

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

No. 420 (RCAF) Squadron

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Thornthorpe, Yorks.	1-3-44		Squadron was called upon to prepare for operations tonight. 10 aircraft bombed up and marshalled but only 8 took off to attack target STUTTGART; as we had to non-starters 1 due to icing and another due to engine trouble. One aircraft returned early due to restricted oxygen supply to all positions. The effort was considered successful and all aircraft returned safely.	
	2nd March		R53567 WOL. McDonald, I.A. A/O. appointed to commission as Pilot Officer w.e.f. 16-12-43. The Squadron ordered to stand down for the day.	
	3rd March		R175058 W/S. Kalle, R.A. Pilot was appointed to a commission as Pilot Officer w.e.f. 10-1-44. The Squadron was ordered to stand down today. A/O. G.M.M. Scott, from No 6 Group from No 62 Base, visited the unit today. Also 71143, W/L. Burt from A.I.S. at Air Ministry and 18090 W/O Howland, P.O. from Headquarters Bomber Command were visitors. The A/O took part in a bullseye tonight. One of these returned early due to engine trouble, while the other completed bullseye and returned safely to base.	and 3/1. R. Tufts
	4th March		Preparations were made for operations tonight but were later cancelled. Seven aircraft proceeded on leave yesterday. Final arrangements were made with RAF station Sealands, for the burial of R533784 W/S. Hardy, R.S. Pilot, and four members of his crew who are to be buried at Blacon Regional Cemetery, Chester on Tuesday, March 7, 1944 at 1400 hours. The health of the Squadron was good.	
	5th March		Several aircraft from both flights took part in bombing and air to sea tests today. 1 aircraft completed a 6 hour cross country flight.	
	6th March		Four aircraft were bombed up and took off to bomb target* marshalling yards of Trappes, France. All aircraft returned safely to base with the exception of one aircraft piloted by R54029 W/S. McKay, R.M. which was forced to land on return from target, at a dispersal point. The compasses in W/S. McKay's A/O became W/S as he was crossing the coast of France but he continued with the stream and did not leave the target area. On leaving target area he lost contact with the stream and had to rely on his own initiative, getting a position from the North Star, he followed due north for a period of time, then headed due west and was very much relieved to see the searchlights of the English coast. He decided to make a forced landing at a dispersal point.	
	7th March		6 A/O bombed up and took off to attack target marshalling yards at LE MANS, France. All aircraft returned safely. 1 A/O completed a 6 hour cross country flight returning to base at 2230 hours. 09010 W/L. Warren, W. AASD was attached to this Unit for experience w.e.f. 7-3-44. The Squadron has been asked for volunteers for blood donors and response to date has been quite good. One article omitted on form 541, appears on page 123.	
	8th March		5 A/O were bombed up and made ready for operations which were later "scrubbed". A Command bullseye was also called for tonight which was later cancelled.	
	9th March		Operations scheduled for tonight were cancelled. 3 A/O took off in Command Bullseye tonight and returned safely. RAF 42511 W/O. D. McIntosh, RMO was admitted to Station Sick Quarters 6-3-44 with a cold. His condition is now greatly improved and it is expected he will return within a few days.	

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Thelthorpe, Yorks.	10th March		Operations which were scheduled for tonight were cancelled. 1 A/C took off on a 4 hour cross country and returned to base at 2300 hours. J18020, P/O Hawkins, A. WO/AG was posted to this Unit w.e.f. 10-3-44.		
	11th March		Stand Down: Two new crews arrived today from NO. 1659 Con Unit. J19653 P/O. Halsey, O.I. Pilot, and crew; H158724 Sgt. Sled, J.E. Pilot and crew; J16592 P/O. Kruger, F.C. Pilot and crew; was posted to this Unit w.e.f. 11-3-44. He has been crewed with a headless crew which was has now completed their training at a Con Unit. This now completes crew returns to this Unit today. Four crews took part in fighter affiliation, and two crews completed a cross country flight today.		
	12th March		Stand Down: Adverse weather kept all aircraft of this Unit grounded today. O.I.38 P/L. D.D. Hall, AASD, proceeded on leave after duty today.		
	13th March		O.I.10, P/L Warren, W. AASD, assumed duties of Adj. of this Sqn during the absence of P/L Hall. 8 A/C took part in operations tonight and all returned safely. One landing on diversion at Hatfield Bridge. Target was "marshalling yards at LE MANS, FRANCE". and effort was considered very successful. One A/C took part in cross country flight tonight and returned safely to base. RAF 171775 Sgt. Woolley, D.M.W./AG was appointed to a commission in RAFVR. as Pilot Officer and assigned personal number 172310.		
	14th March		Stand down. Three A/C took part in Command Bullseye tonight. One returned early due to restricted flow of oxygen to two positions while remaining two aircraft completed bullseye and returned safely. J. 201772 P/O. D.D. Watterson, J19426 P/O. E.S. Heipel and H161601 P/S, Pritchard, G.F. pilots, and their respective crews were posted to this Unit from 61 Base w.e.f. 14-3-44. H142369 Opt. Bush, Elect. I posted to 1666 Con Unit. w.e.f. 20-3-44. 1593583 AG2. Armitage, W.R. Inst. Rep. posted to 1659 Defense Training Flight Topcliffe, w.e.f. 16-3-44. Six members of headless crew posted to 61 Base w.e.f. 18-3-44. Five members of headless crew posted to 1666 Con Unit posted to 14th Sqn. w.e.f. 13-3-44. RAF 42511 W/O D.McIntosh DFC O/C Sqn. discharged from station sick quarters yesterday and proceeded on seven days sick leave after duty tonight. O.I.51-6/Ingraham McKenna, will act as O/C Squadron during absence of W/O. McIntosh.		
	15th March		Twelve aircraft took part tonight in operations against Target STUTTGART. Four A/C. returned safely to this aerodrome while others landed safely on diversion at Station Tangmere. All had bombed target. One A/C is missing with following crew and second pilot. J21935 P/O. Calder pilot, J19653 P/O. Halsey, 2nd pilot; J21170 P/O. Jackson, A/B; H140938 P/O. Ritchie, G.W. Navigator; RAF 335495 Sgt. Bethell, F.E. W/O; H251675 Sgt. Heidem, W.R. MU/AG; RAF 1835870 Sgt. Lee, B.R. A/G; H171746 Sgt. Dunbar, W. P/O. Remaining aircraft were hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire killing navigator, H175894 Sgt. Briggs, W.E. and wounding pilot, H160184 Sgt. Moleson, W.D. in both legs and waist as well as rendering U/S Starboard inner engine and starboard tire. Aircraft continued to target and dropped bomb load. Bomb Aimer H160329 Sgt. Benson, N.E. took over navigation and followed flight plan on return journey. A/C was again hit by A.A. fire shortly after leaving target area and lost altitude steadily flying at 4500 feet when it reached Station Fireton to land. A/C ground looped on landing due to burst tire but crew were uninjured. Sgt. Moleson did not advise crew that he had been wounded until after he had landed aircraft. He has been placed in hospital as although wounds were slight he had lost a considerable amount of blood. H151523 WOII Harris, A.M.P. A/B appointed to a commission as Pilot Officer. w.e.f. 14-2-44. and appointed number 185038. Housing situation for officers and NCO's is now acute.		

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Thelthorpe, Yorks.	16th March		Stand Down: Routine local flying carried out. Five of diverted aircraft which took part in last night's operations came back today.		
Thelthorpe, Yorks.	17th March		Stand Down: Routine local flying carried out. After considerable re-arrangement it has now been possible to provide accommodations for new crews on Nos. 5, 6, and 7 bases. However certain officers are still in HQ's billets. CAPT/782 WOLF Mess. CM. pilot was appointed to a commission in the rank of Pilot Officer and assigned personal number 785019 wef 8-1-44. Sgt. Stabiner W.C. A/C has been selected to attend three weeks course on aircraft recognition at Southport commencing April 5th, 1944. E15674 F/S. Keegan, L.E. pilot and crew returned from Station Dummer by train as their aircraft diverted there after operations on 15/16th March. Five uninjured members of crew of F/S. Moaden returned from Station FIRSTON, by rail and M. and reported that Moaden should be released from hospital within a few days. W/O. Tufts from 61 Base visited Sqn. today. S/L. Epa visited Sqn today to interview P/O. James and Sgt. Willoughby survivors of crash of F/S. Harding's a/c on Feb 23/44.		
	18th March		10 aircraft took off in operations tonight to attack target FRANKFURT. All returned safely after bombing target and operation was considered successful. One aircraft landed at this station, remaining a/c landed at diversion at Station, Thorpe Abbott. While taxiing at that Station, a/c "P" of this Sqn. piloted by E159335 F/S. Caffey, J.E. ran into a/c "M" of 425 Sqn. damaging that aircraft's tailplane and propeller of our "P". One aircraft took part in cross country flight tonight and returned safely. O35418 P/O. Jackson, A&SD, the FRO officer at 62 Base visited the Sqn. to obtain particulars of operations involving E160124 Sgt. Moaden, D.M. and crew on night of 15/16th March. E78809 LdO. Allen, Ck/Gen. in Orders Room of this Sqn. is posted to "R" Depot Warrington and is replaced by LdO. R.D. Mackie, E129482 Ck/Gen. from "R" Depot Warrington, Wef 23-3-44.		
	19th March		Stand Down: One aircraft took part in cross country flight tonight and returned to base safely. Normal flying routine carried out. F/S. Briggs M.V. killed during operations of night 15/16th March while a member of F/S. Moaden's crew is to be buried at Brookwood Cemetery Farnborough at 1500 hours on 20-3-44. P/O. James was detailed to attend to represent the Squadron.		
	20th March		Stand Down: Lieut. S.A. Redway - RGA and Lieut. P-ster, RGA. from Borden and Aldershot reported to this Sqn. for experience w.e.f. 20-3-44 for one week. E201479 Acl. Bushby, posted to this Sqn. from 62 Base wef 24-3-44 to fill establishment vacancy. P/O. Jones, posted to the Sqn. from 429 Sqn. wef 19-3-44. P/O. Trickett pilot and P/O. Fenton, pilot and crew posted from 408 Sqn. wef 20-3-44. P/O. Trickett is to attend CAT course commencing 21-3-44.		
	21st March		Stand Down: Routine training carried out while two aircraft took part in a cross country flight both returning to base safely.		
	22nd March		10 aircraft from this Sqn took part in operations tonight against target FRANKFURT. All returned safely. Nine aircraft returned to this station and one diverted to POULHERRA. Two aircraft took part in a cross country flight tonight and returned safely to base. S/O. McIntosh returned from leave and resumed command of the Squadron.		
	23rd March		Stand Down: Routine training carried out. S/L. Gordon from HQAF O/S Hq. visited this station today. Last night's operations reported to be very successful.		

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	References to Appendices
Thelthorpe, Yorks.	24th March		F/L Dall resumes duties of Adj. on return from leave. 12 aircraft took part in raid tonight on target BERLIN. One returned early due to hydraulic system failure while ten aircraft returned safely, after bombing target five being diverted to station OLLISHALL. One aircraft is missing with following captain and crew: J21369 P/O. Rice, H.S. pilot, 2156791 P/S. Fraser, G.O. A/B. J22101 P/O. Altic, N.L. Nav, R207453 WOI Remwick, G. WO/AG, USAAF0886279 2nd Lt. Thomson, MI/AL. H288669 Sgt. B. Lee, J.B. A/B. R2167850 Sgt. Bushell, P.O. P/S. 2 aircraft took part in command bullseye tonight and both returned safely to base.		
	25th March		2 aircraft took part in operations tonight against target "marshalling yards at ALLNOTE, France, and both returned safely to base. 2 aircraft took part in a cross country flight and both returned safely to base. Five aircraft that were diverted to OLLISHALL after operations last night returned to Sqdn. today.		
	26th March		13 aircraft took off to bomb target ESSEN. 2 returned early one due to generator being U/S, and the other due to starboard inner engine trouble. 11 aircraft bombed the target and all aircraft returned safely to base.		
	27th March		Stand Down: 4 aircraft took part in exercise ERIC this afternoon and three in cross country flight this evening. All aircraft returned safely to base. P/L. Klombies from 6 Group Hdqts. visited the Sqdn. to discuss the preparation of Operations Record Book.		
	28th March		Stand Down: P/O. Jackson OJ5416 PNO Officer from No 62 Base visited this Station to introduce O29436 P/O. Goldwell, the new PRO for 62 Base. Advice was received that J17332 P/O. Kelly, the Sqdn Bombing Leader has been appointed Act. P/L. ref 28-2-44. Lieut. Lapere, Royal 22nd Bort. from No 60 BTL and Lieut. Findlater MRE have been attached to this Sqdn. For one week's familiarisation with Bomber Squadron work. Due to unfavourable weather, cross country flights for this evening were scrubbed.		
	29th March		14 aircraft were bombed up in preparation for operations tonight, which were later scrubbed. P/O. C.O. Bird and crew arrived on posting from 61 Base ref 28-3-44. P/L. Markham has been detailed to conduct a court of inquiry to investigate the accident which to Halifax III IN. 603 of 425 Sqdn. which crashed on March 26, 1944, near OLLISHALL.		
	30th March		14 aircraft took off for operations tonight against target NUREMBERG. 2 aircraft returned early one due to oxygen failing in gun position and the other due to hydraulic system becoming U/S. One aircraft returned safely to base on being diverted to station TAN near four to Thorney Isle, one to Ford while aircraft IN. 27 P/S. Ward, J.O. Pilot, and crew (P) Sgt. Sisco P/O. Barclay, P/O. Freeman, Sgt. B. Lee, Sgt. B. Lee, Sgt. B. Lee, and Sgt. Jones, made a forced landing 5 miles from OLLISHALL, when petrol system became U/S on return from bombing target. Landing was successful but brakes failed to hold in loose topsoil and aircraft struck a raised reservoir destroying starboard undercarriage, and damaging tail wheel and starboard ailerons. Pilot and crew were not injured. 1 aircraft took part in cross country flight tonight and returned safely to base.		
	31st March		Stand Down: 3 aircraft took part in Command Bullseye tonight while general training programme carried out in afternoon including two cross country flights. All returned safely to base. All aircraft diverted after raid on previous night, returned to base safely. P/S Ward and crew returned by rail.		

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THORNTON YORKS	11st March		Strength of Squadron Personnel as at 2359 hours, 31-3-44.		
			Aircrew R.C.A.F. Officers: 55 R.C.A.F. Airmen: 113 R.A.F. Officers: 3 R.A.F. Airmen: 54 R.A.F. Officers: 1	Ground Crew R.C.A.F. Officers: 2 R.C.A.F. Airmen: 26 R.A.F. Airmen: 18 W.A.A.F.: 7	
			Hours flown non-operational for the month of March, 1944.	307.05	
			Hours flown operational for the month of March, 1944.	606.05	
			Number of operational sorties flown for the month of March, 1944.	99	
			The health of the Squadron continues to be satisfactory.		
			Number of tons of bombs dropped during the month of March, 1944.	Incond. 124 tons H.E. 94 tons	
			Total number of tons of bombs dropped to date:	Incond. 1978 tons H.E. 94 tons	
			Type and number of aircraft on charge as at 31-3-44.	21 Halifax Mark III	
			SQUADRON AIRCRAFT MOVEMENT The Squadron aircraft establishment has been raised as follows; Auth: Air Ministry, D.O. 128/24/44, 4/11-2-44.		
			Flying P/O.		
			A/S P/O 11 14		
			W/O P/O 11 14		
			C off S P/O 8 10		
			C off S P/O 4 13		
			P/S P/O 4 9		
			Alt Pilot Sgt 11 14		
			A/S Sgt 11 14		
			W/O Sgt 11 14		
			A/S (W/O) Sgt 11 14		
			P/S Sgt 18 23		
			A/S Sgt 36 23		
			POSTINGS TO THE SQUADRON		
			J18020 P/O Hawkins, A. W/O AG from 1053 to 62 Base	J20403 P/O. Andrews, E.J. W/O 62 Base	
			1821944 Sgt. Fletcher, S. P/S 62 Base	E158724 Sgt. Sled, J Pilot 61 Base	
			207852 Sgt. Helle, K. W/O 61	E121847 Sgt. Brennan, G.W/O 61 Base	
			E131173 St. Brown, E.E. A/S 61	294223 Sgt. Watts, W. P/S 61 Base	

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