

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

3878

Page No. 1

of (Unit or Formation) 425 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices																																													
Linton-on-Ouse	1-1-44		Bomber Command started the first day of the New Year by ordering another heavy attack on the German Capital of BERLIN. Eleven aircraft were detailed for the operation; crews were selected and the aircraft prepared. One aircraft was "scrubbed" due to technical failure shortly before take-off. The remaining ten aircraft took off shortly after midnight. All aircraft returned safely the following morning although three forced to land at diversion aerodromes. All aircraft successfully attacked the target although crews reported that P.E.P. markers were rather scattered and the results of the attack were difficult to ascertain.		A675-4688																																													
Linton-on-Ouse	2-1-44		The Battle of BERLIN continues. The Squadron detailed ten aircraft and crews to participate in the attack on the German Capital. At take-off time an unfortunate accident occurred when aircraft D.S. 811 "Q" bogged down in the mud and consequently blocked D.S. 741 "T" from taking off, thus due to the muddy condition of the field two aircraft had to be scrubbed from the operation. One aircraft D.S. 838 "U" was forced to return early with starboard engine unserviceable. The pilot of this aircraft 1st. Lieutenant J.K. Smith (8886141) U.S.A.A.F., was proceeding down the runway when the starboard outer engine became unserviceable. With no hope of pulling up, as he was within 100 yards of the end of the runway, he had no alternative but to attempt take-off on three serviceable engines. Under adverse weather conditions, including low cloud base and heavy and gusty winds, the aircraft was skillfully lifted into the air. Although the Flight Engineer tried to feather the propeller, this mechanism also momentarily failed, and the pilot was forced to fly for several minutes at a very low altitude, one propeller windmilling to add to the pilot's difficulties. When eventually they were able to feather the propeller, 1st. Lieutenant Smith, despite his particularly heavy load was able to climb through thick cloud on only three engines. He headed his aircraft towards the sea, gradually gaining altitude when over the channel, a safe height had been reached to allow him to jettison his bomb load at 5430-0100Z from 9,500 ft. The remaining aircraft successfully carried out their mission and returned safely to this country with the exception of D.S. 768 piloted by CSM J. 18928 P/O G.A. Griffiths which failed to return from this operation. Particulars of the missing crew are as follows:		A689-4695-260																																													
			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th><th>Rank</th><th>Name</th><th>Initials</th><th>Trade</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>J. 18928</td><td>P/O</td><td>GRIFFITHS, G.A.</td><td></td><td>CAPT.</td></tr> <tr> <td>R. 134273</td><td>P/O</td><td>OPPER, L.</td><td></td><td>2ND P.</td></tr> <tr> <td>1343996</td><td>P/O</td><td>ALLEN, P.</td><td></td><td>NAV.</td></tr> <tr> <td>159006</td><td>P/O</td><td>PILNEY, R.H.</td><td></td><td>WOP</td></tr> <tr> <td>J. 18782</td><td>P/O</td><td>SWANBY, G.</td><td></td><td>A/S</td></tr> <tr> <td>1603167</td><td>Sgt.</td><td>JOWETT, G.</td><td></td><td>P/R</td></tr> <tr> <td>188030</td><td>Sgt.</td><td>CRITLAND, A.A.</td><td></td><td>MUAG</td></tr> <tr> <td>R. 107846</td><td>WO2</td><td>SYMONS, P.R.</td><td></td><td>A/S</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	No.	Rank	Name	Initials	Trade	J. 18928	P/O	GRIFFITHS, G.A.		CAPT.	R. 134273	P/O	OPPER, L.		2ND P.	1343996	P/O	ALLEN, P.		NAV.	159006	P/O	PILNEY, R.H.		WOP	J. 18782	P/O	SWANBY, G.		A/S	1603167	Sgt.	JOWETT, G.		P/R	188030	Sgt.	CRITLAND, A.A.		MUAG	R. 107846	WO2	SYMONS, P.R.		A/S		
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Linton-on-Ouse	3-1-44		After two successive operational nights a stand-down was indeed welcomed. This stand-down gave aircrews a much-needed rest and allowed the ground crews a chance to get the aircraft into a serviceable condition. Information was received to-day that the undermentioned N.C.O.'s had been appointed to the commissioned rank of Pilot Officer. CSM R. 142640 WO2 J.T. McLaughlin - Air Gunner CSM R. 107846 WO2 P.R. Symons - Air Gunner (reported missing on previous night's raid).																																															

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Linton-on-Ouse	4-1-44		A stand-down from operations was declared to-day. Most sections were busily engaged in ground training. The popular Squadron Adjutant, CAN.C.12732 P/Lt. R.S. McCartney was informed that he was posted to R.C.A.F. O/S Headquarters w.e.f. 7-1-44.		
Linton-on-Ouse	5-1-44		An all out operational effort was the order of the day. Eleven crews were detailed and briefed to attack the German industrial city of STETTIN. All aircraft took off without difficulty and all successfully attacked the target. Upon return all crews reported a successful attack and the raid appeared to be well-concentrated. CAN.J.15176 Wing Commander W.H. Swetsen, DFC, Squadron Commander, completed his 42nd operational sortie to-day.		A696-4706
Linton-on-Ouse	6-1-44		It was 0900 hours when the last crew landed after the previous night's operations and a stand-down was indeed welcomed. A considerable amount of flying training was carried out by new crews. Information was received of the appointment to commissioned rank as Pilot Officer of R.36703 W/O J.R. Coulombe. In sixteen operational sorties successfully completed this officer has been to the German capital BERLIN eight times.		
Linton-on-Ouse	7-1-44		A stand-down from operations was declared early in the day. P/Lt R.S. McCartney, the Squadron Adjutant, departed on posting to-day, much to the regret of all Squadron personnel. The fortnightly Station Commander's parade and inspection was held this morning. Squadron personnel were inspected by the Base Commander, Air Commodore C.H. McEwen, MC, DFC. At the conclusion of the inspection the Squadron was dismissed to enjoy the fruits of the Accountant Officer's fortnightly distribution of A.S.S.		
Linton-on-Ouse	8-1-44		A stand-down from operations was again the order of the day. All Sections carried out a program of ground training and ground-crew personnel put in a number of good working hours in overhauling the aircraft. Authority was received to-day appointing the undermentioned R.C.O.'s to the commissioned rank of Pilot Officer: 1290715 Sgt. S.G. MacKenzie - Air Gunner 1476599 Sgt. R.C.D. Jones - Air Gunner		
Linton-on-Ouse	9-1-44		And again another stand-down from operations. CAN.C.6069 P/Lt D.F.G. Haldens reported to-day to assume the duties of Squadron Adjutant. Air Marshal, L.H. Bredner, DFC, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, R.C.A.F. Overseas, visited the Station to-day. He was accompanied by Air Vice Marshal G.H. Brookes, Air Officer Commanding No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Group.		
Linton-on-Ouse	10-1-44		The Squadron was again stood-down from operations. One benefit to be derived from these stand-downs is the opportunity it gives all Sections to get well prepared and to carry out any necessary re-organization in the light of past experience. J.10503 S/Lt A.F. Avant, DFC, reported to-day from 1679 Conversion Unit to assume command of "B" Flight. W/Lt Avant is commencing his second tour of operations.		
Linton-on-Ouse	11-1-44		The stand-down continues. The following R.C.O.'s were appointed to the commissioned rank of Pilot Officer: R.121270 P/Sgt. K.M. Pulham - Air Gunner R.1126009 P/Sgt. G. D'Arcy - W/F(Air) 697061 P/Sgt. W.S. Burton - Air Gunner 1820019 Sgt. G.R. Ketcher - Air Gunner. CAN.R.45535 Opl. G.F. Edwards - Armourer was posted to the R.C.A.F. "R" Depot, Warrington, for repatriation to Canada.		

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Linton-on-Ouse	12-1-44		And the stand-down continues. S/L W.T. Miller of the Canadian Section of R.A.F. Record Officer, Gloucester visited the Station to-day to discuss personnel and manning problems with administrative officers representing all Units located on the Base.		
Linton-on-Ouse	13-1-44		With no operations scheduled for to-day the Squadron piled up a few training hours. Information was received to the effect that R.1336/8 Sgt. R.H. Ginson - A/C who is at present interned in Sweden had been appointed to a commission as a Pilot Officer.		
Linton-on-Ouse	14-1-44		To-day saw the end of a series of operational stand-downs which have lasted for over a week. Sixteen aircraft were detailed and were briefed to attack the German manufacturing town of HAMBURG. One aircraft D.S. 836, had to be scrubbed at take-off due to the bomb attachment becoming unserviceable. The remaining fifteen aircraft took off and successfully attacked the target. Crews reported the raid to be fairly well concentrated upon return. Defences were reported to be light over the target but considerable fighter activity was encountered en-route. The crew of aircraft D.S. 763 sighted an ME.110 five miles north of the target. Successfully evasive action was taken and both gunners opened fire at approx. 500 yards range. The enemy aircraft broke off the attack at 300 yards and was not seen again. Aircraft D.S. 646 was attacked by an unidentified single engine fighter. The Mid-Upper Gunner opened fire at 200 yards range and the enemy aircraft broke away and was not seen again. A second attack was delivered by an unidentified twin engine fighter. Successful evasive action was taken and the enemy aircraft broke away and was not seen again. Shortly after leaving the target area a third attack was delivered by an FW.190. The Mid-Upper Gunner opened fire at 150 yards and the enemy aircraft was seen to go through the cloud in a ball of fire. As there were no searchlights or fires in the combat area this enemy aircraft is claimed as destroyed.		A707-A720
Linton-on-Ouse	15-1-44		A stand-down from operations was declared to-day. A heavy fog enveloped the Station thus curtailing all flying activities.		
Linton-on-Ouse	16-1-44		Heavy fog still envelope Station and all flying thereby scrubbed. The Air Sea Rescue Officer from Headquarters No. 6 Group gave a lecture to aircrew on Air Sea Rescue procedure. In the morning all navigators held a special discussion on navigation problems. All Sections carried out the usual work in their respective Sections.		
Linton-on-Ouse	17-1-44		Due to the heavy fog still prevailing a stand-down from operations was again ordered. A wet Ringy Drill was carried out by aircrew in the morning at the indoor swimming pool in York. A lecture was given in the afternoon to aircrew personnel by the Medical Officer on "First Aid Kits". This lecture was followed by a lecture by Base Operations Officer.		
Linton-on-Ouse	18-1-44		A stand-down from operations was again ordered due to inclement weather conditions. Information was received to-day that, J.15098 P/L M. Roach D.F.M., a veteran of 49 operational sorties and who has been the Squadron Bombing Leader since the formation of the Squadron, had been granted a new immediate award of the D.F.C. It was also announced that P/L J.J. Devan (51725) Flight Engineer Leader had also been granted a new immediate award of the D.F.C. Navigators began preparations to-day to give their Sections a new coat of paint. Major Stevenson, Flak Liaison Officer from Headquarters No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Group gave a lecture to aircrew on German defences against the night bomber.		

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Linton-on-Ouse	19.3.44		A stand-down from operations was again declared early in the day. As the weather had cleared sufficiently to allow some flying to be undertaken twelve aircraft were detailed for a Bullseye exercise. Flight plans were prepared but all planes had to be cancelled when it was announced that the exercise was scrubbed due to poor weather conditions.		
Linton-on-Ouse	20.3.44		Operations were ordered and sixteen aircraft and crews were detailed. All aircraft took off without incident and successfully attacked the target. One aircraft D.S. 711 was forced to return early due to oxygen failure. Crew upon return reported a concentrated raid on the German Capital of BERLIN. It was announced that J.18398 P/O M.W. Warren - WOP who has just completed a tour of operations, had been awarded the D.F.C. (non-immediate) - 156575 P/O J.H. Jones, another Wireless Operator who completed his and has since been posted to 1664 Conversion Unit, was also awarded the D.F.C. (non-immediate). Particulars of the missing crew are as follows: J.14907 P/L L.W. McCaig, D.F.C. - PILOT J.19009 P/O R.J. Orr - NAVIGATOR E.117465 P/L T.J. Preece - WOP J.18921 P/O R.D. Polson - AIR BOMBER 162397 P/O R.W. Elliott - P/S 169963 P/O G.R. Ketcher - MU/AG E.109508 WO2 E.S. Hawkes - R/G		A.722-A.736 B.61
Linton-on-Ouse	21.1.44		Operations were again ordered and sixteen aircraft and crews were detailed. All aircraft took off and successfully attacked the target. One s/o, D.S. 641 was forced to return early when the starboard inner engine became w/s, and s/o D.S. 744 was forced to abandon the operation when both generators became w/s. All crews upon return reported a very good prang on the German industrial city of MAGDEBURG.		A.737-A.750 B.62-B.63
Linton-on-Ouse	22.1.44		A stand-down from operations was declared in the morning. The weather closed in during the afternoon. All crews who had landed at diversion base upon return from the previous night's operations, managed to return to BASE before the weather closed in. A heavy rain cancelled a night flying programme which had been planned.		
Linton-on-Ouse	23.1.44		The Squadron was again stood down from operations. In the morning aircrews were given a lecture by an officer who had escaped from enemy territory after having been shot down. Information was received today to the effect that two ground N.G.O.'s had been 'Mentioned in Despatches'. The N.G.O.'s were CAN.R.51150 P/Sgt. J.E. Joyal and CAN.R.73855 Sgt. T. Plunkett. A considerable amount of flying training was carried out during the day and cross-country exercises were completed at night.		
Linton-on-Ouse	24.1.44		A standdown from operations was again declared early in the day. Due to poor weather conditions all flying training scheduled for today had to be cancelled. Normal ground training was however carried out in all Sections. CAN. J.17739 P/O R.G. Priday, DFC, a Flight Engineer, commencing his second tour of operations, reported to the Unit to crew with CAN. J.10503 S/L. A.F. Avant, DFC, Flight Commander 'B' Flight.		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
Linton-on-Ouse	25.1.44		Operations were ordered in the morning and seventeen aircraft and crews were detailed. However after a busy day of preparations the operation was "scrubbed" shortly before take-off. CAN.J.49380 P/O. J.A.R. Couleshe was today informed that he had been awarded the DFC (immediate), for outstanding courage in pressing home an attack on the German capital of BERLIN, when his aircraft had been severely damaged through enemy action.		
Linton-on-Ouse	26.1.44		A stand-down from operations was ordered in the morning. Due to poor weather conditions all flying training had to be cancelled. The afternoon was devoted to educational films which were shown for the benefit of all aircrews.		
Linton-on-Ouse	27.1.44		Operations were ordered and seventeen aircraft and crews were detailed. Main briefing was held at 13.45 hours and a busy day was spent in preparing for an all out effort. All aircraft took off shortly after 1800 hours without incident. Thirteen aircraft successfully completed the long trip and delivered another smashing attack on BERLIN. However from the night operations four crews failed to return. Particulars of the missing crews are as follows: CAN.J.7748 P/Lt. M.O. WILSON - Pilot (A/c LL.721) CAN.J.20922 P/O. J.P. St. Jacques - NAV. CAN.R.116124 P/S. M. Macdonald - WOP CAN.J.20163 P/O. L.H. Power - A/B RAF 533023 SGT. W. LAWSON - P/E CAN.R.240343 SGT. A. GARRISON - MU/AG CAN.R.136201 WO2 W.A. PARK - R/G CAN.J.18608 P/O. R.E. COUNTESS - PILOT (A/c LL.688) CAN.R.128345 WO2 L.H. PATTERSON - 2nd P.(420 Sqn.) CAN.J.15190 P/O. K.A. SCHUMBERG - NAV. RAF 1387614 P/S. W.G. FILER - WOP CAN.R.447843 SGT. H.W. KWAS - A/B RAF 1694805 SGT. A. HEADY - R/E CAN.R.180038 P/S. T.A. THOMSON - MU/AG CAN.R.182007 P/S. V. LAWSON - R/G CAN.J.7896 P/Lt. T.R. SHAW - PILOT (A/c DS.686) CAN.J.14236 P/O. R.E. LYNN - NAV. RAF 1390477 SGT. L.V. LANGSTON - WOP CAN.J.24046 P/O. J.H. DODDIE - A/B CAN.R.115439 SGT. D.L. HUBARD - MU/AG CAN.R.126427 P/S. H. ELLIS - R/G RAF 1803538 SGT. R.T. KING - P/E CAN.J.121946 P/Lt. A.T. MARTENS - PILOT (CAN.) RAF 1586566 P/S. P.J. TREVITHICK - NAV. RAF 1038227 SGT. A.J. HILSON - WOP (A/c DS.775) CAN.R.125556 WO2 T.J. HOUSTON - A/B RAF 1962317 SGT. W.D. PRITCHARD - R/E CAN. R.189617 SGT. A. BROOKS - MU/AG RAF 647351 SGT. R.S. CHESTERS - A/G	A.751 - A.766 B.64	
Linton-on-Ouse	28.1.44		Operations were again ordered and twelve aircraft and crews were detailed. Another hectic day followed and briefing was held at 17.30 hours. Shortly after midnight eleven aircraft became airborne, one w/o LL.621 being scrubbed due to a technical failure. Ten aircraft successfully attacked the target and all returned safely to Base. One a/c DS.772, Captained by CAN.J.14328 P/Lt. W.H. Spafford was attacked by a fighter at 5510N-0700E. The crew continued on however until the starboard outer engine packed up and task then had to be abandoned as sufficient height and speed could not be maintained.		A.767 - A.770

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Linton-on-Ouse	29.1.44		A stand-down from operations was declared in the morning. Information was received today to the effect that First Officer W02 J. Jackson (R.143632), rear gunner in P/O. Coulombe's crew, had been appointed to the commissioned rank of Pilot Officer. Ground crews spent a busy day overhauling the aircraft after two consecutive nights of operations.					
Linton-on-Ouse	30.1.44		Thirteen aircraft and crews were detailed for operations. With briefing at 14.00 hours and take-off scheduled for shortly after 1700 hours, a busy afternoon was spent in preparation for the night's efforts. One a/c, B.776 had to be "scrubbed" shortly before take-off due to a technical failure. Twelve a/c took off shortly after 17.00 hours. A/C B.763 was forced to return early due to a technical failure. The remainder of the aircraft successfully delivered another damaging attack on BERLIN. All a/c returned safely to base.		A.779-A.789 B.65			
Linton-on-Ouse	31.1.44		A stand-down from operations today brought to a conclusion a very successful month from an operational point of view. Despite adverse weather conditions prevailing during a large part of the month, the Squadron took part in nine major raids over enemy territory. One hundred and ten sorties were flown during the month from which six crews were reported missing.					
NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF UNIT AS AT 31st JANUARY 1944								
OFFICERS		AIROBAY	GROUNDWORK	TOTAL	AIROBAY	AIROBAY	GROUNDWORK	TOTAL
R.C.A.F.		59	1	60	R.C.A.F.		54	214
R.A.F.		18		18	R.A.F.		43	69
R.N.Z.A.F.					R.N.Z.A.F.		2	2
R.N.Z.A.F.					R.N.Z.A.F.		1	1
USAAF		2		2	W.A.A.F.		9	9
		79	1	80			100	246
AIRCRAFT ON CHARGE: 15 Lancaster Mk. II								
OPERATIONAL FLYING HOURS: 763.30								
FLYING TRAINING HOURS: 158.30								
OTHER FLYING TIMES: 36.25								
TOTAL SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED OPERATIONAL SORTIES FLOWN DURING MONTH: 100								
TOTAL NON-SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONAL SORTIES FLOWN DURING MONTH: 5								
NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT REPORTED MISSING DURING THE MONTH: 6								
HEALTH: The general health of the Squadron was fairly good during the month. No cases of infectious diseases were reported.								
m Wing Commander, Commanding, 426 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron								