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R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I., para. 2349, and War Manual, Pt. II, chapter XX., and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 55

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

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References
Middleton St-George	Monday 1-2-43		After a very busy two days the Squadron managed to catch its breath and get back their normal footing. The last aircraft to crash and the other one missing were finally cleared up and all signals and casualty procedure completed. No operations were carried out so final preparations were completed for the Squadron Anniversary Party.	References C.A. 70 Appendices 10 1943 CENTRAL REGISTER
	Tuesday 2-2-43		The morning of this memorable day dawned as usual and it could be seen that many were awaiting with bated breath the news from operations room. The success of the whole party was to depend on the outcome of the night requirements for operations. It didn't require any further explaining to know that the Squadron was given a stand down for the night when loud acclamations and shouts were emitted from the direction of the flights. The sale of tickets was then completed and everything was set. On the whole the party was a huge success and run in a very orderly manner. Where the abundant lunch was scrounged from is still a mystery out there it was. It didn't take long to see that many Canadian parcels had contributed to its preparation. The Dance was held in the Bath Hall, Darlington, where a large floor and a twelve piece orchestra left nothing to be desired. Complimentary tickets had been issued to the Station Commander and his section heads, all of whom turned out, including Sgt/Ldr. H.A. Mitchell, now Squadron Leader Admin. at R.A.F. Station, Leamington, who was formerly Adjutant of 420 Squadron.	
	Wednesday 3-2-43		No ill effects were experienced from the festivities of the night previous and the Squadron once more buckled down to its task. We were detailed for night operations and although the met. forecast looked pretty grim, six aircraft took off to bomb HUNTER. As was expected all aircraft were forced to return being unable to climb above the front in which heavy icing conditions and electrical storms prevailed. All returned safely.	A1-6 A147-152
	Thursday 4-2-43		This was a very successful night of operations. HUNTER was once again the target and twelve aircraft took off for this purpose. One was forced back but eleven pushed home the target with very successful results. All aircraft returned safely, three of which landed at HONTERBORN where they were to divert should any doubt exist in their ability to return to base.	B. 7-14 151-194
	Friday 5-2-43		The trip of the night before left the majority of the aircraft and section heads in a rather tired state and there was no action around the flights until well on into the middle of the morning. However, the Squadron was required for party figures on a mining operation on that night so things had to get cracking once again. The operation was cancelled however. This type of "FIA" is what makes the life of section heads on a Squadron a tough one. With three aircraft still away from base one can't very well depend upon them to return in time to be of any use on that night, and yet they have to be shown as available.	

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Kidlington St. George	Saturday 6-2-43		Operations in the form of gardening was carried out by six of our aircraft. Very poor visibility over target area made the trip unsuccessful as a whole with the result that only one aircraft laid its mine. All returned safely.	A 19-24 195-200
	Sunday 7-2-43		Apparently LORIST still had a portion of its dock yards untouched and it was for this point that twelve of our crews were briefed and instructed to aim. All aircraft got away without difficulty with exception of one. The wind in the vicinity of the aerodrome was at an awkward angle between two runways and one aircraft piloted by Sgt. Mosser had considerable difficulty keeping the aircraft on the runway with the result that he blew a tire on take-off and got off with considerable difficulty. Another aircraft returned due to the navigator becoming air sick. The other eleven aircraft bombed the target very successfully. All aircraft returned. One was damaged by flak and landed at R.A.F. Station, BISHOP, another landed at FENHURST and Sgt. Mosser was forced to parachute upon returning to base. No injuries were sustained by the crew and only average damage to the aircraft under such circumstances. The disappointing factor about this operation, as has been the case on most others, is that only one photograph was obtained although all tried. This is a very discouraging feature connected with Wellington aircraft.	A 25-26 201-212
	Monday 8-2-43		Six aircraft were bombed up for operations, which were eventually scrubbed.	
	Tuesday 9-2-43		On this day five aircraft were originally scheduled for operations. The take-off time was changed several times and finally three were to take off at around eleven and two at 02.30 hours of the 10th. The first three finally did take off on a mining operation. Two were successful. All returned safely. The remaining two aircraft for late take off were scrubbed.	A 27-39 213-215
	Wednesday 10-2-43		No mining or bombing was carried out and poor weather only permitted ground lectures.	
	Thursday 11-2-43		Nine aircraft took off on operations. Three successfully bombed target HORTLANDS. Six others attempted minelaying at JELLYFISH, of which only one was successful, due to poor visibility over the target area.	A 40-48 216-224
	Friday 12-2-43		No operations were carried out and nothing out of the ordinary occurred.	
	Saturday 13-2-43		The Squadron stood by for day operations which were cancelled. However, there was no rest for the Squadron and fourteen aircraft were bombed up for operations on LORIST. It would seem that this spot should be in pretty bad shape by now, but we still keep hammering it. On this night fourteen aircraft took off. It can be assumed that thirteen bombed the target with good success. One returned after jettisoning petrol and did not get away from the vicinity of the aerodrome. One aircraft failed to return.	A 49-61 225-227
	Sunday 14-2-43		Five aircraft carried out a successful bombing operation on COLOGNE.	A 62-66 228-242

OBSERVATION SECOND BOOK

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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 57

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

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
	Monday 15-2-43		No operations were carried out by the Squadron.	
	Tuesday 16-2-43		The A.O.G. of No. 6 Group, Air Vice Marshal Brooke, O.B.E., visited the Station and departed the following day. LORIENT was again attacked by ten of our aircraft. All attacked successfully and returned safely.	A 67-76 243-252
	Wednesday 17-2-43		The Squadron was given a stand-down. It is doubtful whether it could be laid to a coincidence that a quarterly party and dance was held in the Officers' Mess on this night. Needless to say everyone enjoyed themselves and no further explanation should be required.	
	Thursday 18-2-43		The Squadron was again given a stand-down in operations. A Station parade was held at which all ranks were required to wear Anti-Gas Respirators. The Station Commander inspected our Squadron.	
	Friday 19-2-43		Eleven aircraft took off on operations against WILHELMSHAVEN. All attacked the primary target and returned. One aircraft was heavily attacked by both flak and enemy aircraft. One of the crew bailed out in the target area, though no details are available. For excellent piloting P/Ogt. Taylor has been recommended for the D.F.M.	A 77-87 253-263
	Saturday 20-2-43		Three aircraft stood by for daylight operations, which were not carried out. No night operations were called for.	
	Sunday 21-2-43		Seven aircraft were bombed up for night operations, but were cancelled.	
	Monday 22-2-43		Ten aircraft were prepared for operations and briefing and marshalling of aircraft were completed. The operations, however, were eventually cancelled a short time before take-off.	
	Tuesday 23-2-43		The Squadron was not required for operations.	
	Wednesday 24-2-43		Eleven aircraft were bombed up and briefed for operations on COLOGNE. A short time before the take-off time the target was changed. This required re-briefing, but this was carried out in a very quiet but methodical and thorough manner in the Crew Room, and the operations got under way. Eleven aircraft took off and all bombed the target and returned safely. Apparently the target was totally a 6 Group effort on WILHELMSHAVEN, with ninety-two aircraft. It is further understood that all returned.	A 88-98 264-274
	Thursday 25-2-43		No operations were carried out by the Squadron, thus giving us a chance to get the new crew up on some much-needed training.	
	Friday 26-2-43		This Squadron put twelve aircraft on COLOGNE in one of the biggest Bomber Command concentrations since the "Thousand Bombs". Eleven aircraft successfully bombed the target. All returned to base safely. <i>After the successful bombing of the target and returned safely. Two returned safely, and nothing at all wrong. One of a minor.</i>	A 44-46 275-285
	Saturday 27-2-43		Eight aircraft carried out Gardening. All aircraft laid vegetables in required area and returned safely.	A 44-46 287-294

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
	Sunday 28-2-43		<p>Eleven aircraft were bombed up and took off on operations against ST. NAZAIRES, another important U-boat base on the French Atlantic coast. The rapid way in which Canadians are arriving in accordance with the Canadianisation Policy is making it most difficult to find accommodation for everyone. What will happen in the next few weeks is something that is not to be looked forward to. It is expected that we will be required to double-up with R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. for some time, in the Technical Branches, since these cannot be changed over night. This is something that must be carefully considered.</p> <p>Strength 28.2.43</p> <p>R.C.A.F. Officers - Air Crew - 40 Ground Crew - 3</p> <p>R.C.A.F. Airmen - Air Crew - 68 61 Ground Crew - 240</p> <p>R.A.F. Officers - Air Crew - 9 R.A.F. Airmen - 33 Ground Crew - 111 Aircrew - 82</p> <p>W.A.A.F. Personnel - Airwomen - 32</p> <p>Other personnel - Australian Officers - Aircrew - 2 - Australian Airmen - Aircrew - 1</p> <p>Hours flown operationally for the month of February, 1943 - 724 hours 45 minutes. Hours flown non-operationally for the month of February, 1943 - 168 hours 20 minutes.</p> <p><u>Loss of Wellington Mark III No. HK-330</u> Can/J. 20574 P/O. L.G. Gibson Pilot Canadian 1255386 P/O. F.R.F. Chapman Navigator Air Operations, Night 13/14th February 698354 Sgt. B.W. Somerset Air Bomber 1215478 Sgt. T.V. Hughes W.O.A.G. Can/H110167 Sgt. MacDonald, P.A. Air Gunner Canadian</p> <p><u>Can/J. 197534</u> Sgt. Somerset, G.J. - W.O.A.G. - Canadian. Wellington Mark III No. 637 Abandoned aircraft by parachute over target area.</p> <p><u>Loss of Wellington Mark III No. HK-468</u> Can/R. 103842 Sgt. Hansen, E.A. Pilot Canadian Can/R. 104836 P/O. Jupp, R.H. Navigator Canadian Air Operations, Night 26/27th February Can/R. 87480 P/O. Chumney, E.A. Air Bomber Canadian Can/R. 86750 P/O. Mitchell, P.H. W.O.A.G. Canadian Can/R. 149475 Sgt. Kellaway, L.R. Air Gunner Canadian</p>	

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