

Appendix No. 22 for March 1945

From:- Officer in Medical Charge 358 Squadron R.A.F.

To:- Officer Commanding 358 Squadron R.A.F.

Ref:- 358S/2022/Med.

Date:- 15/4/45.

Operations Record Book. F540
Squadron Medical History

The present report covers the month of March 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	20	33	1.6
N.C.Os (Air)	54	114	2.2
All Ground Personnel	119	478	2.4
Totals	271	625	2.3

The average No on the daily sick parade was 20 and the average No of new cases seen per day was 8 (against corresponding figures of 17 and 7 in the preceding month).

The incidence of gastro + enteritis was again marked and many personnel (air and ground) were taken off their full duties for varying periods because of this, though cure was effected in 3 – 4 days at most in all of them, apart from those admitted to S.S.Q.

There were also quite a number of skin disease cases, mostly of boils and other septic lesions, and various tineal infections – cruris, pedis and axillae.

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

	Officers (Air and Ground)	N.C.Os. (Air)	All Ground Personnel
S.S.Q.	Nil.	6	25
Hospital	Nil	4	17
Totals	Nil	10	42

Corresponding totals for February were 4 : 1 : 32 ; so that over all increase has occurred.

The most important causes of hospitalisation with the number of cases of each is noted below:-

Venereal Disease :- 8 cases (2 were N.C.Os. Air)

Malaria. :- 2 "

Dengue. :- 2 "

Skin Diseases. :- 9 "

Bacillary Dysentery. :- 1 "

Gastro-intestinal. :- 3 "

The Numbers of ground personnel detained in S.S.Q. for periods of 48 hours or less was 36, and as noted above the majority of these were of gastro-intestinal origin.

Among aircrew there were 20 who were debarred from flying for periods ranging from 24 hours to 7 days, either because of gastro-intestinal disorders or upper respiratory diseases.

The large number of V.D. cases was brought to the attention of the Officer Commanding 358 Squadron and action was taken which resulted in the brothels of Jessore being placed out of Bounds, and a 0100 hours curfew being imposed. to date this appears to have reduced the V.D. incidence.

A lecture was also given to aircrew embracing such subjects as the prevention of V.D., dysentery and malaria. The use of oxygen (and abuse of oxygen) was also included. Further lectures will be given.

On Sunday 25th March W/O Mills and crew were killed when their aircraft crashed and burst into flames immediately after take off. W/O Mills (captain) and F/O Taylor (Bomb aimer) were thrown clear and killed on impact. The other seven members of the crew died from multiple injuries and burns. Many Indian men women and children were burned in the resulting fire (the aircraft crashed into a native village) and to those people such treatment as was immediately available was given, and they were sent to the civil Hospital Jessore. Subsequent inquiry has revealed that several of them died.

It may be noticed here that the trees into which this aircraft crashed, and over whose removal there has been controversy in the past, while their height and distance etc from the end of the runway conform to the specifications laid down, yet, as pilots have stated to me, they present a psychological problem t them, which they feel under certain conditions, be enough to distract attention away from vital instruments etc at take-off, especially during the hours of darkness.

Sanitation & Hygiene

To maintain adequate sanitation on this Squadron site is still proving a difficult matter. However there is now a sanitary Squad which is making a daily inspection of all latrines, drains, grease-traps, swill bins etc, and ensuring that these are kept clean. New swill-bins have been made on the unit with self-closing lids and are being distributed round the messes. Fly-traps are also being made and it is hoped that these measures will reduce Gastro-intestinal disorders. Water supply is adequate, one 500 gallon bowser and one 350 gallon bowser being employed to fill water tanks distributed round the messes, domestic sites and working sites. It is hoped that many necessary repairs will soon be effected in messes, roofs of billets etc, before the monsoon period, and also "bash type" latrines will be replaced. They have been condemned.

The food is improving and there have been no legitimate grouses about it for sometime.

Flying Stress.

Four cases of psychological disorder have been seen during this period. One captain has been taken off flying and disposal from this unit effected as laid down by Air Ministry letter S.61141/S.7.c(1), para 5 clause 1 dated 1-6-43.

Another captain was assessed as a case of "flying fatigue" and was recommended sick leave. Two other air-gunners (who had to bale out on returning from a recent operational trip) were given sedative treatment, had an air test flight and were then sent on leave. On return they did another air-test flight and reported later that they could no longer fly in Liberators. The possibilities of their disposal was explained to them with the advice that they see the Commanding Officer, (whom I informed) The next day the two decided that they could carry on without trouble. Both have been flying since and their captain reports no evidence of anxiety in the air.

There is no evidence that the air-crew personnel of this Squadron are suffering from flying fatigue or flying stress, in spite of the long and difficult flights which they have to make.

Ex-India

Five members of this Squadron have been (or will be shortly) posted EX-India for the following reasons:- Anxiety State aircrew N.C.O., Hyperpiesis, Sciatica, Asthma, and Pulmonary disease. The Anxiety State in the air-crew N.C.O. developed before he had done any operational flying.

R. Halliday F/O
Officer in Medical Charge
358 Squadron R.A.F.

Appendix No. 23 to F.540 for March 1945

To. O.C. 358 Sqdn.

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

March 1945

The Allied Air C-in-C visited the unit on 6th March and seemed generally satisfied with the technical side. The same day the C.O. gave a gen talk to all technical NCO's on the work being done by the squadron, and the difficulties that were unavoidable since it was impossible to plan operations more than a day or two ahead.

On 7th, two recent REFORS aircraft, G 215 and U 242 sprang a leak and had to be put in for fuel cell change; W 394 had metal in filters on the No. 4 engine; squadron personnel carried out an engine change.

On 8th, the initial equipment reserve of 8 engines arrived; engine changes will be greatly facilitated.

On 10th, using a Dakota aircraft of 357 Squadron, engines were flown in to Mezgaon and Comilla to install in)¹ 253 and Q 367. Aircraft T 350 landed at Kunming off operations with No 2 engine u/s; USAAF effecting change. Party despatched to Allahabad and Cawnpore on tool search; spent a week there and picked up a large quantity of tools.

On 12th the Engineer and Servicing Offices and Technical Store were moved to a vacated gun-site centrally situated for all dispersals.

On 13th a workshop party was flown to Digri to cut up mine cases so that more engine working platforms could be locally manufactured.

On 18th A 167 had taxiing accident at night damaging a leading edge and the tail unit of a Dakota. On 20th C 271 landed at Cox's Bazar off ops with No. 1 engine; piston ring had failed and engine change required.

On 25th Z 397 crashed on take off at dawn, no technical defect apparent.

On 26th L 925 went u/s at Cox's Bazar for No.1 engine change; engine ran away on take off and seized.

On 28th U 242 put on engine change, No.4, metal in filters.

The moon period commenced on 22nd and 12 aircraft were put up. A new plan is being adopted now; the squadron operates alternate days and is managing to put up 12 a/c at a time. The day in between enables the aircraft to be worked on and part inspections to be done. Only two op failures occurred during the month, and the scheme seems to be paying dividends. Pilots are now instructed to carry out a mag check before shutting down on return from ops; this will give ground crews more chance to cure snags early.

Weather make afternoon work very difficult now; aircraft surfaces become dangerously hot and interior work is impossible.

The new SD Squadron establishment contains some serious cuts – flight personnel chiefly.

(C. G. Moore)
Engineering Officer,
No 358 Squadron.
Royal Air Force. SEAAF

¹ The ")" symbol is in the record, probably a typo as 253 was "O"

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Appendix No. 24 for March 1945

From:- Signals Officer, 358 Squadron.
 To:- O.C. 358 Squadron.
 Date:- 31st. March, 1945.
 Ref:- 358S/955/Sigs.

F.540 – Signals Report. March 1945.

F/O. J. A. Chitty arrived on posting to this Squadron on 5th March, 1945 and assumed the duties of Squadron Signals Officer, F/Lt. S. J. Brace continuing in his appointment as Signals Leader.

The urgent need for an N.C.O. Radar Mechanic has now been met by the attachment of Sgt. Cowling from 357 Squadron, although one Corporal and on A.C. are still required to complete the existing Radar Establishment. In spite of the postings of F/Sgt. Aitchison (W.E.M.) and seven W/Ops. from the Squadron, the strength of the Signal Section compares favourably with the revised establishment issued on 8th March, 1945 and the loan to S.H.Q. Signals of eleven W/Ops., for W/T. receiving watches with H/F. D/F. operating has been continued.

The high standard of serviceability has been maintained throughout the month, and in spite of a heavy and more or less continuous flying programme, loop swinging has been carried out on eight aircraft, and the calibration charts provided for the Radio Compasses of these aircraft.

The Radio Altimeter test equipment has now been received and installed in the workshop, and has thereby greatly facilitated the calibration checks and maintenance of this equipment. The use of this equipment is still unsatisfactory at the low end of the high range, however, which is due to the general design and inherent characteristics of the equipment.

The Radar Section has installed it's own Maintenance Workshop in a separate building, recently vacated by the instrument section, but 231 Group policy now requires that Squadron Radar maintenance should be carried out in the Station Radar Specialist building with the co-operation of No. 357 Squadron. It is therefore intended to move the main Radar Section to this building early in the coming month, while continuing to use the present workshop for Flight Maintenance.

A Fitting party from 230 Group has commenced the installation of Loran Equipment in the aircraft and the fitting is expected to be completed within the next few days. Arrangements are being made for the fitting of a Loran Trainer equipment in the Navigation Section, thus enabling the Navigators to be instructed in it's use and gain the necessary experience on this new equipment.

During the month, a regrading board for W/Ops. Air was held at Station Signals under supervision from 231 Group Signals and Gunnery Officers, and, as a result, the undermentioned N.C.O.'s have been regraded W/Op. Air Grade I, w.e.f. 12th March, 1945.

284	Sgt. Nettleton	917	Sgt. Fletcher
882	" Donnelly	912	" Pugh
698	" Pollock	334	" Tunnell
596	" Andrews		

J. A. Chitty. F/O.
 Signals Officer
 No. 358 Squadron, R.A.F.