

Appendix No. 12 to No. 358 Squadron F.540 for February 1945

No. 358 Squadron, Royal Air Force, India

Reference:- 358/C.2205/ORC

Movement Order No. 2

Date : 6th February 1945.

Copy No.

- (1) Authority : H.Qs, 231 Group Organisation Instruction No. 29 dated 31.2.45. (Ref. 231G/902/ORG)
R.A.F Move Calcutta Signal ON.1 dated 6.2.45,
and Miltraff authority 53722/MH dated 6.2.45.
- (2) Information : No. 358 Squadron is to move from 185 Wing Digri to R.A.F. Station, Jessore on 8th February 1945.
- (3) Intention : The intention is to move:-
(a) The Squadron Headquarters.
(b) The Squadron Maintenance Section.
(c) Two flights of aircraft, aircrew and ground personnel.
(d) All stores, equipment and M.T.
by road, rail and air to R.A.F. Station, Jessore.
- (4) Execution : The Squadron is to move in seven parties:-
(a) Advance Air Party by Air on 3rd Feb. 1945 as detailed in Appendix 'A'.
(b) Advance Party by road as detailed in Appendix 'B'.
(c) Refuelling Party as detailed in Appendix 'C'.
(d) Main Party by rail as detailed in Appendix 'D'.
(e) Main M.T. party as detailed in Appendix 'E'.
(f) Air Party as detailed in Appendix 'F'.
(g) Rear Party by Road as detailed in Appendix 'G'.
- (5) S. & C. Publications. P/O. Winup is detailed as Officer i/c S.C.O. Pubs and Intelligence papers and he is to take all precautions for their safety during transit.
- (6) Equipment : All Squadron Equipment is to be moved. Each section is responsible for the secure packing of its equipment and that each case is marked : No. 358 Squadron, R.A.F., Blue Band, and flight or Section markings. Field Unit Serial No.A.922 is obsolete and is to be obliterated.
- (7) Dress : All personnel are to wear long sleeved shirts or bush shirts, and slacks. Water bottles are to be filled before departure.
- (8) Travelling Precautions : Plenty of water should be drunk during the journey. Water bottle are only to be filled from sources marked 'Drinking Water Only'. Water not so marked must be sterilised by using water sterilising tablets obtained from the Medical Officer or Nursing Orderly. Use one tablet per full bottle and allow to stand for half an hour before use. The purchase of mineral waters and fruits from itinerant vendors is forbidden. Full anti-malarial precautions are to be observed after sundown.
- (9) Barrack Furniture : F/O. Carter and Cpl. Filey are to had over all furniture, fans, etc., to H.Qs 185 Wing and obtain receipts fro same. They are to proceed with rear party when this duty is completed. No furniture is to be removed from Digri. P/O. A. N. Woods is responsible that no furniture is removed.
- (10) Rations : N.C.O. i/c Cookhouses (Sgt. Simmonds) is to arrange 3 days rations plus 2 days reserve for each party proceeding by road or rail.
- (11) Guards : Guards are to be mounted over all equipment during loading, and un-loading and during halts by road and rail.

(12) Personnel : Personnel returning from Hospital, detachment or leave are to report to H.Qs 185 Wing for onward transmission and are to collect any kit deposited in main stores.

(Sgd)

(W. S. Wood) F/Lt.

for Wing Commander, Commanding,
No. 358 Squadron, R.A.F.

Appendix 'A'
Advance Party 'A' (By Air) 3rd February 1945.

Officer i/c : F/O. K. R. Davison. G.D.(P)

(1) Personnel Strength :	Officers.	S.N.C.Os.	B.O.Rs	Total.
	1.	2	4	7

(2) Take-Off : 1030 hours 3rd February 1945.

(3) Duty : To arrange Rations and reception of Advance party 'B'. In conjunction with Advance Party 'B' to arrange rations and reception of Main Rail and Air Parties and to prepare Messes and Sections.

(4) All personal baggage is to be taken.

Part II – Nominal Roll.

Officers.

F/O. M. R. Davison.	G.D.(P)
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Other Ranks.

Sgt. Bushrod	M. Rigger
Sgt. Stacey.	F.2.A.
L.A.C. Cowley.	F.M.E.
L.A.C. Appleton.	F.M.A.
A.C.1. Weekes	F.M.E.
L.A.C. Fossey.	F.M.A.

Appendix 'B'
Advance Party 'B' (By Road) on 4.2.45.

Office i/c : F/Lt. C. G. Moore (Tech/Eng).

(1) Strength :	Officers.	W/Os.	SNCOs.	BORs.	IORs.	E/Fs.	Total.
	3.	2.	9.	45.	1.	16.	76.

(2) Departure. : convoy will assemble at Parade Ground (Domestic Site) and will move off at 08.30 hours on 4.2.45.

(3) Baggage. : All Baggage of personnel proceeding is to be taken with them and it is to be stacked on the parade ground at 0800 hours.

- (4) Rations : Officer i/c Party is to detail an N.C.O. to collect 3 days rations and 2 days reserve from N.C.O. i/c Cookhouses. Water Tender is to be filed before leaving.
- (5) Equipment : Essential equipment is to be loaded during 3rd February 1945 and space for baggage is to be allowed.
- (6) Duty : To arrange in conjunction with Advance Party 'A' Rations and reception of Main Rail and Air Parties and to prepare Messes and Sections.
- (7) Route : via Khargpur to Calcutta and report to 35 P.T.C., for onward transmission.

Part II (Nominal Roll)

As detailed.

Appendix 'C'

Refuelling Party By Road 5.2.45.

Officer i/c Party : P/O. J. W. F. Tubb.

(1) Personnel	: Officers.	BORS.	E/Fs.	Total.
	1	12	4	17

(2) Vehicles : 3 x Autocars.
 2 x 2500 A.E.C. Refuellers.
 1 x 3 ton Chevrolet.

(3) Rations : Officer i/c Party is to draw 3 days rations and 2 days reserve from N.C.O. i/c Cookhouse.

(4) Departure : From Parade Ground (Domestic Site) at 0830 hours on 5th February 1945.

(5) Route : By road via Asansol and Calcutta to Destination. Officer i/c to report 35 P.T.C. Calcutta for onward transmission.

Part II (Nominal Roll)

Officers.

P/O. J. W. F. Tubb.

B.O.Rs.

Corpl. Southwick.	F.II.A.
L.A.C. Haines.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Williams.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Lyon.	M.T.M.
L.A.C. Long.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Lee.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Kirtley.	M/Asst.
L.A.C. Rolland.	M/Asst.
L.A.C. Howard.	ACH/GD.
L.A.C. Williamson.	ACH/GD.
L.A.C. Dickenson	ACH/GD.
L.A.C. Stevens.	M/Asst.

Appendix 'D'. (Part I)

Main Party (by Rail) on 8.2.45.

- (1) Duties : O.C. Train -- F/O. N. W. Pemberton.
 Officer in Med. Charge -- F/O. R. Halliday.
 Officer i/c Baggage. -- P/O. D. C. Boston.
 Messing Officer -- P/O. S. C. Hull
 Officer i/c S.&.B.Pubs -- P/O. T. Winup.
 Officer i/c Loading -- P/O. A. N. Woods.
- (2) Entraining Strength:
- | Officers. | W/Os. | SNCOs. | BORs. | IORs. | E/Fs. | & Civ.. | Total. |
|-----------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|---------|--------|
| 6 | 2 | 8 | 176 | 4 | 41 | 9 | 245 |
- (3) Rolling Stock : 112 C.Gs, 3 K.Gs, 2 K.Fs and passenger bogies.
- (4) Orders For Entrainment:
- (a) All personnel detailed in Part II of this Appendix to arrive at Chandrakona Road by 2200 hours on 8.2.45. Entrainment is commence at once under the direction of W/O. Hodge and is to be completed by 2300 hours. Train departs 23.30 hours 8th Feb. 1945.
- (b) All Squadron heavy equipment not being moved by road is to be loaded into trucks in military siding by 1200 hours on 8.2.45. Officer i/c Baggage is to ensure that Section equipment is loaded with the trucks marked to receive it and that all freight space is fully utilised.
- (c) Baggage. Officers, S.N.C.Os and airmens baggage is to be loaded into separate trucks and must be tightly packed. Loading is to be completed by 1600 hours on 8.2.45.
- (d) Rolling stock for equipment will be placed at Chandrakona Road at 1200 hours on 7th February 1945.
- (5) Transportation to Railhead:
- (a) Baggage and Kit.
 SNCOs & Airmen, is to be stacked on parade ground by 0830 hours on 8th February 1945. M.T. is to collect and convey to Railway Station at 0830.
 This includes excess heavy baggage of personnel proceeding by air.
- (b) Officers. Baggage is to be stacked outside Squadron Officers' Mess by 0830 hours on 8.2.45.
- (c) Personnel.
 (a) All N.C.Os & Airmen are to parade with travelling kit on parade ground at 2030 hours on 8th February 1945.
 (b) officers will be collected from Squadron Officers' Mess at 2030 hours on 8th February 1945.
- (6) Baggage Parties.
 The Squadron Warrant Officer is to detail four loading parties of 8 men and all available enrolled followers.
- (7) Rations : Messing Officer (P/O. Hull) is to draw 3 days R/R scale rations and 2 days reserve from NCO i/c Cookhouse who is to arrange issue during journey.
- (8) Train Guard: is to be detailed by Squadron Warrant Officer. Arms as necessary to be drawn from the Squadron Armoury by 1200 hours on 7th February 1945.

Part II (Nominal Roll)

Personnel as detailed.

Appendix 'E'
Main M.T. Party by Road on 10.2.45.

Officer i/c : P/O. MacDonald.

(1) Personnel Strength	: Officers.	SNCOs.	BORs.	Total.
	1	2	10	13

(2) Vehicles :

8 x 3 tonners.
2 x 15 cwts.
1 x Station wagon.

(3) Rations :

3 days plus 2 days reserve to be drawn from N.C.O. i/c Cookhouse.

(4) Departure :

Convoy will move off from parade ground (Domestic Site) at 0830 hours on 10.2.45.

(5) Baggage :

All Kit and baggage of personnel proceeding is to be taken.

(6) Route :

Via Kharagpur to Calcutta. Report to 35 P.T.C. for onward transmission.

Part II (Nominal Roll)

Officers.

P/O. McDonald.

Other Ranks.

F/Sgt. Cockburn.	D.M.T.
Sgt. McMeecham.	F.II.E.
Cpl. Russell.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Balchin.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Harris.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Lupton.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Oldroyd.	M/Cyslist.
L.A.C. Breem.	ACH/GD.
L.A.C. Rimmer.	F.M.T.
L.A.C. Marshall.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Murphy.	ACH/GD.
L.A.C. Bibby.	D.M.T.

Appendix 'F'
Air Party (9.2.45)

Officer i/c : S/Ldr. S. A. Sharpe.

- (1) Emplaning Strength : Officers. SNCOs. BORs. IORs. Total.
 Aircrew 28 188 -- -- 216
 Ground Staff. 3 6 168 15 192
- (2) Aircraft : 17 Liberator Mk. VI. -- (1) Harvard.
 (1) Sentinel.
- (3) Movement of Personnel. Personnel will be conveyed, 12 passengers per aircraft at the following times.
 1st Party - 0830 hrs. 2nd Party – 1130 hours – 3rd Party 1430 hours on 9th February 1945.
 M.T. is to collect from parade ground (Domestic Site) at 730, 1030 and 1330.
- (4) Equipment : Urgent Equipment and cooking utensils are to be carried.
- (5) Baggage : 40 lbs of baggage including bedding allowed per passenger. All excess baggage is to proceed by rail on 8.2.45.
- (6) Parachutes. Parachutes are to be drawn by all aircrew and 16 for each aircraft for use of Ground Crew on later parties.

Part II (Nominal Roll)

Personnel as detailed.

Appendix 'G'
 Rear Party by Road.

Officer i/c F/O. R. A. Carter.

- (1) Strength : Officers. S.N.C.Os. B.O.Rs. E/Fs. Total.
 3 3 7 6 19
- (2) Vehicles : 4 x 3 ton.
- (3) Rations : Officer i/c is to draw w days plus 3 days reserve Rations from Catering Officer H.Qs 185 Wing.
- (4) Duty : To hand over all furniture, fans, etc., and obtain receipt therefore. All buildings are to be left clean and tidy and any equipment overlooked in the main move is to be brought along. The party is to proceed immediately the duty is completed.
- (5) Baggage and Kit.
 All baggage is to be moved with the party.

Part II (Nominal Roll)

Officers.

F/O. R. A. Carter.
 P/O. D. C. Mees.
 F/O. J. Wheatley.

Other Ranks.

Sgt. Pattinson. C.W.F.

L.A.C. Allanson	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Jenkinson.	D.M.T.
L.A.C. Way.	F.M.T.
L.A.C. Clarke.	M/Cylist.
Corpl. Foley.	C.W.F.
L.A.C. Brown.	ACH/GD.
L.A.C. Scullion.	ACH/GD.
Enrolled Followers.	6 seqppers.

Appendix No. 13 to 358 Sqn F.540 for Feb. 1945

Form 540 – Signals Section - February 1945.

Early in the month the Squadron moved from R.A.F. Station, Digri to R.A.F. Station, Jessore. This time the move was greatly facilitated by the fact that a large volume of the equipment was moved by road along with a small advance party. A second party from the section was flown to Jessore in the Squadron's aircraft and the remainder together with the rest of the equipment travelled by rail.

The strength of the section had now been greatly augmented.

Attempts to start a watch system at the S.H.Q. W/T cabin were held up for nearly a fortnight owing to the dispersal of personnel and transport arrangements. This applied mainly to wireless operators but servicing of aircraft was maintained.

On experience gained at Digri the Test-bench was set up within three days.

Once again the Main signals workshop had to be shared between Radar and W/T. The services of the Station Radar building staffed by No.357 Squadron's Radar personnel, were placed at the disposal of this Squadron but there was only one test-set available for Radio Altimeters which proved of little or no advantage.

The Squadron again commence its second operational period with the Radio Altimeters still in very unsatisfactory condition. S/Ldr. Blondal, Group Radar officer along with P/O. Rouse of No. 357 Squadron visited the section and their help was enlisted in order to procure the test-set.

During the month G/Capt. Moloney, Chief Signals Officer, E.A.C., and Wing Commander Herbert, Chief Signals Officer, S.A.F., and the Station Signal Officer visited the Section. They were mostly interested in the personnel situation and the maintenance facilities set up in the Workshop. Attention was drawn to the lack of test equipment for Radio Altimeters and G/Capt. Moloney promised to look into the matter.

A high standard of W/T serviceability was maintained throughout the month.

The identification procedure adopted by this Squadron at Digri and still considered an efficient method of identifying was found to be impracticable by S.H.Q., Jessore and the ident was, and continues to be, carried out by straight forward rekoh message.

Signals briefings were carried out by Station Headquarters Signals.

Appendix No. 14 to 358 Sqn F.540 for Feb. 1945

Navigation Section – F.540 – Feb. 1945

The squadron arrived at R.A.F. Station, Jessore on the 10th. February 1945 and the navigation section was allotted a completely empty building without any furniture. After two days the situation was alleviated by the acquisition of two map chests and a few tables but the inequitable distribution of furniture on the Station was a big handicap. After three days spent in organising the section the squadron commenced operating on the 19th.

On all except very long operations, i.e., 20 hours duration, only one navigator was carried. This is felt to be a big strain on the Navigator and Group have been requested to authorise the carrying of two navigators on all operations over twelve hours duration.

Owing to bad weather, and lack of moonlight, the use of Astro would have been of the greatest value in some of the operations, but a shortage of A.N.T's. Volume E., the local latitude band, seriously handicapped this work.

There were two cases of navigational failure during the month. In the first case, F/O. Wood (Capt.) F/Sgt. Ely (Nav.) and crew baled out approximately 30 miles North of Base on a heading of 240 deg. after a twelve hour operation. A Court of Inquiry was held but, since neither log nor chart could be produced no decision could be made as to whether the incident was in fact, due to navigational failure. The second Case, W/O. Martel (Capt.) and F/Sgt. Whale (Nav.) returned to Base reporting failure of Gyro Fluxgate and B.16 Compasses. A full report on this was forwarded to A.C.S.E.A..

In the short time available before the Squadron commenced operations there was little scope to institute a training programme, but a talk was given by the Navigation Officer and the working policy of the section discussed. A lecture was given by the compass adjuster on the Gyro Fluxgate compass and, together with the Navigation Officer laid down a procedure whereby, after the engines had been run up, the pilot allowed the navigator time to erect the Gyro before the aircraft was taxied.

during the month all the astro compass brackets were modified and it was proved to be a tremendous improvement. The new compass card was installed on the Navigator's table and covered with perspex and this, too, is considered an advantage as all corrections are now on one card.

One of the worst snags at the moment is the acute shortage of astro watches, a position which does not seem likely to improve for some time.

Appendix No. 15 to 358 Sqn F.540 for Feb. 1945

Form 500 – Armament Section — February 1945

During the month of February the Armament Staff have been kept fully employed even although a non operational period existed between the two moon periods, it so happened that the Squadron was moving and so it was not found possible to give much time off.

The Armament Section is still working under extreme difficulties as regards Bomb trailers and tractors, although the Squadron has been formed four months, there are still none of the aforementioned available, the result is that it is necessary to share one prime mover and 16 bomb trailers between two squadrons with the result that it takes at least twice as long to get the container loads to the Aircraft. It has even been found necessary to bring the containers to the aircraft on the 3 ton Dodge to get the aircraft prepared for operations.

The armourers in 'A' and 'B' flights have done extremely well during the month. No hang ups or bomb gear failures have been reported. Any gunnery snags which have been brought up were minor troubles which in no way detracted from the operational efficiency of the guns and turrets.

The removal of ball turrets from all aircraft has commenced and to date 8 have been removed, as the Squadron no longer require to carry so much armament the removal and preparation for storage and removal to Maintenance Units is well at hand.

Strength of personnel is now over establishment but under established with junior N.C.Os during March it is hoped to remedy this position.

Effort :	Aircraft loaded for ops	79.	
	Aircraft completed successful operations		27.
	Total containers loaded.	845.	
	Total containers dropped.	248.	
	Total packages loaded.	298.	
	Total packages dropped.	105.	

Appendix No. 16 for February 1945

From:- Officer in Medical Charge 358 Squadron R.A.F.
 To:- Officer Commanding 358 Squadron R.A.F.
 Ref:- 358S/2022/Med.
 Date:- 13/3/45.

Operations Record Book. F540
 Squadron Medical History

The present report covers the month of February 1945.
 During this period the numbers on sick parade were as follows:-

	No on Sick Parade	No of Visits During Period.	Average No of Visits Per Person.
Officers	15	26	1.6
N.C.Os (Air)	33	73	2.2
All Ground Personnel	173	387	2.2
Totals	221	486	2.0

The usual disorders were seen, as noted in the last report, but an increased incidence of gastro intestinal was observed, which usually cleared up with rest and treatment in a few days. Approx: 24 men were detained in S.S.Q. for 48 hrs for minor ailments, and of these the vast majority were bowel disorders.

Actual admissions to S.S.Q. and hospitals were as follows:-

	Officers	N.C.Os.	Ground Personnel
S.S.Q.	1.	Nil	23
Hospital	3	1	9
Totals	4	1	32

From the above figures it would appear that the health of the Squadron generally showed an improvement over the previous month. In actual fact this was not borne out by a sick parade experience when it is remembered that the previous report covered a period of 38 days, while the present one only 28 days. As the Squadron moved during both periods any inference which may be drawn from that must be considered equal. The figures do show that 221 men were on sick parade in 28 days against 188 in 38 days, paying 506 visits as against 486. (a ratio of 4.7 new patients daily in the first period, to 7.8 in the period under review). Again the average no. on each daily sick parade in the former period was 13.3, whilst in the latter it was 17.3 men per day. It is considered that this increase was due to the very great differences that exist between the sanitation on this site and the former one. It is again borne out that (without being able to focus this difference on any particular cause) proximity to a native town will immediately cause a sharp and marked increase in the incidence of disease in spite of the most careful precautions. Which causes one to wonder why the R.A.F. have been suffering from this problem for several years on this particular station. One other effect from close proximity to a native town has been observed:- the rising incidence of Venereal Disease. Only 3 fresh cases were seen during the last period, but 8 fresh cases were seen during February, and 4 other men came for blood-tests as they had visited brothels and though having no symptoms or signs were wise enough and anxious enough to volunteer for examination and blood-testing. The brothels have now been placed out of bounds and a 0-100 hours curfew imposed.

The efficiency of these methods is doubtful unless reinforced by strict patrol of the brothel area.

The greatest number of actual (or potential) cases was noted among N.C.O's (aircrew) relative to the number of aircrew and groundcrew personnel of course. A lecture has since been given to aircrew embracing V.D. among other subjects of general and particular interest to them including the use of oxygen.

Station Hygiene

R.A.F. Station Jessore has been described as the worst station in India due to its high incidence of Malaria and the epidemic conditions of smallpox and cholera which are always prevailing in the town and district. To combat this all personnel have been warned through D.R.O's and the usual available protection given via inoculations and vaccinations (including cholera) to all personnel. A parade is held for this purpose each Wednesday and at present almost 100% of the Unit have received full protection. The greatest difficulty is found amongst aircrew and this is now being overcome so that 100% protection is expected when the next report is forwarded.

Many new latrines still require to be built as the present are inadequate in numbers and of the worst possible type, being constructed of bamboo alone. S.M.O. Group has held a Sitting Board and it is hoped that authority will be given for immediate replacement of these latrines by the standard type. The Municipal Authorities are responsible for the disposal of excreta in the town sites and this (under daily supervision from the N.C.O. i/c Sanitary Squad) is being carried out. This sanitary party (consisting of 1 Cpl. and 2 AC's – the Cpl has not done a Sanitation Course – plus 3 sweepers) maintain the drains, latrines, grease-traps, and ablutions in a healthy condition. One of main faults encountered is that Mess and ablution drains flow into the town monsoon ditches and as the Municipal authorities are not ensuring that these are kept in good repair (they are blocked with weeds and other growth, old tins etc) they have consequently become filled with stagnant water and mud, which besides giving off a disgusting smell, is a natural breeding ground for mosquitoes flies etc. The Chairman of the Municipal Council was approached and I requested him to see that these drains were kept clean, but nothing has so far been done.

The food is of good quality and sufficient in quantity and few well-judged complaints have been heard since the Squadron settled down on this Station. the N.C.O's Mess has had a new kitchen installed so that the problem of cooking in a small badly-ventilated Kitchen has it is hoped, been solved. Other repairs such as fly-proofing of windows and doors is being done and should reduce the numbers on Sick parades suffering from gastro-intestinal disorder which increased rapidly when the Squadron came here.

There was a deficiency of 200 charpoys on arrival which took almost two weeks to solve, in spite of notification to H.Q. Bengal/Burma prior to moving from Digri. During this period those who were unfortunate had to sleep on a cement floor, which led to a large number of airmen reporting sick with aches and pain in their backs and limbs, coughs, colds, etc., and though none of these was proved to be seriously ill, it was felt that if any illness had supervened, it would have been justifiable to state that it was 'due to conditions of service'. This problem was also found at R.A.F. Station Digri and seems to be common when a Unit moves to a new Site, if the remarks of the Medical Officers with whom I have talked are to be accepted as true, Two movements of this Squadron have certainly proved it to be so. Accommodation on the Unit is crowded and it is hoped will be alleviated before the really hot weather comes in. Either new billets require to be built, or a re-shuffling of present accommodation is required. With the opening of the new site this question may be solved.

There is apparently a great shortage of fans for distribution to Station, and that is presumed to be the reason why none of the billets that the Squadron occupies are so equipped. The Senior Administrative Officer of the Station has been informed of this and it is understood that he has requested issue of these. It is pointed out that in the near future shortage of this essential equipment is going to cause an increase in the heat effects and therefore fans require to be supplied immediately otherwise operational efficiency which will be tried to its limit in any event, will greatly suffer.

In order that there will be adequate water supplies at all points on the Unit a redistribution of existing water-tanks has been affected, so that now none of the Squadron personnel will ever be very far from a drinking-water point.

There is nothing of a Medical interest to record on the operation work of the Squadron. No aircrew personnel appear to be suffering from flying fatigue, in spite of the long flights which their duties involve, or other disorders of a psychological nature, nor have there been any queries from the Commanding Officer or Flight Commanders as to whether individually named members of aircrew have been reporting sick unnecessarily or for minor complaints. It is hoped that this happy state of affairs will continue.

(R. Halliday.) F/O
Officer in Medical Charge,
No. 358 Squadron. R.A.F.

Appendix No. 17 No. 358 Sqn F540 for Feb/1945

To:- O. C. 358 Sqn

Form 540. Engineer Section Ref.358S/R.1652/3/ENG.

The last operation of the moon period was completed on the night of 1st February, 1945, and the squadron immediately began to move to Jessore. The advance party left by road on the 4th, followed on the 9th by the main rail party, and the air party in two trips on the 10th. Accommodation was difficult at Jessore both from the technical and domestic point of view. Of all the aircraft pens only 3 were large enough for a Liberator to turn around on; the remainder have blast walls and aircraft have to be towed out, turned round on the taxi track and then towed tail first into the pen before bombing up can be commenced. To date only one tractor has been received suitable for towing Liberator aircraft. The domestic accommodation in town was insufficient for all the squadron technical personnel, and Instrument Repairers, Electricians and 'B' Flight ground crew had to be accommodated at Santola, some 5 miles out of town, messing at the central mess in Jessore.

During a non-flying period extending up to 19th the Squadron settled-in and carried out certain S.D. modifications such as removal of the Ball Turret and front guns. Aircraft D 353 was found to require two engine changed on account of high oil consumption and metal in filters, and H 257 had to be category ES, the port undercarriage having been pulled away from the spar by a heavy landing.

Personnel arrived to meet established vacancies throughout the month and the squadron is now fairly well up to strength; NCO Fitters IIA are the chief deficiency. Tools are slow coming in, but considerable progress has been made in the local manufacture of working platforms, and benches from material obtained by breaking down min cases.

Operations commenced on 19th and continued to the end of the month. a large number of operational failures occurred, the root cause being the fact that aircraft were being detailed for operations day after day until they were put u/s for inspection. Aircraft in some cases landed at 11.00 hrs. from one operation and were off again by 16.30 hours for the next. The time on the ground was sufficient only to D.I., refuel and re-arm; if any snags arose they could not be cleared in time for scheduled latest take off.

On 19th O 253 landed at Tezgaon and had to have No.1 engine change on account of a piston ring break up. On 20th two aircraft were lost on operations, G 282 and U 925; Q 367 landed at Comilla and had to have No.1 engine change on account of piston and cylinder damage. On 22nd N 365 had to have a fuel cell change. On 25th H 188 failed to return from operations. On 27th L 977 was allotted out for early major inspection at 400 hours, this was the only remaining training aircraft from 1673 H.C.U. and was no longer fit for ops.

Replacement aircraft received during the month were all early series Liberators requiring up to a week's work on them before operationally fit.

(D. G. Moore) F/Lt.
Engineer Officer,
No. 358 Squadron.
Royal Air Force. SEAAF.