

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Of 150 Squadron

Place	Date	Summary of Events
Kairouan	1/7/43	<p>To commence the month of July, eleven of our aircraft were detailed to attack the marshalling yards and military installations at Palermo, the pilots being F/Lt Langlois, S/Ldr Garrod, P/O Kalberer, F/O Jones, Sgts Tinsley, Sullivan, Smith K., Whitehouse, Hales, Mortimer and Alagrachi – all the aircraft took off between 20.55 and 21.27 hours. On the outward and return journeys there were patches of cloud at 8000 -9000ft and over the target area there were patches of cloud at 10000ft with some ground haze, darkness was intense.</p> <p>One aircraft developed engine trouble on the outward journey and was forced to jettison its bomb load. Three crews were able to say definitely that they found and bombed the target but the remainder had difficulty in pinpointing and could not say with certainty where their bombs fell. A fairly large red fire was reported in the southern part of the town and another in the centre. There was moderate to intense heavy flak and a small quantity of scattered light flak. All crews returned by 0155 hours.</p>
	2/7/43	Stand down
	3/7/43	<p>On this occasion 17 aircraft were detailed for an attack on the marshalling yards and military installations at Trapani. Sixteen aircraft took off by 2100 hours under: S/Ldr Vincent, F/Lt Langlois, F/O Jones, P/O Kalberer, F/Sgt Mortimer, Sgts Alagrachi, Hales, Smith P.G., Sullivan A., Sullivan L.G., Wilkes, Bashford, Lee, Rutherford, Valentine and Seville. Two aircraft had to turn back with engine trouble after jettisoning in the sea. On the route out there was much cloud at about 8000ft and this extended over the target where there was 8/10 and slight ground haze. Owing to the haze and intense darkness crews found pinpointing difficult but believe that their bombs fell near the target area. One crew claim to have seen their bombs bursting on the target and one crew dropped 1x4000 on buildings adjoining Trapani Milo Aerodrome, but many bombs were dropped indiscriminately. There was intense inaccurate light flak and 12/30 searchlights. All aircraft returned.</p>
	4/7/43	Stand down
	5/7/43	Stand down
	6/7/43	<p>On this occasion 14 aircraft were detailed for operations, two to attack Palermo and 12 to operate against the Sardinian aerodromes of Villacedro, Milis and Pabillionis. Owing to engine and flare path difficulties only 8 aircraft were able to take off. The pilots being S/Ldrs Garrod and Vincent, Sgts Smith K., Whitehouse, Smith P.G., Sullivan, Bashford and Valentine. Of these crews, one returned early with engine trouble and three jettisoned their bombs due to serious defaults. Weather: there was some low cloud and ground haze with intense darkness which made pinpointing difficult. Sgt Smith K. claims to have dropped 1x4000 in the target area at Palermo. Of the crews on the Sardinian aerodromes none was able to identify the targets so bombs were dropped D.R. without any results being observed. Sgt Bashford became short of petrol while some distance from base and three of his crew bailed out successfully, fortunately, however he was able skilfully to land his aircraft at Field J. All our crews were accounted for.</p>
	7/7/43	<p>This night's target was the aerodrome at Comiso for which 14 of our aircraft were detailed under the captains:- F/Lt Langlois, F/Os Jones, Kalberer, Rogers, F/Sgts Mortimer, Ivory, Sgts Smith P.G., Seville, Alagrachi J., Sullivan, Alagrachi J.E., Tinsley and Wilkes. The aircraft took off in three waves between 2050 and 0113</p>

hours. There were isolated patches of medium cloud over the sea and target area and ground haze and intense darkness all added to the difficulties of identification. A few crews claim to have identified the aerodrome and most believe that their bombs were dropped in the vicinity. Nickels were dropped. All aircraft returned safely.

- 8/7/43 On this occasion 14 aircraft were detailed to attack the aerodromes at Catania under:- S/Ldr Garrod, F/O's Rogers, Kalberer, Williams, Jones, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Seville, Whitehouse, Smith P.G., Sullivan, Hales, Macdonald, Valentine and Smith K.. There were three waves and all aircraft took off between 2107 and 2023. Weather:- visibility was fairly good but there was slight haze over the target area. Sgt Seville experienced an engine failure and was forced to crash land four miles from base – all crew were unhurt. One aircraft returned early due to engine overheating. Owing to darkness, ground haze and searchlights none of the crews was able to definitely identify the target, but DR (dead reckoning) runs were made from the coast and most crews believe that their bombs burst in the vicinity of the aerodrome. One big explosion and several fires were reported. Defences:- There was intense heavy flak and some light flak and the numerous searchlights were active and accurate. All our aircraft returned safely.
- 9/7/43 On this important date 14 aircraft were detailed to assist our forces in the invasion of Sicily. Three were ordered to attack Catania with 4000lbs bombs and eleven to bomb a limited area of the town at Syracuse. Captains were:- G/Capt Powell, F/Lt Langlois, F/Sgts Ivory, Mortimer, Sgts Sullivan A., Sullivan L.G. Alagrachi, Rutherford, Wilkes, Smith K., Macdonald, Tinsley, Valentine and Hales. The weather was clear with excellent visibility. Two aircraft bombed Catania but one 4000lb failed to explode (Sgt Hale, HF728 "JN-C"). The other 423 (4000lb) dropped its bomb at Augusta and caused a large explosion followed by a big fire. At Syracuse the town was brilliantly illuminated by accurately dropped flares so all the crews were able to identify the target and observed their bombs drop in the target area. Flak at Syracuse was negligible but at Catania there was fairly considerable heavy and light flak and 5 searchlights. Many good photographs were obtained. All crews returned.
- 10/7/43 Stand down
- 11/7/43 Seven aircraft were detailed to attack Montecorvino aerodrome and five Marsala, the pilots being:- Sgts Valentine, Alagrachi, Wilkes, Rutherford, Smith P.G., Mortimer, Tinsley and Sgts Whitehouse and Hales, F/O Rogers, Jones and Kalberer. Weather was good. Most crews on Montecorvino clearly identified the target and dropped their bombs accurately causing some fires. Bombing of Marsala was equally accurate and a large explosion, giving off a pall of black smoke was observed. Some aircraft came down to 900ft on the aerodrome to machine gun aircraft. Flak at both places was negligible and all aircraft returned safely.
- 12/7/43 The target for tonight was the town and military concentrations at Caltanissetta in central Sicily. Nine aircraft took off between 2030 and 2110, the pilots being: S/Ldr Garrod, F/O's Rogers, Kalberer, S/Ldr Vincent, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Sullivan L.G., Sullivan A., Macdonald and Smith K.. The weather was cloudless enroute and over the target and a very accurate and successful attack was made. Some small fires were started and towards the end of the attack the target was obscured by smoke. Some aircraft came down to 500ft and machine gunned the town and barracks. Defences were non-existent save for some small-arms fire from the barracks. Several good photos were obtained and all aircraft returned.
- 13/7/43 On this occasion ten aircraft were detailed to attack the Messina ferry and marshalling yards. The captains were: F/Lt Langlois, F/O Williams, F/Sgt

Mortimer, Sgts Bashford, Wilkes, Valentine, Rutherford, Whitehouse, Hales and Smith P.G.. Take off was from 2030 – 2112. Visibility was good over the target and all crews claim to have clearly identified it. Numerous bursts were seen to straddle the marshalling yards and two larger explosions were observed culminating in a red glow and a pall of black smoke. There was moderate accurate heavy flak and 6 to 12 ineffective searchlights. Each crew dropped 18 x 250lb bombs. All our aircraft returned safely.

14/7/43 Tonight eleven crews were briefed – three to attack the industrial districts of Naples with 400lb bombs and eight were to unload 18x250lb on the aerodrome of Pomigliano D’Arco. The pilots on Naples were F/O Jones, Sgts Smith K. And Sullivan who were able to identify the target and bomb accurately. There was moderate heavy and light flak which was fairly accurate and the numerous searchlights reduced the accuracy of the bombing.

The pilots on Pomigliano aerodrome were: S/Ldr Garrod, F/O’s Rogers and Kalberer, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Alagrachi J.E., Macdonald, Tinsley and Sullivan L.G. and they too were all successful in finding the aerodrome. Flares assisted identification and the accurate bombing resulted in 15 to 20 fires being started which had all the appearance of being aircraft burning. Defences on the aerodrome were practically negligible.

15/7/43 On this occasion eleven of our aircraft were detailed for operations. F/O Jones and Sgt Wilkes taking 423’s to San Giovanni. F/Lt Langlois, Sgts Mortimer, Bashford and Rutherford taking 18x250lb to Cretone aerodrome and F/O Williams, Sgts Whitehouse, Smith P., Hales and Valentine on the aerodrome at Reggio. Weather was excellent in all cases and the 2x4000lb were dropped very close to the ferry at U.S.G. The crews on the aerodromes had a successful time and many aircraft were ignited on the ground at both places. Defences on the aerodromes were negligible but at U.S.G. there was moderate heavy flak and 12 searchlights in operation. All aircraft returned safely.

16/7/43 Once again Naples was the target for which eight of our Wellingtons were detailed under the command of F/O’s Rogers and Kalberer, F/Sgt Sullivan, Sgts Smith K., Tinsley, Bashford, Macdonald and Alagrachi who took off from 2015 to 2045. Weather was good with excellent visibility, but there was a smoke screen in operation over the target, so most crews had difficulty in pin-pointing. Early arrivals, however, claim to have hit the marshalling yards, but later arrivals were unable to say definitely where their bombs fell owing to the smoke screen. One crew reported a terrific explosion near the target area. There was moderate heavy flak which was accurate in some cases and there was a slight amount of light flak with 15-20 searchlights. All our aircraft had returned safely by 0235.

17/7/43 On this date nine aircraft were ordered to bomb Pomigliano aerodrome under G/capt Powell, S/Ldr Garrod, F/O Williams, Sgts Hales, Whitehouse, Rutherford, Seville, Smith P.G., and Lovesy. Weather and visibility were not too good but some crews found and bombed the target, setting buildings on fire. At least four aircraft bombed Montecorvino aerodrome and several fires (believed aircraft) were started and a large explosion was observed. This may have been an ammunition dump. There was slight, inaccurate heavy flak. Light flak was slight but there were 6-8 searchlights which “coned” several aircraft for up to 1 minute. Bombing height was 3500-8000 feet. All aircraft returned.

18/7/43 Stand down

19/7/43 On this occasion 14 aircraft were detailed for operations, eleven being ordered to attack the aerodrome at Aquino with 250 and 500 pounders and the three 423’s were to bomb Capodichino aerodrome. The pilots were F/Lt Langlois, F/O Rogers, F/Sgts Mortimer and Anderson, Sgts Sullivan, Bashford, Wilkes, Alagrachi,

Valentine and Macdonald on the Aquino aerodrome. F/Sgt Sullivan, Sgts Lee and Smith K. On Capodichino. Weather was clear with moderately good visibility and ten aircraft were able to identify Aquino aerodrome and drop their bombs accurately with the help of flares. Large fires followed by explosions were caused among the buildings and these later merged into one enveloping fire. Many aircraft dispersed on the ground were set on fire and many were seen to explode and pyrotechnics were set off. At the end of the raid, there were fires around the whole perimeter. Flak was negligible. Bombing height was 2500-8000ft and 17 photos were obtained. Two of the crews on Capodichino claim to have found the target and seen their two bombs burst in the target area, one starting a fire in the SE corner among buildings. The third aircraft was unable to pinpoint the target accurately due to searchlights but the bomb was dropped somewhere in the aerodrome vicinity. There was no flak from the aerodrome but moderate inaccurate heavy and light flak came from the Naples defences and 20-30 searchlights were active and accurate. All crews returned safely from both of these operations.

- 20/7/43 Target for tonight was the aerodrome at Crotona in southern Italy and eight aircraft were detailed under:- W/C Malan, F/O Williams, Sgts Lovesy, Smith P.G., Hales, Rutherford, Seville and Whitehouse. The aircraft took off between 2330 and 0007 and all landed safely by 0625. In good weather all the aircraft were successful in finding the target and, since there were no defences, all the aircraft bombed from below 5000ft. At least seven of the 12 aircraft in the NW dispersal were set on fire and there was a large fire in the buildings in the same area. A pyrotechnic dump was blown up and the aerodrome was liberally cratered. Five aircraft machine gunned from under 1000 ft. 21 photos were obtained and nickels were dropped over the "toe" of Italy.
- 21/7/43 On this occasion there were two targets. Five aircraft were detailed to attack the marshalling yards at Salerno under F/O Jones, F/Sgts Mortimer and Sullivan, Sgts Lee and Sullivan. There was 7/10ths cloud over the target but four crews claim to have bombed the marshalling yards through gaps in the cloud, the other bombed in the town near the barracks. There was no opposition. The other target was Capodichino aerodrome and the five detailed were piloted by S/Ldr Garrod, Sgts Wilkes, Tinsley, Alagrachi and Macdonald. Pinpointing was considerably hampered by the 7/10ths cloud and bombing was inaccurate. There was moderate heavy flak from Naples and it was fairly accurate. Nickels were dropped. All of our aircraft returned safely from both these operations.
- 22/7/43 Tonight's target was the landing ground at Practicadi mare for which nine aircraft were detailed under:- F/O Kalberer, Rogers and Williams, Sgts Smith P.G., Hales, Rutherford, Bashford, Valentine and Whitehouse. All the aircraft took off by 2028 hours. Reports indicate that the illuminating flares were dropped well over the target and nearly all crews were able to identify it easily. Sticks were seen to straddle the landing ground and buildings were hit, but only one small fire was observed. Opposition was negligible and all our aircraft returned safely.
- 23/7/43 Today nine aircraft were detailed for an attack on the marshalling yards at Salerno. Pilots were:- F/O Jones, F/Sgts Mortimer, Sullivan and Anderson, Sgts Smith K., Adams, Seville, Holmes and Lovesy who all took off by 2042. Illuminating flares were dropped well over the target enabling all crews to identify it easily. Consequently, some good bombing ensued and all crews claim to have dropped their bombs on the target. Several large fires were observed in the marshalling yards and dense black smoke was being given off. Opposition was non-existent -no guns & no searchlights. Nickels were dropped. All crews returned safely.

- 24/7/43 Tonight's operations were scrubbed
- 25/7/43 Stand down (political?)
- 26/7/43 On this occasion eleven aircraft were detailed for operations, nine to attack the aerodrome at Capodichino under: - F/Lt Langlois, F/O's Rogers and Kalberer, Sgts Sullivan, Lee, Macdonald, Wilkes, Valentine and Hales. Sgt Valentine returned early with engine trouble after jettisoning bombs on land. All crews had difficulty in finding the target and none were able to say definitely that their bombs dropped on the aerodrome. There was little light flak but the moderate heavy flak was fairly accurate and 30/40 searchlights were operating from Naples. Two aircraft under F/O Williams and Sgt Tinsley were detailed for a special operation dropping German Leaflets over Sicily in the Catania/Adrano district and also over Messina. These operations were successfully carried out. All our 11 aircraft returned safely.
- 27/7/43 Operations cancelled
- 28/7/43 On this occasion nine aircraft were detailed to attack the landing ground at Montecornino, but only eight were able to take off under:- S/Ldr Garrad, F/O Jones, F/Sgts Mortimer, Sullivan and Anderson, Sgts Lovesy, Smith P.G. and Adams. Five aircraft located the target and observed their bombs burst on the landing ground and in and around buildings. The remaining three aircraft failed to locate the target owing to adverse weather conditions and jettisoned their bombs.. Opposition was negligible and only one light flak gun being observed. Nickels were dropped. All aircraft returned safely.
- 29/7/43 No Operations tonight
- 30/7/43 Stand down
- 31/7/43 Tonight six aircraft were detailed to attack military concentrations at Adrano in Sicily. The pilots were F/Sgts Ivory, Sullivan, Sgts Lee, Seville, Tinsley, and Wilkes who took off in waves of two between 1920 and 2040 hours. One aircraft claims to have identified and bombed the target. Four bombed in the believed vicinity of the secondary target of Randazzo and one returned with its bombs, being unable to locate either target. There was no opposition. All aircraft returned safely.

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