

## February 1945: Form 540

357 Squadron

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
Jessore	February	1945	Part I – Operations
			The month of February 1945 saw a further increase in the number of sorties flown by 357 (S.D.) Sqdn. However this was only to be expected due to the increasing requirements of the Sponsoring Forces & the almost daily expansion of the Squadron. An advance of 19 sorties was made on our previous best month January 1945; for in all 124 sorties were flown. The percentage of successes was very similar to last month, being 73% against 75% during January. No doubt this figure would have been higher, but for the fact that extremely bad weather was encountered over Dropping Zones in Burma & French Indo-China during the period Feb 11th to Feb 21st. This is easily shown by the number of unsuccessful sorties due to bad weather made on "Operation Bazaar" in French Indo-China. 10 sorties were made on this target during the period stated, & with the exception of one of these being unsuccessful due to technical trouble developing in the aircraft, all were unsuccessful due to the fact that 10/10 Cu cloud was encountered over the Dropping area. After Feb 21st however, all further sorties made on this target were successful, due to the solitary fact that the belt of bad weather, which had been covering this area, had lifted.
			Statistics show that of the 124 sorties flown, 90 were entirely successful, 19 were unsuccessful owing to no reception being seen over the target area, 13 were unsuccessful due to bad weather (mainly 10/10 ths cloud) being experienced over the D.Z., 1 was unsuccessful due to a Navigation failure & 1 was unsuccessful due to technical trouble developing in the aircraft.
			The work the Squadron performed was as hitherto, an amalgamation of the requirements of the Sponsoring Forces namely – I.S.L.D., Force 136, 'Z' Force, "D" Division, O.S.S., & 'E' Group. whose requirements were detailed in brief last month.
			The Squadron's aircraft operated mainly over Burma, but it would be noteworthy to add that there was a great increase of sortie flown over French Indo-China but these were on a smaller scale to those previously mentioned.
			The month was marred by the unfortunate crash of Aus.421464 W/O J. W. Reid & Crew who were operating in a Dakota KJ927 on "Cloak?" on a day light sortie on Feb 10th. The mission was carried out successfully, but extremely bad weather was encountered over the Chin Hills on the return flight & although no details are yet to hand, it is thought that the a/c must have become uncontrollable & crashed in the vicinity of Muint Victoria (10,018 ft.) There were three other Dakotas on this target at the same time as W/O Reid & the other crews reported seeing W/O Reid leave the target & s/c Base, which is the last that was seen of him. The pilots of the other Dakotas reported that the only way they were able to return to Base was by flying at 15,000' & avoiding cloud patches at that height over the Chin Hills.
			Aus.421464 W/O J. W. Reid
			1534015 W/O J. Hartley
			1395542 F/S. J. Longhurst
			Aus.425109 W/O J. Begg
			2209199 F/S. T. Nathaniel
			AI posted as "Missing on Operations" Feb. 10, 1945.
			A synopsis of the work carried out by the Squadron during the month,

			showing (a) the code name of the operation, (c) & (b) the Country & approx. area in which the D.Z. was to be found, (d) successful & unsuccessful Liberator sorties (e) successful & unsuccessful Dakota sorties & (f) total sorties on each operation, is detailed overleaf. This of course, will form a condensation of the Forms 541 & for the complete details for each operation, & sortie, the Form 541 should be referred to.					
			Synopsis of Work Carried Out					
			Sorties					
			Liberators		Dakotas			
Code Name	Country	Area	S.	U.	S.	U.	Total Sorties	Remarks
Dilwyn	Burma	Hsenwi	9	1	1		11	
Future	Burma	Maymyo	3	2	1		6	The first two sorties were unsuccessful for the D.Z. was found eventually 5 miles E. of the briefed D.Z. on a well wooded hill.
Label	Burma	Hsamong hkam		1			1	Systematic search, but no reception.
Bittern	Burma	Hsenwi?			1	1	2	No reception on 1 sortie.
Grain	Burma	Meiktala	1			2	3	Both Dakotas saw no reception
Burglar	Burma	Yamethin	2	1			3	
Cloak	Burma	Chauk			4		4	Aus.421464 W/O J. W. Reid crashed
Ramrose	Burma	Yenang Yaung Coastal Area		1	5		6	
Blood hound	Burma	Wa States			1	2	3	Bad weather on 2 sorties.
Bug	Burma	Bassein			1	1	2	No reception seen on either sortie. Blind drop was made on 1st.
Manual	Burma	Kaledan	2		2	1	5	
Bulge	Burma	Hsipaw				1	1	Complete search, but no reception.
Nation	Burma	Pegu			1		1	
Governor	Burma	Mongkung				2	2	10/10 cloud over target on both sorties.
Character	Burma	Kemapyu	1		8	3	12	On 3 occasions nor reception seen.
Heavy	Burma	Kengtung	1		1		2	
Binge	Burma	Prome				2	2	No reception.
Crusader	Burma	Toungoo				1	1	No reception.
Barge	Burma	Lower Chindlon			19		19	
	Burma	Rangoon	1				1	Dropping Nickels on Rangoon area.
Hebrides	Malaya	Kelantan	3	1			4	
Sargent	Malaya	Patani	1				1	
Mandate	Malaya	Kelantan	1				1	
Evidence	Malaya	Perak	1				1	
Fighter	Malaya	Kelantan	1				1	
Funnel	Malaya	Perak	1				1	
Pontoon	Malaya	Kelantan	2				2	
Polka	French-Indo-China	Vientiane	1				1	

Bazaar	French-Indo-China		10	10			20	10/10 cloud over target Feb 12th – 21st.
Satirist	French-Indo-China	Vinh			1		{blank}	
Desert	French-Indo-China	Sieng Khong Ventiane	2				2	
Globe	China	Chianting	1	1			2	
			44	18	46	16	124	53% successful
			It would, no doubt, be of interest here to note the following information which has been received from the field indicating the success or otherwise of the drops. Of course, it will be appreciated that not many of the field positions have facilities to send back messages, but those messages that we have received are quoted below:-					
			Date	Operation	Remarks			Pilot
			19/2/45	Dilwyn/Squirrel 7	"All containers arrived safe. Only one plane flew down lights & dropped well. One flew across bottom of leg, but dropped near. One dropped in other paddy fields distant one mile."			F/O J. Churchill
				Dilwyn/Squirrel 8				Aus.408361 W/O R. W. Bain
				Dilwyn/Bear Squirrel 2				Aus.421387 W/O W. G. Petley
			19/2/45	Ramrose/Rhine 4	"First class drop. Four containers & thirteen packages collected."			Aus.421792 P/O J. R. Collister
			19/2/45	Future/Bison 6	"only aircraft heard was one near Maymyo at 2000 hrs & one moving S. to N. at 2300 hrs."			Can.J.4115 F/L J.D. Lamb
			20/2/45	Dilwyn/Monkey 9	"Good work R.A.F. Everything found."			Aus.408361 W/O R. W. Bain
			20/2/45	Burgler/Hippo 5	"Aircraft flew three times within one mile of D.Z. Break in clouds & good light over target. Level cloud at least three thousand feet."			P/O. F. C. Cooke
			20/2/45	Character/Hyena 1	"Very good drop of personnel. 16 chaps now present of which 9 fell into forest 8 from good height up to two miles from DZ. Little & 5 O.R's unlocated. Am combing forest for rest of stores widely scattered."			Aus.14407 F/L. P. W. Bowles F/S F. F. Bush

			22/2/45	Heavy/Wolfs'	"Considered main flare path hidden from view unless plane overhead. Fires alight till midnight. Plane made two runs & left area. Layout of lights revised.."	Aus.14407 F/L. P. W. Bowles
			25/2/45	Character/ Hyena 11 Hyena 7,8, 9,10	"Good drops Daks & last Lib. Others very high & inaccurate."	F/S. F. F. Bush
			26/2/45	Satiriste? I	"Well received. Congratulations on accuracy of drop."	S/Ldr. T. P. O'Brien
			26/2/45	Future/Bison	"Thanks for drop. One container opened mid-air. Suggest R.A.F. NOT switch on lights for dropping."	F/O J. Churchill
			24/2/45	Pontoon/ Reno 1 Reno 2.	"Safe & perfect landing on correct D.Z. All containers less 4 collected. Request congratulate crews of both a/c on perfect job."	P/O. F. C. Cooke F/O J. Churchill
			24/2/45	Character/ Ferret 1. Ferret 2. Hyena 3 & 4	"Group landed safely exception Guthrie fractured tibia. 22 containers received. Previous day 12 containers."	S/Ldr. T. P. O'Brien Aus.415670 P/O R. A. Black
			23/2/45	Manual/ Mouse 4 Mouse 5	"Acknowledge drop 24 packages 3 containers plus free drop"	F/S. F. F. Bush W/O. E. Wheelhouse
			24/2/45	Dilwyn/ Gazell 5	"Four containers & only 12 free drop packages received. One package missing."	Aus.421702 P/O. T. A. Collister
			24/2/45	Hebrides/ Trumpet 4. Trumpet 5. Trumpet 6.	"Two planes grand drop. Thank R.A.F."	Can.J.6644 F/L. T. H. Lee Can.J.4115 F/L. J. D. Lamb Aus.421387 W/O. A. G. Petley
			22/2/45	Bazaar 74 75 76 59	"We received 28 containers 4 small containers 1 cloth package 36 tyres."	F/O. J. Churchill P/O. F. C. Cooke Aus.408361 W/O. R. W. Bain

			21/2/45	Bazaar 82 83	"We received 22 containers & 9 packages & containers 2nd plane broke in flight. The A.O.P's in Cambodia signalled planes over numerous places & gave general alert in Cambodia. Jap suspicious very much aroused as planes circled round brick kiln for a long time."	W/O. S. H. Seed			
			26/2/45	Sargent/Coraet? 1	"Contact established with party."	Can.6644 F/L. T. H. Lee			
			4/2/45	Bittern II	"Received supply well total six containers but one chute didn't open."	W/O. F.Wheelhouse			
			26/2/45	Evidence	"Request Aircrew concerned should be thanked for their most successful drop"	W/Cdr. L. M. Hodges			
					Aircraft on the Squadron at the end of February 1945 consisted of:-				
				11 Liberators VI's	11 Dakota IV's	1 Harvard	1 Auster		
				"W"KH160	"Z"KH216	"O"KJ914	"F"KJ919	FS794	MJ341
				"S"KH166	"Q"KH257	"G"KJ920	"H"KJ921		
				"R"KH273	"X"KH326	"J"KJ922	"K"KJ924		
				"V"KH313	"U"KH323	"L"KJ925	"M"KJ926		
				"Y"KH391	"P"KH395	"D"KJ889	"N"KG490		
				KH325		KJ913			
					Total Operational Hours Flown – February 1945	1250.41			
					Total Operational Sorties Flown – February 1945	124			
					Part II - Administration				
Jessore	February	1945			The month opened with a concentrated security drive. It was circulated in D.R.O's that in view of the nature of this unit, as high a standard of security as possible must be maintained.				
	Feb. 3				Censorship was stressed to a very high degree.				
					the under-mentioned Officers were awarded full power of Subordinate Commanders under the provisions of K.R's & A.C.I's with immediate effect:-				
					W/Cdr. L. M. Hodges D.S.O., D.F.C.	O.C. 357 Sqdn.			
					W/Cdr. P. G. D. Farr D.F.C.	O.C. 358 Sqdn.			
					S/Ldr. E. C. Hucklebridge	136 R&S.U.			
					S/Ldr. J. Raven	S.A.O., S.H.Q. Jessore			
	Feb. 12				The posting of Aus.423804 F/O. E. T. Matley to take a Captains course in Canada caused a great upheaval in Officers' Duties on the Squadron, for it came to light that F/O. Matley had held the offices of Squadron Parachute Officer, Squadron Gas Officer & Squadron Unit Savings Officer. These duties were detailed respectively to Can.J27577 F/O. W. B. Arnold, F/O. D. H. Hulme & Aus.410782 P/O. K. Younger. P/O. Younger also assumed the duties of Jessore Safety Range Officer.				
					The glad tidings that Air Letters & Air Mail Letters under an ounce could be sent to the U.K. postage free was warmly welcomed on the Squadron, but it was accompanied by many 'bitches' from Canadian & Australian personnel.				
	Feb. 14				A Committee of Adjustment was appointed as under to safeguard &				

		administer the disposal of the effects of Aus.421464 W/O. J. W. Reid, W/O. J. Hartley, F/S. J. Longhurst, F/S. T. Nathaniel & Aus.425109 W/O. J. Begg who were posted "Missing" on 10/2/45.
		President Aus.410782 P/O. K. Younger
		Members W/O. J. H. Middleton Aus.421387 W/O. W. G. Petley.
		The 50 Rps prize for the best design for a Squadron Badge was awarded to 1188312 L.A.C. Hoad, A. Many interesting & novel designs were submitted.
		Welfare.
		The Wing Educational Officer stayed at Jessore for 1 week – 22/3/45 to 1/2/45 for the purpose of interviewing personnel wishing to see him.
	Feb. 14	The Station Welfare Committee held a meeting in the Educational Amenities Room at 1700 hrs on the 14th Feb.
		The following Members of the Committee were in attendance.
		S/Ldr. J. Scott – Station Welfare Officer.
		Sgt. Campbell – Station Signals Representative
		Aus.418600 F/O. K. Buchanan – 357 Sqdn. Welfare Officer
		Cpl. F. Winrle, S.H.Q. Representative
		P/O. T. Kay – 358 Sqdn. Welfare Officer
		L.A.C. Subsiam – I.A.F. Representative
		W/O. Barrisi – 136 R&S.U. Welfare Officer
		It was agreed to accept the offer of H.Q.R.A.F. Bengal/Burma to have a weekly ENSA show on the station. It was thought that the loss on the rebate from the Cinema on those nights when ENSA visited was insufficient reason for rejecting H.Q.'s offer.
		Other items on the agenda were as follows:-
		1. Reservation of Non-Reservation of seats for ENSA shows.
		2. Housing of visiting ENSA artists.
		3. Gramophone circuit & distribution of records.
		4. Welfare Amenities – General.
		The Meeting was closed at 1845 hrs.
	Feb. 28	H.Q.R.A.F. Bengal/Burma Welfare were approached for a consolidated list of leave Centres in India in order to aid personnel on the Squadron desirous of leave, but who have no address to which to apply.
		Recreation
		Hockey fixtures were arranged for the month of February as follows.
		Feb. 5 Maintenance v H.Q. & Signals
		Feb. 6 A.I.E's v M.T.
		Feb. 8 H.Q. & Sigs v Flights
		Feb. 9 Officers & A/Crew v A.I.E's
		Feb. 10 Flights v M.T.
		Feb. 12 Officers & A/Crew v Maintenance
		Feb. 13 M.T. v H.Q. & Sigs.
		Feb. 14 Flight v Officers & A/Crew
		Feb. 15 Maintenance v A.I.E's
		Also the Football knock-out Cup Competition commenced & much enthusiasm was displayed over these matches.
		Part III – Personnel
		P.O.R's R.A.F. dated 15/2/45
		Posted to 357 Squadron ex U.K. w/e/f 13/12/44

			116762 F/L. G. A. Turner
			124406 F/L. P. Arkell
			77370 F/L. J. Williams, D.F.C.
			49333 F/L. L. G. A. Reed, D.F.C.
			148804 F/O. A. A. Morley
			Posted to 357 Sqdn from No 6 R.F.U. wef 18/12/44
			163433 F/O. R. D. Lister
			165514 P/O. M. V. Douse wef 3/1/45
			183921 P/O. J. Poulton wef 2/1/45
			Posted from 357 Sqdn to R.A.F. Poona wef 7/2/45
			186160 P/O. F. S. Quinn
			Posted from 357 Sqdn to H.Q. 185 Wing wef 24/1/45
			186170 P/O. D. Manser, D.F.M.
			186225 P/O. G. C. Cowling
			Promotions
			131571 F/O. G. Smith promoted F/L wef 25/9/44
			158030 P/O. R. L. Rouse (Tech Radar) promoted to F/O (W.S.) wef 23/9/44
			165157 P/O. T. S. Hunter (G.D.(P) promoted F/O (W/S) wef 5/11/44
			137614 F/O. J. Irvine (G.D.N.) promoted to F/L (W.S) wef 20/11/44
			165369 P/O. G. N. Gillin (G.D.N.) promoted to F/O (W.S) wef 2/12/44
			190065 P/O. B. F. Payton (G.D.N) appointed to commissioned rank on probation in the G.D. Branch of R.A.F.V.R. wef 5/12/44
			188798 P/O. R. Rigg (G.D.W.G) appointed to commissioned rank on probation in the G.D. Branch of R.A.F.V.R. wef 11/11/44
			Part IV – Honours & Awards.
			His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Distinguished Service Order to 159031 F/O. J. Churchill, D.F.C. for duties carried out whilst with No. 357 (S.D.) Sqdn.