

R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I. para. 224a and War Manual Pt. II, chapter XX., and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation) No. 433 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron

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| Place | Date | Time | Summary of Events | References to Appendices |
|------------------|--------|------|--|-----------------------------|
| Skipton-on-Swale | 1-2-45 | | <p>The day began with fine weather and small amounts of cloud. Visibility was 2-4 miles, deteriorating in the afternoon and evening with scattered showers. Normal activities were carried out by crews and sections in the morning. Thirty-two of the diverted 8th U.S.A.A.F. A/C left for their home base at 10:00 hours. Two remained for maintenance and repair. Operations were called at 11:00 hours and seven crews were briefed to attack Ludwigshafen. This being our first operation on Lancasters, events were watched with keen interest by all personnel. All A/C took off successfully at approximately 15:30 hours. Crews reported the target was apparently well pranged and left burning although covered by 8/10ths cloud. Flak was only moderate. One A/C, Lancaster "A" HG-460, piloted by J8418 S/L H.K. Stinson, DFC, crashed a few miles south of base on return. Two of the crew, J35586 P/O A.W. Bellos, Air Bomber and J90641 P/O R.J. Thompson, Rear Gunner, baled out and are safe but the remaining members were killed. The cause is unknown at present. The loss is keenly felt by the Squadron as S/L Stinson was Flight Commander of "A" Flight. The remaining 6 A/C returned safely; "G" landing at Woodbridge, "H" at Waterbeach and "K" at Mendlesham. The remaining three A/C returned to base.</p> | Appendix A.II, Pages 1 & 2. |
| | 2-2-45 | | <p>Rainy morning, clearing up at noon and becoming quite fine in the afternoon. Small amounts of Lancaster conversion and training were carried out in the morning. Normal activities by the remainder of crews. Operations were called at noon for an evening "do". Crews were briefed to attack Wiesbaden. Take-off was delayed for an hour but finally three crews took off at approximately 20:30 hours. Due to this delay J89832 P/O R.J. Girdale was deleted from the Battle Order as this was his first take-off with a load. The target was hidden by 10/10ths cloud so results were not visible. Flak was moderate barrage at height. The greatest enemy was heavy icing due to a front over the continent but with a true "press-on" spirit our crews carried on. All A/C returned to Base.</p> | Appendix A.II, Pages 2 & 3. |
| | 3-2-45 | | <p>Fine weather for this morning, a light S-W wind, visibility 5 miles plus small amount of medium cloud. No operations were called so the crews concentrated on training. There were no cross countries but "B" Flight continued Lancaster Conversion with circuits and "bumps". "A" Flight carried out bombing practice. Ground training was carried out in the</p> | Page 2..... |

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| | 3-2-45 | (cont'd) | normal manner. Four more Halifax A/C were ferried to Tholthorpe. Weather clamped in during early evening and the day ended with rain. | | |
| | 4-2-45 | | Fine morning, small amount of cloud, visibility 10 miles. Weather clamped down in late afternoon with showers. "B" Flight continued with conversion all day. Sections carried on normal activities with lectures and exercises. Operations were called at noon and crews were briefed to attack Bonn in "Happy Valley". Six A/C took off successfully at approximately 17:30 hours. Crews reported 10/10ths cloud to target, clearing a little at target. Markers were not too reliable, causing A/C "J" (J13353 F/L J.P. Brown) to orbit the target. A/C "O" (J39529 F/O J.P. Farrell) suffered a small flak hole in bomb bay. The glow could be seen for 100 miles after the crews had left. One A/C, Lancaster "M" PA-219 captained by J46120 F/L N.D. Marx, DFC, with J37847 F/O C.H. Howald as 2nd Pilot, failed to return from this operation. The remaining five A/C returned to base. | | Appendix A.II, Pages 3 & 4. |
| | 5-2-45 | | Fine morning, small amount of cloud, visibility good. Light winds and very mild. Lancaster conversion continued in "B" Flight with "A" on practise exercises. All sections carried out normal lectures and exercises. Operations were called and four crews briefed. After several postponements the operation was cancelled. Three cross countries were scheduled in "A" Flight for night flying. All took off but returned early due to weather. | | |
| | 6-2-45 | | Cloudy morning, visibility 2 miles. Very little wind. The service funeral was held in Stonefall Cemetery, Harrogate of J8418 S/L H.K. Stinson, DFC, Pilot; J35716 F/O D.J. McMillan, Navigator; J89146 F/O J.T. McShane, Wireless Operator, and J92192 F/O R. Pierson, Mid-upper Gunner. The service was conducted by the Station Padre, O8450 S/L F. Cooper. A large party of Officers and N.C.O.'s led by the Officer Commanding, O1649 W/O G.A. Tambling, formed the funeral party. The body of the fifth member of the crew, 187130 R.A.F., F/O E.H. Thompson, Flight Engineer, was shipped to London for private interment. "A" Flight stood by for operations but none materialised. The afternoon and evening were rather damp with severe showers. No night flying was laid on. | | |
| | 7-2-45 | | Fine morning, small amount of cloud, visibility 4 miles. Strong westerly wind. "B" Flight continued with conversion; with "A" carrying training. All sections continued with | | |

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| | 7-2-45 | (cont'd) | normal activities. Operations were called at noon and seven crews were briefed to attack Goch, just over the front lines. After a short postponement seven A/C took off successfully at approximately 19:00 hours. Crews reported no marking on the target and on orders from the Master Bomber the operation was scrubbed. All crews reported a glow through 10/10ths cloud, stratus. A/C "C", captained by J39529 F/O J.P. Farrell, experienced a flak hole in M/U Turret. All our A/C returned safely to base. J90885 F/O J.A. Forbes and crew joined the Squadron to-day. | | Appendix A.II, Pages 4 & 5. |
| | 8-2-45 | | 10/10ths stratus cloud, N/E wind, visibility 2 miles. "B" Flight continued with small amount of conversion. Sections carried out normal activities. Operations were called and crews were briefed but it was scrubbed during the afternoon. There was no night training laid on. | | |
| | 9-2-45 | | Fine day, no cloud, strong westerly wind, visibility 5 miles. "B" Flight continued with conversion to Lancasters and carried out dinghy and parachute drill. Operations were called and crews were briefed but the "op" was scrubbed due to weather. Navigators were engaged on dry swims, gunners on skeet range and night vision. Air Bombers took further lectures on Lancasters. W/Ops. engaged on equipment lectures. | | |
| | 10-2-45 | | Cloudy day, 10/10ths stratus with a light S.E. wind giving the usual fog. Operations were called during the morning and eight crews attended briefing. Much to everyone's joy the operation was cancelled and all members were enabled to attend the party and dance held in the Officers' Mess. "B" Flight continued with conversion during the day. Air Gunners did night vision; Navigators did ground training. | | |
| | 11-2-45 | | Cloudy day, 10/10ths stratus with a light S.E. wind. Rain during the late morning. No flying training was laid on for the day. All crews attended a lecture in the Station Cinema. Subject matter was the duties of 100 (Special Duties) Group given by S/Ldr. Brandon of that group. Crews were engaged in supervised dinghy drills during the afternoon. | | |
| | 12-2-45 | | Rain again to-day in scattered showers, 6/10ths stratus cloud. Still no flying training laid on. Pilots and Flight Engineers had a lecture on Merlin engines. Navigators did dry swims and Air Gunners on the skeet range between showers. | | <i>[Signature]</i> |

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| | 13-2-45 | | <p>Fine morning, small amounts of cumulus cloud, visibility 10-15 miles. Both flights had flying training laid on and these duties were carried out. Operations were called during the morning. Seven crews were briefed to attack Dresden "for Uncle Joe", and all took off at approximately 2100 hours. Visibility was good over the target and fires from the preceding raid could be seen for 100 miles on the approach. The bombing was conducted by a Master Bomber. E171272 W/O E.R. Smyth, Pilot of A/C "D" reported that his oxygen was partially u/s and forced to fly at 10000 feet a greater part of the way. All crews agreed it was a very good raid. All our A/C returned safely, 4 landing at Hardwick, "H", "F", "C" and "G". "F" landed with a port inner engine feathered, compasses U/S and radio U/S and "G" with all navigation aids U/S. The remaining A/C landed at Base.</p> | | Appendix A.II, Pages 5 - 7. |
| | 14-2-45 | | <p>Bright clear day, strong westerly winds, visibility 15 miles in the morning deteriorating to 4 miles in the afternoon. "B" Flight still carried out conversion training. Operations were called in the morning and five crews were briefed to garden in Pomerania Bay, near Stettin, doing a bit of bottling up. All A/C took off at approximately 1750 hours. Crews reported 10/10ths strato cumulus cloud into target. Gardening was done on instruments. J93063 P/O H.E. Batty in A/C "B" reported three hang-ups, J26099 P/L P.D. Holmes in A/C "D" did two orbits and made a successful run on the last one. J92764 P/O R.K. Harrison completed three orbits, dropping vegetables on his second and third run. All reported a successful operation and all returned to Base.</p> | | Appendix A.II, Page 7. |
| | 15-2-45 | | <p>10/10ths stratus cloud, visibility 2 miles, light south westerly wind. No flying training laid on due to low cloud. Navigators did dry swims, Air Gunners had a session on Sytton Bank. Operations were called during the morning. Three crews were briefed to garden in the Olao Area, our own particular garden plot. All A/C took off successfully at approximately 1630 hours. The weather began to close down immediately. Vegetables were successfully laid and all our A/C returned, landing at Charter Hall.</p> | | Appendix A.II, Page 8. |
| | 16-2-45 | | <p>Ground fog, horizontal visibility 2000 yards, light south-easterly wind. Clear sky during the morning, clouding over to 10/10ths during the afternoon. No flying laid on at all. Navigators had speed-up exercises, Engineers had engine handling lectures. No nite flying was laid on.</p> | | |

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| | 17-2-45 | | Same as yesterday, ground fog, visibility 1000 yards. No flying laid on at all. All crews attended a lecture by 07736 S/L H.T. Holden on Aerodrome Control. Our diverted A/C returned at approximately 1600 hours. | | |
| | 18-2-45 | | The day began with moderate ground fog with south easterly wind, lifting at noon. "A" and "B" Flights laid on training. A small amount was carried out. Operations were called and three crews were briefed to garden at Oslo Fiord. All crews took off successfully at approximately 1550 hours. Crews reported cloud conditions to 10,000 feet but vegetables were laid successfully on instruments. All our A/C returned safely to Base. | | Appen. A.II Page 8. |
| | 19-2-45 | | Ground fog again to-day with light south easterly wind. No training was laid on due to weather. Navigators did dry swims and Air Gunners on night vision. Wireless Operators participated in exercises and practices. | | |
| | 20-2-45 | | Little better to-day, 7/10ths cloud, wind fluctuating between south and south-west. "B" Flight continued with a small amount of training. Operations were called and after a postponement (as usual) 14 crews took off successfully to bomb Dortmund in "Happy Valley". This is rapidly getting to be a home away from home for the boys. Weather over the target was reported to be 9-10/10ths cloud S.C. with tops 5-6,000 feet. T.I.'s were dropped but due to cloud sky markers were used in the latter stages of the raid. Searchlights were used to illuminate the cloud for fighters. Flak was alight to moderate, loose barrage, 16-20,000 feet with some predicted. The glow from fires could be seen for 75 miles on the way home. Fighters were active. J27716 F/L R.F. Bartran, Pilot of A/C "N" and J39529 F/O J.P. Farrell, Pilot of A/C "F" reported a combat by enemy aircraft. No claims were made. All our aircraft returned safely to base. | | Appen. A.II, Pages 9 to 11. Appen. C.IV & C.V. |
| | 21-2-45 | | 10/10ths stratus cloud in the morning, clearing as day wore on. No training was laid on but operations were called in the morning. 14 crews were briefed to attack Duisberg. Again a postponement came through but approximately 1900 to 2000 hours 14 A/C took off successfully. Crews reported 8/10ths thin stratus, tops 6000 to 8000 feet. Visibility above cloud was good. The markers were well concentrated so bombing was visual with radar check. Several large explosions were reported and the glow could be seen for approximately /page 6..... | | Appen. A.II Pages 12 to 14. D.R.A. |

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| | 21-2-45 | (cont'd) | 75 miles on the homeward route. All our aircraft returned safely to Base. | | |
| | 22-2-45 | | 8/10ths stratus cloud with a south westerly wind. "B" Flight laid on a small amount of training. The remaining crews were enjoying a well earned rest. No operations were called but an early morning call was forecast. As a result a Squadron stand-down was announced. No further activity to report. | | |
| | 23-2-45 | | Fine spring day. Small amount of scattered cloud with a strong westerly wind. "A" and "B" Flights were out in strength on training. Operations were called and six A/C were briefed to garden in Oalo Area. (That again) All our A/C took off successfully at approximately 2000 hours. Vegetables were planted in the right place and no activity was reported with the exception of 020393 F/L R.W. Paterson who experienced a little reception in the form of flak on his second orbit. No damage. | | Appen. A.II, Pages 14 & 15. |
| | 24-2-45 | | Bright day, 3/10ths s.c. cloud, fairly strong westerly wind. Visibility was almost unlimited. The flights laid on radar training to some extent. Operations were called and two aircraft took off to participate in a Sea Search, J16229 F/L E.J. Meek in A/C "C" and J39529 F/O J.P. Farrell in A/C "N". Nothing was sighted. Five crews were briefed to garden in the Oalo Area or Fortsgrunn. All took off successfully at approximately 17:05 hours. Crews reported 8/10ths to 10/10ths stratus with tops 3500 to 4500 feet. Visibility above cloud was good. A/C "P" piloted by J93063 F/O H.E. Batty made four orbits and gardened on a visual. A/C "T", piloted by J89420 F/O R.F. Saunders, made six orbits but abandoned due to insufficient definition of the datum point. Brought back mines. A/C "U", piloted by J16536 F/L A. Strelchuk, also made an orbit but gardened on instruments finally. 020393 F/L R.W. Paterson's comment was "Met. appalling". The remainder gardened successfully and all returned safely to Base, F/O R.F. Saunders landing with full load of vegetables. | | Appen. A.II, Page 15. Appen. A.II, Pages 15 & 16. |
| | 25-2-45 | | 5/10ths strato cumulus cloud, visibility 10 miles. Two A/C were detailed for a Sea Search; A/C "D", piloted by J26099 S/L F.D. Holmes and A/C "L", piloted by J89783 F/O J.D. O'Neil. Both took off at approximately 0840 hours. Both crews made a sighting and took appropriate action. S/L Holmes returned to Base but A/C "L" circled the two dinghies for over five hours. There were no signs of life aboard the dinghies. Pilots had navigation | | Appen. A.II, Page 16. |
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| | 25-2-45 | (cont'd) | lectures, gunners were on the skeet range. No operations were called. | | |
| | 26-2-45 | | 9/10ths strato cumulus cloud, strong W.S.W. wind, visibility 10 miles. No operations were called so all sections carried out normal activities. Navigators on dry swims, Air Gunners on the skeet range. The Section Leaders attended a conference, presided over by the Officer Commanding, C1649 W/O C.A. Tambling. All personnel were detailed to do a spring clean-up in and around their quarters. At 1730 hours we were advised of an early morning call so all crews got to bed early. The Adjutant, C8992 F/L J.E. German, outdid everyone by retiring at 0200 hours, February 27th. | | |
| | 27-2-45 | | The early morning call did develop. 13 crews were briefed to attack Mainz. All engines were warming up when time off was set back two and one half hours. Finally all crews took off successfully at approximately 1235 hours. Crews reported 10/10ths stratus to 8-10000 feet. Bombing was done on smoke puffs. Flak was moderate barrage. All our A/C returned safely to base. Two new crews reported in to-day for operational duties: J92120 F/O W.S. Marker and crew and J92115 F/O B.H. Jensen and crew. | | Appen. A.II, Page 16 to 18. |
| | 28-2-45 | | Bright clear day, small amounts of cumulus cloud. No operations were laid on "B" Flight had a small amount of training. Crew members were at their various sections carrying out normal activities. Air Gunners were on Night Vision, Navigators on Dry Swims. All crews were warned for an early morning call. | | |
| | | | CASUALTIES:- | | |
| | | | On the 1st of February A/C "A" NG-460, captained by J8418 S/L H.K. Stinson, DFC, crashed on returning from operations. The Rear Gunner, J90641 F/O R.J. Thompson, and Air Bomber, J35586 F/O A.W. Bellos, bailed out; the other members of the crew were killed in the crash. | | Appen. A.II, Page 1. |
| | | | On the night of the 4th of February A/C "M" PA-219, captained by J16120 F/L N.D. Mara, DFC, failed to return from operations. | | Appen. A.II, Page 4. |
| | | | POSTINGS IN:- | | |
| | | | Appendix D.II, P.O.R.'s R.A.A.F. Officers, Serial No. 1/45; P.O.R.'s R.A.F. Officers, Serial Nos. 4/45, 7/45 & 8/45; P.O.R.'s R.A.F. Airmen Aircrew, Serial Nos. 4/45, 6/45, 7/45 & 8/45; P.O.R.'s R.C.A.F. Officers, Serial Nos. 5/45 to 10/45; P.O.R.'s R.C.A.F. Airmen Aircrew, Serial Nos. 5/45 to 10/45. | | |
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| | | | <p><u>POSTINGS OUT:-</u> as above.</p> <p><u>PROMOTIONS:-</u> " "</p> <p><u>APPOINTMENTS:-</u> " "</p> <p><u>COMMISSIONS:-</u> " "</p> <p><u>HONOURS AND AWARDS:-</u></p> <p>J29592 S/L W.C. Pierce, Pilot, was awarded an Immediate Distinguished Flying Cross, authority H.Q.B.C. Postagram, DC/S.23191/P., dated 10-2-45.</p> <p>On the night of January 14th, 1945, this Officer was captain of an aircraft detailed to attack Grevenbroich in Germany. When setting course over base the port inner engine went unserviceable due to an oil leak, nevertheless he carried on and flew most of the way to the target at 6,000 feet. Just prior to reaching the target he unfeathered the unserviceable engine in order to gain the maximum amount of height before all the oil was lost. The engine was feathered again and the run through the target was made. Throughout the entire trip the artificial horizon on S/Ldr. Pierce's A/O was completely unserviceable and it was necessary for him to let down through cloud in order to get back to base. The exceptional skill and determination displayed by this Officer in carrying out this operation, despite extremely difficult conditions, is only indicative of a sustained courage and unusual initiative shown throughout all his operational sorties.</p> <p>The following personnel, formerly on the strength of the Squadron, have received the decorations noted, under authority of DC/S.23191/P., dated 14th February, 1945.</p> <p>J3484 G/C A.J. Lewington, DFC and Bar; J29268 F/L J.H. Howes, DFC; J35706 F/O G.G. D'Alvise, DFC; E7801 W/O I. A.T. Smith, DFC; J86368 F/O H. Solomon, DFC; J87961 F/O L.R.G. Dent, DFC.</p> <p><u>CHANGES IN COMMAND:-</u> Nil.</p> <p><u>CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATION:-</u> Nil.</p> <p><u>AIRCRAFT ON CHARGE:-</u></p> <p>28 Aircraft, Lancaster Mk. I, on charge.</p> | | |

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| | | | <p>FLYING TIMES:-</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">Operational</th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">Non-operational</th> <th style="width: 30%; text-align: center;">TOTALS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Day</td> <td style="text-align: center;">91:13 hrs.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">315:50 hrs.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">407:03 hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Night</td> <td style="text-align: center;">558:34 hrs.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">94:48 hrs.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">653:22 hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTALS</td> <td style="text-align: center;">649:47 hrs.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">410:38 hrs.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1060:25 hrs.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | Operational | Non-operational | TOTALS | Day | 91:13 hrs. | 315:50 hrs. | 407:03 hrs. | Night | 558:34 hrs. | 94:48 hrs. | 653:22 hrs. | TOTALS | 649:47 hrs. | 410:38 hrs. | 1060:25 hrs. | | |
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| TOTALS | 649:47 hrs. | 410:38 hrs. | 1060:25 hrs. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | <p>NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL SORTIES:-</p> <p>97 sorties. This figure includes four A/C on Sea Search.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | <p>MONTHLY AND CUMULATIVE TOTALS OF BOMBS DROPPED AND MINES LAID:-</p> <p>H.E. - 111 tons. Cumulative total from 1-1-45 - H.E. - 222 tons.</p> <p>Incendiary - 153 tons. " " " " - Incendiary - 177½ tons.</p> <p>Mines - 94 tons. " " " " - Mines - 125 tons.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | <p>NUMBER OF COMBATS WITH ENEMY AIRCRAFT:-</p> <p>Two Combat Reports were submitted for the month of February, both on the 20th. No damage to bomber or claims on E/A were reported.</p> | | Appen. C.IV & C.V. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | <p>HEALTH:-</p> <p>The health of the Squadron is generally good. Respiratory troubles still predominated, general decrease in notifiable diseases.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | <p>STRENGTH OF UNIT:-</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">Officers Flying</th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">Officers Non-Flying</th> <th style="width: 30%; text-align: center;">Airmen Flying</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>R.C.A.F.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">107</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R.A.F.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">12</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTALS</td> <td style="text-align: center;">112</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">129</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | Officers Flying | Officers Non-Flying | Airmen Flying | R.C.A.F. | 100 | 1 | 107 | R.A.F. | 12 | 0 | 22 | TOTALS | 112 | 1 | 129 | | |
| | Officers Flying | Officers Non-Flying | Airmen Flying | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| R.C.A.F. | 100 | 1 | 107 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| R.A.F. | 12 | 0 | 22 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTALS | 112 | 1 | 129 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | <p>SHORT STATEMENT BY THE SQUADRON COMMANDER PERSONALLY:-</p> <p>The month of February has been fairly satisfactory. The Squadron was ahead in training hours, the conversion to Lancasters has been completed by both Flights and the Squadron is up to full operational strength; thus our operational sorties are almost double that of the previous month. The serviceability is excellent and the morale remains at its usual high standard even though we have lost two of our best crews, including a Flight Commander and a Deputy Flight Commander.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | /Concluded over..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

