

January 1946: Form 540

159 Squadron

Place	Date	Summary of Events
		Part I. – Operations.
		January, 1946.
	5.1.46	The Squadron began the year with a new commitment. 80 Tons of Welfare Stores arrived from Calcutta: the stores were to be ferried to Singapore, & 159 was given the task of flying them as far as Butterworth. One Liberator left Salboni on this date, piloted by F/Lt. Bowen, with a load of 3080 lbs. The aircraft refuelled at Pegu, & the crew stayed overnight in Transient Aircrew Quarters at Butterworth, returning next day to Pegu & Base.
	6.1.46	F/Lt. Newton & crew flew with 3080 lbs. to Pegu & Butterworth.
	7.1.45	F/O. Allsopp & crew flew with 3080 lbs. to Pegu & Butterworth. This operation with similar load was carried out by crews whose pilots are listed below, on the given dates.
	9.1.46	F/Lts. Hoult & Barlow. The latter pilot completed the leg to Butter worth on 3 engines, magnetos on No. 3 engine having gone U/S in the air.
	10.1.46	W/O. Meyer, with load & spare magnetos for F/Lt. Barlow's aircraft.
	11.1.46	Sgt. Ricketts.
	13.1.46	F/O. Clark & P/O. Rogan?.
	16.1.46	F/O. Hedley.
	17.1.46	F/O. John.
	18.1.46	P/O. Abercrombie.
	19.1.46	F/O. Haines. This was the last flight that could be made, as Butterworth's runway, short & unfit for heavy aircraft, went U/S. thereafter. 40,000 lbs of stores had been lifted.
	26.1.46	159 & 355 Squadrons were assigned to drop supplies of Rice to villagers in areas of S.E. Burma where food was scarce & ground transportation difficult. The amount of Rice to be dropped was originally set at 1040 tons, but this figure was later increased. On this date 2 Liberators of 159, piloted by F/O. Hedley & P/O. Abercrombie, flew to Pegu on detachment for approx. 2 weeks. Rice-dropping crews of both Squadron were commanded by S/L. Stenbridge of 355.
	27.1.46	F/O. Clark, F/O. John, Sgt. Ricketts, & their crews flew to Pegu on detachment.
	28.1.46	The first drops of Rice were made. 6 sorties were flown, 3040 lbs. of Rice being carried by each aircraft on each sortie. The 3 Dropping zones were in the Salween and Chaton districts of S.E. Burma; Kyowaing was a D.Z. in Paddy fields in a wide valley, 25 minutes flying time from Pegu; Metharoot, 80 minutes flying time from Pegu, was a grass Landing Strip; Patado, 1000 minutes away, was in a narrow dog-leg valley, the most difficult location of the 3. Haze, extending to 6000 feet quite often, made identification & approach difficult. From the beginning a target of 3 Sorties Per aircraft was set, & this was reached on each remaining day of the month.
	29.1.46	12 Sorties were made by 4 aircraft.
	30.1.46	12 Sorties were made by 4 aircraft.
	31.1.46	12 Sorties were made by 4 aircraft. W/O. Meyer & crew went to Pegu on detachment.
		On these operations during January:-
		Total Hours Flown by 159 Squadron Aircraft: 51.10 Hours
		Total Weight of Rice Dropped: 101,200 lbs.
		The arrival of 9 Squadron Lancasters early in the month necessitated the transfer of the entire Personnel of "B" Flight ground crews. Since the ground crews of "A" Flight had thus to service all our aircraft, & the Butterworth & Pegu assignments were by themselves enough to keep the available Personnel busy, the Programme of Training Flights had necessarily to be curtailed drastically.
		Part II – Administration.
	2.1.46	A comprehensive programme of Training, including flights & lecture syllabuses, began on this date. In addition to lectures on technical subjects appropriate to each aircrew category, talks on matters of interest & concern to the majority who will be leaving the R.A.F. during this year were laid on, speakers being provided by the Station E.V.T. Section & found among Squadron Personnel.
	7.1.46	The vanguard of 9 Squadron, 6 Lancasters, landed today. The Station Commander & other Headquarters Officers, with the Commanding Officer, Adjutant, Flight Commanders & others of 159 Squadron, met & welcomed The C.O. & crews of the Lancasters at Dispersals. We provided transport to our Messes, & entertained the crews until their own Messes were ready next day.

Place	Date	Summary of Events
		The arrival of the Lancasters produce a large crop of speculations about the disbandment date for 159, but during the month no authoritative ruling could be obtained. It was certain, however, that 159 would remain fully operational until 9 Squadron had completed its training programme & was able to take over.
	10.1.46	S/L. Legg assumed Command of the Squadron; S/L. Williams went on detachment to Kashmir.
	14.1.46	28 applications were received for Mid-Tour Leave, & a draw was made to obtain the 5 names required for submission to R.A.F. Salboni.
	23.1.46	W/C. Bowes D.F.C. & Bar resumed Command on return from detachment to Kashmir.
	26.1.46	Saturday morning Drill Parades began for Squadron Personnel. During this month a Defence Scheme for the Protection of R.A.F. Station Salboni in the event of riots & disturbances among the civil population was drawn up; Officers of 159 were among those appointed to command Defence Flights, & Range Firing Practice was instituted for Officers & N.C.O.'s. On each Stand Down afternoon, 15 Officers were detailed to attend Drill Parades conducted by the Station W/O.
		During the last two weeks of January so-called "strikes" occurred at several R.A.F. Stations in India while there was no expectation of unrest at Salboni, all Squadron Officers who were in charge of Airmen's billets were instructed to obtain lists of their men's grievances & complaints for submission to the Station Commander.
		Part III – Personnel
		Special Postings – Officers.
		113225 A.& S.D. INT. F/O. A.W.A. Oliver: to No3 R.E.C. Worli for Class "A" Release w.e.f. 8.1.46.
		87527? G.D. (W/A.G.) F/L. A. G. Edgerley: to No. 1 O. & C.T.S. Kandy for Admin. Course, w.e.f. 18.1.46
		57035 G.D. (A.G.) F/O. R. Bone: to U.K. on Compassionate Posting, by air, w.e.f. 23.1.46.
		Special Postings – N.C.O.'s.
		1607720 Sgt. Masters R.J.: to No. 3 R.E.C. Worli for Class "B" Release w.e.f. 19.1.46.
		Attachments.
		To A.H.Q. Burma for 6 days w.e.f. 6.1.46:
		F/O. J. H. Jones G.D.(Nav). 166024
		P/O. J. Ruthven G.D.(W/A.G.) 201105
		P/O. E. Sharples G.D.(ENG.) 56889
		To B.M.H. Calcutta, w.e.f. 19.1.46
		F/O. G.T. Nash G.D.(W/A.G.) 166618
		To S. of J.S.P.T. Bhopal for No. 2 Jungle Instr's course, w.e.f. 23.1.46.
		F/O. D. Adamson G.D.(Nav.) 167886.
		To Aircrew Mountain Centre, w.e.f. 10.1.46.
		S/L. R.W. Williams G.D.(P) 87437
		Part IV – Honours & Awards.
		There were no honours & awards Promulgated during this month.
		The Butterworth & Rice Dropping commitments absorbed much of the Squadron's energies this month, & the Training Programme inevitably suffered. However, the feeling among Squadron Personnel has been that these assignments, which may be the last we shall be called upon to do, are in keeping with the traditions of 159 Squadron & a worthy task for its last weeks of existence.
		(R.W. Williams) Squadron Leader, Commanding No. 159 Squadron R.A.F.