

159 Squadron

Place	Date	Summary of Events
		Welfare Notes.
Digri.	July	July has been a month of activity. During the early part of the month electric lighting and fans were fitted in the billets on the Domestic Site. This amenity is greatly appreciated since such a luxury has not previously been experienced on any of the Squadron's three camps in Bengal. A temporary delay in the wiring programme was experience owing to the shortage of D.P.W.D. labour but this was overcome by aircrew personnel volunteering to wire the billets of the ground personnel.
	8.7.44.	On July 8th a Welfare meeting was held with S/Ldr. J. Blackburn D.S.O. D.F.C. presiding. It was decided to place the Airmen's Welfare Organisation on a firm basis and to endeavour to dispense with the Indian Canteen Contractor in order to run a Squadron Canteen organised by Squadron personnel. Arrangements were discussed for the formation of a Squadron Band and a Concert party. sports programme was also discussed.
	11.7.44.	The Commanding Officer appealed to the airmen for a sports subscription to enable the purchasing of new equipment. Rupees 250 were contributed and further subscriptions will be forthcoming from Officers and N.C.O's.
	15.7.44.	A Sports Meeting was held and S/Ldr. J. Blackburn D.S.O. D.F.C. outlined what he hoped to provide in the way of sports grounds and equipment. The Sports Officer was instructed to purchase the necessary equipment.
	16.7.44.	A meeting was held of all personnel interested in the formation of a Squadron Concert Party. It was decided to commence rehearsals immediately. At the same meeting it was decided to attempt the formation of a Squadron band.
		Good progress has been made with the arrangements for running a Squadron Canteen. Small tables and a modernistic bar have been constructed from scraps of wood from the Armoury. Easy chairs, cutlery, table cloths, curtains etc. have been purchased in Calcutta and the official opening has been arranged for Aug. 3rd.
		One gramophone recital was held during the month, consisting solely of classical music. This was quite well attended by personnel who were keenly interested and requests were made for more concerts of a similar type. A pick-up has now been procured for future recitals.
		Sports Notes.
		With the slight drop in temperatures compared with June, enthusiasm for sports increased and 2 soccer and 1 hockey pitches were marked out. On July 7th the Monsoon Football League for Inter-Section games commenced and a match has been played on practically every evening when the weather would permit. The League is going well with the Armourers topping the table and the Officers bringing up the rear. Two Squadron matches have been played against 185 Wing – score 1-1 – and against 355 Squadron – score 2-2.
		Hockey has not yet got into its stride but a few enthusiasts have already played friendly games. An Inter-Section Hockey League is being formed. The Canadian personnel have introduced the game of soft ball using their own equipment and several amusing matches have been played. It is hoped to introduce Basketball to lay out a running track, and to hold a Sports Day later in the year.
		Medical Notes.
		Changes in Squadron Personnel.
		W/Cdr. Hopkins D.F.C. Officer Commanding, was on 9.7.44. admitted to the 47th British General Hospital. This is the Senior Officer's second bout of hospitalisation since joining the Squadron last December. S/Ldr. J. Blackburn D.S.O. D.F.C. is now commanding the Squadron.
		Several new crews arrived on posting from H.B.C.U. Bangalore. Shortly after arrival several reported sick mostly with intestinal trouble and it is considered a high percentage was caused through infection in transit, due to bad travelling facilities. It is thought that important personnel such as aircrew joining squadrons for operational duties should be exposed to as little infection as possible and should be transported

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		across India by either fast passenger train or aircraft
		S/Ldr. Rex R.A.A.F. Liaison Medical Officer paid a two day visit to the Squadron on July 18th.
		Illness.
		Considering this is Bengal and July the incidence is not alarming. There are less squadron personnel in Hospital now than at the end of June; the decrease due mainly to the discharge of "Effects of Heat" Cases.
		Appended is data concerning Sick Parades, Admissions to Hospital etc. in respect of both Ground Crews and Air Crew; they refer of course to all personnel (including I.A.F.) but not Enrolled Followers.
		The admissions to hospital and S.S.Q. will appear at first sight large but it should be remembered that in many cases they have been under treatment in S.S.Q. for a few days often for less than 48 hours, that treatment in S.S.Q. is always more regular, it is always assured, cure is attained more quickly and the patients returned to work sooner. As out patients they would be unfit for work in any case. Again X-Ray cases even for injuries etc. necessitate admission to hospital.
		Comparing figures it will be seen that there is difference in the incidence of disease among ground and aircrew personnel. Intestinal diseases (Acute Gastro-Enteritis, Enteritis and Dysentery) are much higher in aircrew than in Ground personnel; this is due to numerous causes among which may be cited:
		(1) Arrival of new aircrews as mentioned in Section A. Para.2.
		(2) Aircrew in the main are less hygienically minded than ground crews.
		(3) Many of the aircrew are new arrivals in the country thus more prone to intestinal upsets. The ground crews are in the majority "old sweats".
		(4) For cleanliness, organisation etc. the Sergeants' Mess is much inferior to the Airmen's Mess.
		Injuries.
		This is the next most common condition. They have all been non-flying accidents The increase in this type of illness is due to the intense sports programme – injuries are inevitable – but the moral effect is so beneficial that its incidence from a sickness standpoint should be viewed accordingly.
		Skin Diseases.
		There is a decrease from last month. Prickly heat is not so common and its sequel, Septic Prickly Heat was less in evidence. The equipping of the station with fans has helped; also the weather which in the early part of the month was relatively cool. Its high comparative incidence among ground personnel is understandable – sections mostly involved were Maintenance and Armoury.
		Malaria.
		The incidence is relatively low but it will rise in the coming months unless attacked accordingly and consistently. In only one case can infection definitely be traced to the station; all aircrew were infected on leave or returning from leave etc. The most important single item in Malaria control is site situation i.e. living a safe distance away from infection (Indian Personnel). The Unit is fortunate in having no local villages of any size near but matters could be improved if the bearers, Indians, Cooks etc. (150 strong) could be domiciled at a safe distance ½ mile) from domestic site. The Squadron has now its own power flit sprayer and provided sufficient Pyrethrum is available, its advantages will be tremendous. All billets have been issued with spray guns, spray killer, anti malaria cream etc. and all precautions have been strengthened.
		Venereal Disease.
		Three cases of Venereal Disease were contracted in brothels in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras; one case is of the relapsing variety. There is no V.D. known, contracted on the station except among Enrolled Followers whose disposal after hospitalisation is one of extreme difficulty because of their cast system and because so many were, prior to the onset of the disease, cooks mess waiters etc.
		Ear Disease.
		Mostly external, there were five cases actually, two were re-admitted during the month. The causes of this external Otitis is probably a combination of many factors

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		some of which are:-				
		(1) Inherent susceptibility to the disease.				
		(2) Humidity. (3) Dust. (4) Water.				
		Finally there has been no fatalities. There has been one case of Diphteria, a cook; no carrier was found.				
		Average daily sick: Ground personnel – 10. Aircrew – 6.				
		Average daily admissions to hospital of S.S.Q. – 2.6.				
		Total Admissions to Hospital Grnd. Staff: 49. Aircrew: 30.				
		Hospitalisation during July		Remaining in Hospital 37		A/C on posted strength N/D Sick – (12)
		Grnd. Crew	A/Crew.	G/C.	A/C	
		Intestinal Diseases	5 (2)	12 (3)	4	7 (2) 6(3)
		Injuries	7	3	5	0 0
		V.D.	1	2	1	1 1
		Malaria	3	3	2	2 0
		Skin.	9	2	1	0 0
		Ear	4	3	0	0 0
		Dysentary in brackets. Of these:				
		G/Staff Bacillary 2. Aircrew: Amebic 1. Bacillary1. Dysentary 1.				
		Posting of Officers & Aircrew See Appendix.				
		(J. Blackburn)				
		Wing Commander Commanding				
		No. 159 Squadron, R.A.F.				