R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I., para. 2949 and War Manual. Pt. II., chapter XX., and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

S.22-1-426 3AS

994 Page No. ONE

of (Unit or Formation) 426 (R.C.A.F.) SQUADRON

No. of pages used for day

SECRET.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Linton-on-Ouse	1.12.43		Operations were called for and thirteen crews briefed for the attack. Take-off, originally set for approximately 17.00 hours was set back to mid-night, but the ops. were scrubbed at approximately 23.00 hours.	
Linton-on-Ouse	2.12.43		Thirteen aircraft were once again detailed to attack BERLIN and all became airborne with the exception of B.S. 776 which was scrubbed. Four aircraft returned early due to technical failures and were diverted to other aerodromes. Aircraft B.S. 770 piloted by F/O McD. Shaw J.17677 failed to return. Seven aircraft attacked the primary target all being diverted to southern aerodromes on return.	A.639 to A.646 B. 51 to B. 56
Linton-on-Ouse	3.12.43		Operations were again called for. Crews which had been diverted from the previous day's raid were unable to take off from the diversion aerodromes, and consequently only six crews were available for the attack. Take-off was at 00.20 hours on the morning of the 4th.	
Linton-on-Ouse	4.12.43		One aircraft piloted by Flight Sergeant R.C. Sturley - R151922 failed to return from the nights' operation which was directed against LEIPZIG, Germany. Aircraft B.S. 763 piloted by F/L S.M. Ensele - J14999 was forced to abandon the attack due to faulty instruments. The remaining aircraft bombed the primary, and while 9 to 10/10ths cloud made results difficult to assess, the considerable amount of glow on the cloud indicated large and concentrated fires. The last aircraft set down on return at 08.20 hours and a stand-down today gave the crews a well earned rest.	A.647 to A.651 & B.55
Linton-on-Ouse	5.12.43		Squadron stand-down. Church services were held in the Station Chapels. P.R.U. sortie flown over LEIPZIG today show fires still burning uncontrolled. Commissions were received for four more R.C.A.F. aircrew personnel. R.70989 F/S J.L. Wilson -- R.132673 F/S T.H. Fewsdale R.70133 F/S H.L. Garrick and R90358 F/S G.V. Andrew. Six aircraft were detailed for G.H. training exercises in the afternoon. Aircrew personnel not detailed for flying training helped to move the Station Intelligence Section to their new quarters. Two night cross country exercises had to be scrubbed due to inclement weather.	
Linton-on-Ouse	6.12.43		A Squadron stand-down from operations. The first Flight Engineer on the Squadron to graduate to commissioned rank was 90801 Sgt. Hiscock, E.V. Authority was received today for his appointment to the commissioned rank of Pilot Officer. Authority was also received for the appointment of R95170 Warrant Officer J.E. Powers and R.165285 F/S J.C. Linser to the rank of Pilot Officer. The sergeants and officers of the Signal Section received a one hour lecture on general signals procedure. All flying training scheduled for the evening had to be scrubbed. Fighter attribution exercises were rescheduled for the afternoon, but they also had to be scrubbed due to foul weather. Gunners however, received ground training on shadograph, spotlight and trap shooting. Twelve Flight Engineers received some gunnery practice on the 25 yard range.	

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SECRET.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Linton-on-Ouse	7.12.43		The Squadron was again stood down from operations. Gunners and WOP/AG's carried out D.I's on their A/C in the morning. Five aircraft were detailed for G.H. training exercises. In the evening the new Canadian Y.M.C.A. Hospitality Centre for all ranks, was officially opened. Boasting a Canadian hostess, plenty of Canadian papers and magazines as well as a good supply of soft drinks, namely Pepsi-Cola, a good Canadian favourite, this promises to be a very popular rendezvous for all ranks during the long winter evenings to come.	
Linton-on-Ouse	8.12.43		Again the Squadron was stood down from operations. Authority was received in the morning to post the Squadron Maintenance Personnel, formerly employed in the R. & I. Section, to 34.26 Servicing Echelon. Additional personnel were posted to No. 62 (R.C.A.F.) Squn. Altogether the Squadron will lose approximately 115 ground personnel. One A/C was detailed for G.H. runs in the afternoon. Three A/C on fighter affiliation exercises.	
Linton-on-Ouse	9.12.43		The stand-down continues. More commissions received in the morning. The following N.C.O's have now been elevated to the commissioned rank of Pilot Officer. R.124620 Warrant Officer B. Davidson - R128536 Sergeant A.J. Hurley - R129144 Flight Sergeant Birnie, H.W. - R66186 Flight Sergeant Hammell, K.R. Four A/C were detailed for G. H. training exercises.	
Linton-on-Ouse	10.12.43		A standdown from operations was again the order of the day. A Station Commanders parade was held in the morning. The Squadron fell in No. 2 Hangar at 08.00 hours and paraded to the Station Parade Ground at 08.45 hours. After the inspection by the Station Commander, airmen personnel were dismissed to attend pay parade. Many jubilant faces were noticed after the Accountant Officer's bi-monthly distribution of wealth took place. A considerable amount of flying training was carried out in the afternoon, mostly in the form of G.H. runs and fighter affiliation exercises.	
Linton-on-Ouse	11.12.43		Operations requested three freshman crews for operations. Crews were detailed, aircraft prepared, and take-off was scheduled for 06.00 hours the following morning. However, later on in the evening this operation was scrubbed. Flying training was carried out in the afternoon, with Fighter Affiliation and G.H. runs comprising the main portion of the program. W/C W.H. Gustman, DFC flew to Nanston Tower and return.	
Linton-on-Ouse	12.12.43		The Squadron was again stood-down from operations. A considerable amount of flying training was carried out today. Gunners completed 12 detailed air to air firing and 12 details of fighter affiliation. Gunners also fired a quantity of rounds on the Ghost Range. Twenty minutes turret manipulation training was also carried out. Six aircraft were detailed for G.H. bombing training. A further 6 aircraft were detailed for night bombing exercises, but due to w to weather conditions this had to be scrubbed. J.18908 P/O R. Countess and crew reported to the Squadron on posting from Bomber. W035ODN	
Linton-on-Ouse	13.12.43		Squadron was stood-down and a strenuous training programme laid on, including fighter affiliation and G.H. runs. R.109741 F/S Prattle and crew reported to the Squadron.	

(P10886—9505) Wt. 54652—6312 150M 12/42 T.S. 700

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R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I., para. 2949 and War Manual. Pt. II., chapter XX., and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation) 426 (R.C.A.F.) SQUADRON

Page No. THREE

No. of pages used for day

SECRET.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Linton-on-Ouse	14.12.43		Squadron was stood-down from operations. Our first Yorkshire fog hit the drome and hid from view any illusions of flying for today.	
Linton-on-Ouse	15.12.43		Squadron was again stood-down, and an intelligence lecture given to all aircrew in the main briefing room in the morning. Fog still predominated, and all flying was scrubbed. An Officers' Mess Meeting was held in the afternoon at which a programme was drawn up for Christmas Day.	
Linton-on-Ouse	16.12.43	c	Operations were called for and thirteen crews briefed for the attack on BERLIN. All aircraft took off, two returning early owing to technical failures. It was an unfortunate night for the squadron four aircraft being lost. Weather had closed in at the time of return and two aircraft crashed. D.S. 837 piloted by S/L T.M. Kneale crashed at Yearsley, killing 6 members of the crew and seriously injuring the mid-upper air gunner. D.S. 779 piloted by Flight Sergeant R.B. Stewart crashed at Hunningore, killing 5 members of the crew, dangerously injuring the rear gunner and slightly injuring the mid upper air gunner. Aircraft D.S. 782 piloted by J.19815 Pilot Officer Davies and aircraft D.S. 846 piloted by J.18858 Pilot Officer Archibald are missing. Seven aircraft reported having attacked the primary. 10/10 th cloud conditions prohibited any real assessment of results and the general impression was that the attack did not have the good results of previous raids.	A.652 to A.662 & B. 56 & B.57
Linton-on-Ouse	17.12.43		Squadron standdown. Weather was exceedingly foggy and no flying was undertaken. The Squadron Commander in company with the Squadron Engineer Officer visited the scene of last nights crashes.	
Linton-on-Ouse	18.12.43	c	Welcome news was read in the morning papers, reporting that P/O Davies and his entire crew, reported missing on the BERLIN raid on the 16th December had baled out over Sweden, the only casualty being frostbitten ankle suffered by one of the crew. The squadron was stood-down and a training programme drawn up with stress on S.B.A., Fighter Affiliation and Air Firing. The weather refused to clear during the day, however, and details were scrubbed.	
Linton-on-Ouse	19.12.43		Squadron was stood down and a training programme arranged that had all crews air borne on air firing, bombing, and S.B.A. practice. It was not possible to obtain fighters for Fighter Affiliation.	
Linton-on-Ouse	20.12.43		Operations were called for and nine crews briefed to attack FRANKFURT, Germany. All aircraft took off with the exception of "J" due to mid-upper turret and generator being u/s. Aircraft LL.687 returned early, the MU/AG being unconscious owing to lack of oxygen, and aircraft MA. 763 owing to pressure failure. Aircraft MA.716 piloted by GAN.J.18916 F/O. W.A. Griffin and aircraft LL.630 piloted by 158306 F/O. R.J. Stuart, C.G.M. are missing. Four crews reported attacking the primary target. P.F.F. route markers were not well concentrated and bomb aimers had difficulty in deciding when to release their loads. Many incendiaries were taking hold,	A.663-A.668 B.58-B.59

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events — SECRET.	References to Appendices
Linton-on-Ouse	20.12.43		(Continued from Page 3) however, and the general opinion was that it would develop into a good raid. In losing two aircraft the Squadron lost two of its most experienced crews including W/C. R.J. Murphy (J.13843, Squadron Navigation Leader. Air Vice Marshal M.R. Anderson, recently appointed Deputy Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, R.C.A.F. Overseas, visited the Station today and sat in at the interrogation of W/O. W.H. Seetman, DFC, and crew. [redacted]	
Linton-on-Ouse	21.12.43		Squadron was stood down and a lecture given by the Squadron Commander to all aircrew on "Turn-backs etc.". Three aircraft were detailed for night cross country exercises. Duff weather prohibited flying during the day.	
Linton-on-Ouse	22.12.43		Funeral services were held at 0930 hours this morning for eight members of the Squadron who lost their lives in the two crashes on return from operations on December 16th. Interment took place at the Stonefall Cemetery, Harrogate, Yorkshire. The bodies of three R.A.F. members of the Squadron were sent home for burial. Day flying consisted of Fighter Affiliation exercises, air to air firing, air tests, and one cross country. Four aircraft completed night bombing details at Strensall Range. A ground lecture and instruction on G.H. was given to new navigators this afternoon.	
Linton-on-Ouse	23.12.43		[redacted] Scaffmed figures were called for this morning and nine crews were mustered for an attack on Berlin. Crews were at their aircraft ready to start up for the original time of take off set at 1650 hours when a postponement came through setting it back to midnight. Once more engines were warmed up for take off. The perspex of all aircraft was covered with hoar frost and the wings had a liberal coating. The effort was eventually scrubbed by BASE and aircraft returned to their dispersals. All crews agreed that the day was the hardest on nerves in some months.	
Linton-on-Ouse	24.12.43		A bright clear day with a stand down from operations. All aircraft available were airborne early in the afternoon on training details. Christmas Eve festivities on the Station were a great success. Dances were held in the Y.M.C.A. and by the Sergeant's Mess. Midnight church services in both chapels were very well attended.	
Linton-on-Ouse	25.12.43		All members of the Squadron quickly recovered from their Christmas Eve celebrations when at 10.00 hours Scaffmed figures were called for. The many plans made for a bright and Merry Christmas seemed to have been all for naught. Before the shock was over, however, the operations were scrubbed at 1007 hours, the whole of the Station then settled down to a most enjoyable Christmas Day. All Squadron officers helped to serve Christmas Dinner in the airmen's Mess at 12.00 hours. Some 1000 meals were served in two sittings and much credit is due to the Catering Staffs for a very excellent dinner with all the trimmings. Senior N.C.O.'s were guests in the Officer's Mess in the afternoon, dinner being served to the N.C.O.'s at noon and to the officers in the evening. Church services were held in the morning. One and all voted the day a grand success.	

(71286—9503) Wt. 34651—6312 150M 11/44 T.S. 700

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R.A.F. Form 540

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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation) 426 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron

Page No. FIVE

No. of pages used for day

SECRET.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Linton-on-Ouse	26.12.43		Squadron was stood down. Church services were not well attended this morning being the day after Christmas. Gee, G.H. and S.B.A. training was undertaken during the day.	
Linton-on-Ouse	27.12.43		Operations were anticipated, but a stand-down was ordered and a fully flying programme laid on including fighter affiliation, air to air firing, S.B.A. practice, bombing and G.H. training. Two crews completed night cross country exercises.	
Linton-on-Ouse	28.12.43		Another stand-down from operations and again a heavy training programme was arranged.	
Linton-on-Ouse	29.12.43		Goodwood figures were called for this morning and twelve crews briefed to attack BERLIN. All took off with the exceptiom of DS.741 which collided with an aircraft of 405 Squadron while taxying for take off. All aircraft bombed the primary target and returned safely, aircraft DS.849 piloted by F/Lt. M.C. Wilson(J.7748), landing at diversion aerodrome SHIPDAM due to fuel shortage. This was F/L. Wilson's first trip as Captain and news of his landing which was slow in coming through was very cheering indeed. Weather over the target was 10/10th cloud with tops from 8,000 to 10,000' and good visibility above. Ground defences over the target were active, but fighter activity negligible. Results were impossible to assess, though crews in the last wave reported a considerable red glow on the clouds. Advice was received today that His Majesty the King had approved the immediate award of the D.F.C. to 2nd Lieutenant Stanley Gaunt D.F.M. (C885972). 2nd Lt. Gaunt has now been released to the U.S.A.A.F. having completed his tour with this Squadron. Three crews reported to the Squadron from 1679 Conversion Flight and one crew from 405 (R.A.F.) Squadron.	
Linton-on-Ouse	30.12.43		Squadron was stood down and little flying was undertaken, the day being devoted to repair of aircraft and analysis of back plotting of previous night's logs. One new crew carried out a local familiarization flight.	
Linton-on-Ouse	31.12.43		Operations were called for and eleven crews briefed for the attack. It was scrubbed however in the mid-afternoon and all hands then turned to preparation s to ring in the New Year. Dances were held in the N.A.A.F.I. and the Officer's Mess. Two new crews reported from 1679 Conversion Flight bringing the Squadron once again up to establishment.	

NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF UNIT AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1943

OFFICERS	AIRCREW	GROUND CREW	TOTAL	AIRMEN	AIRCREW	GROUNDCREW	TOTAL
R.C.A.F.	64	1	65	R.C.A.F.	96	18	114
R.A.F.	15	-	15	R.A.F.	25	-	25
R.A.F.(CAN)	1	-	1	R.N.Z.A.F.	2	-	2
R.N.Z.A.F.	1	-	1	W.A.A.F.	1	-	1
	81	1	82		-	9	9
					124	28	151

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SECRET.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
			AIRCRAFT ON CHARGE: 22 LANCASTER MARK II	
			OPERATIONAL FLYING HOURS: 265.55 FLYING TRAINING HOURS: 221.50 OTHER FLYING HOURS: 46.30 TOTAL 533.15	
			TOTAL NUMBER OF SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED OPERATIONAL SORTIES DURING MONTH: 39 TOTAL NUMBER OF NON-SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONAL SORTIES FLOWN DURING MONTH: 8	48 acc to 541 9 acc to 541
			HEALTH: An epidemic of common colds resulted in the general health of ground crew personnel being only fair throughout the month. The general health of aircrew personnel during the first part of the month was satisfactory but deteriorated during the latter part of the month due to influenza and common colds.	
			Wing Commander, Commanding, 426 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron	

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