

February 1944 Form 540

203 Squadron

Air27/1200

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
			Month of February 1944
			I. Introductory.
			This month has shown the Squadron dispersed over India with detachments at Cochin, Madras, and Ratmalana and a temporary detachment at Vizagapatam. The Cochin detachment has maintenance crews for 40 hour inspections.
			II. Personal.
			1. Command
			Wing Commander C. A Masterman O.B.E., D.F.C. commanded the Squadron during the month except when on leave when S/L. D. G. Hunter took over. W/Cdr. Masterman was also called upon to take over the command of Santa Cruz Station for a few days during the absence of W/Cdr. Smythies.
			2. Postings.
			Arrivals.
			F?/O Smith and F/O. Morris, both complete with crews. P/O. Elliott joined the Squadron as the new Intelligence Officer.
			Departures.
			?/L. Harvey and F/O. Loken? were posted from the Squadron and our three American Navigators, F/O. Gordon, F/O Cormier? and F/O. Allender left to join American Units.
			3. Casualties.
			No casualties were suffered by the squadron during the current month.
			4. Visits.
			Air Vice Marshal Baker S.A.S.O. Air Command S.E. Asia together with the A.O.C. 225 Group Air Commodore Mackworth visited the squadron on the 24th. and lunched at the Officers' Mess.
			III. Operations.
			Sorties from Santa Cruz showed a decrease at 28 during the month, but our detachments were much more active. Sorties from Cochin show only a slight increase due to the fact that our detachments at St. Thomas' Mount was rushed to Vizagapatam for a few days and Cochin had to send aircraft to replace them. The Madras detachment was terminated on the 22nd. but on the 24th. four aircraft were despatched to Ratmalana. Shortage of petrol en route caused one aircraft to jettison Depth Charges and some equipment. The following day therefore a further aircraft was sent to Ratmalana. This one had engine trouble and was obliged to jettison the load of Dept Charges.
			Sorties and Hours were as follow:-
			Sorties Hours
			Santa Cruz 28 174.42
			Cochin 22 149.42
			Madras (St. Thomas Mount.) 8 62.28
			Vizagapatam 4 25.37
			Ratmalana 12 102.00 ??
			74 504.29
			All operations were A/S work, cover being given to convoys. A/S searches and sweeps of shipping lanes have been carried out. No sightings of U/Boats

			were made during the period under review.
			IV. Training.
			Training flights have had to be drastically reduced and completely cancelled during the latter half of the month owing to the shortage of tyres. Some bombing and Fighter affiliation practice was successfully carried out in the early part of the month and many Naval Officers from escort group were taken up. Courses were still being held at Colombo and Bhopal and one officer is at Amarda Road on a Bombing Leaders Course. Films showing the value of Radar were shown to aircrews.
			V. Sports.
			In its sports fixtures the squadron had a most successful month. The football team were the winners of each of the three matches played. The softball did even better by playing and winning five games; which put them at the head of the Bombay League.
			Inter section football matches were also played, and Badminton continued to be popular. A Badminton team was formed towards the end of the month, and they were successful in winning their first match against S.H.Q.
			S/L Hunter for
			Wing Commander Officer Commanding,
			No. 203 Squadron R.A.F.