

October 1944 Form 540

203 Squadron

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
			I. Introduction
			Throughout the month the task of moving, re-equipping and re-organization has proceeded according to plan. The month opened with the Squadron still based at Santa Cruz, a Detachment of five aircraft at Cochin and an advance party at Madura.
	3rd Oct		Three Wellingtons from Cochin were flown up to Santa Cruz. On landing, F/O. Morris punctured a tyre which presented something of a problem to the Maintenance Section who had packed up all equipment.
	4th Oct		The Main Rail Party left from Andheri Station in charge of Squadron Leader V. B. R. Gane. At the Station the party was joined by 40 new Air Gunner N.C.O's from Worli to make up the Liberator crews. The rail journey was scheduled to take 5 days, and this proved to be a somewhat excessive allowance; a Kitchen car was attached to the train and certain Stations scheduled as ration stops at which fresh meat and bread were to be picked up. Owing to the consistent tendency to run ahead of schedule these rations were not always collected.
	5th Oct		All serviceable Wellingtons at Santa Cruz were flown to Jodhpur by skeleton crews and handed over to No. 319 Maintenance Unit. The crews were then flown to Kolar by transport aircraft for training at No. 1673 Conversion Unit.
	7th Oct		2 coaches were detached from the special train at Jolarpet Junction for those aircrew and ground personnel proceeding to Kolar.
	8th Oct		At Trichinopoly the rail party changed train to the Metre gauge, involving transshipment of all heavy equipment. This was achieved in 4 hours, allowing time for an evening in the town.
Madura	9th Oct		Rail party reached Madura at 0430. The R.A.F. Station was built in 1942 since when, with the exception of one short period, it has been occupied only by a C. & M. Party. In the interval, the domestic accommodation, consisting of "basha" huts, has suffered to some extent. The technical site on the other hand, comprising permanent buildings of granite construction taken over from a Hindu religious community, provides good accommodation for the different Sections.
			The Operations Room occupies the central building, a modern Hindu Temple which has been successfully converted for the purpose.
			The runways are 2000 yds and 1600 yds in length. The only notable obstruction if formed by a large rock situated about 4 miles to the north of the airfield, which nevertheless provides a useful landmark.
Madura	17th Oct		F/Lt. Botterill and the Rear Party from Santa Cruz arrived at Madura.
	16th Oct		Wing Commander Fox flew in Harvard to Kolar to visit the crews doing conversion training. Good progress is being made.
Madura	25th Oct		A Liberator from Kolar landed at Madura in the course of a cross-country flight by Squadron Leader Gane and returned to Kolar with the Engineer, Signals and Armament Officers.
Cochin	28th Oct		Wing Commander Fox visited Cochin for 2 days to supervise winding up of the Detachment.
Madura			II. Weather
			October sees the onset of the rainy period, which lasts for 2 months. The thunder clouds build up during the day and storms which are of short duration, break during the late evening, or at night. Owing to the light gravelly subsoil the water drains away quickly.
			III. Operations.

		All operational crews are engaged on conversion training, and no operations have been carried out.
Cochin		IV. Cochin Detachment.
		As an operational Unit the Detachment terminated on October 5th when the aircrews left for the No. 1673 H.C.U., Kolar. The unserviceable Wellingtons remained at Cochin together with some maintenance personnel, and crews were sent from Madura to ferry these away when they became serviceable.
Madura		V. Sports & Entertainments.
		Football and cricket pitches were quickly prepared, and friendly games started. A local football league is being formed, in which the Squadron team will compete.
		The existing Canteen facilities are quite inadequate, and steps are being taken to have them extended. A camp cinema building is provided, but again this is too small, and no projection equipment is yet installed.
		Preliminary arrangements have been made for visits by E.N.S.A. Concert Parties and other entertainments.
		VI. Personnel.
		Strength of the Squadron
		Officers:- 38: W.O's & N.C.O's. – 239: Airmen – 257.
		Arrivals
	25th Oct	F/O. W. Moodie C.21348 – Radar Officer.
		Departures.
	1st Oct	F/Lt. Divens, C. J. J.15287 – Gunnery Leader F/O. Jones, R. M. F/O. Pearce, C. G. Aus. 400566 P/O. Woodcock, S. L.
	20th Oct	F/O. Clarke, G. F. S. C.21649 – Radar Officer.