

May 1943

RAF Form 540

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Of 150 Squadron

Place	Date	Summary of Events
Blida, Algeria	1/5/43	Owing to weather conditions, the Squadron was stood down from operations
	2/5/43	Owing to weather conditions, the Squadron was stood down from operations
	3/5/43	Owing to weather conditions, the Squadron was stood down from operations
	4/5/43	Owing to weather conditions, the Squadron was stood down from operations
	5/5/43	The formation of 330 Wing Royal Air Force takes place today. Group Captain J.A. Powell DSO CBE commands the wing which is to be composed of 142 and 150 Squadrons. The Squadron also moves today to Fontaine Chaude near the village of Pasteur which is 300ft above sea level. The move was successfully completed.
Fontaine Chaude, Algeria	6/5/43	The Squadron has been detailed to carry out an attack on the docks at Tiapani and eleven aircraft and crews have been selected to carry out the operation. Crews:- F/Lt Vincent, F/O Hanlon, F/O Langlois, Sgt Mortimer, Sgt Seville, Sgt Rimmer, Sgt Smith, Sgt Rutherford, Sgt Lee, Sgt Tinsley, Sgt Rayment. Five aircraft were withdrawn "X" (F/Lt Vincent) heating in rear turret U/S, "V" (F/O Hanlon) voltage control overcharging, "O" (Sgt Mortimer) starter motor jammed, "C" (Sgt Rimmer) damaged bomb bay, "J" (Sgt Seville) not bombed up in time. The remaining six aircraft were airborne between 2300 and 2356 hours. There was much cloud haze, and an electrical storm on the way, and over the target area visibility was particularly bad. Intense darkness added to the difficulties of pinpointing and none of the crews could say definitely exactly where they bombed. The attack was carried out between 0150 and 0230 hours. The anti-aircraft guns were very active, both heavy and light flak being encountered, there was also some searchlight activity. "M" (Sgt Lee) landed at Biskia, "S" (Sgt Rayment) landed at Guelman on a grassy plain outside the town. The remaining four aircraft landed safely at base between 0455 and 0556.
	7/5/43	"S" (Sgt Rayment) returned from Guelma. The Squadron is stood down tonight.
	8/5/43	The target for tonight is Villacedro aerodrome with Cagliari/Elmas aerodrome as the alternative target. Twelve crews have been detailed for the operation :- S/Ldr Holmes, P/O Langlois, P/O Wykes, Sgt Mortimer, Sgt Smith, Sgt Seville, Sgt Rutherford, Sgt Tinsley, Sgt Lee, Sgt MacDonald, Sgt Rimmer, S/Ldr Vincent. All aircraft were airborne between 1840 and 0103 hours, the attack being spread out over six hours. There was no cloud enroute but some 5/10 - 6/10 was encountered over the target area, and there was some ground haze. The attack was delivered between 2115 and 0350 hours, pinpointing was difficult owing to unfavourable weather conditions and intense darkness. Bombs were dropped in the vicinity of Deccimomannu, Sudiana and Elmas, as well as on and around the primary target, Villacedro Aerodrome. Fairly accurate, moderate to intense flak was encountered over the primary target but no damage was sustained by our aircraft and all returned safely to base between 2349 and 0607 hours.
9/5/43	Palermo is to be attacked tonight and ten aircraft have been detailed for the operation. Crews are as follows:- G/Capt Powell, P/O Langlois, P/O Wykes, Sgt Rutherford, Sgt MacDonald, Sgt Mortimer, Sgt Rimmer, Sgt Smith, Sgt Lee, Sgt Seville. All the aircraft took off between 1925 and 1942 hours. "F" (Sgt Rutherford) returned early owing to loose tank cover, having jettisoned 3x500 and 2x250 lb bombs and bringing back 2x1000. Visibility was excellent and	

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pinpointing was facilitated by reason of brilliant moonlight. All the attacking aircraft claim to have successfully bombed docks and town. The attack was made between 2216 and 2223 hours. Light to heavy moderate flak was encountered but it was inaccurate. A small amount of light flak was also encountered but it was likewise ineffective. The weather at base was unfavourable, four landed between 0130 and 0242. "P" (P/O Wykes), "H" (Sgt MacDonald), "C" (Sgt Rimmer) landed at Bone. "N" (Sgt Lee), "J" (Sgt Seville) landed at Biskia.

- 10/5/43 During the day, aircraft that landed away last night returned to base. The Squadron is not required for operations tonight.
- 11/5/43 The Squadron is detailed to attack Marsala Port, twelve aircraft are being prepared for the operation. Crews:- S/Ldr Vincent, P/O Langlois, Sgt MacDonald, Sgt Rimmer, Sgt Smith, Sgt Mortimer, Sgt Bashford, Sgt Smith Jnr, Sgt Tinsley, Sgt Chandler, Sgt Lee, Sgt Seville. All the aircraft took off between 1928 and 1950 hours and the majority of the aircraft successfully bombed the Marsala dock area. One very large fire was started. Flak was negligible. All the aircraft returned safely.
- 12/5/43 The Squadron is detailed for an attack on Naples, with the following crews:- P/O Langlois, P/O Wykes, Sgt MacDonald, S/Ldr Holmes, Sgt Chandler, Sgt Rimmer, F/Lt Hanlon, Sgt Alagrachi, Sgt Rutherford, Sgt Tinsley, Sgt Mortimer. Sgt Lee failed to take off owing to leak in oleo leg, the remaining were airborne between 1942 and 1957 hours. Weather conditions enroute and over the target were perfect but a smokescreen was started in the residential area and began spreading over the target area. However a large percentage of the HE's and incendiaries were dropped in the target area and along the whole length of the docks and several fires were started in the industrial area. All our aircraft returned safely. Heavy flak was moderate and there was no light flak.
- 13/5/43 Thirteen of our aircraft are detailed for an attack on Cagliari under command of the following captains:- Sgts Bashford, Alagrachi, Tinsley, Paris, MacDonald, Smith K, Mortimer, Rutherford, Rimmer, Smith P, P/O Wykes, S/Ldr Holmes and S/Ldr Vincent. Weather was good and there was a moon, so all our aircraft were able to identify the target. A large fire was started and it is thought that this was due to fuel oil storage tanks being hit. Heavy flak was slight and light flak was negligible. Five searchlights were reported. All our aircraft returned safely.
- 14/5/43 Tonight's target is the town of Palermo for which twelve of 150 Squadron aircraft are detailed, the crews being:- F/Lt Hanlon, P/O Langlois, F/O Wykes and Sgts Smith P., Bashford, MacDonald, Alagrachi, Paris, Seville and Smith K.. One aircraft did not take off due to engine trouble and one returned immediately. Weather was good and target was easily identified in moonlight. A large fire was started in the dock area. There was a fairly large amount of heavy flak but it was not concentrated. Light flak was negligible. About 30 searchlights were in operation and one aircraft was caught for about a minute. Leaflets were dropped to fall on Palermo. All our aircraft returned safely.
- 15/5/43 On this occasion eight of our aircraft were ordered to bomb the town and docks of Tiapani. The pilots being:- F/Lt Hanlon, Sgts Tinsley, Smith K., Bashford, Chandler, Alagrachi, Rimmer and Paris. One aircraft returned with engine trouble after having jettisoned 1x4000lb bomb in the sea. There was some cloud on the way to the target, but visibility was good in the target area, except for slight ground haze and all but two crews aimed their bombs at the target. All crews report seeing a large explosion in the centre of the town which was claimed as being the gasworks. Flak both heavy and light was moderate and 1-15 searchlights were active. Two of our aircraft failed to return and are presumed

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missing, the pilots being Sgt Rimmer and Sgt Paris.

- 16/5/43 On this date twelve aircraft were detailed to drop leaflets on Rome and to bomb Rome/Lido di Roma seaplane base. The crews were:- F/Lt Hanlon, S/Ldr Vincent, F/O's Langlois and Wykes, Sgts Alagrachi, Tinsley, MacDonald, Smith P., Rutherford, Seville, Alagrachi and Group Captain Powell. The aircraft took off between 1850 and 1920 hours but "O" returned early with engine trouble. There was a small amount of cloud on the route but this cleared over the target and all crews clearly identified Rome in the brilliant moonlight before dropping their leaflets. Roma/Lido was also found successfully and good results were obtained. Our aircraft went down to 100ft to machine gun seaplanes lined up on the tarmac. Only moderate heavy flak was experienced over Rome, light flak was negligible. Lido di Roma appeared to be defended by a single machine gun. All our aircraft returned safely.
- 17/5/43 Alghero was the target on this night to be attacked by eight of 150 Squadron aircraft under the command of F/O Wykes, Sgts Bashford, Smith K., Alagrachi, Chandler, Tinsley, Alagrachi and Rutherford. The aircraft took off between 1855 and 1922 hours. The weather was fairly good enroute and all crews report having clearly identified the town. Most aircraft dropped their bombs in 2-4 sticks from low altitudes and many bomb bursts were seen in the town and port areas and a large fire was left burning in the centre of the town. Several aircraft machine gunned the town from as low as 200ft. Only two light flak positions defended the town. Nickels were dropped in the district. All our aircraft returned to base by 0030 hours.
- 18/5/43 150 Squadron was not called upon to operate this night.
- 19/5/43 Tonight's target is the aerodrome of Deccimomannu in Sardinia for which ten of our aircraft were detailed, piloted by:- S/Ldr Holmes, F/Lt Hanlon, F/O Wykes, Sgts Seville, Smith K., Chandler, Bashford, MacDonald, Alagrachi and Smith P.. The weather was clear enroute with exceptionally good visibility over the target. One aircraft had instrument trouble and returned early after jettisoning its bombs in the sea. The aerodrome was easily found and several aircraft were believed to have been set of fire. The flak encountered was negligible and all our aircraft returned safely.
- 20/5/43 Ten aircraft on this occasion were detailed to carry out intruder raids on the aerodromes of Villacedro and Deccimomannu. They were piloted by :- S/Ldr Vincent, P/O Wykes, P/O Langlois, Sgts Smith K., Alagrachi, Chandler, Seville, Alagrachi, Smith P, MacDonald. The attack was planned in four waves, the first aircraft took off at 1900 hours, the others followed at hourly intervals, last aircraft to go at 2326 hours. Weather was cloudless enroute with excellent visibility over the target areas. Many bombs were dropped on the dispersals where aircraft were clearly seen and fires were started. Some bombs were dropped on Cagliari. Flak at Deccimomannu was negligible but at Villacedro was much more intense with several batteries of heavy flak guns which held their fire until the aircraft had found the target, light flak was not apparent. Photographs were taken, one of Villacedro and seven of Deccimomannu, with ground detail. All our aircraft returned safely by 0403 hours.
- 21/5/43 Nine aircraft of 150 squadron were ordered to intrude on the following Sicilian aerodromes on this night. Castel Viliano, Sciacca, Tiapani, Milo and Borizzo. The captains were F/Lt Hanlon, F/O Langlois, SGTS Rutherford, Bashford, Alagrachi, Smith P., Chandler, Alagrachi and Williams. Weather was good and visibility excellent over all target areas enabling crews to identify ground detail. Most aircraft attacked at least three targets. At Castel Viliano explosions were seen on

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the flare path and fires on the dispersals. Fires started at Sciacca could be seen 45 miles away and bombs were also seen to fall in the target areas of Borizzo and Milo. The flak at Castel Viliano was moderate and fairly heavy and moderate light flak over other targets negligible. Sgt Williams and crew failed to return and are presumed missing. All other aircraft returned safely.

- 22/5/43 The Squadron was stood down for tonight.
- 23/5/43 Tonight eleven of our aircraft were called upon to make our first raid on the island of Pantelleria. Captains were F/Lt Hanlon, F/O Wykes, Sgts Lee, Smith P., Chandler, Seville, Rutherford, Macdonald, Smith K., Bashford and S/Ldr Holmes. The last named pilot landed early owing to sickness after having jettisoned his bombs safely. The aircraft took off between 1945 and 2025 hours. Weather was cloudless but owing to intense darkness few crews were able to definitely identify the two targets, namely the town and the aerodrome. Consequently bombing was done mainly on D.R. position and few results were observed, but one fire was reported to the South East of the town. One 4000lb bomb dropped on the aerodrome failed to explode. Flak was slight to moderate. Heavy flak erratic and inaccurate mainly North of the aerodrome. All our aircraft landed safely.
- 24/5/43 The target for this night was the docks and marshalling yards at Albia in Sardinia and the pilots briefed were:- F/Lt Hanlon, F/O Wykes, Sgts Tinsley, Alagrachi, Smith K., Rutherford, Lee and Alagrachi. The eight aircraft took off between 2350 and 0043 hours but Sgt Rutherford returned early owing to engine trouble. Weather was cloudless with good visibility both enroute and over the target. F/Lt Hanlon was one of the first to attack the target and his bombs hit an ammunition dump causing a tremendous explosion which was felt a 7000ft. The resultant fire enabled other crews to identify the target area so accurate bombing was carried out. Nickels were also dropped. Flak was negligible from 6-7 heavy flak guns. No light flak or searchlights. All aircraft landed safely.
- 25/5/43 The Squadron is inoperative tonight pending move to Kairouan West.
- 26/5/43 The Squadron move to Kairouan West was successfully carried out today.
- Kairouan West 27/5/43 The Squadron's first raid from Kairouan West was an intruder operation on the Sardinian aerodromes of Villacedro and Deccimomannu, the pilots concerned being F/Lt Hanlon, Sgts Smith K., Lee, Alagrachi and Rutherford. The five aircraft took off at intervals between 2020 and 0118 hours. The weather was cloudless over the target areas but darkness was intense and there was some haze so identification of the targets was difficult. Bombs were dropped in small sticks in the vicinity of the aerodromes but few results were observed. Slight to moderate flak at Villacedro and more accurate than previously. None at Deccimomannu. Elnas – slight to moderate from Cagliari. All our aircraft landed safely between 0045 and 0531 hours.
- 28/5/43 On this occasion eight of 150 Squadron aircraft took off to intrude over the Sicilian aerodromes of Castel Viliano, Borizzo and Tropani Vielo under the captaincy of S/Ldr Holmes, F/Lt Langlois, F/O Wykes, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Alagrachi, MacDonald, Smith K. and Rutherford. Due to ground haze and intense darkness pinpointing was difficult but bombs were dropped in the vicinity of the aerodromes without visible effect. Flak was negligible except at Castel Viliano where heavy flak was moderate and accurate. Several enemy aircraft waiting to land were seen firing two red stars. All our aircraft returned safely between 0055 and 0510 hours.

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- 29/5/43 On this occasion eight of our aircraft set out to attack the town and docks of Pantelleria, the pilots being as follows:- F/Lt Langlois, F/Sgt Ivory, Sgts Chandler, Lee, Smith, Tinsley, MacDonald and Alagrachi. The aircraft took off between 2100 and 0330 hours. Weather was fine with no cloud over the target but owing to ground haze and intense darkness, identification of ground detail was difficult. Four of the aircraft made double sorties. Most aircraft identified the coastline and harbour and mixed loads of H.E. were dropped including 2x4000lb, but results of bombing generally were not observed. Conditions however improved and later arrivals were able to see their bombs burst in the docks and town area. Both heavy flak and light flak was slight and ineffective. All our aircraft returned safely.
- 30/5/43 The Squadron is stood down tonight.
- 31/5/43 On this occasion nine of our aircraft again attacked the town and docks of Pantelleria, three of them making double sorties. The pilots were:- S/Ldr Vincent, F/Lt Langlois, F/O Wykes, Sgts Bashford, Chandler, MacDonald, Lee, Rutherford, Mortimer. The aircraft took off between 2055 and 0335 hours and all returned safely by 0540 hours. Weather was clear with good visibility enroute and over target. Bombs were seen to burst on the town and in the docks and several small fires and one large one were seen in the dock area. Nine photographs with ground detail were obtained. Flak was negligible.
- 6/5/43 P/O J.T. Davison posted to 150 Squadron for flying duties J21707
- 12/5/43 F/O (A/F/L) J.G. Roberts posted from 150 Squadron to United Kingdom. 129108
- 14/5/43 P/O J.B. Wilkinson posted to United Kingdom 143483
F/O R.M. Malcolm posted to United Kingdom J8830
- 16/5/43 P/O C.C. Darling posted to 150 Squadron for flying duties. J21819
- 18/5/43 F/O H.E. Dowle posted to 150 Squadron for flying Duties. 126995

A.A.N. Malan
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