

Residents

The first residents at Sculthorpe/Tattersett were Douglas DB7 Bostons. A batch for the French Air Force were taken on by the RAF after the fall of France. By coincidence it was a Free French squadron (342) who were operating them; they were formed at the then parent station of West Raynham before moving to their new home.

After they had moved on they were replaced by Antipodean squadrons with Lockheed Venturas although they were soon replaced with de Havilland Mosquitoes (Mk6), they were later joined by an RAF squadron flying the same aircraft. The Mosquitoes stayed until the end of the year 1943. Sculthorpe was now an independent station.

In the New Year there was the sound of American engines to be heard when a number of RAF B17 Fortress arrived to carry out radio countermeasures work, soon these were joined by a number of USAAF crews who worked with them. It has been suggested that they were joined, for a while, by gliders which were stored on the grassed areas, indeed photographs of the time show the grassed areas painted out on the negatives. By the end of May 1944 Sculthorpe was empty and being prepared for extension to a very Heavy Bomber base.

When Sculthorpe reopened in 1948 the resident aircraft was a sole de Havilland Tiger Moth used by the OC to commute to the parent station of Marham and also Little Snoring which was under care and maintenance but was under the control of Sculthorpe.

The Americans arrived in 1949 with Boeing B29s and B50s they were only meant to stay for 30-90 days but some stretched it out to 6 months!

In 1951 US Strategic Air Command brought some North American RB45 aircraft to Sculthorpe for a four year stay to spy on the USSR. After two years the 47th Bomber Wing arrived for a ten year stay with similar aircraft although some were tactical models. They were soon joined by the 49th Air Division (incorporating some lesser units) they were equipped with non-combat aircraft, cargo, taxi, training and some target towers used to support the US Army who were there at the time. There was also an Air Rescue squadron with such interesting

aircraft as Grumman AS16 Albatross and Boeing SB29 with their large orange rescue boats under-belly.

Once the SAC RB45s had gone or had been incorporated with the 47BW squadrons there was then room for the 420 Air Refuelling Squadron with their Boeing KB29 tankers, they were to outlive the 47BW by two years.

As a Standby base in the 1970s and 80s Sculthorpe was host to deployments of Air National Guard from the States and also USAF and RAF detachments displaced from their home bases as a result of ongoing remedial work there.