

**April 1945: Form 540**

358 Squadron

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
R.A.F. Station Jessore	April 1945		
	1		Operations Order No. 43.
	3		Operations Order No. 44.
	6		Operations Order No. 45.
	9		Operations Order No. 46.
	11		Operations Order No. 47.
	12		Operations Order No. 48.
	13		Operations Order No. 49.
	15		Operations Order No. 50.
	18		Operations Order No. 51.
	20		Operations Order No. 52.
	22		Operations Order No. 53.
	24		Operations Order No. 54.
	26		Operations Order No. 55.
	27		Operations Order No. 56.
	28		Operations Order No. 57.
	29		Operations Order No. 58.
	30		Operations Order No. 59.
			Summary of Operation in April 1945.
			Increased commitment during April gave 358 S.D. Squadron the opportunity of mounting more sorties with a proportionate improvement in the number of successes – by which is meant sorties in which drops were made and also in which drops were successful from the point of view of the people at the receiving end.
			Of the total of 121 sorties mounted 89 were completed, representing 73.55% success. Total operational hours flown were 1232.35 hours.
			On the debit side, chief reasons for 32 sorties not being successful was the absence of receptions at D.Zs. This was no doubt due to the ground situation becoming more fluid generally; with the advance of our troops in Burma and the increased Japanese Military activity in French Indo China & Siam.
			Uncompleted sorties are classified as follows:-
			No reception. 14 Wrong Reception 2 Weather 8 Technical 8
			The longest sortie made during March was equalled by F/Lt. Robinson who on a trip to Malaya, logged 20 hours 39 minutes.
			Crews individual efforts during the month are summarised as follows:-
			F/Lt. Roe 11 sorties. 9 completed. Reports from the field:-
			1/4 "Good drop. Unfortunately this DZ blown".
			12/4 "Congratulate pilots. Good drops. 28 containers and 10 packages found.
			W/O. Bullen. 10 sorties. 9 completed.
			1/4 "Many thanks RAF, Unfortunately this DZ blown".

		18/4 "Drop widely scattered. Many missing."
		29/4 "Received drop all right. Thanks to Pilot for very good show."
		24/4 "Drop last night O.K. thanks."
		F/Lt. Bridges. 10 sorties. 7 completed.
		1/4 "We believe A/c. failed to reach us though weather over here fairly good."
		F/Lt. Robinson. 9 sorties. 6 completed.
		1/4 "We believe A/c. failed to reach us though weather over here fairly good."
		3/4 "Three Libs. only. Dak not seen. Dropped 35. Understand R.A.F. want perfect conditions but one good DZ soon compromised if used too often."
		9/4 "Field report successful."
		13/4 "Two Libs. completely successful."
		W/O. Drummond. 9 sorties. 6 completed.
		3/4 "Drop O.K. one radio set smashed."
		12/4 "Thank you for useful drop."
		26/4 "Operations successful."
		18/4 "Drop widely scattered. Many missing."
		F/O. Smith. 8 sorties. 7 completed.
		1/4 "Many thanks. Good drop. This D.Z. blown."
		9/4 "Lib. stores high and wide."
		18/4 "20 chutes received on 18th. Many thanks for stores. Whole village saw dropping because A/c. dropped high especially on last tow runs."
		S/Ldr. Sharpe. 8 sorties 6 completed.
		1/4 "Lib. tactics and accuracy perfect."
		13/4 "Two Libs. completely successful."
		29/4 "Good drop."
		24/4 "Bloodiest drop I've ever seen. First plane flew down and off lights. Dropped in jungle."
		F/Lt. Monks. 8 sorties. 6 completed.
		12/4 "Congratulate pilots a good drop. 28 containers & 10 packages found (Total load dropped)".
		22/4 "Received drop O.K."
		F/Sgt. Matthews. 8 sorties. 4 completed.
		18/4 "Congratulations on first class drop of stores much appreciated."
		28/4 "Drop excellent."
		26/4 "Excellent drop last night. All chutes close to fires. Picked up 11 containers 5 packages."
		F/Lt. Jones. 7 sorties. 6 completed.
		18/4 "Drop widely scattered. Many Missing."
		30/4 "Congratulate pilot on perfect drop of personnel and stores."
		W/O. Adams. 7 sorties. 5 completed.
		9/4 "A/C. too early over D.Z. area. No signals laid out."
		24/4 "Only one Lib. 24th. Lovely drop. Hundreds keen fighters waiting arms."
		F/O. Hedley. 5 sorties. 5 completed.

		F/Lt. Mayger. 4 sorties. 1 completed.
		W/Cdr. Farr. 4 sorties. 4 completed.
		27/4 "Stores drop excellent but party had heavy landing. One man sprained ankle."
		F/Lt. Davison. 5 sorties. 4 completed.
		F/O. Stuart. 8 sorties. 4 completed.
		General:
		During the month the Squadron flew a grand total of 1317 hours 45 minutes (Operational 1232.35 hours. Non-op (Between Base and A.L.Gs 69.00 hours and Training 16.10 hours). Flying this month has been intensive for the reduced number of crews available nevertheless more sorties were mounted than in March and a higher percentage of successful drops was attained. (73.55%) W/C. Farr, S/L. Sharpe, F/L. Jones and F/L. Monks dropped loads of "Joes" for the first time during the month. S/L. Sharpe, F/L. Monks and F/L. Davison completed tours of 300 hours during the month.
		Serviceability:
		Serviceability was well maintained during the month.
		'B' Flight:
		Serviceability good. 'W' gave constant trouble with fuel pressure drops and was ineffective from 2nd. to 21st. inst. It later became serviceable but developed leaking tanks and was U/S again. Aircraft 'O' and its replacement were allotted away for tank changes. One aircraft failed to take off through the rigger omitting to inspect the tyres on D.I. Two aircraft turned back through technical trouble, one a double engine failure and one C.S.O. trouble. A/c. 'Y' (F/L. Mayger) returned to base after eight hours with an unexplained phenomenal petrol consumption of 211 g.p.h. 'O' returned on one occasion on 3 engines. Aircraft 'X' KH312 (F/Lt. Robinson) was ditched and lost on 1st May after two engines had failed.
		'A' Flight.
		Cox's Bazaar airfield was used extensively by aircraft from 'A' Flight. F/S. Matthews force landed her in 'K' 392 and returned in KH271 which had been left here in March. 'L' 925 force landed last month was brought from Cox's Bazaar back to base. F/S Matthews, in KH271 taxied into a tarboiler on 28th April, damaging the prop of No. 4 engine and tearing out the reduction gear. This A/c. was sent to 136 R.S.U. for repair.
		Aircrews:
		'A' Flight had an average of 8 crews and 'B' Flight an average of 7 crews available during the month. Three 'B' flight Captains became tour expired during the month leaving 4 effective and one crew under training. 'A' Flight had 3 Captains who completed 300 hours during the month.
		Training:
		No training was carried out in 'A' Flight this month. In 'B' flight training progressed rather slowly as all serviceable aircraft were required for operations. F/Lt. Mayger was successfully soloed at night and commenced ops. on 15.4.45. F/O. Wilson soloed day and is under training at night.
		III. Personnel.
	3	W/O. J. A. Buchanan & W/O. R. H. Cross appointed to Commissioned rank as Pilot officers wef. 7.12.44.
	29	F/O. L. N. Wilson, bitten by a searay when swimming at Akyab. Flown back from Akyab to base and admitted to Hospital, Calcutta.

			IV. Honours and Awards.							
	13		90056 F/Sgt. Primmer, F. E. (F.2.E.) 1449999 Sgt. Malcomm? W. I. (F.M.T.)	Mentioned in Despatches. London Gazette dated 1.1.45.						
			V. General							
	7		R.A.A.F. Liaison Officer, W/Comdr. G. A. Pape, visited all Australian personnel accompanied by Welfare officer, R.A.A.F. and S/Ldr. Landray, H.Qs, 231 Group.							
	9		M.T. Accident on Main Road, nr. Santela Camp. One Indian coolie was knocked down and injured; later admitted to Civil Hospital, Jessore for treatment. "Patient" later "escaped" from hospital on 11th April.							
	10		Severe gale struck the area at approx. 1915 hours followed by an electrical storm and heavy rain. Considerable damage was done to roofs and temporary premises throughout the Domestic site and the airfield buildings. Work was not affected.							
	12		Officer Commanding, W/Comdr. P. G. D. Farr (DFC) and Station Commander G/Capt. W. T. F. Wightman (DFC, AFC) flew to Calcutta for Station & Squadron Commanders' Conference at Strategic Air Force H.Qs.							
	13		Another storm struck the area. Although the wind velocity was not so high as on the 10th. much more rain fell and several buildings collapsed. The M.T. Section was reduced to a sorry state as three of the six bays completely collapsed. Several billets became unsafe as the roofs are now dangerous.							
	17		Visit of the R.C.A.F. Liaison Officer, S/Ldr. J. R. Heald from R.C.A.F. Overseas H.Qs, Bombay.							
			Ops Record Book for Medical Officer, Engineer Officer, Signals Officer, Armament Officer – Appendices Nos. 18, 19, 20 and 21.							
			III – Personnel							
			The posted strength of the squadron at the end of the month was as follows:							
				Officers	NCOs Aircrew	SNCOs Ground	BORs	IORs	EF/s	Total
				52	134	45	463	20	68	782
			Effective Stg.	51	124	39	404	16	55	689
			(P. G. D. Farr)							
			Wing Commander, Commanding,							
			No. 358 Squadron, R.A.F.							

