

August 1945 Form 540

203 Squadron

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events																																			
			Compiled by F/O. R. J. G. Ellett																																			
Kankesanturai.	August 1945		I. Operations																																			
			The Squadron continued anti-shipping operations until the date of the Japanese surrender, all sorties being flown by the detachment at the Cocos Island. These included reconnaissances of Western Java, the Sunda Straits, and northward to Banka Island. Towards the end, large scale shipping movements were observed between Batavia and Singapore, but owing to the concentrated defences of these targets, and inability to get sufficient numbers of serviceable aircraft available for concentrated attacks, the results obtained were disappointing. On the final day's operation F/O. Law made an individual attack on one of these convoys, from which he failed to return.																																			
			It is now possible to summarize the results obtained during the period (March 20th to August 15th) during which the Squadron has been operating against enemy shipping, as follows:-																																			
			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Tonnage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Destroyed:</td> <td>No. 7 Sub-Chaser</td> <td>350</td> </tr> <tr> <td>M/V. Agata Maru</td> <td>300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 MTB.</td> <td>80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Tug.</td> <td>150</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>7 Coasters.</td> <td>1050</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Probably Destroyed</td> <td>1 Freighter</td> <td>400</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 Coasters</td> <td>1500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Barge</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 M.L.</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Damaged</td> <td>1 M/V</td> <td>5000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9 Coasters</td> <td>1350</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Barges</td> <td>150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Sandoway</td> <td>50</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Tonnage	Destroyed:	No. 7 Sub-Chaser	350	M/V. Agata Maru	300	1 MTB.	80	1 Tug.	150				7 Coasters.	1050	Probably Destroyed	1 Freighter	400	10 Coasters	1500	1 Barge	50	1 M.L.	100	Damaged	1 M/V	5000	9 Coasters	1350	3 Barges	150	1 Sandoway	50
		Tonnage																																				
Destroyed:	No. 7 Sub-Chaser	350																																				
	M/V. Agata Maru	300																																				
	1 MTB.	80																																				
	1 Tug.	150																																				
			7 Coasters.	1050																																		
Probably Destroyed	1 Freighter	400																																				
	10 Coasters	1500																																				
	1 Barge	50																																				
	1 M.L.	100																																				
Damaged	1 M/V	5000																																				
	9 Coasters	1350																																				
	3 Barges	150																																				
	1 Sandoway	50																																				
			Assessing coasters as 150-ton Sugar Dog type and barges as 50-ton lugger type, this gives the following totals:																																			
			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Destroyed</th> <th>Probably Destroyed</th> <th>Damaged</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1930 gross tons</td> <td>2050 gross tons.</td> <td>6550 gross tons.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Destroyed	Probably Destroyed	Damaged	1930 gross tons	2050 gross tons.	6550 gross tons.																													
Destroyed	Probably Destroyed	Damaged																																				
1930 gross tons	2050 gross tons.	6550 gross tons.																																				
			As a result of this and similar long range shipping attacks in conjunction with the activities of the East Indies Fleet, the supply and reinforcement of Japanese bases in the Andaman and Nicobar islands by surface craft was virtually stopped. The enemy was forced to ferry the more urgent supplies and personnel by air, when transport aircraft were at a premium.																																			
			Shipping along the West coast of the Malay Peninsula was greatly curtailed and eventually reduced to occasional movements during the hours of darkness. Attacks were then switched to the East side with better results. By the end of July movement between Bangkok and Khota Bahru had been virtually stopped.																																			
			The end of hostilities came before the anti-shipping organisation at the Cocos Island had become fully operative, but movement of Japanese shipping along the West coast of Sumatra was being made increasingly dangerous.																																			
			Non-Operational Flying.																																			
Kankesanturai	16th Aug.		Immediately on the Japanese surrender, orders were received for the ferrying of 26,000 lbs. of Red Cross Parcels from St. Thomas Mount to Sigiriya. This commitment was performed with the aid of aircraft of 1346 A.S.R.U.																																			

	21st Aug.		Two aircraft conveyed a quantity of containers and packages from Minneriya to Cocos Island in connection with the preliminary stages of the re-occupation plan. This was continued as and when serviceable aircraft were available. As from August 27th the commitment became 1 aircraft per day from Minneriya to Cocos Island transporting Red Cross Parcels.
			Technical
			Serviceability. The standard of the detachment aircraft at the start of the month was good, and all difficulties in connection with maintenance were overcome with the aid of spares and equipment from 321 Squadron. Facilities on the Island were very limited with shortages of tools and equipment of all kinds.
			On 4th August Liberator N lost a cylinder on an operational flight, and a new engine had to be obtained. This was transported to Cocos Island by a Sunderland.
			On 12th August Liberator J on operational take-off had a runaway supercharger turbine with the result that two cylinder heads were blown off the engine. This necessitated another engine change.
			A third aircraft was damaged in the course of a minor inspection, a genuine case of "spanner in the works", so that in the later stages, with their limited facilities, the maintenance parties were faced with considerable problems. In addition, owing to the dirty condition of the petrol, re-fuelling took up to 3 hours per aircraft.
			Flying totals for the month.
			Sorties Hours
			Operational 9 90 ½ (1 aircraft lost)
			II. Administration.
			Formation of the 7203 Servicing Echelon.
			Servicing has been organized on an Echelon basis, to be known as No. 7203 Servicing Echelon, and personnel have been posted from the Squadron in accordance with the Echelon establishment.
			Administrative control is exercised through S.H.Q. Kankasanturai, and technical control through the Chief Technical Officer, Servicing Wing, Kankasanturai.
			The Echelon is divided into Daily Servicing and Repair and Inspection Squadrons, the latter coming under the charge of the Squadron Engineer Officer, F/Lt. J. H. MacLaren.
			III. Personnel
			Considerable adjustments of establishment resulted from the formation of 7203 Servicing Echelon. In addition to postings to the Echelon, there were also postings to the Station Headquarters. In some cases the number of tradesmen posted was greater than establishment while in others the number was insufficient to fill the Echelon establishment. For the time being the Sections have to manage with their present strength, resorting to mis-employment if necessary.
			Movements.
	24th Aug.		Squadron Leader P. B. Waddy (Flight Commander) was repatriated. He was succeeded by Squadron Leader G. L. Fletcher.
			Towards the end of the month orders were received for the immediate repatriation of all Australian personnel. The majority of the Canadian personnel have also left the Squadron, or are shortly due for repatriation, and replacement crews are arriving from U.K.
	21st Aug.		The Adjutant, F/Lt. Foley was posted to S.H.Q. Kiatak? for duties at Singapore, F/Lt. L. Smith arrived to take his place.

			Casualties.
			The following are believed to have lost their lives when Liberator M crashed off Sebesi Island during the operation on August 13th:
			185341 F/O. J. A. Law, D.F.C. Pilot.
			1585967 F/Sgt. D. Olden Co-Pilot
			1216918 F/Sgt. G. T. Watkins Navigator (Confirmed killed)
			1104572 Sgt. P. West W.O.M.