

85th FLYING TRAINING SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

85th Bombardment Squadron (Light) constituted 20 Nov 1940
Activated, 15 Jan 1941
Redesignated 85th Bombardment Squadron, Light, 20 Aug 1943
Redesignated 85th Bombardment Squadron, Light (Night Attack), 16 Apr 1946
Redesignated 85th Bombardment Squadron, Light, Jet, 23 Jun 1948
Redesignated 85th Bombardment Squadron, Light, 16 Nov 1950
Redesignated 85th Bombardment Squadron, Tactical, 1 Oct 1955
Discontinued and inactivated, 22 Jun 1962
Redesignated 85th Flying Training Squadron, 22 Mar 1972
Activated, 1 Sep 1972

STATIONS

McChord Field, WA, 15 Jan 1941
Fresno, CA, 11 Aug 1941
Will Rogers Field, OK, 17 Feb 1942
Greensboro, NC, 16 Jul–17 Oct 1942
Mediouna, French Morocco, c. 17 Nov 1942
Thelepte, Tunisia, 9 Jan 1943
Youks-les-Bains, Algeria, 16 Feb 1943
Canrobert, Algeria, 27 Feb 1943

Thelepte, Tunisia, 30 Mar 1943
Souk-el-Arba, Tunisia, 16 Apr 1943
Soliman, Tunisia, 1 Jun 1943; Malta, 22 Jul 1943
Sicily, 12 Aug 1943
Grottaglie, Italy, 24 Sep 1943
Vincenzo Airfield, Italy, 15 Oct 1943
Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 11 Jan 1944
Capodichino, Italy, 22 Mar 1944
Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 25 Apr 1944
Ponte Galeria, Italy, 13 Jun 1944
Ombrone Airfield, Italy, 26 Jun 1944
Poretta Corsica, 15 Jul 1944
Salon, France, 4 Sep 1944
Follonica, Italy, 16 Sep 1944
Rosignano Airfield, Italy, 4 Oct 1944
Grosseto, Italy, 10 Dec 1944
Pisa, Italy, 17–23 Jun 1945
Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 11 Jul 1945
Lake Charles AAFld, LA, 9 Sep 1945
Biggs Field, TX, 20 Oct 1946
Barksdale AFB, LA, 19 Nov 1948
Langley AFB, VA, 17 Oct 1949–21 May 1952
Sculthorpe RAF Station (later, RAF Sculthorpe), England, 31 May 1952–22 Jun 1962
Laughlin AFB, TX, 1 Sep 1972

ASSIGNMENTS

47th Bombardment Group, 15 Jan 1941
Twelfth Air Force, 2 Oct 1949
Ninth Air Force, 17 Oct 1949
Tactical Air Command, 1 Aug 1950
47th Bombardment Group, 12 Mar 1951
47th Bombardment Wing, 8 Feb 1955–22 Jun 1962
47th Flying Training Wing, 1 Sep 1972
47th Operations Group, 15 Dec 1991

ATTACHMENTS

363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group, to 31 Aug 1950
363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Sep 1950–11 Mar 1951
47th Bombardment Wing, 17 Nov 1952–7 Feb 1955

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B–18A, 1941
DB–7B, 1941
A–20B, 1941

A-20C
A-20J
A-20K
A-26B (later B-26), 1945
A-26C
B-45A, 1949
B-66, 1958
T-37, 1972
T-6, 2004

COMMANDERS

Maj John J. O'Hara, 15 Jan 1941
1LT Delmar E. Wilson, 7 May 1941-unkn
Maj Reginald J. Clizbe, 1942
Maj Guymon Penix, 20 May 1943
Maj Martin H. Johnson, 28 Apr 1944
Maj Gene C. Vance, 6 Aug 1944
LTC Roger W. Page, 5 Feb 1945
1LT Robert A. Browning Jr., 29 Aug 1945
Maj John F. Sharp, 9 Sep 1945
LTC Joseph W. Ruebel, 12 Mar 1946
Maj Richard D. Salter, 1 Nov 1946
Maj John F. Sharp, Feb 1947
Cpt James L. Loudon, 9 Jun 1947
Maj Robert E. Wilmarth, 11 Jun 1947
Maj Paul B. Neafus, 25 Jun 1947
Maj Atlee G. Manthos, Aug 1947
Maj Harlan C. Wilder, Sep 1947
LTC John G. Napier, Nov 1947
Maj Harlan C. Wilder, Apr 1948
Maj Harold W. Burns, 3 Aug 1948
Maj Paul B. Neafus, 13 Aug 1948
Maj Gus Weiser, 30 Aug 1948
Maj Paul B. Neafus, 3 Sep 1948
LTC Benjamin G. Willis, 22 Sep 1948
Maj Hubert M. Blair, Feb 1949
LTC Benjamin G. Willis, Mar 1949
Maj Hubert M. Blair, 3 Jul 1949
Maj James S. Kale, 4 Nov 1949
LTC Benjamin G. Willis, 24 Feb 1950
Maj Harlan C. Buttrill, 1 Sep 1950
LTC Hubert M. Blair, 3 Jan 1951
LTC George B. Leaverton, 1 Mar 1953
Maj Robert E. Grovert, 17 Dec 1954

LTC Raymond L. Fitzgerald, 7 Jul 1955
Maj Keith Conley, Nov 1955
Maj Carl A. Pacharzina Jr., Dec 1957
LTC Jack C. West, 25 Aug 1958
LTC William L. Sheppard, 19 Feb 1961-22 Jun 1962
LTC Edwin W. Johnson, 1 Sep 1972
LTC Max C. Brestel, Oct 1974
Lt Col Dale R. Ullrich, 28 May 1976
LTC James N. Ahmann, 17 Feb 1978
LTC James L. Weaver, 14 Apr 1978
LTC Carl Hintze III, 2 Aug 1979
LTC Terrence P. Corrigan, 11 Sep 1980
LTC Charles R. Edwards, 4 Aug 1981
LTC John P. Stephenson, 15 Jul 1983
LTC Gary L. Lindner, 19 Apr 1985
LTC Sigourney D. Hall, 3 Apr 1987
LTC Thomas R. Cooper, 24 Jun 1988
LTC Gary A. Praesel, 15 Jun 1990
LTC James S. Sheehan, 15 Jun 1992
LTC Kevin J. Kennedy, 28 Jan 1994
LTC Carl A. Steel, 7 Jul 1995
LTC Jason B. Barlow, 2 Jun 1997
LTC Michael A. Silver, 28 May 1999
LTC William T. Davidson Jr., 14 Jul 2000
LTC David L. Turner, 22 Mar 2002
LTC Steven G. Moore, 4 Aug 2003
LTC Daniel W. Gernert, 25 Apr 2005
LTC Christopher C. Richardson, 31 Aug 2006

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Algeria-French Morocco

Tunisia

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Anzio

Rome-Arno

Southern France

North Apennines

Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
North Africa, 22 Feb 1943
Po Valley, 21–24 Apr 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1958–30 Jun 1960
1 Jan–31 Dec 1973
1 Jan 1976–28 Feb 1977
1 Jan 1979–30 Apr 1980
1 May 1983–30 Sep 1984
1 Apr 1985–31 Jan 1987
1 Feb 1987–31 Mar 1988
1 Apr 1988–31 Mar 1989
1 Apr 1989–15 Mar 1991
1 Jul 1998–30 Jun 2000
1 Sep 2003–30 Jun 2005
1 Jul 2005–30 Jun 2007

EMBLEM



Over and through a yellow orange disc, border light turquoise blue, a skeleton wearing tuxedo and silk hat, proper, riding in open cockpit of large red aerial bomb, smoking a cigar, and twirling a revolver about the right forefinger, all emitting white speed lines to rear. (Approved, 9 Sep 1944)



On a Blue disc edged with a narrow Yellow border, a Gray sphere grid-lined Black, within five White stylized cloud formations. Striding down the sphere a Yellow tiger in perspective, mouth Red, teeth White, outlines and details Black. (Approved, 2 Jan 1973)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Antisubmarine patrols, Dec 1941–Jan 1942. Combat in MTO, 10 Jan 1943–30 Apr 1945. Undergraduate pilot training, 1972.

Flying the B-18 from McChord Field, WA, the 85th's war record began two days after Pearl Harbor. Its mission was flying anti-submarine patrols off the west coast of the United States. This was a short lived mission, however, as training for overseas duty began six weeks later.

Following 10 months of training, the 85th, a squadron of the 47th Bomb Group, moved to North Africa as part of Twelfth Air Force. The training not only included methods of operation, but also a change to the A-20 "Havoc" aircraft. The unit began operations by flying low-level bombing missions against the enemy in North Africa. When Axis forces broke through at Kasserine Pass in February 1943, the 85th, though undermanned and under supplied, flew attack missions against the advancing armored columns, slowing their advance and helping stop the enemy's offense. For this action, the squadron was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

While remaining active in combat during March and April 1943, the squadron trained for medium-level bombardment operations. The 85th participated in the reduction of Pantellaria and Lampedusa in June 1943, and the invasion of Sicily that July. Near Messina, Italy in August 1943, the squadron bombed evacuation beaches used by the Germans. When the British Eighth Army began the invasion of Italy in September 1943, the 85th was there to lend support. The squadron played an active role during the allied advance toward Rome from September 1943 through June 1944.

The invasion of Southern France during August and September 1944 saw more combat for the

85th. From September 1944 to April 1945 the mission of the 85th was to attack German communications facilities in mountainous northern Italy. It was during this time the 85th began flying night intruder missions in the A-26 Invader. A second Presidential Unit Citation was awarded for the squadron's performance from April 21-24, 1945, when, in bad weather and over rugged terrain, the squadron maintained operations for 60 consecutive hours, destroying enemy transportation in the Po Valley, preventing an organized withdrawal of German forces. Throughout the war, the 85th Bomb Squadron flew against such targets as tanks, convoys, bivouac areas, troop concentrations, supply dumps, roads, pontoon bridges, rail lines and airfields.

The 85th returned to the United States in April 1945. The squadron trained in a variety of tactical operations. The 85th was one of the first squadrons to receive the B-45 "Tornado", America's first jet bomber, which it flew until 1958, when the B-66 Destroyer was introduced.

The 85th Bomb Squadron was deactivated in May 1962 while stationed at RAF Sculthorpe, England. In September 1972, the squadron was reactivated as the 85th Flying Training Squadron, at Laughlin AFB, TX (formerly the 3645th Pilot Training Squadron).

On 1 October 1998 the squadron was split in half, forming the 84th Flying Training Squadron. The 86th Flying Training Squadron, Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, conducts the T-1A flying training portion of Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training (SUPT).

The mounting litany of grievances included unreliable avionics, breakdowns in bomb bay equipment, and the occasional engine fire during startups. Captain Carrington, the 85th Squadron maintenance officer, declared, "We got back into the business of checking out a bomb group we had all kinds of trouble. Sometimes we'd open up the electrical compartment and find it would be full of water from rain. The canopies would crack. The heating system, with its fish oil in it, failed almost every flight. And in the heat down there, we had a deal that if you were scheduled to fly the airplane they'd put a canopy over it, and they'd actually let you taxi to the end of the runway and hold, then take that off." As B-45s continued operating, unsatisfactory reports (URs) began "flying like bullets." The usual maintenance headaches were further compounded by chronic shortages of parts and qualified personnel to install them. Improvisation and innovation thus became essential bywords throughout the B-45's tenure at Barksdale. In April 1949, the 84th Squadron mechanics reported that stripping combustion chamber linings from J47s, an essential part of mandatory engine inspections, was almost impossible because "a special tool for removing the chambers is not at hand. A tool was manufactured locally that appears to be more satisfactory than the one authorized." It is a time-honored axiom among ground personnel that, while they make the headlines, flight crews could never get airborne save for the skill, tenacity, and technical imagination of the crew chiefs and their men. The Tornado, as events unfolded, taxed those abilities to the utmost. "They hated it," mechanic Merle Sollars unequivocally asserted, "it was a tough airplane.

The loss of number 47-044 and its entire crew on August 31, 1949, was a further blow to the 47th Wing. The aircraft departed Barksdale at 10:22 A.M. to perform routine instrument and

transition training. Four minutes later, it inexplicably smashed into a cotton field fourteen miles northwest of Barksdale. Major Paul B. Neafus, the 85th's Squadron's assistant group operations officer, and Lieutenant Donald A. Paulson perished in the fiery wreckage, parts of it scattered over a wide area. Eyewitnesses reported seeing the aircraft's right side on fire when the pilot, apparently attempting to land, lost control and cartwheeled. "The plane hit the ground and then turned over," D.M. Powell told the press. "I didn't hear an explosion but a big puff of flame enveloped the craft." Once the fires were doused, anxious crash investigators picked through the sprawling debris for clues among the ruins. Preliminary indications highlighted defective thermocouples in the tailpipe assembly, after which all B-45s were grounded once again. Crash authorities subsequently deduced that vapors from an apparent fuel leak exploded in flight and blew off the right nacelle structure. All B-45 tailpipe assemblies were accordingly stripped, inspected, and repaired as necessary, and the jets resumed flying by mid-September 1949-Still, the loss of an experienced pilot like Neafus was serious and considered "immeasurable not only to the 47th Bombardment Wing, but also deprives the United States Air Force in a critical period of advance of a devoted and able commander."

The unkindest cut of all occurred on September 17, 1949, when Order No. 93 arrived from Headquarters, Twelfth Air Force, announcing the 47th Bomb Wing's deactivation. The full extent of President Truman's FY 1950 budget cuts now manifested in the new Department of Defense Economy Program. Consequently, the 84th and 85th squadrons were reassigned to the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 4th Fighter Wing, at Langley AFB, Virginia. The 86th Squadron was disbanded outright, with planes and personnel absorbed by the remaining two formations. Facing an inactivation date of October 2, 1949, Colonel Chapman worked to effect a smooth transition to his new clime, where he would also assume command of the 363rd Group.

The spring of 1950 marked the one-year anniversary of the Tornado's debut as the nation's first jet bomber. It had been a particularly harrowing experience for the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group, but strides had been made in safety, flight worthiness, and in-commission rates per month. By June, both the 84th and 85th squadrons were flying double the number of hours that had been flown the previous February. The percentage of B-45s in commission had also soared to 78 percent, which elicited giddy exuberance from the unit historian. "This happy condition and the ability to maintain this high percentage differed so greatly from the early days of Louisiana that the humorous remark was heard to the effect that 'When we had three B-45s in commission at Barksdale, a legal holiday was declared.'" Accidents during this period remained a major source of concern, but had declined proportionally given the overall number of hours flown. The most serious incident occurred on May 28, 1950, when number 47-032 crashed on landing. Loud noises had been heard in the left wing nacelle when lowering the main gear, which refused to indicate fully locked.. When the aircraft touched down, the unsecured landing gear collapsed, spinning the plane completely around and snapping off both main landing gears. No injuries resulted but the Tornado was unsalvageable. Impact damage was also sustained by number 47-052 when "a large seagull disputed the right-of-way in the traffic pattern during the last few days of March. Although the gull came out second best in the dispute, a great deal of sheet-metal work was required to affect [sic]

repairs." Finally, on June 21, 1950, number 47-055 experienced a compressor explosion during an instrument training flight. The aircraft landed safely, after which the faulty unit was removed and shipped to General Electric for disassembly and inspection.⁴⁶ So, despite a variety of accidents and engine-related malfunctions, operations with the B-45s displayed an overall improvement.

Pilots and ground personnel from the 323rd Reconnaissance Squadron, 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, were already at Langley AFB undergoing training on the B-45 MTU, they were months away from being qualified.⁴ By default, it fell upon the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group, Tactical Air Command, to provide pilots with any B-45 proficiency despite their own unfamiliarity with reconnaissance. It was decided that volunteers culled from the 84th and 85th Bombardment squadrons at Langley would deploy back to Barksdale for a 30-day crash course in photographic techniques. This mixing of TAC crews with SAC or ConAC machines may have ruffled feathers in certain quarters, but it proved the only practical expedient for getting Tornados in theater as quickly as possible. This new, top-secret unit received the official designation of Detachment 4149A, 84th Bombardment Squadron more simply known as Detachment A.

The 84th and 85th Bombardment squadrons, meanwhile, were transferred back to their parent unit, while a greatly reduced 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group was shunted over to Shaw AFB, South Carolina. A federalized Air National Guard unit, the 115th Bomb Squadron, was attached to the Bomb Wing, bringing it up to full strength. Over the next three months prospects brightened further as greater emphasis on securing spare parts resulted in expanded operations. The biggest changeover from this period was when the 85th Bomb Squadron finally phased out the last of its B-26 Invaders, accepted delivery of fifteen B-45s, and resumed all-jet operations. The unit historian quickly noted how morale throughout the 47th Bomb Wing giddily rebounded, undoubtedly "due to the welcome change to an all-jet, all-bomber unit, rather than the previous combination of jet bomber squadron, conventional bomber squadron, reconnaissance squadron and reconnaissance tech squadron, which had been the case under the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group organization."

In August 1951, Langley-based B-45s of the newly invigorated 85th Bomb Squadron participated in Operation Southern Pine, a large-scale joint service maneuver. The aircraft completed sixty-five missions during the August 11-12 training phase, with only eight aborts due to weather or mechanical failure. During the ensuing operations phase, B-45s flew 211 sorties and completed 173 missions. Thirty-nine of these were aborted, but only sixteen resulted from mechanical failure. Throughout these proceedings, Tornados executed simulated attacks against enemy airfields, railroad bridges, and marshaling yards with considerable success. Their activity also revealed that the Initial Point (IP) utilized was usually too close to the intended targets. High speed turns were sometimes required to correct this anomaly, which often resulted in bombers overshooting their target areas. New directives were then issued: "Bomb runs should be at

least four minutes duration or approximately 30 nautical miles." This long-axis bomb run gave Tornado navigator-bombardiers more time to line up on a target without stressful 60 degrees turns. Formations of three to eight B-45s were also employed in formation bombing behind number 47-087, which acted as the lead ship and employed MSQ-I ground radar and the AN/APW-1 beacon. Results here were also judged satisfactory. In fact, the only problem encountered was spotty communications with Combat Operations due to unreliable teletype machines.

The rhythm of activity was interrupted only on November 16, when a parade was arranged at Langley. The 84th Squadron contributed several B-45s to a mass fly by: "Reviewing officers were very pleased with the maneuver." The 85th Squadron likewise busied itself with officers passing through their atomic paces at Sandia, while their aircraft returned to Norton for modifications. This left the unit with only four Tornados to conduct their many exercises. Worse, after a long, accident-free period, number 47-064 crashed on December 12, 1951, killing Captain Russell M. Gibbons, Lieutenant Russell E. Leggett, and Captain Melvin W. Knuth. They had departed on a routine navigation flight at 6:00 A.M., and climbed to 25,000 feet without incident. Soon after Gibbons, a veteran instructor pilot, radioed that number four engine fire warning light was illuminated, he shut both right-wing engines down and was proceeding back to base. The craft, flew erratically, missed its first landing approach, then circled around for another pass. A nearby Navy tugboat captain subsequently reported that 47-064 descended silently into the frigid waters of Chesapeake Bay. A week later the wreckage was salvaged, but no evidence of fire could be found in either engine. Accident analysts concluded that the B-45, flying with one wing tank full of fuel and the other almost empty, "skidded" while turning, which sloshed fuel away from the booster pumps and inadvertently flamed out engines 1 and 2.

Not surprisingly, for maintenance crews braving the vicissitudes of an English winter, working on B-45s outdoors made a difficult task even more arduous. According to Sergeant Leonard Satterly, a gun mechanic with the 85th Squadron, "It was cold on the flight line. I can remember trying to replace a booster motor underneath the B-45 on the flight line in the winter — and I could not melt the solder. I could not get the goddamn soldering iron hot enough to solder the wire together!" Sergeant John B. Wiltshire found himself in a similar predicament. "I froze to death working on the flight line," he said, "You had to take your hands out of your pockets and you couldn't work with gloves." To many Yanks, Albion was seldom more perfidious than in winter.

Another pressing problem, the lack of suitable bombing sites, was somewhat alleviated after the Americans gained access to the Luce Bay Bombing Range. The site functioned well until August 28, 1953, when a live bomb aimed by Captain Alfred Hoshier sank the target ship, necessitating its closure for three months. December 20, 1953, also heralded the arrival of the 422nd Bombardment Squadron, which had deployed to Sculthorpe without combat ready crews. Consequently, trained personnel were gleaned from the 84th and 85th squadrons to build up its strength. This composite unit then served as the nucleus of the reconstituted 86th

Bombardment Squadron, a constituent unit of the 47th Bomb Wing that had been deactivated in 1949. "What they decided to do is that they took a third of each and assigned them to us with a third of ours," Lieutenant Alan McLaren beamed. "Well, we kept our best and we made them give us their best, so obviously we were the best squadron!" Like the other squadrons, Tornados of the 86th received their own flashy livery, this time in blue. The wing also suffered an additional loss on October 8, 1953, when number 47-037, flown by Major Louis B. Panther, Lieutenant Craig E. Crowley, and Lieutenant Robert J. Ford, crashed outside Norton AFB, California, during an IRAN acceptance flight; there were no survivors.

For B-45 personnel, Hozapple also upped the ante in terms of combat readiness and reduced reaction time, which he now measured "from the time the alert is called to the time that the bomber loaded its DOD weapon, taxis into number one position on the runway, runs up at 100% and releases its brakes." He began running a series of simulated alerts, usually between 3:30 and 5:30 A.M., to shave off as much time as possible. Continuing practice resulted in bomb loading time dipping from three hours to an hour-and-a-half. This emphasis on alacrity paralleled realization that Soviet IL-28 bombers stationed in East Germany could strike English airbases in as little as ninety minutes. The division historian said that "more practice is needed before the combat wings are in a position to state with confidence that they cannot be caught on the ground even under the worse conditions of surprise attack." Another important innovation, unique to B-45s, also evolved about this time. Previously, loading the Mark 5 bomb was a laborious, time consuming process involving removal of the left bomb bay door, then hand-cranking it into position, all of which took 46 minutes. Captain Oliver T. Knapp, 85th Squadron, then suggested tipping the Tornados back on their tail skid so that the weapons dolly could maneuver directly under the aircraft at a considerable savings of time. Sergeant John Butts also recalled the general's renewed emphasis on speed. "We had atomic capability and when the whistle blew we had so many minutes to get a loaded airplane out to the runway, he explained. "That caused a lot of people to go in a lot of different directions and they called it the Holzapple Shuffle." Sergeant George Watson, by contrast, proffers a more baleful reflection. "I had the world's biggest alarm bell right outside of my room, and it would shake the wall when they rang it," he shuddered, "and that would ring any time."

By fall, wing headquarters advanced preparations to drop all remaining B-45s from its inventory and phase in the newer B-66s. The 84th Bombardment Squadron accordingly transferred all sixteen of its Tornados to the 85th and 86th squadrons, while the majority of its flight and maintenance personnel attended conversion classes at Eglin AFB, Florida. Shoran training also terminated at Sculthorpe, as Destroyers were not equipped for that mission. Still, many pilots remained unimpressed by the sleek newcomer and remained loyal to their Tornados. "The B-66 was obviously faster," Lieutenant Neile remarked, "but it wasn't as high and it wasn't as capable. There's never been a bomber that the Air Force ever had that could take off with a full fuel load and a full bomb load, climb straight to 40,000 feet and then start a cruise climb from there. No other bird could ever do that." Years later the issue of whether the B-66 was actually an improvement remained a contentious issue in the minds of many. "That has been discussed in reunions if whether the B-66 brought any more to the table than the B-45," Sergeant Butts reflected, "and the general answer is no."

The waning days of B-45s in Europe proved anticlimactic throughout the spring and summer of 1958. Commencing on January 18 of that year, increasing numbers of B-66s arrived at Sculthorpe while the ranks of Tornados dwindled commensurately. The 86th Bombardment Squadron began exchanging aircraft in March 1958, while the 85th, which postponed converting until July, dispensed with them the following September. Beforehand, several Tornados concluded a final, five-day maneuver to Ben Guerir Air Base in Morocco in March, operating with a minimum of spare parts to rest self-support measures in combat, and the ingenuity of service crews. Afterwards, training flights grew less and less frequent. The only aberration to this otherwise uneventful transition occurred on June 13, 1958 Friday the thirteenth in one of the most bizarre episodes associated with the B-45- Apparently Airman Second Class Vernon L Morgan, a married twenty-one-year-old Indiana native, had entered into an illicit tryst with a local sixteen-year old girl. When the affair ended at the behest of her parents, Morgan inexplicably jumped into number 47-046 at Alconbury, fired up the engines, and took off. He apparently lost control of the jet three minutes later, spun in near Wood Walton, Peterborough, cartwheeled across the ground, and blocked the main Edinburgh-London rail line. Morgan died instantly, but a bigger disaster was narrowly averted after an approaching train successfully braked before striking the wreckage. This is the last recorded crash of a B-45 and also its last fatality.

85th Bombardment Squadron (Tactical): Stationed RAF Sculthorpe during June 1968 as part of 47 BW took over B-66Bs of 95th BS to replace its B-45As inactivated on June 22, 1962,

During June 1958, the 17th BW began transferring its aircraft to the 47th BW to replace the North American B-45s of the 84th 85th and 86th. At first, the 86th BS operated its Destroyers from RAF Alconbury, but during August 1959, it joined the other two squadrons of the 47th BW at RAF Sculthorpe.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

Unit yearbook. *Sculthorpe RAF Station, England 1953 Pictorial*. Montgomery Publishing Co. London, England. 1953.

Unit yearbook. *Sculthorpe RAF Station, England, 1957 in England, United States Air Force Sculthorpe, Norfolk*. 1957.