

159 Squadron

Place	Date	Summary of Events
Digri	Sept. 1944	In spite of monsoonal weather conditions, 159 Squadron were detailed to carry out several operations. Two long distance Night Mining Operations at Bangkok and Go-Sichang were successfully carried out on 4/5 Sept. by 13 aircraft, 5 aircraft at Bangkok and 8 aircraft at Go-Sichang. On 6/7 Sept. a very successful bombing Night Raid was carried out by 11 aircraft against Hnohnbladuck an important railway and military centre near Bangkok. For a long range daylight mining operation at Victoria Point on 12th Sept. 1944, fourteen a/c were detailed. Unfortunately one aircraft crashed only five minutes after take off and one aircraft returned early due to engine trouble. The successful mining carried out on the 12th in good weather resulted in the Squadron being detailed for two similar daylight operations on 17th Sept. at Mergui and Tavoy. Twelve Liberators took off but this time very adverse weather conditions were experienced with rain and cloud base down to 200 ft. over the last 150 miles before the Target. Five of the aircraft (6) detailed to mine Mergui found it impossible to locate the target area and joined the other 6 aircraft in mining Tavoy River Estuary. One aircraft managed to locate Mergui and laid mines in poor visibility. The final operation of the month was a Night Bombing attack on Myitnge Station on 24/25th Sept. when an experiment in target marking was attempted. 14 aircraft were detailed, 13 A/C attacked and one returned early due to technical trouble. During the month several other operations were planned but due to bad weather never materialised. In two of these cases the operations were cancelled, when the aircrews were in the aircraft awaiting take off. For full details of all these above operations see Form 541.
Digri	2nd Sept.	F/Lt. K.P. Alcorn assumed command of "A" Flt. vice F/Lt. F.P.A. Heynert.
		11 aircraft of 159 Sqdn. took part in a Practice Mining Exercise during the night of 2/3rd Sept., the object being similar to that of a Bulls eye Exercise in U.K., namely to provide practice for the ground defences in addition to practice for the aircrews. A section of the Hooghly River south of Calcutta was chosen as a suitable location for this practice operation.
	7th. Sept.	A draft of 20 airmen, mostly technical trades, arrived from B.R.D. Worli. F/O. F.D. Kinsey arrived to take over the duties of Squadron Adjutant from F/Lt. J.L.S. Fry who was tour expired.
	9th Sept.	Fifty N.C.O's selected from aircrew and ground crew by the Sergeants' Mess C.M.C. were entertained at the Officers' Mess. A pleasant informal evening was enjoyed by all and it is hoped to hold similar functions periodically.
	12th Sept.	Five minutes after taking off for an operation a Liberator of 159 Squadron E.V.844 "Z" crashed. The following were killed:- AUS409896 T/W/O Crowley R.A.P., 1384974 T/F/Sgt. Edwards D.B., 1333314 T/W/O Freeman A.J., 1035646 Sgt. Baldwin R., 1138876 T/F/Sgt. Wyatt B., AUS.419406 T/F/Sgt. Bishop J.J.
	19th Sept.	A Court of Enquiry was held to investigate the crash of A/C E.V. 884 "Z".
	21st	W/Cdr. J. Blackburn D.S.O. D.F.C. left the Station on temporary duty and S/Ldr. R.A. Robertson assumed command of 159 Squadron. F/Lt. W. Quinn of "B" Flight assumed command vice S/Ldr. Robertson.
	22nd.	A Number of Squadron personnel who had been billeted on 185 Wing Domestic Site had to be moved back to 159 Squadron Site in order to vacate billets to house personnel of a new unit arriving on the Station.
	24th.	W/Cdr. J. Blackburn D.S.O. D.F.C. returned to the Station for 2 days in order to take part in the Night Operation against Myitne Station when target marking was tried as an experiment.
	27th	S/Ldr. Burbridge assumed the duties of O.C. "A" Flight vice F/Lt. K.P. Alcorn. S/Ldr. Burbridge also assumed the duties of P.M.C. Officers' Mess vice W/Cdr. J. Blackburn D.S.O. D.F.C.
		Welfare Notes.
		The New Squadron Canteen continued to make good progress. During the month alterations were carried out by C.P.W.D. to enable the existing store room to be enlarged. The kitchen was extended and a new concrete cooking range installed.

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		During this period cooked foods were unobtainable but have recommenced with the completion of alterations. No record recitals were held owing to the fact that no further records were received from Group via Wing.
		Concert Party rehearsals continued. The projected show has been postponed until November owing to leave, sickness, postings etc. However, excellent material has been obtained from the Command Welfare Library, H.Q. A.C.S.E.A. Simla along with band parts and it is hoped that rehearsals will continue without further setbacks.
		Sports Notes.
		Soccer is again reviving in popularity. A Soccer Team drawn from all units on the Station was successful in the final of the Bankura Shield 3 – 0. Great crowds attended this and the previous matches and in spite of transport difficulties it is hoped to enter further outside competitions of a similar nature. Hockey continued to increase in popularity, "A" Flight Ground Crew team heading the Hockey League. A Station Rugby match was played against R.A.F. Salboni at Salboni, the home team winning 3 – 0.
		Medical Notes.
		F/Lt. J.P. Kelly Officer in medical charge 159 Squadron has been posted to Adv. HQ. A.C.S.E.A. and thus after 16 months leaves the Squadron. F/Lt. Grant will be the new Squadron Medical Officer.
		On the 12th. Sept. the Squadron lost one aircraft; shortly after take off it crashed in flames. The six crew perished with the aircraft. Sickness during the month of September has been relatively low. Below are the figures for the month.
		Admissions: Total: 7. Grd. Staff: 5. Aircrew: 2.
		Remaining in Hosp: Total: 5. Grd. Staff: 4. Aircrew: 1.
		The above cases were the usual Gastro Intestinal, dysentery, Infective Hepatitis, Malaria, Injuries, W.D. (total for Mth. 1 (aircrew)) Dengue, Skin Disease, Respiratory T.I. eye and ear diseases, kidney diseases. dental cases, tonsillitis, and Dyspepsia. Average daily sick was 17 (ground staff 12, aircrew 5). attendance at Sick parades has increased as will be seen from the following: July Average daily sick 16, August 16.7 Sept. 17. Daily average admissions to hospital have decreased: August 3.2 Sept. 1.6. Cases of Dysentery have decreased due to various factors among which may be sited (1) rehousing of native personnel off the site. 2. Reduction in fly menade. 3. Better hygiene in Messes, particularly Sgts' Mess. Increased site cleanliness, and fewer new arrivals from R.A.F. Stn. Kolar. There were seven cases of Malaria on the Squadron during the month, 5 B.O.R's and 2 I.O.R's. Only one case of V.E. Early Syphilis contracted in Calcutta in a Brothel. Two Squadron personnel were repatriated on Medical grounds. Other than the six deaths mentioned there have been no deaths due to illness on the Squadron during September.
		For Posting During Month Officers & Aircrew See Appendix.
		(R.A. Robertson)
		Squadron Leader Commanding
		No. 159 Squadron, R.A.F.