

RAF Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I.  
para. 280 and War Manual Pt. II, chapter XX, and  
note in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

# OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

2507

5.22-1-427  
D.H.

Page No. 11

of (Unit or Formation) No. 7 Bomber Squadron

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices																												
R.A.F. Station, Graft.			1. NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF UNIT AS AT 1ST JANUARY, 1943																														
			<table><tr><th>STRENGTH</th><th>AIRCRAFT</th><th>GROUND CREW</th><th>TOTAL</th></tr><tr><td>RAF OFFICERS</td><td>7</td><td>2</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>RAF AIRMEN</td><td>62</td><td>66</td><td>127</td></tr><tr><td>R.A.F. OFFICERS</td><td>17</td><td>1</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>R.A.F. AIRMEN</td><td>45</td><td>165</td><td>210</td></tr><tr><td>GROUND CREW</td><td>3</td><td>32</td><td>35</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>419</td></tr></table>	STRENGTH	AIRCRAFT	GROUND CREW	TOTAL	RAF OFFICERS	7	2	9	RAF AIRMEN	62	66	127	R.A.F. OFFICERS	17	1	18	R.A.F. AIRMEN	45	165	210	GROUND CREW	3	32	35				419		
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	1.1.43		No flying was carried out due to weather conditions. The Squadron is prepared and anxious for full operational programme and hopes that it will be called upon in the near future.																														
	2.1.43		Six aircraft sent to Middleton St. George for mining operations but it was cancelled by Ground Headquarters. Tractor starting trolleys etc. were sent over to Middleton St. George by road and it was found that these facilities helped in getting the aircraft ready on time.																														
	3.1.43		Six aircraft sent on minelaying operations off the Friesen Islands. Three aircraft piloted by Pilot Officer Bennett, Sgt Chambers, and Sgt Johnson got a pinpoint and dropped their mines. The other three were not so fortunate with the weather and found the position allocated to them obscured by 10/10 clouds, consequently they were unable to obtain a pin point and returned to base with their mines. Aircraft "1" piloted by Sgt Chambers had a hole in the starboard wing about a foot square due to "flick". All aircraft returned to base safely.		App. "1" 2.2 to 67																												
	4.1.43		Five aircraft were detailed for minelaying but the operations were cancelled on weather conditions. Local flying took place.																														
	5.1.43		No flying due to weather conditions, although there was no rain a low haze prevailed all day.																														

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
	6.1.43		No flying - the weather still being bad. A lecture was given by Squadron Leader McKay, "B" Flight Commander on petrol Cook manipulations.		
	7.1.43		No flying due to weather conditions.		
	8.1.43		Seven aircraft were detailed for mining operations. Air tests were carried out but the operations were scrubbed.		
	9.1.43		Seven aircraft were detailed for mining off the Frisian Islands. Four were able to pinpoint their positions and drop their mines, but the remainder returned with their loads. All aircraft returned safely.		App. "A" 17 to 19 c/d
	10.1.43		No flying due to weather conditions. A lecture was given on icing but the meteorological officer.		
	11.1.43		Six aircraft were detailed for minelaying but it was scrubbed on account of icing conditions.		
	12.1.43		A full programme of training flying was arranged but had to be scrubbed owing to the weather closing down.		
	13.1.43		Air to sea practice was carried out by two crews, also a day Cross country flight.		
	14.1.43		Seven aircraft were detailed for operations against LORIENT. The weather during the day was misty and very cold. The crews were in the aircraft ready to take off when news was received that the operation was scrubbed due to icing conditions.		
	15.1.43		Seven aircraft were again detailed for operations against LORIENT. Six aircraft took off in six minutes. Sgt Chambers in "B" had to be scrubbed at the last moment due to engine trouble.		App. "A" 17 24 to 26 2-1 /Cont'd Page 3.



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of (Unit or Formation) No. 437 Squadron, R.C.A.F.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	References to Appendix
	13.1.43	Cont'd	developing whilst running up. This was the first bombing raid undertaken by the Squadron. Squadron Leader H.A.L. Williams, "A" Flight Commander and crew in "E" failed to return, the other five landed at Tangmere. The pilots reported that they had successfully bombed the target and three photographs were obtained.		
	16.1.43		The five aircraft did not return from Tangmere due to weather. One aircraft was detailed for mining off the Frisian Islands. The weather was extremely poor all day and there was no surprise when the operation was cancelled. Flight Lieutenant Peters took over temporary command of "A" Flight due to S/L Williams being missing.		
	17.1.43		The aircraft away at Tangmere returned to base. No further flying carried out due to weather conditions being unserviceable. Total flying for the day was 8:15 hours.		
	18.1.43		An intensive flying training programme laid on for today was cancelled due to bad weather. This programme was designed primarily to bring more of the crews up to full operational standard. Crews detailed were disappointed at having their programme scrubbed.		
	19.1.43		The weather continued to be unserviceable for flying of any sort. The aircrew attended an intelligence lecture by the local Operations Officer.		
	20.1.43		Five aircraft were detailed for a minelaying trip. At the last minute, however, the operation was scrubbed due to bad weather.		
	21.1.43		Six aircraft were detailed for minelaying off the Frisian Islands. Five only took off, P/O Parsons being a non-starter due to engine trouble. Four aircraft returned safely but Flight Lieutenant D.A. SHEAR and his crew consisting of Sgts. Patrick, Cross, Sparling and Hoyt did not return from this operation. Sgt Vandenhornhove did not drop his mines due to his not being able to pinpoint.		App. "A" 231 to 267

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
	22.1.43		No flying carried out this date and weather unserviceable.		
	23.1.43		No operations ordered for today. Weather continued very unsatisfactory and only two hours and forty-five minutes flying training was done all day.		
	24.1.43		Ten aircraft were detailed for an operational bombing trip. All the aircraft were bombed up and all crews ready to go when the operation was scrubbed due to bad weather.		
	25.1.43		Eight aircraft were detailed for a minelaying trip. As was the case the previous day at the last minute the operation was scrubbed due to the weather. The Commanding Officer went to 13 Group Operations Room at Newcastle on a fighter liaison trip.		
	26.1.43		Nine aircraft were detailed for a mine main target bombing operation. Eight of the aircraft successfully bombed the target (See appendices) Sgt Hartney returned early due to engine trouble and landed at Harwell. Sgt Johnson returned to the home base, but the other aircraft landed as indicated due to lack of fuel. P/O Bennett and P/S Gagnon at Wing, P/S Gagnon at Dealand, Sgt Vandebrook at Bishforth, P/S Palmer at Buxton, Sgt Williams at Harwell. P/O Taylor crashed into a hillside at Mile near Sheffield on the way home to base. Miraculously, only P/O Mortimer was hurt and his injuries are of a slight nature although he was admitted to Buxton Hospital. Aircraft crashed on the only flat surface within ten miles and although the aircraft was written off, the escape of all members of the crew was so fortunate it was, therefore, the feature story of some Sunday papers.		App. "A" 27 to 30 28 34
	27.1.43		All the aircraft diverted the previous night returned to base today with exception of P/O Mortimer in hospital, returned to Craft by train. No operational flying carried out this date.		
	28.1.43		No flying of any sort done this date due to weather being completely unserviceable.		

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of (Unit or Formation) No. 437 Squadron, R.C.A.F.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	References to Appendix
<u>RAF Station</u> <u>Croft</u>	<u>29.1.43</u>		Nine aircraft detailed for a bombing raid, only six took off, the other three being non-starters due to engine trouble. Sgt Vandenberghe turned back due to severe icing. The other five aircraft successfully bombed the target. Weather conditions were bad both to and from the target, there being severe icing conditions and 10/10 clouds from Croft to the target and back necessitating some 2 1/2 hours solid instrument flying on the part of the pilots. Sgt Vandenberghe landed at base as did Sgt Johnson and Sgt Peters. W/O Barnside R.A.F.C. and Sgt Hartney landed at Newall. Sgt Williams landed at Ryehouse.		<u>APP. 1</u> <u>38 to 41</u> <u>37</u>
	<u>30.1.43</u>		Two aircraft detailed for the Squadron's first daylight bombing raid. W/O Halsey and W/O Bennett took off. W/O Halsey returned before reaching the objective due to weather being unfavourable for a daylight attack. W/O Bennett and his crew, consisting of W/O Kent and Sgt Phillips, Wallace and Smith, C.O.s did not return and are missing from this operation. The aircraft diverted the previous night returned to base today.		<u>APP. 1</u> <u>42 to 44</u> <u>43</u>
	<u>31.1.43</u>		Four aircraft and crews stood by at 06:00 hours today ready if needed for a daylight bombing operation but the operation was scrubbed by Group.		
			3. <u>Rehearsal and Landing - NIL</u>		
			4. <u>Scrambling - NIL</u>		
			5. <u>Landings - NIL</u>		
			6. <u>Postings (to and from the Unit)</u>		
			W/O W.E. Pullen 210725 Posted to this Unit from RUF Boulton ref. 29.1.43		
			W/O D.E. Milne 213766 Posted to this Unit from 23 C.F.U. ref. 27.1.43.		
			W/O J. Chasnovoff 30495 Posted to this Unit from 411 Sqdn. ref. 2.1.43		
			W/O L.W. Somers 20229 Posted to this Unit from 1664 Con. Unit ref. 10.1.43		
			W/O J.E. Greening 230216 Posted to this Unit from 1664 Con. Unit ref. 10.1.43		
			W/O V.E. Santerton 210133 Posted to this Unit from 14 C.F.U. ref. 21.1.43.		
			W/O H.W. Sooder 213372 Posted to this Unit from 14 C.F.U. ref. 21.1.43.		

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	Reference to Appendices
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7. Change of Station Command - NIL
8. Change in Administration - W/O J. Benson posted Superannuary pending posting to Adjutant's post. W/O A. Peters took over temporary command of "A" Flight on 16.1.43 due to W/O M. Williams being posted to missing.
9. Change in Unit Command - NIL
10. Accident on Ground - 19 Wellington III Hercules II Engines.
11. Health General - In general, state of health of No. 417 Squadron personnel has been very good.
12. Operational Strength of Unit as at 31st January, 1943.

Category	Number	Percentage	Total
RAF OFFICERS	10	4	14
RAF AIRMEN	67	94	163
R.A.F. OFFICERS	13	1	16
R.A.F. AIRMEN	28	39	37
OTHER PERSONNEL	3	---	3
			<u>233</u>

13. Operations - Non operational flying hours January, 1943.

a. Operational Flying Hours	Day	2400	N/A	247:25
b. Non-operational Flying Hours	Day	NIL	N/A	NIL
c. Flying Training Hours.	Day	09:55	N/A	36:40

14. New aircraft casualties claimed - NIL

*(Signature)*  
 (D. H. Burnside) Wing Commander,  
 Officer Commanding,  
 No. 417 Squadron, R.C.A.F.