

June 1945 Form 540

203 Squadron

| Place | Date | Time | Summary of events |
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| | | | Compiled by F/O R. J. G. Ellett |
| | | | I Operations |
| | | | During the first half of the month operations were carried out from Kankasanturai. On June 13th. a detachment of six aircraft flew to Akyab, from which station the remaining sorties were flown. Weather conditions were generally unfavourable. While conditions at base have invariably been good, bad weather was encountered on all sorties in the Nicobar and Andaman area, whilst at Akyab, Monsoon conditions not only interfered with operations, but also affected the serviceability of aircraft on the ground. |
| | | | IN other respects, facilities at Akyab were better than had been anticipated, and under the new arrangements, living conditions for aircrews have been further improved. |
| | | | The limiting factor appears to have been the heavy demand on available accommodation from Squadrons of 231 Group. |
| | | | Anti shipping strikes have accounted for further ships destroyed and damages as follows:- |
| | | | 2 Standard Wooden Coasters destroyed. |
| | | | 1 Tug Destroyed. |
| | | | 1 M.T.B. Destroyed. |
| | | | 1 Wooden Coaster damaged. |
| | | | 2 Powered Sampans damaged. |
| | | | 1 Barge and 1 Wooden Coaster probably damaged. |
| | | | In all 23 operational sorties were flown amounting to 305 hours. |
| | 1st June | | Non Operational Flying |
| | | | Flight to Australia |
| | | | 2 aircraft were detached in order to convey a party of F.A.B?. officers and a quantity of mail from Colombo to Sidney. The Liberators were piloted by F/L. Fletcher and F/L. McKay. |
| | | | The passengers were picked up at Ratmalana. thence the aircraft flew to Minneriya and from there were routed via the Cocos Islands and Perth, Australia. These were the first aircraft to make a night landing at Cocos. |
| | | | No troubles of any kind were experienced on this flight. Minor inspections were carried out at Sydney (Mascot). T/L. McKay returned after a week. F/L. Fletcher was delayed and returned two days later. |
| | | | The return trip was also trouble free. The navigation proved accurate, and the Cocos Island M/F Beacon could be picked up from 600 miles. The return was also made via Ratmalana to deliver mail. |
| K.K.S. | 4th June | | Small shipping having been reported on the move in the Andaman area, two aircraft were detailed to search Stewart Sound and southwards down the East coast to Rutland Island, keeping particular look-out for concealed landing craft which might be lying in the Sound. |
| | | | Neither aircraft reported any sign of life, though visibility conditions were good. The only vessel sighted was a derelict landing barge beached close to the jetty at Takla Oyster Point, and half filled with water. Photographs of this were taken. |
| K.K.S. | 5th June | | Again two aircraft searched Stewart Sound and the east coast of the Andaman Islands without result. The weather on this occasion was bad. F/O Law made an attack on the derelict barge reported the previous day. Four bombs were dropped but did not hit. M.G. Strikes were obtained. Opposition was Nil. |

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| | | | S/L. Waddy whilst searching round Ritchie's Archipelago sighted buildings on John Lawrence Island and took photographs, but owing to bad light, these did not come out. |
| K.K.S. | 8th June | | Four aircraft were dispatched at first light on a patrol of the Nicobar area, two being briefed to search up the west coast of Great and Little Nicobar Islands and two up the east coast. The patrol was flown in bad weather and no enemy sighting was made. F/L. Aldroft strafed a beached derelict hulk in position 0710N, 9356E. F/L. Elmes overshot the patrol area owing to a strong tail wind, and flew on almost to the Malay Peninsula. This left him with a minimum of fuel for the return flight, but the aircraft was directed to China Bay, and landed safely after 17 ½ hours. |
| | 12th June | | An enemy convoy was reported by H. M. Submarines off Northern Sumatra. This consisted of a supply ship and a submarine chaser escort, and was thought to be making for the Nicobar and Andaman Islands. Five aircraft were airborne to patrol from Great Nicobar Island towards Sabang on a parallel track sweep, to intercept this force. |
| | | | The patrol was carried out to position 0611N, 9457E where three British Destroyers were sighted, which had themselves intercepted and sunk the enemy ships. The Destroyers were seen to be attacked by S.E. and T.E. enemy aircraft without being hit. The Liberators remained in the area for 30 minutes endeavouring to communicate with the S.N.O. unsuccessfully; they were then recalled to base. The enemy aircraft made no attempt to attack the Liberators. Owing to the length of the patrol, the Liberators took off from China Bay and returned via China Bay, but all had sufficient fuel to fly on to K.K.S. |
| | | | Technical.. |
| | | | Serviceability at the beginning of the month was low, and an all out effort was made, working in shifts for 24 hours a day, to get aircraft serviceable. By June 13th. the serviceability exceeded 90%. |
| | | | Training. |
| | | | Owing to the large proportion of the Squadron operating on detachment, training was confined to newly-arrived crews. |
| | | | II. Administration |
| | | | Sport. |
| | | | The persistent high winds interfered with the football programme for a time, but the games have continued. Hockey and rugby have also been played. |
| | | | Swimming continues to be most popular, and non-swimmers have the advantage of instruction from the sports staff. |
| | | | Entertainment. |
| K.K.S. | 15th June | | An E.N.S.A. party played to a full house in the Station Cinema. |
| | 17th June | | A party from the station attended a concert at Jaffna Convent. |
| | | | {section on establishment changes crossed out – see section III} |
| | | | (b) Casualties |
| K.K.S. | 22.5.45. | | P/O. A. L. Partridge, RAAF (A417407), the navigator of an aircraft engaged on a shipping strike in the Nicobar area, received bullet wounds in the left arm. |
| | | | III Personnel |
| | | | The following amendments to the establishment No. LWE/SEA/276/A were made during the month. |
| | 8/6/45 | | 1 AC photographer deleted. (Amendment No. 15) |
| | 11/6/45 | | 1 F/Lt. Gunnery (G) deleted from Headquarters Flight and 6 F/O's and 26 Sergeants – Gunner (G) and Air Gunner respectively, deleted from the two Flights (Amendment No. 16) |

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| | | | With the departure of these gunners each complete crew will number 9, when sufficient Navigators arrive to allow two for each aircraft. |
| | 29/6/45 | | Daily Servicing Echelon. |
| | | | 2 Corporals and 1 AC-ACH/GD deleted; and 1 Cpl Armament Assistant and 2 Cpls. Maintenance Assistant added. |
| | | | III Personnel. (Promotions) |
| | | | F/Lt. F. B. Waddy, R.C.A.F. (J.10234) appointed to the rank of acting S/Ldr. (Flight Commander) wef. 5.5.45. |
| | | | P/O. E. Hartley (185077) to F/O. wef. 23.3.45. |
| | | | F/Lt. G. L. Fletcher (J.9275) appointed to the rank of acting S/Ldr. (Flight Commander) wef.20th. May, 1945. |
| | | | Commissioning. |
| | | | 1389157 F/Sgt. J. C. Hindley appointed to a commission wef. 27.11.44. (Officer's No. 187778) |
| | | | 1388981 F/Sgt. P. G. Statt appointed to a commission wef. 9.1.45. (Officer's No. 196359) |
| | | | (b) Casualties. |
| | | | 1316918 F/S. Watkins (Nav.W) and 2207596 F/S. Burns (F/Eng) were very slightly injured during a low level attack o a motor vessel on 22nd. June. They sustained a bruised shoulder and cuts on the forehead respectively. |
| | | | IV. Honours and Awards. |
| | | | His Majesty the King approved the following immediate award of the Distinguished Flying Cross (Authority H.Q. ACSEA 725/25/2/1/P1 dated 17th May, 1945) :- |
| | | | P/O. J. A. Law (155341) |
| | | | 655693 W/O. C. D. Hudson |
| | | | Both these awards were for determination and devotion to duty resulting in the destruction of a Japanese cargo ship and escort vessel, against which this Squadron sent a force of six Liberators. |
| | | | His Majesty also approved the award of the D.S.O. to the Unit Commander, W/Cdr. L. Fox D.F.C. (36099) – Authority H.Q. ACSEA letter 725/25/P1, dated 26 May, 1945. |
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