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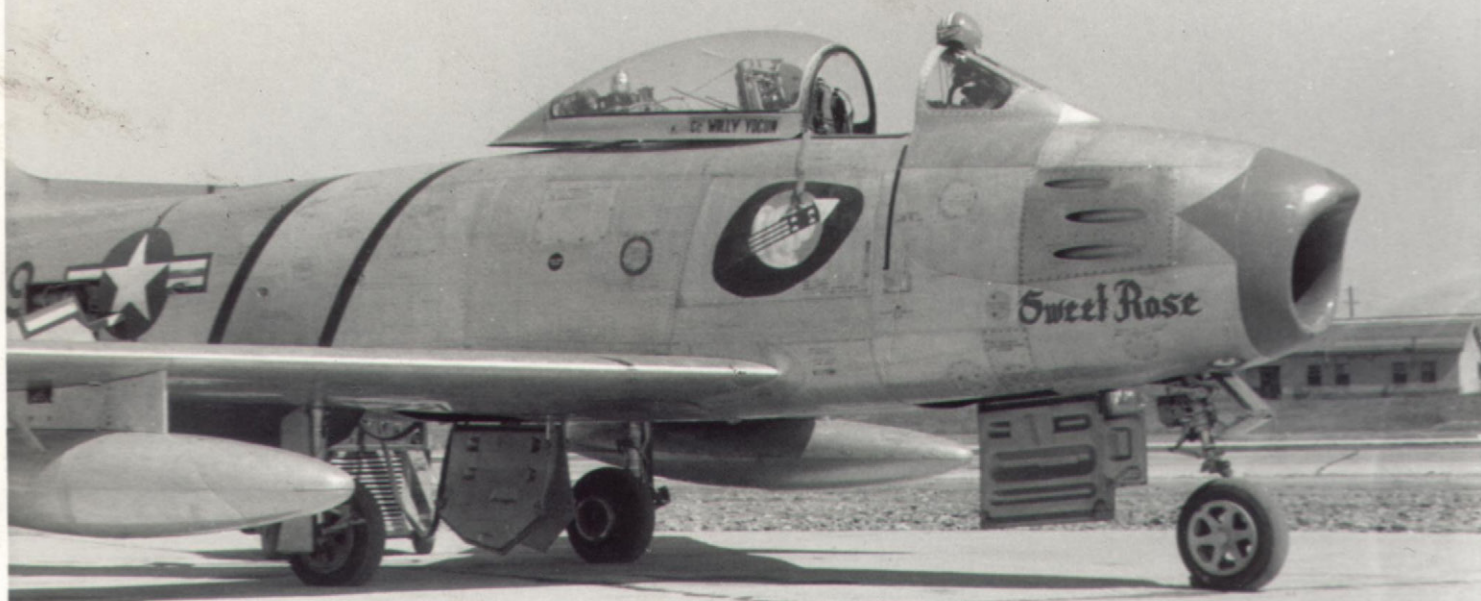
  
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## Crew Chief Wally Yocum and his F-86F-30-NA Sweet Rose

A story of love and passion

Alongside famous or at least well known Sabres flown usually by the aces of Korean war, there were also numerous planes flown by less known or unknown-to-us pilots over the war troubled peninsula. These guys not risking less than their famous colleagues anyway. Even less famous mechanics took care of their airplanes continuously and in self-sacrificing manner. These young men, giving the names to their planes as well as the pilots, also have their stories. This is one of them. The story of Walter E Yocum, Crew Chief of F-86F-30-NA Sabre FU-539, on which he painted the name of the only love of his life.

Walter E. Yocum Jr. entered the United States Air Force after high school. During 1952, Walter, known to all as "Wally", had a brief stay at both Sampson AFB in New York and Amarillo AFB in Texas. Late in 1952, Wally was transferred to Shaw AFB in South Carolina completing aircraft and engine training and joined the 336th Fighter Inceptor Squadron. Wally spent time on B-26 bomber maintenance and learning about jet engines.

He soon received new orders and was shipped to Korea in 1953 as part of the 4th Fighter Inceptor Wing (Far East Air Force), 336th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, known as the world famous „Rocketeers“. The base was called K-14, located in Kimpo, which is near Seoul. Wally was assigned as the crew chief of North American F-86 Sabre 52-4539. He quickly added his sweethearts name to the nose, „Sweet Rose“. Wally was dating Rose Ann Portaro after high school. She lived in Marion Heights, Pa, Wally was from nearby Mt. Carmel, Pa.

The pilot was Kenneth C. Ewing, who had „Dreaded Gombo“ painted on his side of the aircraft. The name signified an mysterious infectious disease. After the Air Force, Ken flew F-86s in the Wyoming Air National Guard for a few years, and then got a job flying for United Airlines in Denver. He flew for them for 34

years and retired in 1991. Ken passed away in late 2014.



Lieutenant Ken Ewing named FU-539 from mysterious disease...



Sabres FU-539 and FU-577 sitting on the stand-by apron of K-19 base



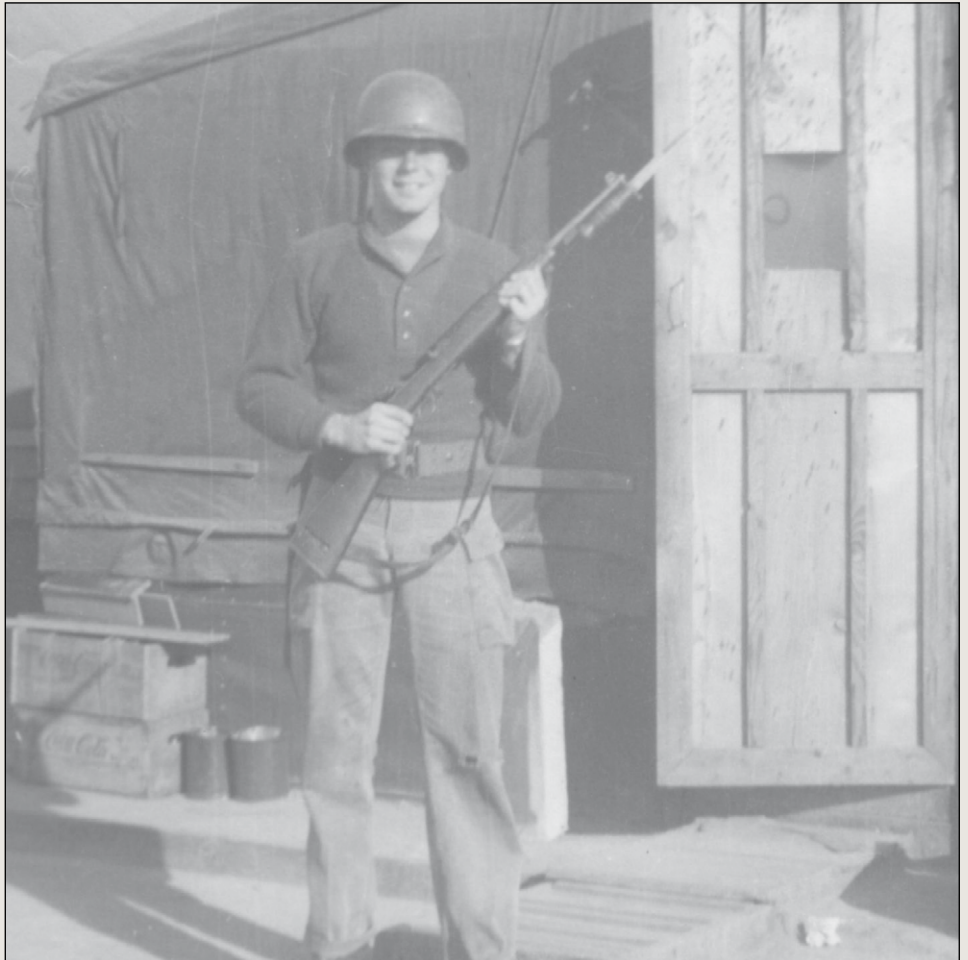
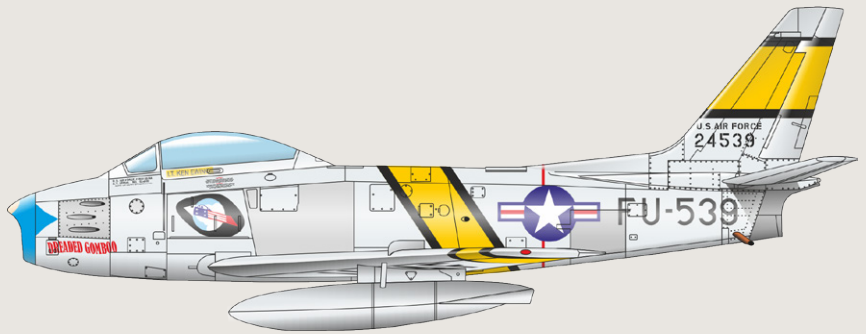
# HISTORY

## Fragments from Korea

Wally describes his experiences at Kimpo as some of the most memorable experiences in his life. His Sabre patrolled the skies for enemy MiG's. Ken was a wingman and was to function as protection during routine missions. Even as the armistice was signed, the unpublished skirmishes continued to happen. Wally remembers that each mission was decided early in the day based on whether the navigational landmark mountain near the base, known to all as the „Witch's Tit“, was visible or covered in clouds. Clear days and the mission was on! The Sabre was a model F-86F-30NA equipped with the new 6-3 wing that allowed speeds to increase to 695 + miles per hour at low altitudes. The plane could now match the speed of the MiG and climb to altitudes of 47,000 feet. Wally claims this wing allowed tighter turns as well.

This jet was also equipped with the General Electric J47-GE-27 engine that boosted thrust above 5900 pounds. Wally recalls that he would tweak on the fuel controller to make sure the Sabre achieved a high tack reading. This enabled his pilot to keep a fast plane if needed, citing that Ken needed to keep up with the squadron formation. He said the plane was a pleasure to work on and was well designed for ease of maintenance.

Wally also remembers some good days that he was allowed to eat with the pilots, receiving a meal with Ken of real milk and cheese, instead of the normal crew meal of powdered products. But he also remembers being told that he was responsible for that plane no matter what and had to take his turn at guard duty as well. The sergeant told him he better place his bayonet on his gun as you only get 90 rounds and when the enemy comes over the hill, they'll keep coming.



„Place your bayonet on the gun. You only get 90 rounds and when the enemy comes over the hill, they'll keep coming!“



Nineteen years old Crew Chief Wally Yocum with his „Sweet Rose“.



Wally and Rose during their honeymoon somewhere at Niagara falls during 1955.



## After the war...

The plane remained in the 336th arsenal until late 1954 at Kimpo. It was dropped from inventory and transferred to the Taiwanese ROC Air Force. Wally was assigned in early 1955 to Misawa Air Base in Japan. Eventually making it back safely to the US being stationed at Dover AFB in Delaware. He would then marry his sweetheart in 1955. They immediately wanted to start a family, so Wally left the Air Force in 1955 at the rank of Airman First Class. The decision to leave the Air Force was to avoid being transferred, wanting a stable location to raise children. Wally would work civil service at Dover maintaining fighter aircraft and eventually one of the largest military planes in the world, the Lockheed C-5A Galaxy as part of the 436th FMS (Field Maintenance Squadron). Wally served the Air Force maintaining jet engines for 38 years and was honored by the 336th at Seymour Johnson in 2014, decaling an F-15E Eagle with his name on the cockpit "Cc Wally Yocum" and, of course, "Sweet Rose" on the nose. Rose Ann Yocum, although passed in 2014 (at the age of 80), will always be his only true love and aircraft engines will always be, even at the age of 81, his passion!



Wally Yocum and new Sweet Rose 2014: F-15E of 336th squadron from Seymour Johnson Airbase...



...and the name of Crew Chief must not be omitted!



Man and his plane today. Some 62 years after he put the Sweet Rosee on the right side of his Sabre in Korea.

## F-86F-30-NA Sweet Rose in kit 1163:



1163  
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BUILT

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# ULTIMATE SABRE



built by Jan Novotný





F-86F-30, Lt. Ken Ewing, 336th FIS „Rocketeers“,  
4th FIG, Kimpo Air Base (K-14), Korea 1954

This Sabre initially served with the 6408th MSG (Maintenance Servicing Group), later being sent to Korea, where it flew with the 336th FIS of the 4th FIG until 1954. Pilot Lt. Ken Ewing named the plane „Dreaded Gomboo“ on „his“ side of the aircraft, while Crew Chief Walter Yocum named the Sabre on the other side „Sweet Rose“, after his fiancée, whom he later married. After the Korean War this Sabre was transferred to the Taiwan Air Force.

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