

December 1943 Form 540

203 Squadron

Air27/1199

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
			Month of December 1943
			I. Introductory.
			The month of December was marked by the commencement of operations in India. Courses on a large scale were organised in Ceylon, Bhopal and Poona..
			II. Personal.
			1. Command.
			The Squadron was commanded throughout the month by W/Cdr. C. A. Masterman O.B.E., D.F.C.
			2. Postings. Arrivals.
			F/Lt. Harrod was attached to the Squadron for training purposes and F/Lt. Walsh was post to assist him.
			3. Casualties.
			The Squadron sustained no casualties during the month.
			4. Visits.
			The A.O.C. S/Cdr. Mackworth, C.B.E., D.F.C. pain an official visit to the Squadron arriving at Santa Cruz on the 29th, visiting the Tannery that day. Lunching at the Officers Mess on the 30th.
			III. Operations.
			The first operation was carried out on the ??? December by S/Ldr. Scotney with F/Lt. Gane. The duty being to give A/S cover to H.M.S. Suffolk on firing exercises.
			A Total of 21? sorties totalling 149? Hours 2?5 minutes was flown during the month on Convoy escorts, A/S patrols and sweeps of shipping lanes between Bombay and Colombo. All convoys were met.
			No sightings of U. Boats or enemy forces were made during the month by aircraft of the Squadron.
			Although 16 Wellington aircraft Mk.XIII were on the strength of the Squadron, operations were limited by the lack of serviceable aircraft due to the shortage of spares.
			IV. Training.
			165?? Hours 25? minutes were flown on non operational flights. These including training flights with day and night ferrying of crews for courses and the usual air tests.
			Lectures were organised by F/Lt. Harrod and F/Lt. Walsh on G.R. procedures based on the new instructions I.E. Indian Ocean G. R. Tactical Instructions. On December 11th. F/O. Selwyn was flown to Colombo for a Ship Recognition Course.
			V. Sports & Entertainments.
			Various sports meetings took place and plans were made fro a football pitch. Badminton was in demand and a sports officer was nominated to organise this game and fix up one of the hangers for use at night time with artificial light.
			A dance was held in the Officer's Mess on the 21st. to enable members to

			make friends and possibly be invited out during the festive season.
			On Christmas Day the airmen were served their Christmas dinner in time old fashion by the officers and Senior N.C.O's, the officers having been previously been entertained at the bar by the sergeants.
			VI. General.
			The Tannery was more or less completed as the Squadron H.Q. during the month, where the whole business of the Squadron was conducted except for the Photographic Section which was installed in buildings specially built for the purpose at S.H.Q., Santa Cruz. The Santa Cruz Operations Room was used for all operational briefings.
			Wing Commander
			Officer Commanding,
			No. 203 Squadron,
			Royal Air Force.
			Note: Although operations are mentioned, there are no Form 541's for the Squadron in the records held by Kew.