

January 1944 Form 540

203 Squadron

Air27/1200

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
			Month of January 1944
			I. Introductory.
			The New Year was marked by increased operations and the opening up of a detachment of 3 Aircraft at Cochin, a small detachment operated from St. Thomas' Mount for a few days.
			II. Personal
			1. Command.
			The Squadron continued to be commanded by W/Cdr. C. A. Masterman OBE, DFC. throughout the month.
			2. Postings. Arrivals.
			F/O. Craig & Crew were posted to the Squadron.
			Departures.
			F/Lt. Harrod ceased to be attached to the Squadron. F/O. Haffery posted to U.K. for Pilot's Course.
			3. Casualties.
			No casualties were sustained by the Squadron during the Month.
			4. Visitors.
			On January 29 th . at 17.30 Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Commander, S.E.A.C. arrived for an official visit to the Squadron and detachments of other Units under Santa Cruz Control. After our C.O. W/Cdr. Masterman had been introduced the latter introduced the Supreme Commander to each officer of the Squadron and Lord Louis Mountbatten spoke a few words to every officer. The Supreme Commander was also introduced to a few selected aircrew and airmen and he then addressed the whole Squadron as well as other members of H.M. Forces in a field behind the Tannery. It was a good pep talk and undoubtedly was a stimulus to the morale of all who were privileged to hear him. Attached are a few photographs taken during his visit.
			III. Operations.
			Owing to improved serviceability of aircraft the activities of detachments, operational hours were nearly trebled at 439 Hours 11 ⁷ minutes i.e. 61 Sorties.
			The sorties were all A/S work, convoys, searches and sweeps of shipping lanes both off the East & West coasts of India. The hours were made up as follows:-
			Santa Cruz 306 Hrs. 29 ⁷⁷ mins. 41 Sorties. Cochin 107 Hrs. 09 ⁷⁷ mins. 16 Sorties. (St. Thomas Mt.) Madras 24 Hrs. 33 mins. 4 Sorties.
			No sightings of U Boats were made by A/C of this Squadron during the month. During the Month Deputy Flight Commanders flew to Sampre and Jawani to inspect the sites as possible bases for future detachments.
			IV. Training.
			Although only 73 hrs. 10 mins. were flown on non-operational flights they consisted of many more sorties of short duration, particular attention being made to practice bombing. Members of the Royal Navy were taken in many of these trips to enable them to get to know and understand aircrew and to

			appreciated the difficulties involved when aircraft are escorting convoys.
			Courses were still in great prominence particularly at Colombo and Bhopal.
			V. Sports and Entertainments.
			Football matches have aroused great interest and keen competitive matches have been played between flights and sections and neighbouring Units. Badminton has been in full swing, matches have also been organised and games well contested. Swimming has been very popular especially amongst the aircrew.
			An informal dance was held in the Officers Mess on the 29 th .
			Wing Commander
			Officer Commanding,
			No. 203 Squadron,
			Royal Air Force.