in the early 50s. But the base historian (a very nice gal) was intrigued and said they would launch an effort to learn more about the Korean War days, and make it available on the base as part of the Osan 'heritage'.

By the way, the lineup of aircraft at Osan was F-16s, A-10s, U-2s that were based there; with C-130, KC-135,

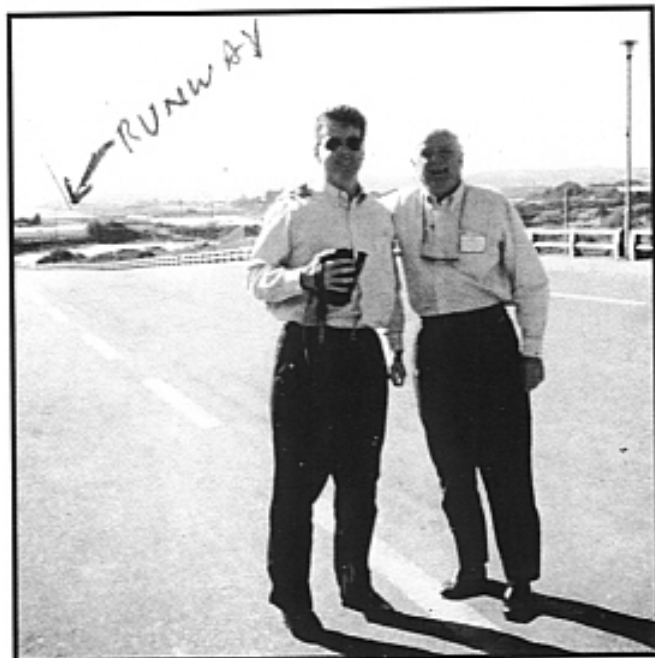


Lt. Harvey Brown in the cockpit at K-55 in 1953.

and other types in and out on the transient ramp. We were told that this was THE Air Force fighter base in South Korea now. The gate guard aircraft is a copy of Joe McConnell's F-86F, "Beautious Butch". It will probably be changed once the history of 18th is known, possibly to Jim Hagerstrom's 67th FBS F-86F, #FU-7777. Jim was the 28th ace in the Korean War. OK you 18th Group guys, what was the tail number on Hagerstrom's airplane?

We got a super 'cooks tour' of K-55 from the PAO. He hauled us all over and even to places which were probably restricted. But we didn't see anything that we couldn't have seen from off-base with a good set of binocs. The far side of the runway, the north side, was a regular lineup of AA installations. And I'm sure we only saw a very small part of what's out there.

(r-l) Harvey Brown Sr and Harvey Brown Jr. on the bridge at the east entrance to K-55 in 1993. The main runway is in the distance.





TOP - The other fighter squadron at Osan AB is the 25th FS equipped with A-10A/OA-10A Thunderbolt II ground attack aircraft. "OS" is the tail code for any aircraft stationed at Osan AB.

An F-16B of the 36th FS on the ramp at Osan AB in 1999, armed with AIM-120 AAMRAMs and AIM-9 Sidewinders.

I really had strong feelings as we motored by the approach ends of that long East-West strip. It sure as hell looked familiar. And for just a fleeting moment, I was 'back there' at 100 kts. touching down, letting go a little and opening the canopy for a blast of sea level (and safe) air. I really felt that I could kick the tires, hop in, and with a very few minutes of cockpit time, fire up old FU-350 and spend forty minutes horsing it around. Maximum 2 1/2 Gs of course! I suppose all of us feel that way, don't we? I'll have to admit that twenty-four years flying a Navion kind of keeps me primed.

My last recollection of Seoul in 1953, was pretty bleak. The three bridges over the Han River were bombed and down in the river. Now there are nineteen (count 'em) bridges over the Han. And that's still not enough for the twelve MILLION souls that live there. We had

lunch on the 63rd floor of an insurance building on the Han one day.

One of the days that we were there was the Korean Thanksgiving. Every one in the country was in the process of either going to, or returning from their ancestral home. What a mess that was. A very good day to be walking and not driving.

Since this was a 'Veterans Return' trip, we were feted by the ROK government, and given a Korean medal and other goodies as a 'Thank You' for whatever we did. Even the US Army PR people gave us a big welcome. It was the first time anyone at all had ever given me any kind of 'thank you' for my Korean War service. Anyway, that's what we did during a week in Korea. Like all travels, it seems to get better in retrospect.

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What do fighter aces do when their tour ends or the war stops? Some made good will tours like Col. George Jones and Major Bill Whisner, seen signing autographs in Los Angeles in 1953. Captain Joseph McConnell, top scoring ace in Korea with 16 victories, received a personal hand shake from General O.P. Weyland, Commander of FEAF. Colonel Royal Baker toured the North American plant facilities in Los Angeles, riding in a new 1953 Mercury convertible.





The 1954 Nellis AFB Gunnery Team had four aces when they won the first all jet gunnery competition in 1954; (l-r) Bill Wescott, Charlie Carr, George Jones(team captain), Warren Rice, Jim Kasler, and Bob 'Hoagie' Latshow. All photos courtesy Earry Davis Collection except 1954 Gunnery Meet credit to Warren Rice.





What Is It? Three F-86As were camouflaged with olive drab Army paint in the late summer of 1951. Each aircraft was painted differently from the other. Rumors are that they flew radio relay missions. But nothing is for sure. Anyone with knowledge or photos of these three 'painted ladies' are asked to contact Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics, 4713 Cleveland Ave. NW, Canton, OH 44709, or e-mail at <sabreclsx@aol.com>.

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