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R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I., para. 2349, and War Manual, Pt. 1k, chapter XX, and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No.

of (Unit or Formation) 148 SQUADRON, R.A.F.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
	1942	1.9.42	<p>12 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Enemy M.T. concentrations now reported to be retreating westwards after heavy attacks by light and medium bombers the previous night. All aircraft proceeded to the target and much havoc was observed among M.T. vehicles which were badly dispersed. All aircraft claim direct hits and many fires observed burning. 16 Fires observed burning when aircraft left target area. Very little opposition encountered and all aircraft returned safely. W/Cdr. Warras C.O. flew in aircraft "M".</p> <p>Letter written to 206 Group stating it was impossible to hold four expired personnel on strength owing to present state of alert.</p> <p>Bombs dropped 164 x 250lb G.P. 24580 x 40lb G.P.</p>	
	2.9.42		<p>News received all available aircraft to be prepared to do a double sortie. 10 aircraft took off on 1st Sortie. Target as on previous night - Concentrations of vehicles moving westwards. Excellent results reported by crews. Good visibility made task much easier. 8 Fires observed as aircraft left target, supposed to be too large for forward aircraft. 100 (Capt. W. J. W. W. W.) claims direct hits and vehicles burning. 4 direct. All aircraft returned safely. After aircraft took off on 2nd sortie and proceeded to attack the same target. Excellent illumination made this operation highly successful. Many direct hits obtained on vehicles and 14 fires started, one of which could be seen 50 miles away. Hurts seen among lorries which appeared to disintegrate. All aircraft returned safely and crew report a very successful operation.</p> <p>Bombs dropped 208 x 250lb G.P. 24580 x 40lb G.P.</p>	
	3.9.42		<p>15 aircraft detailed for operations. Target M.T. concentrations in Battle Area. News received Sgt. Flood W/O AG posted to U.K. as tour expired. All aircraft took off safely and proceeded to the target. Many fires and explosions started amongst vehicles. W/O Clark (Captain aircraft W. 385) crashed into high ground on return. Owing to visibility being very poor crew base, the aircraft crashed into high ground nose first. The front gunner (Sgt. Dome) was killed and 2nd Pilot, Observer and 1st W/O AG injured. The aircraft on examination was a complete write-off, fuselage being broken. Remainder of aircraft returned safely.</p> <p>Bombs dropped 210 x 250lb G.P.</p>	
	4.9.42		<p>14 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Enemy M.T. concentrations still retreating westwards. All aircraft observed burning on arrival over target. Aircraft W. 543 (Captain Sgt. Curteis) burst tyre on take off, but Captain decided to carry on with operation and make a belly landing on soft sand when aircraft returned. The 5th stick of bombs dropped by this aircraft started 5 large red fires and 12 small fires. By light of flare it was found that the first tyre was hanging in ribbons. Violent explosion started by aircraft W. 542 (Captain W/O W. No. 2011) the blast of which could be felt at 5,700ft. Many fires burning over target as aircraft left. All returned safely. Aircraft W. 543 made a successful belly landing on soft sand. All crew were uninjured. News received Sgt. Clark W/O AG posted 21 P.T.C. to await passage to U.K. as tour expired.</p> <p>Bombs dropped 194 x 250lb G.P.</p> <p>News received that Squadron was to have a stand down. Greatly appreciated by all personnel, as they have been working at maximum pressure since June 23rd.</p>	
	5.9.42			

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
	6.9.42.		6 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping and Installations Tobruk Harbour. News received by Sgt. Williams, P/O Loos, P/O Mahood (Squad. Nav. Officer), and Sgt. Hooper posted 21 P.T.C. to await passage to U.K. as tour expired. Owing to poor visibility no results could be seen. All aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 27 x 500lb G.P.	
	7.9.42.		All crews stood down. No operations. Sgt. Billings to proceed to 2 M.E.S. for further training with a view to captaincy. Message received from G.O.C. 8th Army congratulating R.A.F. achievements attained during present enemy offensive which now appears to have been checked.	
	8.9.42.		15 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping at Tobruk Harbour. Visibility very poor and results were only partially observed. Fires started in dock area. Aircraft W 607 whilst flying over battle front was hit by burst of heavy A.A. fire which suddenly opened up. Bombs detonated when Sgt. Kemp on returning in aircraft G 487, in over 500lb G.P. bomb which he was carrying, burst into tail plane and fuselage. All other aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 65 x 500lb G.P. 41b SBC x 1.	
	9.9.42.		11 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping in Tobruk Harbour. Bombs seen to burst in dock area and two fires started. Heavy anti-aircraft fire very accurate. Aircraft W 607 and G 487 were damaged by flying mine which hit aircraft. Bombs dropped 58 x 500lb G.P.	
	10.9.42.		No operations. All crews stood down. News received by Sgt. Billings to proceed to 2 M.E.S. for further training. P/O Bentley, P/O Daynes, P/O Moore, Sgt. Reddell, Sgt. Fish, P/O Foster posted 23 P.T.C. to await passage to U.K. as tour expired.	
	11.9.42.		Sgt. Whatmore, Sgt. Wursley, Sgt. Gosling posted 23 P.T.C. as tour expired. 2 P.M.S. arrived on posting. 12 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping and Dock Installations Tobruk Harbour. One large fire started in dock and followed by violent explosion. Illumination not very good and results were difficult to observe. Anti aircraft fire fairly accurate. All aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 58 x 500lb G.P.	
	12.9.42.		No operations. All crews stood down.	
	13.9.42.		14 aircraft detailed for Secret operation. Target later discovered to be Tobruk and the operation a Combined Services Raid. All aircraft took off on operations. A violent explosion seen at 23.55. hours at base of harbour. All crews report on the violence of this explosion which shook all aircraft. Anti aircraft fire fairly heavy but appeared to be firing very high. Many fires and explosions observed along dock area. All aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 78 x 250lb G.P. 42SBC x 40lb G.P.	
	14.9.42.		No operations. Crews stood down.	
	15.9.42.		No operations. Crews stood down.	

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See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I., para. 2249, and War Manual, Pt. II, Chapter 22, and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

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of (Unit or Formation) 1st Squadron, R.A.F.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
L.G. "Z"	1942	16.9.42	9 aircraft detailed for operations. target - Shipping and Dock Installations Tobruk Harbour. Owing to poor visibility, results were difficult to observe. Bursts seen along dock area. Not a very successful operation. All aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 48 x 500lb G.P.	
	17.9.42		All crews stood down. No operations. One Wellington crew detailed to standby for proceeding to India.	
	18.9.42		9 aircraft detailed for operations. target - Shipping and Dock Installations Tobruk Harbour. Stationary ship about 10,000 tons seen off Mersa Matruh by F/Lt. Gane (Aircraft DV 876) Owing to position of moon, impossible to say if bombs fell near the vessel. target has been difficult to see during the past few nights owing to moon being too high when blitz period started. Not a successful operation. All aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 47 x 500lb G.P.	
	19.9.42		8 aircraft detailed for operations. F/O Mogue and crew proceeded to No. 1. Ferry Control to await transport to India. Crew position will be difficult this month owing to personnel being withdrawn from operations and shortage of crews arriving. All aircraft took off on operations. 2 large balls of black smoke seen drifting across harbour. 2 Fires observed burning in Dock area, one probably on a ship. Aircraft HP 640 (Captain Sgt. Curtis) reported missing. No news received after 00.36 hrs when S.O.S. position 70 - 80 miles S. of Mersa Matruh was received. Remainder of aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 42 x 500lb G.P.	
	20.9.42		No operations. All crews stood down.	
	21.9.42		8 aircraft detailed for operations. target - Mersa Matruh. 101 Sgt. Chinery posted 23 P.T.C. to await passage to U.K. as tour expired. 3 AG Gunners arrived on posting. 1 Sgt Gunner left on posting to Aquila. Visibility good and clear over target. 2 Fires started but no aircraft seen. Heavy A.A. fire fairly accurate. All aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 14 x 250lb G.P. 580 4lb x 8.	
	22.9.42		5 aircraft detailed for operations. Low serviceability expected during next few days owing to 7 aircraft requiring 240 hours inspection. Sgt Moon - Pilot posted 22 P.T.C. to await passage to U.K. as tour expired. All aircraft took off to bomb target and bombed dock area. No results from aircraft mentioned. Bombs owing to engine trouble and returned to base. All other aircraft returned safely. A poor operation. Bombs dropped 15 x 500lb G.P.	
	23.9.42		No operations. All crews stood down. Sgts. Harper and Tate posted No. 23 P.T.C. to await passage to U.K. as tour expired.	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
	24.9.42.		5 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Landing grounds in Daba area. Poor visibility and low lying cloud obscured results, but bursts were seen amongst badly dispersed aircraft. P/O Watson (M 508) claims direct hit on a train. Sparks were seen to be flying from the engine, and the train stopped. All aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 63 x 250lb G.P. 1036 4015 G.P.	
	25.9.42.		5 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping and Dock Installations - Tobruk Harbour. Searchlight dazzle prevented observation of results. Aircraft T. 2571 abandoned operation and returned to base owing to engine trouble. Bombs dropped 26 x 500lb G.P.	
	26.9.42.		6 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping Tobruk Harbour. News received Sgts. Cane, Trinks, Wilkinson, Bassarrah, Moughton posted 28.9.42. to await passage to U.K. as tour expired. Letter written by C.O. to 2236 Wing about future operations and position of moon. Last operation was complete failure owing to moon being too high when aircraft were over target. All aircraft took off safely. No shipping or jetties could be seen. Bursts observed in Dock area. Aircraft DV 623 recalled owing to port engine trouble. Remainder of aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 21 x 500lb G.P.	
	27.9.42.		5 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping Tobruk Harbour. 1 fighter left on posting. 1 AC 625 arrived on posting. Large ship attacked off jetties, no results seen owing to evasive action. A.A. fire accurate. 16 searchlights operating round harbour. Aircraft DV 520 (Captain Sgt Beadle) missing from operations. Remainder of aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 19 x 250lb G.P. 226 x 401b G.P.	
	28.9.42.		4 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping Tobruk Harbour. News received Sgt. Frampton HQ AF in aircraft HF 840 reported missing on 18/19th Sept. now safe having walked back. No news received of remainder of crew. Sgt. Frampton reporting back within the next few days. P/O Hambleton Adj. admitted Hospital. P/O Watson took over duties as Squadron Adjutant. Aircraft HD 947 (Captain P/O Pearse) failed to return from operations. P/O Pearse had completed 38 operations with this Squadron and was due to be taken off shortly. Remainder of aircraft returned safely after a poor operation. Bombs dropped 12 x 500lb G.P.	
	29.9.42.		No operations. Crews stood down. Only 2 aircraft serviceable.	
	30.9.42.		4 aircraft detailed for operations. Target - Shipping Tobruk Harbour. Owing to poor visibility no results seen. Bursts observed in Dock area. Aircraft HF 848 (Captain Sgt. Sillingham) did not return. This is the third aircraft missing in 4 nights. Remainder of aircraft returned safely. Bombs dropped 16 x 500lb G.P. Bombs dropped during September. 547,390lbs. Operational hours flown 694hrs. 25 mins.	

[Signature]
Wing Commander, Commanding,
No. 148 Squadron, R. A. F.