

Utah National Guard HISTORY HIGHLIGHT



July 2023

Air National Guard's First "Ace", 1952

"The brilliant marksmanship, superlative airmanship and utter disregard for personal safety displayed by Captain Jolley reflect great credit upon himself and the USAF" Distinguished Flying Cross Citation, 1952

Clifford Dale Jolley, the Air National Guard's first "Ace" was born May 4, 1921 in Cleveland, Ohio. Jolley's love of aviation and strong sense of patriotism led him to join the US Army Air Corps in 1941 and became a winged pilot by 1942. After serving primarily in Alaska during World War II, Jolley moved his family to California where he worked as an airplane mechanic and flight instructor.

Jolley served briefly in the California National Guard, where he completed his jet aircraft training and performed as a gunnery instructor. In 1948, he transitioned to the new F-86 Sabre, the United States first swept wing fighter aircraft. In 1949, Jolley moved to Utah and joined the Utah National Guard. Jolley toured the country with the UTNG and showcased the F-86s firepower in air demonstrations until the Utah Air National Guard was activated for the Korean War in 1952.

Captain Jolley was assigned to the 335th Fighter Interceptor Squadron where he flew out of Kimpo Air Base, South Korea performing bomber and photographic reconnaissance escort and offensive and defensive counter air missions.

Shooting down his fifth MiG-15 on August 8, 1952, Jolley became the 18th jet ace of the Korean War and the first from the National Guard. Jolley was highly decorated and credited with seven confirmed kills and 13 probable's by the end of the war.

Jolley served until 1966 when he retired from the Utah National Guard as a lieutenant colonel. After his flying career ended, he started a new career as a designer and architect. He passed away on July 13, 1994 after complications from a brain tumor and was honored with a military flyover during his burial in Bountiful, Utah.



Served in Two Wars

Capt Clifford Jolley poses in front of his P-51 Mustang during his brief service in the California Air National Guard before joining the Utah Air National Guard.

Jolley served in World War II and the Korean War. As a combat pilot in WW2, Jolley flew P-40s and P-38s in the Aleutian Islands campaign. During the war, he was assigned to the 18th Fighter Squadron, 343rd Fighter Group, 11th Air Force and shot down three enemy planes.



Replica of the F-86 "Jolley Roger" performs at an airshow at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

Seen from the gun camera, A MiG-15 trails smoke after taking hits from an F-86 in pursuit near MIG Alley, Korea, 1952.



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Jolley was awarded a Silver Star for his heroic actions on July 4, 1952. His citation reads: For gallantry in action against an enemy of the United Nations while serving as pilot of an F-86 Jet Fighter of the 335th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing, Fifth Air Force, in Korea.

Leading a flight of F-86s protecting friendly fighter bombers in the Sakchu area, Captain Jolley sighted two MiGs and, positioning himself, damaged one of them before they escaped across the Yalu River. Later, over Sinuiju, Captain Jolley was attacked by four MiGs, during which time he was wounded and his aircraft damaged. However, he regained control, destroyed one MiG that was attacking his wingman, and drove off another. A few minutes later, Captain Jolley damaged another MiG in a brief encounter. While proceeding out to sea he received a distress call from his wingman. Captain Jolley immediately made a 180 degree turn to his wingman's aid despite the fact that he was wounded, and his

aircraft badly damaged and very low on fuel. Before overtaking his wingman, he was advised the wingman had headed safely out to sea, so Captain Jolley returned to a friendly island, bailed out, and was rescued by friendly aircraft. As a direct result of his superlative airmanship and quick thinking, one MiG was destroyed, two MiGs critically damaged, and he diverted a fierce enemy attack on his wingman in the second encounter of the day. Through his heroic gallantry in action against determined enemy opposition, Captain Jolley reflected the highest credit upon himself and the military service. great credit upon himself, the Far East Air Forces, and the United States Air Force.

Jolley finished his service with a Silver Star, Purple Heart, four Distinguished Flying Crosses, and three Air Medals.

Sources:

Military Times, 2023

Together We Served, 2011

Replica of the F-86 Sabre "Jolley Roger" flown by Lt Col Clifford Jolley during the Korean War. The aircraft is on display at the Hill AFB Aerospace Museum.



Capt Clifford Jolley stands at the cockpit of his F-86 Sabre, "Jolly Roger" before flying a mission into Korea