

R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in E.R. and E.C.I.,  
para. 218, and War Manual, Pt. II, chapter XL, and  
notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

## OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

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of (Unit or Formation) 408 Squadron (R.C.A.F.)

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Syerston	1/10/41		Weather fine during morning became cloudy later 5/10 - 7/10ths, visibility 3000 yards. Three aircraft were despatched this date to carry out a bombing attack on KARLSRUHE and one for mining off the FRISIAN ISLANDS. The latter returned before reaching target owing to port engine failure and was diverted to NEWTON where he landed safely. The remaining three aircraft which were on orders to carry out an attack over KARLSRUHE were recalled owing to adverse weather at base. One of these three aircraft failed to receive the recall and reached its objective, and landed safely at BRIPFIELD after having been diverted to this aerodrome. The other two, which received the recall, one bombed HUNKING DOCKS on the return trip and the other SAARBRUEN, both landing safely at NORTH LUFFERHAM where they had been diverted.	A87 A88 A89 A90
Syerston	2/10/41		Fog during morning, dispersing later, cloud 5/10 to 7/10 3000 feet, visibility 1000 yards, improving later. Squadron stood down this date following H.F.T.'s owing to adverse weather.	
Syerston	3/10/41		Cloud 7/10 3000 feet, visibility 1000 yards improving later. 3 aircraft from this Squadron made photographic mosaics of this base, also NEWSTEAD ABBEY and OSSINGTON. No operations due to adverse weather conditions.	
Syerston	4/10/41		Low fog, dispersing later. Cloud 10/10 at first dispersing to 3/10 - 5/10 during afternoon with visibility at 200 yards, at first, improving 4 to 6 miles. No operations this date.	
Syerston	6/10/41		Weather 10/10 Stratus cloud at 300 feet with fog dispersing slightly in afternoon. Visibility 1000 yards with slight improvement later. Squadron stood down this date. Wing Commander H. W. Timmerman, D.S.O., D.F.C., Officer Commanding 408 Squadron, accompanied by the Station Commander, Group Captain R. T. Taffe, O.B.E., visited Air Ministry and R.C.A.F. Headquarters in London this date. Squadron Leader W. J. Burnett, D.F.C. assumed temporary command during the O.C.'s absence. 3/10/41 - - It is regretted no entry was made for the 5th as weather at base was 10/10 cloud 800 feet which dispersed slightly, increasing in the afternoon. Operations were cancelled at briefing and it was even impossible to carry out H.F.T.'s	

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Syerston	7/10/41		Low fog during morning dispersing in afternoon to 5/10 - 8/10 Cumulus at 3000 feet. Visibility 300 to 500 yards at first then improving from 3 to 4 miles during afternoon. The Squadron stood down, no flying. The Officer Commanding the Squadron, Wing Commander H.W. Timmerman, D.S.O., D.F.C., returned from London this date. Squadron Leader W. J. Burnett, D.F.C. relinquished temporary command of the Squadron this date upon the return of the officer Commanding.	
Syerston	8/10/41		Considerable fog during morning which dispersed slightly by midday but closed in again later. Cloud 4/10 - 7/10 at 2000 to 3000 feet. Visibility at 500 yards, improving later. One plane took off for Blind Approach test. No operations this date.	
Syerston	9/10/41		10/10 Cloud at 500 feet, lifting slightly during afternoon. Constant rain and drizzle all day. Visibility 1000 to 2500 yards. No operations.	
Syerston	10/10/41		Low cloud, 1000 feet, 8/10 to 10/10 Strata Cumulus during morning, lifting towards midday and lowering to 2000 feet at evening. Eleven aircraft completed H.F.'s during morning. Eleven aircraft were bombed up for bombing attack over KEMPES WOOD at ESENN, but only ten of these took off, one being unable to do so due to engine trouble. One of the ten which took off returned after being in the air fifteen minutes owing to intercomm. failure and another turned back over ESENN due to overheating of one motor. Another one of these aircraft identified the target only to be unable to open bomb doors to release his load. The remaining seven aircraft reached and successfully bombed their target.	A91 A92 A93 A94 A95 A96 A97 A98 A99 A100
Syerston	11/10/41		Fair weather during day improving from 8/10 Strata Cumulus cloud at 1500 feet in the morning to a complete absence of clouds during the evening and night. Visibility 4 - 6 miles. Two freshmen crews were detailed for operations tonight but same were cancelled during afternoon.	
Syerston	12/10/41		No clouds during morning but slight Cumulus forming in afternoon. Visibility 4 to 8 miles with improvement up to 12 miles. H.F.'s were carried out during the afternoon. Two aircraft took off for a diversion attack over ESENN but one returned almost immediately owing to wireless failure. This wireless failure was luckily rectified in time so that this same aircraft was able to take off later with seven others on a bombing raid over the BUNA FACTORY at ESENN.	A101 - A112



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para. 2249, and War Manual, Pt. II., chapter XL, and  
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Syerston	12/10/41		Further, 3 other aircraft were detailed to attack the searchlight belt in the BOCHOLT area, one of these three aircraft being successful in scoring two direct hits on a ship in NEW HOLLER HARBOUR.	
Syerston	13/10/41		Fog in morning on low ground, which cleared quickly, few clouds at midday increasing to 8/10 - 9/10 during afternoon with visibility 2 - 4 miles. 1 aircraft proceeded to WADDINGTON where it was bombed up for operations on COLOGNE. Aircraft returned safely the following day. Squadron Leader W. J. Barnett, D.F.C. assumed temporary command of 408 Squadron in the absence of the Officer Commanding, Wing Commander H. W. Timmerman, D.S.O., D.F.C. having proceeded on 7 days leave as of this date.	A113
Syerston	14/10/41		Low cloud during morning and 10/10 again in the afternoon at 2000 feet with visibility 2 - 3 miles. 6 crews were detailed and briefed for operations this date but cancelled following briefing.	
Syerston	15/10/41		Weather fair during morning becoming overcast in afternoon and developing into continuous rain.	
Syerston			Cloud increasing from nil to 3/10 - 6/10 Strata Cumulus at 3000 feet, and, later on 15/10 at 1000 feet. Visibility 3 - 6 miles deteriorating in evening. Squadron stood down from operations this date.	
Syerston	16/10/41		Fair during morning slight rain at midday with clearing during afternoon. Cloud 4/10 - 8/10 at 1500 feet increasing to 10/10 then clearing entirely during afternoon. 10 crews were briefed during the afternoon, one of which was detailed to carry out a bombing attack over HUNKIER and the nine others the MARSHALLING YARDS at DUISBURG. Of the 9 aircraft detailed for the raid over DUISBURG, only 6 actually reached the target area while the remaining 3 were forced to turn back owing to intercomm. failure and engine trouble. Unfortunately, the target area was obscured by cloud, preventing accurate bombing.	A114 A115 A116 A117 A118 A119 A120 A121 A122 A123
Syerston	17/10/41		Continuous rainfall day. Cloud 7/10 - 9/10 Strata Cumulus 1500 - 2000 feet with visibility 4 - 8 miles, deteriorating in rain. During the morning and afternoon aircraft practiced low level bombing from 150 feet with good results obtained.	

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Syerston	18/10/41		Gale warning during morning. Wind velocity reached 60 m.p.h. with heavy rain. 10/10 cloud at 1000 feet during morning clearing later during afternoon for a short period. Visibility 3 - 6 miles. There was no flying today due to weather conditions, and aircrews were shown films on oxygen flying and aircraft recognition. Wing Commander Nash and Wing Commander Jefferies from 5 Group H.Q. visited the Squadron this date.	
Syerston	19/10/41		Overcast during morning with slight breaks in cloud. Cloud 7/10 to 10/10 Strata Cumulus at 2000 feet with intermittent rain. Conditions deteriorating during afternoon with wind reaching a velocity of 50 m.p.h. Visibility 2 - 4 miles. A number of aircraft made H.F.T.'s but night operations were cancelled during early part of afternoon.	
Syerston	20/10/41		6/10 - 8/10 cloud at 2000 feet during morning, dispersing later with a visibility of 6 - 10 miles. 12 aircraft were detailed on night operations. 11 to bomb the RAILWAY YARDS at BREMEN and 1 freshman crew for gardening off BORRUM. The gardening operation was successfully completed. Of the 11 aircraft detailed for the attack over BREMEN 2 were forced to turn back due to intercomm. failure and engine trouble and 1 other (Hampden P1212) crashed at HALTHAM 4 miles north of CONDRIBBY at 0045 hours. 3 members of the crew of P1212 were killed and 1 badly injured, later taken to RAUGHBY HOSPITAL. The dead members of the crew were: Pilot, NZ401801 Sergeant Bradley, D. G. of Waipukurau, New Zealand. Navigator, HQAB/167522 Sergeant McMillan, A. T. of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Air Gunner, 1077943 Sergeant Stansfield, R. A., of Leyland, Lancs. The injured Wireless Operator was 1167456 Sergeant Gales, E. L. of Scaton, Devon, who suffered concussion and lacerations of the scalp. The exact cause of this crash is unknown. These casualties are the first sustained by this Squadron since its formation.	A124 A125 A126 A127 A128 A129 A130 A131 A132 A133 A134 A135
Syerston	21/10/41		Local haze during morning clearing later. Slight cloud 2/10 - 4/10 Strata Cumulus at 4000 feet and decreasing at midday. Visibility 1 - 2 miles. No operations today but aircraft detailed on low level bombing practice during afternoon.	
Syerston	22/10/41		Cloud 6/10 - 9/10 Cumulus and Cmb. at 2300 feet with showers of rain and sleet, clearing later on in day. Visibility 6 - 12 miles except during showers. 11 aircraft were detailed and took	A136 A137 A138 A139 A140 A141 A142 A143 A144 A145 A146 A147

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See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and J.C.I., para. 2349, and War Manual, Pt. II., chapter XX., and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Syerston	22/9/41		<p>off for operations on a bombing attack over the CENTRAL STATION at MANHEIM. Of these two were forced to turn back due to intercomm. failure and engine trouble and, Hampden P1218 one of the eleven aircraft did not return to base and was reported missing with complete crew. It is presumed this aircraft disappeared over enemy territory, no W/T or other signal having been received from crew following take-off. The missing crew were: Pilot 964895 Flight Sergeant Pittscomb, P.A. of Wembley, Middlesex. Navigator HQAB/106120 Sergeant Gifford, R. M., of Sherbrook, Quebec, Canada. Wireless Operator 927081 Sergeant Bagg, P.A.G. of Bayleigh, Essex. Air Gunner 751990 Flight Sergeant Walker, F.E. of Perry Bar, Birmingham, 22. No word has been received of the crew since its disappearance this date. All KINPOWED. All remaining aircraft had to contend with severe icing and static and, only 4 aircraft were able to identify the city of MANHEIM through gaps in the clouds. Aircraft were diverted to WATTISHAM and 7 landed at this station with 1 taxiing into a ditch due to faulty direction on the part of ground crew and the remaining 1 aircraft landed and crashed at WATTISHAM HEATH due to damaged undercarriage following enemy action over MANHEIM. No casualties were sustained in the accident at WATTISHAM but one of the Wireless Operator/Air Gunners of Hampden AE 245 C, which crashed at WATTISHAM HEATH received slight injuries to his ears. His name is 940327 Sergeant Corrie, J. E. of Glasgow. The six remaining aircraft returned safely to their base the following morning, 23/10/41.</p>	
Syerston	23/10/41		<p>Cloud 4 - 7/10 Strata Cumulus and Cumulus at 2000 to 3000 feet, increasing during day with a visibility of 6 - 12 miles. 1 freshman crew was detailed to proceed to WASHINGTON for night operations over the docks at Le HAVRE. Aircraft returned safely.</p>	A147
Syerston	24/10/41		<p>Cloud 3/10 - 3/10 Strata Cumulus 2500 to 3500 feet increasing toward midday to 10/10 with a visibility of 2000 to 4000 yards. Aircraft were detailed for low level bombing practice with good results obtained. Miss Nora Eastwood, British representative of the Toronto Star, Toronto Ontario, Canada, accompanied by photographer representing the Keystone Press visited the Squadron</p>	



Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Syerston	24/10/41		this date, interviewed Canadian personnel and took photographs of Canadian crews and aircraft.	
Syerston	25/10/41		Low cloud Strata Cumulus 8/10 - 10/10 at 1200 feet with rain and drizzle all day. Visibility 1/2 miles decreasing in precipitation. It was impossible to carry out N.J.T.'s on aircraft detailed for tonight's operations owing to adverse weather conditions and during early afternoon all operations were cancelled owing to fog.	
Syerston	26/10/41		Weather 7/10 - 9/10 Cumulus and Strata Cumulus cloud 1500 to 2000 feet with occasional squalls. Wind reached a velocity of 35 - 45 m.p.h. 360° at 2000 feet. Visibility 2 - 3 miles improving during latter part of day. One freshman crew was detailed for operations on a bombing attack over CHENBOURG DOCKS and operated from SWIMMING only to find 10/10 cloud over the target. Aircraft were detailed and took off for low bombing practice during the afternoon. The funeral for Sergeant Bradley HENAP and Sergeant William HCAF took place yesterday 25/10/41 and bodies were buried in the Cemetery at NEWARK, NOTTS. Sergeant Stansfield's body was sent on to Blackpool for burial following instructions from Mrs. Stansfield, his wife. An escort was detailed to accompany Sergeant Stansfield's body to Blackpool from Lincoln and remained there for the funeral. The escort was an aircrew sergeant and a friend of the deceased.	
Syerston	27/10/41		7/10 - 10/10 cloud at 2000 feet with occasional rain and visibility from 3 - 4 miles. High winds and gale warnings with wind reaching a velocity of 50 m.p.h. at 2000 feet. All flying cancelled this date owing to weather.	
Syerston	28/10/41		Wind velocity 45 - 50 miles per hour from 360° with rain and sleet showers and variable clouds. Visibility 4 miles improving to 8 miles later on during the day. 2 freshman crews were detailed for night operations to operate from LUFFENHAM but, owing to adverse weather conditions operations were cancelled and crews were forced to remain at LUFFENHAM for the night. Both crews returned to base safely following morning. Aircraft were detailed for low level bombing practice at CLIFTON PASTURES with results showing a great improvement in accuracy from a height of 50 feet despite strong winds.	
Syerston	29/10/41		Stormy weather with fresh to strong gales and wintry showers (snow). 9/10 - 10/10 CMB and S.G.	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Syerstén.	29/10/41		<p>cloud at 1500 feet extending above freezing level 2000 - 3000 feet with visibility 4 - 5 miles. 10 aircraft were detailed for operations tonight over SCHIPOL AERODROME but, due to constant mist showers it was found impossible to carry out N.F.T's. This raid over SCHIPOL AERODROME was planned to attack, what was reported to be, half the available GERMAN bombing concentration following their return from a raid over ENGLAND. The GERMAN aircraft did not leave the ground and our aircraft took from this aerodrome nevertheless but extremely bad weather made it impossible for any of the aircraft to identify the target. Most of our aircraft returned to base with their individual load of bombs.</p>	<p>A149 A150 A151 A152 A153 A154 A155 A156 A157 A158</p>
Syerston	30/10/41		<p>Cloud 4/10 - 7/10 increasing to 10/10 at 1500 to 2000 feet. Freezing level 3000 - 4000 feet and visibility 3 - 4 miles deteriorating. 2 freshmen crews proceeded to Scampton from where they were to operate for night operations but due to adverse weather conditions they returned to base during afternoon. Col. Cooper (American) representative of the Christian Science Monitor accompanied by Mr. Rybeck, Swedish representative of the B.B.C. visited the Squadron this date. Col. Cooper took numerous photographs of aircrew and aircraft and armament and both he and Mr. Rybeck were entertained at luncheon in the Officers Mess by the Officer Commanding the Squadron, Wing Commander H. W. Timmerman, D.S.O., D.F.C. and the Station Commander, Group Captain E. T. Taffie, O.B.E.</p>	
Syerston	31/10/41		<p>4/10 - 6/10 cloud, 3000 feet with visibility 3 - 4 miles. 12 crews were detailed for operations of which 2 were freshmen crews for mining operations off the FRISIAN ISLANDS. The remaining ten crews proceeded to a bombing attack over BLOHM and VOSS SHIPYARDS, at HAMBURG. Of the aircraft which proceeded to HAMBURG, only 3 were able to identify the docks through the clouds. One of the freshmen crews did not take off from this aerodrome due to difficulty experienced with the brakes of his aircraft, but the other freshman completed his task successfully.</p>	<p>A156 - A168</p>

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Gyeron.			<u>OFFICER PORTERS AND ATTACHMENTS</u>	
	20/10/41		<u>POSTED</u> R/O. H.J. Brown attached from No. 25 O.T.U. Minningley.	
			<u>POSTED</u> R/O. J.G. Wilson attached from No. 25 O.T.U. Minningley.	
	30/10/41		<u>POSTED</u> R/O. G.B. Brockway attached from No. 25 O.T.U. Minningley.	
			<u>POSTED</u> R/O. H.F. Hall attached from No. 25 O.T.U. Minningley.	
Gyeron	4/10/41		<u>HEADQUARTERS PORTERS AND ATTACHMENTS</u> 933248 Sgt. P. McIntosh, Observer, posted to be attached to No. 44 Squadron Waddington.	
	1/10/41		853933 Sgt. J.E.M. Brown, Observer, posted to be attached to Waddington on R.A.F. course.	
	10/10/41		580639 P/Sgt. Bunting, J.A. returned from Bombing Leaders course at Neaby.	
	11/10/41		74643 Sgt. I.W. Hall, Pilot, posted to R.A.F. Gyeron (non effective sick)	
	14/10/41		106160 Sgt. J.I. Williams, O.T.U. posted from No. 14 O.T.U. Cottam.	
	18/10/41		129459 Sgt. R.E. Stafford, O.T.U. posted from No. 14 O.T.U. Cottam.	
	22/10/41		964077 Sgt. P.A. Titcomb, Pilot, 126139 Sgt. R.E. Clifford, Observer, 927001 Sgt. P.A. Page, O.T.U. posted to R.A.F. Gyeron.	
			721790 Sgt. R.E. Walker, O.T.U. posted supplementary to No. 1 R.A.F. Post Waddington, non eff.	
			22/10/41. (non effective missing)	
	27/10/41		1160477 Sgt. R.E. Todd, Observer, 1160476 Sgt. R.E. Robertson, Observer, 902777 Sgt. D. Gordon, Observer, 1162005 Sgt. G. Jefferson, O.T.U. posted from No. 14 O.T.U. Cottam.	
	34/10/41		903440 Sgt. L.W.J. Thomas, O.T.U. posted to No. 25 O.T.U. Minningley.	
	30/10/41		118367 Sgt. R.E. Hill, O.T.U. posted to No. 14 O.T.U. Cottam. 126005 Sgt. R.E. Macville, O.T.U. posted to No. 14 O.T.U. Cottam. 923063 Sgt. P. Bishop, Air Gunner, 1172042 Sgt. R.E. Ford, 1167741 Sgt. R.E. Hartill, O.T.U. posted from No. 16 O.T.U. Upper Heyford.	
	30/10/41		1160477 Sgt. R.E. Thomas, Observer, posted from No. 25 O.T.U. Minningley.	
	31/10/41		1160479 Sgt. P.A. Hall, Observer, 1099079 Sgt. L. Harding O.T.U. posted from No. 25 O.T.U. Minningley.	

W. L. Gammeter  
 Wing Commander, Commanding,  
 No. 401 Squadron, RAF.