

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. One.

of (Unit or Formation) 424 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
TOPCLIFFE	1.2.43		Weather: Foggy early morning becoming cloudy to fair. Visibility improving during day to good by mid-afternoon. As no operations were scheduled the day was devoted to training. Sunray treatment and dinghy drill were carried out in the morning. In the afternoon all aircrew attended a lecture on various subjects, given by the Station Commander. Flying Training: Day 9hrs. 40 mins. Night. Nil. The Squadron Commander who has been attending a court martial at ACKINGTON, returned to the Squadron to-day.		
TOPCLIFFE	2.2.43		Weather: Cloudy with slight rain in the morning. Cloud breaking in the afternoon and almost completely dispersed in evening. Some mist during the morning but visibility becoming moderate by evening. Winds S.E'ly 5-10 m.p.h. veering S.W'ly light about midday. No operations were carried out, the only flying being one air test of 25 minutes. Aircrew training in dinghy drill and lecture by Specialist Officers was continued. One new aircraft arrived for the Squadron - Wellington III BK.348, Hercules XI engines. (Port) 553630/307538. (Starboard) 57538/545170.		
TOPCLIFFE	3.2.43		Weather: Fine apart from slight showers in the early afternoon. Visibility excellent all day except in showers when it fell to moderate. Winds very light and variable but mainly westerly. South Westerly 5 m.p.h. in afternoon and at night. At 09.00 hrs. nine aircraft were detailed for bombing operations at HAMBURG. Briefing was held at 13.30 hrs., main at 14.30 hrs. Take off for 18.20 hrs. Half an hour before take-off our detail was dropped to two only. Flight Lieutenant Klassen WO. and Pilot Officer Ames CP. took off on schedule but returned to base as instructed when weather became very thick. Consequently the squadron participated in no operational flying for the day. Training flying totalled, Day: 2 hrs 05 mins. Night: 6 hrs. 05 mins. Flight Lieutenant Knight B.J. C.7711 reported to the Squadron for Adjutant duties.		
TOPCLIFFE	4.2.43		Weather: Fair 3/6/10 cloud at 3000 feet during daylight hours otherwise little or no cloud. Visibility good. Surface wind Westerly 6-12 m.p.h. backing slightly and decreasing to less than 5 m.p.h. during backing. Squadron was detailed for bombing operation, the target being LORIENT. Twelve aircraft were detailed, a total of 122 aircraft to participate. First wave, of which 424 Squadron provided seven, to be loaded with 9 x 2,000 lb. Second wave, five of which were from 424 Squadron, loaded with 1 x 4000 lb or a mixed load. Take off scheduled - First wave 17.45 hrs. Second wave 18.25 hrs. Primary briefing was held at 15.30 hrs. main at 14.30 hrs. First seven aircraft took off between 17.45 hours and 17.53 hrs., the remaining five, for the second wave, between 18.30 hrs. and 18.34 hrs. One aircraft "H" K.3790 piloted by Squadron Leader W.B. Allison, developed engine trouble and landed at LUSGATE BOTTOM at 21.50. Aircraft "V" B.K.144, piloted by Sergeant Harrison A.R. turned back at 1951 H. 0256 W. at 20.34 hrs. due to guns being up and a partial failure of oxygen supply. Load of one 4000 lb bomb jettisoned at turning point. His aircraft returned to base at 23.01 hrs. The remaining ten aircraft all reached the target and found visibility good, they released loads at heights of 13,000 feet to 17,000 feet. Target was pin-pointed and caught in bomb sight without exception. Actual bursts were observed on target by three aircraft, the remainder could not be positive due to extent of fires already burning. Moderate to heavy flak was experienced N. W. and S. of town. Some light flak nearer centre of town. Defences appeared to have been increased since the last visit. Five dummy fires were observed, three North and two South of the target. Large fires were burning in target area, these were visible for 80		A. 57 - A. 46

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TOPCLIFFE	4.2.43	(cont)	<p>miles. Searchlights were active both sides of river as many as twenty at one time. One aircraft encountered heavy and light flak at 20.34 hrs in vicinity of GURRNEY. This is considered a most successful raid. All ten aircraft that reached target arrived at base undamaged.</p> <p>Operational flying time for the period: 67 hrs 58mins. Training flying time: 9hrs 36mins. One new aircraft was received. Wellington III-BK 560. Engines, Hercules XI.</p> <p>Port 57593/346225. Starboard: 57859/346491.</p>																																
TOPCLIFFE	5.2.43		<p>Weather: Cloudy with continuous slight rain or drizzle most of the day. 5-8/10 low cloud at 1500-2000 ft., visibility 1-3 miles. Surface wind S.S.W'ly 10-15 m.p.h.</p> <p>Six aircraft were detailed for "GARDENING" in the NEOTARINE III area. Briefing was held but later in the afternoon the operation was scrubbed due to unfavourable weather conditions. Crews not detailed for operations put on the day in training in dinghy and parachute drill. Sunny treatment was also taken. No flights of any kind were carried out. The Squadron said farewell to its genial and capable Adjutant, 01300 Flight Lieutenant Gingsa L.R. who has been posted to 425 R.C.A.F. Squadron.</p>																																
TOPCLIFFE	6.2.43		<p>Weather: Cloudy with rain and drizzle in early morning, clearing before dawn, thence fair conditions for rest of period, visibility moderate becoming good after dawn. Winds S.S.W'ly 15-20 m.p.h. Gusts veering N.W'ly 10-15 m.p.h. gusty by end of period.</p> <p>Seven aircraft were detailed for "GARDENING", six in the NEOTARINE area, One in the TREPOIL area. Primary briefing was held at 13.30 hrs., main at 14.30 hrs. The six for the NEOTARINE area took off from 17.20 hrs to 17.23 hrs, the one for TREPOIL at 17.39 hrs. Four of the aircraft reached the target and unloaded eight "Vegetables" at an average height of 700 feet. Visibility was variable ranging from 1-3 miles and 7-10/10 clouds. Visibility was reported very bad by two. Pin-points on locality could not be obtained and they returned to base with two "Vegetables" each. Aircraft "I" Z 1632 damaged both propellers and nose on landing due to generator u/s. It is regretted that aircraft "Q" BJ 658 is missing from this operation, no news having been received since take-off at 17.28 hrs. Particulars of this crew are as follows:-</p> <table><tr><td>Pilot</td><td>CAN. R106789</td><td>Sgt</td><td>OGIL</td><td>E.T.</td></tr><tr><td>NAV</td><td>CAN. J. 11799</td><td>P/O</td><td>PATTERSON</td><td>J.M.</td></tr><tr><td>B/A</td><td>RAF. 1315775</td><td>Sgt</td><td>ALLEN</td><td>F.J.</td></tr><tr><td>WOP/AG</td><td>CAN. R. 73428</td><td>"</td><td>COATES</td><td>E.D.</td></tr><tr><td>A/G</td><td>RAF. 936085</td><td>"</td><td>BOOTH</td><td>A.E.</td></tr><tr><td>WOP/AG</td><td>CAN. R106616</td><td>"</td><td>DUKE</td><td>H.M.</td></tr></table> <p>During this operation one enemy aircraft was believed seen, the only one during this entire operation, but could not be identified. Light inaccurate flak was encountered East of TRECHILLING, heavy inaccurate flak in the vicinity of BORKUM and NORDENNEY. Searchlights were observed at TRECHILLING and at the east end of JUIST. What appeared to be a destroyer surrounded by small craft was observed at 19.24 hrs. at 5356 N. 0340 E. Flying time was as follows:- Operational 26.02 hrs. Training 6 hrs. 15 mins.</p>	Pilot	CAN. R106789	Sgt	OGIL	E.T.	NAV	CAN. J. 11799	P/O	PATTERSON	J.M.	B/A	RAF. 1315775	Sgt	ALLEN	F.J.	WOP/AG	CAN. R. 73428	"	COATES	E.D.	A/G	RAF. 936085	"	BOOTH	A.E.	WOP/AG	CAN. R106616	"	DUKE	H.M.		reached
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TOPCLIFFE	7.2.43		<p>Weather: A few scattered showers during night becoming fair from dawn onwards. Visibility good. Wind N.W'ly 10-15 m.p.h. gusty becoming W.S.W'ly light after dusk.</p> <p>Two aircraft were detailed for dinghy search for Sgt. Cox and crew (Aircraft "Q" BJ 658) missing from "GARDENING" operations on the previous night. Aircraft took off at 09.30 hrs. and searched the following areas: 0200 E. 5210 N., 0310 E. 5314 N. They returned to base at 15.05 hours.</p>																																

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TOPOLIFFE	7.2.43	(cont)	having found no trace of the missing crew. Eight aircraft were detailed for bombing operations on LORIENT. First briefing was held at 13.30 hrs, main at 14.30 hours. Take off commenced at 18.23 hours and completed by 18.27½ hours. Aircraft "X" DE.613 experienced an oxygen failure in four positions which could not be fixed and returned to base four hours and fifty three minutes after take off, with full load of incendiaries. The remaining seven aircraft reached the target without exception and reported visibility good except for smoke and haze. All identified the target, three got the actual aiming point in bomb sight but four found it obscured by smoke and fires. All released their loads, at an average height of 14,000 feet on the target area. Three reported having seen the actual bursts, the remaining four reported that the extent of the fires in target area prevented actual observation. Moderate to heavy flak was encountered in N. and W. of the dock area which appeared to decrease as the attack progressed. Approximately fifteen searchlights were observed. Several dummy fires were seen. This is considered a most successful operation. The target area was well on fire with smoke rising to 12,000 feet. Six of the aircraft which reached the target returned to base undamaged. The seventh aircraft, "U" BK.435 landed at R.A.F. Stn. MORETON VALLANCE on account of rear starboard bomb door damaged by flak and a hole in rear starboard tail plane. Flying Times: Operational: Day 11hrs 12mins. Night 4hrs 27mins. Non-Operational 4hrs 53mins.		
TOPOLIFFE	8.2.43		Weather: Fair during night with moderate visibility becoming cloudy after dawn with rain towards end of period. Poor Visibility. Winds mainly S.W. fly gradually increasing throughout day, becoming 20-25 m.p.h. by end of period. Five aircraft were detailed for "GARDENING" in ROSEMARY SOUTH area. Briefings were held at 13.30 hrs and 14.30 hrs but the operation was scrubbed in the late afternoon. A further four aircraft were detailed for "GARDENING" operations during the night but this also was scrubbed. Due to the fact that many aircrew were standing by for operational duties, training was curtailed considerable, however, those not detailed participated in dinghy and parachute drill. C.42 Air Vice Marshal G.E. Brookes, O.B.E., Air Officer Commanding No. 6 R.G.A.F. Group visited the station in the late evening and interviewed several of this Squadron's Sergeants Air Crew, regarding applications for commissions. Flying Times: Operational - Nil. Non-Operational - 1 hr. 40 mins.		
TOPOLIFFE	9.2.43		Weather: Rain at first ceasing soon after daybreak, then fair or fine with good visibility. Towards end of period. Poor Visibility. Winds mainly S.W. fly gradually increasing throughout day, becoming 20-25 m.p.h. by end of period. Five aircraft were detailed for "Gardening" operations in the TREFOIL and NECTARINES area. Briefings were held at 13.30 and 14.30 hrs. Prior to take off the detail was reduced to one. This aircraft took off for the TREFOIL area at 00.30 hours. Weather was very bad crossing the North sea due to snow and hail. Visual pin point was obtained and two "Vegetables" were dropped at 5250y N. 0430 E, at a heading of 290° N. Visibility was good between gaps in 8-9/10 clouds. There was no congestion in the "GARDEN" and the aircraft returned to base at 04.36 hrs. After a successful operation. Flying times: Operational: Night 4.06hrs. Non-Op. Day 9.00hrs Night: Nil.		A.63
TOPOLIFFE	10.2.43		Weather: Fine with good visibility until dawn, becoming cloudy with intermittent rain during the afternoon. Visibility gradually deteriorating and fog from early evening. Wind N.W. fly 10-15 m.p.h. becoming very light and variable after dawn. Five aircraft were detailed for "GARDENING" in the ROSEMARY and NECTARINES area. Briefings were held at 13.30 and 14.30 hours but the operation was scrubbed in the late afternoon. Ground training was carried out in parachute and dinghy drill. A one hour lecture was given on Signal matters. The Squadron hockey team proceeded to Durham for a game against 419 Squadron, 424 Squadron finishing by a score of 11-5. Aircraft serviceability report for five Squadrons attached to R.A.F. Station Topoliffe, showed 424 Squadron leading the last four weeks out of the five, coming 2nd on the 5th week. 11 aircraft were available for service this evening with 16 crews (including 7 freshmen). Flying Times: Operational: Nil. Non-Operational: Day: 4hrs 05 mins. Night: Nil.		

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TOPCLIFFE	11.2.43		<p>Weather: Cloudy with occasional slight drizzle during evening. Cloud 6 - 9/10 low at 2 - 3000 feet. Visibility good after dawn but 2 - 4,000 yards until then. Wind calm becoming S.W. 15-20 m.p.h. during morning.</p> <p>Three aircraft were detailed for "MOLING" operations, however, the operation was scrubbed in mid-morning. A further six were detailed for "GAMBLING" in the HECARINE I area. Briefings were held at 13.30 and 14.30 hours. Take off commenced at 17.59 hrs and all aircraft were airborne 3 1/2 minutes later. Two of the crews found visibility extremely bad and were unable to get a "Gee" fix and returned to base as instructed, with loads of 1 x 200 and 1 x 202 each. The remaining four aircraft found visibility poor to fair and were able to identify area by pin point or "Gee" fix. Vegetables (5 x B.200 and 3 x B.202) were laid from an average height of 700 feet. Heavy inaccurate flak was encountered from the centre of the island. One aircraft fired an enemy recognition cartridge when three searchlights with light and heavy flak co-operation were observed. Our aircraft was not actually held in the searchlights at the time. The immediate effect was the complete dousing of all searchlights and all flak was stopped at once. All aircraft returned to base undamaged.</p> <p>424 Squadron hockey team played 425 Squadron at Durham to-day and won by a score of 6 - 2. Operational flying time - 2 1/2 hrs 54 mins. Non-Operational: Day: 4 hrs 00m. Night: Nil.</p>		A.61-A.69.
TOPCLIFFE	12.2.43		<p>Weather: Squally with low cloud and slight drizzle from mid-day with variable amounts of low cloud dispersing entirely by night but strong gusty wind continuing until late in evening. Visibility good except in drizzle. Wind W.S.W. 15 to W.N.W. 25-30 m.p.h. gusts to 40 m.p.h. All flying was stood down for the day owing to the weather. Considerable time was spent in parachute and dingy drill and on-land training. Enemy treatments were given to aircraft. The Signals Officer gave a one hour lecture on W.T. equipment, followed by a two hour lecture on Signals matters general. Good progress was made in the issue of arms to ground personnel for station defense. Different positions have been allocated and a defence exercise is to be carried out shortly.</p> <p>The Squadron hockey team proceeded to Durham for a game against 408 Squadron, 424 Squadron won by a score of 4 - Nil. This win places our Squadron as champions of the R.C.A.F. Bomber Command. The first game of the schedule was lost, followed by six consecutive wins. No operational training flying hours for the day. Thirteen aircraft and 14 crews were serviceable for operations.</p>		
TOPCLIFFE	13.2.43		<p>Weather: Fair to cloudy, low cloud increasing from nil to 6-9/10 at 2-3,000 feet in afternoon. Visibility good, surface wind W. 10-15 m.p.h.</p> <p>12 aircraft were detailed for operations with target LORIENT. Nine aircraft carried loads of 3 x 500 lb H.E., 90 x 4lb and 8 x 30lb incendiaries. 3 aircraft carried 1 x 4000lb. Briefings were held at 13.30 and 14.30 hours. Three aircraft (first wave) took off, commencing at 17.35 hrs. the remaining nine commencing at 18.11 hrs. One aircraft returned to base on account of rear turret unserviceability. All eleven aircraft that reached the target identified it and nine sighted actual aiming point. The remaining two found it obscured by smoke. Visibility was otherwise reported as good or excellent. Bombs were dropped from an average height of 15,000 ft. actual bursts were observed by four. One aircraft had a mechanical failure of bomb release equipment and jettisoned part of the load on the return. Light and medium inaccurate flak was encountered, eight searchlights were combed over the target. Very large fires were observed by most of the crews, between 30 and 40 being counted at one time. After the bombing commenced enemy aircraft became active and three were engaged and driven off by our squadron. No damage was suffered by enemy action. One of our aircraft incurred damage on the front turret in a mid-air collision with another aircraft. Our aircraft went into a spin and the order was given to bail out. Two of the crew, CAN.R.19561 Sgt Duncan (P/A) and CAN.R.75261 Sgt MacGillivray (Air Gunner) did so but shortly after, control was regained and</p>		

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TOPOLIFFE	13.2.43	(cont)	landing was made without further damage. Minor injury was sustained by one of the crew who baled out. Nine aircraft returned to base, three to other stations in England. This is considered a most successful operation with particularly good results. One aircraft Wellington X was received by this Squadron to-day:- H.E.369 (Port) A271420/885964 (Starboard) A274334/885882. Flying Hours. Operational - 75hrs 18mins. Non-Operational - Day: 2 hours. Night: 5 hours.		
TOPOLIFFE	14.2.43		Weather: Fine with excellent visibility all day but much low thin cloud. Winds W.S.W'ly 15 m.p.h. becoming stronger and more gusty after dark. Eight aircraft were detailed for bombing to OGLETT. Loads detailed were as follows: 5 a/c carrying 690 x 4lb, 30 x 4lb "X" type and 8 x 30lb incendiaries. 2 a/c - 8 x 500lb G.P.s. 1 a/c - 1 x 4000lb H.E. Pre-briefing was held at 13.30 hrs, main briefing at 14.30 hrs. Take off commenced at 18.05 and all aircraft were airborne four minutes later. All aircraft reached the target area and bombed on the marker flares dropped by F.F.F. Visibility was 10/10 clouds with 5,000 ft. tops. The average height at which bombs were released was 13,500ft. Due to low visibility, actual bursts could not be observed but several saw reflections of bursts in clouds. One aircraft had one 500lb bomb hung up which was brought back. One of our aircraft fired a short burst at an enemy aircraft which sheered off and was not seen again. Aircraft Wellington III "B" E.4691 was followed by an M.E.109 which closed to 250 yds. and broke away after firing a short burst which went low. It returned to 350 yds. for a further attack when our rear gunner, CAN. R127958 Sgt Watson W.H., fired two bursts of 400 and 600 rounds. Tracers were seen to enter nose and the aircraft burst into flames and went down through cloud. Moderate to heavy flak was encountered, as predicted, bursting through clouds at all heights from 12-18,000 ft. Some coloured flares appeared to be decoys fired from the ground attempting to simulate F.F.F. flares. Searchlights were ineffective. All aircraft returned to base, two with minor damage from flak. The method of attack on the target appeared effective and the F.V.P. flares were clearly identified. Flying Times for the day:- Operational - 46hrs 24mins. Training - Day: 4hrs 30mins. Night: Nil.		
TOPOLIFFE	15.2.43		Weather: Fair or fine apart from occasional slight showers. 3-6/10 cloud at 2 to 3000 ft. visibility good, surface wind W'ly 25 to 30 M.P.H., gusty. Five aircraft were detailed for operations. Pre-briefing was held at 13.30 hours, operation was scrubbed shortly after. Considerable ground training was accomplished including back plotting of charts, by navigators, on the previous two nights operations. Synthetic training was carried out at S.H.Q. in the morning. Link, L.M.L. and "Gee" box training was taken by AIF Bombers. A one-hour lecture was given on icing conditions to pilots by "A" Flight Commander. Five crews practiced dinghy drill. A new crew was received bringing the total crews on the Squadron to 33. The Squadron hockey team proceeded to Bigby for the first of a two game series and lost by a score of 5-4. The team is confident that Thursday's game will provide an entirely different story. No flying of any kind was carried out during the day.		
TOPOLIFFE	16.2.43		Weather: Fine with good visibility all day. Surface wind mainly N.W.'ly 15-20 M.P.H., gusty at times. Ten aircraft were detailed for bombing on LORRY. Briefings were held at 13.30 hrs. and 14.30 hrs. Take off commenced at 18.11 hrs. One aircraft returned to base due to oxygen failure. The remaining nine reached the target without exception and found visibility very good. Bombs were dropped from an average height of 13,000 ft. Two were unable to observe results of		

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TOFCILIFFE	16.2.43	(Cont)	bombing due to smoke haze but targets were identified by P.P.P. flares without difficulty. One aircraft carried 1 x 4000 lb., the remainder 3 x 500 T.D., 450 x 4 lb. incendiary and 8 x 30 lb. incendiary. Light inaccurate flak and 6 or 7 S/L were encountered in target area and also heavy and light flak at the French Coast. Two very large explosions were seen by several crews. Dummy fires were observed around the target area. What appeared to be a Halifax was observed going down in flames by two of our crews. Dummy fires were observed around the target area. Two of our aircraft suffered minor flak damage, remainder undamaged. Flying Times for the period:- Operational - 58 hrs. 44 mins.; Non-operational - Day - 20 mins. Night - 2 hrs. 5 minutes.		
TOFCILIFFE	17.2.43		Weather:- Cloudy with moderate visibility until dawn, then fair with good visibility. No operations were scheduled for the day so good progress was made in training. A one-hour lecture was given to Air Gunners on the PNEO turret. Navigators back plotted the previous night's operation and charts were prepared for operations to come. Five new crews were given a lecture on flying controls. Two aircraft were used for "Gas" training. Our Squadron Commander, Can. C.148 Wing Commander H. M. Carscallen proceeded to London for a well earned leave and command was taken by Commander of "A" Flight, W.A.F. 115784, Squadron Leader W. E. Allison. Duties of Flight Commander of "A" Flight were taken by W.15177 Flight Lieutenant F. V. Taylor, the Deputy Flight Commander. Can. C.42 Air-Vice Marshal G. E. Brookes, C.B.E., Air Officer Commanding No. 6 R.C.A.F. Group, paid a visit to the Station and interviewed two Sergeants (aircrew) from our Squadron re application for commission. Flying Times for the period:- Operational - Nil; Non-operational - Day 11 hrs. 55 min. Night Nil.		
TOFCILIFFE	18.2.43		Weather:- Fine with small amounts of low and medium cloud. Visibility good becoming moderate in evening and poor towards midnight. Surface wind W.N.W'ly. 5-10 M.P.H. becoming light variable or calm in late evening. No operations detailed for the day. Navigators back plotted the late returns from ops. of 16th file. 15 Airgunners practiced trap shooting and 10 took spot light training. Air to sea firing was practiced. Operational crews on the Squadron now total 24 including 8 freshmen. In addition 5 crews are under training and 4 are on leave. The Squadron Hockey team came through as promised and won from 411 Squadron by a score of 2 - 2. The game was played at Durham. This makes 424 Squadron hockey champions of the R.C.A.F. in the North and Midlands. Games are scheduled with champions of the Southern Division for the R.C.A.F. championship of England. At to-day's game Can. C.42 Air-Vice Marshal G. E. Brookes, C.B.E., Air Officer Commanding No. 6 R.C.A.F. Group, presented 424 Squadron with a trophy of 6 Group championship. It was accepted on behalf of the Squadron by Can. R.154338 Corporal W. C. Dumas, the captain of the team. The Air-Vice Marshal later presented individual medals to all the members of the team. Flying Hours for the period:- Operational - Nil; Non-operational - Day 19 hrs. 40 min. Night Nil.		
TOFCILIFFE	19.2.43		Weather:- Fair to cloudy, low cloud at 2 - 3000 ft. Visibility 2 - 4 miles improving to 20 miles later in day. Wind W'ly 10-15 M.P.H. falling light towards end of period. Twelve aircraft were detailed for bombing operation on WELMUNDHAWEN. Pre-briefing was held at 1330 hrs. main at 1430 hrs. Two aircraft were unable to take off due to U/S. Two aircraft loaded with one 4000 lb. each took off at 1750 and 1750 1/2, the remaining eight loaded with 3 x 500 G.P. 360 x 4 lb. and 16 x 30 lb. incendiaries, took off from 1755 to 1759. One returned to base in 2 hrs. 59 mins. due to engine trouble. The other nine aircraft reached the target. Two found visibility good and saw the target in bombight. The rest found 6 to 10/10 cloud and bombed on P.P.P. marker flares. Bursts were observed by two crews while others saw bursts from other bombs. Loads were released from an average height of 15,500 feet. Concentrated		

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TOPOLIFFE	19.2.43	(cont)	<p>fires were observed around aiming point and the entire town appeared to be ablaze. Moderate and heavy inaccurate flak was encountered. S/L were ineffective. One of our aircraft was followed by an S/L but lost it by evasive action. This raid is considered most successful. All aircraft returned to base undamaged.</p> <p>Flying Times for Period:- Operational 53 hrs. 55 min.; Non-operational - Day 1 hr. Night - Nil.</p>		
TOPOLIFFE	20.2.43		<p>Weather:- Fair becoming cloudy late afternoon. Visibility moderate becoming poor at times. Wind very light and variable becoming S.W. 'ly 5 - 10 M.P.H. afternoon and evening.</p> <p>Two aircraft were detailed for a dinghy search for crew of L26. Squadron aircraft missing from previous night's operation. Several aircraft from other Squadrons participated. Our two took off at 10.20 and 10.21. Area searched was 54.05 N. to 54.15 N. and 0220 E. to 0300 E. Aircraft returned to base after 6 1/2 hour search with no success to report. Six aircraft were detailed for GARDENING operations in NECTURINE I AREA. "Vegetables" laid was, as follows: 1 x A104, 3 x B200, 2 x B202. Briefings were held at 13.30 and 14.30 hrs. Take off commenced at 17.40 hrs. and all 6 were airborne 5 minutes later. Five of them reached the target area and found the visibility good except for a slight haze. "Vegetables" were dropped on specified location and return was made to base without damage. No congestion was experienced in target area. Slight light flak was encountered from centre of SEASIDE. Only one S/L was observed. One crew reported seeing an orange light descend into sea, explode, and burn for several minutes. This is thought to be our aircraft "U", Wellington III, E.K.435, engine Hercules XI, Port A/056468/22A015 Starboard A/057618/346250. The crew of the missing aircraft is, as follows: NZA16077 Sgt. Pilot Baulf, Ivan Harry William; Can. J.13121 Pilot Officer, Navigator, Pleasance, Walter; 1332051 Sgt. WCE/AG King, Leslie John; 1432835 Sgt. A/G Skeeles, Frederick John; 1335970 Sgt. R/A White, Basil Talbot; Can. R.117504 Sgt. A/G Arpin, John. Keen regret is felt by all ranks at the loss of this experienced and popular crew.</p> <p>Flying Times for the Period:- Operational 34 hrs. 7 mins.; Non-operational - Nil.</p>		
TOPOLIFFE	21.2.43		<p>Weather:- Fine with small amounts of well broken cloud and good visibility. Surface wind S.W. to S.S.W. 'ly 5 - 10 M.P.H.</p> <p>No operations scheduled for the day. Three crews engaged in flying training and others in dinghy and parachute drill. A one hour lecture on signals was given by Pilot Officer J. J. Smidland, J.15900, Squadron Signals Officer. Fifteen P/L's of aircraft were carried out. One new aircraft was received L.H.402 (440 type) Wellington I. Hercules VI engine, Port S.S.5964 E.L.F. 271420; Starboard S.S.5982 E.L.F. 271336.</p> <p>Flying times for the Period:- Operational - Nil; Non-operational - Day 8 hrs. 25 min. Night-Nil.</p>		
TOPOLIFFE	22.2.43		<p>Weather:- Cloudy during day clearing in evening. Visibility was poor all day becoming misty at night. Winds were light variable in the morning freshening to S.W. 'ly 10 to 15 M.P.H. in the afternoon and then falling light variable at night.</p> <p>The squadron was stood down for the day due to the weather. Considerable progress was made in training, specialized Officers giving talks on various subjects. Dinghy and parachute drill was carried out and sun-ray treatments were taken. Link and A.M.L. training was carried out.</p> <p>Flying Times for the Period:- Operational - Nil; Non-operational - Day 2 hrs. 5 mins. Night 30 min.</p>		
TOPOLIFFE	23.2.43		<p>Weather:- Fog in morning dispersing in the afternoon but cloudy till late evening. Visibility improving to moderate during the afternoon then becoming poor again at night. Winds were light and variable but generally S.W. 'ly 5 M.P.H. in the afternoon.</p> <p>No flying of any kind was carried out. Further progress was made on ground training. All</p>		

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation). 424 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
TOPOLIFFE	23.2.43.	(cont)	aircrew attended a motion picture on dinghy drill. The Squadron Hockey Team proceeded to Durham for the first of a two-game series for the R.C.A.F. championship of England with 400-406 Squadron Team. Our boys came through again with a 3-2 win and are to proceed to London on Saturday.		
TOPOLIFFE	24.2.43		<p>Weather: Fair to cloudy with only moderate visibility during the day and poor morning and evening. Winds S.W.'ly 5 to 10 M.P.H. morning and evening, S.W.'ly 5 M.P.H. in the afternoon.</p> <p>Twelve aircraft were detailed for bombing operation on HAMBURG, the target was later changed to WILHELMSHAVEN. Briefings were held at 13.30 and 14.30 hrs. Five of our aircraft carried 1 x 500 lb. G.P., 270 x 4 lb. incendiaries and 8 x 30 lb. incendiaries. Five carried 3 x 500 lb. G.P., 360 x 4 lb. incendiaries, and 16 x 30 lb. incendiaries. The remaining two carried 1 x 4000 pounders each. Take off commenced at 14.19 and all aircraft were airborne six minutes later. Two of the aircraft returned before reaching the target due to instrument difficulty. The remainder reached the target and identified it. Visibility was poor with 10/10 cloud. Bombs were released from an average height of 15,000 ft. on P.P. marker flares which were plainly visible. Due to the cloudy condition actual results could not be observed. Moderate heavy flak was encountered but it was scattered and inaccurate. Light flak trailed up to 14,000 ft. Several crews reported large red glow from fires, as many as seven being counted. On returning to base, aircraft Wellington X, E.R. 369, "F", crashed on the perimeter and burnt. Three of the crew were rescued with only minor injuries. It is regretted that the following were killed in the crash: 1073681 P/Sgt. Banks, J.; Can.R. 95634 Sgt. Worley, R.B.; 1209651 Sgt. Miles, A.A. Five of the aircraft returned to base undamaged, the remainder landed at other Stations undamaged.</p> <p>Flying Times for the Period: Operational 57 hrs. 49 mins. Non-operational Day 1 hr. 55 min. Night - Nil.</p>		
TOPOLIFFE	25.2.43		<p>Weather: Cloudy clearing towards latter half of period to little or no cloud. Slight shower during afternoon. Visibility one to two miles at first improving to eight to twenty miles during day then falling to eight to twelve miles during afternoon. Winds S.W. veering S.W.'ly 8 to 14 M.P.H., then veering W.'ly and falling light.</p> <p>Seven aircraft were detailed for GARDENING in NECTARINE I. Briefings were held at 13.30 and 14.30 hours. Take off commenced at 21.20 hrs. One of the aircraft did not take off due to engine cutting out. Visibility at the designated area was very poor with 10/10 cloud. Three of the aircraft could not obtain pin-points and were forced to bring their loads back to base. Another aircraft turned back before reaching primary as the sites in the rear gun position were U/S. Two of the crews reached the designated area by "Geo" fix and dropped the "Vegetables" from a height of 800 ft. Each aircraft carried 1 x 0300 and 1 x B200. All aircraft returned to base undamaged. Three new aircraft Wellington I's were received, as follows: E.R. 3431, Hercules VI, Port 339722 R.A.F. 376702 Starboard 339676 R.A.F. 376656; E.R. 273 Port 339538 R.A.F. 376518 Starboard 339298 R.A.F. 376278; E.R. 272 Port 339176 R.A.F. 376156 Starboard 339162 R.A.F. 376142. The following aircraft were taken off charges: Wellington I, E.R. 363, Hercules XI, Port 339594 R.A.F. 376240 Starboard 339582 R.A.F. 376138; Wellington III, E.R. 1674, Hercules XI, Port 331831 R.A.F. 187501 Starboard 331562 R.A.F. 196762.</p> <p>Flying Time for the Period: Operational 23 hrs. 57 mins. Non-operational Day 1 hr. 10 mins. Night - Nil.</p>		
TOPOLIFFE	26.2.43.		<p>Weather: Cloudless becoming cloudy towards late afternoon. Low cloud at 3 to 4,000 ft. Visibility 10 to 30 miles becoming 8 to 12 miles towards midnight. Winds W.'ly falling to N.'ly during early morning then changing to S.W.'ly 8 to 12 M.P.H. during day falling light towards night.</p>		

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	References to Appendices
TOEOLIFFE	26.2.43	(cont)	<p>Eight aircraft were detailed for bombing operation on COLOGNE. Six aircraft carried 1 x 500 lb. 2 x 500 G.P., 360 x 4 lb. incendiaries, 16 x 30 lb. incendiaries. Two carried 1 x 4000 H.G. each. Seven aircraft took off commencing at 18.50 hrs. and all were airborne by 18.55 hrs. Three did not reach target due to mechanical difficulty or sickness of crew. The four that reached the target area found visibility very good and bombs were released from an average height of 16,000 ft. Aiming point was identified from P.F.F. flares. Actual bursts were observed by one of the crews. The target area was seen to be well afire with five large fires being counted. An exceptionally big fire was burning in the immediate area of the P.F.F. markers. Heavy moderately accurate flak was encountered and a large number of S/L were observed North and West of target. All aircraft returned to base, one having suffered minor damage from flak in fuselage and tail plane, the rest being undamaged.</p> <p>Flying Times for the Period: Operational 31 hrs. 37 mins. Non-operational Day 30 mins. Night - Nil.</p>		
TOEOLIFFE	27.2.43		<p>Weather:- Fine all day with excellent visibility. Winds light and variable freshening to W. by 10 to 15 M.P.H. in the afternoon becoming calm at night.</p> <p>Five aircraft were detailed for GARDENING in NEUCHÂTELE II. Take off commenced at 18.00 hrs. One aircraft carried 2 x G300, remaining four 2 x D400. "Garden" area was identified by pin point without exception and "Vegetables" were dropped from an average height of 700 ft. in good visibility obscured slightly by a sea haze. Parachutes were seen to open in each case. One of our aircraft fired 800 rounds from 700 ft. at a gun position on East end of ASKLAND. The guns stopped firing. A second aircraft was tailed by a twin engine E/A at 1000 ft. When within 100 yds. airgunner opened fire with 100 rounds, tracer went low but E/A disappeared and was not seen again. All our aircraft returned to base undamaged, reporting a most successful "Gardening" operation. This is a red letter day for our Squadron as our hockey team became R.G.A.F. Overseas champions. The final game of the two game series was played at Purley Rink in London against 400-406 Squadron, 424 won by a score of 8 to 4. Air Marshal H. E. Edwards C.B. presented the Edward's Trophy which was received on behalf of the team by the Captain, Corporal "Torky" Dunart.</p> <p>Flying Times for the Period: Operational 21 hrs. 48 mins. Non-operational Day 135 hrs. Night - 1 hr.</p>		
TOEOLIFFE	28.2.43		<p>Weather:- Fog in early morning dispersing rapidly. Fair to cloudy but low cloud dispersing in evening. Visibility excellent from 1000 hrs. Wind freshening to Wly 10 to 15 M.P.H. at mid-day somewhat lighter in evening.</p> <p>Nine aircraft were detailed for BOMBING operations at ST. NAZAIRE. Two were scrubbed due to mechanical difficulties. Briefings were held at 13.30 and 14.30 hrs. Take off commenced at 18.07 and seven aircraft were air borne by 18.10 hrs. Five carried 3 x 500 G.P., 360 x 4 lb. incendiaries, 16 x 30 lb. incendiaries; two carried 1 x 4000 lb. each. Failure of oxygen supply necessitated the return of one of our aircraft. The remaining six reached the target without exception and found visibility very good except for slight haze. P.F.F. markers were distinctly seen and loads were dropped on them from an average height of 15,000 ft. Actual bursts could not be observed due to the extent of the fires already burning. All aircraft reported many fires in fact, later arrivals stated that the whole target area was a mass of flames. A few dummy fires were ineffective. Medium and heavy flak was encountered over target area co-operating with 8 to 10 S/L. One of our aircraft landed at Boscombe Down, the balance returned to base, all were undamaged. This was considered a most successful undertaking.</p> <p>Flying Times for the Period: Operational 45 hrs. 7 mins. Non-operational Day 40 mins. Night - Nil.</p>		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices																																				
TOPCLIFFE	28.2.43		<p>Aircraft on charge as at 28th February 1943. 17.</p> <p>Health: There has been no appreciable change in the general health of the Squadron, which remains good.</p> <p>Aircrew: Four aircrew were admitted to S.S.Q. suffering from U.R. infections. They were all discharged after short periods and are now fit for duty. One aircrew contracted V.D. but has now returned to duty. One aircrew was injured (sprained ankle) when he bailed out on return from operation and is still a patient in The Military Hospital, Catterick, undergoing a course of massage and rehabilitation.</p> <p>Ground Crew: Admitted S.S.Q. - 4; admitted hospital - Nil.</p>																																						
			<p>NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF UNIT AS AT 28th February, 1943.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>(Officers)</th> <th>Aircrew</th> <th>Ground</th> <th>(Airmen)</th> <th>Aircrew</th> <th>Ground</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>R.C.A.F.</td> <td>25</td> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td>74</td> <td>191</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R.A.F.</td> <td>12</td> <td>-</td> <td></td> <td>47</td> <td>269</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R.A.F. (CAN)</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td></td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(U.S.A.) R.C.A.F.</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td></td> <td>7</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Strength</td> <td>37</td> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td>128</td> <td>360</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	(Officers)	Aircrew	Ground	(Airmen)	Aircrew	Ground	R.C.A.F.	25	4		74	191	R.A.F.	12	-		47	269	R.A.F. (CAN)	1	-		-	-	(U.S.A.) R.C.A.F.	1	-		7	-	Total Strength	37	4		128	360		
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Total Strength	37	4		128	360																																				
			<p>OPERATIONAL - NON-OPERATIONAL & TRAINING FLYING HOURS, FEBRUARY 1943.</p> <p>(a) Operational Flying Hours: Day: 24 hrs. 13 mins. Night: 605 hrs. 13 mins.</p> <p>(b) Non-Operational Flying Hrs. Day: 95 hrs. 45 mins. Night: 24 hrs. 19 mins.</p> <p>Total Flying Hours: 749 hrs. 30 mins.</p>																																						
			<p>NO. OPERATIONAL SORTIES - 121.</p>																																						
			<p><i>W. J. Farrell</i> VC.</p> <p>Wing Commander, Commanding, 424 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron, R.A.F. Station, TOPCLIFFE.</p>																																						