

# The Black Shed

During the rebuilding of Sculthorpe, c1946, the US Government finance and built what came to be called 'the Black Shed' aka atomic maintenance building. This was out of bounds for the RAF and they had no access to it.

There is evidence that the US Military were involved in the building of the Black Shed. A cigar smoking American officer was seen driving around the airfield in a jeep!





## The B29 Superfortress

Some were modified to carry a-bombs and were known as Silverplates.

In 1942 there was a proposal that English Electric should build B29 bombers for the RAF but his was not carried forward.

For security reasons the existence and function of the Black Shed was not made public. However, in October 1958 an airman shut himself in there with a loaded pistol. The matter was resolved by the Padre although questions were asked in the Commons some while later. It is possible that this incident hastened the deactivation of the functions of the Black Shed.



The regular B29s needed to have their bomb-bays modified to carry an A-bomb but the new B50 models were designed to carry them from the outset.

Eventually the dimensions of Nuclear bombs were reduced so that loading pits were no longer required. Aircraft were then tipped onto their tails for loading.

Later there is anecdotal evidence that B45s had to do the same.

Above: One of the entrances for the mechanisms to operate the bomb loading pit.

The functions of the Black Shed were eventually taken over by one of the Igloos on the Munitions compound off-base to the north east. At the time of writing this igloo is still radioactive!

It is not known exactly when the Black Shed was dismantled but it was sometime before the 47BW was deactivated in 1962.



This is still radioactive