

## Security at Sculthorpe

When Sculthorpe reopened in 1948 the wartime attitude to security still persisted. Cultivation went on up to the peritrack and no one considered going on to the airfields without an invitation. Hedges and ditches afforded the necessary security. Once the Americans arrived there was a rethink and, at their request guards were posted around the aircraft, some of which may have been loaded with dummy A bombs or even the real ones! Barbed wire was also under consideration. There were still contractors on site and consideration had to be given to them, they could have been Eastern European Spies.

Things got more serious during the Korean War, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Light Anti Aircraft and searchlight regiment of the British Army were drafted in to provide protection and anti-sabotage facilities. They were followed by 4<sup>th</sup> regiment of the Royal Artillery, who in turn were replaced by RAF Police and dog handlers. The army had created their own tented town while they were there.

In 1950 the Air Ministry decided that Sculthorpe should be brought up to full bomber airfield standard by posting in 257 men of all trades without consideration for their own circumstances. These men had little or nothing to do apart from anti sabotage duties (i.e. guard duties) this must have made it a most unpopular posting!

By 1951 the Americans had Sculthorpe to themselves and the US Army in the form of the 50<sup>th</sup> RCAT Detachment came in to provide security. They had training facilities on the coast at Stiffkey and could provide anti-aircraft and smoke generating facilities.

Quite what prompted the installation of a high one-way chain link fence around the entire base is not known, possibly the continued use of Nuclear Ordnance or the impending arrival of the secret RB45 spy-in-the-sky aircraft.

In the 1970s there were a number of RAF families living at Sculthorpe and MoD police were drafted in to look after their interests, this proved to be a good move in the long run. A decade later the CND convinced themselves that Cruise missiles were being kept there and started cutting holes in the fence to allow them access to the base to make their protests. The end came when attention was switched to Molesworth and Greenham Common where the missiles really were.

In 1992 the USAF no longer had any use for Sculthorpe as it was then and so closed it down. Security was contracted out to a commercial company while the property was being sold.