

## November, 1944: Form 540

358 Squadron

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
Kolar, Mysore State, India	8/11/44		No. 358 (H.B.) Squadron – U. E. to Liberators Model aircraft – formed under Formation Order No. 269 at Royal Air Force Station Kolar, Mysore State, S. India wef. this date. The Squadron is to be located initially at Kolar (HQ. 225 Group) during formation and initial training and later when operational at Digri, Bengal, under the control of H.Q. 231 Group through H.Q. 185 Wing. The nucleus of the Squadron formed from 60% personnel thrown up by the disbandment of No. 1673 Heavy Conversion Unit. The address of the Squadron is "No. 358 Squadron, R.A.F. India". Establishment to which the Squadron will work is LWE/SEA/263A – Officers 91; S.N.C.Os. 217; O.Rs. 424 – Total 732. Enrolled Followers 136. All ground equipment and tools were divided between the Squadron and No. 6 R.F.U. and both units were enabled to continue their programmes.
	9/11/44		Four new "Liberator" Mk.VI aircraft arrived on allotment from No. 352 M.U.
	10/11/44		Twelve "Liberator" Mk.VI aircraft allotted from No. 1673 H.C.U. The Squadron now up to I.E. strength for training purposes.
	12/11/44		S/L(A/W/Cdr) P. G. D. Farr, D.F.C., posted from 1673 H.C.U. to command w.e.f. 8.11.44. acting rank retained.
	12/11/44		The Squadron moved into new H.Qs. and Flight accommodation. This move put all sections into a compact area which was most convenient from all points of view.
	18/11/44		A detachment of No. 23 A.P.C., consisting of 9 Officers, 25 S.N.C.Os and 10 other ranks arrived at Kolar to commence a course of training to fit the Squadron for daylight operations; Course to last approx. 4 weeks.
	21/11/44		Air Vice Marshal A. G. H. Sharp (D.S.O.) A.O.A., B.A.F.S.E.A. visited Kolar on inspection.
	23/11/44	2046 hrs.	Liberator HB/VI. – EV846 detailed for night circuits and landings, crashed on the edge of Kolar airfield and burned out. (Cat. E.O. Burnt). The pilot F/Sgt F. Porter (Aus.425353) had made 3 satisfactory landings and 4 take-offs, and on an 'overshoot' made a starboard turn off the runway to the South at 90°. The aircraft appeared to continue on this course for some seconds before turning again to starboard when it was seen to be losing height. The rate of turn increased considerably until the aircraft was heading towards the airfield, when it disappeared from view to reappear shortly afterwards on the same heading. From a height of 50' the aircraft went into a very shallow dive, collided with tree tops on the edge of the airfield and crashed in flames. The machine was a complete write off – Category E.O. (Burnt). The whole crew of five were killed. Light conditions were half to full moon and there was no wind. Technical trouble is the air suspected and A.I.B. investigation requested.
	27/11/44	1700 hrs.	The funeral of the crew killed on 23rd took place at the American Mission Cemetery, Kolar, Mysore State, S. India (113°17'N. 78°17'E). The bodies interred were:-
			Aus. 425353 F/Sgt. F. Porter (Australian) - Pilot.
			Aus. 430353 F/Sgt. J. W. White (Australian) - Co-Pilot.
			338237 Sgt. C. V. Garside (R.A.F). - Nav.
			2203157 Sgt. M. T. Jones (R.A.F) - WOP/A.
			P/O. J. McHardy (55610) (R.A.F) - GD. Air/Bomber.
			Full service honours were accorded. Next of kin were notified in accordance with usual procedure.

	27/11/44		F/Lt. R. L. H. McDougall (Pres) & F/O. Nicholl and F/O. Badgeley detailed as Squadron Committee of Adjustment to dispose of the effects of P/O. McHardy, F/Sgt. White, F/Sgt. Porter, Sgt. Jones, and Sgt. Garside, killed on the 23rd.
			The Squadron was divided into three sections (X, Y & Z) for daylight training under No.23 A.P.C. Syllabus. Each section flies one day and takes theoretical and practice instruction on the following two days. "Z" Section (6 crews) commenced flying today, X & Y Sections on ground instruction. Weather conditions were the best for flying for 10 days past during which dense low cloud and rain had prevailed.
	28/11/44		'Y' Section (7 crews) commenced daylight flying instruction, 'X' & 'Z' on ground instruction. Flying conditions average with thin low stratus cloud. Visibility 4/6 miles.
	29/11/44		Squadron communication aircraft Harvard FL796 arrived and placed in 'A' Flight.
	30/11/44	1100 hr.	Flying training resumed although weather conditions were not favourable. A Wing Escort Exercise arranged by H.Q. 225 Group for Nos 5 and 123 "Thunderbolt" Squadrons and six "Liberators" of 358 Squadron for Nov. 30th, Dec. 1 and Dec. 2 was cancelled today owing to unsuitable weather conditions. The Exercise was ordered to be carried out each day as follows:- 093 <sup>1</sup> hours. 6 Liberators take off from Kolar. Form up in 2 "Vics" of three and set course for Kajamalai climbing to 12,000 feet en route. 1100 hours, Liberator formation to orbit Kajamalai until fighters are seen to "Scramble" then set course for Yelahanka.
		12.30 hrs.	Liberator Formation attacks Yelahanka, No. 1670 T.C.U. to intercept Formation over airfield. After carrying out attack Formation is to turn right for Kolar.
		1300 hrs.	Liberator formation arrives Kolar with escort. Formation splits up and escort wing returns to base.
			Training hours flown – 128.40 day, 39.10 night. Period 9.11.44 to 30.11.44.
			Non Training hours flown – 9.45 hours day. Total Hours 177.35.
			Aircraft serviceability over the period 9/30.11.44 was:- Available - 16. Average Serviceable ( 56%) Average U/S. 6 (38%). Wastage:- 1 A/c on 23/11. Category (6%).
			To date no ground personnel had been posted by B.P.O., Base Air Forces, India, to bring up the Squadron to Establishment. Despite a deficiency of 50 the Squadron ended the month with 67% serviceability. Posted Strength at end of month:
			Officers 42, S.N.C.Os. 229, B.O.Rs. 190, I.O.Rs. 20, Total 481.
			(P. G. D. Farr) W/Commandr,
			Wing Commander, Commanding,
			No. 358 Squadron, R.A.F.

<sup>1</sup> This should probably read 0930 hrs.