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R.A.F. Form 540

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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 1

of (Unit or Formation) 420 (R.C.A.F.) SQUADRON.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Waddington.			<p><u>PREFACE</u></p> <p>No. 420 Royal Canadian Air Force Squadron was first brought into being on December 19th 1941 it was then of course no more than a name.</p> <p>It is hoped in time that this Squadron will be composed entirely of Canadian personnel.</p> <p>The object of No. 420 Royal Canadian Air Force Squadron is to become an operational Squadron in the shortest possible time, and the efforts of all personnel will be bent to this aim.</p> <p>It is hoped that the various difficulties which always beset a new Squadron on formation will be surmounted with the minimum of trouble, and that the eighteen Hampden machines allotted will soon be in the air. Two Flights are to be formed and the Maintenance Flight.</p> <p><u>NO. 420 (R.C.A.F.) SQUADRON.</u></p>	1941
Waddington	1/1/42		<p>The Squadron is in the process of formation. The Commanding Officer, Wing Commander J.D.D. Collier D.F.C. has taken over command as from December 19th 1941, but for past 10 days has been detached to command No. 44 Squadron, Waddington.</p> <p>A number of flying and ground personnel have been posted from No. 44 Squadron, Waddington, to assist in forming No. 420 Squadron, and these include two Flight Lieutenants to start up "A" and "B" Flights in 420 Squadron. Approximately forty other flying personnel have also moved over.</p> <p>The hangars are being redecorated, and the Squadron Headquarters offices have been occupied by the C.O., Adjutant, P/Sgt. Discip and a nucleus of Orderly room staff.</p>	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
			<p>Twenty one Hampden aircraft are now with the Squadron (three being held in excess of establishment)</p> <p>All aircraft are fully operationally serviceable.</p> <p>No flying is taking place.</p> <p>Endeavours have been made to procure all Canadian personnel, and nine Canadian ground personnel have arrived. It is hoped to get a Canadian Gunnery Officer, and a Canadian Bombing Leader.</p> <p>F/Lt. Savage the Squadron Medical Officer arrived.</p> <p>Four flying crews have arrived and have been crewed up.</p> <p>"A" and "B" flight have begun servicing their aircraft.</p> <p>Ground personnel are arriving satisfactorily, but certain sections such as Armoury, Instruments etc. are very short of H.Q. Gs.</p> <p>No tools have arrived for the Squadron, and a certain number have been borrowed enabling two aircraft per flight to be serviced for flying.</p> <p>Weather unfit for flying.</p> <p>Three Officer pilots have reported for duty. Aircraft have been allotted to flights and have been placed in correct dispersal fields.</p> <p>More Squadron offices have been decorated, and occupied by sections.</p> <p>Weather fit for flying, and three aircraft were put up for local flying and tests. These are the first aircraft serviced by 420 Squadron entirely to take the air.</p> <p>Lecture in morning for Navigators and Wireless Operators on new Harbord Navigators Loop.</p> <p>Canadian Bombing Leader, F/O Miller arrived, also one pilot.</p> <p>Church parade for a number of ground and aircrew personnel.</p> <p>Lecture in morning for air crews.</p> <p>Fit for flying, and local flying carried out by both flights.</p> <p>Ultra violet ray treatment available for air crew, and all encouraged to attend every second day. It is very popular.</p>	
Waddington.	2/1/42			
Waddington.	3/2/42			
Waddington.	4/2/42			

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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 3

of (Unit or Formation) 430 (Recon) SQUADRON

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
			Purchases made of Wirelesses, games etc. for air crews.	
			Nearly all sections of hangars are now occupied, and in operation.	
			We now have a total of one Corporal and eleven men who are Canadian. R. 60628 LdO Grant W.L.M. (Canadian) recommended for promotion to Corporal to fill vacancy.	
Waddington	5/1/42		Lecture for flying crews. Weather fit for flying - local and Cross Country flying from both flights. No tools for servicing of aircraft have yet arrived, but flights are still managing with the small amount they have borrowed.	
			Four of our serviceable aircraft have been allotted away - this now leaves us with our correct establishment i.e. 18 aircraft.	
			All decorations of hangars now completed.	
Waddington.	6/1/42.		There are now six complete aircrews in the Squadron.	
			Lecture for flying crews by Signals Officer in Morse and Aldis Lamp.	
			Weather fit for flying, cross country flying by both flights.	
			It is hoped that the tools for servicing aircraft will arrive on January 9th.	
			Another pilot reported this morning making seven complete crews.	
			Posting instructions have arrived for seven more Canadian ground personnel.	
			Our surplus aircraft was collected to-day by 14 O.T.U.	
			Night flying programme had to be cancelled owing to bad weather.	
			Intend lectures arranged for Navigators to familiarise them with the new Navigator operated Loop. Bombing up practices have been carried out with all types of bombs used by Hampden aircraft.	
Waddington.	7/1/42		Lectures for flying crews, general talk on navigation.	
			Weather unfit for flying. Practiced bombing aircraft up with various types of bombs. No fresh aircrews reported to-day.	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
			Night flying programs cancelled owing to bad weather. Two Canadian ground aircrew reported for duty to-day.	
Waddington.	8/1/42.		Lectures for flying crews on Bombing. Local and cross country flying by both flights also ground instruction on new Marconi Navigator Loop Receiver.	
			Another pilot reported this morning making eight crews.	
Waddington.	9/1/42		Night flying operations cancelled owing to bad weather conditions.	
			Photographic Lecture for air crews.	
			The Engineer Officer reported for duty this morning.	
			One aircraft took a pilot to Blackpool to collect a Hampden plane from there.	
			Bombing practices carried out, and local cross country flying by remaining crews.	
Waddington.	10/1/42		Lecture for flying on Iron and Controlled Landings.	
			S/Ldr. Campbell reported for duty this morning, he is second in command of this Squadron, and Flight Commander of "A" Flight. Squadron Leader Campbell originated from Alberta Canada, and reported for duty here from Southampton 44. He has already completed 110 hours operational flying.	
			Maintenance Flight formed under Command of P/O Sparway the Squadron Engineer Officer.	
			Visit to Squadron by the Squadron Leader, P/Lt. Pagwin and P/Lt. Spear. They are from R.C.A.F. Headquarters London, and have to talk to our Canadian personnel. They were shown around departments of the Squadron, and interviewed Canadian Wireless Operators, and Wireless Operator Mechanics. Local flying, cross country, and night circuits and landings took place.	
Waddington	11/1/42		Church Parade for ground staff personnel, all denominations. Sermon given by Chaplain Chief.	
			Lectures for flying crews at 10.00 on bombing and again at 13.45 hours on signals (navigation)	
			A small proportion of tools for servicing aircraft have now arrived, and are being checked.	
			One Pilot Officer Navigator reported for duty this morning. A little local flying done to-day, but arrangements had to be curtailed owing to bad weather conditions, visibility	

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of (Unit or Formation) No. 420 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Waddington	11/1/42		very poor. Night flying cancelled.	
Waddington	12/1/42	(0000Z)	Lecture for flying crews on January 10.00 hours, again on signals at 13.45 hours. Local flying by both flights also bombing practice. Night flying operations somewhat curtailed, owing to snow, but three machines were in the air for short flights.	
Waddington	13/1/42		Lecture on flying due to snow showers. In afternoon full operational ground practice took place - all sections took part - nine aircraft were detailed and were fully operationally equipped with guns, bombs, flares, cameras etc. Seven complete crews were detailed, and a programme was carried out which was equivalent to normal operations apart from the flying - all sections proved satisfactory except the Armoury who due to untrained personnel took too long to bomb up - a further practice will take place.	
Waddington	14/1/42		No flying in the morning owing to bad weather. Bombing practice was carried out in the afternoon five machines took part. Lectures in the morning on pyrotechnics. Night flying practice was carried out, circuits and bumps. (three machines were airborne)	
Waddington	15/1/42		Lectures. Local and cross country flying in the morning. Gunnery practice this afternoon for six crews. S/Ldr Campbell took a machine and pilot to Warkton to collect Hampden machine from there. Further consignments of ground equipment arrived.	
Waddington	16/1/42		Lectures for flying crews on meteorology and signals. This morning low level bombing practice by four crews and this afternoon practice with the R.D.F. Loop. Visit from P/Lt. Davidson (RCAF) padre and Mr. Davery Y.M.C.A. liaison officer, these officers called to arrange for sports - ice hockey, base-ball etc., and to discuss fixing a Y.M.C.A. hut for Canadian personnel.	
Waddington	17/1/42		Lecture in the morning on maintenance, later on this morning circuits and bumps and night flying tests by both flights. Lectures in the afternoon by P/Lt. Shore on escaped prisoners of war. P/Lt. Shore is one of the only two R.A.F. prisoners who have escaped from Germany during this war. Night flying programme was carried out, seven crews took part in infra-red photography practice.	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Waddington	18/1/42		<p>Churot, all denominations. A practice attack on Beampton aerodrome was carried out in conjunction with the Home Guard. Three machines delivered a low level bombing attack on various strong points, visibility was very bad, and the aircraft were practically over the target before being seen by the gun crews on the ground. The attack worked out exactly to plan and timing was excellent.</p>	
Waddington	19/1/42		<p>A talk was given in the morning by aircrews by the Commanding Officer (W/Odr. J.D.D. Collier D.F.O.) on preparations and requirements for operations for which we are now ready.</p> <p>In the afternoon a lecture was given by Professor Thomas on Smoke Screens. Snow and poor visibility prohibited any flying. A practice bombing up of four aircraft was undertaken which was satisfactory.</p>	
Waddington	20/1/42		<p>In the morning a film on dingy rescue was shown to aircrews. Wintry conditions with snow and ice were not conducive to flying and none was undertaken. Cockpit systems and procedures were explained and practised.</p>	
Waddington	21/1/42		<p>A Red-Letter day. We were o-kayed for operations. Everyone was as "keen as mustard" to start the real job of bombing the enemy. Operations orders were issued, bombing up commenced, guns, cameras planes etc. fitted, crew briefed, courses mapped, and then at last in the gathering darkness, the first six aircraft of No.420 (R.G.A.F.) Squadron were "off"</p> <p>Five aircraft attacked Baden. The sixth carried out gardening operations.</p> <p>Four of the five aircraft attacking Baden returned safely and reported successful attacks, but it has to be regretfully stated the remaining one of these five failed to return, and is posting as "missing on air operations", S/Ldr. T.V.L. Wood, the captain of the missing aircraft, and who was O.C. "B" Flight, and his crew consisting of Sgt. Grealy, navigator, Sgt. Semple, 1st Wireless Operator and Sgt. Bott, gunner will be sadly missed by the whole Squadron. The sixth aircraft on "gardening" operations returned safely.</p>	
Waddington	22/1/42		<p>The lessons learned in preparing for yesterday's first bombing operations were dissected and imparted to the R.C.O's in charge of ground crews and maintenance sections, and</p>	

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of (Unit or Formation) 420 (R.G.A.F.) Squadron

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
			alterations in procedure were indicated which will make for more efficient preparation in the future.	
			One aircraft was detailed for "gardening" night operations. The aircraft Captain reported the operation successful on his return.	
			W/Lt. G.L.B. Harris was appointed O.C. "B" Flight, and recommended for promotion to S/Ldr.	
Waddington	23/1/42	Friday	A mixture of snow, ice, rain and mist precluded any possibility of flying. A lecture on First Aid was given by the Squadron Medical Officer (P/Lt. Savage) in the morning. In the afternoon cockpit drill and parachute drill was practised.	
"	24/1/42	Saturday	The rapid thaw which set in yesterday continued and the aerodrome was unserviceable for flying. Crews were rested.	
"	25/1/42	Sunday	In the morning as many members of the Squadron as could be spared attended Divine Service. Preparations for night flying training were made during the afternoon, and at night one pilot carried out circuits and landings, and one pilot undertook a local cross country exercise.	
	26/1/42	Monday	The squadron was again programmed for night operations. Six aircraft and crews were detailed for "mining" operations, and the vetting of aircraft, bombing up briefing of crews and other necessary preparations were carried out during the day. Six aircraft took off at dusk, and five aircraft successfully completed the task. The remaining aircraft had to return to base after 2 1/2 hours flight owing to low oil pressure on starboard engine.	
	27/1/42	Tuesday	Wintry conditions of snow and ice again set in. No training flights were undertaken and advantage was taken to use the Link Trainer for instruction and practice. No operations were carried out.	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Waddington	28/1/42	Wed.	<p>In the morning a lecture by Chief Signals N.C.O. was given to air crews.</p> <p>One aircraft was detailed for night dropping over Paris. The flight of five hours 45 minutes was successfully accomplished by a "freshman" who thoroughly enjoyed his moonlight trip over the Seine.</p> <p>One aircraft carried out local cross country flying training.</p>	
"	29/1/42	Thurs	<p>Five aircraft were detailed for night operations. Bombing up, briefing and the usual preparations were carried out, but at the last moment weather conditions deteriorated and the operations were cancelled.</p>	
"	30/1/42	Frid.	<p>Three aircraft were detailed for mining operations. The bombing and gunnery exercises carried out their usual tasks, but once again weather conditions in the form of a blinding snow storm set in during the afternoon, and although take off was delayed for nine hours, the weather was still sufficiently bad as to cause cancellation of the operations.</p>	
"	31/1/42	Saturday	<p>The weather had improved from yesterday and we were backed to be once more detailed for night operations, hoping this time the weather would be kind to us. Six aircraft were bombed up and the crews briefed. All aircraft took off, three to attack HEST, and three to attack ST. NAZAIRE. The three HEST aircraft reached their target, but only one bombed the cruciform at HEST, the bursts, however, were not seen as the aircraft, piloted by S/Ldr. C.C. Campbell (C.O. "A" flight), was caught in the searchlights. The aircraft could not get sufficient height, and after dropping wing bombs in the sea off target to gain height returned to base with the remaining bombs. The third aircraft to reach HEST area did not attack the primary target owing to late arrival, but attacked an aerodrome believed to be LAVERG. Bombs believed to have hit aerodrome buildings. Of the three aircraft attacking ST. NAZAIRE, two attacked the primary target, but owing to cloud no bursts were observed. The third aircraft did not locate the target going to base and cloud and returned to base with bombs.</p> <p>The six aircraft returned safely from the night operations.</p> <p>The current strength of the Squadron today is as follows:-</p>	

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of (Unit or Formation) 420 (R. C. A. F.) Squadron.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
			<p>R.C.A.F. Officers, aircrew - one: ground crew - Nil</p> <p>R.C.A.F. Airman, aircrew - Nil: ground crew - 66</p> <p>R.C.A.F. Officers, aircrew - 15 ground crew - 4</p> <p>(One R.C.A.F. Officer aircrew is a Canadian)</p> <p>R.C.A.F. Airman aircrew 52 ground crew (a) posted, 199 (b) attached 80.</p> <p>Other personnel - Nil.</p> <p>The number and type of aircraft on charge to-day is seventeen Republics I with Pegasus XVIII engines.</p> <p>The number of hours flown during the month are:-</p> <p>Operationally:- 95 hours 20 min;</p> <p>Non-operationally:- 151 hours 50 min;</p> <p>No personnel were officially credited with enemy aircraft destroyed damaged or probables.</p> <p>Nineteen ground crew airmen arrived to-day.</p> <p><i>W. H. H. H.</i></p>	