

RAF Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in KR and ACI.
 Form 540 and War Manual P. H. Chapter 11, and
 also in R.A.F. Order Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

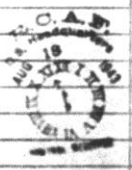
of (Unit or Formation) 438 R.C.A.F.

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	References to Appendix																																							
Thetford	July 1/40		<p>Lowering clouds and threatening rain storms did not dampen the spirits of the detachment of 40 A.C.F., 2 W.D.'s, 6 corporals, 2 Sgts. and one P/Sgt. under command of Flt/Lt. W.N. Thomson J. 3524 with P/Lt. G.T. Sutherland, Adjutant, as they embarked at the Alton's Mess Site for the trip to Ripon. Best blues were freshly pressed and buttons and shoes shone brightly despite lack of modern facilities on this partly completed station. Arriving in Ripon, the 438 flight debused and fell in smartly and were soon marching through the streets of this old walled town with heads erect and arms swinging. On reaching the cathedral along with several flights from other nearby R.C.A.F. stations, all ranks filed into the imposing edifice and took their seats just before the special service arranged by No. 6 Group R.C. to commemorate Dominion Day started at 1000 hours. The impressive service lasted an hour, and was attended by the town Council and other notables in their quaint livery, nervous civilians including a number of children, and high ranking officers from No. 6 Group R.C. and R.C.A.F. stations and units, including our C.O., G. Harris, C.N., 17876. After the service ended with the National Anthem the troops fell in and marched back to the parking lot and prepared for the return trip to Thetford, arriving just in time for lunch. This Dominion day celebration will long be remembered by all Canadians who were privileged to take part in it. However by 1330 hrs. all ranks were once again busy on the job of getting this station and Squadron into Operational shape. It is a big job but if willingness to work hard and long, determination to overcome all obstacles and a fine spirit of co-operation seen on this 1st July 1940, will soon be making a worthwhile contribution to the efforts of No. 6 Group and R.C.</p> <p>STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF UNIT AS AT July 1st 1940.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="2">OFFICERS</th> <th colspan="2">Airmen</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Altogether</th> <th>Ground Crew</th> <th>Altogether</th> <th>Ground Crew</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RCAP</td> <td>21</td> <td>2</td> <td>77</td> <td>162</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RCAP (USA)</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RAF</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>50</td> <td>112</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RAF (USA)</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RCAP</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RAF</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		OFFICERS		Airmen		Altogether	Ground Crew	Altogether	Ground Crew	RCAP	21	2	77	162	RCAP (USA)	1	-	1	-	RAF	2	-	50	112	RAF (USA)	1	-	-	-	RCAP	-	-	-	-	RAF	-	-	-	-		
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Thalburg	July 2/43.		Work on the station is progressing slowly but surely and Sgtn. personnel are arriving daily. Many difficulties of organization still exist and lack of supplies and equipment is a problem. A muster parade of all aircrew was held in the new crew room at 1100 hours today and W/C G. B. Harris, 37876, S. Jnr. C.O. spoke briefly to the assembled gathering of 130 all ranks, welcoming them to this new Sgdn. and outlining his plans for the future and stating clearly but good naturedly what kind of co-operation he must have from me and all. We are indeed fortunate in having a man of the type of W/C. G. B. Harris, 37876 as C.O. of 4.4 Squadron.		
Thalburg	July 3/43.		We are still very short of some trades, especially Chef cooks and waitresses and also compass adjusters, etc. Messia and No. 6 Group are being requested by phone and signal every other day or so to post in these requirements. A/C. Callaghan, M.C., D.F.C., Station, Base Commander paid a visit to Sgdn. H.Q. this morning and conf. with W/C. G. B. Harris, 37876. In the evening a softball team representing the Station but including men from 4.4 Sgdn. played a game at Union, losing a tight game 2 to 1.		
Thalburg	July 4/43.		Church services at 1100 hrs. for R.C.'s and 1200 hrs for Protestants were well attended. After which all ranks went back to work as we are on a seven day week here and no double pay for overtime or Sundays either except for the civilians employed by the contracting firm.		
Thalburg	July 5/43.		Supplies and personnel continue to come in slowly but we are still woefully weak in some trades and in stationary. The staff officers from No. 6 Group H.Q. appearing very keen and well groomed as staff officers always do, paid us a visit this afternoon and after surveying our rather primitive surroundings, promised us their fullest co-operation. A softball game between teams from No. 4 and 6 Sgdn. representing H.Q. and 4.4 Sgdn. this evening provided some laughs and a 21 to 12 win for H.Q.		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	Reference to Appendix
Thaltheore	Jul 8/43.		<p>More non-operational flying took place today as P/L J.E. Morley, J.1562 and crew, Sgt. F.S. Harrison, S.106618 and crew, P/O I.L. Colchester, J.6032 and crew, P/O Dan, S.H. J.16318 and crew, Sgt. Lottle, O.E.128019 and Sgt. H. Green, 1096280 and crew got back into flying once again. Local flying and some practice landings were indulged in over the nearby Streatley sands and several hits and near misses were claimed. The ever popular game of softball is an almost nightly feature on the fine local playing field near No. 1 Mess and is drawing an ever-increasing number of interested although rather bewildered RAF spectators. We may yet experience the identical ones that it is slightly different to boundaries. A schedule of games between teams of S.M. Squad. personnel has been drawn up with the first game slated for Tuesday 11/7/43.</p>	SECRET	Reference to Appendix
Thaltheore	Jul 9/43.		<p>No flying today as ceiling is almost zero and visibility very poor. A water parade of all aircraft was held by P/O C.E. Harris, 37878, in the Crew Room at 1400 hours today when several important announcements were made. Track and field events are in the sports spot events in this week as several sides of this squad are practicing for the meet to be held at Hixon on July 12/43.</p>	SECRET	Reference to Appendix
Thaltheore	Jul 10/43.		<p>Continued bad weather prevented any flying today and the aircraft seemed very quiet and almost deserted. It is cold and wet and windy today and more like winter than the middle of summer. More personnel are arriving daily and our strength is nearing the 500 mark but we are still badly in need of key personnel such as cooks, clerks, signpost assistants, messengers and others, etc. P/O I.L. Colchester J.6032 left on a R.A.F. course and P/Sgt. A.T. Smith S.79011 had 1/2 training today. Pay and accounts officers from Hixon were held a tea - drinks here this morning and as usual there were no shortages or lates. Our Messday Post Office is now operating in Squadron N.O. building in charge of P/O I.L. Colchester, S.16378 assisted by Sgt. G. Jones, Detachment, S.71081 and is doing a thriving business.</p>	SECRET	Reference to Appendix

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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation) 538 Sqn. R.A.F.

No. of pages used for day _____

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	Reference to Appendix
Thalrose	July 11/43		Church services were held today at 1100 hours for R.A.F.'s and 1400 hrs. for Protestants. The R.A.F. service was conducted by W/O Robinson, 67369 and the Protestant service by W/O W.J. Butcher, 65723, of Hinton and both services were well attended. This afternoon six new Halifaxs, some with the new perspex nose, arrived out of the air one by one in quick succession and landed to dispersal areas, bring our A/C strength up to 11 unmodified. W/O G.D. Potts, 14524 and crew, and Sgt. A.W.G. Austin, 59891, and crew did some local flying and practice bombing during the afternoon.		
Thalrose	July 12/43		The Squadron C.O., W/O G.E. Harris, 17070, and crew made their initial flight as part of this Squadron today. Sgt. H.H. Hill, 612302, and crew and W/S F.J. Piper, 625176, and crew were also putting in some local flying time. Another new Halifax arrived by A.C. bringing our A/C strength to an even dozen. Sgt. J.J. Spaulding, 611515, rejoined the Squadron today from a brief home leave following his marriage to Miss Pamela Anne Prikler of Lorton, Essex, on July 6/43. A movie put on by the T.M. Club in the station's mess hall was enjoyed by a large audience of all ranks. W/S Tucker, R.O., 625530, received notification of his appointment to commissioned rank and left on a 48 hr. leave to obtain his uniform.		
Thalrose	July 13/43		W/O G.E. Harris and some officers from Station, 41 Sqn. R.A.F. spent the day as observers at an Army Infantry battle exercise staged near Hinton Castle. They were placed in an advanced position where they could clearly see the attacking infantry, their artillery support, the situation overhead and observe the shell bursts on a nearby hill. A few practice shells were blasted in the air above their heads but neither the observer nor supported troops were hit. The weather was very poor in the morning with mist drifting in but cleared up later on. Another new Halifax arrived by A.C. earlier in the day. W/O G.D. Potts, 14524, Spad. Medical Officer arrived on another fresh crew on R.A.F.'s Station at Vancouver Island, B.C.		
Thalrose	July 14/43		Defavourable weather conditions prevented local flying today and only W/O F.V. Sykes, 11119 and crew were in the air. W/O G.D. Potts, R.O., of British Flying Team, Hinton, B.C., and crew		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	Reference to Appendix
Thalbridge	July 14/43	(Cont'd)	<p>H.Q. London, spent some time here today explaining the new system of handling R.C.A.F. personnel pay. There were no queries from officers or men re pay but that was due to the fact that no advance notice of this visit was received so very few knew about it in time.</p> <p>A/C G.H. McEwan, M.C. D.F.C., visited the station this afternoon and conferred with station and Squadron officers. Another free movie entitled "The Road to Koroiber" put on by the Y.M.C.A. in the airman's mess hall in the evening was enjoyed by a large audience of all ranks. A number of Mess personnel arrived on the station today on posting from Squadron in Ireland. They were waitresses and cooks and were soon busily employed in the various messes.</p>		
Thalbridge	July 15/43.		<p>Very inclement weather during most of the day compelled cancellation of all flying programmes.</p> <p>A large contingent of all ranks of 43 Squadron arrived today in charge of W/O W.P.M. Newman O983 and his Adjutant, W/Lt. C.R. Higgins O3371 and were billeted on Site J. This large influx of all ranks is going to tax the capacity of all messes and sleeping sites to the limit for a time.</p> <p>The Sqn. Post Office is doing a large volume of business in parcels and letters which are always very welcome. Late in the afternoon two Spitfire Pilots landed their trim little aircraft and conferred with Sqn. Officers in regard to Fighter Affiliation training. Our track and field men took part in the events at Ripon today but the competition was very keen.</p>		
Thalbridge	July 16/43.		<p>Wonderful weather for a change and the bright sunshine was enjoyed by everyone after a long spell of rain, wind and cold. Flying was in full swing today as no less than 16 of our pilots and their crews took to the air for Fighter Affiliation training. The Spitfire pilots later put on a demonstration of flying for squadron personnel. Softball and horse shoe pitching are popular sports on the sites these fine evenings. Those lucky enough to possess bicycles spend many off duty hours exploring the surrounding area which is at its best just now.</p>		
Thalbridge	July 17/43		<p>More wonderful weather and local flying training continues at a fast pace. The Squadron Engineer Officer reports that compliance checks are nearing completion and that all 33 aircraft</p>		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	References to Appendices
Thalbridge	July 17/43.	(Cont'd)	new on hand will be ready to fly in the near future. The liberty bus to York at 1800 hrs. and returning at 2300 hrs. every Saturday night is a popular innovation as the regular civilian bus schedule is quite inadequate for the requirements of the large number of civilian labourers and services personnel.		
Thalbridge	July 18/43.		The weather continues fine but is beginning to show signs of a coming change. Flying training is the order of the day with all flyable aircraft being kept busy by engine crews. W/L. W.H. Thomson, J.1524, and crew with the 2nd Lt. W/L. G.S. Sutherland, C3180, as a passenger took off at 1100 hours for practice bombing at Stranraer but on finding the clouds over the target too low, did some local flying and landed at 1200 hours. This afternoon A.V. Brooks of No. 6 Group H.Q. and A/C C.M. Malcolm H.Q. D.F.S., of Linton Bass H.Q. paid a short visit to Station and Squadron H.Q.'s.		
Thalbridge	July 19/43.		The weather has improved and flying is untroubled. Ground training is being carried on by the Flight and Section Leaders. Maintenance and R. & T. flights are now functioning and more aircraft are reported as ready to fly but still not operational. Our Amusement Section is busy under supervision of the Station Amusement Officer piloting an excellent future handbook for the Station. A new movie put on by the Y.M.C.A. was enjoyed by a large audience of all ranks this evening.		
Thalbridge	July 20/43.		More bad weather today and only limited flying training but two more new Halifaxes arrived by A.T. During the day brought over A/C strength up to 15 of which 3 will fly and the other 6 are under-repair acceptance checks. Work on buildings, lighting systems, etc. is going ahead steadily and over the week the Squadron nearer to operations. A Canadian Army Concert Party known as "The Orange Cafe" put on a splendid two-hour variety show here this evening which was thoroughly enjoyed and enthusiastically applauded by a capacity audience of all ranks.		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	Reference to Appendix
Thalbridge	July 21/43.		Another detachment of 27 men arrived from Bournemouth on posting today which brings our strength well over the 500 mark. Accommodation on the living sites is overcramped with sixteen airmen in a Messen tent which is too many. A conference of Station and Squadron officers was held at 1400 hrs. ^{by} W/O G.H. Harris, 57678, to promote harmony and eliminate overlapping. G/O H.W. Carscallen, D.F.O. newly appointed acting Station Commander arrived from Eastcote this afternoon. In the evening, two free movie shows put on by the I.M.C.A.s were enjoyed by large audiences. The picture entitled "The First of the Year" was very appropriate for an R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. audience, as it was the story of the life of the inventor of the famous "Blitzfire".		
Thalbridge	July 22/43.		Poor weather curtailed flying today as clouds were very low but it cleared up in the evening. G/O H.W. Carscallen, D.F.O., acting Station Commander spent some time here this morning and returned to his own Station at Eastcote after lunch. S/L Sinclair of Beccles, Gloucester, arrived here late this afternoon and spent some time with Station and Squadron officers discussing personnel recruitment problems. Sgt. J.G. McPherson, R.A.F. No. 1051249, W.O.A.C., received his commission today and was granted 48 hours leave in which to secure his uniform and kit.		
Thalbridge	July 23/43.		New arrivals on the station today included S/L D.H. Holman, C/O, Engineer Officer newly arrived from Canada. He will be taking over as A/S Sqdn. Engineer Officer from S/L D.J. MacLaurin, O2112, whose posting to Linton Station is pending. W/O Miller No. 6 Group H.Q. Engineering Officer visited the Station and Squadron this afternoon and evening. Other new arrivals on the Station are an R.C. Padre, F./Lt. F.H.B. Beishon O14601 and a Protestant Padre, S/Lt. E.G. Scott, O3651. The Squadron's biggest flying effort to date took place this evening in the form of a practice operational daylight takeoff was carried out in a satisfactory manner. Seven aircraft took off in 13 minutes and after flying for an hour were brought down again in 25 minutes by flying control. Much valuable experience was gained by all concerned. Four more new Halifax arrived today bringing our A/C strength to 19.		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	Reference to Appendix
Thalbridge	July 24/43		Another complete crew consisting of P/O F.C. Lord, J6823, pilot, P/O B.S. Jones, J.1477b, Navigator, P/O D.J. Sinclair, J.11057, Bomb-Aimer, Sgt. P.M. O'Hara, E.12674d, W.O. de P., Sgt. S.A. Walter, 1802702, P/N, Sgt. M.H. Wallace, R.78305, & Sgt. J.C. Desjardis, R.59777, air-gunnery, joined the Sqn, today on posting from 1664 Conversion Unit bringing our complete aircrew strength to 21. Local and cross country flying was the order of the day from a flying point of view. Sgt. A.W.C. Austin, C58291, and crew landed at Farnborough with engine trouble at 1345 hrs. and will be returning tomorrow. The Saturday night Liberty Run was routed to Harrogate instead of York which proved to be a popular change. The regular bay parade was held here this morning by PAV Officers from Linton Base H.Q.		
Thalbridge	July 25/43		Church services were held at 0930 hrs. for Protestants and at 1100 hrs. for R.C.'s today and both services were well attended on a voluntary basis. All ranks are in high spirits today over the fine news of last night, when B/C attacked Hamburg very heavily and only 12 planes did not return to base, of which none were from No. 5 B.O.A.S. Group. A/C C.M. Johnson from Linton Base H.Q. visited the station this evening. The Sqn's first night flying took place tonight with several crews doing local night flying and cross country flying. An improvised flarepath was used in place of the regular runway lighting which is not yet installed. Drums is also non-existent at present and a searchlight was placed beyond the end of the runway as a marker. Our Net. & Flying Control organizations were well tested and some faults discovered in N/T which will be corrected. Much valuable experience was gained by all concerned and this training will be repeated frequently from now on. Our control tower is far from perfect in design and is not well placed for a good view of the flying field. P/O D.J. Sinclair, C7112 Engineer Officer, left on posting to Linton Station.		
Thalbridge	July 26/43		Our aircrew strength jumped considerably today when Sgt. J.H. Holland, E.121026, and Sgt. J.P. Finlayson, E.121177, and their respective crews, and also a spare P/O and A/S reported on posting. The crews under Cdr. W.G. C.E. Gault, day and night flying training continued with most of the activities being brought to several crews equipped C. & B. & local night flying to		

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Thaltrups	July 26/43	(Cont'd)	get used to the Flare pot which may have to be used for operational flying in the near future. Notice of the commissioning of Sgt. D.H. Poplestone, R.95383, R/A, presently on leave, was received by signal today. Some badly needed Q/B's arrived on posting today and were at once sent to the R. & I. section for training as maintenance assistants. Two performances of another free movie put on by the J.A.C.A. in the mess hall were enjoyed by all ranks.		
Thaltrups	July 27/43.		Warm sunny weather featured today and was very welcome. The Squadron's first Clothing parade was held today and was well attended. This afternoon a visit was paid the Sqdn. by a number of Linton Base Officers checking up on our requirements. There was only day flying today of which F/L J.E. Hookay, J.4562, and crew's feat of a height test to 21000 feet was the highlight. Sgt. Pilot G.M. Johnston, R.98865, or "A" Flight was summoned to Linton Base H.Q. for interview with A.F.W. G.E. Brookes, O.B.E., of No. 6 Group H.Q. in regard to his application for a commission. Cpl. S.H. Morrison, 1247866, N.C.O. 4/o Orderly Room received notice of his promotion to Sergeant effective July 20th, 1943. Notice was also received today of the promotion of P/O A.H. Wall, J.16011, P/O A.H. Mackay, J.14515, P/O J.N. Dodge, J.15117, to Flying Officers.		
Thaltrups	July 28/43.		Marvellous weather again today and the flying training programme was stepped up with pilots and crews doing cross country, fighter affiliation and local flying. Our Engineer Officer reports steady progress with his initial acceptance checks but is held up on some A/C by lack of small parts. A dance in the mess with the Linton Station Band providing the music was enjoyed by a large number of all ranks besides the mess. W/O Randa, Sr. Administration Officer from Linton Base H.Q. conferred in 5th. H.Q. this afternoon with Station and Squadron Officers in regard to handling of applications for commissions from similar N.C.O.'s.		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	Reference to Appendix
Thalbridge	July 29/43		<p>More wonderful weather today just about establishes a record with three good days in a row. Flying training continues at a fast pace with both day and night cross country flying and fighter affiliation. The Squadron Adjutant, W/L Sutherland, G.3289, was an interested passenger with W/L W.L. Thomas, J.3526, and crew, on the night cross country flying. On going to the Sergeant's mess with the aircrew for supper after flying, being dressed in blue serge over his uniform, he was mistaken by the Yeaf on duty for an airman and ordered over to the airman's mess to eat but was rescued by a Sgt. A/G much to everyone's enjoyment.</p>		
Thalbridge	July 30/43		<p>The weather is showing signs of clearing today. Considerable flying time was put in by squadrons pilots and their crews on daylight cross country and bombing exercises and on a night cross country and "bull's eye" exercise. W/L L.H. Jenkins, G7567, of Det. A.S., R.C.A.F. Overseas H.Q. London visited Station H.Q. this afternoon and spoke for two hours to Station and Squadron Adjutants and Administration Officers re the compilation and importance of Form 540 and 541. He had a lot of good ideas but very few answers as to how to solve the problems arising from his ideas. The Station Commander, S/L R. Gordon, arrived by air with A/Lt. G.H. Brookes, D.O.B. of No. 6 Group, R.C.A.F. H.Q. to take over his new command. The A/Lt. looked very cool and collected in his shirt sleeves in his sunny stream-lined Weston Phoenix aircraft.</p>		
Thalbridge	July 31/43		<p>Several pilots and their crews put in some flying hours in local flying and high level bombing exercises today. Our first full month of flying ends with a total of 115 day and 11 night sorties for a total of 126 hours, 19 sorties and no fighter accidents. Total squadron strength is now about 600. The bulk of the squadron is now based in England. Subordinate operations continue to be carried out in all parts and all sections and action is negligible.</p>		

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