

Sculthorpe opens for the third time.

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The last 47BW aircraft left Sculthorpe in 1964 and then the place remained empty until 1967 when the USAF was obliged to leave France and the 48th Tactical Fighter wing (TFW)relocated to RAF Lakenheath opening Sculthorpe as a dispersed Operating Base. Things progressed rapidly when the 7519 Combat Support Squadron moved in on 1st January 1971.

While at Sculthorpe 7519 were allocated two major tasks. to create and administer a Standby Dispersal Base, much to the disappointment of the local population who would have preferred full operating base with all the financial implications.

The site had to be secured, buildings had to be renovated and furnished, the Fuel lines and airfield lighting had to be reactivated and married quarters which were not being used by the RAF had to be modernised The Munitions site would be required but that was in poor repair and had been vandalised.

B) Take charge of Lakenheath's War Readiness materiels which, in this case, were the drop tanks and pylons for the 48TFW aircraft.



Drop tanks & pylons were stored at Sculthorpe 40 miles from where they were needed!

100 personnel were assigned to 7519 but still civilian clerks had to be employed for some of the admin work there were 59 other personnel at Sculthorpe but they were assigned to other units and could not be poached. There were also problems with the supply of materials for packing the drop tanks in for transport. In spite of the best efforts of the Base Commander Lt. Col. Williams and his staff it would seem that 7519 was understaffed and underfunded.

Nevertheless work continued on the Standby Base ready for the next big event in the Autumn of 1972 which was a US Army led exercise Flintlock V.

Medical facilities had to be considered but the hospital at Lakenheath were confident that they could handle everything anyway they had an annex on Sculthorpe. There was also provision for calling in a local GP if necessary. Security also had to be considered and Air Force police were drafted in from Lakenheath. With some foresight British MoD police were also drafted in. These were later needed when a high-profile peace movement targeted the base and made a confounded nuisance of themselves. Flintlock V arrived in fine style on September 3rd 1972 with the landing of a C5 Galaxy the largest aircraft ever to use Sculthorpe. It caused no problems in spite of its size and weight. Sculthorpe was then set for another few years of Flintlocks and exercise Coronets as well as units displaced because of work on their home runways. The munitions site was still under renovation during Flintlock. Because Sculthorpe had changed status it was now needed for non-nuclear ordnance.



A C5 landing ay Sculthorpe could have had an adverse effect on taxiways and hardstandings. The remainder of the troops were brought in by C141Starlifters which were half the size. They came in from the East over the North of Fakenham at 5 minute intervals.

