

Jets

After the second world war the US aviation industry was looking to produce the next generation of military aircraft, a number of interesting designs were proposed. When one of them eventually flew it was described as flying as bad as it looked!

One design was the North American XB45 which the Strategic Air Command (SAC) were interested in, in particular the reconnaissance version and when it was ready they acquired a number of RB45C for their 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. One detachment was then sent to Sculthorpe (on a tidy basis), after a short stay at Manston, At Sculthorpe four RB45Cs were loaned to the RAF Special Duties squadron for use on Operation Ju Jitsu.

At the same time Tactical Air Command (TAC) were looking to resupply the 47th Bombardment Wing with the same aircraft. The wing was deactivated in 1949 as an economy measure and the squadrons dispersed. However the situation in Europe was causing concern and the wing was reactivated and sent to Sculthorpe along with their mark 5 A bombs. They were later joined by the 86BS

In 1953 SAC decided to replace their aircraft with the new B and RB47, leaving a number of RB45Cs surplus. Tactical Air Command (TAC) took them for the 19th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (19TRS). That done they were sent to Sculthorpe to join the 47BW and to enhance the resources of the 49th Air Division. Eventually they were the first unit to convert to the new RB66, the other squadrons of the wing then followed soon after.

With the war in Korea and the news that the USSR had the Atom bomb NATO were concerned that the USSR would use the situation as an excuse to expand westwards into Europe. A USAF bomber wing based in Europe would act as a deterrent and also reduce the number of troops on the ground in the event of hostilities. To that end SAC were considering a B29 wing, After all that had been using Sculthorpe since 1949. Meanwhile TAC had the 47thBW ready with its B45s. An assessment was made to establish who would be the most suitable to send. The 47th BW came out on top with their new, smaller, faster and more potent aircraft so they were sent to Sculthorpe to join the powerful 49th Air Division overlapping the 91st SWRW who were already there. The 47BW were later bolstered up with the 86BS, the 19trs and the 420ARS. Four RB45s of the 19TRS arrived before the bulk of the squadron these aircraft were to be used by the RAF Special Duty flight for their last operation before handing over to the 19trs.

The 47th BW remained at Sculthorpe for a Decade seeing out the Berlin blockade, the Suez crisis and the Hungarian crisis even though the 49th Air Division had been disbanded in 1956