

Wing Commander, Commanding,
No. 104 Squadron, R.A.F. NAAF.

FORM 540 (10-42)

R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in R.R. 104 A.C.I.,
para. 2349, and War Manual, Pt. II, Chapter XX and
notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 133

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of (Unit or formation) No. 104 Squadron, R.A.F. NAAF.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Hani West. L.G.	Nov. 1st.	1943	12 Aircraft of the Squadron were despatched to attack the Marshalling Yards at Viareggio. One aircraft returned early owing to sudden illness of the Navigator. One aircraft returned owing to bad weather and engine failure. Illumination was provided by three aircraft and the remaining seven successfully located and bombed the target. Bombs were seen bursting in the Marshalling Yards causing electrical flashes. Direct hits were claimed on the bridge (Canal Bridge) and another on the railway station. Aircraft "P" (F/Lt. McDermott) did not return to base.	
	2nd.		11 Aircraft were despatched to carry out an attack on the Fiano Romano Landing Ground. Two aircraft returned early, the first, on account of the blowing open of the Pilots escape hatch, the second, on routine check of the bomb doors all bombs fell out. The remaining aircraft located the target and bombs were seen to fall and explode on the landing ground, and in the dispersal area, near misses were claimed on parked aircraft, three aircraft were seen to be on fire and several other fires were reported.	
	3rd		The Squadron was not called upon to operate.	
	4th		The Squadrons target was Orte Marshalling Yards, another of the many communication targets which have been attacked in the past months. It is reported that the attack on Grossetto Marshalling Yards was successful in blocking them (29/30 Oct) and it is thought that this may have contributed to the increase of activity at Orte. 12 Wellingtons were airborne, of these 5 acted as illuminators and 7 as bombers. Some of the illumination fell (It is believed over Orte Town) to the N.W. of the target, and some bombing took place under these flares. Other illuminators and bombers located and attacked the Marshalling Yards on which many sticks were seen to burst, starting two short lived fires and causing electrical explosions and flashes. Some photographs confirm correct target attacked. Opposition:- 3-4 L/F and 4/5 H/F guns firing ineffectively from around the yards. Weather over the target was good, but ground mist was in evidence on route - moderate to fair variable winds. All aircraft returned safely.	
	5th		The Squadron did not operate due to adverse weather conditions. Rain fell steadily but spasmodically for most of the morning and afternoon, clearing in the evening and recommencing about 23.00 hours when it developed into a violent thunder storm and gale. Parts of the camp were swamped, tents blown down including the church, ration store, and Gunnery Tent. The storm eased off at about 01.00 hours but rain continued to fall until dawn.	
	6th		The Squadron was not called on to operate owing to weather conditions. The Landing Ground and dispersal areas are in a soggy condition owing to yesterdays rain.	
	7th		The Squadron was not requested to operate bombers, only two nickalling aircraft to the area of Leghorn - Spezia - Florence, however these two nickallers were cancelled during the afternoon owing to bad weather.	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Sanl West	Nov. 9th		<p>Considerable improvement in the weather. The Squadron operated 14 Aircraft. Twelve of these attacked the railway bridge over the river Ombrone 2½ Miles South of Grossetto. Of these 12 aircraft, 5 provided sufficient although scattered illumination for six to locate and attack the target in clear moonlight conditions. Bombing runs were made from South to North, most bursts being seen across and on the railway just off the North end of the bridge. Aircraft "X" F/O. McDowall went down to 600 feet to drop a 4,000 lb bomb with 11 second delay and a direct hit was claimed, debris and considerable smoke being seen from the burst. Photographs confirm the correct target was attacked. Opposition was Nil. Weather over the target was good, but only fair on route as aircraft flew through the "front" forecast by the Met. lying between Maratimo Island and 59° North. One of these aircraft developed engine trouble near Orbetello and abandoned the operation, after bombing coastal road and railway at Talamone. Of the Nickelling aircraft detailed to drop leaflets, the aircraft which operated to cover the area bounded by Leghorn -Spezia-and Florence, with Italian Leaflets, returned early owing to aircraft instability. While the other successfully dropped German nickel/s over the battle area, just North of the bomb line. All aircraft returned safely.</p>	
	9th		<p>Twelve aircraft were airborne tonight to attack the railway bridge over the river Siera just West of Pontassieve, but the weather seriously interfered with the operation, there existing 10/10 cloud at 3-10,000 feet, with rain, strong winds and freezing level at 6-7,000 feet on route and over the Italian mainland. Only two aircraft successfully located the target, which they bombed, observing bursts on or near the East end of the bridge, one stick starting a short lived fire. Remaining aircraft were unable to locate the target owing to extensive cloud. Two aircraft attacked bridges at Grossetto without observing results, two aircraft saw their bursts across roads near Talamone and one of these fired 1,700 rounds of S.A.A. from 2-500 feet at lights on Grossetto - Talamone Road. Remaining four aircraft bombed bridges, roads and railways in the Arno Valley area. One aircraft unable to locate a suitable target jettisoned bombs in the sea, due to engine trouble. One aircraft returned early with rear turret U/S. The only opposition experienced was four L/F guns at Orbetello. All aircraft returned safely.</p>	
	10th		The Squadron was not called upon to operate tonight.	
	11th		<p>Tonight the Squadrons target was the Marshalling Yards at Prato near Florence, with the railway bridge over the river Cecina at Cecina as an alternative if weather hindered the successful location of the primary target, however the weather there was good and all ten aircraft were able to locate the yards quite easily. All crews report seeing their bombs burst on the yards. Two good fires were burning in the warehouses. A stick is claimed to have thrown trucks off the lines and started a short lived fire. Sticks of bombs were seen to start a fire with rocket like explosions, while three blue electric like fires, of short duration were observed in the North end of the yards. The yards were reported to be well alight but considerable smoke obscured accurate observations. Some incendiaries were burning outside the target. Photographs of good quality showing ground detail confirm correct target was attacked. Opposition was non existent, and patches of rough weather existed on the route.</p>	

21703 Wt. 38206/3503 400,000 12/30-Mec & Co-51-5658

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See instructions for use of this form in F.R. and A.C.I.

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

of (Unit or Formation) No. 104 Squadron. R.A.F. NAAF.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Hani West	Nov. 12th		Eleven aircraft were detailed to attack the railway bridge at Pontassieve tonight, having as an alternative target the railway bridge at Cecina. Owing to bad weather conditions, (10/10 cloud at 2-4,000 feet) over target only five aircraft were able to locate Pontassieve. These bombed from a height of 600 to 4,000 feet from 20.32 hours to 20.53 hours. Bursts were seen in Centio and along the Marshalling Yards, the bombing being well concentrated. Fires were started and one building left burning. Aircraft "W" (F/Lt. Thirsk) attacked the railway bridge with a 4,000 lb bomb (G.P. 11 second delay) which was seen to explode 10 yards from the North West corner of the bridge. The height of attack was 600 feet and it was found necessary to approach from the Sievo valley owing to the altitude of the surrounding hills. Throughout the time the pilot experienced engine trouble. Four aircraft attacked the secondary target of the railway bridge at Cecina, scoring hits along and either end of the bridge. Electrical flashes were seen after one hit and at 20.46 hours a terrific explosion took place which was felt at 4,000 feet. Photographs show that the target suffered to the extent of having a gap $\frac{1}{2}$ of its width about half way across. It was bombed from 20.45 to 21.10 hours from 3,000 to 4,000 feet. One aircraft was unable to locate either target and therefore attacked the railway line between Orbetello and Civitavecchia at a position of 42° 22' N. 11° 32' E. Direct hits are claimed. Bombing heights 6,000 feet Time 21.20 hours. One aircraft returned early owing to engine trouble. The weather throughout prevented full advantage being taken of the lack of opposition, one light gun only being encountered at Pontassieve and Nil at Cecina.	
	Nov. 13th		The Squadron was not called upon to operate.	
	14th		A Group Stand down today.	
	15th		The Squadron was not called upon to operate.	
	16th		Prato Marshalling Yards were detailed for attack tonight, but the operation was scrubbed during briefing owing to weather conditions. The Advance Party left for the new Camp site at Oudna.	
	17th		Squadron Stand down today.	
Oudna. L.G.	18th		Stand down. The Main party under F/O. Elliott left for Oudna at approximately 09.30 hours, the route taken being as follows:- Bonficha-Infidaville and Tunis, the party arrived at the new location at 17.30 hours. A busy hour was spent in erecting tents but by the time darkness fell all personnel were under cover.	
	19th		T - Squadron was not called upon to operate today.	
	20th.		The Group was assigned Turin as their target tonight, but the operation was cancelled.	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	141	References to Appendices
Oudna. L.G.	Nov. 21st 1943		Stand down.		
	22nd		A further stand down, due to weather.		
	23rd		The Squadron was again assigned Turin, but weather conditions necessitated it being cancelled.		
	24th		14 Aircraft were detailed to attack Turin Ball Bearing Factory, but the operation was unsuccessful due to very bad weather conditions, 6/10-10/10 cloud being experienced throughout the route; the base as low as 1,500 feet rising to 10,000 feet. As a result only two aircraft were able to locate Turin, and did not bomb as after breaking clouds, were unable to pinpoint the target. One of these aircraft bombed the railway between Genoa and Sori instead. No results were observed. One aircraft jettisoned bombs over land East of Genoa. 2 Aircraft "D" (W/Cdr Crossley, DFC) and V.(P/S Johnson) are missing. One aircraft successfully made an emergency landing at Elmas in Sardinia and the remainder had to return early owing to failure to locate target or turned back due to the weather, after reaching Italian coast. 3 Aircraft with 4,000 lb bombs did not operate from advanced base at Elmas owing to refuelling difficulties. One light gun was seen at Spezia and a Heavy gun and a Searchlight at Genoa. No photos were taken.		
	25th		Seven aircraft were detailed for the same target as last night but the operation was scrubbed owing to weather. S/Ldr. Fox, T.R. DFC. "B" Flight Commander acted as Commanding Officer of the Squadron.		
	26th		A Squadron stand down tonight.		
	27th		The Wing did not operate today.		
	28th		The Squadron was assigned the North and South Landing Grounds at Ciampino as the target for tonight, the object being to crater the runways. Ten aircraft were detailed and from 21.05 to 20.35 hours the area was attacked from 4,500 to 6,000 feet. Two Illuminators were supplied by the Squadron and several other illuminators were put on by their Squadrons, but they had difficulty in locating the correct point of attack with the result that the illumination was scattered, early chandeliers were not over the target, but over a factory to the North East, similar in appearance to the Landing Ground hangars. It is considered that six of our aircraft definitely located the target, bursts being seen on landing strips and near hangars. The remainder were misled by flares into attacking the factory area. There was a ground haze which made location difficult. Opposition was stronger than we had experienced for some time. 4/8 Light guns at the target were accurate and putting up intense fire assisted by 4 Searchlights. One aircraft of another Squadron was seen to be shot down at 20.28 hours. At Anzio there was slight ^{fight} and also a Heavy Gun barrage.		
	29th		Stand down today.		

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of (Unit or Formation) No. 104 Squadron, R.A.F. NAAF.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
Oudna. L.G.	Nov 30th. 1945.		<p>The Squadron was assigned Turin, but weather conditions necessitated it being cancelled.</p> <p>During the month the following Honours & Awards were made to personnel of this Squadron:- British Empire Medal awarded to L.A.C. Collins.H.T. 1291419. Mentioned in Despatches:- F/S. Westhead.F.J. 553182. Sgt. Wilson. K.B.620975. Sgt. Vanderstock.A.F.M.945520. L.A.C. Clarke.W.A. 575375. 569284. F/S.Turner. S.C. 962229. Cpl. Dummer. J.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  Squadron Leader, Commanding, No. 104 Squadron, R.A.F. NAAF. </p>	

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