

From: O.C. 292 Squadron Ceylon Flight, Sigiriya
To: O.C. 292 Squadron, Jessore.
Date: 6th July, 1944.

Weekly report – 29th June to 5th July.

1. On Friday last a message was received via the Operations Room that my aircraft HF945 was ready for collection. However, it was not possible for me to get away until Sunday, when I made the journey by truck. On arriving at Ratmalana, I was informed that the aircraft had not even been looked at since my last visit. No one had any idea as to the origin of the message: Altogether too mysterious for me:
2. However, a teleprinter signal has now arrived for me to the effect that the tyre change has now been carried out, and I have checked by telephone that this is the case. Accordingly I intend going down to Ratmalana again tomorrow, Saturday, and combining the trip with a visit to 222 Group, where I have one or two problems for the attention of S.A.S.O.
3. I should like to confirm that this Headquarters as from 1st July will be responsible for all returns, etc., in respect of the two detachments at Ratmalana and China Bay. It was not possible to assume responsibility previously as without a definite deadline, a certain confusion would have arisen in the apportioning of the responsibilities of the Station concerned in such returns.
4. Reference my paragraph NO. 5 in last week's report, I have decided to drop the complaint re Pharparmaa??? because of the extreme difficulty in getting clear-cut facts. If there are any other of the Squadron's aircraft or crews to come through there, though, I would definitely suggest that it would be well worth the while of the C.O. to take a trip up there. Fulton tells me that there are three of our baricks standing on a piece of ground which it is well known becomes a bog in a few weeks' time, when the monsoon breaks there. The Engineer Officer is reputed to have justified his action with the remark that they would never be serviceable anyhow. The worst of Fulton's experiences was that the intercom sets of three members of his crew were removed from the Transit Store on the direct orders of the Wing Commander commanding the station and given to the crew of another aircraft going through to England. When Fulton discovered this and demanded write-off action in respect of the equipment (which of course was on personal charge) this was refused. For three days after the aircraft was otherwise ready for departure, he was delayed awaiting write-off action, and it was only when he flatly refused to leave the place until something was done that they consented to strike the items off the clothing cards. Then, as there were no replacements available, he was permitted to take off on the journey down here with only one headset and microphone for the entire crew. Further, the map with which he was supplied, did not cover the place of destination, but stopped about 30 miles short. The aerodrome was marked on the whit margin.
5. Yesterday I visited my China Bay detachment. I contacted the Station Commander (Group Capt. J. M? King), and he was quite happy as far as the detachment was concerned, but he was still fuming under what he considered a slight, in that when F/Lt. Bird went up there to conduct the enquiry into the prang of Walrus 807 he did not report to him, but just took the evidence direct: This, he felt, was hardly official procedure:! Naturally, I apologised profusely for Bird, and promised to point out to him in no mean terms, the error of his ways. This information explains why Bird said that Group would not be taking any action on the findings of the enquiry. The biggest bother of the China Bay crowd, as also it is with Ratmalana, is the question of P.O.R.{???} action for the period prior to 26th May. Some poor blokes have had no pay or allowances since they arrived in Ceylon, and have been merely living on casual payments. That sort of thing is all right for a while in the case of a single man, but does not work with chaps with wives in England. This should now be sorted out alright, as I have supplied 222 Group with all the necessary information to enable them to complete the necessary action.

6. On the 1st July I despatched to China Bay a new 3-ton truck, and detached one of my D.M.T's to them. They say this has made life 100% better for them up there, and it has made them independent of the station M.T. section, who are at times a little trying, I believe.

7. The maintenance organisation is now running like clockwork, and we are still getting a generous measure of co-operation from the various sections on the station, in matters beyond our scope.

8. The big thing on the agenda at the moment is the imminent move to Kankesanturai. It is still the intention to move "at a date to be determined later, approximating to 1st August". As this is a top-secret matter, I will not discuss it further here: suffice it to say that the matter is well in hand, and that I will let you have dates etc., when known, by signal.

Squadron Leader,
Commanding, 292 Squadron, Ceylon Flight