84th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, TACTICAL

MISSION

LINEAGE
84th Bombardment Squadron (Light) constituted, 20 Nov 1940
Activated, 15 Jan 1941
Redesignated 84th Bombardment Squadron, Tactical, 1 Oct 1955
Discontinued and inactivated, 22 Jun 1962

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, 18 Nov 1942
Youks-les-Bains, Algeria, 6 Jan 1943
Canrobert, Algeria, 29 Mar 1943
Thelepte, Tunisia, 5 Apr 1943
Souk-el-Arba, Tunisia, 13 Apr 1943
Soliman, Tunisia, 1 Jun 1943
Malta, 21 Jul 1943
Torrente Comunelli, Sicily, 10 Aug 1943
Gerbini, Sicily, 20 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, 10 Jun 1944
Ombrone Airfield, Italy, 24 Jun 1944
Poretta Airfield, Corsica, 15 Jul 1944
Salon, France, 5 Sep 1944
Follonica, Italy, 22 Sep 1944
Rosignano Airfield, Italy, 4 Oct 1944
Grosseto, Italy 2 Jan 1945
Pisa, Italy, 17-22 Jun 1945
Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 12 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, England, 31 May 1952-22 Jun 1962

ASSIGNMENTS
47th Bombardment Group, 15 Jan 1941
Twelfth Air Force, 2 Oct 1949
Ninth Air Force (attached to 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group), 17 Oct 1949
Tactical Air Command, 1 Aug 1950 (attached to 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Sep 1950)
47th Bombardment Group, 12 Mar 1951
47th Bombardment Wing, 8 Feb 1955-22 Jun 1962

WEAPON SYSTEMS
B-18, 1941-1942
A-20B, 1942-1945
A-20C
A-20G
A-20J
A-20K
A-26B (later B-26), 1945-1949
A-26C
B-45A, 1949-1957
B-66B, 1958-1962

COMMANDERS
LTC George B. Thabault, #1952
LTC R. L. Fitzgerald, #1953
Maj W. P. Baker, #1957

HONORS
Service Streamers
None

Campaign Streamers
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

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

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
1 Jul 1958-30 Jun 1960

EMBLEM
Upon a golden disc edged in red a red devil with white horns courant, white speed lines trailing and carrying over his right shoulder a black drop bomb. (Approved, 9 Sep 1942)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS
Antisubmarine patrols, Dec 1941-Jan 1942. Combat in MTO, 22 Jan 1943-30 Apr 1945.

The spring of 1949 proved heady days at Barksdale as the deafening whine of J47s resonated up and down the flight line. The 84th Squadron historian reported unaccountably buoyant spirits for the month of April and attributed it to the arrival of more Tornados. "Most all rated personnel are very eager to fly in the B-45 and the airmen have expressed desires to work on them. It is uncertain as to where this present rise in morale will stabilize but it is expected to remain above its present level. Far from being intimidated by the big airplane, pilots came to love the B-45 by virtues of sweet handling and its predictable disposition. "It was what we called an honest airplane," Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Fitzgerald explained. "If you did this, you knew what was going to happen. If it stalled you'd know ahead of time like the B-25. Where you could kick the tires and pretty much jump into a B-26,

this was a little more involved and you knew you had to do it because there was a lot more to the airplane." Captain "Sandy" Sanderson, another convert from the Muroc days, maintained it was "One Hell of a fine airplane. It flew well, had good altitude capability, it had good range capability, particularly after we got the 500-gallon drop tanks. [L]eave it alone and it would land itself.

The hazards of working around such complex machinery cannot be understated. For example, the Tornado sported bomb bay doors that snapped open and shut with lightning rapidity to minimize problems associated with high-speed drag. "The B-45 had a 3,000 pound hydraulic system," Sgt. Little recalled. "Everything moved faster and with more force." Claude Riddell, another 84th Squadron mechanic, mentions his first encounter with such potentially dangerous equipment: "The bomb bay doors, the first time I saw them close I happened to bat my eyes thai instant it shut while I blinked. So I'd watch them occasionally and sure enough they'd go clunk! 3,500 pounds of hydraulic pressure. And if you were standing in the bomb bay, they would close just about where your hips would be. Well, some guy put a 4 x 4 in the bomb bay doors, and when someone went goofing off and closed the doors, splincerc fell down on the hangar floor."

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 cerrain 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.

On August 22, 1950, orders arrived from ConAC instructing Detachment A, 84th Bombardment Squadron, to embark on a 90-day TOY at Yokota AB, Japan. McDonough's command had completed its thirty-day training period on August 25 and passed a readiness inspection held by Headquarters, ConAC, three days later. It now faced the immediate problem of actually deploying overseas. Initially, the three aircraft flew to the Sacramento Air Materiel on 15 Sep for their eventual transit by aircraft carrier to Japan. Captain Carrington describes what happened next: They were arguing how we were going to get there, to the Far East. No airplane had ever flown it before and at those high altitudes. They had no knowledge of the winds. The Navy wanted, I think, one million dollars apiece to haul them over and the Continental Air Command couldn't afford it. I worked outside, Mac worked inside, and he would tell me what was going on. Anyway they had quite a hassle. And finally we convinced them that we could fly it, so we moved up to Bairfield-Suisan [Travis AFB] and sat there for a couple of weeks. There I decided that if we lost cabin pressure like we normally had been losing it in the older models we wouldn't have enough oxygen to stay up high enough to get there, so they let me modify the airplanes and we added extra tanks. And then Mac and Simmons would talk to airline pilots coming back and forth from Honolulu what they could tell us about the upper winds.

A departure date from the Zone of the Interior (ZI) was established at September 20, 1950, whereby the three RB-45Cs would be preceded by a C-54 transport carrying ground crews and 30 days' worth of spate parts to Hawaii. An additional 90 days' worth of parts traveled concurrently by water." The RB-45Cs range was a constant source of concern because of anticipated 50-knot headwinds; final calculations for maximum range were abetted by including a one-hour fuel reserve as insurance. RB-45Cs were capable of in-flight refueling, but Air Fotce officials involved in the project felt that "air to air refueling is not considered necessary and is not recommended without prior training in the Zone of the Interior." For keeping such large, complex, and temperamental aircraft like the RB-45Cs functional, a premium was also placed on forwarding spare parts and supplies to Japan, resulting in a superabundance that would have been unimaginable at Barksdale or Langley.

No effort was spared by AMC or any other agency to secure the means of keeping the planes aloft. "We supposedly, and I am sure we did, leave the United States with 120 days of parts, or any

conceivable parts that we needed for that aircraft," Sergeant Merle Sollars says. " I took ninety gallons of hydraulic fluid with me, which is a Hell of a lot of hydraulic fluid." North American Aviation was also represented by a B-45 technical expert, Jack Waite. Six months later, when Waite filed his official report, he attributed the detachment's ability to keep their aircraft in commission to two distinct factors. The first was "fly away" kits requisitioned directly from North American Aviation! which completely bypassed the labyrinth of Air Force supply channels. The second factor, Waite wrote, "has been the never tiring efforts of all officers, airmen, and civilian technical representatives assigned to rework, substitute or do whatever should be done.

The three RB-45s departed Fairfield-Suisun AFB on September 20, 1950, and let down onto Hickham Field, Hawaii, following a five-hour transit. According to Major Carrington, "The day came and we decided to try it. We filled our tanks and we lined up on the runway, cut down, and filled them all up again put in every pound that would go in there. And we all took off in formation for Honolulu using JPL" The flight Itself was uneventful, but highlighted the fact that "aircraft could use more navigational aids, especially celestial navigation provisions."14 Secrecy surrounding the detachment was also closely maintained and security remained tight. Sergeant Walter Dackson, a camera repairman, related that "We were segregated from the rest of the base and they had armed guards around us in the barracks, and we were marched, as I remember, over to the mess hall and back. Couldn't go to the PX, couldn't go to the movies, couldn't do anything. We kind of wondered what was going on and the master sergeants and those people, they knew but they wouldn't say anything —and we wondered 'What the Hell's going on?'" Two days later Detachment A departed for the next leg of their journey, Midway Island.

The RB-45Cs dropped down on Midway on September 23 and made preparations to refuel before finally proceeding onto Yokota AB, near Tokyo. Thus far, good planning and adroit flying had kept the operation functioning smoothly, save for a near disaster with Carrington's mount, number 48-015. Midway was short of just about everything needed for jet operations, including stocks of jet fuel but, given the urgency of the situation, it was decided to improvise and press on as quickly as possible. Sgt. John Mangum, crew chief of 48-014, recalled that "We were putting in 115-145 [octane avgas] fuel they didn't have any jet fuel. We ran it through a water separator and there's about as much gas leaking out as water." Then came 48-015's turn. Sgt. John Wilkerson was working with Sgt. Oscar E. Hager on the wing as the plane was being refueled. "Hager had a Ronson cigarette lighter in his pocket and, as he stooped over to pick up the water separator and it hit the wing and sparked. The fumes from the jet fuel were all over the place and then one big 'boom!'" The fire started burning along 48-015's wing as the startled ground crews pulled back, but only Jack Waite retained the presence of mind to act decisively. "We heard somebody hollering Hell," Sgt. Mangum recalled, "so we turned around and there's Jack Waite upon the wing putting that fire out all the rest of them were gone. And so we got every fire extinguisher we could and threw them up to him and he put it out." Waite's quick thinking saved the million-dollar warplane, which sustained relatively light damage save for a tear hi its leading edge. Unhappy at being detained longer, Captains McDonough and Simmons decided to forge ahead; Carrington could catch up to them at Yokota. A thorough search of the island was conducted for aluminum, but none turned up. Carrington then resorted to the only source of sheet metal available. According to Sergeant Sollars, "The crew stayed on requisitioning parts which were not forthcoming, so they decided to patch this airplane with beer

cans, which they did. That undoubtedly must have been Carrington because he was the type of guy who would do that." This tacky but eminendy practical improvisation worked fine, and number 48-015 eventually rendezvoused with the other two RB-45s at Yokota a few days later.
Sergeant Price also mentioned an incident on Midway Island not recounted elsewhere. He had been called upon to check number 48-015 for any possible damage to its electrical systems and was performing a preflight of the APQ-24 navigation system:

I really can't remember the sequence of switches except for one that I'll never forget. The last switch controlled the ship's converter that produced 400 cycle (hertz) AC, mainly for the APQ-24. When I threw the switch, both wing tip fuel pods ejected!

I ran outside to see the starboard pod laying on the ground with some fuel leaking out. The port side pod was dangling from one bolt. The ground crewmen that had been lying around waiting for me to finish were on the other side of the tarmac, having done the hundred-yard dash in eight seconds! I yanked the cable from the engine nacelle and grabbing the towing tongue in the power unit, I started pulling it away from the aircraft. I was pleasantly surprised to see Captain Carrington run up to help me. Later I was told that another cable ran out to the wing tips that was further back in rhe wing and apparently there was a short in this cable that carried signals to the wing tip pods, including, I assume, eject signals. As far as I know, nothing else was ever made of the incident.

Two RB-45s of Detachment A roared into Yokota AB on September 28, 1950, and awaited Carrington's appearance shortly thereafter. Staff Sergeant Robert Stadille, working with the intelligence section of the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, was awestruck by the gleaming visitors. "They were the sleekest-looking things that I'd ever seen," he said. "The pilots were young guys in their 20s nice guys. They talked to you, they were young and eager and excited about flying that B-45. And, of course, every RB-29 jockey was envious of those guys. They flew some missions for us over Korea, and they did in three and-a-half hours what took a B-29 eight nine ten hours to do and were flying at 40,000 feet."

Mechanics, who had previously endured systemic shortages at Langley and Barks-dale, also found their new abode a literal spare-parts heaven. "When we first got over there we had all kinds of support in the world," Sgt. Wilkerson beamed. "We had the North American rep, the G.E. Rep, and the electronic rep, and we got an engine over there in a matter of a week. We had some pretty good priority when we first got there." Crew and airplanes alike began prepping for active service in theater, but they were immediately sidelined for four weeks after it was discovered that their 263 equipment (cameras) had yet to arrive. Bill Crowley, the NAA technical representatives at Long Beach, understood why. "One of the problems was that the program was so damn secret that nobody knew it was there except those that were working on the problem," he reasoned. "Jack Waite was our lead representative and we had John Spielman over there, and they would have difficulty going through their own supply circles of getting parts and it would take so long. So they were using me as a runnel, especially for the Land camera parts."

Devoid of essential camera parts, Detachment A simply marked time and did not conduct its first mission until November 2, 1950, five months into the war. Men and machines performed suitably

over North Korea, although a bureaucratic lapse nearly caused A disaster during die return leg of the mission. The Tornado had been apparently dispatched without prior clearance from Center of Combat Operations, Fifth Air Force, nor the director of operations, FEAF headquarters. Consequently, four flights of F-80s scrambled from South Korea to Intercept what appeared to ground radar as a fast moving intruder. "Only tentative recognition of the RB-45 (which was new to this theater) by one of the fighter pilots prevented the F-80s from making attacks," it was noted. Henceforth, orders directed future Detachment A flights to be cleared in advance with Combat Operations for their own safety. By now the RB-45C's unsavory ditching characteristics were also appreciated, and necessitated deploying a mission-designated SB-29 over the Sea of Japan. The rescue bomber orbited in place until the jet bomber safely returned from the north. Their presence was considered essential because a Tornado crew would likely succumb after 20 minutes' exposure in the frigid waters, even with their rubberized, anti-exposure suits.

Over the ensuing two months, Captains McDonough, Carrington, and Simmons performed weekly missions over the Korean peninsula. The exact nature of these flights is not recorded; yet, at this stage of the conflict, these probably consisted of target-gathering information, bomb damage assessment (BDA), and Trimetrogon mapping of the rugged peninsula. Detachment A was demonstrating its worth and Captain Fred Sager, photo interpreter of the 548th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron at Yokota, who was responsible for discerning every shred of information captured by the Tornados, felt "Every mission where they were able to get over the target, they always brought back good tesults." The FEAF operational history records twenty-four reconnaissance missions between November 2 and December 31, 1950, with little commentary, save that Headquarters, Fifth Air Force, assumed operational control of all flights as of November 3. Henceforth, operations came under the purview of Major General Earle E. Partridge, who emphasized proper mission profiles, careful evaluation of all reconnaissance equipment extant, and development of evasive tactics to negate enemy air defenses.

This last factor was of increasing relevance to Detachment A following the debut of Soviet-manned MiG-15 interceptors on November 1, 1950. Their arrival had been detected by an RB-29 flight on October 18, 1950, which photographed 75 swept-wing fighters arrayed along Andong (Antung) airfield, Manchuria. In fact, the Russian 151st and 28th Fighter Air divisions had only recently deployed there, astride the Yalu River, which subsequently became their air operations center for the war. The MiGs were not only superb combat aircraft, they were manned by veteran pilots capable of engaging their American counterparts on equal terms. The introduction of crack Soviet pilots and their high performance interceptors also dramatically skewed the balance of air power above North Korea. At a stroke, every airplane in the Fifth Air Force was immediately outclassed, and the death-knell of lumbering, propeller-driven bombers was sounding. The Russians were especially keen to bag an RB-45C, which until then operated with near-impunity around the northwest corner of Korea, a region soon to gain infamy as "MiG Alley." Their unwelcome presence certainly upped the ante for Tornado missions and, as Lieutenant General Georgy Lobov crowed, "When the MiG was introduced, a quiet life for the reconnaissance crews ended."

To the specter of MiGs must be added the crushing onslaught of Chinese Communist forces in November 1950, whose startling success radically altered the nature of RB-45C activity. Emphasis

now shifted from topographical mapping, bombing pre-reconnaissance, and bomb damage assessments to daily monitoring of enemy troop movements along the Yalu. "When it became apparent, that the Chinese were intervening," Sager explained, "the major mission of the RB-45s in Korea was to photograph the bridge at Andong to see what the bridge traffic was, the number of Chinese troops crossing, and where they were going." In Carrington's words, "We had our wing? sticking over in China because we were photographing the river every day. After the Chinese invaded, we photographed the river every day so they could count the footprints in the snow to see how many came over. Continuous proximity to Andong also brought the Tornados within easy reach of Soviet jets stationed there. The threat they posed further underscored their utter lack of tail defenses, long considered a major deficiency in RB-45Cs. The aircraft did, in fact, possess a gunner's compartment, but this had yet to be fitted with twin .50 caliber machine guns as in the bomber variant.

The Tornado's vulnerability did not skirt Captain Carrington's vigilance for long; once alerted to the presence of MiGs, he approached Sergeant Price to try to jury-rig a radar-warning device for the tail section. The resulting device proved worthy of "Rube Goldberg" himself. Price said: When all was installed, I took a portable field strength meter to check the radiation field pattern. It was supposed to be a cone like pattern of 45 degrees with the apex at the tail. Unfortunately the damn thing was radiating everywhere. I suspected that the large metal mass represented by the tail stabilizer was creating interference patterns. The AN/APS-13 was designed for fighter aircraft and I think that the massive metal structure of the RB-45C was interfering with the transmit/reception abilities of the AN/APS-13. Finally we had a local fighter fly behind the RB-45C and crisscross in and out of the tail area. You might have guessed it; I was lying in the tail gun position with a screw driver, tweaking the receiver sensitivity control, trying to find an optimum point whete the interference was minimized while still detecting the intruder flying into the tail transmitter pattern. Alas, our efforts were in vain because at low altitudes, where most needed, the combination of fouled-up transmission and ground clutter would give continuous false alarms and I could just imagine that school bell going off in that small cockpit space!

The Tornado's vulnerability was further compounded when superlative North American F-86 Sabrejets, the only American fighters capable of tangling with MiGs, were absent from Korean skies for another month.

On November 20, 1950, less than a month after RB-45C operations commenced, Detachment A officials issued a report to Headquarters, Air Force, recommending immediate installation of a tail warning radar or a tail gunner's position, along with identification friend or foe (IFF) transponders, an auxiliary scope for photography at the copilot's position, and a voice recorder for logging camera operations. "It is hoped that these recommendations can be carried out, so that future operations using this type of aircraft may be improved," the unit historian wrote. Photographic problems also arose, especially in the low-level Sonne system, which proved particularly troublesome. Captain Carrington related the following: "We found out that the photo cameras that we had couldn't keep up with our speed and we ripped a lot of film that way, going too fast. The Fairchild people worked with us everybody came over and worked with us — then we got it all squared away and were doing really well." Speaking of his own contributions to flight activities, Captain Young, who had flown P-47s during World War II, informed his parents, "We have taken some good pictures and some of

them have been quite valuable, of course you don't know the satisfaction that I used to get when I could blast a bunch of enemy troops with 8 fifties on my old 'Jug.'

The perils of unarmed, unescorted reconnaissance missions tragically hit home on December 4, 1950, when Detachment A suffered its first and only loss. On that fateful day, Captain Charles E. McDonough inexplicably commandeered Carrington's aircraft (48-015) to fly a mission northward with copilot Captain Jules E. Young and navigator Captain James J. Picucci. According to the only information available, this was a routine photo mission from Sinuiji eastward to Hoeryeng along the North Korea-Manchuria border. Routine radio contact had been maintained as they coasted into Korean airspace, but thereafter McDonough failed to call in as scheduled. Orbiting SB-29s search and rescue aircraft did not detect any distress call or observe any floating debris. The reason is clear: McDonough's Tornado had been successfully intercepted by a sveno (flight) of four MiG-15s from the 523rd Fighter Aviation Regiment near Andong. According to Starshi Lieutenant Aleksandr F. Andrianov, the Russians scrambled jets around noontime to engage American F-51s that had been active near the river. Flying at low altitude, the Russian pilots noticed a set of contrails above them and, after reporting their sighting back to headquarters, they were ordered to intercept the high-flying intruder. The MiGs rapidly climbed to 30,000 feet in trail of McDonough who, lacking eithet a tail gunner or tail-mounted radar, remained unaware of their approach. The RB-45C still enjoyed an advantage of distance over its pursuers and forced the MiGs to chase it for 50 miles (80 kilometers) before firing could commence. The Soviets gradually worked themselves to within a few hundred yards of their quarry, then cut loose with heavy cannon and fatally stitched the Tornado in two passes. "As a result of the engagement, the tight engine caught fire and the aircraft began losing altitude," Andrianov explained in 1995 "At approximately 3,000 meters or lower, I saw one parachute deploy from out of the plane.... I followed the aircraft in its descent down to 1,000 meters, but there were hilltops at 1,200 meters. When I noticed that one of the hilltops was at a higher altitude than my aircraft, I broke off my pursuit. I clearly saw the aircraft crash and explode.... I am not sure if the pilot of the aircraft made an error or not, but if he had not gone into a turn we would still have been chasing him ovet Korea."

Back at base, the four MiG pilots, flushed with victory, drew cards to received credit for downing 48-015. Andrianov picked the jack of clubs and won a 3,000-ruble bonus for his effort. Many years elapsed before the facts were finally known, but the presumed loss of an expensive jet and its crew to MiGs did not go unheeded at Yokota. Two days after the shoot-down, FEAF historians noted that "RB-45 missions were scheduled with regular TOTs (times over target) which invited enemy interception. It was decided that immediate action be taken to assure staggered target times on all such missions.

Exactly where the crippled Tornado impacted remains speculative and various sources pinpoint the site as either near Sinuiju, on the Korean side of the Yalu, or several miles north of Andong, inside Manchuria. McDonough was apparently the sole surviving crew member and was severely burned when he parachuted into the burning wreckage. The injured pilot lost his boots while extricating himself and spent several days in the freezing snow before being apprehended by Korean authorities. McDonough was in terrible physical condition when brought before Soviet authorities for interrogation. Afterwards, he relayed his plight to Captain Hamilton Shawe, a fellow prisoner who,

after being exchanged, informed Air Force debriefers that McDonough was removed from his unheated cell by North Koreans guards, placed on an ox-cart, and never seen again. Shawe believed that McDonough's health appeared so impaired that he did not expect him to live much longer. Thus perished one of the B-45's most memorable personalities whose daring spirit, along with those of Young and Piccuci, reposes in the ghostly court of the Great Khans.

The mystery surrounding the shoot-down of number 48-015 intensifies, for there was apparently a fourth passenger on the ill-fated flight. Colonel John R. Lovell, a high-ranking Air Force intelligence officer, apparently accompanied McDonough for reasons that remain unclear. Like McDonough, Lovell was a professional officer with an appetite for danger.

Other changes were in the wings. TAG, formerly subordinated to the Continental Air Command, became operationally independent as of December 1, 1950. Around this time a handful of officers from the 47th Bomb Group had begun filtering through an intensive atomic weapons course held at the Sandia Laboratory, New Mexico. This practice was formalized through a special mission directive issued on December 27, 1950, and the cadre, drawn exclusively from the 84th Bomb Squadron, became responsible for "testing, devising new techniques, and establishing doctrine that would serve as a foundation for TAC's initial entry into the field of atomic employment." The promulgation of a tactical doctrine was viewed as critical for harmonizing military relationships between "the weapon, its associated equipment, and the delivery system." Not surprisingly, the squadron developed atomic tactics with a composite unit consisting of nine B-45s and seven F-84s, both of which were ultimately deployed in England with the 49th Air Division. In the course of these top secret activities, the 84th Squadron weathered the usual litany of shortages, including trained specialists, bombing ranges, low supply priority, and aircraft modifications that were seldom in place when needed. Still, during the second half of 1951, they managed to drop 639 practice bombs and inert "shapes," roughly half of which were photo scored.

From their training activities, personnel of the 84th Bomb Squadron began forging outlines for Air Force tactical nuclear warfare. They gradually deduced that, as far as B-45s were concerned, the most survivable tactic was approaching and departing target areas in level flight at high speeds and altitudes. They computed that the circular errors of bomb drops between 5.500 and 7,500 feet were half of those which had been released from 25,000 feet, but minimum-altitude deliveries required prompt breakaway maneuvers to negate critical overpressures generated by the blast. This necessitated "a full 2g pull up into a climbing turn of about 3000 feet per minute while maintaining 2gs to a radial heading away from the bomb burst." Simultaneously, crew members were to protect

themselves against intense thermal radiation unleashed by the weapon: "One second before burst time pilot and co-pilot should look down and close their eyes to prevent blindness and reduce the possibility of thermal radiation burning the skin behind the goggles; other personnel should cover their goggles with their arms; all personnel should take particu¬lar precaution to be certain that all bare skin is covered and that no direct exposed metal parts of the aircraft touch bare skin for at least one minute after the explosion." It was also suggested that the B-45s utilize high speed and high altitude as optimum defensive tactics during the approach to target, as well as available cloud cover when possible. The study concluded by recommending against formation take offs, fast join-ups, and close formation flying because of the potential danger of mid-air collisions.

The actual approach-to-target tactics remained a subject of considerable technical wrangling. As situated, B-45s were outfitted with at least four distinct delivery systems to facilitate their mission. The most accurate system was Shoran (nicknamed "Ronnie"), which could be utilized in all weather conditions, but was restricted to the line-of-sight range of the two ground transponders. The onboard MSQ-1 radar system also proved functional, but was constrained by its dependency on ground controllers, who were themselves constricted to line-of-sight operations. Unlike Shoran, MSQ-1 required only one transmitter, but the target location had to be known and plotted by ground personnel in advance. The ubiquitous APQ-24 radar differed from the above-mentioned units in completely divesting itself of ground control, given the variability inherent in radar pictures, it was the least accurate. It was also overly complicated and subject to frequent breakdowns. Sergeant James Kirk, a radar technician with the 85th Bomb Squadron, neatly summarized the challenges facing this essential piece of equipment. "Looking back on it I realize this system had been built on the shoulders of the technology that had emerged in World War II," he noted, "The bugs had been worked out they knew how to do it; how to get rate motors controlled to where you could keep cross hairs over the target and if you could do that you knew exactly how far you were from the target. Then it became a ballistics problem." Once all these gremlins had been resolved, the APQ-24 became the staple of B-45 bombing operations and a reasonably reliable delivery system.

Rounding up this quartet of delivery systems was the old Norden M-9B bombsight employing World War II-type optical sighting technology. It rated higher than the APQ-24 and between Shoran and MSQ-1 in terms of accuracy, but it was limited by darkness and cloud cover and proved of little use for target identification. A study recommended that all available bombing systems should be evaluated on a mission-by-mission basis and changed according to the dictates of accuracy and equipment. In December 1951, TAC headquarters officers had also formulated extensive plans for righting the Soviets in Western Europe, and they compiled a list of 123 fixed targets throughout East Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Their priority, in descending order, were airfields, troop concentrations, railheads, oil-storage depots, production facilities, and above-ground munition dumps. Such "retardation" missions had been previously designated to SAC bomber units flying slow and extremely vulnerable B-29s. The faster B-45s enjoyed much better prospect of surviving their missions, which were intended to slow, not stop, Soviet advances by disrupting rear-area, supply, and transportation activities.

Not surprisingly, the officers ordered to undergo "Bomb Commander" instruction at Sandia Laboratories found it a most daunting regimen. "I went to Sandia out in New Mexico," Major Hubert

M. Blair notes, "and went through the atomic bomb school and that was the most intensive training I have ever gone through in my life 30 days. We got there and they showed us a spaghetti factory [blueprint] of the atomic bomb and they said "When you leave Viere you'll be able to draw this schematic from memory' 1 couldn't believe them. The most intensive course and greatest instructional group 1 ever worked under." Captain Edward J. Sanderson was similarly struck by security measures attending this endeavor: "My wife didn't even know where I was. We couldn't tell a damn thing about it. You went in that classroom in the morning and you came out in the evening and you couldn't take any papers in and you couldn't take any papers out. Everything had to be up here [points to head]." Perhaps the most eloquent protest was penned by Lieutenant (later major general) Daryl E. Tripp, when he wrote, "This course was almost a Gestapo operation similar to what was imposed on the Enola Gay crews. Security would have watered the eyes of a Senate Select Intelligence Committee of today. We could take no notes. In fact, they went as far as to check the latrines to see if any of us were writing wiring diagrams, barometric pressures, or implosion details on toilet paper for the final exams." Security measures back at Langley were equally intense around the 84th Squadron hangar and parking area, especially in light of activities occurring there. "All entries and departures to and from the guarded area are positively controlled by armed guards and the use of a controlled identification badge," the unit history recorded.

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."

The transition proved a happy one. Because the 84th Squadron remained preoccupied by atomic training, the bulk of training and flying activities reverted to the 85th Squadron, whose personnel were already B-45 proficient. By the end of June 1951, all of the B-26s had been replaced by jets. The Tornados now trickling into Langley had previously been cocooned while awaiting delivery, and they arrived in unserviceable shape. "The reason for their poor condition was evidently caused by an extended period of storage at the contractors from the date of manufacture in 1947 until actual delivery late in 1951," the historian wrote. Try as they might, the 47th Bomb Wing never got a break. Still, the 85th Squadron flight crews continued training with their Tornados while personnel from the 115th Squadron arrived at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, to attend the B-45 Mobile Training Unit. Meanwhile, newly arrived aircraft lacked visual bombing equipment and were wholly dependent upon the APQ-24 radar for aiming purposes. When these units functioned poorly at high altitude,

technicians determined that they required pressurization for the system modulator kits, parts for which had been ordered from the manufacturer back in May 1950. The requisite equipment fortunately materialized nearly a year later, the sets were modified accordingly, and bombing scores improved commen-surately. Taxiing problems also arose after the jets began finding themselves competing for takeoff time with B-26s of the 4400th Combat Crew Training Group, which was also at Langley. It was essential that the jet bombers launch quickly to conserve fuel, so a system of staggered takeoff and landing times was adopted for both units. Sufficient Tornados were also on hand to allow three aircraft for a flyover of Clarksburg, West Virginia, during Armed Forces Day, May 20, 1951 Three additional B-45s were likewise dispatched to Shaw AFB, South Carolina, to participate in firepower demonstrations held at Fort Bragg.

Routine activities dominated the 47th Bomb Group's agenda for the balance of the year. Officers and enlisted personnel of the 84th Bomb Squadron remained preoccupied with their special training activities, while B-45s continued passing in and out of Norton AFB and Kirtland AFB for fitting and testing to meet Back Breaker requirements. The unit historian also commented that test drops using Shoran proved far more accurate than those attempted with the still balky APQ-24 radar system. A training regimen was subsequently enacted to perfect Shoran bombing runs from 15,000 feet. New personnel also joined the 47th Bomb Wing roster to flesh out its component squadrons. Captain Leonard Baer, newly assigned to the 85th Bomb Squadron in the fall of 1951, was delighted after checking out in B-45s, yet he was perplexed about the remaining bomber fleet: "I thought the B-45 was not only outstanding I had 1,000 hours in B-50s and 2,500 hours in B-29s and I could not understand why on Earth the government was wasting theit money building B-50s, when they had a B-45 that was so much better."

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 Rill 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.

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 Hosher 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.

The new year began inauspiciously for the 49th Air Division, as its top secret cover was blown by an article appearing in the New York Times on January 22, 1954, which accurately assessed its classified role. "It underwent special training at the Sandia atomic training center in New Mexico before arriving here in May 1952," the essay read, then it went on to describe B-45 operations out of Eleusia, Greece, on Russia's vulnerable southern flank. This revelation prompted Brigadier General Stevenson to request that his unit be downgraded to "unclassified" and unnecessary restrictions on his operational planning eliminated.18 While headquarters pondered his request, the 47th Bomb Wing resumed intensive training activities that spring. Foremost among these was Operation Big Chance, May 1-3, 1954, a complicated endeavor that closely approximated one of the dreaded Operational Readiness Tests. The 84th Squadron Historian noted how "the organization lived in tents, messed from a field kitchen, and flew under some of the worst weather conditions imaginable." B-45s nonetheless executed 70 missions with a 74 percent success rate, while the maneuver was regarded as "the most successful ever placed into execution by this Division."

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 that the B-45," Sergeant Butts reflected, "and the general answer is no."

Despite the ongoing conversion process, the 47th Wing dutifully maintained its Emergency War Plan (EWP) capabilities, another point of pride. "To the best of our knowledge," the wing historian boasted, "this is the first time that any tactical organiza¬tion has converted aircraft while maintaining complete wartime responsibilities." Around this time the director of Logistics Plans, Third Air Force, finally decreed the Tornado's fate: all were declared obsolete and destined "for fire fighting training of personnel at USAFE stations within the European theater of operations." It was a sorry ending for a useful airplane. Finally, in the course of routine operations, another serious mishap occurred on September 20, 1957, when 84th Squadron commander Major Torino V. Di Salvo took number 47-083 on a training flight from Sculthorpe, caught fire shortly after takeoff, then crashed near RAF West Raynham. Di Salvo, Lieutenant Gustave E. Budruweit, and Lieutenant Floyd E. Martin all perished in the crash.

84th Bombardment Squadron (Tactical): Stationed RAF Sculthorpe during June 1958 as part of 47 BW, took over B-66Bs of 34th 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.

THE early morning Texas sky was a clear bright blue as Flying Cadet Galen B. Price taxied his BC-1 onto the sod of Kelly Field and checked his engines prior to takeoff. The date was January 15, 1941. Perhaps the young pilot was thinking ahead a few days to graduation and the golden bars of a second lieutenant.

Not many hours before in Wilmington, Delaware, nine-year-old Joseph Barnett took his seat in the fourth grade room of St. Mary's School.

Thanks to the watchful eye of Mess/Sgt James L. Finley the personnel of the 3rd Attack Group, Savannah, Georgia, had enjoyed a good breakfast and were about their tasks.

This same day, at McCord Field, Washington, 2nd Lt Ernest H. Lawson became the first commanding officer of the 84th Bombardment Squadron, Light.

The 84th was formed from the 17th Bombardment Group and became part of the 47th Bombardment Group with its sister squadrons, the 85th, 86th and 97th. The squadron's first aircraft were B-18s, and shortly after Pearl Harbor the unit flew the B-18 and B-24 on Pacific submarine patrol from Hammer Field, Fresno, California.

After several months of patrol and training, the 84th moved to Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, where it was equipped with A-20s. On its way to Africa in November of 1942 the squadron stayed at Horsharn and Bury St Edmunds, England, not far from the present station of Sculthorpe.

The unit had its baptism of fire on January 23, 1943, in the North African campaign and was mentioned in dispatches as being instrumental in the winning of the now famous Battle of Kasserine Pass.

Mid-1943 saw the 84th with its first Distinguished Service Cross and pushing on to the air battles of Pantelleria, Lampedusa and Sicily.

The Allied Forces slugged northward into Italy, and the 84th took an important role in the support of the ground forces. The Commanding General of the Allied 5th Army sent his congratulations for the squadron's part in cracking the Wermacht's defense line in front of Rome.
Early in 1945, at V-E Day, the 84th was in northern Italy pounding the remnants of Kesselring's German army and flying its newly assigned A-26 Invaders deep into Austria and France.

The unit returned to the United States in July 1945 and began the customary post-war "merry-go-round" of stations Goldsboro, Lake Charles, Biggs, Barksdale and, in February of 1949, Langley Air Force Base. Virginia, where it was attached to the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group. B-45s were the new aircraft, and the 84th flew faster, farther and packed more punch than ever before.

Some of the first combat crews to the Korean conflict included two present-day members of the 84th—Capt Muraski and Lt Reynolds.

March 1951 saw the squadron again joining the reactivated 47th Bombardment Group, and by the end of that year it was once more thinking of overseas movement—Col Galen B. Price, 47th Group Commander, WO Finley, Armament Officer, and A/2C Barnett, operations specialist, went with it to its new station.

You sit on your bunk examining a half-crown. After a series of mental gymnastics you come to the conclusion that its worth in American money is exactly 35 cents.

Twenty-five hundred miles to the west the citizens of Hampton, Virginia, are slowly sizzling in the 90° temperatures of a humid June afternoon, but as you compute the value of British money, you and your fellow members of the 84th Bomb Squadron are enjoying a cool English evening.

The ringing in of the New Year, 1952, was barely over when the 84th began to buckle down to this task of overseas movement. On January 15 the unit began a seven-day work-week, twelve hours a day. Do you remember? You got twelve hours off (if you were lucky).

This intensive training and build-up required additional man-power in the squadron. They came in all ranks and for all duties. Here is a list of some of the combat crew officers assigned in the first two months of the year:
Capt Harry Barnes Capt Hugh Pendleton Capt Robert Maloney Capt Roland Parnell Lt David Colgan Lt Arthur Gentile Lt Jacques Dastillung Lt Phillip Dunlap Lt Thomas Pratt Lt Robert Redlin Lt William Roach Lt John Schill Lt Richard Coulter Lt Ernest Mclntosh Lt Ray Bowers Lt Craig Crowley Lt Clarence Causey Lt Robert Ford Lt Otis Laney Lt Robert Lewis Lt William Owens Lt Arthur Smith Lt Leslie Waltman Lt William Webster Lt Bernard Giannell Lt James Leibrock Lt Stephen Neiley Lt Ovis Pickett Lt Howard Strandberg Lt John Watts Lt Eugene Wicker Capt Harvey Christensen Capt James Sherrard Capt Clifford Spear Capt William Tanner
Capt Hugh Walker Lt George Hoffman Lt Nolan Hughes Lt Robert Jackson

During January the F-84s were transferred from the squadron, and Warning Orders were issued on February 1, 1952. As more gunners arrived permanent combat crews began to take shape. Maintenance crews under the leadership of Cap I, Bernard Watts, W/0 DeFreece, and M/Sgt Little worked feverishly to overcome handicaps caused by parts shortages and the relay of squadron aircraft to west-coast modification centers. Operations difficulties increased as combat crews were ordered to TDY for specialized training. Nevertheless the 84th can be proud that it pressed ahead to become a thoroughly trained outfit.

On February 20 you learned that you had a new C.O.—Col William S. Cowart relinquished command of the squadron to Lt Col George B. Thabault on that day.

As the 84th continued maximum training, its B-45s flew from Langley Air Force Base to criss-cross contrails over the entire United States—ferry trips to California, training flights to New Mexico and Florida. Maintenance crews often followed, sometimes spending many weary hours in the cold cabin of a C-47 to get to the west coast and be on the job.

Capt Gilbert N. Wilson was transferred during March and replaced as squadron adjutant by 1st Lt Donald V. Earnhardt. Both Lt Earnhardt and 1st Sgt Kimbo arrived just in time to plunge headlong into paperwork, inspections, readiness reports, and shot records. Yes, among other things, they made certain that no one was cheated out of that long cold needle with that last tetanus booster.

In supply, Capt George Hamilton, Tech/Sgt Charles Stolzy, and Sgt W. Kessinger, to name but a few, wrestled with reams of paper to get the unit ready for the move. They had dreams at night of "POE", "TOE", "UPREL", "M/R", "AMC", "TAT", and "4984C".

The squadron welcomed help from the arrival of Lt John R. Adams and Capt Donald Henley. At about the same time it lost the services of Majors Cottingham and Dodge, as both transferred to other vacancies in the 47th Bomb Wing.

To be certain that the 84th made the trip with brand-new war paint, Tech/Sgt Ralph C. Buster put his artistic talents to work and led crews as they painted the new group insignia and squadron colors on all the aircraft.

By this time our advanced party, under the direction of Capt Hugh H. Walker and Sgt Maxey, was in England. Then came the order that all organizational equipment must be in port by May 10. MSgt Branch had his packing production line going full blast to make certain the last crate was finished and the final footlocker carted off to the pier.

The ground echelon shipped from Hampton Roads on May 21, 1952, aboard the General Haan. Many a G.I. cast a jaundiced and critical eye over the rusty plates and crowded superstructure as he clambered aboard. But she was a seaworthy tub, setting sail for England as the Langley band played "So Long, It's Been Good To Know You."

The voyage was smooth and (the way we like it) uneventful. The 84th disembarked at Southampton, England, the evening of May 29. That night the unit look the train for Sculthorpe via Fakenham.

All agree that M/Sgt Pollack and the rear echelon men deserve great praise for the work they did back at Langley. In one instance they took a "hangar queen" and by hard work they transformed her into another aircraft in tip-top shape for the trip across.

This flight was made in three legs. The flight echelon took off from Langley Field for Goose Bay, Labrador on June 12. Capt Harry Barnes and W/O DeFreece with a cadre of men were there to greet them as they had gone ahead to make arrangements and be on hand for any maintenance difficulties. On June 13 the squadron flew the second and third legs, to Keflavik, Iceland, and then on to Sculthorpe, England. Lt Col Thabault was the last one to touch wheels in England, landing at 2030, June 13, 1952.

Once you were in England it took quite a bit of "getting used to"driving on the left side of the road, attending the "cinema", eating "chips" and, if you were so inclined, drinking warm beer. For a while at least, everyone was a bachelor. Bicycles and motor scooters were the modes of transportation.

During this time the 84th Softball team played some late season games. They were stopped just short of the base championship by the 104th Com Squadron. M/Sgt Charles J. Lorence and A/2C P. Pitzer starred in pitching assignments. But all that heavy work load in the early part of the year had left little time for practice. The 84th was beaten in a closely contested game, but as the team left the field they had the satisfaction of knowing they had put up a good scrap.

Baseball fever also invaded the quiet confines of the pilots' lounge. In a rash moment Capt Toinlinson's first pilots challenged the younger co-pilots to a game of Softball on the field of honor. The co-pilots quite naturally won, and during the course of the contest two passing Englishmen were heard to observe that some sort of octogenarians' cricket convention was in progress.

In July, the squadron operations officer, Maj John Beard, was transferred to Headquarters Third Air Force, and his duties were assumed by Maj David S. Anderson, affectionately known as "The Little Leader". In that same month a new influx of combat crew members began: this latest group has included Maj Dale Scott, Capt Paul Forcey, Capt Leak, and Lt Gene Harte.

Early on an August morning you were rudely awakened by the sound of the alert—"Everyone to his post! Grab a carbine, the field is being attacked!" The next day you read in the English press that Sculthorpe had been "invaded" by the 16th Parachute Brigade, British Territorials—just letting us know what it could be like.

But in September came the most welcome invasion of all; the dependents arrived at Sculthorpe. They came by MATS, by commercial air, by MSTS, and on the transports S.S. La Guardia and S.S. United States. The greatest contingent of wives by far arrived on the S.S. Washington, which docked at Southampton on September 29. As the wives stepped off the boat the band struck up a lively old American air, "Back in the Saddle Again". Now all the married men could enjoy what they had long waited for a good home-cooked meal.

Once the families were settled at the base and about the picturesque English countryside, the squadron got back to its tasks. Later in the year two unrelated but noteworthy events took place. First, with the dissolution of Group Headquarters as such, Maj Raymond L. Fitzgerald coming to us as squadron operations officer and (reminding some of us that, time is passing) Capt Veldheer becoming the first combat crew member to enjoy the title of grandfather.

Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 8 Nov 2015
Updated: 12 Nov 2015

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