

## Allies at odds

When 214 Squadron left Sculthorpe in May 1944 it was considered that the station was on 'Care and Maintenance'. As soon as the war was over it became a satellite of RAF Marham. The UK and the US reached an agreement to allow SAC to place some units there on 30-90 day deployments with the RAF giving some secondary support such as transport, catering, medical & postal services and security. So, with the arrival of Group Captain H C Parker in January 1948 the station opened again with the first SAC units arriving in February 1949. There were some 400 RAF personnel there and they had to share the domestic sites with the Americans although they had not been used for over four years. 50 new married quarters and later, new dormitories were available, but the two air forces lived separate lives. After a while the Americans chose to ignore the regulations and aircraft arrived and departed without being recorded, which upset the RAF.

G/P Parker was also responsible for Little Snoring, then still an active RAF Station. There were hundreds of people squatting in the scattered domestic sites and one man remained in a building close to the live perimeter track. Attempts to get him to pay rent or get out came to nothing.

Meanwhile, back at Sculthorpe the situation was not good. The Americans were in the habit of taking over things and giving the RAF menial tasks to do this caused a drop in morale across all ranks of the RAF. The regulars were worried about their future and those doing National Service (about 50% of the total) were just killing time!

During the Summer of 1950 nearly 300 extra airmen were drafted in to take care of security including some light AA units from the Royal Artillery. Things got so bad that the G/C was denied access to some parts of his airfield! The Americans took over more and more of the airfield and ignored regulations. Morale across the RAF was very low and by December 1950 there was little or nothing for them to do. Those that remained were housed and fed by Bircham Newton some miles away. The RAF drawdown continued and by the last day of January 1951 the RAF had gone. The official date for the handover to the USAF was February 1<sup>st</sup> 1954 but a lot would happen before then.

When the USAF 47thBW was occupying Sculthorpe the RAF still appointed a commanding Officer. Today it is known simply as Sculthorpe airfield and is administered by the Army. The USAF still use it by arrangement.