



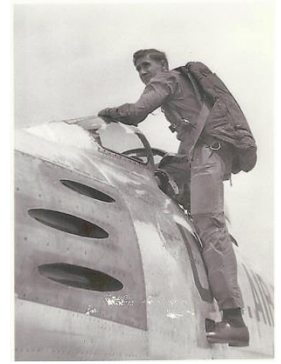
## EUGENE CROCKETT 'GENE' SIMMONS

First Lieutenant, U.S. Air Force

Sept. 1953 – Sept. 1956

12<sup>th</sup> Strategic Fighter Wing

Strategic Air Command



Son of Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Chessie Simmons of Annona, Red River County, Texas, born and raised on a farm near Annona. Graduated from Annona High School in May, 1950 and began college at East Texas State Teachers College in Commerce in September, 1950, graduating in May, 1953 with a BS degree in Business Administration. While at ETSTC participated in the ROTC program, earning a Commission in the U.S. Air Force as a Second Lieutenant in July, 1953 following a Summer Camp program at Luke AFB in Phoenix, AZ.

Began Active Duty Status with the Air Force at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, TX, then on to Goodfellow AFB in San Angelo, TX for Basic Pilot training in the L-21 Super Cub and the AT-6 Texan. Following graduation from Basic Pilot training in May, 1954, the love of my life, Genevieve "Jenny" Harmon agreed to marry me and join with me on our Air Force journey to become a Jet Fighter pilot. Our next stop was Webb AFB in Big Springs, TX for Advanced Pilot Training in the T-28 and T-33 Jet Trainer. After receiving the Silver Wings of an Air Force pilot at Webb AFB, and being selected for Fighter Pilot Training, we moved on to Laughlin AFB in Del Rio, TX for an introduction course to Gunnery School while still flying the T-33, we were introduced to Air-to-Air combat tactics and Air-to-Ground strafing and bombing. After completing this course successfully, we moved on to Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, NV for Advanced Gunnery School in a combat aircraft, the F-86F Sabre Jet which had shown its prowess in the Korean War against the North Korean and Chinese MIG. We were taught Air-to-Air combat tactics by the same fighter pilots that performed so well in the Korean Conflict. While at Nellis I became a member of the North American Aviation Mach Buster Club by flying the F-86 thru the speed-of-sound on March 17, 1955 in a steep dive from 40,000 ft. altitude.

After reaching my dream of becoming a Jet Fighter Pilot, our next assignment was to the Strategic Air Command as a Fighter-Bomber Pilot capable of delivering a nuclear weapon with an F-84F deep into the Soviet Union. Our primary duty station was Bergstrom AFB in Austin, TX, and our primary assignment was to strike the Soviet Union in case the Cold War turned into a nuclear conflict. There were many temporary duty assignments (TDY) including Eielson AFB in Fairbanks, Alaska where we were protecting the "lower 48" against attack from the Soviet Union.

In Sept. 1956, we decided to return to civilian life to raise our family and after a few years as an Inactive Reserve Officer we decided to resign my commission and become an Air Force Veteran for the rest of my life.



REPUBLIC F-84F THUNDERSTREAK



NORTH AMERICAN F-86F SABRE JET