

159 Squadron

Place	Date	Summary of Events
Digri		After the daylight cloud cover attacks on Mandalay to Indaw Railway Line, 159 Squadron were called upon to carry out a night low level mining operation with Bombing diversion at Moulmein, 2/3rd August. This was followed by instructions to stand by for a night mining operation at MERGUI, but weather conditions proved unsuitable however, and preparations were made for a long distance daylight, low level bombing attack on the Burma Siam Railway. This period of stand by was concluded by an order to lay mines by daylight at Mergui Harbour on August 13th. 12 aircraft were detailed and all took off at first light. 11 aircraft successfully completed the mission, the longest daylight operations attempted by the Squadron, while one aircraft returned early due to technical trouble. The following signal was received from the A.O.C.: - "159 Squadron did a grand job of work yesterday. Please convey my appreciation to all aircrews and ground crews". A similar daylight mining operation was carried out at Tavoy on August 16th. 12 aircraft were detailed and one returned early due to technical trouble. Very poor weather conditions were experienced over the last 50 miles before the target, with low cloud estimated base 200 ft., and very poor visibility with rain. During a further period of stand-by for more daylight mining the weather proved unsuitable and the next and final operation of the month was night mining in Port Blair Harbour, 28/29th August.
	1.8.44	Air Commodore Mellersh, the A.O.C. visited R.A.F. Digri and stayed overnight. A B.E.S.A. Variety Concert Party gave a performance of their show "WHOOPEE". No. 7 Hill Party consisting of 2 N.C.O's and 28 airmen left for Chakrata by rail.
	2.8.44	S/Ldr. J. Blackburn D.S.O. D.F.C was granted the acting rank of Wing Commander on assuming command of 159 Squadron.
	3.8.44	Tremendous interest was taken in the opening of the new Squadron Canteen run entirely by the Squadron. The large room previously used by the Indian Canteen Contractor was redecorated and refurbished by personnel working voluntarily. Small Tables were made from damaged bomb boxes, a modernistic bar constructed across the full width of the room and serviceable high bar stools made by padding the tops of old bomb-fin containers. Orange coloured table cloths and curtains were purchased and the room now presents a bright cheerful appearance. The official opening ceremony was performed by the Commanding Officer, W/Cdr. J. Blackburn D.S.O. D.F.C. who stressed the fact that the Canteen was now the men's own property and that in future all profits would go directly to the Squadron P.S.I. The evening closed with a sing-song and numerous references in letters to U. K. indicate that it was the most successful social event since the formation of the Squadron.
	4.8.44	F/O D. F. Chatt was appointed Education Officer. P/O E. Willings assumed the duties of Officer i/c M.T. vice P/O Anderson. F/O R. Mathews assumed the duties of Parachute Officer Vice F/Lt. S. Higgins.
	5.8.44	Aircrew billets were reorganised in order to group all the Personnel of each flight to be living in separate buildings.
	11.8.44	Air Commodore W. G. Cheshire, Chief Intelligence Officer, Air Command S.E.A. visited R.A.F. Digri and during his tour of the station inspected the new 159 Squadron Intelligence Gen Room on the S.H.Q. Site.
	12.8.44	A performance by a B.E.S.A. Concert Party was given in the Station Cinema.
	16.8.44	No. 8 Hill Party consisting of 16 airmen left for Chakrata by train.
	16.8.44	W/Cdr. Howells, Command Navigation Officer visited R.A.F. Station, Digri.
	18.8.44	A very interesting lecture on the Burma Front War Situation, past and present was given to all 159 Squadron personnel by Major Humphrey.
	19.8.44	S/Ldr. Boynton, 231 Group Bombing Leader visited 159 Squadron.
	22.8.44	No. 7 Hill Party returned to the Station. Lt. Gould of the U.S. Navy gave a talk on the U.S. Mark 13 Mine to aircrew.
	30.8.44	F/Lt. Carmichael of 3 Tact Air Force visited the Station to talk to aircrews on his experiences when captured by the Japanese on the Arakan Front.
		During the month personnel of 160 Special Flight consisting of 2 crews and relative ground personnel were added to the establishment of 159 Squadron w.e.f. 21.7.44. In future 160 Flight will be known as 159 Squadron Special Flight or 159 Squadron "C" Flight.
		WELFARE NOTES
		The opening of the new 159 Squadron Canteen, redecorated, re-furnished and run by Squadron

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		<p>personnel has proved a very important factor in the improvement of welfare facilities. For full details see the entry under 3rd August. A considerable profit has been made during the first month and it is hoped to be able to pay off quite soon, the money loaned to finance the venture. Permission has been obtained from the Medical Officer for making the tea, sold by the Canteen and the Chah-wallahs with non-chlorinated water. It is generally agreed that the quality of the tea and the cakes sold by the Chah-wallahs is greatly improved.</p> <p>Two gramophone recitals have been held; one of popular recordings, and the other entirely of classical music. The latter proved successful in view of the small number of people interested and it was suggested by the Education Officer that a musical society be formed.</p> <p>Several rehearsals have been held by the Squadron Concert Party. The number of personnel on leave has interrupted progress at rehearsals during the last 3 months but it is hoped that circumstances will permit the production of a show in the near future.</p>
		SPORTS NOTES.
		<p>Sporting activities continue to be very popular on the Squadron. This month hockey has become increasingly popular. Matches have been played every evening possible and great interest has been shown. So far all games have been practice games, hockey league matches being due to start in September.</p> <p>Many soccer games have been played although interest in this game appeared to wane a little possibly do to the sections experiencing difficulty in turning out teams through personnel being sick, on leave or detached. Five members of the Squadron were selected to play for the 185 Wing Team composed of personal from the three units on the Station. Great interest was shown in the two matches played by this team against Indian teams in a knockout competition. Both games, were won by the R.A.F. team and both were played at Bankura some 35 miles away. The unique style of football played by the Indians who wore only bandages around their insteps proved highly interesting to our team. Although Bankura cannot be classed as a large town, a crowd of seven or eight thousand spectators watched each game.</p> <p>During the month the cricket practice nets have come into use and it is hoped to commence games in September.</p> <p>At the end of the month a new competition for teams of 6 a side was started to compete for the W/Cdr. Boffee cups - Darts. Most sections submitted teams many managing to muster two and on most evenings two matches were played, in the Recreation Room.</p>
		PHOTOGRAPHIC NOTES.
		<p>Only three aircraft attempted to take photographs at night using two flashes each, but owing to bad weather only two pictures of ground detail were recorded.</p> <p>The oblique camera was carried twice on daylight sorties gaining thirty results in all.</p>
		MEDICAL NOTES.
		<p>F/Lt. J.P. Kelly (medical Officer) proceeded on a month's leave on 1.8.44. and was relived by F/Lt. S. J. Mackeanie from 231 Group.</p> <p>ILLNESS. During the month the number of intestinal cases (Dysentery, Gastro-Enteritis) was exceedingly high, most of these cases were newly arrived aircrew who had only been on the station a short time. By the end of the month, the cases had decreased to quite a low figure, and it is considered that most of the Intestinal trouble was brought on by the poor hygiene in travelling conditions across India. At the end of this month there were now considerably less in hospital than at the end of July.</p> <p>Appended is data concerning sick parade admissions to hospital on respect of both ground crew and aircrew; including all personnel with the exception of Enrolled Followers.</p> <p>INJURIES. Once again another month has passed with no flying injuries; the number of injuries caused through sport has been very low, and only two persons had to be admitted to hospital.</p> <p>SKIN DISEASE. During the month the average dry bulb daily readings was quite reasonable, although the humidity was high. No alarm was caused through the few cases of skin disease. (Prickly heat was again the chief complaint).</p> <p>INFECTIOUS DISEASES. Another case of Diphtheria was admitted to hospital, but no carrier had been found on the Unit.</p> <p>VACCINATIONS &amp; INOCULATIONS. Over 150 persons were inoculated against either T.A.B. or Cholera, and approx. 150 were vaccinated.</p> <p>Average daily sick parade Grd. Staff: 10 Aircrew: 6.7 Average daily admissions to hospital and S.S.Q. 3.2 Total admissions to hospital or S.S.Q. Ground Staff 55; Aircrew 44.</p>

Place	Date	Summary of Events		
		Number remaining Hospital: 36.		
		Diagnosis of people admitted to Hospital or S.S.Q.		
			Ground Staff	Aircrew
		Cl. Dysentery	5	11
		Diahrmdra?	7	5
		Cortza?	8	7
		Dengue	6	2
		Cl. malaria (Pyrexia)	6	2
		Skin disease	7	1
		Heat effects	2	3
		Diphtheria	1	
		Total	13	12
			55	44
		(J. Blackburn)		
		Wing Commander Commanding		
		No. 159 Squadron, R.A.F.		