

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

J. 22-1-419
205

R. and A.C.I.
Form XX. and

of (Unit or Formation) No. 419 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron

096

No. of pages

Date	Time	Summary of Events	<u>SECRET</u>
14 December	1430	14 aircraft and 14 crews were briefed for an attack on Berlin. Fifteen minutes before the operation was postponed until 21.30 hrs. and eventually scrubbed at 22.45 hrs. As a result of early briefing and postponements of take-off, no training of any type could be undertaken by the Squadron.	
14 December		14 aircraft briefed to attack LEIPZIG. This operation was scrubbed after the first plane taken off, it having to be recalled. Owing to the fact that Wing Commander Pleasance was hospitalized, Squadron Leader Dyer took the briefing for this operation and received many compliments on his concise delivery and full coverage of the subject. GEE training was undertaken by the Navigators who are not warned for this operation. Flight Lieutenant Brown, the W/Op. Leader, gave a half-hour lecture to Squadron W/Ops (W/Ops) on Radar equipment carried in aircraft. A considerable amount of time was also spent in W/T training section fitting up demonstration tables. Squadron Air Gunners not warned for operations were allocated to training in skeet shooting, A/C recognition, and spotlight trainer and air firing.	
14 December		14 aircraft of the Squadron were briefed to attack LEIPZIG. Take-off was at 23.30 hrs. at a ceiling of 5,000 ft. Cloud layer extended to 7,000 ft. Moderate rime icing was experienced on the way to the target. General opinion was that the EBF had laid a very successful pattern. Several large explosions were observed. Enemy aircraft appeared to mark the in and out by dropping clusters of the white flares at regular intervals. A/C "P", F/Sgt. Parker as Captain, returned early because the port undercart of his aircraft failed to retract fully. A/C "E", F/O Byford as Captain, was forced to return early because of heavy icing. F/O Hamilton was also forced to turn back because of icing and excessive engine heating. "Q", after bombing, landed at WRATTING COMMON.	

Date	Time	Summary of Events	<u>SECRET</u>
1 December (Cont'd)		<p>"W", P/O Metheral as Captain, had to feather his starboard inner engine while still 20 mi from the target but, although he was losing height rapidly and was obviously going to be to attack, he continued on and bombed at 13,000 ft. after the last wave had passed. P/O Metheral has since been awarded the D.F.C. for his devotion to duty in this attack.</p>	
2 December		<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>Considerable amount of GEE training was undertaken by the Navigators, also Navigational training.</p> <p>4 crews undertook Radar training.</p> <p>Signals Section had a general "natter" on general behaviour, etc. as regards signals and operations.</p> <p>18 Gunners proceeded to SUTTON BANK Range on a turret firing detail.</p> <p>A wet dinghy drill was held by 4 crews at TERNARY baths.</p>	
3 December		<p>Command Stand down.</p> <p>Crew Navigation training was carried out and the Security lecture was given to aircrew in the afternoon.</p> <p>Practice bombing up was carried out by the Amament Section with the new type 4 lb. incalustre projectile.</p> <p>5 comparatively new W/Ops. were given an hours lecture followed by a practical demonstration on the Halifax inter-comm. system.</p>	
4 December		<p>Command stand down.</p> <p>Sgt. Dyer delivered a talk to the Squadron on the subject of R/T procedure, turnbacks and turret failures, and Squadron esprit de corps. It was unanimously decided to establish a prisoner of war cigarette fund, the intention being to send cigarettes to ex-419 persons now prisoners of war, it being hoped that 500 cigarettes could be sent to each prisoner at 3 month intervals.</p> <p>18 air gunners were detailed for firing on the SUTTON BANK range.</p> <p>Flight Engineers had a lengthy discussion on the peculiarities of the Merlin XIII engine.</p>	

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Time	Summary of Events
<p>December Cont'd)</p>	<p>Considerable amusement was caused in the Armament Section by the arrival of an Acceptance and Inspection Sheet for the Armament Officer's signature for the inspection of the Station T.I. This has given rise to the rumour that it is intended to arm elementary trainers with bombs for the opening of the second front. It may be added that the Intelligence Section has since squashed this rumour.</p>
<p>December</p>	<p>Squadron Stand Down. The Squadron was visited by No. 15 Squadron Navigation Officer. In the course of his talk to the Navigators, several new ideas were exchanged and discussed. A football match between the Armament Section and the Station I & R Electrical Section was played by the Station with a score of 11 to 1, the only casualty being the Squadron's goalkeeper who suffered a strained back from picking the ball out of the net so often. F/Lt. Hall, the Squadron Engineer Leader, proceeded on the initial Flight Engineer Leader's tour. A special talk was given to the Air Gunners by S/Ldr. Dyer on the subject of "Gunners co-ordinated with the Pilot".</p>
<p>December</p>	<p>Squadron stand down. This being the start of the moon period 8 crews were sent on leave making a total of 17 crews on leave. Special Navigation training for Bomb Aimers was undertaken in the morning, pilots, navigators and bomb aimers being shown a special film on H2S equipment in the afternoon. Special check of ground maintenance of aircraft was carried out by the pilots. A special crew arrived from TROPOLIS to carry out the tail modifications to Halifax aircraft.</p>
<p>December</p>	<p>Squadron stand down. Individual crew Navigation training was undertaken and Flight Engineers were given special training in astro navigation.</p>

Time	Summary of Events
December (d)	Owing to the repairs being carried out on runways, 3 aircraft were despatched to TOPCLIFFE and their crews could continue their RADAR training.
December	Squadron stand down. Crew training was carried out in the morning, the afternoon being left free.
December	Considerable discussions arose about the possibility of the Squadron converting to Lancaster and the difficulties that would be involved in changing over without an actual conversion of aircraft. Squadron stand down.
December	Great interest was taken in the arrival of the Airborne Lifeboat Demonstration Unit and their lectures and demonstrations were greatly enjoyed by the Squadron aircrew and they felt that they had derived great benefit from them.
December	Flight Engineers had a long discussion on engine handling and engine conditions.
December	8 bomb aimers and their captains attended a bombing-up demonstration given by our Squadron and Cpl. Hulce of S. of T.T. Kirkham arrived to give the Squadron Armourers (Guns) instructions and demonstrations in turret procedure.
December	Squadron stand down. 2 Canadian built Lancasters arrived for the use of the Squadron with the immediate results that all sections took up a certain amount of training in Lancaster equipment.
December	Squadron stand down. The 3 crews who had been sent to TOPCLIFFE for RADAR training returned to the Squadron, having completed training.
December	Further talks and demonstration tours on our new Lancaster aircraft were carried out by practical all sections. The Armament Section started to break in some newly arrived airmen in bombing up procedure.
December	Squadron stand down. Crew training was carried out in the morning and a special propaganda film was shown to all in the afternoon.

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<p>17th December (Cont'd)</p>	<p>Cpl. Hulce of S. of T.T. Kirkham finished his course of instruction the Armoury Section. A census of opinion was that his visit had been well worth while.</p> <p>A Conversion of the Squadron to the new Bomber Command Servicing Units was completed and remains to be done is the actual posting of the various bodies to H.Q. Wing, I. & R. and Servicing Echelons.</p> <p>A meeting was held of those members of the Squadron who had been on Squadron strength during Wing Commander Fulton's period of command. It was decided at this meeting to form a "MO" eligibility for membership being confined to those who had at any time served with 419 S. It was tentatively agreed to hold a dinner on January 12th which would be the second anniversary of the Squadron's first operational flight. A committee was formed to handle the detail dinner and it was decided that only those personnel who had been on strength of the Squadron at that date, together with some special guests, should be invited. It is anticipated that Constitution of the Club would be drawn up and Officers elected during the course of the Squadron stand down.</p>
<p>December</p>	<p>Crew and GEE training were carried out in the morning, most of the aircrew being given leave for the afternoon.</p> <p>6 crews proceeded to THORNABY BATHS for a wet dinghy drill.</p> <p>25 air gunners proceeded to SUTTON BANK for turret firing.</p> <p>S/Ldr. Trites, Group Armament Officer, paid the Armament Section a visit.</p>
<p>December</p>	<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>Station Commanding Officer had a parade for promulgation of Court Martial, this Squadron No. 2 Squadron on the Station Wing.</p> <p>GEE and crew training was carried out by the Navigators.</p> <p>A demonstration of incendiary clusters was carried out in the open ground behind the bomb</p>

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December	This was attended by all Squadron aircrew.
December	Squadron stand down.
	Information was received from Air Ministry that S/Ldr. Weedon, ex "B" Flt. Commander, and F. Campbell, an ex Nav. of the Squadron, had been awarded D.F.C.'s for their good work while at the Squadron.
	More CBE and crew training.
	Commanding Officer inspected the airman's barrack blocks and found them satisfactory.
	18 air gunners were detailed for firing at SUTTON BANKA but this had to be scrubbed due to transport.
December	14 aircraft were detailed for operations on LEVERAUSEN but these were scrubbed at briefing.
December	Squadron stand down.
	Crew training was carried through until noon, then a Squadron stand down was declared, with exception of two crews who were detailed to carry out air tests. On landing "R" got into difficulty owing to the loss of an engine and a moderate cross-wind on the runway. On attempting a second circuit the aircraft crashed, luckily without injury to the crew, the aircraft being categorized "E". A prisoner of war lecture was given to all aircrew personnel.
December	14 aircraft were detailed to attack FRANKFURT. There were two early returns, the remainder and returning to base without incident. The general consensus of opinion was that the P.F. was not particularly good and scattered results were expected.
	F/Sgt. Parker returned from 405 Squadron after being there under instruction for 8 days on Lancaster A/C. The Ruhr Express, the 1st Can. built Lancaster, having been allotted to this Squadron was brought home by F/Sgt. Parker and was the object of a great deal of interest.
December	Squadron stand down.
	Wing Commander Pleasance returned from leave and gave a lengthy address to the aircrew personnel on results of the previous months Bomber Command activity with special reference to the part played by the Moose Squadron.

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8 December (Cont'd)	<p>Sgt. Richardson of Air Ministry completed a series of lectures on the Lancaster X airframe. Riggers of the Squadron have been attending these lectures and it is felt that much benefit derived from them.</p> <p>Sgt. Kane, N.C.O. 1/c Squadron Stores, returned from 405 Squadron and R.A.F. Station, WYCOMB studying their system of Stores procedure for Lancaster spares.</p> <p>Engineering publications for the Lancaster X and Merlin Engines have arrived in satisfactory quantities.</p>
December	<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>8 aircraft of the Squadron were detailed for special bullseye exercise. 8 officers of the Squadron and ack-ack groups were carried as passengers to observe the effect of ground defences. Unfortunately this exercise had to be cut short due to enemy action.</p> <p>Special lectures and instruction were given to ground crew personnel on Radar.</p> <p>During the morning Radar training, fighter affiliation, flight tests and air to air firing were carried out.</p>
December	<p>15 A/C were detailed for operations. These were scrubbed at noon.</p> <p>A new system of fighter affiliation in conjunction with Spitfire O.T.U.'s was inaugurated. Two fighter affiliation flights, these proving quite successful.</p>
December	<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>Normal duties were carried out in the morning with Radar training and GEE training dominating. A complete squadron stand-down was declared in the afternoon owing to it being Christmas Eve. The Armament Section were called on to supply Station Craft with special slings for mines. The Armament Section had been called on for a Gardening sortie and were short of this equipment.</p>
December	<p>A goodwood effort was ordered at 0930 hrs. and scrubbed at 1030 hrs.</p> <p>Christmas festivities were carried out as planned. The general consensus of opinion being that these were most successful.</p>

Time	Summary of Events
December	<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>A special lecture was given to the Navigators on PFF Navigation.</p> <p>Radar training height tests and air to sea firing carried out.</p> <p>It having been found that locker accommodation was allowing flying clothing to get damp, a room was improvised. In the event of operations being ordered flying clothing is now strung on lines in the Bomb Aimer's instruction room and a heater van backed up to the window, the heat being passed into the room and the heat turned on until the atmosphere and clothing are completely dried. Aircrew attire themselves in this room just prior to proceeding to the marshalling platform.</p>
December	<p>8 A/C were detailed for gardening in the BALTIC. After briefing take-off was postponed 3 hours and then finally scrubbed. It may be noted that Navigational gun for this operation was exploded in coming through and caused quite a panic in the Navigation department.</p> <p>Owing to the operations ordered the only training done was by those crews detailed for Radar training. A detail of gunners had been sent to SUTTON BANK but these were recalled on operations being laid on.</p>
December	<p>Squadron Stand down.</p> <p>The weather was particularly good for local flying with the result that many training flights and air tests were carried out, particularly a large number of details for air to air firing and fighter affiliation were laid out.</p>
December	<p>17 A/C were detailed to attack BERLIN. There was one early return, A/C "B" with port inner and hydraulics w/a. "Y" star missing and the remainder bombed the target and returned safely. "X" and "Z" landed at CORMISHALL, the Squadron diversion base.</p> <p>The details of the crew of "Y" are as follows:- Captain: R145227 F/S Thompson, R.L. on his operational sortie; Navigator: R139545 Sgt. Webb, F.H.; Air Bomber: R130425 Sgt. Maloney, S. W/Op. (Air): 1320259 Sgt. Bilyard, R.G.; Flight Engineer: 1873080 Sgt. Cooper, J.; M/U: R130425 Sgt. Carroll, A.; Rear Gunner: 193039 Sgt. Barry W.J.</p>
December	<p>Squadron stand down.</p>

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Time	Summary of Events
14 December (Cont'd)	<p>Crew training was carried out with particular emphasis on GEE and Radar.</p> <p>A detail of 15 gunners proceeded to SUTTON BANK for turret training.</p>
14 December	<p>14 aircraft were detailed for operations on FRANKFURT. These operations were scrubbed one before take-off. A Squadron stand down was immediately declared to allow personnel to take part in New Year festivities.</p>
December	<p><u>POSTINGS DURING THE MONTH</u></p> <p><u>Postings to the Unit:</u></p> <p>(3rd December) 1709161 Sgt. Wood, G. (F/E) from 431 (RCAF) Sqn. for operational duties.</p> <p>(6th December) J.22470 P/O A.L. Warren (Pilot); 1387861 Sgt. Sutton, S. (Nav.); R158079 F/Lt. (A/B); 1035031 Sgt. King, W.J.E. (W/Op (Air)); R98044 Sgt. Kent, E.D. (F/E); 1510808 Sgt. tree, H. (MU/AG); R189979 Sgt. Minett, M. (R/G). from 1659 Conv. Unit, TOPCLIFFE.</p> <p>(13th December) R147417 Sgt. McIvor, R.A. (Pilot); R157928 Sgt. Bremner, J.D. (Nav.); R158079 Sgt. Coulding, S.H. (A/B); R119519 F/S Claridge, W.T. (W/OP A.G.); R109302 Sgt. Riden, S. R190041 Sgt. Tucker, K.D. (MU/AG); R190321 Sgt. Dujay, R.E. (R/G). from 1659 Conv. Unit, TOPCLIFFE.</p> <p>(25th December) J9072 F/L J.A. Westland was posted to the Squadron to the post of Deputy Commander, "B" Flight.</p> <p><u>Postings from the Unit:</u></p> <p>(3rd December) 127107 F/O A. Winskill (A/B) was posted to 20 O.T.U., LOSSIEMOUTH, for instructional duties. F/O Winskill completed a tour of operations with the MOOSE SQUADRON, at the conclusion of which he was detailed for a Bombing Instructor's Course which he passed very successfully.</p> <p>(9th December) J11183 F/O E.G. Gray (A/G); R194654 Sgt. Niskanen, S.E. (A/G) were posted to 439 (RCAF) Sqn. GRANBEN LODGE, for operational duties.</p> <p>(22nd December) 68185 F/L H.L. Shackleton (Pilot), 1601726 Sgt. Gibson, R.G. (Nav.), 151210 A.A. Ashford (A/B), 1314440 Sgt. Williams, H. (WOP (Air)); 1678297 Sgt. Newton, T. (A/G) 15</p>

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December	<p><u>Postings from the Unit (Cont'd)</u></p> <p>Sgt. Palmer, W.R. (F/E); 1077032 Sgt. Walker, J.W. (MU/AG); posted to 405 Squadron, GRANSBY</p> <p>F/L Shackleton had held the post of Deputy Flight Commander "B" Flight with this Unit for some time and was a very popular member of the Squadron.</p> <p>(23rd December) 961438 Sgt. Brakes, B. E. (WOP (Air)) was posted to 1659 Conv. Unit, TORGLIE</p> <p>recrewing, having been on the strength of this Unit as a spare Wireless Operator for some time.</p>																								
December	<p><u>Details of bombs dropped during the month are as follows:</u></p> <p>14 x 2,000 lb. H.C., 1076 x 30 lb. L.C., 61 x 1,000 lb. M.C., 36,690 x 4 lb. incendiaries</p> <p>The tonnage dropped was: High Explosives, 44.5 tons, incendiaries, 89.52 tons.</p>																								
December	<p><u>The strength of the Squadron as at 31st December, 1943 is as follows:</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>AIRCREW:</u></th> <th>R.C.A.F. <u>OFFICERS</u></th> <th>R.C.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u></th> <th>R.A.F. <u>OFFICERS</u></th> <th>R.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u></th> <th>U.S.A.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>59</td> <td>122</td> <td>5</td> <td>72</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <th><u>GROUNDCREW:</u></th> <th>R.C.A.F. <u>OFFICERS</u></th> <th>R.C.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u></th> <th>R.A.F. <u>OFFICERS</u></th> <th>R.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u></th> <th>U.S.A.A.F. <u>AIRWOMEN</u></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>3</td> <td>342</td> <td>Nil</td> <td>66</td> <td>37</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>AIRCREW:</u>	R.C.A.F. <u>OFFICERS</u>	R.C.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u>	R.A.F. <u>OFFICERS</u>	R.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u>	U.S.A.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u>		59	122	5	72	3	<u>GROUNDCREW:</u>	R.C.A.F. <u>OFFICERS</u>	R.C.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u>	R.A.F. <u>OFFICERS</u>	R.A.F. <u>AIRMEN</u>	U.S.A.A.F. <u>AIRWOMEN</u>		3	342	Nil	66	37
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December	<p><u>No. and type of aircraft on Unit Charge:</u> 18 Halifax Mark II, 3 Lancaster Mark I.</p>																								
December	<p><u>Flying time for the month of December, 1943:</u> Operational: 329.10 Non-operational: 213.55</p>																								
	<p><u>Number of Sorties carried out:</u> 45</p>																								
	<p><u>Enemy aircraft claimed as casualties during the month of December, 1943:</u></p> <p>Only one combat took place on operations during the month, and no enemy aircraft are claimed as casualties.</p>																								
	<p>Attached herewith 1 combat report for the month of December, shown as Appendix "B".</p>																								
December	<p><u>General Summary of the Month's Activities by Wing Commander W.P. Fleasance.</u></p> <p>(a) It is noted that very few operational sorties were made during the month, this being primarily due to bad weather conditions, however, flying training was carried on to a great extent and</p>																								

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31st. December		<p><u>General Summary of the Month's Activities by Wing Commander W.F. Pleasance (Cont'd.)</u></p> <p>anticipated that this will greatly benefit the Squadron on future operations.</p> <p>(b) The course of lectures by the Engineering Officer and Srr. N.C.O's has been well received by all "C" Group tradesmen. These lectures are designed to enable these tradesmen to pass the coming trade test board examinations.</p>	
31st. December		<p><u>HEALTH.</u> Excepting for the usual run of winter colds, the health of the Squadron is generally satisfactory.</p>	
31st December		<p><u>Short Summary of the Year's Activities by Wing Commander W.F. Pleasance</u></p> <p>(a) During the year the Squadron has flown a total of 1190 operational sorties and has been responsible for dropping the following tonnage of bombs on the enemy:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2,000 lb. H.C. - 41.4 tons, 1,000 lb. M.C. - 22.4 tons, 1,000 lb. G.P. - 46.5 tons, 500 lb. M.C. - 88.75 tons, 500 lb. G.P. - 7.5 tons, 1500 lb. mines - 47.25 tons, 1,000 lb. mines - 44.5 tons, 30 lb. L.C. - 581.52 tons, 4 lb. incendiaries - 134.72 tons.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Grand total dropped: 3219.22 tons.</p> <p>(b) During the year the Squadron gunners accounted for 10 enemy aircraft shot down and destroyed, and have also claimed one as probably destroyed and one damaged. The details of A/C claimed destroyed: 1 ME.110, 1 ME.210, 3 JU.88's, 3 FW.190's, 2 unidentified A/C, 1 ME.110 probably destroyed and one JU.88 damaged.</p> <p>(c) There were 50 crews lost during the year involving a total personnel of 358. Of these 3 have returned to this country and exactly 100 are known to be prisoners of war. 119 are known to have lost their lives, the remaining 136 have not as yet been accounted for. Squadron's percentage of losses in ratio to operational sorties undertaken is 4.2%.</p>	
		<p><i>W.F. Pleasance</i> <u>(W.F. Pleasance) Wing Commander,</u> <u>Commanding 419 (RCAF) Squadron,</u> <u>Middleton St. George, Durham.</u></p>	

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No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
Middleton St. George	1st December	4/5	14 aircraft and 14 crews were briefed for an attack on Berlin. Fifteen minutes before take-off the operation was postponed until 23.30 hrs. and eventually scrubbed at 22.45 hrs. As a result of early briefing and postponements of take-off, no training of any type could be undertaken on the Squadron.		
	2nd December		14 aircraft briefed to attack LEIPZIG. This operation was scrubbed after the first plane had taken off, it having to be recalled. Owing to the fact that Wing Commander Fleasance was hospitalised, Squadron Leader Dyer undertook the briefing for this operation and received many compliments on his concise delivery and full coverage of the subject. GNE training was undertaken by the Navigators who are not warned for this operation. Flight Lieutenant Brown, the W/Op. Leader, gave a half-hour lecture to Squadron W/Ops (Air) on Radar equipment carried in aircraft. A considerable amount of time was also spent in the W/T training section fitting up demonstration tables. Squadron Air Gunners not warned for operations were allocated to training in skeet shooting, A/C recognition, and spotlight trainer and air firing.		
	3rd December		14 aircraft of the Squadron were briefed to attack LEIPZIG. Take-off was at 23.30 hrs. with a ceiling of 5,000 ft. Cloud layer extended to 7,000 ft. Moderate rime icing was experienced on the way to the target. General opinion was that the FFF had laid a very successful Wengami pattern. Several large explosions were observed. Enemy aircraft appeared to mark the track in and out by dropping clusters of the white flares at regular intervals. A/O "P", P/Sgt. Parker as Captain, returned early because the port undercarriage of his aircraft failed to retract fully. A/O "R", P/O Ryford as Captain, was forced to return early because of heavy icing. P/O Hamilton was also forced to turn back because of icing and excessive engine heating. "Q", after bombing, landed at BRATTING COMMON.		A.1146 - 1160



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	4th December		<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>Considerable amount of GEE training was undertaken by the Navigators, also Navigational crew training.</p> <p>4 crews undertook Radar training.</p> <p>Signals Section had a general "matter" on general behaviour, etc. as regards signals and operations.</p> <p>18 Gunners proceeded to SUTTON BANK Range on a turret firing detail.</p> <p>A wet dinghy drill was held by 4 crews at THORNBY baths.</p>		
	5th December		<p>Command Stand down.</p> <p>Crew Navigation training was carried out and the Security lecture was given to aircrew personnel in the afternoon.</p> <p>Practice bombing up was carried out by the Assessment Section with the new type 4 lb. incendiary cluster projectile.</p> <p>5 comparatively new W/Ops. were given an hours lecture followed by a practical demonstration on the Halifax inter-comm. system.</p>		
	6th December		<p>Command stand down.</p> <p>Mr. Dyer delivered a talk to the Squadron on the subject of R/T procedure, turnbacks concerning turret failures, and Squadron esprit de corps. It was unanimously decided to establish a prisoner of war cigarette fund, the intention being to send cigarettes to ex-419 personnel who are now prisoners of war, it being hoped that 500 cigarettes could be sent to each prisoner at 3 month intervals.</p> <p>18 air gunners were detailed for firing on the SUTTON BANK range.</p> <p>Flight Engineers had a lengthy discussion on the peculiarities of the Merlin XXXIII engine.</p>		

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of (Unit or Formation) **No. 419 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron**

No. of pages used for day _____

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Middleton St. George	6th December	(Cont'd)	<p>Considerable amusement was caused in the Armament Section by the arrival of an Acceptance and Inspection Sheet for the Armament Officer's signature for the inspection of the Station Tiger Moth. This has given rise to the rumour that it is intended to arm elementary trainers with hand grenades for the opening of the second front. It may be added that the Intelligence Section has since squashed this rumour.</p>	
	7th December		<p>Squadron Stand Down.</p> <p>The Squadron was visited by No. 15 Squadron Navigation Officer. In the course of his talk with the Navigators, several new ideas were exchanged and discussed.</p> <p>A football match between the Armament Section and the Station I & R Electrical Section was won by the Station with a score of 11 to 1, the only casualty being the Squadron's goalkeeper who suffered a strained back from picking the ball out of the net so often.</p> <p>F/Lt. Hall, the Squadron Engineer Leader, proceeded on the initial Flight Engineer Leader's Course.</p> <p>A special talk was given to the Air Gunners by S/Ldr. Dyer on the subject of "Gunners co-operation with the Pilot".</p>	
	8th December		<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>This being the start of the moon period 8 crews were sent on leave making a total of 17 crews on leave.</p> <p>Special Navigation training for Bomb Airmen was undertaken in the morning, pilots, navigators and bomb airmen being shown a special film on H2S equipment in the afternoon.</p> <p>Special check of ground maintenance of aircraft was carried out by the pilots.</p> <p>A special crew arrived from TORONTO to carry out the tail modifications to Halifax aircraft.</p>	
	9th December		<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>Individual crew Navigation training was undertaken and Flight Engineers were given special training in astro navigation.</p>	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Middleton St. George	9th December (Cont'd)		Owing to the repairs being carried out on runways, 3 aircraft were despatched to TOPELIFE so that their crews could continue their RADAR training.	
	10th December		Squadron stand down. Crew training was carried out in the morning, the afternoon being left free. Considerable discussions arose about the possibility of the Squadron converting to Lancaster A/C and the difficulties that would be involved in changing over without an actual conversion course.	
	11th December		Squadron stand down. Great interest was taken in the arrival of the Airborne Lifeboat Demonstration Unit and their lectures and demonstrations were greatly enjoyed by the Squadron aircrew and they felt that they had derived great benefit from them. Flight Engineers had a long discussion on engine handling and engine conditions. 8 bomb aimers and their captains attended a bombing-up demonstration given by our Squadron armourers. Cpl. Hulse of S. of T.T. Kirkham arrived to give the Squadron Armourers (Guns) instructions and demonstrations in turret procedure.	
	12th December		Squadron stand down. 2 Canadian built Lancasters arrived for the use of the Squadron with the immediate results that all sections took up a certain amount of training in Lancaster equipment.	
	13th December		Squadron stand down. The 3 crews who had been sent to TOPELIFE for Radar training returned to the Squadron, having completed training. Further talks and demonstration tours on our new Lancaster aircraft were carried out by practically all sections. The Amusement Section started to break in some newly arrived airmen in bombing up procedure.	
	14th December		Squadron stand down. Crew training was carried out in the morning and a special propaganda film was shown to all aircrew in the afternoon.	

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of (Unit or Formation) No. 419 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Middleton St. George	14th December	(Cont'd)	<p>Opl. Rules of S. of T.T. Kirkham finished his course of instruction the Armoury Section. A consensus of opinion was that his visit had been well worth while.</p> <p>A Conversion of the Squadron to the new Bomber Command Servicing Units was completed and all that remains to be done is the actual posting of the various bodies to H.Q. Wing, I. & R. and the Servicing Echelons.</p> <p>A meeting was held of those members of the Squadron who had been on Squadron strength during Wing Commander Fulton's period of command. It was decided at this meeting to form a "MOOSE CLUB" eligibility for membership being confined to those who had at any time served with 419 Squadron. It was tentatively agreed to hold a dinner on January 12th which would be the second anniversary of the Squadron's first operational flight. A committee was formed to handle the details of the dinner and it was decided that only those personnel who had been on strength of the Squadron at that date, together with some special guests, should be invited. It is anticipated that a Constitution of the Club would be drawn up and Officers elected during the course of the dinner.</p>	
	13th December		<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>Crew and GSE training were carried out in the morning, most of the aircrew being given stand-down for the afternoon.</p> <p>6 crews proceeded to THORNABY BATHS for a wet dingy drill.</p> <p>25 air gunners proceeded to SUTTON BANK for turret firing.</p> <p>S/Ldr. Frites, Group Armament Officer, paid the Armament Section a visit.</p>	
	16th December		<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>Station Commanding Officer had a parade for promulgation of Court Martial, this Squadron forming No.2 Squadron on the Station Wing.</p> <p>GSE and crew training was carried out by the Navigators.</p> <p>A demonstration of incendiary alustres was carried out in the open ground behind the bomb dump.</p>	<p>RB</p>

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References and Appendices
Middleton St. College	16th December (Cont'd)		This was attended by all Squadron aircrew.	
	17th December		Squadron stand down. Information was received from Air Ministry that S/Ldr. Weedon, ex "B" Flt. Commander, and W/O Campbell, an ex Nav. of the Squadron, had been awarded D.F.C.'s for their good work while attached to the Squadron. More GSE and crew training. Commanding Officer inspected the aircrew's barrack blocks and found them satisfactory. 18 air gunners were detailed for firing at SUTTON BANK, but this had to be scrubbed due to lack of transport.	
	18th December		14 aircraft were detailed for operations on LAYBROOK but these were scrubbed at briefing.	
	19th December		Squadron stand down. Crew training was carried through until noon, then a Squadron stand down was declared, with the exception of two crews who were detailed to carry out air tests. On landing "R" got into difficulties owing to the loss of an engine and a moderate cross-wind on the runway. On attempting a second circuit the aircraft crashed, luckily without injury to the crew, the aircraft being categorised "E". A prisoner of war lecture was given to all aircrew personnel.	
	20th December		14 aircraft were detailed to attack FRANKFURT. There were two early returns, the remainder bombing and returning to base without incident. The general consensus of opinion was that the F.F. marking was not particularly good and scattered results were expected. W/Sgt. Parker returned from 405 Squadron after being there under instruction for 8 days on Lincaster A/C. The Ruhr Express, the 1st Can. built Lincaster, having been allotted to this Squadron was brought home by W/Sgt. Parker and was the object of a great deal of interest.	A-1160 & 1173
	21st December		Squadron stand down. Wing Commander Pleasance returned from leave and gave a lengthy address to the aircrew personnel on results of the previous months Bomber Command activity with special reference to the part played by the Moons Squadron.	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Middleton St. George	21st December	(Cont'd)	<p>Sgt. Richardson of Air Ministry completed a series of lectures on the Lancaster X airframe. All riggers of the Squadron have been attending these lectures and it is felt that much benefit was derived from them.</p> <p>Sgt. Kane, N.G.O. A/c Squadron Stores, returned from A05 Squadron and R.A.F. Station, WITON after studying their system of Stores procedure for Lancaster spares.</p> <p>Engineering publications for the Lancaster X and Merlin Engines have arrived in satisfactory volume.</p>	
	22nd December		<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>8 aircraft of the Squadron were detailed for special bullseye exercise. 8 officers of the Searchlight and ack-ack groups were carried as passengers to observe the effect of ground defences. Unfortunately this exercise had to be cut short due to enemy action.</p> <p>Special lectures and instruction were given to ground crew personnel on Radar.</p> <p>During the morning Radar training, fighter affiliation, flight tests and air to air firing was carried out.</p>	
	23rd December		<p>15 A/C were detailed for operations. These were scrubbed at noon.</p> <p>A new system of fighter affiliation in conjunction with Spitfire O.T.U.'s was inaugurated with two fighter affiliation flights, these proving quite successful.</p>	
	24th December		<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>Normal duties were carried out in the morning with Radar training and GEE training dominating.</p> <p>A complete squadron stand-down was declared in the afternoon owing to it being Christmas Eve.</p> <p>The Armament Section were called on to supply Station Craft with special slings for mines as they had been called on for a Gardening sortie and were short of this equipment.</p>	
	25th December		<p>A goodwood effort was ordered at 0930 hrs. and scrubbed at 1030 hrs.</p> <p>Christmas festivities were carried out as planned. The general consensus of opinion being that these were most successful.</p>	<p>NA</p>

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Middleton St. George	26th	December	<p>Squadron stand down.</p> <p>A special lecture was given to the Navigators on PFF Navigation.</p> <p>Radar training height tests and air to sea firing carried out.</p> <p>It having been found that locker accommodation was allowing flying clothing to get damp, a drying room was improvised. In the event of operations being ordered flying clothing is now strung on lines in the Bomb Aimer's instruction room and a heater van backed up to the window, the heater hose being passed into the room and the heat turned on until the atmosphere and clothing are completely dried. Aircrew attire themselves in this room just prior to proceeding to the marshalling point.</p>	
	27th	December	<p>8 A/C were detailed for gardening in the BA/CIC. After briefing take-off was postponed 3 hours and then finally scrubbed. It may be noted that Navigational gun for this operation was extremely late in coming through and caused quite a panic in the Navigation department.</p> <p>Owing to the operations ordered the only training done was by those crews detailed for Radar training. A detail of gunners had been sent to SUTTON BANK but these were recalled on operations being laid on.</p>	
	28th	December	<p>Squadron Stand down.</p> <p>The weather was particularly good for local flying with the result that many training flights and air tests were carried out, particularly a large number of details for air to air firing and fighter affiliation were laid out.</p>	
	29th	December	<p>17 A/C were detailed to attack BRELIN. There was one early return, A/C "B" with port inner engine and hydraulics w/a. "T" status missing and the remainder bombed the target and returned safely. "K" and "L" landed at OOLITHALL, the Squadron diversion base.</p> <p>The details of the crew of "T" are as follows:- Captain: R145227 P/S Thompson, R.L. on his 7th operational sortie; Navigator: R132545 Sgt. Webb, F.H.; Air Bomber: R130425 Sgt. Maloney, S.J.; W/Op. (Air): 1320259 Sgt. Bilyard, R.G.; Flight Engineer: 1873080 Sgt. Cooper, J.; W/U: R193150 Sgt. Carroll, A.; Rear Gunner: 193039 Sgt. Barry W.J.</p>	<p>A-1174-1190.</p> <p>A-1190.</p> <p>a-1190.</p>
	20th	December	<p>Squadron stand down.</p>	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Middleton St. George	30th December		Crew training was carried out with particular emphasis on GSE and Radar. A detail of 15 gunners proceeded to SUTTON BANK for turret training.	
	(Cont'd)			
	31st December		14 aircraft were detailed for operations on FRANKFURT. These operations were scrubbed one hour before take-off. A Squadron stand down was immediately declared to allow personnel to take part in New Year festivities.	
	31st December		<u>POSTINGS DURING THE MONTH</u> <u>Postings to the Unit:</u> (3rd December) 1709161 Sgt. Wood, G. (P/E) from 431 (RCAF) Sqdn. for operational duties. (6th December) J.22470 F/O A.L. Warren (Pilot); 1387861 Sgt. Sutton, S. (Nav.); R158079 F/S Korber, T. (A/B); 1035031 Sgt. King, W.J.E. (W/Op (Air)); 188044 Sgt. Kent, E.D. (P/E); 1510808 Sgt. Crabtree, H. (MU/AG); R189979 Sgt. Minett, M. (R/G) from 1659 Conv. Unit, TPCCLIFFE. (13th December) R147417 Sgt. McIvor, R.A. (Pilot); R157928 Sgt. Bremner, J.D. (Nav.); R158757 Sgt. Goulding, S.H. (A/B); R119519 F/S Claridge, W.T. (W/OP A.G.); R109302 Sgt. Rigden, S.L. (P/E) R190041 Sgt. Tucker, K.D. (MU/AG); R190321 Sgt. Duley, R.E. (R/G) from 1659 Conv. Unit, TPCCLIFFE. (25th December) J9072 F/L J.A. Westland was posted to the Squadron to the post of Deputy Flight Commander, "B" Flight. <u>Postings from the Unit:</u> (3rd December) 127107 F/O A. Winkill (A/B) was posted to 20 O.T.U., LOSSIEMOUTH, for Instructor duties. F/O Winkill completed a tour of operations with the MOOSE SQUADRON, at the conclusion of which he was detailed for a Bombing Instructor's Course which he passed very successfully. (9th December) J14185 F/O E.G. Gray (A/G), R194654 Sgt. Niskanen, S.E. (A/G) were posted to 405 (RCAF) Sqdn. CRANBURY LODGE, for operational duties. (22nd December) 68185 F/L H.L. Shackleton (Pilot), 1601726 Sgt. Gibson, R.G. (Nav.), 151215 F/O A.A. Ashford (A/B), 1314440 Sgt. Williams, H. (WOP (Air)); 1678297 Sgt. Newton, T. (A/G) 1583509	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices																								
Middleton St. George	31st	December	<p>Postings from the Unit (Cont'd)</p> <p>Sgt. Palmer, W.R. (P/R); 1077052 Sgt. Walker, J.W. (MU/AG); posted to 405 Squadron, SPANSDEN LODGE.</p> <p>P/L Shackleton had held the post of Deputy Flight Commander "B" Flight with this Unit for some time and was a very popular member of the Squadron.</p> <p>(23rd December) 961438 Sgt. Brakes, B. E. (WOP (Air)) was posted to 1659 Conv. Unit, TORGLIFFE for retraining, having been on the strength of this Unit as a spare Wireless Operator for some time.</p>																									
	31st	December	<p>Details of bombs dropped during the month are as follows:</p> <p>14 x 2,000 lb. H.C., 1076 x 30 lb. L.C., 61 x 1,000 lb. M.C., 36,690 x 4 lb. incendiaries.</p> <p>The tonnage dropped was: High Explosives, 44.5 tons, incendiaries, 89.52 tons.</p>																									
	31st	December	<p>The strength of the Squadron as at 31st December, 1943 is as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>AIRCRAFT:</th> <th>R.C.A.F. OFFICERS</th> <th>R.C.A.F. AIRMEN</th> <th>R.A.F. OFFICERS</th> <th>R.A.F. AIRMEN</th> <th>U.S.A.A.F. AIRMEN</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>59</td> <td>121</td> <td>5</td> <td>72</td> <td>13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>GROUND CREW:</th> <th>R.C.A.F. OFFICERS</th> <th>R.C.A.F. AIRMEN</th> <th>R.A.F. OFFICERS</th> <th>R.A.F. AIRMEN</th> <th>U.S.A.A.F. AIRMEN</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>3</td> <td>342</td> <td>Nil</td> <td>66</td> <td>37</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	AIRCRAFT:	R.C.A.F. OFFICERS	R.C.A.F. AIRMEN	R.A.F. OFFICERS	R.A.F. AIRMEN	U.S.A.A.F. AIRMEN		59	121	5	72	13	GROUND CREW:	R.C.A.F. OFFICERS	R.C.A.F. AIRMEN	R.A.F. OFFICERS	R.A.F. AIRMEN	U.S.A.A.F. AIRMEN		3	342	Nil	66	37	
AIRCRAFT:	R.C.A.F. OFFICERS	R.C.A.F. AIRMEN	R.A.F. OFFICERS	R.A.F. AIRMEN	U.S.A.A.F. AIRMEN																							
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GROUND CREW:	R.C.A.F. OFFICERS	R.C.A.F. AIRMEN	R.A.F. OFFICERS	R.A.F. AIRMEN	U.S.A.A.F. AIRMEN																							
	3	342	Nil	66	37																							
	31st	December	No. and type of aircraft on Unit Charge: 18 Halifax Mark II, 3 Lancaster Mark I.																									
	31st	December	<p>Flying time for the month of December, 1943: Operational: 329.10 Non-operational: 213.55</p> <p>Number of Sorties carried out: 45</p> <p>Enemy aircraft claimed as casualties during the month of December, 1943: Only one combat took place on operations during the month, and no enemy aircraft are claimed as casualties.</p>																									
	31st	December	<p>Attached herewith 1 combat report for the month of December, shown as Appendix "B".</p> <p>General Summary of the Month's Activities by Wing Commander W.P. Pleasance.</p> <p>(a) It is noted that very few operational sorties were made during the month, this being primarily due to bad weather conditions, however, flying training was carried on to a great extent and it is</p>	Appendix "B-13"																								

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	<u>SECRET.</u>	References to Appendices
Middleton St. George.	31st. December		<p>General Summary of the Month's Activities by Wing Commander W.P. Plesance (Cont'd.) anticipated that this will greatly benefit the Squadron on future operations.</p>		
			<p>(b) The course of lectures by the Engineering Officer and Smr. N.C.O.'s has been well attended by all "C" Group tradesmen. These lectures are designed to enable these tradesmen to pass the coming trade test board examinations.</p>		
	31st. December		<p><u>HEALTH.</u> Excepting for the usual run of winter colds, the health of the Squadron is generally satisfactory.</p>		
	31st December		<p><u>Short Summary of the Year's Activities by Wing Commander W.P. Plesance</u></p>		
			<p>(a) During the year the Squadron has flown a total of 1190 operational sorties and has been responsible for dropping the following tonnage of bombs on the enemy:</p>		
			<p>2,000 lb. H.C. - 434 tons, 1,000 lb. M.C. - 224 tons, 1,000 lb. G.P. - 464.5 tons,</p>		
			<p>500 lb. M.C. - 88.75 tons, 500 lb. G.P. - 7.5 tons, 1500 lb. mines - 47.25 tons,</p>		
			<p>1,000 lb. mines - 44.5 tons, 30 lb. L.C. - 581.52 tons, 1 lb. incendiaries - 1347.2 tons.</p>		
			<p>Grand total dropped: 3219.22 tons.</p>		
			<p>(b) During the year the Squadron gunners accounted for 10 enemy aircraft shot down and destroyed, and have also claimed one as probably destroyed and one damaged. The details are:</p>		
			<p>A/C claimed destroyed: 1 ME.110, 1 ME.210, 3 JU.88's, 3 FW.190's, 2 unidentified A/C,</p>		
			<p>1 ME.110 probably destroyed and one JU.88 damaged.</p>		
			<p>(c) There were 50 crews lost during the year involving a total personnel of 358. Of these 3 have returned to this country and exactly 100 are known to be prisoners of war. 119 are known to have lost their lives, the remaining 136 have not as yet been accounted for. The Squadron's percentage of losses in ratio to operational sorties undertaken is 4.2%.</p>		
			<p style="text-align: right;"><i>W.P. Plesance</i> (W.P. Plesance) Wing Commander, Commanding 419 (B.C.A.F.) Squadron, Middleton St. George, Durham.</p>		

