

June 1943

RAF Form 540

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Of 150 Squadron

Place	Date	Summary of Events
Kairouan West	1/6/43	To commence the month of June, 150 Squadron were ordered to attack the town and docks at Naples, nine aircraft being detailed under:- F/Lt Langlois, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts MacDonald, Bashford, Smith K., Rutherford, Smith P., Mortimer and Chandler. Sgt Mortimer hit a car while taking off causing damage to the bomb doors so he returned to base immediately. Sgt Chandler also returned early on account of high oil temperature and vibration in the port engine, he landed with his 4000lb bomb. Weather was good but darkness was intense. All crews report being able to identify the target and many saw their bombs dropping among port buildings and industrial plant. The defences were very active, but not after the first aircraft had bombed. Heavy flak was moderate and light flak was slight. Fifteen to twenty searchlights were operating. One night fighter was seen over the town. Nickels were dropped to fall on Naples. Our seven aircraft returned safely.
	2/6/43	This night's target was the town and docks of Pantelleria, ten aircraft being detailed, nine of which made double sorties, the tenth being unable to do so owing to a shortage of bombs. The captains were S/Ldr Vincent, F/Lt Hanlon, Sgts Lee, Alagrachi, MacDonald, Rutherford, Chandler, Tinsley, Smith K., Bashford, Mortimer and Smith P. since some of the pilots only made one trip and then handed over to a fresh pilot. Weather was good enroute and over the target but some ground haze developed later. The majority of aircraft were able to identify the harbour, but despite this, reports indicate that bombs fell outside the target area. Flak: moderate light flak, heavy flak negligible. All our aircraft landed safely at base between 0005 and 0525 hours.
	3/6/43	The Squadron was stood down tonight.
	4/6/43	On this occasion 16 aircraft were detailed for an attack on Pantelleria but owing to a flare becoming ignited before take-off one aircraft caught fire and exploded thereby causing the complete destruction of two other aircraft and damaging four more. After the fires had subsided five of our aircraft were able to take off under F/Lt Hanlon, Sgts Alagrachi, Smith K., Chandler and Alagrachi. Two aircraft made double sorties. The weather was good and crews were able to identify the target. Many bomb bursts were seen and medium fires were caused in the town. A long line of fires or lights were observed extending northwards from the Southern end of the island. Flak negligible, at times entirely absent. All aircraft returned safely.
	5/6/43	Four aircraft were detailed, one to bomb and nickel Pantelleria and three to attack the docks at Syracuse and drop leaflets on Syracuse, Catania and Messina. Group Captain Powell carried out the operation on Pantelleria and dropped his 4000lb bomb on the docks but it failed to explode. The aircraft which visited Sicily were flown by Sgts Tinsley, Rutherford and Smith P. who had no trouble in finding the target. Bombs were seen to drop in the dock area at Syracuse. Flak was slight but four searchlights were active. All our aircraft landed safely at base.
	6/6/43	On this date, seven of our aircraft made an attack on the town and docks of Pantelleria. The pilots were:- Sgts Chandler, Mortimer, Alagrachi, Smith K., Rutherford, Alagrachi and MacDonald, the aircraft taking off between 2105 and 0317 hours. Four of our aircraft made double sorties. Visibility was good over the target area and flares were used to assist in pinpointing, and the majority of the crews successfully bombed the target from heights between 3000 and 7000ft. many bursts were seen in the town including some 400lbs. Flak negligible. Eleven

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- photos were obtained showing good ground detail. All aircraft returned safely.
- 7/6/43 Stand down.
- 8/6/43 Pantelleria was again attacked by eight of our aircraft, five of which made double sorties. The captains were Wing Commander Mackenzie, F/Lt Hanlon, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Seville, Tinsley, Rutherford, Lee and Mortimer. Weather was good on the way out, but over the target there was some stratus cloud and ground haze but a proportion of the crews pinpointed the built-up area. Sgt Lee was unable to release his 4000lb bomb and brought it back to base. Sgt Bashford had difficulties in releasing his 4000lb and, after being released manually, it failed to explode. Other aircraft observed bursts in the target area, one crew claiming a vivid explosion caused by their bombs. Flak: only three light flak guns were in action. Twelve photographs were obtained showing ground detail. Average bombing height was 4000 to 7000ft. All aircraft landed safely.
- 9/6/43 Squadron stood down.
- 10/6/43 Nine of our aircraft attacked the town and docks of Pantelleria. Three aircraft made double sorties and three treble making eighteen sorties in all. The pilots were:- F/Lt Hanlon, S/Ldr Garrod, F/O Langlois, S/Ldr Holmes, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Lee, MacDonald, Alagrachi J, Alagrachi J.E., Chandler, Seville and Smith K. Weather: considerable amounts of broken cloud over target area at 1500ft but visibility was very good except for ground haze. All crews identified the target and many bursts were seen in the town and dock area. Flak was negligible. Twenty photos showing ground detail were obtained. All aircraft returned safely.
- 11/6/43 Tonight five aircraft were detailed to attack a new target i.e. the town of Lampedusa, taking off between 2140 and 2228 hours. Pilots were S/Ldr Garrod, Sgts Lee, Chandler, Bashford and Alagrachi. There was some cloud enroute but over the target visibility was very good and crews were able to identify the town by the light of the moon and all claim that their bombs dropped in the target area. Just before the raid flames were seen over the town and it is believed these were caused by British MTB's off the coast. There was no flak. That the raid was successful may be deduced from the fact that the island surrendered to our forces on the very next day. All our aircraft returned safely.
- 12/6/43 Stand down.
- 13/6/43 Five aircraft attacked the ferry at Messina, the captains being: F/Lt Langlois, Sgts Alagrachi, Ivory, Rutherford and Smith K. Weather was clear over target but a smoke screen was believed to be in operation near the ferry. 205 Group aircraft dropped flares over the target. All crews report that their bombs dropped in the target area. Moderate heavy and light flak was encountered from both sides of the Straits. Up to ten searchlights were reported from Messina town and one aircraft was coned for 2 minutes. Nickels were dropped over Sicily. Seven photos showing ground detail were obtained. All our aircraft returned safely.
- 14/6/43 On this occasion five aircraft were detailed to bomb the aerodrome at Castelvetro under Sgts Ivory, MacDonald, Bashford, Lee, and Chandler. Weather enroute and over the target was good and all crews were clearly able to identify the target in the light of the moon. Incendiaries and light bombs were dropped on the aerodrome and dispersals and fires and explosions were observed which were believed to be caused by aircraft burning on the ground. There was a moderate amount of both heavy and light flak, but all aircraft returned.

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- 15/6/43 Stand down
- 16/6/43 Tonight nine aircraft took off between 2230 and 2258 hours to attack the port and marshalling yards at Naples. The pilots were: S/Ldr Garrod, F/S Ivory, Sgts Smith K., Alagrachi Jnr, Lee, Tinsley, Alagrachi J.E., Bashford and Rutherford. Near the target there was 9/10 cloud with tops at 5000ft. Some crews were able to make a quick identification of the target through the gaps in the clouds and many bombs were seen to burst in the built up area. Flak: moderate inaccurate heavy flak with a few searchlights. Six photographs showing ground detail were obtained. Nickels were dropped. All our aircraft returned safely.
- 17/6/43 Stand down
- 18/6/43 Eleven of our aircraft were tonight ordered to attack the town of Syracuse, the pilots being: S/Ldr Garrod, F/Lt Langlois, Sgts Smith K., Seville, MacDonald, Rutherford,, Mortimer, Tinsley, Alagrachi J., Alagrachi J.E. and Chandler. The last named pilot experienced engine trouble and returned early after jettisoning the majority of his bombs in the sea. Weather was good with perfect visibility due to the full moon and all crews were able to identify the areas of the town and accurate bombing ensued. Every crew was able to say that their bombs fell in the target area. There was slight heavy and light flak four searchlights were operating. All aircraft returned safely.
- 19/6/43 Tonight's target was again the train ferry terminus at Messina, for which eleven aircraft were detailed under G/Capt Powell, Sgts Sullivan, Wilkes, Smith P.G., Tinsley, Mortimer, Bashford, MacDonald, Alagrachi, Lee and Seville. There was some cloud enroute but over the target was clear with excellent visibility. Two Crews claim to have hit the ferry terminus and the remainder report dropping their bombs on port installations and factories. There was a moderate amount of heavy flak and one aircraft was hit by a heavy shell which passed right through the fuselage without exploding. About eight searchlights were counted but were ineffective. Nickels were dropped on Sicily. Seven photos with ground detail were obtained. All our aircraft had landed safely 0220 hours.
- 20/6/43 Squadron stand down
- 21/6/43 Ten Wellingtons were on this date detailed to attack the marshalling yards at Salerno, taking off between 2150 and 2207 hours under S/Ldr Garrod, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Rutherford, Seville, Lee, Valentine, Alagrachi, Mortimer, Wilkes and Sullivan. Weather enroute was clear but there was slight haze over the target. This however did not prevent accurate bombing and the majority of crews were able to state that they had dropped their bombs in the target area and 2x4000lb were seen to explode on the marshalling yards. The last aircraft over the target reported numerous fires in the vicinity of the marshalling yards. Flak: One gun fired three rounds. Two crews reported seeing a night fighter with a light in the nose, but no engagements took place. Nickels were dropped and nine photos were obtained with ground detail. All crews had landed by 0415 hours.
- 22/6/43 Stand down
- 23/6/43 Tonight's target was the marshalling yards and sulphur factories at Catania, ten aircraft being detailed under: S/Ldr Garrod, Sgts Alagrachi J., Tinsley, Smith K., Wilkes, Valentine, Bashford, Smith P.G., Sullivan and Alagrachi J.E. Weather enroute was good and nine crews had no trouble in identifying the target in the bright moonlight and most of the bombs fell in the target area. Although it is doubtful whether the sulphur works were hit. One aircraft took off late and bombed the secondary target of Sicata. There was moderate inaccurate heavy

flak at Catania and slight light flak with about 8 searchlights. Average bombing height was 5-8 thousand feet and ten photos were obtained. All our aircraft returned safely.

- 24/6/43 Stand down
- 25/6/43 On this occasion the Squadron was allocated a new and interesting target on the east coast of Italy, namely the oil refinery at Bari, and the following pilots were selected: G/Capt Powell, S/Ldr Vincent, F/Sgt Mortimer, Sgts Smith K., Alagrachi, Lee, Seville, Rutherford, Bashford, Tinsley, Smith P.G. and Sullivan. The twelve aircraft took off between 2120 and 2142 hours. Apart from small isolated patches of stratus, the weather was cloudless enroute, but over the target there was considerable haze and extreme darkness persisted making identification most difficult. Only three crews claim to have positively identified the target and the majority bombed fires which they considered to be in the target area. Photographs prove however, that the target was not bombed and the main weight of the attack fell upon a luckless village in the vicinity. G/capt Powell being unable to identify the target decided to return to base with his bombs, but owing to a shortage of petrol, was forced to jettison over Italy. Flak was moderate heavy flak and there were two searchlights over the town of Bari, but no defences gave away the position of the target. Nickels were dropped and all aircraft returned.
- 26/6/43 Stand down
- 27/6/43 Villa San Giovanni ferry ships and marshalling yards was the target for which 16 aircraft were detailed on this date. Due to the fact that an aircraft taking off collided with another, fortunately without injury to the crews, only fourteen were able to go. Pilots were S/Ldrs Vincent and Garrod, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Rutherford, Smith P.G., Tinsley, Bashford, Wilkes, Sullivan, Seville, Sullivan L.G., Valentine, Chandler and Smith K. Weather was cloudless, both enroute and over the target, with excellent visibility. Accurately dropped flares illuminated the target, which was most successfully attacked. From crew reports, supported by clear photographic evidence, there is no doubt that the ferry terminus, a vital spot, was extensively damaged and the marshalling yards also were hit. Slight to moderate heavy flak was encountered, light flak was negligible, but the eight searchlights were accurate. All aircraft returned by 0423 hours.
- 28/6/43 On this occasion F/Lt Langlois and F/Sgt Mortimer were detailed to accompany 142 Squadron in an attack on the Messina Train Ferry Terminus. Weather was hazy with small amounts of low stratus cloud both enroute and over target. Fires were started in the target area. There was slight to moderate heavy flak which was more accurate than usual. Light flak was negligible but 8-10 searchlights coned over the town. Both aircraft returned safely.
- 29/6/43 Sixteen aircraft were detailed for an attack on Messina Ferry Terminus and marshalling yards. One aircraft was cancelled owing to the generator being U/S while another returned early with engine trouble. The pilots who operated were: S/Ldr Vincent, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Rutherford, Alagrachi J.E., Tinsley, Bashford, Lee, Chandler, Sullivan, Alagrachi J., Sullivan L.G., Smith P.G., Wilkes and Whitehouse. There was some cloud enroute and over the target. Due to haze in the target area pinpointing was difficult and results of bombing generally, were not observed. However some crews claim to have laid their sticks across the town near the marshalling yards and several small fires were seen in the target area but these could not be pinpointed. Heavy flak was moderate and inaccurate and light flak was slight. A few searchlights were operating from a position north of the town. All aircraft returned safely by 0320 hours.

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30/6/43 150 Squadron stand down

W.E.F. 1/6/43 P/O E.A. Hackshaw posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
S/Ldr G.K. Garrad posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
P/O F. Williams posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom

13/6/43 F/O A.W. Crawford posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
F/O R.G.F. Kalberer posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
F/O C.T.H. Blackie posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
F/O M Glynyk posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom

15/6/43 P/O J.J. Brown posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
P/O J.F.Lock posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
F/O W Graham posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
F/O/C.C. Maple posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom

24/6/43 F/O K.B. Rogers posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom
F/O G.H. Vincent posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom

25/6/43 F/O B.E.Mazur posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom

26/6/43 F/O J.A.L. Jones posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex United Kingdom

1/7/43 F/O C.B.L. Bodger posted to this Squadron for flying duties ex Middle East
Command

8/7/43 F/O (A/F/lt) C.H. Morgan posted to No.2 B.P.D. ex this Squadron

24/7/43 F/O W. Graham posted to No.2 B.P.D. ex this Squadron
F/O C.C. Maple posted to No.331 Wing ex this Squadron

A.A.N. Malan
Wing Commander, Commanding
150 Squadron, Royal Air Force