

## January 1945: Form 540

357 Squadron

Place	Date	Time	Summary of events
			Part I – Operations
Jessore			The month of January 1945 saw a great increase in the sorties flown by 357 (S.D.) Sqdn. In all 105 sorties were flown, which not only constituted a record of sorties flown by this Squadron since its formation in February 1944 but also constituted an advance of 34 sorties on our previous best month, December 1944. A proportionate increase of successful sorties was also effected during the month & the Squadron obtained a high peak of efficiency by successfully carrying out 75% of the total sorties flown. Actual figures show that of the 105 sorties, 78 were entirely successful, 10 were unsuccessful due to bad weather being encountered & 17 were unsuccessful due to no reception over the target area.
			The large number of sorties flown can be put down primarily to the increasing amount of operations laid on by the Sponsoring Forces & the exceptionally good weather experienced during the clandestine period, but mention must also be made of the very high standard of Maintenance Efficiency maintained during the month. The high percentage of successes was effected, once again by good weather & Maintenance Efficiency & also by efficient co-operation between the Sponsoring Forces & 357 (S.D.) Sqdn in respect to Times on Target, positions of Dropping Zones & details of reception committees, etc & in no small way, the keenness of the air-crews undertaking these operations contributed to the successes achieved.
			The work the Squadron performed was as usual an amalgamation of the requirements of the Sponsoring Forces, namely – I.S.L.D., Force 136, "Z" Force, "D" Division, O.S.S. & "E" Group.
			The requirements of these Forces described in brief are:-
			I.S.L.D. The dropping & supplying of agents behind enemy lines.
			Force 136 The dropping & supplying of saboteurs behind enemy lines.
			"Z" Force The dropping and supplying of Patrols in front of our own lines to pave the way for our main forces.
			"D" Division Faking parachute descents, etc for general deception purposes.
			"E" Group Maintaining arrangements for the escape of Prisoners of War in Japanese hands.
			O.S.S. The only American organisation for which the Squadron works, & fulfilling the same requirement as Force 136.
			The requirements of these Sponsoring Forces took the Squadron's aircraft over Burma, Siam, China & even as far-distant territories of French Indo-China & Malaya.
	Jan 25		It would be worthy to mention that operations over Malaya were only commenced during this month & on Jan 25th it fell to the lot of F/O Churchill D.F.C. & crew to perform the longest sortie yet attempted by this Squadron. The operation went under the code name of "Carpenter" & entailed a flight of 21 hrs 55 minutes endurance in a Liberator k VI "U" necessitating a landing at

			Chittagong on the return journey. It proved successful & the Squadron Commander – W/Cdr L. M. Hodges, D.S.O. D.F.C., commented:- "This is the longest sortie yet attempted & the crew put up a very fine show on this operation."
			Since that date, however, more sorties have been attempted of similar duration & the future months will see many more carried out, no doubt.
			Brief summaries of the operations carried out during the month are as follows:-
			Operations Over Burma
			Operation "Heavy"
			6 sorties carried out during month by 3 Liberators & 3 Dakotas. Two Dakots & the three Liberators were successful.
			Operation "Bulge"
			One sortie made by a Dakota IV which was successful.
			Operation "Dilwyn"
			8 sorties made – 5 by Liberator VI's 7 3 by D.C.4 <sup>1</sup> 's. 4 Liberators & the 3 Dakotas were successful.
			Operation "Rendz-vous"
			2 sorties made, both by Dakotas & both successful.
			Operation "Bottom"
			2 sorties made – one by a Liberator & one by a Dakota. Both were successful.
			Operation "Bullfinch"
			2 sorties made, both by Dakotas, one successful & one unsuccessful.
			Operation "Blast"
			One sortie made by a Dakota, which was successful.
			Operation "Broke"
			1 sortie was made by a Dakota, which was successful.
			Operation "Barge"
			3 sorties made, all by Dakotas, & all successful.
			Operation "Nation"
			3 sorties made, all by Dakotas & all successful.
			Operation "Binge"
			6 sorties made – 3 by Liberators & 3 by Dakotas. One Dakota & 2 Liberators were successful. There seemed to be some difficulty experienced on this operation & it was put down to incorrect pin-points being given from the field in conjunction with the fact that the D.Z. is in an extremely difficult position. It was suggested to move the D.Z. to a more level location.
			Operation "Ramrose"
			3 sorties were made, all by Dakotas & 2 of which were successful.
			Operation "Consequence"
			1 sortie made by a Dakota & was successful, although carried out in bad weather conditions.
			Operation "Manual"
			6 sorties made – 3 by Liberators & 3 by Dakota. All were successful.
			Operation "Hainton"
			1 sortie made by a Dakota, which was successful.
			Operation "Grain"
			1 sortie made by a Dakota, which was successful.
			Operation "Bittern".
			1 sortie made by a Liberator which was successful.
			Operation "Future"

<sup>1</sup> The record says D.C.4, but this obviously should be D.C.3.

			3 sorties were made by Dakotas of which 2 were successful & 1 was unsuccessful.					
			Operation "Label"					
			5 sorties were made by Dakotas, 1 of which was successful. It is					
			Operation "Juson".					
			2 sorties were mad by Liberators, 1 successful & 1 unsuccessful.					
			Operation "Ligurd".					
			2 sorties were made by Dakotas & both were successful.					
			Operation "Burglar".					
			2 sorties were made by a Liberator & a Dakota & both were successful.					
			Operation "Bandit".					
			2 sorties were made by Dakotas were unsuccessful, due to no reception.					
			Operation "Baag" – China -					
			1 sortie carried out by a Dakota was successful.					
			Operations over French Indo China					
			Operation "Polka"					
			10 sorties were made by Liberators of which 6 were successful & 4 unsuccessful, either due to no reception or bad weather.					
			Operation "Desert"					
			11 sorties were made by Liberators of which 7 were successful & 4 were unsuccessful.					
			Operation "Bazaar"					
			9 sorties made by Liberators 6 successful & 3 unsuccessful.					
			Operations over Malaya					
			Operation "Cairngorm"					
			1 sortie was made on this target by a Liberator & was unsuccessful.					
			Operation "Hebrides"					
			1 sortie was made by a Liberator & was successful.					
			Operation "Evidence"					
			1 sortie was made by a Liberator & was successful.					
			Operation "Beacon"					
			1 sortie was made by a Liberator & was successful.					
			Operation "Carpenter"					
			One sortie by a Liberator which was successful.					
			Operations over Siam					
			Operation "Brillig"					
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			Operation "Brillig"					
			1 sortie made by a Liberator & was a success.					
			Operation "Candle"					
			1 sortie made by a Liberator which was successful.					
			Operation "Savanna"					
			1 sortie was made on this target by a Liberator & was successful.					
			Operation "Coupling"					
			1 sortie made by a Liberator which was successful.					
			Aircraft on the Station at the end of January 1945 consisted of:-					
			11 Liberator VI's	11 Dakota IV's	1 Harvard	1 Auster		
			W	KH160	O	KJ914	FS794	MT351
			Z	KH216	F	KJ919		
			S	KH166	G	KJ920		
			Q	KH257	H	KJ921		
			R	KH273	J	KJ922		
			X	KH326	K	KJ924		
			V	KH313	L	KJ925		

			U	KH323	M	KJ926		
			Y	KH391	D	KJ889		
			P	KH395	N	KG490		
				KH325		KJ913		
			Total Operational Hours Flown During January 1945 – 1060.57					
			Total Operational Sorties Flown During January 1945 – 105					
			Part II – Administration					
Jessore	Jan 30		The month of January 1945 marked the advent of a new Station Commander, namely Group Captain W. T. F. Wightman, D.F.C., A.F.C., who assumed command of R.A.F. Station Jessore vice Wing Commander E.A. Starling w.e.f. 30/1/45.					
	Jan 1		A message was received from the A.O.C. 231 Group, complimenting the Squadron on its work during the past few months of 1944. It read "My heartiest congratulations & appreciation of your efforts during the past few months. Best of luck to you all in 1945".					
	Jan 15		On Jan 15 a visit was made to the station by Group Captain Caldwell & Junior Commander Cranston – RNZAF Public Relations Officers. The following personnel of 357 Sqdn were detailed to meet the Visitors:-					
			NZ 415285 W/O J. H. Boundy    NZ 421063 W/O F. J. Keenan					
			NZ 421489 W/O C. R. Anderson					
	Jan 20		On Jan 20th the Squadron was visited by Group Captain H. I. Edwards, V.C., D.S.O., D.F.C. to discuss the possibility of the institution of a Parachute School.					
			Group Captain H. I. Edwards was here to witness the first Concert Party that 357 Sqdn attempted, namely "Something in the Air", which was presented in the Station Canteen at 2015 hrs on Jan 20. The artists in the show were all members of 357 Sqdn & it was agreed by all ranks that it was quite a fine effort & it was hoped that it would be the fore-runner of many more.					
	Jan 28		Wing Commander H. B. Verity, Ops. S.D., H.Q., Air Command visited Jessore in a Harvard aircraft. Jessore was one of Wing Commander Verity's "stopping off" places on a tour, the object of which was general liaison on any matter connected with Special Duty Operations & the Clandestine Organisations.					
			While with 357 Sqdn. Wing Commander Verity flew on an operation with F/O J. Churchill, D.F.C. & Crew, taking off on the 29th Jan. at 2012hrs & landing on the 30th Jan at 0420 hrs. The operation was a success & Wing Commander Verity was able to see first hand how the Squadron operates.					
			Wing Commander Verity left Jessore for Digri on Jan 30 by a Harvard.					
	Jan 10		"Show Me the Way to go Home" was the title given to a talk delivered by the Wing Education Officer on the 10th Jan in the Canteen Reading Room. The Wing Education officer dealt with & was prepared to answer questions on					
			1) Grants for vocational training.					
			2) Facilities to be granted immediately following a European Armistice for those whose education or vocational training was interrupted by call-up.					
			3) Supply of instructors & training of teachers in this country.					
			4) The effect of Educational & Vocational Training upon (a) pay (b) repatriation (c) demobilisation.					
			It proved a very enlightening talk & many points, upon which a certain amount of doubt was entertained, were clarified.					
			Recreation Amusements etc.					
			The month of January 1945 proved quite abundant in the way of recreation. In addition to the usual football & hockey matches, cinema shows, gramophone recitals & recreational activities carried out in the new Squadron Canteen, two Stage shows were held in the Airmen's Canteen.					

	Jan 18		The first on Jan 18 was the Squadron's own Concert Party's presentation of "Something in the Air", which has been previously mentioned.
	Jan 31		There was also a R.A.F. Welfare Road Show "Airborne" presented on Jan 31 & Feb 1 at 2000 hrs in the Airmen's Canteen which proved a great success.
			Consternation reigned in the camp on the receipt of the news that after this show a pair of ladies pink French Knickers were found in the Sergeant's latrines cherchey la femme!!!
			Arrangements were made to maintain the following gramophone recitals throughout the month, in the Canteen Reading Room:-
			Every Friday at 8 p.m. – A Music Circle for the High-brow & cultured.
			Every Wednesday at 8 p.m. – A Rhythm Circle for the low-brow swing-cats & what-have-you.
			These recitals were actually sponsored by 292 Sqdn but were kindly made available to all personnel on R.A.F. Station, Jessore.
			The two local cinemas – the Bengal Talkies & the Madu-Chakon provided quite good entertainment in the way of films during the month, with very frequent changes of programmes. The popularity of this type of entertainment is borne out by the packed audience, to whom the films are played.
			During the month the C.O. decided to run his own Canteen & arrangements were being got under way to ensure that Canteen goods should be supplied to 357 Sqdn direct & not through the contractor as hitherto. This was being dealt with by H.Q., R.A.F., Bengal-Burma who were issuing instructions to the Controller Canteen Stores Dept in Calcutta.
			Efforts were made during the month to obtain Radios Amplifiers & Speakers & H.Q. R.A.F. Welfare were approached on this matter. Their reply however, was that Amplifiers & Speakers were almost impossible to obtain & that a fresh allocation of radios was being awaited from B.A.E.S.E.A.
			Enquiries were also made from R.A.F. Welfare as regards Table-Tennis Equipment, but once again our entreaties were met with no success. It appears that Balls, Nets, Posts & Bats are procurable, but we will have to make our own table!
	Jan 29		A letter was received from H.Q.R.A.F. Bengal/Burma on Jan 29 to the effect that no charge was to be made for admission to any Welfare Productions or Gang Shows.
			Part III – Personnel
	Jan 6		R.A.F. PORS Promotions
			88689 F/L T. P. O'Brien (GD-P) was promoted to the rank of Acting S/Ldr & granted post of Flight Commander wef 1-11-44.
	Jan 4		R.A.A.F. PORS Promotions
			Aus 420912 F/O F. G. Barlogie (GD-P) appointed to the rank of Acting F/L for F/L Flying Post wef. 1-10-44.
	Jan 19		R.C.A.F. PORS Promotions
			Can.J.39528 P/O H. J. McFadyen (GD-P) confirmed in appointment & promoted to Flying Officer (ws) wef 10-6-44.
			Can.J.44160 P/O J. Tyson (WAG) confirmed in appointment & promoted to Flying Officer (ws) wef 4-10-44
			Can.J.45070 P/O H. Walling (AB) confirmed in appointment & promoted to Flying Officer (ws) wef 5-11-44
			Postings.
	Jan 24		R.A.F. PORS
			186160 P/O F. S. Quinn (NavB) posted from No 357 Squadron to R.A.F. Station Poona for F/L vacancy wef. 1-2-45.
	Jan 15		R.A.A.F. PORS
			Aus 421561 F/O J. Brand (GD-P) posted from No. 357 Sqdn to HQ. B.A.F. S.E.A. Com. Sqdn. wef 35-1-45.

	Jan 12		R.C.A.F. PORS
			Can.J.13790 F/L J. W. Gibson (GD-N) posted from No. 231 Group to No 357 Sqdn wef. 13-1-45.
			Strength of Squadron Personnel
			Airmen                      Officers                      Total
			R.A.F.                      547                      51                      598
			R.C.A.F.                      5                      18                      23
			R.A.A.F.                      21                      10                      31
			R.N.Z.A.F.                      4                      0                      4
			Total                      676
			Part IV Honours & Awards.
Jessore	20-1-45		His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve the immediate award of the Distinguished Flying Cross to the under mentioned officer for duties carried out whilst serving with No. 357 S.D. Squadron:-
			A/S/Ldr K. P. Jones
	13-1-45		Information was received that the French Authorities have expressed their intentions of conferring their Croix De Guerre upon the following Officers & men of No 357 Squadron for duties carried out whilst serving with the Squadron:-
			83720 F/L. H. Cast
			Aus423804 F/O E. T. Matley
			656025 W/O. B. F. Paton
			NZ421063 W/O. T. S. Keenan
			Aus428020 F/S. M. J. Cox
			1323115 F/S. H. M. Farish
			113443 Sgt. D. Scobie
			New Years Honours List, 1945.
			The under mentioned has been awarded "Mention in Dispatches" for duties carried out on No 357 S.D. Sqdn:-
			CanR119899 W/O H. Deyvejonck & F/S Primmer.
			{to end of janp15sm.} 16 is cover note, 17(357jan45pg17) is repeat of 16, 18 is a graph. 19 starts 541.