



North American F-86E, 51st F/I Wing, 25th F/I Squadron, at K-13, Suwon, Korea in August 1952. Broad yellow band with black stripes, red flight leader's stripe on nose and tail, black checkerboard. (Photo - Richard T. Yeoman)

601st Aircraft Repair Squadron

By ABEL L. DOLIM

In August of 1951, I was assigned to the 601st Aircraft Repair Squadron at Kisarazu, Japan. The 601st was part of the 13th Maintenance Group with headquarters at FEAMCOM, Tachikawa. I'd been transferred from Hamilton AFB, California to Far East Air Material Command specifically to replace a personnel officer! However, for lack of a qualified officer and because of my civilian occupational background, I was asked to head the shops project. Eager to get away from paper work for a change, I violated the eleventh commandment of the Air Force, "Thou shalt not volunteer Thyself."

The air base was adjacent to and west of the fishing village of Kisarazu on the Chiba peninsula, just across Tokyo Bay from that sprawling metropolis. Formerly an Imperial Naval Air Station, it was larger and better planned than most WW II type air bases. The hangars and administrative buildings still carried the scars of war, but the USAF and the USN were in the process of correcting this situation.

Kisarazu was the last port of debarkation for USAF fighter type aircraft--the end of the line after the long trip across the Pacific on the decks of an aircraft carrier. The planes were unloaded at Yokosuka, then barged across the bay to Kisarazu where they were off-loaded by a 20-ton Gantry crane. Next, they were towed to the Corrosion Control hangar where they were stripped of their plastic covering and treated for corrosion as

required. Another short towing job westward along the airstrip brought the plane to the line maintenance hangars for complete check-ups prior to test flight.

Two types of aircraft, North American F-51s and Lockheed F-80s, were really given the treatment in what was called the "Rebirth Program", a production line maintenance system set up to process these fighter types.

In addition to responsibility for Corrosion Control and Gantry off-loading, my job was to organize and set up some 13 shops to provide services expected to free the 601st from dependence on the main depot industrial shops at the FEAMCOM HQ base at Tachikawa. Accordingly, I was authorized to secure the Japanese Government war reparations machine tools and equipment required and in no time at all found myself signed up for \$2,000,000 worth of assorted British, French, German, Japanese and American machinery. The greater part of this machinery went into the machine shop, sheet metal shop and heat-treating section. Within two months of my arrival, I was responsible for the supervision of 75 airmen and 150 Japanese nationals employed in the various shops.

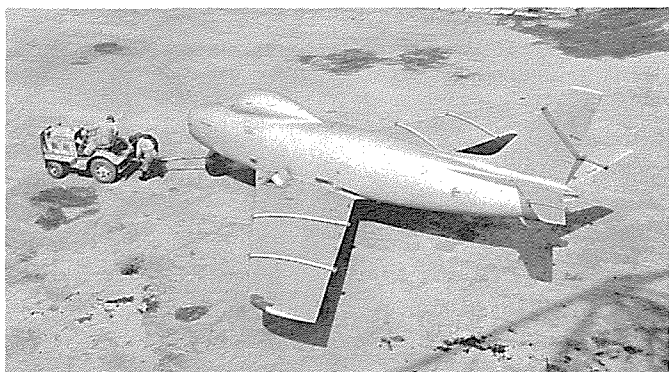
The paint shop in particular was called upon to do some pretty fancy work. This included yellow stripes for F-86s of the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing, black and white stripes for the F-86s of the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing, Ying Yang (national) insignias for ROK F-51s, and Springbok (specy of South African antelope)



Lockheed F-80 being off loaded from barge after journey to Kisarazu, 601st Aircraft Repair Squadron. (A. Dolim)



Protective coating is stripped from F-80C in the Corrosion Control hangar at Kisarazu. (Photo - A. Dolim)



Also serviced by the 601st ARS was the F-86 type, one of which is here heading to Corrosion Control. (Dolm)



Final check of F-86. If check flight proved satisfactory, plane was Ready for Delivery. (Photo - A. Dolim)



"Elenore" was squadron leader's F-86 which had accounted for 10½ Russian aircraft, at K-13. (Photo - Yeoman)



"Janatice" was F-86 piloted by Lt Mike Filliman; crew chief, R. F. Hubbard in cockpit. (Photo - Yeoman)

insignias for RSAAF F-51s.

Sharing Kisarazu with the 601st, the USN operated a small Fleet Air Station repair and overhaul facility adjacent to the Corrosion Control hangar. Their function primarily consisted of receiving and repairing "struck" aircraft from aircraft carriers operating off the Korean coast. They were also engaged in a project which greatly interested all of us, namely preparing and testing bright red F8F drone and yellow-splashed TBM mother aircraft for pilotless attacks on enemy frontal areas. Visiting Marine flyers and assorted "Airedales" (Navy fliers) were forever trying to best USAF F-86s with their McDonnell Banshees in dogfights which took place up to 50,000 feet and in which, incidentally, they always came out second best.

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In November, my replacement finally arrived and I was returned to the much less interesting routine of a personnel assignment. I shall never forget my jam-packed days with the 601st--I had never before worked so hard, but it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For the fourth in the series of "flying experience" articles to appear in the JOURNAL, Abel Dolim was asked to give a brief look back at a phase of the Korean War. This visit to Kisarazu does that and also, hopefully, will open the door to more articles on aviation in Korea. The author, whose address is 15983 E. 14th St., San Leandro, California, is in the Real Estate field and will soon get his private pilot's license.