



THE STYRENE SHEET



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Hasegawa's F-86F as FU-351 of the 67th FBS

By John Heck

It seems jobs were scarce in Silicon Valley, and I was fresh out. That's why the "help wanted" sign at my favorite tropical fish store held slightly higher interest for me—as if it said "free candy" or "wet paint—don't touch." Then there was that voice—that voice in my head that makes me do things. "Take the job," it said. But the other voice in my head said, "it's retail! You can't do retail, remember what happened last time?" The first voice in my head said, "hey, Mr. Restraining Order', you need the money." That's when the third voice in my head said, "hey, you guys hungry? Let's get a sandwich. I'm buying." We all ignored him and when in to get our tetras and Saltines and ask the manager for a job application.

Thankfully they had never heard of the "kitty-melt" incident and hired me a few days later. Aside from learning way too much about tropical fish and buying my first Hawaiian shirts, I made some friends—because they never asked the right questions. One was Jamie Bielefeldt. We had a lot in common; he too knows why too much about tropical fish, has no Hawaiian shirts, and hasn't built plastic models since he out grew it.

It seems his dad used to do something interesting. He flew F-86Fs in Korea. Jamie suggested I build a kit of an F-86F for his dad. At first I resisted because I know how much work it is to

build a kit even out of the box. In addition, I build so few kits that I would hate to give one away. After a while, building a model for someone who used to fly that very aircraft started to sound like a good thing to do. It was.

Jamie brought in an Osprey book called *F-86 Sabre Fighter-Bomber Units Over Korea* and showed me a picture of his father

sitting in the cockpit of his F-86F with his crew chief, Ronald Laudenschlager standing on the wing next to him.

Jamie's father, Lt. Col. Vilas Bielefeldt (Ret.), sent me several slides of him and his Sabre taken at a gunnery meet. These were original Kodachrome slides that I scanned and then returned. I'm sure to Vilas they were just pictures but to me they were museum pieces. While it was great to be able to fondle "vintage" transparencies from the war (just after it techni-



John used Hasegawa's F-86F kit to build Lt. Vilas Bielefeldt's mount as it appeared at the end of the Korean conflict.

cally), I was terrified I would spill Kool-Aid on them or maybe a meteor would crash through my roof and burn the slides up in a smoking crater. I scanned them and returned them as soon as possible.

One of the photos Vilas sent was the same image of Vilas and Ronald that was published in the Osprey book. I decided to use this image as the basis of the project. This would require a seated pilot and a standing crew figure plus the opening of the ammunition door/step and the creation of that little wing plug that overlaps this door.

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The *Styrene Sheet* is a monthly publication of the Silicon Valley Chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society (IPMS). Articles and comments should be submitted to John Heck, Editor, P.O. Box 361644, Milpitas, CA 95036, or by E-mail at editor@svsm.org. Excerpts may be published only with written permission of the editor.

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EDITOR'S BRIEF

Welcome to the November issue of the *Styrene Sheet*. I want to apologize for not getting a *Styrene Sheet* published last month. I don't really know what happened. I was working on it and then went out to dinner on the Thursday before I was to mail it. I remember starting to drive home but nothing else. Weird. The funny thing is, I ran out of toner and the cassette that was loaded was pretty full, I thought. Oh well. I guess I'll take that up with the retailer.

Speaking of the *Styrene Sheet*—I hope you like F-86 Sabres! This issue is nothing but F-86 Sabres. All of the articles revolve around one F-86 pilot, Lt. Col. Vilas Bielefeldt, who flew the F-86F as a lieutenant at the end of the Korean War. As I mention elsewhere in this issue, I had the pleasure of working with Mr. Bielefeldt's son Jamie, and through Jamie learned that his father was a pilot during the Korean War. Jamie suggested I build a model of his father F-86F and so I did.

Aside from my story about building the model of Lt. Col. Bielefeldt's F-86, Chris Bucholtz has submitted a great interview with Mr. Bielefeldt that has, in my mind, given some life to the model that I built. The interview drives home the fact that the model is a replica of a real machine that existed in a time and a place—that real men flew and maintained her and even though FU-351 may no longer be around, she lives in the minds of the men who knew her.

Jamie Bielefeldt has kindly submitted a letter explaining how much the model has meant to his father and even to himself, I suppose. It's very rewarding to know my effort was well received.

Taking a step back, I can see that one might think this is a vanity issue. I assure you that this issue is intended as a tribute to Vilas Bielefeldt and the men and women of his ilk. I must say, however, that I have an ulterior motive—because of my rewarding experience building FU-351 and the acknowledgement that doing so appears to given Mr. Bielefeldt, I wish to suggest a project for the other members of SVSM. I'm talking to you, so pay attention. I would like to encourage ten of the 80 or so participants in our club to volunteer to build one model for a veteran or veteran's family. Our club has a long tradition of reaching out to the community through the Veteran's Model Drive and Make n' Takes and I know this would be a great way to expand our reach in a very personal way.

There really aren't many parameters for this—find a veteran, or his or her family, of any nationality and of any war and build a model for him. This would most likely be a vehicle or piece of equipment he or she used. Maybe you could recreate a piece of history by building a vignette or diorama. I'll let you work out the fine details. It all counts and will get you full credit on your permanent record. There is one caveat—you must write an article about the model and your experience for the *Styrene Sheet*! You're not getting off that easy, mister.

I'd like to accomplish the goal of 10 models for 10 vets by December 2005. I figure it's already the middle of November and not much will happen in December. It's only practical that we would get started in the New Year.

If you think you'd like to participate see Chris Bucholtz or me just so we can keep track of things. Chris has built a few models for vets and may be able to give you some guidelines as to how to get started. I'd also like to get your input on the idea. If you

know how to improve it, I'd love to hear it.

Switching gears—I'm afraid it's time for me to start requesting more articles for the newsletter. Since I took over this project eight months ago, the flow of new material has been steady and impressive. You all have been very responsive and the quality of material has been great. I still have enough material for the next couple of months but I don't want to have to beg at the last minute—so start typing now. As you know, anything you submit is just the right thing, however, I would like to request non-aircraft articles. I believe the stories about planes will take care of themselves but in an effort to keep the *Styrene Sheet* interesting to everyone I would like to mix it up a bit. So, if you build tanks, cars, ships, spaceships, figures, or tiny lobster men, please share your knowledge. Also, kit- and book reviews are the perfect remedy for that one blank page I frequently find myself trying to fill. If you don't have time to build, share your thoughts on a new kit or reference material. Again, I want to thank all of you who have contributed over the last few months. Being short of material is a real spanner in the works and you all have made the process a lot easier and more fun.

Lastly, please note my new email address on the front and back of this issue.

- The Editor

CONTEST CALENDAR

February 13, 2005: **Silicon Valley Scale Models** host the **Kickoff Classic** at Napredak Hall, 770 Montague Expwy., San Jose, CA 95131. For more information, contact Chris Bucholtz at BucholtzC@aol.com.

April 28 - May 1st, 2005: The 20th annual **GSL International Scale Vehicle Championship and Convention** at the Wyndham Hotel, 215 W. South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84094. For more information contact Mark S. Gustavson at msg@GSLChampionship.org or visit their web site at www.gslchampionship.org.

May 21, 2005: The **IPMS/Fremont Hornets** present the **Tri-City Spring Classic** at the Newark Community Center, 35501 Cedar Blvd., Newark, CA 94560. For more information, contact Mark Schynert at mass22@earthlink.net with the words, "Tri-City Contest" in the subject line, or call him at (510) 769-8316.

SUNDAY!
SUNDAY!
SUNDAY!

February 13, 2005



Spine CRUSHING

Model Action!

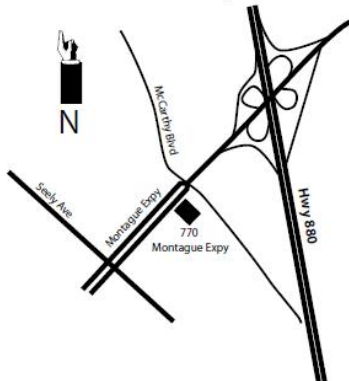
it's the 2005 S.V.S.M.

KICKOFF CLASSIC

— PLASTIC MODEL SHOW, CONTEST & MADNESS!

New **OUTRAGEOUS** Special Awards!

- Best Delta Subject (Valkyries, Daggers, etc)
- Best Heavenly Body (Constellation, Orion, etc.)
- Best Mythos Subject (Hercules, Vampire, etc.)
- Best VE or VJ 1945 subject
- Best Atomic Age Subject 1945-1965
- Best NASCAR subject.



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This year's theme -

"V" is for Victory!

Theme Subjects Include:

- Subjects from 1945 (60th anniv. VE & VJ Day)
- V bomber aircraft (Vulcan, Victor, etc.)
- Warships named Victory, Victor, etc.,
- McDonnell "Voodoo"
- Plymouth "Valiant"
- V shaped subjects
- Vickers vehicles
- Vacuformed Kits
- Vultee aircraft

Napredak Hall
770 Montague Expwy.
San Jose, CA 95131

Lt. Col. Bielefeldt's F-86F in 1/48 scale

Continued from page 1

I had been sitting on a 1/48 Hasegawa F-86F kit and a Verlinden update set for a number of years and used it for this project. With the exception of the alterations mentioned above, I attempted to build this kit as "out of the box" as I could stomach. The Hasegawa F-86F is a fine kit and really only needs some work on the cockpit to build a great looking model. Since I was going to cram a pilot figure in the cockpit, I thought I could get away with not adding additional detail. I also had to take into account the audience. I am sure that Vilas knows the F-86 cockpit like the back of his hand—much better than I ever will, but I was sure that for a model, he had a different expectation. I suspect he would not be poking around in every nook and cranny with a penlight. Additionally I was working on a deadline and I did not want to get bogged down in the usual contortions it takes to fit an after-market cockpit.

Before I started building, I made a couple of minor conversions. I cut out the ammo bay door/step from the port fuselage half and snipped the corners of the upper and lower port wing. This section had to be removed on the "6-3" wing to get the ammo door open. I put these wing points aside for later use and then promptly lost them.

I built the cockpit as per the kit instructions. Everything was



Alclad paints were used for the natural metal finish. The darker panels were achieved by burnishing graphite into the paint with an artist's smudge tool. The tail flash, unit emblem and call numbers are from AeroMaster.

painted gray except the switch panels and the instrument panel, which I painted RLM 66 dark gray. I painted the dials black and picked out the details of the instruments with white. Then I blobbed future into the dials to make them look all shiny. I had to do this a few times as the Future dries pretty thin. Next time, I'll use a clear paint.

The cockpit sits on top of the engine intake so I built that next. I did my best to eliminate the intake and exhaust seams. This is a lot harder than I thought it would be but I got them reasonably cleaned up and then sprayed the intake Alclad Silver. Of course the metal finish shows all the little bits of seam that I did not manage to fill. Close enough. I moved on to the exhaust, which got a coat of Testor's Metalizer Burnt Metal.

The cockpit, intake and exhaust were then sandwiched into the fuselage halves. The nose of the plane fit well and did not need any filling or sanding. I left the nose of the plane off until final assembly since it was red and I would rather not have to mask it for the rest of the assembly.

I fit the Verlinden port ammo bay into the bottom-side of the fuselage. This acted as a step for the pilot to climb on to the wing to enter the cockpit. Quite a bit of fiddling was needed to get it to look right in the slot I cut for it, but hey, it wouldn't be Verlinden if it fit correctly. I left off the ammo cans to add later.

I assembled the three-piece wing and filled the hole I made separating the wing plug at the inside edge of the port wing.



Luckily the AeroMaster decals had the appropriate numbers between the three options supplied on the sheet. The high gloss metal around the exhaust was accomplished by using SnJ polishing powder on the Alclad paint.

The wings needed some seam filling at the join to the fuselage. I took extra care to get rid of scratches and other marks that would surely be revealed by the metal finish. I left the tail pieces off to make painting easier.

Since all my SnJ had turned to jelly after a single use, I decided to give Alclad a whirl. As Alclad is a lacquer and I didn't really want to melt my model, I gave everything a nice sloppy coat of Future. Smaller parts were actually dipped in the Future to assure good coverage. Plus, it's kinda fun.

I gave the entire model several thin coats of Alclad Aluminum. It dries quickly and is rock hard. After it is fully set, masking your model or even driving nails with it is no problem. What I didn't do was to polish the model prior to painting the Alclad. I had assumed the future would make the surface like glass but that was not the case. In some areas the metal finish had a slight pebbly texture. Next time.

I painted the shinier bits around the tail cone with Alclad Aluminum and buffed it with my leftover SnJ powder. Even if the SnJ paint does not have much of a shelf life, the polishing powder lasts forever and can be used on any silver paint. It works great.

Many panels of the F-86 are a slightly darker color than the rest of the plane. I spent the better part of an evening masking around all of these panels over the whole model. After spraying the darker panels with Alclad Stainless Steel, I removed the masking tape to discover that I could not tell the difference between the Aluminum and the Stainless Steel paint. Man, that



To replicate the canopy markings on FU-351 at the time of the gunnery meet, John created decals using Adobe Illustrator and a laser printer. Much of the turtle deck detail was made from strip styrene.

was a lot of work for nothing.

Al at D&J Hobby suggested I try using sticky notes for masking and burnishing powdered graphite into the areas I wanted darker with an artists smudging tool. This worked very well. The only drawback was that the shading was not as consistent as it would have been with paint.

I gave the panel lines a light wash with very thin white acrylic paint. I added a little dish washing soap to break the surface tension allowing the paint to run into the panel lines—sort of. I repeated the process with acrylic black in some of the areas where I thought the lines needed to show more—like around

the guns. I like to use acrylic washes on oil based paints and visa-versa because I can then come back with the appropriate solvent and wipe up the excess without damaging the base paint. Here I was able to use Windex to clean up some of the acrylic wash.

I painted the nose cap red and then masked and painted the black ring around the nose. I believe Jamie actually came over to watch me paint this. Not because he was particularly attached to the black stripe but he wanted to see what modeling building looked like. I warned him that is was most definitely not a spectator sport. You know how long it takes to mask something. I must have spent a half an hour cutting and wrapping masking tape around the nose just to spend maybe 30 seconds spraining it black. I'm really glad Jamie did not hurt himself too badly when he fell unconscious to the garage floor. He then went inside to talk to Stephanie and watch TV. It was truly a noble effort on



The figure was sourced from Hasegawa's U.S. Pilot and Ground Crew set. John shaved the detail off the '70s era figure and built up details with Squadron putty. The life vest straps are made from Tamiya tape.

his part.

Now that the major painting was done, it was time to start applying decals. The problem is—what decals? Mr. Bielefeldt's plane was not on any of the decal sheets available. There are several aircraft from 67th fighter bomber squadron represented, however. With a few modifications I could create markings for Vilas' aircraft. I found AeroMaster's *Sabres Over Korea, Pt. III* decal sheet that had the fin flash and unit markings for the 67th fighter bomber squadron. As it turned out, this decal sheet had all the numbers necessary for FU-351. I just had to cut them apart and rearrange them.

There were two areas that were not so easily addressed. The canopy frame on FU-351 was painted red with "LT. VILAS L. BIELEFELDT ALMA WIS." painted in white letters. Also, the images I had showed the port side of the plane having "U.S. Air Force" stenciled across the fuselage. There was no sign of the boxing chicken emblem that I found on most photos of planes from Vilas' unit. Additionally all the photos I have of FU-351 are of the port side of the aircraft. What did the other side look like? According to Vilas, the boxing chicken logo was painted on the starboard side of the plane and the chew chiefs' name as "C/C RONALD LAUDENSCHLAGER" was on the starboard side of the canopy.

The asymmetric U.S. Air Force stenciling on the sides of FU-351 was a bit perplexing. My references did not show anything like this and the folks I asked about it said it was at least unusual, but hey, I wasn't there so what do I know? The photos of FU-351 I had were taken at a gunnery meet, so who knows what special painting might have been done.

To create the stenciling on the side of the canopy, I measured



The 67th Fighter Bomber Squadron carried the boxing rooster crest on the sides of their F-86s. The 250 lb. bombs are from the Tamiya 1/48 scale P-47D Thunderbolt kit.

the dimensions of the red panel on the model's canopy piece. In Adobe Illustrator, I made a red panel with white letters for each side of the canopy frame. I copied this and made duplicates slightly smaller and slightly larger just to be on the safe side. I then had this printed at Kinko's on decal paper for laser printers. Because the paper was clear and since printers generally do not print white, the white text in the image I created was clear on the decal sheet.

After I dipped the canopy in Future (because I dip everything in Future), I masked the clear parts and painted the canopy frame black to represent the inside color of the canopy frame. Over the black I sprayed Alclad. I masked the front and rear of the canopy frame and painted the side panels white. Once dry, I applied the homemade red decals to the sides of the canopy frame. With a little trimming, the process worked great. Once the decals had dried, I dipped the canopy in Future to make sure the decals stayed in place and to make sure the canopy had that sparkling clean shine (you know, this stuff might even work on kitchen floors).

The rest of the decaling went as normal. I used the AeroMaster tail flash and call numbers markings as well as the stars and bars. The call numbers I simply cut from several of the decal options and arranged them in the proper order. I got lucky as I did not have to go hunting for any numbers—they were all right there on the sheet.

I used the kit decals for the rest of the stenciling. What an insane amount of stencils. This is not even a large aircraft! It took me the better part of a week to apply all the decals since you can really only work on one section at a time otherwise when you look at your fingers



The Hasegawa stock cockpit was used with the exception of a Verlinden ejection seat. The kit cockpit is sparse but the instrument panel is well detailed.

at the end of the evening there will be little black stencils all over them.

Here's where my plans went soggy. The model was leaving with Jamie the next morning and I did not have time to locate a suitable seated figure for the setting I had chosen. This combined with the fact that I am terrible at figures and I thought I only had time to finish one. I decided to leave off poor Mr. Laudenschlager and just build a figure of Lt. Bielefeldt standing next to his plane—like in one of the other photos he sent to me. For this I used a figure from Hasegawa's *U.S. Pilot and Ground Crew* set. The figure had the garrison cap like Vilas is wearing on one of the photos of him standing next to the plane. I sanded off all the uniform detail, cut and rearranged the arms and hands to better simulate Capt. Bielefeldt's pose and used putty to make the uniform sleeves full length. At about two in the morning I built the life vest out of Squadron Green Putty. I don't know what I was thinking—this stuff would take hours to dry and I was out of time. Once the putty scabbed over I painted it. I then used thin strips of Tamiya tape to make the life vest straps. Hey—it was even yellow!

Now that the pilot would not be in the cockpit, the very plain kit seat would be completely visible. I chose to use the Verlinden seat, as it is much better detailed than kit seat. A nicely detailed seat can really make the cockpit look great.

I attached the small bits and the canopy to the model and it was close to done. I decided to attach the F-86 to a base. I did this for several reasons. The model was going to

have to travel to Buffalo, Wisconsin and it needed protection on and after the trip. Also, it makes a more attractive presentation. For the base I used one of the IMEX (is that Apple™ for a Latin American country?) cases for 1/48 scale aircraft. I filled the sink holes in the black plastic base, sanded it smooth and painted it with Polly Scale's concrete and different shades of light grey and tan. I then used a straight edge and a pencil to draw the seams between the slabs of the tarmac. I then used the pencil to add cracks and a black wash to simulate oil stains.

To attach the model, I wanted to use something very sturdy but not permanent. I drilled holes in the bottom of the flattened wheels and glues lengths of brass rod into the holes. I then stood the model in its brass stilts and marked the base where the rods met the base. I then drilled holes in the base and pushed the brass rods through the holes. I bent them on the under side of the base and the model was held firmly in place. If I, or anyone else, needed to detach the model from the base, the brass rods

need only be bent straight-ish and the model can be removed.

I attached the Mini-Vilas figure to the base. Since I cut off, and promptly lost, the little corner of the port wing, I whittled a new one and attached it to top of the wing by the fuselage. Vilas' photos also show a red helmet sitting on the wing. For this, I lovingly decapitated the figure that came with the kit. Rather than tunnel out the inside of the helmet, I simple sanded off all the detail, painted it red and faced the opening toward the fuselage. If Mini-Vilas ever attempted to try the helmet on he would find that there was already a head in there.

With the model complete, I put the lid on the base and slid the whole thing back into the IMEX box. I only whimpered once when I did this. It was 3:30 in the morning. I hoped the model would look okay when I could focus again after a couple hours sleep.

I delivered the box to Jamie who slid the case out of the box. The look on his face over came any uncertainty I had about the work I had done.

All in all, this build was very rewarding and I learned a lot about modeling to boot. Having spent so much time on this model, I thought I would miss not having it in my curio case. The funny thing is—I don't. Even though I do not actually have the F-86 in my possession, I think about FU-351 more than any of the styrene heaps that currently I have in my curio case, and that it might mean more to someone else than it could ever mean to me.

All I know about Vilas Bielefeldt I learned from staring

at a handful of photos. In my mind Vilas is today a twentish year old fighter pilot standing next to a shimmering F-86. The project started out as just a fun thing to do for my friend's dad. It morphed into something else during the late nights in my garage under the buzzing overhead lights. Is it a strange thing to pay tribute to a man in a photo taken 50 years ago; someone whom I will most likely never meet and really know nothing about? It doesn't feel strange at all.

Jamie reports that his dad loves the model and takes it with him to all the veteran and F-86 related reunions that he attends. If Mr. Bielefeldt is pleased with it—mission accomplished. That is what the whole project was about.



The base is the bottom of an IMEX display case painted with PollyScale paints. The model was secured to the base with brass rods glued into the wheels and passed through holes in the tarmac.

John Heck has been building plastic models on and off since 1975. His interests include 1/48 scale WWII fighters, early jets and modern weird stuff. He has been a member of SVSM since 2003.

An interview with Lt. Col. Vilas Bielefeldt

By Chris Bucholtz

Vilas Bielefeldt served in the U.S. Air Force from the Korean War until the end of the Vietnam War, flying a wide variety of aircraft. Vilas spent time with two units in Korea. In 1951, he served as a navigator with the 452nd Bomb Wing (light) flying the B-26 Invader, and from August 1954 to December 1955, he flew the F-86F Sabre with the 67th Fighter Squadron, 18th Fighter Bomber Wing.

CB: You flew the B-26 Invader in combat over Korea before you went to the F-86. That means you were flying during a period of transitioning from one era to another.

VB: Oh, gosh...I think I flew 46 different kinds of airplanes.

Some of them were civilian; I had a pilot's license before I went to the military. I was trying to be an airline pilot in East St. Louis, Illinois in 1949, working my way by doing double shifts, and all that. We were about ready to fly big airplanes, and then we got drafted.

CB: When did you get to Korea?

VB: I was in Korea in 1951. First, I went to pilot training in East St. Louis, and then had an FAA physical. When I got drafted, I enlisted in the Air Force

– I didn't want to be a ground pounder. So I enlisted, and they said, oh, gosh, we need pilots. So I went in as a pilot, but when I got to the last physical, I could not pass an eye check. So I went to navigator's school in 1950. In 1951, I graduated and went to the B-26. Fortunately, being a pilot, I got chosen for an airplane that had no place for a navigator! So I flew in the co-pilot's seat of a hard-nosed B-26 – it had eight guns in the nose, three in each wing and four in the back, four turrets with two guns each. I had a good time. I was flying in the co-pilot's seat and I couldn't have cared less about giving the pilot directions every now and then, because that was my job. I flew in the B-36 for a year; we had one-way missions with that thing into Russia. Then, I was accepted into pilot training and graduated into the F-86 in 1953, and went back to Korea. In the Korean War, I was there just as we were establishing the line at the 37th parallel. The Chinese had chased us all the way down to the Pusan perimeter, and then we chased them back up to about the 38th parallel, and then there was more or less a stalemate there. I was there six months and I got my 55 missions in, which was the requirement for a tour for a B-26. It was all at night. Low-level at night. Which was a fun

thing, really. It's kind of hazardous in some ways. A few guys dragged back some high power lines on the tail, and one guy on the propeller. It doesn't work too long after it's wound up 40 lines of power line!

CB: The night interdiction campaign was credited with helping to stop the Chinese advance down the Korean peninsula, but there were a lot of pilots and planes lost. That was before the avionics for night attack were really evolved. How did you enjoy that mission?

VB: I had a good time in it. I had gone over there as a replacement. The unit I went to was the 452nd Bomb Wing (Light). It was the Long Beach National Guard. They had been recalled to fly those airplanes, and had taken them over there. I got there,

and the commies had been driven north to about the 38th Parallel, and we were replacing these National Guard guys. I was a teetotaler at that time. When I went to flying training I was a pretty good partier, but I got up one morning after a party and I was up solo and I said, jeez, you could kill yourself doing that. Two hours of sleep and feeling poorly and here you are all by yourself up next to God. I kinda quit drinking, so I was



Lt. Vilas Bielefeldt poses with F-86F FU-351 at the Far East Air Force (F.E.A.F.) Gunnery Meet in April, 1955.

the bartender when I got over there. Those guys who were already there, they could snork it down. They were ready to go home, of course.

The B-26 was just a great airplane. Seven or eight of us second lieutenant navigators had gone over there and we were replacements, so they hadn't assigned us to crews because people were going home and coming in. Us seven used to sit in the back of the briefing room, which was a big, dark bungalow, a mud hut. One day, after we all had seven or eight missions under our belts, here comes this guy, a captain. He's got a crunched dungaree hat on. He doesn't wear a flying suit; he has dungarees on like an army soldier. He's got an army belt around him. After seven missions, us second lieutenants didn't wear our army belt any more, no canteen and no .45 around the base. We were hot stuff, y'know. But this captain comes in and he's got a bayonet strapped to his right leg and he's got this .45 on, extra clips of ammunition around his belt and the bayonet, and a canteen, and a first aid kit and then he had another Sam Brown belt—all over dungarees, green army fatigues.

They introduced him as a new pilot, and we were all laugh-

ing. "Who the hell's gonna get assigned to him? He looks like a tough cookie!" He had a big nose, but he was a good-looking man, about six foot four. We look up at the assignments, his name was Probst... and it's Bielefeldt. Oh Christ! So he sat me down and we talked for quite a while. He said, "This is my first mission, and it's going to be combat. I haven't flown before. I trust you will keep me on the straight and narrow with everything that goes on on the base and in combat." I said, "Yes sir!" He said, "Let's go to the airplane." I knew that airplane in and out. I sat in it all day. I had everything memorized the way a pilot should. We were just marching out the door, and I'm talking away and trying to be a nice guy. He interrupted me and said, "I believe second lieutenants march on a captain's left, do they not?" I said "yes sir!" And I moved over and I never said another word.

We went out to the airplane and did our preflight, went to lunch and came back. By now, it's pitch black and things aren't going as well as they should for him in the cockpit. He's the only pilot now, other than me sitting next to him, and I don't pay no mind to what he was doing—except I was monitoring every damn switch he moved. By now, we were taught that you mind everything because you can get killed. So he's thundering down the runway, and I hadn't said a word yet. He said, "Goddamn! where's the cowl flaps!" He has them not in trail like they were supposed to be but open. I hit the switch before he even got "Goddamn!" out! They went trail and he said thanks. After that we were great buddies!

One night we were dropping a bomb on something we thought we saw move. Now, remember, it's pitch black, and we're diving toward the ground. It was my job to keep my eyes closed while he fired the guns. He would call a signal and I would close my eyes while he fired the guns. When he stopped firing, I opened my eyes and said, turn right, or whatever. Anyway, as we pulled out, a lone tracer came over our heads pretty damned close. He just let loose with the worst language—he was a Cajun—and on the way down he says, "Everything armed!" And I'm hitting switches and everything. He goes right back down, and they're still shooting, so he knows where he is. He unloaded every bomb and every round of ammunition we had on that one position. "Take that, you SOB!" We were right down in the dirt, and I'm sure everything that was there was blown up, and we went home. He took it personally.

We did some godawful low stuff and I've seen the B-26 over 500 miles per hour when we still had stuff in the bomb bay. The thing was tough, and it was tough until it got to Vietnam. There, they started pulling wings off it. Some of the modern things they did with it were not conducive to longevity!

CB: After you flew 55 missions in B-26s, you come back to the states, you go through some alternate training and after a stint in Strategic Air Command, you end up back in the Far East Air Force flying the F-86 at the very end of the war. What was the typical mission in mid-1954?

VB: The only thing we'd do with it then that might involve combat was fly taunting patrols up the west coast. We'd be at 45,000 feet, probably 14 or 12 of us, and we'd put a Canberra bomber down at 20,000 feet, hoping the MiGs would come up and try to shoot down the Canberra, and we'd pounce on them. Well, hell, the MiGs were just as smart as we were, really, and they wouldn't fall for that trick.

I got to Korea in October, and then we did not stay long.

By January, we were moved back to Kadena, Okinawa. All 75 F-86s took off at once, and we flew to Kadena, and we stayed there one month. During that month we were at a base with zero buildings. Sort of like Iraq. All they had was a fuel dump, an underground fuel pumping station, and a good runway. So we lived in tents, and we had a very short runway, a 5000-foot strip, and we flew bombing missions every day. It was the beginning of the mobile air force.

Three days after we got done with that 30-day mission at Yontan, we flew back to Kadena and then the Chinese attacked the Tachen Islands in January of 1955, and I flew FU-351 down to Chaiei, Taiwan. I was the first scramble from Chiayi to fly top cover missions over the Tachen Islands. We were instructed explicitly not to get over the mainland, and not to get within three miles of the coast. Hell, the ground cover was down below, and you had no clue where you were. But you could see contrails over to the west. They would make their circles over land and we would make ours over the water, guns hot and test fired and ready to drop tanks. We'd sit up there for an hour, and then we'd come back and somebody would replace us. I got three or four of those missions before it kind of died down, they found out they weren't going to take the Tachen Islands. They never were intending to; they just fired a lot of artillery shells at them.

CB: By this stage, 1955, there had been some time to digest the lessons of fighting the MiG. Did you get to be the beneficiary of any of that experience?

VB: When I got to Korea in 1954, most of the big-gun aces had already been transferred back to the states. They could fly 100 missions then and they were done, so they would come back to the states. There were no aces in our group when I got there in 1954. They had gone home already. I was assigned to the 18th Fighter Bomber Wing, and that was strictly an air-to-ground mission. We went up on a lot of air superiority stuff; what they did to the F-86 in the fighter squadrons was to wax the wing edges and make sure the rivets were polished to make it go faster and they very rarely carried anything; they didn't even have bomb shackles beneath the wing. They slowed the thing down. The wing I was with was air-to-ground, so we had six bomb shackles hanging down underneath, and that slowed airplane down considerably. They did have shackles for external tanks just to give them a little time to get up there, and they fought with those shackles underneath the airplane, which is a streamlined fairing that goes over the shackles and hooks the tank to it or the bomb to it. The MiGs did the same thing, but you'd punch those off as soon as you had contact with one another.

CB: You said all 75 aircraft went from Korea to Okinawa. These days, people don't realize how big a deal that was.

VB: Big deal! Actually, all 75 cranked, but 75 didn't get off the ground. I think there were four aborts on the ground at K-55, and they came down later because of maintenance problems. If you have 75 airplanes, you weren't going to get the all off the ground in that day and age because you had too many malfunctions mechanically. We had 5 T-33s that went off at the same time in that ferry mission. We were moving. The whole unit moved. Big trucks were moving off the base with our supplies, we didn't have many big air transports back then so a lot of stuff went to Kadena by water.

CB: In those days, the weather could radically affect the beginning or the end of a mission. How did you find your way

without modern avionics and things like GPS?

VB: The only thing we had in our airplane was a box called the "coffee grinder." It was a big radio about six inches wide and 12 inches long, and it was way down in front of the stick. There was a handle to wind it, and you had to wind it side to side as you did an old a.m. radio. It was merely an a.m. radio, is all it was, with a direction finder indicator up in your instrument panel that would point to a station. You had to tune it in and then identify it and make sure it was the right one, then click it to "DF" as they called it, or direction finder. That needle would point to the station. If you followed the needle, and made the compass coincide with the same heading, you would get to the station. Of course, the wind would affect you, and you would describe an arc going there if you didn't

compensate for that. It was very difficult. As a matter of fact, we had the same AF band that radio stations had at that time, 550 to 1700. A lot of guys would listen to music on various stations. I never could do that - I always wanted the radios turned off. Remember—if you put that thing on DF and just kept pointing it at the station, you could be 100 miles off course. It would

still point to the station, but you'd be pointing in a different direction. A lot of guys got really lost by putting the plane on the nose and following that instead of following a perfect heading and putting some drift in so you through maintained five or 10 degrees drift through your hour-long course.

In the F-86, you generally flew for an hour unless you were doing a cross-country. I was just looking at my log book, and most of my flights were 55 minutes or 30 minutes. So if you flew a long course and didn't pay attention to the drift you could be 50 miles off course and not know it. It was about four months after I left K-55 in 1955, a flight leader had a flight of four up, and he fooled around and got them so far from base, up doing air to air combat over water from Kadena, that they never made it back. They ran out of gas. They put four airplanes in the water and bailed out.

CB: Speaking of water, one of your more scary F-86 stories involved saluting departing families on a ship.

VB: On 8 January 1955, I was up on a test hop, a flight to check out aircraft systems, but it was more or less an unwritten plan that any aircraft from the 67th or any flight would salute the ship on which departing pilots and families were rotating back to the states. On this day, many of our good buddies from the 18th were on their way home. The night before

there was a big party and an embarkation on a great transport ship for a leisurely trip home. All were with their families. As the ship steamed past the last visible point of Okinawa, I in the lone Sabre came over the ship, just under Mach 1, about 580 knots. I pulled up in front of the ship to about 15,000 feet and lazy-eighted the old bird back down in a diving turn to line up with the bow. The old Sabre breezed down the length of the ship at mast height at Mach 1. Everyone was on the deck waving. And I thought, Goodbye Charlie, have a good trip home, and everybody's waving from the deck and you're boring in on them, and I was probably less than 100 feet above the ship. At the stern of the ship, I commenced a 4-g pull up, intending to disappear into the blue, when the Sabre let out a loud explosion with a loud disturbing shudder and burble.

Needless to say, the pucker string tightened. I eased off the 4 gs and eased the power back to 90 percent, checked every instrument, craning my neck to view the rear of the plane for flames. When I looked back in the cockpit, and I can still see it, almost, every gauge is as steady as a rock. There ain't nothing wrong in the cockpit. Now what! You still got the roar!

Well, what appeared to be an explosion was not that at all. It was just that little radio

compartment panel in the back flying off. Then you wonder, did it hit the ship? Well, there's no way could it hit the ship, because I was going 550 or 600, and that thing followed me for two miles. You're flexing the airplane, and the panel was held on with dzus fasteners—a piece of wire under the skin, and then you turned what looked like an old fashioned screw with a slot, and you'd snap that over the piece of wire with a prong that would stick out of the screw. That would hold the panels on. Well, if you flexed the airplane, a lot of times it would come loose, or the flexing of the fuselage, because it does flex, would jar it loose and it would fly off.

CB: I guess it's lucky it didn't hit the tail...

VB: A little piece like that wouldn't have hurt the tail a whole lot. It could have cut into it... We had one F-86 hit a guy wire underneath a power line in North Korea, and he brought it back. There was big rip in the side—I guess he busted the guy wire. But it left a big rip in the horizontal stabilizer!

CB: When you come back from a flight like that, how do you face your crew chief? You know who he's going to blame!

VB: I don't know how you face him! When I landed, I didn't know I'd lost anything. Laudenschlager came up to the airplane, and I was on a test flight... Remember, even though we were assigned to that airplane most of the time we flew



Crew chief Ronald Laudenschlager joins Lt. Bielefeldt by FU-351.

some other airplane because it wasn't feasible to be scheduled tightly with your own bird, or it was out of commission or whatever. But Luadenschlager comes up and I said, "something's wrong with this airplane! I had a big boom!" He said, "oh yeah, you lost a panel!" I lost a panel? Well, that's good news really! I'd been up there trying figure out what it is.

CB: The F-86 was late in the game in becoming a fighter bomber in Korea.

VB: The first ones were all fighter, air-to-air, air superiority. Our unit really got F-86s very late. I just took the airplane that John made me over to the 18th FBW Reunion that we had in Dayton this year. All of the people who are there except for about 10 were all from the F-51 outfit. That was before the F-86 got there. They were really one of the backbones of the defense of Korea in 1950 when they first got invaded. They flew two or three, four, five times a day to keep the enemy off guard, but it was losing battle because they had old airplanes. They were good, but the F-51 was an air superiority airplane too, now used for air-to ground so it doesn't carry a lot of ordnance compared to its weight and use of fuel. It wasn't meant for it.

CB: When the F-86 started replacing the F-51 around 1952, those guys were really pioneering the use of a jet light attack aircraft.

VB: When I transitioned... we transitioned in training from the T-6 to the T-28, which is a pretty sophisticated plane. The T-28, when you push it downhill, it's going to rip right up to 300 or 400 miles per hour. It had seven cylinders and it wasn't very big. It was so different, because when you jab the power on a reciprocating airplane, you have power, now. In the T-33, the next airplane I flew, it took eight seconds to wind up from idle, which was 65 percent roughly, to 100 percent. So you had to think about full throttle eight seconds before you'd need it. It would be the same as that with going to the F-86 from the F-51, which had a very fast engine in the Merlin engine. Those things, they'd rev up right now, even though it had a big, huge four-blade propeller on it. The F-86 took a few seconds to wind up from 65 to 100 percent.

CB: That must have made attacking a target, especially in a dive, a very interesting experience.

VB: It's not the loss of instant power, or the delay in getting into power. It's more apparent when you're landing than when you're attacking something. If you're attacking something, you're at some 3500 feet or above, depending on the steepness of the angle you want to go down at. Typically, you wouldn't have the power very high at that point. You'd probably leave it there and just point the nose downhill. A jet airplane would then accelerate very swiftly. You're going as fast as the airplane can go very quickly because it's so streamlined. Whereas the propeller airplane, you'd probably have to put power on it to get the airspeed you wanted to drop a bomb or to strafe or whatever. In a jet airplane, you just added power when you wanted to pull up. You'd be sitting there at maybe, I can't recall exactly what it was anymore, mainly because you don't even look at the danged power instruments in a dive, because you have other things to look at, so I have difficulty telling you now what percent of power we'd have in a dive, but probably around 90. Then you'd pull it up to 100 when you wanted to pull up and get away, as soon as the bomb was gone.

CB: Was there any specialized sight for bombing, or did you use the gunsight?

VB: We used the gunsight in the airplane. The F-86 had a very sophisticated gunsight. It was a radar gunsight, and it would acquire the target way out to 3500 feet, which is a half a mile or a little more. It would actually take on a target farther than that, probably. Then we shot at about 800 feet. That thing would keep the pipper where you should hit the target with the Gs and speed that was on the airplane. As long as you kept the pipper on the target, it was going to do that. That was air to air. When you went air to ground you'd just fix that. You had a switch where you could fix the sight in the middle and you'd depress it for whatever bomb or strafe you wanted. You'd depress it so many mils down and then the sight would just stay there, just like a fixed bombsight. It didn't take off for any drift, like the Norden bombsight for a bomber, you could bring in the drift and kill drift, that kind of thing, and you had to move the airplane around to do that. But the F-86 just had that pipper that came up on the windscreen from a light sitting down behind the instrument panel. We were a true fighter-bomber. It had a ring around the pipper, a ring of dots—actually, they were little squares, I suppose—but when you'd get in really close, the ring would be almost solid. When you get out wider the dots would be farther away. When you had the proper data set in air-to-air, that ring would enclose the wingtips. That would give the range of when you should shoot. When you were in air to ground, you could do the same thing. If you knew the size of the truck, or the bridge or whatever you were hitting, when you set the ring on there and they coincided it was time to get and go.

CB: Did the F-86 have any vices?

VB: The F-86 on high-angle dives and/or tough air to air combat, it had a ridiculous wrinkle in its aerodynamics. That was the tuck, or the dig-in. The F-86 liked to be flown with light fingers, with light hands. And if you did that it was a very fine airplane. But if you didn't, you could get an angle of attack that's just a tad beyond what it should be, and it goes into a high-speed stall which would start shuddering and that would overstress the airplane. It would try to turn faster than it was built to do. That was about the only flaw I can think of with the F-86. A lot of airplanes have little things that you ought not do with it because it's going to flip you or whatever and go out of control, or one wing would stall or the tail surfaces would stall, and then you're out of luck because it's going to start dropping shortly after that. But the F-86 had a high-speed stall, which is what it amounted to, and that put a lot of stress on the pilot and the airplane, of course. It was kind of like turning a car too fast around a corner. Most cars will straighten up, but sometimes you get a car beyond where it will do that and it won't straighten up any more.

CB: Did the dig-in ever get you?

VB: One time in my case, I had my own airplane, and Luadenschlager was my crew chief. I was doing air to ground at high angle, which is 60 degrees or higher, which is considerable angle, really; you have to start pull up quite a ways from the ground, or else you're going to be in the ground. If you're at 10,000 feet and going 600 miles an hour in that dive, you're going to hit the ground no matter what. You might as well just bail out because you're going to hit the ground regardless of what you do with the airplane. You can pull it to idle, put

the speed brakes out, pull the gear down—it's going to fly off because it's overstressed—there ain't nothing you can do. You're going to hit the ground. This one, I was at about 70 degrees, and we use to paint little gadgets on the side of the cockpit with a grease pencil that would indicate the angle. When that grease pencil line on the cockpit was lined up with the horizon, you'd be at 70 degrees. I was diving on a truck that I couldn't see very well and it was a target, just a practice target out on the range, and I pressed a little bit steeper and I imagine I was at 8000 feet. Well, here come the trees, so I brought it up a little too high and next thing you know I've got 10 Gs on the airplane. It's only stressed for 8.4 or so. Around 8 Gs you could pull without overstressing the airplane. So I came back, and of course the crew chief came back and said, "Well, Lieutenant, you and I are going to be using the screwdrivers..." It took 400 screws to get that belly pan off before he could test the spar to see whether I'd cracked it or not. Of course, I laid under the airplane along with everybody else for four or five hours unscrewing the screws, and putting them back in, which is even worse!

They called it "dig in." The plane would dig in if you pulled back too hard. It would do it in air-to-air also.

CB: You and your wing-mates put an awful lot of holes in the rocks around Okinawa.

VB: Oh yeah!

CB: In that geography there, you can do that sort of practice. I imagine that the wing became very proficient in air-to-ground.

VB: Yeah... We would get pretty doggone proficient. The problem arises that on a rock like that, it was a matter of your wingman saying whether you hit it or not, because you don't have any place out there, unless you put a boat out there, to triangulate to see if you hit it. We had a gunnery range at Yontan which is just north of Kadena a ways, it's on most Okinawan maps, and at K-55 in Korea we had a gunnery range and we also had one in Taiwan. They had the target marked out, they had three towers, they're manned by a person, and you drop a bomb and they can triangulate—you'd drop a 25 pound bomb, just a little bitty thing about a foot long that has a shotgun charge with black smoke. When you hit the ground a puff of smoke would come up and the guys are watching in the tower and they'd tell you, 13 feet at 20 degrees and 12 o'clock.

Out on the rock, the real practice with everybody, and we

had a lot of new pilots when we got to Okinawa who were transport pilots. It's the feel of getting the airplane off fully-loaded. You've got a lot of weight on when you have a full bomb load, and the airplane flies different. It was a matter of getting into the proper glide or dive and then getting to the release point so you can hit that rock or that target. Most of the time, you can look back, pull up and start turning right away and you can see the splash if you missed the rock. The rock wasn't very big, maybe several hundred feet across. It wasn't much of a target.

The practice that we wanted to get at Yontan for preparing to go to Taiwan was how to get off the ground at a full gross weight. The same thing was towing an air to air target. The F-86 towing a target didn't want to get off the ground the same way as another airplane would, where you'd wait and

sit there until it flies off. The F-86 would not do that. If you left the F-86 on the ground, the plane is nose low. If you put full throttle to it and you let it on the ground and don't touch the stick, it's probably going to go off the end of the runway at 250 knots and never get airborne. It'll be at a negative angle of attack. If you try a normal take off, you pull the airplane up so the nose wheel

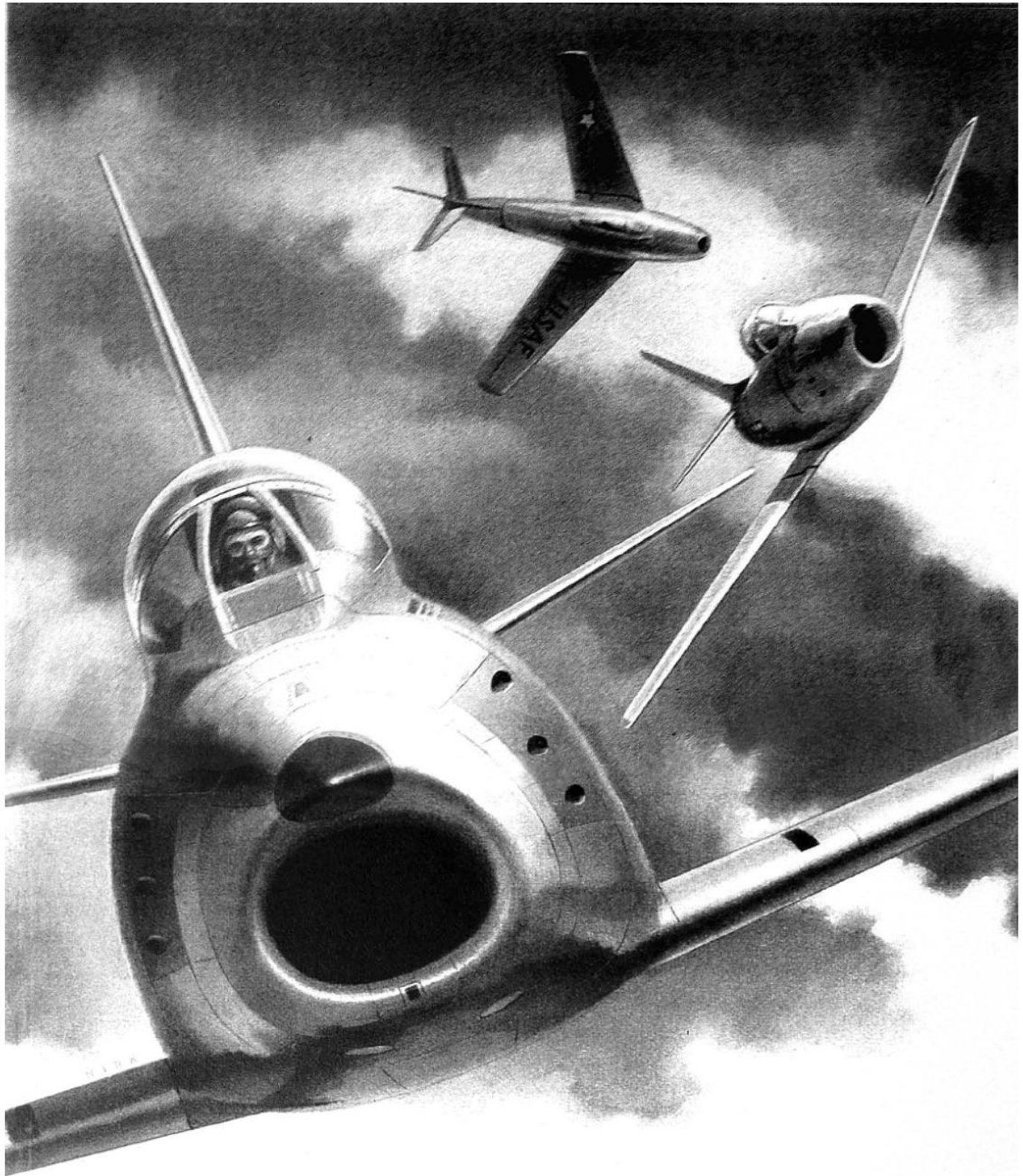


Lt. Bielefeldt and crew chief Ronald Laudenschlager pose with FU-351. This photo was later published in Osprey Publications' *F-86 Saber Fighter-Bomber Units Over Korea*.

is 16 inches above the cement as you take off. If you get that proper angle of attack, the F-86 is one of the only airplanes I've ever flown where, when it starts to fly, when the wings gain lift and you have the proper angle of attack, the nose will very gently head toward the sky. Coming back to land, when you lower the wheels, the airplane again will very gently lower the nose toward the ground. But, going back to take off, if you pull it back too far, say about two feet off the ground or maybe more, you'll pull it behind the power curve, you get too high an angle of attack, and it'll again go off the end of the runway at 250 knots and never get airborne.

This happened towing targets quite a bit. People would get the nose up; it doesn't get off the ground because you have all this drag hanging behind you, 500 feet of cable and this six by 20 target. You're dragging that piece of cheesecloth behind you and it doesn't want to get off the ground right away, but you have to leave it at that angle of attack because if you keep pulling the nose up the damned thing will go off the end of the runway and never get airborne again.

We lost one F-86 this way in Korea. The pilot had never towed a target before. "How do you tow the target?" he said.



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A fine bird-taking delivery of FU-351

By Jamie Bielefeldt

My Dad was a fighter pilot. He'll tell you he fought in three wars. Korea, Vietnam and the "Cold War." After nearly 30 years in the United States Air Force he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. My Dad told me stories about his days in the military like when he blew up a narrow foot bridge with single 250 lb. bomb, or how he was called back at the last minute from a flight he was supposed to take for some R'nR, only to watch the plane crash on take off, killing everyone on board except the pilot and co-pilot. I often heard of him refer to these years as the "good old days." I know the "good ol' days" referred to the lasting friendships he made and to his joy of flying.

I was lucky enough to fly with my Dad, flying "copilot." Reading off the safety checklist of our Cessna 198. "Flaps?" ...check. "Oil pressure?" ...check, and then flying around town and looking down on our house. That was fun, especially when you're around fourteen. Those were my "good ol' days."

A good friend of mine, John Heck, builds model airplanes. Not like most people build model airplanes, like the way I built them when I was a kid. I would buy a model kit and then build the whole plane in a weekend. I would then hang it from the ceiling with fishing line until the Fourth of July when most of my models completed their mission. I, of course, built all the planes my Dad flew: an A-4, a T-37 and a T-38, and some others. I also built an Israeli Mirage 5. I built some weird plane that had little bomblets that were attached to the little wings on the wheel struts, which I purchased strictly because it looked "cool." Anyway, John's planes don't look like my planes, or like most people's planes for that matter. He will deny this totally, but his planes look like the friggin' picture on the box.

I was attending a family get together to celebrate my father's birthday, and I asked John if it would be possible to commission him to build a plane for my Dad; the F-86F Saber. We discussed the terms and John explained that due to the amount of time involved that I couldn't afford his hourly rate, and basically, John offered to build the plane for me; no

charge. I offered a bunch of measly payments, like dinner or whatever and John said a bunch of excuses like, "I've never built a plane like this before," or "it will be good experience for me," etc... In end, I like to think he built the plane for friendship and his joy of building model airplanes.

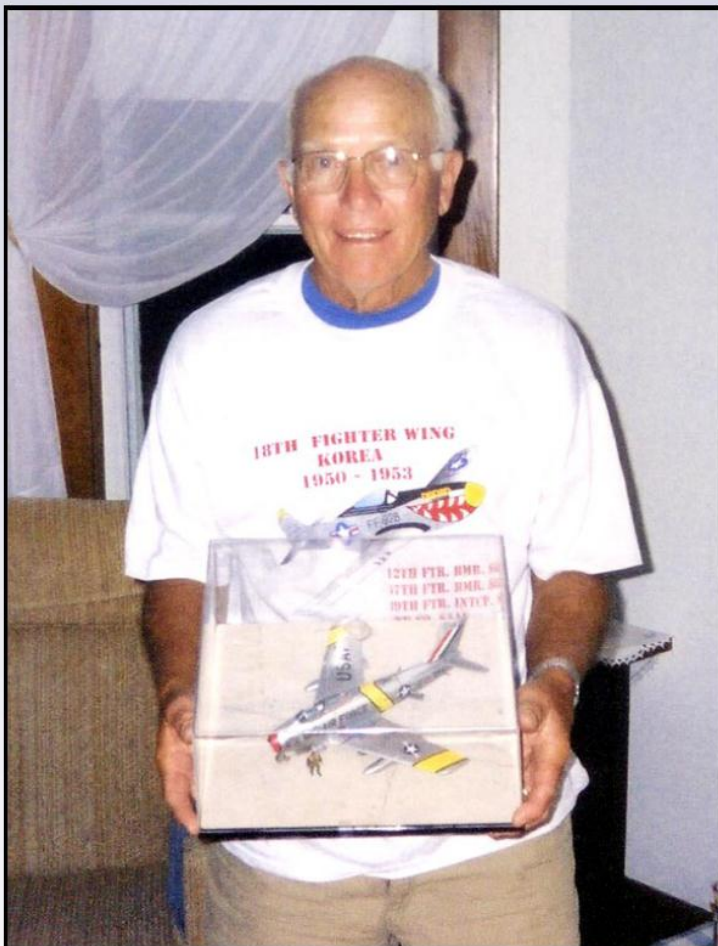
This is the part I get to brag about John. In approximately six weeks with many late nights, John built the entire model. Including, having to build many parts from scratch. The project actually went from just building the plane itself to creating a complete diorama with the plane parked on the tarmac, and my Dad standing next to it, all under a

shatterproof plastic case. The scene was modeled after one of a series of photos my father had sent John as a reference for some last minute details. It was very exciting for me to hear the daily updates and watch a bunch of plastic bits become a plane.

For those of you who are modelers, you probably know the precision, attention to detail and patience involved in building models of this caliber. My education at the amount of work I had asked John to do began when I asked John if I could come by his workshop (garage), and see how it all comes together. John tried to warn me that this was not the most exciting spectator sport, but I convinced him I really wanted to see at least part of the process. I was there about two to two and half hours and during that time John had masked the entire plane and airbrushed the nose paint, and that's all. And the actual painting part only took maybe five minutes. Even though it looked perfect to me, I think he actually re-did it. The stag-

gering amount of time that goes into the prep work, not to mention the actual model building itself is probably not realized by most casual ex-childhood model builders, like me. Watching this one tiny part of the building of the model was actually very interesting, and as John had warned, staggeringly, if educationally, boring, and yes, sadly, I ended up on the sofa watching a movie with his wife. Feeling, not for the last time, a little sheepish about having asked John to spend so much time on a project he would not get to keep in his model case.

The finished model included the plane, at rest, sitting on the tarmac with my Dad standing next to it. It was awesome. I was amazed by the attention to detail. John even got the



Lt. Col. Vilas Bielefeldt (Ret.) poses with the model of ol' 351 at his home in Buffalo, Wisconsin.

glint off my Dad's bald head right. Needless to say, I was completely blown away. It was, unbelievable. I can't remember exactly, but I hope John got sick of hearing me tell him what a terrific job he had done. I did remember however, just a hint of trepidation as he handed over responsibility for a bunch of plastic, paint and glue he had just spent 500 hours assembling in the proper order.

Thus began my 36 hours of paranoid hell—transporting this thing on a three and a half hour flight and then a two hour drive to my Mom and Dad's house in the tiny river side town of Buffalo, Wisconsin, all the while imagining, and then blocking from my mind, model damaging scenarios in my head. The model made the entire eight hour trip, with the exception of a solo white knuckle, nail biting, roller coaster ride through the airport x-ray machine, never out of my grip.

When I unveiled the plane at my Dad's birthday party, Dad didn't cry or anything, but I could tell he really liked it. I remember him saying, "Ol' 351 lives again!" The plane was awed and ooh'd over my entire time at Mom and Dad's. It was like a traveling museum piece as relatives would line up to view FU-351 and marvel at this or that. It was definitely the hit of the trip.

Dad told me FU-351 was not his dedicated plane, (even though his name was on it), and that he often had to fly whichever plane was available at the time. He did fly FU-351 to the Far East Air Force (F.E.A.F.) Gunnery Meet in April, 1955 and flew most of his competition missions in

Lt. Col. Bielefeldt's experience in Korea

Continued from page 12

Somebody told him as a joke, "Just pull the nose back a little more, a little higher." He went right off the end of the runway. He made it! He ejected just as the airplane turned 90 degrees. What happened was he hit the barrier at the end; we had a chain barrier. He hit those chains and it bounced him up in the air. As he was up in the air he said, "This baby ain't going to fly," and he ejected, but he was 90 degrees to the ground and it ejected him into a rice paddy. And he lived! He wasn't even hurt!

CB: The other thing people seem to miss these days is just how many planes were lost in the military during the 1950s.

VB: When I went through training at Nellis, I think we lost about one a week. You'd never see it in the paper outside of the Nellis News or the Las Vegas Sun. You'd never hear it in your home town. You'd lose a lot of airplanes. During the war, in the B-29s, the statistics showed, it was safer to be on a combat mission than it was to be in training back at Douglas, Utah.

I went back to Vietnam in the A-37. It wasn't sophisticated. It was about the same as the F-86, except that it had civilian OMNI and civilian TACAN, and it had all the modern navigation equipment. But as far as flying the airplane, you were manual—everything was manual cables. And armored. And it had big engines. You could get off the ground in that. I'd have much rather have been in combat with that airplane than in training. We lost many more in training than we ever did in combat.

CB: The A-37 replaced the A-1 in the Sandy role in Vietnam, right?

VB: We were trying. They probably should have replaced

'351. He calls John's model his "pride and joy" and proudly displays the plane in a place of honor at his home in Buffalo and Warrensburg, Missouri. He has also displayed the model at the American Legion Hall in Alma, Wisconsin, The Veterans of Foreign Wars Meeting in Cochrane, Wisconsin, the American Legion/Quiet Birdman Association meeting in Warrensburg, Missouri, the Missouri Veterans home in Warrensburg, and the 18th Fighter Bomber Wing Association Reunion in Dayton, Ohio where it was displayed unguarded for three days while my Dad sweated, according to his e-mail.

I asked my Dad to jot down some notes in preparation of writing this editorial. He wrote of how he was amazed by the details of John's model, "Down to the grass in the cracks of the revetment concrete. Even the pilot looks like me...Ol' 351 was a fine bird." I couldn't agree more. I know that my Dad was proud of his military service, and my family and I were proud of him. John's model gave us a chance to share one moment and stand next to Dad and his plane. It gave me just the slightest hint of what it would be like to be there, standing next to that plane.

So yeah, I owe John a whole crapload of free movie tickets, and landscaping favors and whatever else he asks for, which of course, he never does. But from me, thanks just the same, and I owe you one, and a *big* one at that. So, here's my toast to John and the "good ol' days," past and present and old FU-351. She was, and now continues to be, one fine bird.

the A-1 earlier. We had sophisticated anti-aircraft guns in Vietnam, and their radars can pick up those propellers before you get over the horizon! You ain't going to pick up an A-37 as easy, or an A-4 or any other attack airplane. We had problems in training. Instructors would lose the T-37 in with two instructors in it! You wonder how that could happen, but it does.

CB: How did the F-86 stack up against the other planes you flew?

VB: In its time, that was the airplane to fly. I flew the F-84F a little later, which was an atomic bomber, and we again had one-way missions right after I came back from Okinawa. The airplane was built 10 years later than the F-86, so you had better strength metal, better control surfaces. But some items in the F-84 were a heck of a lot worse than the F-86. I'd rather fly the F-86.

CB: When you went back to visit Okinawa, they still had 10 F-86s, not F-84s.

VB: Yeah! They were H's. The F-86H had a totally different engine in it and totally different flying characteristics. It was a quite a bit heavier airplane. The F-86E was a pretty light airplane. They actually lucked out. The F-86XP or whatever they called it was not a good airplane when they test flew it at first, so they lucked out when they found a good engine for it. It made a good airplane out of it.

Chris Bucholtz has been building models since 1973 and has been a member of SVSM since 1986. His interests include 1/72 scale aircraft of all types, but specifically World War II and subjects whose pilots or crew he has met.

A wealth of references—F-86 books in review

By Chris Bucholtz

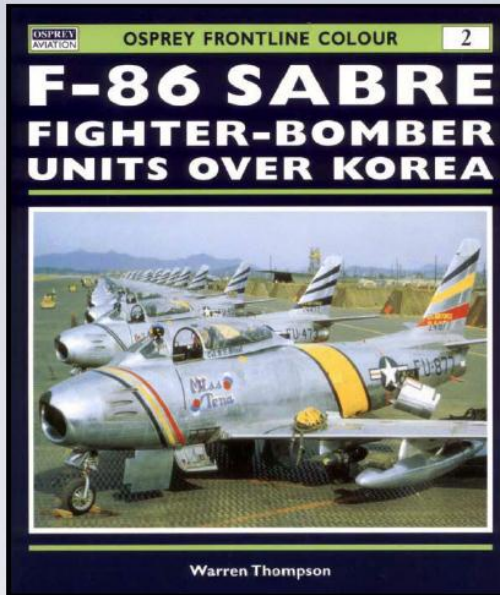
F-86 Sabre Fighter-Bomber Units Over Korea

By Warren Thompson
1999, Osprey Publishing

Although the F-86 was not even evaluated as a fighter-bomber until May 1952, it played a major role in the last year of the Korean War as MiG-15s began using drop tanks and started ranging south to the areas where F-51Ds and F-80Cs had operated with impunity. The F-86 replaced all F-51Ds and most F-80Cs and introduced a fighter-bomber that could defend itself against the MiG-15.

Warren Thompson has made a career of writing about the "forgotten war," and this book does a great job of mating a brief but comprehensive text with a collection of beautiful photographs that completely document the use of the Sabre in the air-to-ground role.

Thompson uses many first-hand accounts to spice up his



account of the F-86s in action against Chinese ground forces, documenting the transition from prop aircraft to jets and, later, the way the F-86s broke up the million-man Chinese offensive in the last few weeks of the war, an application of airpower which, at the very least, maintained the lines that eventually became the border between the two Koreas.

As good as the text is, the photographs are the real attraction. They are all in color, and the fact that many a U.S. serviceman came to Korea via Japan and with new cameras and Kodachrome film is readily apparent from the book. Hundreds of color photos showing aircraft from the 8th, 18th and 35th Fighter-Bomber Groups (including the South African Air Force's No. 2 Squadron) illustrate everything from aircraft markings to airfield conditions to the uniforms worn by the pilots to the officers' clubs at various bases. It is exceptionally complete (see the photo of Vilas Bielefeldt on page 120!) and it covers these units through the end of their time in Korea, including post-war service. If you want a book that can provide you with a great reference for finishes, markings and ordnance options, this should be your first stop.

Warbird Tech Vol. 3: North American F-86 Sabre Jet Day Fighters

By Chris Hughes and Walter Dranem
1996, Specialty Press

Chock full of detail photos and pages from the erection manual, this book provides a great source of detail images for the Sabre modeler. Written by former USAF Museum Director Dave Menard and Walt Fink under a pair of pseudonyms, the book traces the development of the F-86 from the original drawings through the F-86H. There's plenty of coverage of the Korean War, but more useful are the contemporary drawings of the throttle assembly, gun bays and wing slats and

photos of the consoles, instrument panel, and behind-the-seat radio shelf of the F-86F will make modelers happy. The text offers concise explanations of Project Ashtray, the early experiment in creating a photo-reconnaissance Sabre, and Project GUNVAL, which up-armed the F-86 with 20mm cannons. There are also good images of the ejection seat and cockpit components of the F-86H. The book also has a brief color section that illustrates such anomalies as a Korean F-86F in camouflage, an all-yellow F-86A target tug



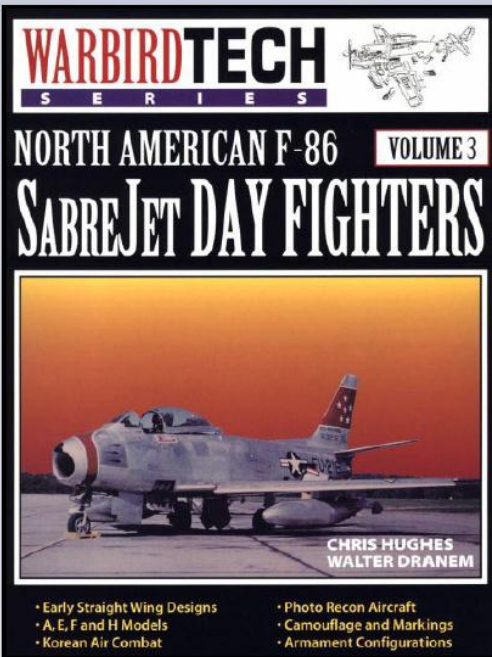
F-86 Sabre Fighter-Bomber Units Over Korea has hundreds of brilliant full color photos. Here 1000 lb. bombs await to be loaded onto FU-389 in the spring of 1953.

of the Montana Air National Guard, a brightly-trimmed F-86H which served as a chase plane for the F-104 program, and Sabres from Saudi Arabia, Canada, Japan and Australia (this being the only appearance of the CAC CA-27 in the book). If there's a drawback, it's that the book bites off more than it can chew; 100 pages is not enough space to cover the many evolutions of the F-86 in its many incarnations. Still, with a \$17 price tag, this is a valuable reference, especially for the F-86F and F-86H.

Korean War Aces

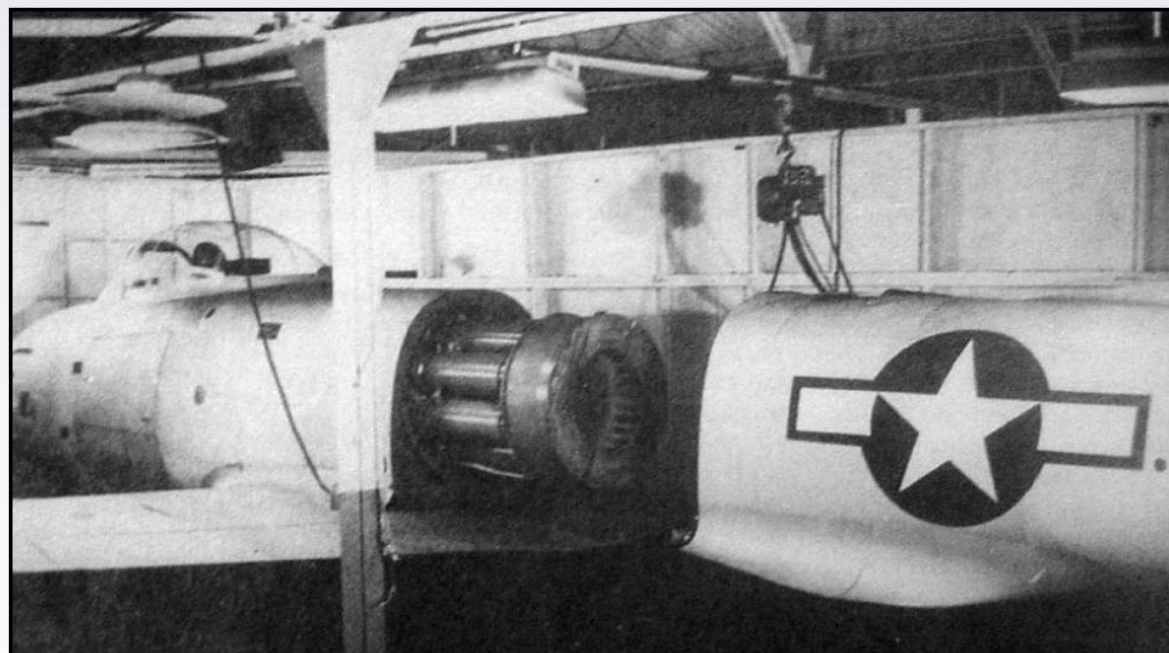
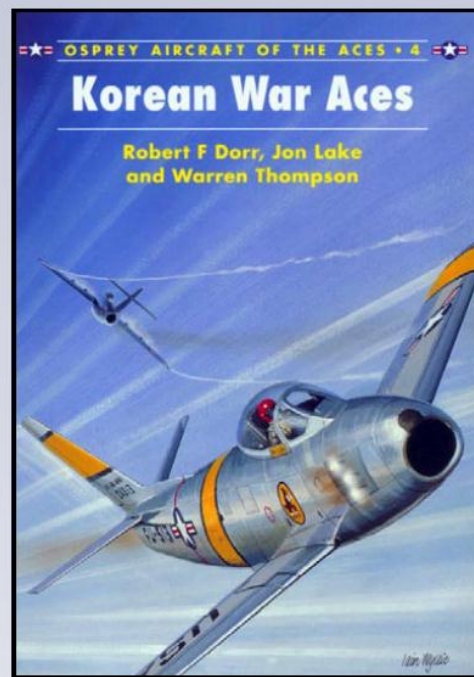
By Robert F. Dorr, Jon Lake and Warren Thompson
1995, Osprey Publishing

One of the most enjoyable reads in the entire Osprey Aircraft of the Aces series, this book is concerned not only with



the F-86 but with other aircraft that scored kills in Korea. Of course, the F-86 was the only aces' mount (save for Guy Borden's F4U-5N) in Korea on the allied side, and so much of the book covers the Sabre in combat. The book emphasizes the scarcity of F-86s in Korea for much of the war and spices things up with some very exciting pilots' recollections of combat. Fighting in the F-86

was little different for these men than fighting in the P-51 or P-47 had been in World War II; Captain Karl Dittmer recalls an incident where he and his wingmen attacked a group of 50 MiG-15s! Another section tells of the 16th Fighter Interceptor Squadron's routine penetration of Chinese air space, which resulted in many kills and, eventually, the shoot-down and capture of its commanding officer Ed Heller, flying "Hell-er Bust X." The introduction of various F-86 models are outlined clearly in the text, and the last chapter deals with the Russian pilots who flew against the F-86. As is always the case in this series, the center of the book has a collection of 56 profiles, most of them Sabres, providing a handy bit of inspiration to anyone stuck for a scheme for his model. There are also many black-and-white photographs, line drawings and a comprehensive index of every allied pilot who scored a kill in the Korean War. For the price (about \$15), this is a great value and perhaps the best single reference on the air-to-air portion of the Korean air war.



Warbird Tech Vol. 3: North American F-86 Sabre Jet Day Fighters contains many great reference photos, charts and drawings. This is a rare look at the mock-up of the straight-wing XP-86.

November SVSM In-House Contest — JUST JAPANESE
Planes, Boats, Tanks, Cars, Bikes—if it's Japanese, bring it!

OCTOBER MINUTES

At the October meeting, it was announced that this year's Christmas meeting will be held at the library and we'll treat it as a light pot luck. Bring something if you'd like, but no giant vats of clam chowder, pots of boiling marinara or things that could otherwise get on the floor. Try cookies, candy, a vegetable plate, soda, a cake maybe. Plus, the gift exchange, which we will detail next issue.

In model talk... Bert McDowell is working with Trumpeter on the design and engineering of their upcoming 1:350 U.S.S. Lexington. He had a test shot at the meeting, and says that working with Trumpeter is frustrating but they are receptive to suggestions. Jim Priete's Alliance X-2 won the X-plane award at the Antelope Valley show.

Bill built the resin kit and scratchbuilt the rocket nozzles, horizontal stabilizers and other details. Frank Babbitt is F-16 crazy; his models this meeting included his big 1:32 F-16 by Hasegawa, which is getting a complete landing gear bay detailing job and a possible Tiger Meet scheme; a 1:48 Hasegawa Viper outfitted with a Seamless Suckers intake and a resin wheel well; a 1:72 Hasegawa F-16A with a Seamless Suckers intake, a built-up F-16 finished as the YF-16, and Revell F-16, which has a hump that Frank says gives the model an unrealistic appearance. Shervin Shembayati Hasegawa Bf 109G had a cowling that didn't fit all that well, but he says the 1:48 model is otherwise very good. Shervin had similar complaints about the cowling and decals of Academy's 1:72 F6F Hellcat, but he finished it into a very nice replica, as he did with Italeri's old-ish A-4F Skyhawk. He's also enjoying Hasegawa's 1:72 P-40N, which he is building as the 15,000th P-40 to be built. Jim Lund said that building the Tamiya F-84G Thunderjet left him a little cold, what with all the parts fitting together so easily and all the detail being present before he really did anything. Jim finished his plankwing in Thunderbirds decals. Buddy Joyce brought in his newly-acquired copies of the Grand Phoenix F3H-2 Demon and FJ-4 Fury, and he exhibited his Emhar 1:72 and Matchbox 1:48 Furies as well. Braulio Escoto did a bang up job on Hasegawa's RA-5C Vigilante, which he built as a gift for a friend. Lou Orselli got his mitts on DOC's 1:72 CV-33 mini-tank, which he says has lots of detail despite its tiny size. Lou also had his prototype Fw 190V-1, for which he had to do a little scratchbuilding, and his superb Supermodel CANT 1007, which features radio detail from Cooper Details and markings from a Tauro decal sheet. Vince Hutson is making slow progress on Craftworks' daunting 1:32 resin Lavochkin La-5; the cockpit is largely installed and now Vince has some serious sanding ahead of him. Chris Bucholtz has the beginnings of his Academy P-38's paint job in place, and he's painted up a 1:72 CMK figure to crew the Lightning once it's finished. Richard Linderer did a bit of restoration work on Revell's old PBY Catalina, which he built with his father almost 40 years ago! The model suffered damage in the 1989 earthquake, but Richard has it back to as-

built condition. Ron Wergin has already finished Dragon's new Tiger I, which impressed him for its level of detail, including the molded-on zimmerit. Ron gave the Tiger a crewman from a Prieser figures set. Ron also had four figures on hand, including two Dragon and two Tristar figures. The Tristar figures particularly impressed him, especially the Dieppe raid German naval infantryman. Andy Kellock cleaned up at the Bulletproof car show, where his "secret weapon" 1964 Impala, customized with the roof from a 1959 Cadillac, was built for the trophies and delivered! His Silver Bullet rat rod also scored an award at the show, which was held in Antioch. Terry Newbern bought the AMT salt flats racer for the cockpit glazing, which

he planned to use for an air racer; now, he's mulling over possible uses for the flat, yellow car. Bill Abbott's modeling is not limited to plastic things that just sit in one place; he made a flying balsa model of a Hawker Hurricane that was about 1:48 and which flies really well (he demonstrated after the meeting when all the tables and chairs had been put away!). Bill also brought in the Tamiya Halibut kit that was the subject of last month's *Styrene Sheet* article, and took great pride in the advances he's made in his scratchbuilding skills in the process of building a cockpit for his Minicraft 1:144 737 and his Revell



Jim Lund's 1:72 Vickers Hastings was awarded Model of the Month. Nice work, Jim.

737, which he says builds up really well. Don Savage took the MS Hobbies Porsche 962 and fitted it to a Tamiya body; he plans on finishing it off as a Coca-Cola-sponsored IMSA car. Mark McDonald has not found any extremely aggravating issues with the Azur 1:32 I-16 Rata, although he says there are plenty of small areas to fix. He commended the kit's resin bits, like the exhausts and gunsight, and plans on finishing his model in Nationalist Spanish markings. Roy Sutherland topped Mark's big I-16 with a 1:18 Bf 109G-6, namely a 21st Century Toys Gustav that has been autographed by Gunther Rall. Roy built it for an auction at the National Air and Space Museum, despite his best efforts to destroy the model in the process. Roy also has finished another 1:32 Hasegawa Bf 109-6 as an aircraft from JG.54, this one destined to be a paint master for another 1:18 21st Century Toys product. Greg Plummer's gleaming Ki-84 was built all but out of the box from the Hasegawa kit, and was finished with a coat of Testors metallizer paints. Greg says the kit is great except for the use of polyvinyl caps to hold the wheels on the struts. Eric McClure has the fuselage of his Czech Model FJ-1 Fury "Chunned" together, but he hopes to start gluing soon. Eric's also adding detail to the hull of a Sherman, and has spent some time building up the side armor. Ben Pada is converting the Hasegawa F4U-4 into a bubbletop racer, with a similar configuration to the F2G Super Corsair, adding a Verlinden engine, a Skyraider canopy and other modifications. Ben also brought in his Tamiya F4U-1 finished in the early blue-gray camouflage to offer comparison. Speaking of Corsairs, Barry Bauer's 1:72 Tamiya F4U-1D was built almost out of the box as an aircraft off the Bunker Hill. Kent McClure is battling

his way through an Academy 1:72 P-40B, and he has plans to finish it as a British machine. Kent also converted some small-scale dwarves into crowdads using putty, pin heads for eyes and metal for feelers. There is little chance these will pilot Kent's F-104, but he did have the cockpit for the Hasegawa 1:48 Starfighter painted and equipped with a Martin-Baker ejection seat. In a smaller scale, Bill Ferrante's F-104, also by Hasegawa but in 1:72 scale, will carry many missiles; it's being built for the museum at NAS China Lake, and it too has been equipped with a metal Martin-Baker seat. Cliff Kranz fitted his Panzer VI chassis with a quad 20mm anti-aircraft turret from Real Models to depict a proposed flak-Panther. Mike Burton is also building a model for the China Lake display, this one a Sidewinder-packing F-86D in Royal Hellenic Air Force markings from Hi-Decal. Mike's also got an Airfix Il-28 "Beagle" assembled and awaiting paint, a Revell 1:144 E-2C Hawkeye constructed to a similar stage, an Aviation Usk Tsurugi suicide plane on its scratchbuilt landing gear, and a 1:48 MPM Pe-2 built in the odd trainer configuration with two large canopies. Mike's also made considerable progress on combining the Koster vacuform conversions with the Monogram P-38 to create a P-38M Night Lightning, a P-38G BTO, and a P-38F. Mike also has the Wings 72 Ki-83 assembled and awaiting paint. John Heck has finished his Tamiya

NIK1 Kyofu, which boasts a realistic chipped-paint finish. John says the shiny spots actually looked more realistic after they were flat-coated. And the model of the month goes to... Jim Lund for his Vickers Hastings in 1:72! After the experience of building a state-of-the-art Tamiya kit, Jim just had to have a go at an Conrail kit, which he said was a lot more



Andy Kellock's contra-rotating prop Fokker D.VII racer won third place.

fun, and the finished product was certainly an unusual visitor to the display table.

We also had out annual Unlimited Air Racers contest in September. A field of five vied for the title this year. Mike Burton radically modified a Frog de Havilland Hornet so it had a butterfly tail with the pilot's seat located between the tails and a coat of British racing green paint. Andy Kellock took the old Hawk



Jim Priete won second place with his Curtiss R3C.

Spitfire 24, lowered the cockpit, and gave it a Coca-Cola sponsorship, complete with large logos and the Coke "wave" pattern across the top wing. And the winners were... In third place, with his Fokker D.VII racer, was Andy Kellock. Andy gave the biplane a contra-rotating propeller (which he carved by hand), a teardrop canopy, and a butterfly-style tail, all finished off with Alclad paint and hand-sprayed serial numbers! In second place, with a Curtiss R3C in 1:48, was Jim Priete. Jim is using the Hawk kit as a pattern for correcting the 1:72 Hasegawa "Porco Rosso" R3C; he made wheels to replace the floats in the kit and finished it with Alclad and Tamiya paints. And the winner, with his souped-up BD-6, was Greg Plummer. Greg took the LS BD-5, added ducting for a flat 6-cylinder engine, swept the wing and added seat belts to the cockpit. For a finishing touch, he added flame decals originally intended for Hot Wheels cars! Congratulations to all our winners!



Greg Plummer's microscopic BD-6 was modified from the LS BD-5 kit. It won first place.



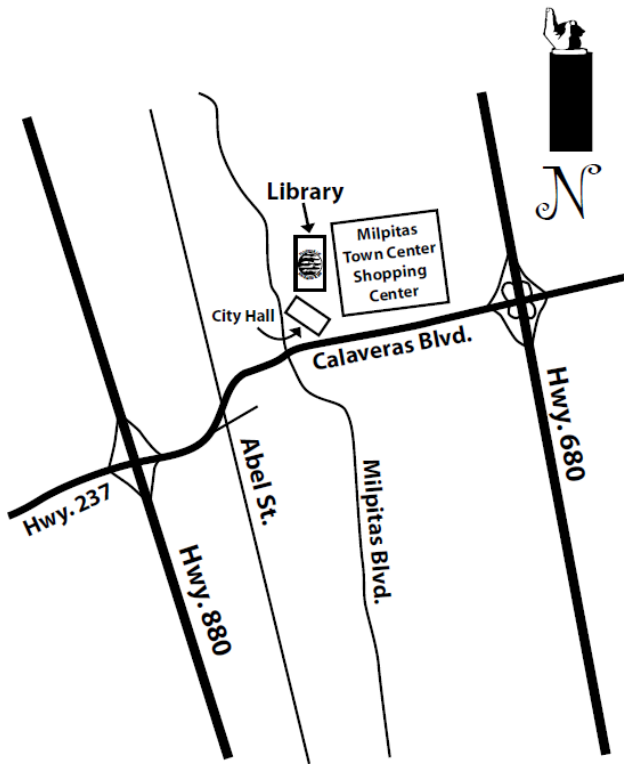
The STYRENE SHEET

is now on line.

WHY?

...THRILLS AND CHILLS!

Go to www.svsm.org to download the October color newsletter.



Next meeting:
7:00 p.m.,
Friday,
November 19
at the
Milpitas Public Library
40 N. Milpitas Blvd.
For more information, call the
editor at (408) 307-0672
email: editor@svsm.org



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