

June 1945 Form 540

358 Squadron

(Note: Initial, as typed draft transcription)

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
R.A.F. Station Jessore, Bengal	June 1945		I. Operations
	1		Operation Order No. 76
	4		Operation Order No. 77
	6		Operation Order No. 78
	7		Operation Order No. 79
	9		Operation Order No. 80
	10		Operation Order No. 81
	12		Operation Order No. 82
			Liberator DD/VI, KH350 (Capt) F/Sgt. K. M. Hodgson – took off for an operational flight over S.E. Asia at 02.50 hours and 1 ½ minutes afterwards crashed about 3 miles N.W. of the runway. All the 9 men were killed. The aircraft crashed into the open paddy fields and burst into flames (Category E.O. Burnt total). The cause of the accident is not yet known.
			Personnel Killed:
			165993 F/O. S. Grayon. G.D. (Nav)
			166166 F/O. W. C. Lewington G.D. (A/B)
			1493778 F/S. K. M. Hodgson Pilot (Capt)
			1607295 Sgt. F. H. Crighton Pilot (2nd Pilot)
			1565487 Sgt. A. E. Crosby WOP/A
			1681685 Sgt. F. Priestley WOP/A
			1827315 Sgt. J. Freeland A/G
			2215224 Sgt. F. Davis F/Eng
			1827503 Sgt. D. Mc. P. Murray A/G.
			The bodies of all the deceased crew were interred in the European Cemetery, Jessore (Map Reference 2311N 8911E) at 1830 hours on 12th June 1945. The service was conducted by a padre who was flown from H.Q. 231 Group to conduct the ceremony. An investigation is being ordered
	13		Operation Order No. 83
			Liberator SD/VI KH252 (Captain – F/Sgt. Staines) took off from Base at 1133 hours I.S.T. Information was received from Group Headquarters that this aircraft crashed, near Fenni, East Bengal at approx. 0030 hours on 13th. The aircraft was a total loss (Cat. E.O. Burnt – total). Of the crew of 8 aircrew of 358 Squadron and one passenger of the U.S.A.A.F. (Cpl. McFarlane) the following were killed:
			1541974 F/Sgt. G. E. Staines - Pilot (Capt)
			166160 F/O. J. E. Ede - GD (A/B)
			1399835 Sgt. G. Crosse - A/G
			1418118 F/Sgt. D. Rose - Nav.
			1418118 Sgt. J. L. Humphreys? – WOOP/A
			Cpl. MacFarlane (USAAF) - Photographer
			Three of the crew were injured and are in hospital at Comilla:
			1805741 Sgt. S. Hinds 2nd Pilot (Seriously)
			1435147 Sgt. L. Simpson WOP/A (Seriously)
			2202911 Sgt. R. Cressley A/G (Despatcher) – Condition good.

		The cause of the accident is not known but an investigation is being ordered.
		All the deceased personnel were interred in the R.A.F. Cemetery, Fenni, E. Bengal (Map Ref. 2300N 9124E) at 1700 hours on 14th June 1945. The injured were flown by 12th Bomb Group USAAF who gave every assistance possible, to Comilla, where they were admitted to the B.G.H. there.
	14	Operation Order No. 84
		Squadron Leader L. C. McConnell, O.C. 'B' Flight flew to Fenni to identify the bodies recovered from crash of KH252 and to attend the funeral.
		Liberator SD/VI. EW215 took off from base for a special operational flight at 0525 hrs. I.S.T. and set course for target. No further news of this aircraft was received and no messages were picked up from the aircraft The circumstances of becoming missing are not known.
		Missing Personnel:
		1541488 F/Sgt. D. O. Gwinnell – Capt.
		1522067 Sgt. E. Evans-Hughes – 2nd. Pilot
		165931 F/O. J. A. McBeath – GD (Nav)
		166159 F/O. D. L. Petherbridge – GD (B/A)
		1685063 Sgt. D. Quinn – WOP/A
		1681143 Sgt. A. L. Clarke – WOP/A
		1595989 Sgt. S. Williams – A/G
		1827467 Sgt. G. W. Whytoc?k – A/G
		1339774 Sgt. A. Webb – A/G
	15	A Sea search for missing EW215 was ordered by HQs 231 Group. 4 aircraft of the squadron, were airborne at first light and a square search of a large area of the Bay of Bengal off the Arakan Coast was conducted. No trace of the missing crew could be found and aircraft returned to base.
	16	Operation Order No. 85
	17	Operation Order No. 86
		Information received that A/c EW215 (Capt – F/Sgt. Gwinnell) had force landed on Ramree Island and that the whole crew have been picked up by Catalina aircraft and flown into Calcutta. Official confirmation of crash and rescue details awaited.
		Information received from 14 B.G.H. Comilla, that Sgt. S. Hinds, 2nd pilot of KH252 which crashed near Fenni on 13th June, had died in hospital at 0415 hours on 14th June 1945.
	19	Operation Order No. 87
		Liberator SD/VI EW124 (Captain – F/O. A. D. F. Anderson) which took off at 0333 hours I.S.T. today missing on operations. No information of this aircraft and crew.
		Personnel missing:
		J.20943 F/O. A. E. F. Anderson GD (P) – Capt.
		J.44519 P/O. A. Mc. A. Silverthorn GD (P)
		1459361 Sgt. K. H. Storrar Nav.
		J.45996 P/O. E. F. Elford GD (A/B)
		R.260658 Sgt. W. G. Bond WOP/A
		1800541 Sgt. A. W. Robertson WOP/A
		R.284637 Sgt. W. A. Vaudner A/G
		R.281890 Sgt. A. Maxwell A/G
	20	Operation Order No. 88
	21	Operation Order No. 89
	22	Operation Order No. 90
		F/Sgt. Gwinnell and whole crew, who forced landed in EW215 on Ramree Island on 14th June, were collected today from Alipore Airfield, Calcutta. All were quite well after having been treated for exposure in No.9 R.A.F. General

		Hospital, Calcutta.
	23	Operation Order No. 91
	24	Operation Order No. 92
	25	Operation Order No. 93
	26	Operation Order No. 94
	29	Operation Order No. 95
	30	Operation Order No. 96
		Operational Summary
		Monsoon conditions prevailed and the number of sorties mounted during the month was less by 20 than the total for May. The percentage of successful missions was lower accordingly; 43.9% representing the lowest monthly figure since the squadron has been operating.
		While many A/c were able to get well within their target area, only to find D.Zs obscured by low cloud, bad weather was also encountered all along routes between base and targets. Consequently several sorties were comparatively short-lived, and one captain, F/S. Gwinnell, finding himself encircled by violent storms, force landed his Liberator in a paddy field on the mainland east of Ramree Island on the 14th. All members of the crew survived the landing without injury and after being several days with natives, who took them to the coast in boats, they were picked up by Catalina.
		Three other aircraft were also lost on operations but with less fortunate results for the crews. On 12th Jun F/Sgt. Hodgson and his crew of eight were killed when he crashed on take-off. On the same day F/Sgt. Staines crashed near Fenni with the result that five of the crew were killed, one died from injuries and two were seriously injured. During an operation on the 19th F/O Anderson's A/c was reported missing and has not been heard of since.
		One operation over French Indo China was made abortive by enemy action. Arriving over his D.Z. area at 0154 hours 1st July, F/O. Outram's aircraft was attacked by two or three enemy fighters from astern. Violent evasive action was taken with the aid of cloud and although it was reported that the E/A opened fire on their initial attack, no hits were received by the Liberator. Flying in and out of cloud on a westerly course, the A/c kept out of reach of the Oscars and at 0340 hours F/O. Outram decided to jettison containers and make a run for base. It would appear that this order may have been misunderstood by the despatcher, F/O. Cook, for two minutes later it was found that he and the six passengers who were to have dropped on the D.Z., had disappeared from the A/C. Later a report was heard from the field revealed that six had landed safely, nothing having been heard of one of the passengers
		Analysis of the month's operations :-
		Total sorties : 78
		Completed : 33 ½ i.e. 43.9%
		Uncompleted : 44 ½
		reasons for Not completed sorties:
		Weather 29 ½
		No reception 4
		Technical 7
		Enemy action 1
		Crashed & missing 3
		Loads dropped: men 18
		Containers 276
		Packages 204
		Hours flown: 799 hours 59 mins.

	June 1945		II – Administration.
	1		Suppressive treatment of Malaria instituted with effect from today. Each man is to take two tablets of mepachrine for the first seven days and one tablet per day thereafter as laid down in A.C.S.E.A. Admin Order. No. 51/45. Administrative action was taken to hold Section parades at which every person was witnessed to consume his dose.
	8		Wing Commander P. G. D. Farr, D.F.C., Officer Commanding, proceeded to H.Qs 231 Group to attend an Inquiry into the accident to Liberator VI KH397 on 25th March 1945.
			S/Ldr. S. A. Sharpe, O.C. 'A' Flight assumed Command of the Squadron in the absence of the C.O.
	11		Wing Commander, P. G. D. Farr, D.F.C., resumed Command of the Squadron on return from Group.
			III – Personnel.
	2		Six aircrews arrived in reinforcement of the Squadron. 4 were received from No.6 R.F.U., Kolar and 2 from Poona ex 5 O.T.U., 21 officers were posted in these crews as follows:
		166373 P/O. Lindway D. - A/B.	166738 P/O. Chapman D. H. – Nav. (in hospital)
		166698 P/O. Fanlknor R. G. – Nav.	160652 F/O. Fforde J. S. – GD(P)
		166279 F/O. E. W. Johnson – GD(G)	151961 F/O. D. Kearne – GD(P)
		J.20943 F/O. A. E. Anderson – GD(P)	166194 P/O. D. W. White – GD(P)
		166787 P/O. A. P. Brandreth – GD(A/B)	J.20131 F/O. C. R. Ellinor – GD(P)
		J.45996 P/O. E. F. Elford – GD(B/A)	J.47446 P/O. J. A. Moon – GD(G)
		J.47342 P/O. B. Mendelovich – GD(Nav)	117228 F/Lt. L. G. Wilson – GD(P)
		55068 F/O. J. N. Foster – GD(P)	J.44876 P/O. P. O. Sheppard – GD(P)
		J.42404 P/O. H. F. McKenzie – GD(G)	166212 P/O. E. L. Medley – GD(P)
		J.44319 P/O. A. M. Silverthorn – GD(P)	J.47363 P/O. R. G. Steele – GD(A/B)
		166292 P/O. K. G. Taylor – GD(Nav)	166744 P/O. H. H. Newman – GD(Nav)
	5		2 Reinforcement crews arrived from A.P.C., Poona including the following officers:-
		185967 F/O. E. T. Manning – GD(P)	166093 F/O. R. M? Arscott – GD(P)
		165942 F/O. R. A. James – GD(P)	166353 P/O. R. ?, Brandon – GD(Nav)
		166130 F/O. J. J. Cooper – GD(G.S)	166350 F/O. J. Willcocks – GD(Nav)
		169703 F/O. T. Shipp – GD(P)	166377 F/O. T. D. Walker – GD(A/B)
		166127 F/O. P. F. Elliott – GD(G.S)	
	17		F/O. H. V. Smith J.27276? and 992251 Sgt. Copley? C. Returned to the Squadron after being shot down on 29th May 1945.
	21		One reinforcement crew of eleven men arrived from Poona. The following officers were included:-
		166544 P/O. J. W. Simms?? GD(P)	182369 F/O. A. B? Duff GD(P)
		157??26 P/O. J. A. M??dman GD(A/B)	167414 P/O. D. J. Griffiths GD(Nav)
		166452? F?/O ? ? ??? GD(G)	
	24		One reinforcement crew arrived ex Kolar via H.Qs 231 Group. Only officer was: F/O. G. C Mayhow?? (166168) G.D. (A/B)
	25		Two reinforcement crews arrived ex R.A.F. Kolar. Officers in these crews were:-

		J.22409? F/O. ? ???? GD(P)	J.47317 P/O. E? Hoff???er GD(Nav)
		J.47330? P/O. G? Barrand? GD(Nav)	161276 F?/O. P. B. Sanders GD(P)
		18?2750? P/O. G. H? Booth? GD(A/B)	
	28	One reinforcement crew arrived ex Poona. Officers were:	
		152105? F/O. ? R. Sealy? GD(P)	167453 P/O. J. F? ??????r GD(A/B)
		19?1408 F/O. G? J. O. McArd???	167470 F/O. N. U?????art GD(Nav)
		GD(P)	
		16688? P/O. P. A. Hillman? GD(G)	
	30	Personnel on Strength at end of month:	
		Officers	S.N.C.Os
		B.O.Rs	L.O.Rs
		E/Fs	Total Personnel
		108	300
		453	20
		65	935
		V – General	
	15	Wing Commander J. J. ? DeLange, D.F.C., (R.N.Z.A.F.) Liaison officer visited the New Zealand personnel of the Squadron.	
	22	After over 4 months struggle to start a Squadron Canteen, principally because of lack of suitable premises, arrangements were inaugurated to take over No.357 Squadron Canteen in Jessore town. This will prove a great boon and a source of interest to the General personnel who have been very keen on the idea.	
		Training:	
	30	The Squadron ?orimeror?? held a conference of flight Commanders & Section leaders, to arrange the training programme to be carried out during the period 1st to 14th July when the Squadron will be withdrawn from operations for this purpose. At the end of this period all aircrew will be re-categorized.	
		Summaries from Medical Officer, Navigation, Armament, Engineering, Signals Officers – Appendix 21, 22, 23, 24 & 25.	

Air17/1765