

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

No. 424 (R.C.A.F.) SQUADRON.

Page No. 002.

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No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
WILKINSON-ON-SWALE.	1.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with moderate visibility in the morning. Good in the afternoon and evening. Period of light drizzle around noon. Light south westerly winds. Gunners were detailed on daily inspections, turret manipulation, gun harmonisation and aircraft recognition. Navigators had 16 hours ground GSE work and also a round table conference on navigation subjects. Bomb aimers attended a lecture on the bomb sight. Engineers had a round table conference following a lecture on engines. X countries were prepared and carried out. Total flying time 42 hours 15 mins.	
DO.	2.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with light rain in the early morning. Good visibility with fresh westerly winds. Gunners were detailed for D.I.s, turret manipulation and gun harmonisation. 60 mins. of fighter affiliation training was also carried out. Navigators attended a one hour navigation lecture and also busied themselves on log book plotting. Engineers held a round table discussion on the HERCULES engine. All WOI/AGs attended a lecture on wireless. 12 non-operational flights were carried out today. Total flying time 11 hours 15 mins.	
DO.	3.2.44		WEATHER: Fine becoming fair with good visibility. Strong westerly winds. All gunners were detailed for D.I.s and turret manipulation. Navigators held ground GSE practice. Bomb aimers, Flight Engineers and WOI/AGs, each held round table discussions regarding their special work. During the afternoon all aircraft attended a lecture on security at the intelligence section. Preparations were then made for 10 aircraft for Bulls eye tonight. One failed to take off due to engine trouble. All the other aircraft were successful. Total night non-operational flying time 41 hours 20 mins.	
DO.	4.2.44		WEATHER: Fair to fine with good visibility. Strong westerly winds all day. Gunners were detailed for D.I.s, turret manipulation and also attended a lecture on the Browning guns. Two of our aircraft were detailed for a sea search. No operations were made. Preparations were made for eight aircraft to go on a Bulls eye. Due to adverse weather conditions this had to be cancelled two hours before take-off. Navigators attended a round table conference on navigation problems. Engineers attended a lecture on HERCULES engines. There were no observations made on the sea search. Total flying time 10 hours 20 mins.	
DO.	5.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy becoming fine with good visibility. Light north westerly winds. Navigators held a two hour round table conference on navigation subjects and 14 hours ground GSE practice. Bomb aimers were detailed for link training and GSE. Gunners practised aircraft recognition and turret manipulation. Engineers held a general discussion on the HERCULES engine. Circuits and bumps were carried out today. Total flying time 15 hours 15 mins.	
DO.	6.2.44		WEATHER: Fine becoming cloudy. Light south easterly winds. Navigators attended a lecture on navigation during the forenoon. Gunners were detailed for compass swinging and turret manipulation. Bomb aimers attended a lecture on HES. In the afternoon all crews were detailed for lectures by the Intelligence Officer, W/O. J.D. BLAKE, and F/O. S.H. BURTON, the Squadron Radar Officer. Owing to adverse weather no flying was carried out today.	

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SKIPTON-ON-SWALE.	7.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy becoming fair to fine. Good visibility with westerly winds. Navigators were detailed for compass swinging and preparations for the night X country. Gunners were detailed for D.I.s. All other crews made preparations for the night X country. A few crews were detailed for day X countries and air tests and fighter affiliation. In the afternoon preparations including briefing were held for the night X country. The latter, in which seven crews took part was very successful. Total flying time, Day: 7 hours 10 mins. Night: 36 hours 35 mins.		
DO.	8.2.44		WEATHER: Fine becoming cloudy in the afternoon, clearing later with excellent visibility. Light westerly winds. Bomb aimers were detailed on bombing up practice and GEE training during the forenoon. Air Gunners were detailed on turret manipulation, gun harmonisation. Engineers attended a lecture on the HERCULES engine. Navigators were detailed for BW Field 16 hours ground GEE practice. In the afternoon preparations were made for 5 night X countries. Some local flying was also carried out during the day. Total flying time Day: 15 hours 10 mins. Night: 26 hours 25 mins.		
DO.	9.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with light rain in afternoon and evening. Good visibility. Fresh westerly winds. The Squadron advised No. 6 Group today that it had eight crews who were now ready for operations. Air Gunners were detailed for turret manipulation and aircraft recognition. Navigators swung compasses and engineers held GEE practice in the morning. In the afternoon crews attended a lecture by the Group Air to Sea rescue Officer. Other crews attended a movie entitled BATTLE OF BRITAIN at LEECHING STATION. Total flying time today 1 hour.		
DO.	10.2.44		WEATHER: Fine at first becoming showery with some snow. Strong north westerly winds. The Squadron was stood down today. Flight engineers were detailed for a lecture on the HERCULES engine. Navigators held a round table discussion on navigation problems. Gunners practised aircraft recognition. Bomb aimers attended a lecture on the bomb sight and also held GEE practice. Adverse weather did not permit any flying today.		
DO.	11.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy becoming fair to fine. Good visibility with north westerly winds. Navigators were detailed for compass swinging and D.I.s. A lecture was also given on mandrill. Flight Engineers attended a lecture on mandrill after their D.I.s. Air gunners were detailed for turret manipulation and also for fighter affiliation. All aircrew were detailed for a lecture on mining given by Commander MacDONALD. E.M. Seven day X countries were carried out today. Most of the junior officers were told that they had to move to new quarters today. Apparently they were not very happy over this move and the Commanding Officer W/O. J.D. BLAKE explained the reason for the move. This Station is overcrowded and it is quite a problem to find quarters for every one and officers have to sleep in dormitories. This is not pleasant but under the circumstances nothing else can be done at present. Total flying time today 17 hours 35 mins.		
DO.	12.2.44		WEATHER: Fine becoming cloudy with moderate to good visibility. Light northerly winds. Navigators were detailed for compass swinging and D.I.s. They also held a round table conference on navigation subjects. Bomb aimers held a bombing practice and also carried out some ground GEE practice. Gunners were detailed for turret manipulation, gun harmonisation and aircraft recognition. Flying consisted of 8 day and one night X country. Total flying Day: 20 hours 20 mins. Night: 5 hours 40 mins.		

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of (Unit or Formation) NO. 424 (R.C.A.F.) SQUADRON.

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
SKIPTON-ON-SWALE.	13.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with fog in morning and evening. Light south westerly winds. The Squadron was ordered to detail 8 aircraft for operations to-night. This was later reduced to six aircraft. All preparations were made for this first operations since converting to HALIFAX III aircraft. At 1500 hours word came through that the operation was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. CAPT. ROSE, 1st Sqn. 22nd Bn. R.A.F. was found in the SWALE RIVER this afternoon. This N.C.O. was drowned when the aircraft in which he was flying crashed in the SWALE RIVER on 22.1.44. Flight Engineers were detailed for a lecture on long range fuel tanks. All Gunners were detailed on complete turret check up. No flying was carried out to-day.		
DO.	14.2.44		WEATHER: Poor visibility in early morning, improving around noon and deteriorating later. Slight rain in the afternoon and evening. Winds light variable. Due to poor flying weather all flight and sections detailed their personnel to various lectures after completion of D.I. In the afternoon a general lecture was given on security; all personnel including Groundcrew were detailed to attend this lecture. A meeting was also held in the C.O.'s office, Flight Commanders and Section Leaders attended and discussed ways and means of reducing the amount of time spent in briefing and that Section Leaders have their own preliminary briefing so as to reduce the time of main briefing.		
DO.	15.2.44		WEATHER: Fine at first becoming cloudy with rain late at night. Fair visibility. Winds light S.E.'ly. The Squadron was ordered to detail 8 A/C for operations to-night. 6 Pilots were detailed to go to other Squadrons where they will fly as "Second Dickies". Take off time was set at 17.17 hrs. All our A/C took off on schedule. Two A/C had early returns because of engine trouble. Other A/C arrived over the target in 10/10th cloud, with good visibility above 9,000 ft. Target was identified by well scattered but visible flares. No congestion was observed over the target area, and bombing appeared to be concentrated on flares. Due to thickness of cloud it is difficult to assess result of bombing although fires were reflected over a large area and glow could be seen 60 miles away. Heavy inaccurate flak was experienced. One of our A/C had its elevators damaged by a fighter attack. Evasive action was taken and the enemy was eluded. If the flak was accurate this attack should have resulted in heavy damage to the target. One of our A/C "A" RA.311 is missing from this operation. CAPT. S.M.J.20359 A/S/L A.V. Reilander; NAV. AUS.413755 P/O B.W. Foskett; B/A AUS.415244 P/O Fisher; W/G RAF.158517 P/O F.W. Jones; P/E RAF.159577 P/O A. Dowding; W/G RAF.2216237 Sgt. Lucas, G.; A/G RAF.1511036 P/S Bartley, F.W.; 2nd P.M. CAN. J.5940 P/E R.H. Penlaguen. All our successful A/C were diverted due to adverse weather conditions. Operational Flying Time, 42 hrs.		A.1 - A.8.
DO.	16.2.44		WEATHER: Fair to cloudy. Rain in forenoon. Poor visibility. Light N.W.'ly winds. The Squadron was stood down to-day. Poor flying weather prevented our diverted A/C from returning to base. Remaining crews were detailed for lectures in their respective Sections. Crews were dismissed at 16.15 hrs.		
DO.	17.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with rain morning and afternoon. Moderate visibility. N.W.'ly winds. Our diverted crews still away and again prevented from returning due to adverse weather conditions. Navigators were detailed for ground "see" practise and other Sections held round table discussions on their special work. Personnel dismissed at 16.30 hrs.		
DO.	18.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with light rain and snow. Moderate visibility. Winds N.'ly. The Squadron was ordered to detail 8 A/C for operations to-night. Arrangements were also made with other Squadron for 10 "Second Dickies". This operation was cancelled at 16.45 hrs.		

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
SKIPTON-ON-SWALE	19.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy, snow in the morning. Visibility moderate to poor. Winds N.W.'ly. The Squadron was ordered to detail 8 A/C for operations, 10 "Second Dickies" were also detailed to other Squadrons. As the A/C were being taxied up to the runway one of our A/C "B" run into the rear turret of A/C "E" and instantly killed the Rear Gunner, CAN.R.198039 Sgt. G.A. Bottrell. The latter being struck by the propeller. A Court of Enquiry will be held on this accident. As this was the 4th A/C in line, only the three preceding ones took off. One of the latter had an early return due to a technical failure. Of the other two A/C one got away past SKIPGIG due to poor wind information and was too late to return on the aiming position so therefore dropped their bomb on flak position 5060N 1114E at 04.20 hrs. Our successful A/C arrived over the target at 04.01 hrs. flying at 23,000 ft. Good visibility but 10/10th cloud below 5000 ft. Bombs were dropped on markers but results not observed. Many A/C seen bombing the target. No enemy A/C seen and flak inaccurate. No damage to this A/C which landed at Dunsenham.		A.9 - A.11
DO.	20.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy, with rain and some snow. Good visibility. N.W.E.'ly winds. The Squadron was ordered to detail 5 A/C for operations to-night. Target - SRUTGARTY. All our A/C took off on schedule but two had to return early, one because of a defective oxygen regulator and the other had an unserviceable D/R compass. Our successful A/C reached the target in good time. Although there was 5/10th cloud, pin points were obtained and markers were easily identified. A heavy barrage was put up by the defences and one A/C was holed in two places. Flak up to 25,000 ft. encountered and at times was intense. One A/C saw a fighter coming in from above. Evasive action was taken and the enemy was lost to sight. Numerous A/C were observed over the target although there was no concentration. Large areas of the town were covered by fire and the latter seemed to be spreading all over. On the way back the glow could still be seen between 75 and 100 miles away. Total operational flying time - 26 hrs. 58 mins.		A.12 - A.16
DO.	21.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with rain. Moderate visibility. N.W.E.'ly winds. The Squadron was stood down to-day. S/L J.A. Westland and crew reported in to-day to assume duties of "A" Flight Commander. All Section Leaders detailed their personnel for round table conferences after their D.I. were carried out. Local flying to-day - 9 hrs. 50 mins.		
DO.	22.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with showers. Moderate to good visibility. Winds N.W.E.'ly. CAN.C.7279 P/O R.H. Howard reported in today as supernumerary to Adjutant. The Squadron was ordered to detail 10 A/C for operations to-night. All preparations were carried out for the trip, but operations were cancelled at 17.00 hrs. due to adverse weather conditions.		
DO.	23.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with light rain. Moderate to good visibility. Winds N.W.E.'ly. The Squadron started the leave roster to-day. Two crews left to-day for 7 days' leave. CAN.R.198039 Sgt. G.A. Bottrell who was accidentally killed on the 19th February, was buried at HARMOGATE this morning. Six of his comrades acted as pall bearers and 20 others including 6 Officers also attended the funeral which was conducted by S/L Province, R.C.A.F. Skipton-on-Swale, Padre. Some local flying was carried out by the crews and consisted of local circuits and bumps - Time - 6 hrs. 15 mins. Other personnel were detailed for D.I.'s and held round table conferences regarding their respective duties.		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
SKIPTON-ON-SWALE	24.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy with light rain. Visibility moderate to good. Winds N.E. 11y. The Squadron was ordered to detail 10 A/C for operations to-night on SCHEFFELSTADT. One A/C failed to take off and another had to return early due to the overload tanks being U/S. Our successful A/C reached the target in good visibility and all found P.W.F. well concentrated. Bombs were dropped in the centre of the concentration. No enemy fighters were seen. Flak was quite heavy but it did not appear to bear very accurate, although one of our A/C was holed in two places. Numerous fires could be seen and the target looked like a sea of flames. As one Pilot stated, "If there is anything left down there not on fire, I would be damned well surprised". A very successful raid. All our A/C returned safely and only very slight holes in one A/C. Total flying time - 67 hrs. 27 mins.		A.17 - A.25
DO.	25.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy, good visibility, intermittent rain. Winds N.W. 11y. becoming N.E. 11y. The Squadron was ordered to detail 8 A/C for operations. Target - AUGSBURG. 8 A/C took off but two were early returns, one due to failure of engine and the other due to a leak in the oxygen system. Six were successful in the bombing of the target and report the raid was most successful. Huge fires could be seen covering the whole of the target area and the glow from these could be seen for many miles. Two of our A/C were attacked by enemy fighters. One A/C was attacked four different times. One of these attacks the P/W was claimed to have been shot down by Rear Gunner, CAN.R.14656 P/S Cable. P/O Beach was the Captain and the Pilot of this A/C, "B" 14436. He took evasive action on each attack and prevented the A/C from being hit. The P/W was seen to crash and burst into flames. Some A/C were a hindrance and quite heavy flak was experienced over the target. All six A/C were diverted, the two early returns arriving at base. Total flying time - 50 hrs. 06 mins.		A.26 - A.33
DO.	26.2.44		WEATHER: Cloudy, rain or sleet. Moderate to poor visibility. Light winds. The Squadron was stood down to-day. All Section Leaders lectured their respective groups in the forenoon and round table discussions were carried out in the afternoon. Due to adverse weather conditions, no flying was carried out to-day. The C.O. and Adjutant travelled to BIRSK to open a bank account for 424 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron funds of £257/-/4 in Lloyds Bank Ltd. This is a private fund of free gifts of money presented to Squadron for all the personnel of the Squadron. Moving of personnel (Officers) is still going on when operations permit.		
DO.	27.2.44		WEATHER: Snow continuously in morning, showery in the afternoon. Poor visibility becoming moderate. The Squadron was stood down to-day. A party of A.T.C. boys arrived at approximately 10.00 hrs. and were given lectures in the classroom by the Air Gunners. They were later taken out to the A/C by officers in groups of four and shown through the A/C which was much appreciated by the boys. No regular lectures were given our own groups as the time was used in attending to the A.T.C. lads. Due to adverse weather conditions, no flying was carried out to-day.		
DO.	28.2.44		WEATHER: Fine becoming fair. Slight snow. Visibility good. The Squadron was ordered to detail 10 A/C for operations. All preparations were made but at the last moment an order came through cancelling the job. CAN.R.14524 P/S Clifford one of the Pilots had the misfortune to break his leg late this afternoon. P/O G.G. Kerr, CAN. J.17500 reported to the Squadron today to occupy the Signals Leader post.		

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SKIPTON -ON-SWALE	29.2.44		<p>WEATHER: Fine, becoming cloudy. Visibility, moderate to good early morning and evening - hazy in afternoon. Winds, light variable to moderate S.W.</p> <p>Squadron was stood down to-day. Section Leaders held lectures for their respective groups and round table discussions were held on the various subjects, bombing, gunnery, navigation and Pilots' information. S/L C.W. Faddock DFC, OAM, J.16776, Squadron Gunnery Leader, one of the original members of the Squadron has been posted effective to-day to 1664 Conversion Unit.</p> <p><u>AIRCRAFT ON CHARGE.</u> 19 HALIFAX III.</p> <p><u>HEALTH - General</u> - fair. Numerous cases of upper respiratory infections. Nothing serious. One case of V.D. and a few cases of scabies.</p> <p><u>Aircrew</u> - larger number of aircrew grounded than in previous month, due mostly to colds. Nothing serious. No cases of flying stress. One fatal accident on the drone.</p> <p><u>Groundcrew</u> - quite a large number of colds, Nothing serious. One case of V.D.</p> <p><u>NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF UNIT AS AT 29th FEBRUARY, 1944.</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>(OFFICERS)</th> <th>AIRCREW</th> <th>GROUND CREW</th> <th>(AIRCREW)</th> <th>AIRCREW</th> <th>GROUND CREW</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>R.C.A.F.</td> <td>49</td> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td>103</td> <td>229</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R.C.A.F. (U.S.A.)</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td></td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R.A.F.</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> <td></td> <td>42</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AUS</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W.A.A.F.</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td></td> <td>-</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>53</td> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td>146</td> <td>245</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>OPERATIONAL AND NON-OPERATIONAL HOURS FLOWN DURING MONTH OF FEBRUARY, 1944.</u></p> <p>(a) Operational Flying hours Day - Nil Night - 225 Hours 00 Mins.</p> <p>(b) Non-Operational Flying Hours Day - 110 Hours Night - 129 Hours</p> <p style="text-align: right;">W. H. W. E. WING COMMANDER, COMMANDING, No. 424 (R.C.A.F.) SQUADRON.</p>	(OFFICERS)	AIRCREW	GROUND CREW	(AIRCREW)	AIRCREW	GROUND CREW	R.C.A.F.	49	2		103	229	R.C.A.F. (U.S.A.)	1	-		-	-	R.A.F.	3	-		42	10	AUS	-	-		1	-	W.A.A.F.	-	-		-	6		53	2		146	245		
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