

Form 540: January, 1945

159 Squadron

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events
Digri	Jan.	1945	Part I – Operations
			This month operations were held up on two occasions through unfavourable conditions in the target areas, one operation being cancelled. With these exceptions, operational flights were made at regular intervals and satisfactory results were obtained. Yet another long-range mission was undertaken to lay mines at Penang. This proved particularly satisfactory, giving ample compensation for the last trip to this area which was undertaken with unfavourable weather in the target area. A new technique for this Squadron was adopted on the night of 14th, when the Rajburi Rly. & Road Bridge was attacked. Owing to the absence of moon, two aircraft were detailed to drop flares in bundles of 3 at regular intervals over the target. The bridge was illuminated for 40 minutes during which time a low-level attack was made by the remaining aircraft. Direct hits were evident by the subsequent photographic cover. A second attack was made on the bridge in moonlight on the night of 20th and the bridge was rendered temporarily unserviceable. Earlier in the month Bridge 286 on the Burma Siam Rly. was attacked and this operation resulted in approx. half of the bridge falling into the river. Altogether a total of 144 operational sorties and 2141.30 operational hours were flown, these being summarised as follows:-
			"A" & "B" Flights
			1/2. Bridge 286 over the Nakorn-Jaisri River – 16 sorties, 32 x 2000 lb; 64 x 1000 lb.
			8. Moulmein Rly. Workshops – 16 sorties, 20 x 2000 lb; 88 x 1000 lb; 28 x 500 lb. Incends.
			12. Mergui Jetties & Shipping – 9 Sorties, 36 x 1000 lb; 36 x 500 lb. Mergui – Mining. 2 Sorties 12 Mines. Moulmein Mining – 5 sorties 40 mines.
			14/15. Rajburi Bridge. 16 sorties. 112 x 1000 lb; 4 x 250 T.I.; 12 x 100 lb; 60 Flares.
			18. Martaban Railway. 16 sorties. 106 x 1000 lb; 28 x 500 lb. Incends.
			21. Mining – Pakchan R. Moulmein Stn., Mergui, Goh Sichang, Heinze Bay, Rangoon R., Martaban, Bangkok, Tavoy – 16 Sorties, 104 mines.
			24/25. Mining – Panang N. & S. Channels – 16 Sorties, 64 Mines.
			27/28. Goh Kran Is. 2 sorties 12 x 1000 lb.
			30/31. Bridge 286 7 sorties 7 x 2000 lb., 42 x 1000 lb. Mining – Heinze Bay, Tavoy, Rangoon River Mergui 9 sorties, 84 mines.
			"C" Flight – 14 sorties.
			A total of 67.30 non –operational hours were flown by the Squadron.
			Notification was received that the following members had been awarded the D.F.C. for work on this Squadron: F/Lt. K. P. Alcorn; F/Lt. W. N. Judd; F/Lt. N. S. Quinn; P/O J. D. Sandilands; W/O M. B. Murphy.
			On the night of 31st Liberator BZ938 "W" of "C" Flight failed to return from an operational flight. The crew consisted of : S/Ldr. J. W. Bradley, F/Sgt. Bellingham, F/O A. G. Jaffrey, W/O A. R. Williams, F/Sgt. Snelling; F/Sgt. Woodage; F/Sgt. Woodbridge; F/Sgt. L. Adams; F/O W. J. J. Lowry.
			Part II - Administration
			Medical.
			F/Lt. D. G. Grant left the Squadron on the 1st on posting to 343 Wing and F/Lt. H. B. Thornton took over the Medical charge.
			Sickness for the month has remained at a satisfactory low figure, being chiefly due to the cooler season. The average daily sick (aircrew) was 4.2, Ground staff 6.6, giving a total of 10.8.
			There was a further decrease in the incidence of malaria with only 2 cases. One was a relapse and the other contracted on the camp.
			Of 3 cases of V.D., 2 (ground staff) were relapses and a third (aircrew) was contracted

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			in a brothel in Calcutta while under the influence of alcohol.
			Fruit and tea hawkers and barbers continue to receive a daily inspection and it is considered that a fair standard of hygiene is being maintained. At the monthly inspection of civilian camp followers it was noticed that a great improvement in personal hygiene has been made.
			The general standard of sanitation is satisfactory though a sense of individual responsibility as regards cleanliness of sites etc. seems to be lacking.
			There have been no epidemics of disease this month and the health of the Squadron remains satisfactory.
			Sport
			Hockey matches were numerous during the month and the players showed much enthusiasm. No trouble was found in forming a good team which remained unbeaten. Cricket also proved popular and several inter-unit matches were played. Difficulty was experienced owing to aircrew members in the team being unable to play. A match against 355 Squadron resulted in a decisive victory for 159 Squadron. A new concrete cricket strip is being built on a new site.
			Welfare
			The welfare of the airmen on the Squadron has been built up to a reasonably good standard. It is regretted though that a lack of interest in this respect is becoming evident. A report on welfare is not available.
			Part III – Personnel
Digri	1.1.45		F/Lt. H. Richardson assumed command of "A" Flight vice S/Ldr. B. F. Burbridge.
	4.1.45		S/Ldr. J. Gauntlett assumed command of "B" Flight vice F/Lt. H. R. Mathews.
	9.1.45		F/Lt. J. Hall assumed command of "A" Flight vice F/Lt. H. Richardson.
	20.1.45		G/Capt. K. L. Waldwell R.N.Z.A.F. former C.O. of a unit in New Zealand visited the station as part of a tour of inspection of units and general liaison work for New Zealand airmen in this Theatre.
	25.1.45		Court of Enquiry assembled to investigate and record the absence without leave from duty and deficiencies in respect of Mahbood Khan – Enrolled Follower. Present F/O N. Rees, Member F/O P. Child.
	17.1.45		Q/M W. A. Coryton C.G. M.V.O. D.F.C. A.O.C. in C. Bengal-Burma accompanied by A/C Mellersh paid a short visit to the Squadron.
	21.1.45		A special mission from the Empire Air Navigation School visited the station. This mission included: G/Capt. Richardson, Deputy Commandant, S/Ldr. Kelly – Bomber Command; S/Ldr Evans, Radar; F/Lt. Gass Coastal Command. All available navigators assembled and navigational problems were discussed.
			(B. F. Burbridge)
			Wing Commander Commanding
			No. 159 Squadron, R.A.F.