

Sabre Jet Classics



Volume 13, Number 2

SUMMER 2005



***INSIDE: BugOut From Kimpo
15th Reunion, Memories Of Nellis, More!***

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volume 13, number 2
Summer 2005
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(front cover) An F-86A of the 3596th CCTS "Cadillac Flight" on its hardstand at Nellis AFB, Nevada, in 1952. "Cadillac Flight" was part of 'The Fighter School'. (credit - Dick Gilbert)

next issue: F-86 Nose Art,
Lagg-15 In Korea, 44th FBS on
Taiwan, more!



SabreJet Classics

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-the PRESIDENTS notebook

The Fifteenth Reunion is past and was a great success. This is the fourth reunion I've been involved in and it was better than all the others. I think I'm getting the hang of it. My thanks go to all of you who helped, especially Rich and Helge Geiger, Mike and Ardith Freebairn, Bob and Nancy Smith, George and Roi Menster, Jack Seaman, Pat and Nora Hughes, my lovely wife Dorothy, Dan and Audree Druen, Bob Matasick, Polly Winesett, and a host of others that I asked to help at a moments notice. Thanks again everybody. It couldn't have gone so well had it not been for your help.

Now a bit about the reunion. The food and service at the Monte Carlo were superb as usual. Catering Manager Carolyn Welch and her assistants, worked from early morning to late at night overseeing the food preparation and presentation. Group Sales Manager Michael Catalano, and Secretary Katrina Brentsen, were invaluable in solving any and all accommodation problems. The Monte Carlo has always done our association a fine job and we look forward to working with them in the future.

After 31 cancellations, we had 492 registrants for the reunion that began on April 4th, 2005. We had a few no-shows and some late registrants, which equated out to about 500 attendees. While I would like to see more members enjoy these reunions, I think we had a pretty good participation for less than 1800 members. Like you, I am a member of five other Air Force affiliated organizations, and our reunion participation exceeds all others hands down.

Due to inflation and other considerations, the cost of the next reunion will have to be increased. This problem was addressed at both the Board of Directors and General Membership meetings. It was agreed that we simply have to increase the registration fee to \$100. However, you will lose none of the benefits. The registration fee will still include two brunches, a cocktail party, some drink tickets, and the reunion banquet. However, the cost of some other functions may also increase.

At the Membership Meeting, two changes to the Constitution were presented and approved. They include:

paragraph E was added to article 111 Membership;

E. Folded Wings Membership. This position was established to accommodate the names of deceased F-86 pilots who passed away before the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association tablet was available at the National Air and Space Museum. Members who are interested in having their deceased friends or family member name on the tablet, may do so by completing a membership application for that person and sending it and a \$25.00 membership fee to the Association. They must also send the required \$100.00 to the National Air and Space Museum along with the F-86 Sabre Pilots tablet donation form.

Article IV: Membership Dues paragraph C was changed to include \$100 Life Membership fee for those over 75 years in age.

Paragraph C: Dues assessed on a yearly basis, payments shall be credited on the date the members check is deposited in the Association's bank account, and shall be current

from that date of the following year. Accounting for dues will be handled in the same manner as a newspaper or magazine subscription; i.e. dues payments will be added to the "dues expiration date" if this date has not expired. Extended years and life memberships will be available to all members. Dues charges are \$25.00 for one year, \$50.00 for three years. Life Memberships for persons younger than 75 years of age is \$200.00, and \$100.00 for those over 75 years of age.

The following list of officers were nominated and approved by the membership:

Jerry Johnson — President
Robert N. Smith — Vice President
Richard Geiger — Treasurer
Secretary — OPEN
Walter D. Druen — Chairman of the Board of Directors
Bruce Hinton — Director
Pat Hughes — Director
Robert Matasick — Director
Robert T. Slater — Director
Lloyd C. Ulrich — Director
Alonzo J. Walter — Director

Finally, if you are interested in having your name added to the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association tablet(s) at the Air and Space Museum, please contact Glenn Carus. His address and phone number are in the 2005 Membership Roster, and his e-mail is gcarus@mindspring.com.

May God Bless our troops, you and the United States of America.

Check 6.

JERRY R. JOHNSON
President F-86 SABRE
PILOTS ASSOCIATION

from the editor

Well the 15th Reunion is finished and I'm already looking forward to the 16th in 2007. This reunion was one of the smoothest run that I've had the fortune to attend. My first one was 1992 when Hank Buttleman invited me to attend. I missed one since that time. This was my wife Susan's first time to a Sabre Pilots Reunion. And except for constantly having to hear what a great guy I am from all you guys (she said it was making her ill!), she also had a superb time.

Of note. Many of you have been contacting me either by phone or e-mail regarding your membership expiration date. If you have a problem, just drop a note to the Las Vegas address and they'll take care of it. I don't mind you asking me about it but I can't do anything other than forward your message to Jerry Johnson in Las Vegas.

The same thing happens if you contact me about your name appearing on the Sabre Pilots tablet at the Smithsonian, although it gets a bit more involved. If you wish to have your name added to the tablet, or have already paid for it to appear but it hasn't, please contact Glenn Carus at (703)250-2288, or e-mail him at gcarus@mindspring.com. Glen is our liason with the Smithsonian and will be glad to take of your problem.

I have received several notes regarding articles that have been sent to me for the magazine, and you haven't seen your effort in print yet. We now have a small backlog of articles - not that many so keep them coming - but some are lacking photos and I do NOT have photos of every unit (yet). Or I never got the article in the first place. E-mail is much quicker than surface mail in two ways - getting there and getting lost. One small stroke of a key and an e-mail story can be gone forever. So please follow up with another e-mail if I do not answer that I received your e-mail. I always ask that a person also send a copy of his article by surface mail too, just as a precaution. And don't forget, e-mail photos cannot be used in the magazine. If you have a print, just loan it to us and we'll get it copied. If you have color slides, we can have our lab make prints from the slides and then return them to you. It usually takes a few weeks but the results are worth the effort and wait.

Upcoming articles for future issues of *SabreJet Classics* will include a feature on development of the Australian Avon-powered Sabre; Project GUNVAL which resulted in what every pilot in Korea wanted, a cannon-armed Sabre; development and flying the F-86H, etc. See you in the future.

Larry Davis
Editor

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FOLDED WINGS

Captain Troy Gordon Copé, 16 September 1952
Ronald C. Duval, April 17th, 2005
Willis W. Lutrell, January 18th, 2005
Hillman W. Madison, Jr., March 22nd, 2005

POLICY STATEMENT

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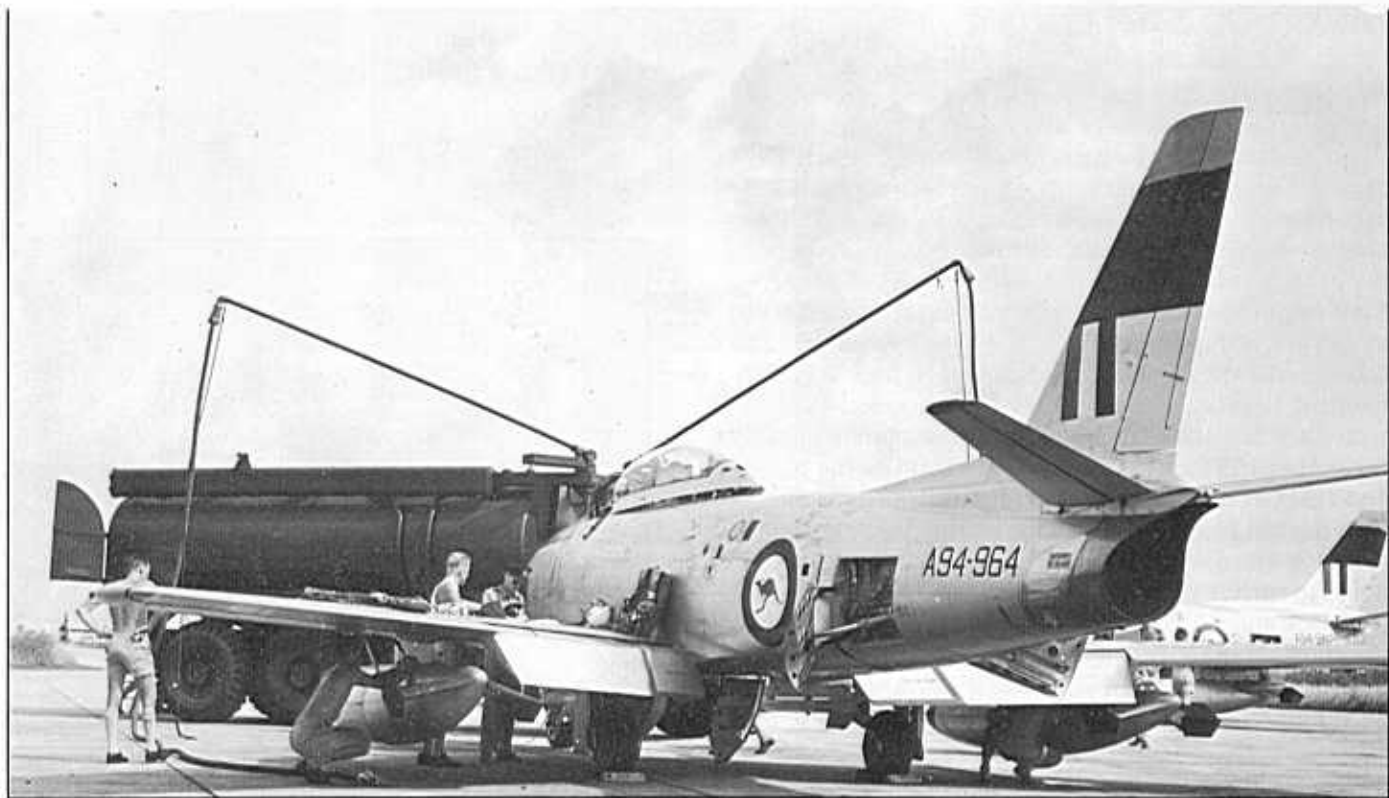
What Is It? Well our "Question of the month" got several responses, none of which were a confirmation. The question was "In what month did the 4th FIG change the combat markings on the Korea-based Sabres from black & white stripes to black & yellow stripes? Both Bruce Hinton and Lon Walter could not say as they rotated home in late Summer 1951 before the change came about. John Henderson contacted Bud Mahurin who reported to the 4th FIG in february 1952 and he said the airplanes had the black and YELLOW bands at that time. The previously mentioned 4th FIG crew chief has some film that he said was taken in late November 1951 and at least one aircraft has the black and YELLOW bands painted on the fuselage and wings, with the old black rudder stripe as the only identifier of a 4th FIG Sabre. But your editor also has photos dated in early 1952 with 4th FIG Sabres still flying with the black and WHITE stripes. So we're still left with the question - WHEN DID THE 4TH FIG CHANGE FROM BLACK AND WHITE BANDS TO BLACK AND YELLOW BANDS? If anyone can show a dated photo (Kodak slides were dated at the time), please contact Larry Davis, Editor, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721, or e-mail sabreclsx@aol.com.



SABRES AROUND THE WORLD

A Commonwealth CA-27 Sabre assigned to no. 11 Squadron of the Malaysia Air Force in 1972. Malaysia was the first nation to obtain the Commonwealth version of the Sabre, receiving their first ten aircraft in October 1969. A total of eighteen CA-27 Sabres were delivered by 1971, including two non-flying instructional air frames. The aircraft were delivered in standard Commonwealth silver overall paint scheme, but were soon painted dark green on the upper surfaces, with light grey undersides, to coincide with their COIN mission against communist insurgents. Following their replacement by Northrop F-5s in the late 1970s, the Malaysian Sabres were sold to neighboring Indonesia. (credit - Larry Davis collection)





No. 79 Squadron, RAAF, ground crew personnel refuel one of their Commonwealth CA-27 Sabres at Don Muang Airport, Bangkok, Thailand, in June 1962. No. 79 Sq took their Sabres to Bangkok in response to a threat by North Vietnam as outlined under the SEATO agreement. (credit - USAF)

Australia's Big-Engine Sabre's Air Defense Role in SEA

by Jim Flemming
former Commander RAAF Ubon

In 1962, in response to a threat to Thailand from across the Laotian border, four member nations of SEATO, the US, Britain, New Zealand, and Australia, sent armed air units to create a holding force in Thailand. These units were intended to withstand any initial attack until full scale reinforcements could be sent. Australia's contribution would be no. 79 Squadron, equipped with big-engined Commonwealth CA-27 Avon Sabre jets, which would be based at Ubon, then a small airfield near the Laotian border.

The airfield at Ubon didn't have much in the way of facilities, except for a runway and control tower. Some RTAF T-28s operated from Ubon, and the US had set up a LION radar site. No. 79 Sq. established an operating base there, with tents, ground support equipment, and squadron supplies flown in from Australia by C-130 Hercules cargo planes. The first CA-27 Sabres flew in on 1 June 1962. Four days later, the Sabres were operational, and would remain so for the next six years.

No. 79 Squadron's primary mission was air defense of the area. But because of political constraint's, they would be unable to contribute to the shooting war in the north. To achieve this mission, during daylight hours, two Sabres were armed with 30mm HE ammunition and two AIM-9B Sidewinder missiles. The Sabres

could be scrambled within a two minute alert time.

As the war in Vietnam intensified, a large buildup of Ubon was undertaken by the US. Eventually, it became a major F-4 Phantom operating base and home of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, 'The Wolfpack'. By this time, No. 79 Sq. had a more permanent camp, with accommodation and recreation facilities on one side of the runway, with maintenance hangars and aircraft keyways on the other. Our American friends called it "Kangaroo Valley".

Members of the USAF 25th TFS painted a black bat "zap" on a no. 79 Sq Sabre at Ubon in 1967. (credit - Al Piccarillo)





A no. 79 Sq. Commonwealth CA-27/mk. 32 Sabre on the ramp at Ubon in July 1968. The CA-27 Sabre had a Rolls Royce Avon powerplant rated at 7600 lbs. thrust, over 2500 lbs more than USAF F-4-powered Sabres. (credit - Tom Brewer)

To maintain a constant state of readiness, our two alert Sabres were usually scrambled at least twice per day, then guided by ground radar to intercept the returning Wolfpack F-4s. These intercepts had been organized by 8th TFW Commander, Col. Robin Olds, due to his concern that many of his new pilots from the States had little or no air to air combat experience. The F-4C had no gun, so combat training had been denigrated in favor of missile tactics.

With the cooperation of the no. 79 Sq. commander, Col. Olds planned and organized an effort to give his returning pilots some 'air combat experience'. Returning F-4s were routinely bounced by the Australian Sabres. Col. Olds' flight leaders were notified of the impending Sabre 'attacks', but the returning element leaders, wingmen, and their back-seaters were not.

Because of the high performance of the Commonwealth Sabre, and its very low profile, it was an ideal substitute for a simulated MiG-17 attack. The RAAF pilots, who were frustrated by political direction that they could not cross the borders of Thailand, had a great time 'hassling' with the returning Wolfpack F-4Cs. And many memorable 'dogfights' took place over the Lao-tian border.

Quite a few new F-4 pilots got a big fright when they thought they were being bounced by North Vietnamese MiGs. Later, on the ground, until the situation was explained, some very terse exchanges took place between members of the Wolfpack and the Australian Sabre pilots.



Three no. 79 Sq. CA-27 Sabres over eastern Thailand in 1968. No. 79 Sq. Sabres were responsible for air defense over the Thai bases during the conflict in South-east Asia. Unofficially, they were tasked with "jumping the F-4s" and pretending to be MiGs. (credit - Tom Brewer)

Some of the USAF squadron commanders with Korean War experience, remembering shootdowns across the Yalu River near Antung, recalled the MiG-15s vulnerability. In particular, "Hoot" Gibson, Commander of the 433rd TFS "Satan's Angels", was insistent that all his combat crews were to be 'intercepted' by the Australian Sabres at every opportunity. Although uncomfortable for the tired returning F-4 aircrews, he said at this training was invaluable in ensuring their survival around Hanoi.

Later, in a 'bell ringing' ceremony in the O-Club, Col. Olds praised the 79 Squadron pilots, stating that "many of the air crews in the Wolfpack who were present, owed their lives to the lessons learned while hassling with the 79th Sabres." The Commander of the 79th Squadron, and the RAAF Base Commander, were then awarded Lifetime Honorary Memberships in the 8th TFW as a token of its appreciation. This more than made up for the few black eyes and fat lips that were incurred earlier in the program.

And the esprit and camaraderie between the US Air Force and the RAAF remained at a very high level, where it has always been, and where it remains to this day!

(editor's note: An indepth article on the CA-27 Avon-powered Sabre will be found in a forthcoming issue of SabreJet Classics)

15th Reunion Report "After The Action"

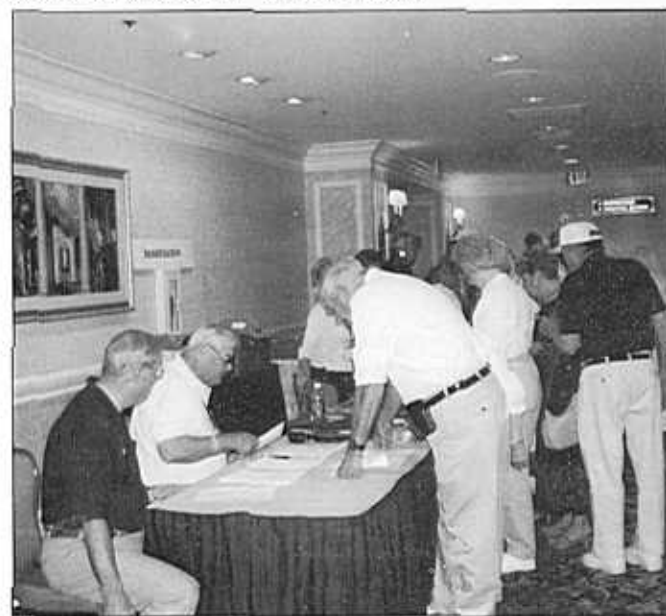
Monday, April 4th, 2005. At 1pm, Las Vegas time, President Jerry Johnson officially declared the 15th Reunion of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association "Open!". The crowd in the hallway began lining up to receive their registration packages which included, two Brunch tickets, a cocktail Party ticket, seven free drink tickets, your name tag, and an Association pen and calculator (which work great by the way). The women were presented with a scarf. Not a bad deal for the cost.

Registration went very smoothly because of the people that were running it. Many thanks to all those that helped. As you entered the Hospitality Room, you immediately noticed two things - the Flight Line Store display on the left, with plenty of Association items for sale, including shirts, jackets, hats, and Mach Buster certificates. The 'Store' is now being run by Jack Seaman. Many thanks to George Menster who did a fine job but was forced to give up the 'Store' due to moving.

Second and on the right, was the cash bar. You could redeem the seven 'drink tickets' at the bar at any time. The bar stayed open every night until 10 pm. And of course, just in front of you were dozens of tables, usually filled with old friends and colleagues. Several tables had signs announcing that "Here was the meeting place for X Squadron, or Class ??, or whatever." I saw mini-reunion signs for class 56N, the 86th FIS out of Youngstown Airport, 453rd FBS, 44th FBS, and the SPAADS from the RCAF.

For the next three days and nights a constant stream of pilots and their spouses wove their way through the maze of tables, stopping every few feet to say Hi to a friend or squadron mate. You could hear "Remember when we—" at literally every table, usually followed by a gale of laughter. Of course there was also the "What-ever happened to—?", which often was followed by a moment of silence.

The registration line seemed to always be full from the opening gong at the 15th Reunion.



WELCOME



15TH REUNION

Tuesday morning opened bright and cheerful with a 0900 buffet style Brunch. The food was delicious as always and no one left hungry. If you did, it was your own fault. Registration continued throughout the day with more and more members entering the hall looking for old friends. By the time registration closed, we had over 500 in attendance. The evening was highlighted with a buffet dinner that was incredible. You could choose from chicken piccata, salmon, and steamship round of beef. But watch the horseradish sauce. It could really light up your palate if you weren't careful. I know!!!

Bright and early on Wednesday, and I do mean early, the day began. The golfers left the hotel at 0630 for an 0800 tee time at Nellis' Sun Rise Vista Golf Course. One half hour later, the buses were ready to take everyone else to the Red Flag briefing at Nellis. It's incredible what goes on in these building all day, every day. The ladies were treated to a luncheon at 1130 while the men were gone. That evening a cocktail party was held in the Hospitality Room.

Bob Smith (L) and Dan Druen discuss various issues during a lull in reunion activities. Dan is Chairman of the Board of Directors, while Bob is our Vice President.





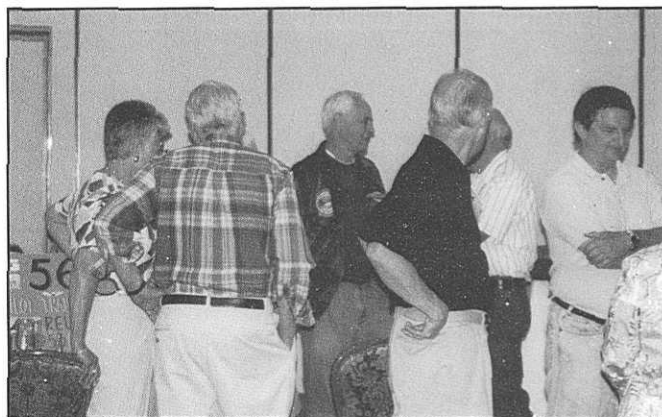
The Flight Line Store always had a long line from opening day until the night of the banquet. George Menster and Jack Seaman did an outstanding job in running the 'store'.

While the guests were busy on the golf course and at Red Flag, the Association officers held a Board of Directors Meeting at 1 pm. The meeting was highlighted by several problem areas that needed to be addressed. These included the cost of the reunion, which has increased dramatically over the past several years, while fees have remained the same. Treasurer Richard Geiger noted that the cost of the reunion this year would be in excess of \$114,600.00, while the fees generated would be about \$71,500.00 - a net LOSS of almost \$41,000.00!

Something had to be done. After much discussion, it was decided to raise the reunion registration fee to help offset the costs - from \$60 to \$100. This would allow us to continue with everything that is included in the package - two Brunches, and the cocktail party. The prices for golf, Red Flag, and the Banquet may also need to be raised but this will be decided later and the membership will be notified.

Other items that were discussed included a presentation from Glenn Carus on the status of the Association tablets at the Smithsonian. Jerry Johnson noted that we had a list of 178 inactive members, which are printed within this issue of the magazine. Anyone knowing the status of anyone on the list, is asked to contact either Jerry Johnson or Larry Davis.

Members of Class 56N had their own table and a mini-reunion within our 15th Reunion. George Andre reported that Class 56N had over 20 members in attendance.



There was a large crowd for both of the morning brunches held in the hospitality Room. As usual, the Monte Carlo Food was excellent and plentiful.

Thursday began with the second Brunch at 0900, which was followed by the Membership Meeting at 1030 hrs. The new slate of officers was unanimously elected. A list of their names and positions is included in the President's Notebook. It was noted that membership has declined about 100 since the last reunion. The attending members were asked to encourage their fellow squadron mates to join the Association. Many squadron associations only have a few members within our association, even though they all flew the F-86.

Glenn Carus gave a nice talk regarding the Association tablets that are on display in front of the Udvar-Hazy building of the Air & Space Museum. Glenn passed around photos of the museum and the 'tablets', and urged all in attendance to submit their names and money and get their names on the tablet. The membership was told of the reunion costs and fees, and overwhelmingly approved the increase in reunion fees beginning with the 16th Reunion in 2007.

The membership also voted on two changes to the Constitution, which were both approved. Tom Slee informed the members that he had 1/32 scale models of the F-86F available; and that he could have the moldmaker do a 1/32 F-86D if he had 25 members sign up. The





The cash bar was set up inside the Hospitality Room and with 6 free drink tickets, was always a busy place.

President Jerry Johnson calls the Members Meeting to order on Tuesday morning. Several very important issues were discussed and voted on by the membership in attendance.



Treasurer Dick Geiger gives his report and details the reasons that the association needs to raise the price of the 16th Reunion.

Two brunches were part of your registration 'package' at the 15th Reunion. The food was buffet style, meaning you could eat to your hearts (or stomachs) content. But stay away from the horseradish!



One of the many squadrons that held a mini-reunion in conjunction with the 15th Reunion was the 44th FBS, who had two full tables of members in attendance.

Glenn Carus explains the details of getting your name on an Association tablet exhibited at the Udvar-Hazy branch of the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum. The association has three tablets on display.





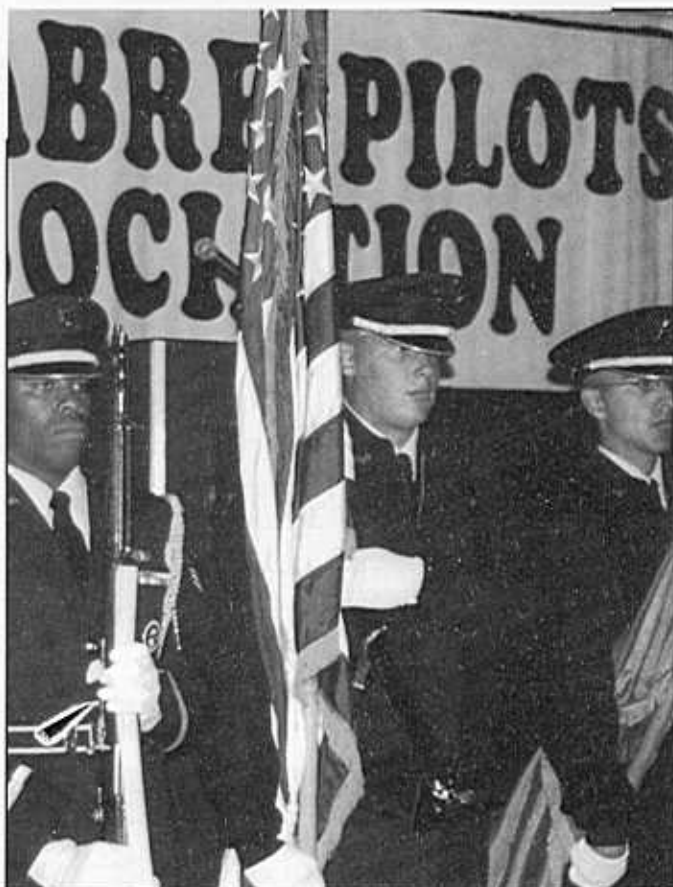
President Jerry Johnson welcomes Major General Stephen Goldfein, Commander of the Air Warfare Center at Nellis AFB, to the 15th Reunion.

cost would be about \$69.00. Tom has a catalog and he can be contacted at F86pilot@mindspring.com.

Thursday evening promptly at 1900 hrs, the Banquet was opened by the posting of the colors by the Nellis AFB Color Guard. After a sumptuous meal of filet mignon and sea bass (not to mention that incredible cheese-cake dessert), Major General Stephen M. Goldfein, Commander of the Air Warfare Center at Nellis, gave a short talk about the status of the Air Force and the mission of the men at Nellis. One of the highlights for me was when he mentioned that the RPVs that are flying every day over Iraq, are being piloted via satellite by men and women on the ground at Nellis AFB, some 12,000 miles away! INCREDIBLE! His talk was received with a large number of "Oohs!" and "Ahhh's", and he was given a standing ovation at the end. Maj.Gen. Goldfein was presented with a model of the F-86 by Jerry Johnson.

Following dessert, the membership was treated to a lively concert of patriotic songs from Don and Ruth Harten playing a fife and drum. The music ranged from Revolutionary War times up through today and was well received. Next was the raffle and several people went home with more money than they brought. Two tickets went unclaimed - #426973 and #809838. If you have those tickets, please contact Bob Smith, PO Box 370535, Las Vegas, NV 89137 with a xerox of the winning ticket.

President Jerry Johnson then closed the 15th reunion and wished everyone well with the hopes of seeing everyone back at the 16th Reunion. This was my wife



Nellis AFB sent a Color Guard to open the banquet at the 15th Reunion. VERY SHARP!!

Susan's first Sabre Pilots Reunion and she really enjoyed herself, although she got a bit tired of hearing about what a great job I was doing. Thanks Guys! Hope to see even more of you in 2007.

(all photos courtesy of Larry Davis)

Bob Watson reported that the 86th FIS out of Youngstown Airport, had about a dozen attendees at the 15th Reunion. Another squadron in attendance was the 453rd FBS.





Don Ackert reported that at least 10 members of the RCAF SPAADs attended our reunion this year. The SPAADs are the RCAF equivalent to our F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn.

Maj.Gen. Stephen Goldfein gave a rousing talk about the men and weapons being developed and operated at Nellis AFB Air Warfare Center in the war on terrorism. It was very informative and exciting.



President Jerry Johnson welcomes all those attending the 15th Sabre Pilots banquet. The food was superb and that cheesecake was to die for.

Jerry Johnson presented Maj.Gen. Goldfein with a model of the F-86 Sabre as a token of our appreciation. Maj.Gen. Goldfein said it would take a place of honor in his office.



Ruth and Don Harten gave some very exciting renditions of various patriotic music at the close of the banquet.



Troy Cope Returns Home

With Grateful Thanks to Charlie Cox

February 2005 - Finally, after 53 years, Captain Troy Cope, United States Air Force, has returned to his home and family from the Korean War. Captain Cope was shot down over the Yalu River in 1952. This is his story.

On 16 September 1952, Captain Troy "Gordy" Cope, and Captain Karl Dittmer, pilots in the 335th FIS, 4th FIG, climbed into the cockpits of their F-86E Sabres for another mission to an area of North Korea known as "MiG Alley". On this fateful day, Cpts. Cope and Dittmer would engage up to six Soviet-built MiG-15 jet fighters over the Yalu River. The MiGs were flown by Soviet fighter pilots from the 518th Fighter Regiment.

During the melee, a MiG-15 piloted by Capt. Vasily Zhuravel, pulled in behind Capt. Cope's F-86 and fired his cannons. Several cannon shells struck Capt. Cope's Sabre and witness' saw the airplane burst into flames and go into a dive across the Yalu River. Capt. Troy Cope was never heard from again and was declared 'Missing In Action'. With no word about his fate from the communists following the cease fire in July 1953, Capt. Cope was presumed dead in late 1953.

However, he was still carried on the official rolls as Missing In Action. Had he died in the crash? Had he ejected and been captured, only to be sent to a Soviet gulag as several other American pilots had been. No one knew exactly. However, in 1995, a significant event took place. An American businessman was visiting China and stopped to see the Korean War Museum in Dandong, China. The MiGs had been based at nearby Antung Airbase, just across the Yalu River from where the dogfight had occurred between Capt. Cope and Capt. Zhuravel.

Inside the museum, the American businessman discovered a display of artifacts from the war, including the dog tags of an American pilot - Capt. Troy Cope. He made a 'rubbing' of the dog tags and turned them over



Captain Troy Cope, Korea 1952. (credit - Karl Dittmer)

to officials at the U.S. Embassy. An official investigation was immediately started. In 1999, a breakthrough occurred when Defense Department MIA analysts were allowed to search the Russian archives in Podolsk.

Within the archives was a detailed report on the downing of an American F-86 that took place on 16 September 1952, the day on which Capt. Cope was shot down. The report included the after-action report from Capt. Zhuravel describing how he shot down the American Sabre. Also included were eyewitness reports from a Chinese villager who was able to describe the location of the crash site. The report noted that "an enemy airplane crashed into a house in a village and the pilot's body was found in the wreckage.", and noted the exact location of the crash site.

As a result of these findings, American and Chinese officials met in Beijing in October 2003 to discuss excavating the crash site for any possible remains. The

An Honor Guard from the Texas Air National Guard bring Captain Troy Cope home to the Dallas-Ft. Worth National Cemetery on May 31st 2005. (credit - Darrell Byers)





Members of the Honor Guard carry Captain Troy Cope's casket to the grave. Captain Cope's remains were uncovered in an unmarked grave near Antung AB in Manchuria in June 2004. (credit - Darrell Byers)



Carl Pope places a rose on his brother's casket during the services held at the Dallas-Ft. Worth National Cemetery. (credit - Darrell Byers)

initiated by members of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command as soon as possible. A preliminary site investigation located further evidence and eyewitness testimony regarding the crash.

Recovery operations were completed in June 2004 and all artifacts and human remains were returned and repatriated back to the United States at Hockam AFB, Honolulu, Hawaii, on 13 July 2004. One of Capt. Cope's sons accompanied the JPAC team and watched as

excavator's unearthed a parachute, identifiable pieces of the airplane, and the remains of a man. Through DNA testing, the body was positively identified as that of Captain Troy Gordon Cope.

On 31 May 2005, Captain Troy 'Gordy' Cope was buried with full military honors at the Dallas-Ft. Worth National Cemetery. A missing man formation was flown by three 336th TFS F-15E Strike Eagles from Seymour Johnson AFB.

Members of the Honor Guard fold the flag as a trio of 336th TFS F-15E Strike Eagles fly a 'missing man' formation over the services. Capt. Cope was a pilot in the 336th Squadron in Korea when he was shot down in October 1952. (credit - Darrell Byers)

(note: All Darrell Byers photo used with permission of the Dallas Star-Telegram)





(L-R) Andy Anderson, John Henderson, Dick Becker, and Nick Farrell talk things over on the Kimpo flightline in December 1950. The four pilots and Henderson, North American Tech Rep, were part of Detachment A, the first Sabre unit to fly combat in Korea. (credit - USAF)

BUGOUT FROM KIMPO

by John Henderson

The order to 'pack up and ship out' came on the 30th or 31st of December, 1950. I heard from either M/SGT Lowe, the 336th FIS line chief, or one of the three pilots I bunked with at Kimpo. It had been slim pickings for the pilots of Det A since the 22 December shootout when we scored six MiGs, which took the fight out of the Russian pilots. until the 30th, when Commander Paul Pugh, a Navy exchange pilot with the 334th Squadron, and Capt. Jim Jabara both scored.

The detachment flew its last Yalu River sorties on the 31st, and many of those aircraft went directly back to Johnson AB, Japan, following the mission. I don't recall exactly how many went to Johnson at that time, but I do recall that it was a much shorter distance to walk the entire line of Sabres parked at Kimpo following the mission.

We had about twenty aircraft remaining on the line at Kimpo after the departure of the first group to Johnson. That included one 'sick bird'. That airplane had been involved in a fatal accident the evening of 1 January. It was on that date that the move back to Johnson was confirmed and the rest of the detachment would leave on the 2nd. I'd packed up my personal gear and put it with my tentmate's bags for transport, and went back to the flight line.

Time was divided between boxing up and loading of the GSE, special tools, and spares, once we knew they would not be needed to maintain the Sabres. We were in good shape maintenance-wise, and by mid-day, all aircraft were ready to fly. The biggest chore was to install the big 200 gallon ferry tanks in place of the 120 gallon combat tanks normally carried.

The word was passed - 'anything useable by the enemy

that could't be sent to Japan, was to be destroyed.' So, between drop tank installations, we continued to clear the parking ramp of useable items, which were either burned or destroyed using a sledge hammer.

As evening came, we were warned that no fires or lights would be allowed as the perimeter of the base might come under small arms attack. We had reports that the Chinese had traveled so fast that their artillery couldn't keep up, which must have been true since Kimpo suffered no heavy weapons fire while I was still there through the 2nd.

We were preparing to run up the remaining F-86s with replacement drop tank installations, checking for fuel transfer from the underwing tanks to the main fuel tank.

Lt.Cmdr. Paul Pugh, US Navy, was an exchange pilot with the 4th FIG when they deployed to Korea in November 1950. Commander Pugh scored the last Sabre victory of Detachment A's short time at Kimpo. (credit - Larry Davis collection)





North American Sub Station #1 was at Suwon after the return to Korea by the 4th FIG in March 1951. Kimpo was deemed "too rough" for Sabre operations at the time. (credit - Dick Merian)

The engine had to be run at about 70% throttle to pressurize the tanks and make them feed. In most cases, there would be a man on each tank which would preclude one man from having to go from one tank to another while checking. But on 1 January 1951, we were very short of personnel, and there was only one airman for the checks.

We started the feed checks and had five or six engines running at the same time. As they started, I walked down the line into the run-up area, walking well in front of the aircraft. Perhaps fifty feet past the second Sabre, I heard the sound of an engine change - from the high pitch roar that was characteristic of the J47, to a deadened, muffled roar. It got my immediate attention.

As I turned toward the sound, I had the fleeting image of someone's legs disappearing down the intake. Due to the lack of personnel, one of the airmen had to cross to the other drop tank for his check. Procedure called for

"Minimum Effort", an F-86A with the 4th FIG showing all the equipment necessary to change an engine on the open ramp at Kimpo AB. Most of this equipment was unavailable to John Henderson and his crew on the night of 1 January 1951. (credit - USAF)



4th FIG crew chief Sgt. Will prepares to duck under Dave Fitton's Sabre the correct way - behind the nose gear. Even if the J47 was not running, it was always good practice to cross under the Sabre BEHIND the nose wheel. (credit - Troy White)

a man to cross under the fuselage and behind the nose gear. To this day, I wonder why Sgt. Witherspoon crossed in front of the nose gear. I checked to make sure the gear door was closed during the run-up and fuel transfer tests. It was. We had no bell-mouth screens nor run-up stands. And none would have been available this late on this particular day anyway. All such items were either already enroute to Johnson or packed up and awaiting transportation.

This young man, like most of us, was wearing a GI-issue, hooded parka. The parka was bulky and probably affected his ability to easily bend over and scoot under the nose behind the nose wheel. So he tried another route. How many times he passed in front of the nose wheel in the past, I have no idea. I would guess this might have been his first. It was also his last. It cost him his life.

It was a bad time to lose an engine. But it was a terrible



"Burr Head", sits in the snow at Kimpo during December 1950. Although snow wasn't a big problem, the cold, 30+ degrees below zero, certainly was! (credit - Ken Siddons)

time to lose a promising young man. Sgt. Witherspoon was dead before the violent vortex slammed him into the accessory cover on the nose of the engine. His body tore off the airspeed pitot pickup, which is welded in the intake on an F-86A. It was the pieces of the pitot that destroyed the engine, when they passed through the compressor section. The engine whined to a stop and the medics removed Sgt. Witherspoon's body from the intake duct.

Now we had a problem. Do we destroy the airplane on the ramp to keep it out of the hands of the Chinese, or do we change the engine and try to make it flyable? Fortunately, we had a spare engine, built up and ready for installation. But we were still in a bind. To safely change an engine at night, we needed light. But we couldn't risk that with the Chinese close at hand. The engine clearance on the right side was very, very tight. It would be extremely risky in the dark.

We would have to use a 'sling' to control the engine as we had no other means to lift it. We couldn't roll the 'cherry picker' to the airplane so we had to roll the airplane onto the engine. Over uneven ground, with minimum clearance - it was a bad deal. Someone made the decision - we would remove the engine in the dark on that night. The old engine lay on some sand bags while we removed the replacement from the transport dolly. We'd still have sheet metal repair to the hole in the intake where the pitot had been torn out. But that would be done in the morning.

There would be time while the sheet metal work was being done, to install the replacement engine and be ready to check it out once the intake was patched and checked for FOD. Work began on the engine change and intake patch well before the sun came up. Inspection revealed no other damage. It was anticipated that the



The damaged engine accessory cover of the J47 that John Henderson and his crew removed during the early morning hours of 2 January 1951. (credit - John Henderson)

remaining Sabres would launch after the noon hour, giving us the entire morning to make this last Sabre ready. As the scab patch was being riveted over the hole inside the intake, we started installing the new engine.

We had sufficient light to watch the close tolerances and the engine slid securely into the mounts. We made all the connections and replaced the aft section. The engine checked out satisfactorily as did the drop tank fuel transfer. When all systems were 'Go!', we put it up for a test hop, knowing full well that if the check flight was OK, the aircraft would not return to Kimpo. Capt. 'Mac' Lane, later to be USAF's Inspector General, took the damaged bird up, flew by, and then attached himself to Capt. Max Weill's wing for the flight to Johnson.

It was so cold on the flightline at Kimpo that crews built small windbreaks, called "fire pits", from old drop tank crates and boxes. Inside they had a 55 gallon drum used as a furnace, and always had a hot pot of coffee brewing. (credit - John Henderson)





4th FIG ground crew personnel push a new J47 engine into the fuselage of a Sabre on the ramp at Kimpo during December 1950. Clearances were very tight on the right side, made doubly tough on 2 January 1951 since they had to do it in the dark. (credit - Larry Davis collection)

Lt.Cols. Zack Taylor and Bruce Hinton, Capt. Quay, the armament officer, a flight line M/Sgt., and myself were left behind to see to the damaged engine and clean up the odds and ends before we abandoned Kimpo. It was a lonely afternoon and evening, and more than a little scary. I was airlifted out about midnight aboard a C-54

Installing a new engine at Suwon was slightly better than at Kimpo in the Winter of 1950. The 307th BG B-29 in the background served as an engine repair shop during the late Spring of 1951. Engines were flown in from Japan ready to install. (credit - Irv Clark)



The drop tank 'farm' at Kimpo in 1951. Most of the tanks are 120 gallon so-called 'combat tanks'. However, the flight to Johnson AB, Japan, required use of the 200 gallon ferry tanks. (credit - North American)

air-evac flight for the walking wounded. I'm not certain how the 4th Group officers got my name on the manifest, but I'm eternally grateful. They saved me from a long hike to Inchon Harbor. Detachment 'A' operations at Kimpo Air Base were finished.



MEMORIES OF NELLIS

by Robert Holland

It's been 51 years. What follows is from memory only and some of you will probably say, "That's not the way it was at all!" But this is how I remember it.

They'd been fairly careful with us in cadets. There'd been a few accidents, some of them fatal, but not too many. And from time to time, we'd hear stories about Nellis and Luke and how it was a much different game there. Someone said, "If you can survive Nellis, Korea should be no problem."

The day finally came. We graduated from cadets - 52F - and were on our way to the big time, Nellis AFB. The first thing I saw approaching the base was an ominous looking burned out hulk of an '86. Certainly a wreck used for fire fighting exercises but I didn't know it at the time. In the BOQ I noticed that someone was gathering the personal effects of the occupant in the room next door. Four guys had been killed the week before, target fixation, midairs, etc.

Of course, living next to Las Vegas wasn't the most healthy situation. If you were a 'jock', you felt a certain pressure to be able to party all night on the strip and be unaffected the following morning at Nellis. Who needs sleep when you're 20?

During the initial briefing, Colonel Clay Tice, the Nellis commander, gave us a welcoming speech in the auditorium. As I recall, it went like this - "Welcome to Nellis AFB men. The finest fighter weapons school in the world. We're going to do one of three things to you here - wash you out, kill you, or make you one of the best fighter pilots in the world. The choice is yours. Now I want you all to go out, drink a pint of 'panther piss', eat a pound of raw meat, find yourselves a strange woman, and we'll see you bright and early Monday morning."

Lt. Robert J. Holland at Nellis AFB in 1952. (credit - RJ Kolland)



The 3596th "Cadillac Squadron" ramp at Nellis in 1951. There were at least two Sabre squadrons within The Fighter School at Nellis, the 3595th and 3596th. (credit - North American)

I was assigned to the 3596th Cadillac Squadron, commanded by Major Bill Whisner, and ace in both World War 2 and Korea. The checkout in the Sabre was fairly casual - take a look at the manual, listen to a short briefing by another Korean ace, Ivan Kinchloe, who always had a huge cigar in his mouth while he stuck his head in my cockpit. "You'll like it kid!" Then the first take-off, wings wagging all over the place with Kinchloe following in another '86 to keep me out of trouble. It was a great thrill. The '86 was the hottest fighter in the world and I was going to be an F-86 pilot.

It was a very impressive collection of pilots and Kinchloe was certainly one of the most colorful. One evening at the O-Club, he was having a particularly good time when a bird colonel ordered him to 'tone it down'. I don't remember the exact words but Ivan told that colonel where he could go and what he could do. Now captains don't talk to colonels like that anywhere. But Kinchloe was a double ace, and the colonel was a ground pounder, and this was Nellis. The colonel made several red-faced apoplectic threats but nothing ever came of it.

Later we were shown some of Kinchloe's gun camera film showing a huge tail pipe taking up the whole screen, then a shower of MiG-15 parts plying by. Someone later said, semi-seriously, "If he ever bothered to learn how to use the gun sight, he'd have had twice as many kills!" As it was he had 10. Later on he was to have been the first pilot to fly the X-15 rocket plane, but as everyone knows, he was killed in an F-104 accident at Edwards in 1958.



A flight of "Cadillac Squadron" F-86As over Nevada in 1952. Note the Cadillac emblem on the tail. Today, they would have to pay GM a royalty for such things. (credit - North American)

My first supersonic ride was exciting, particularly after recently seeing the English movie "Breaking The Sound Barrier", and remembering that scene of the black smoking hole after the test pilot had hit the 'sound barrier'. It was all exciting to a green kid just out of cadet school.

Another day we were off at 0500. Our instructor, another Korea veteran, wanted to read below sea level on his altimeter, so off we went to Death Valley, a few feet above the dirt, on our way to the practice bombing range. We barely cleared the roof of Scotty's Castle (the guests must have loved that) as we proceeded on our way. I was number 4 and burning up more fuel than anyone else trying to stay in position.

Approaching Indian Springs on our way back, I was down to the 'Texaco' low fuel point. I called "Texaco!". No response. I called again and my flight leader simply said, "I heard you. Stay in position and shut up!" I remember passing over Las Vegas and seeing ZERO on my fuel gauge. I was petrified, expecting to flame out at any moment. But I didn't.

Another Sabre pilot member that flew with "Cadillac Squadron" was Dick Gilbert, seen here by his 3596th Sabre at Nellis in 1952. (credit - Dick Gilbert)



I flew that same airplane on the next mission. As I approached the cockpit, the crew chief calmly said, "Lieutenant, do you know how much fuel we put in your airplane yesterday? 435 gallons!" It was an F-86A and that was the maximum internal fuel capacity, unless I have the numbers wrong. I'd pulled into the chocks on fumes! I told this to my flight leader and his only comment was - "Nice fuel utilization!" Later at K-13 at the end of a mission, I heard the tower tell someone that he "was number 3 in the 'flame out pattern!'"

Another day we were on the high angle bombing range as I heard the ground controller call, "Swordfish Lead, what's that column of black smoke?" Lead - "Oh that was my no. 4 man. Lost him on the last pass." The controller came back, "Unscoreable at twelve!" These things happen. This was Nellis.

Then there was the daily flag lowering ceremony. Everyone would gather at the flag pole at the end of the day. The idea was that exactly at 1700, one of the instructors

who can forget the infamous ejection seat 'ride' that everyone rode. However, many would be glad for the experience after they had to go through the 'real deal' at a future date. You can ride virtually the same thing in every amusement park today. (credit - Dick Gilbert)





One of the "memories" that some pilots had of Nellis was having a small part in various Hollywood motion pictures. This F-86A from the 3595th CCTS was painted as a MiG for a role in the Reel War in "Sabre Jet", which starred Robert Stack. (credit - Dick Gilbert)

would appear in an '86 as low and as fast as he could manage, and attempt to dazzle us with whatever he thought was appropriate. A vertical series of rolls to a few knots above stall, a double Immelmann, or maybe even try for a triple. All to the cheers and cat calls of everyone as we headed for the club.

Anyway, when we left for Korea, we thought we were all very hot stuff. Real jet pilots, not old retreads who'd been flying ancient P-51s, P-47s, or P-38s. Actually, those 'old men' were highly experienced fighter pilots from 'the War', only five years or so back. They were in their late 20s or early 30s and at the top of their game. Of course,

Pilots from the 3596th Cadillac Squadron pose for the camera in 1951. Third pilot in the back row is Major Vermont Garrison, Commander of the 3596th, who would go to Korea and become a Double Jet Ace. (credit - SabreJet Classics)

being young and full of it, very few of us really understood that, but they really knew what they were doing.

There were many in this class in the instructor group at Nellis. The Best Of The Best! But the point was that like all of the other young men being sent off to war since the beginning of history, we were untested and apprehensive, but also with the naive confidence of youth and excited by the prospect of the adventure.

What did we have - 350 hours at most. Now, looking back after 23,000 hours (I know, I know, multi-engine time doesn't count!), that doesn't seem like much of anything.

The Commander of The Fighter School at Nellis was Col. Clay Tice, who flew this F-86E-15 with distinctive bands representing every squadron assigned to The Fighter School at the time. (credit - Ron Kelly)



Cold War Fighter Pilot



Harold Wade

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"Been there, done that." That will be the reaction of most fighter pilots from the Fifties through the early Seventies after reading Harold Wade's memoirs of his USAF career. His many tales of "close shaves" in T-33 and F-86D/L aircraft will surely rekindle memories of similar episodes.

Those who have never flown high performance military aircraft will gain an appreciation for this demanding profession as it was not so long ago. Mr. Wade's book is an easy read, and he enhances his flying stories with details of his family life and no-holds-barred accounts of his interactions with the military chain of command as he perceived it.

This reader was surprised at how familiar were the scenarios in which the author found himself. Primitive (by today's standards) navigation and communication equipment often made the fighter pilot's job a series of near-death experiences. As Mr. Wade says after telling of yet another harrowing flight, "This was the continuing story of my flying career; unfamiliar territory, in the dark, bad weather, and low on fuel." AMEN!

If you've been there, be prepared to remember many of your own adventures you haven't thought about in a long time. Have your grandkids read this in any event. If you're a "wannabe", you'll find the stories enlightening.

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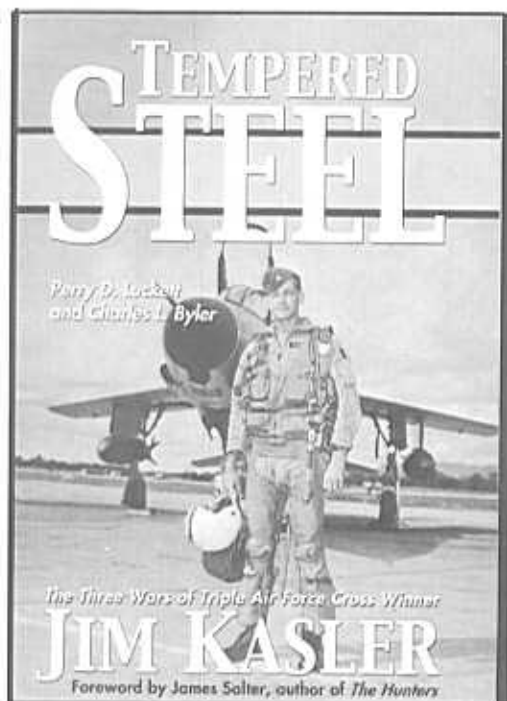
"Skeet" Vaughan wants to hear from anyone that flew with Lt. Edward A. Smith, 336th FIS 1953-54. Contact Otha "Skeet" Vaughan, 10102 Westleigh Dr, Huntsville, AL 35803, (256)881-2566, or e-mail skeetv@knology.net

67th FBS in Korea

1st Lt Glenn Beadle, wants to contact anyone that served with him in the 67th FBS at K-55 during the Korean War. Contact Glenn Beadle (601)956-4602, or e-mail gbeadle@jam.rr.com

F-86 NOSE ART

Did your F-86 have any personal markings like names or nose art? Your Editor would like to see photos of F-86s of any type, and at any base or unit, with personal markings of any type. Contact Larry Davis, Editor, SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721, (330)493-4122, or e-mail sabreclsx@aol.com



TEMPERED STEEL

The Three Wars of Triple Air Force Cross
Winner Jim Kasler

By Perry D. Luckett and Charles L. Byler

Potomac Books, Inc.
22841 Quicksilver Drive
Dulles, Virginia 20166

Colonel Jim Kasler, USAF Retired: B-29 tail gunner, F-86 Sabre pilot (6 MiGs), F-105 Thud pilot (91 missions), POW (6 1/2 years), successful businessman, family man. Three Air Force Crosses (the only three time recipient), two Silver Stars, Legion of Merit, nine Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars (one with "V"), two Purple Hearts, and eleven Air Medals. Jim Kasler's amazing life story is summarized in those few words, but the authors of his biography have provided details which reveal much more about this American hero. Perhaps the words of another hero, in the "Afterword" of *Tempered Steel*, say it best:

As the biography documents, Jim Kasler is an indestructible man who persevered in the face of death through years of wartime combat flying, massive injuries in Vietnam, and vicious, continuous torture at the hands of his captors at Hoa Lo prison. Colonel Kasler can thank his tremendously strong character for his miraculous survival.

Jim's status as a Korean War ace speaks for itself. In Vietnam he was one of the Air Force's top fliers, lauded by fellow pilots as 'the Destroyer' for his effectiveness in the F-105 Thunderchief. Despite being junior in rank to many in his wing, he planned and led the June 29, 1966, Hanoi POL (petroleum, oil, and lubricants) strike. It was perhaps the most effective major attack of the Vietnam War, save perhaps the great B-52 bombardments that shut down the war.

The tough breaks ahead would have defeated a lesser person. During his captivity, Jim Kasler was in a painful and hopeless mess, squeezed between the disciplinary arm of the prison and the severe needs of his grotesquely wounded body. Several attempted "operations" never repaired him properly, but rather left him with debilitating infections that would haunt him for many years, even after his return. During numerous torture sessions, he suffered a ruptured eardrum, broken rib, broken teeth, multiple flayings of his buttocks and legs (which left his skin hanging in shreds), and a reinjury of his poor leg when his attackers repeatedly kicked it and jumped on it. Still, Jim refused to cooperate with his torturers, showing spectacular resistance and admirable integrity.

... he survived, returned home, and continued serving his country. I greatly admire his courage and tenacity.

JAMES BOND STOCKDALE
Vice Admiral, USN (Retired)
Medal of Honor recipient
NAM-POW

"Sabres Over MiG Alley"

by Kenneth P. Werrell

This is the most thoroughly researched and documented account of the F-86 that I have ever read. It is NOT a 'coffee table' book, with slick pages and many photos (there are about 20 photos total), but it reads like a textbook on the F-86.

In fact, it is a normal size, hard cover book with 233 pages plus 85 pages of footnotes, etc. The author, a 1960 grad of the Air Force Academy and a professor since leaving the Air Force, cites many interviews, and includes many footnotes and an extensive bibliography. Our own Bruce Hinton is quoted often. And Mr. Werrell gives praise to *SabreJet Classics* as a prime source of his information. His footnotes cite various issues of *SabreJet Classics*, as well as Larry Davis' and Warren Thompson's excellent Sabre books.

"There is considerable material of a mixed nature in magazines. Of these I would emphasize three - *SabreJet Classics*, the organ of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Assn., prints interesting and useful first person accounts; ... Larry Davis published a lengthy, detailed, excellent, and extensively illustrated study of the F-86 in *Wings Of Fame*, vols. 10 & 11."

Although I haven't finished reading the whole book, I've found only a few minor editing errors. Overall, the mass of information is more than I've ever seen in one place. You can learn more by contacting Historic Aviation Books, plus a Google search for "Sabres Over MiG Alley" will turn up several other sites, including Amazon.com. Gents, I recommend this book.

Lon Walter



WHAT IS IT? Our strange Sabre for this issue is an early F-86H-1 with the standard six .50 caliber machine gun armament. But what makes it strange is the fact that it carries the Lockheed Starfighter emblem on the nose and drop tanks, leading one to believe it had something to do with the F-104 program. Anyone with information about the airplane, the time and place, is asked to contact your editor, Larry Davis, SabreJet Classics, 6475 Chesham Dr NE, Canton, OH 44721, (330)493-4122, or e-mail sabreclsx@aol.com. (credit - Larry Davis collection)

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