

R.A.F. Form 540

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.

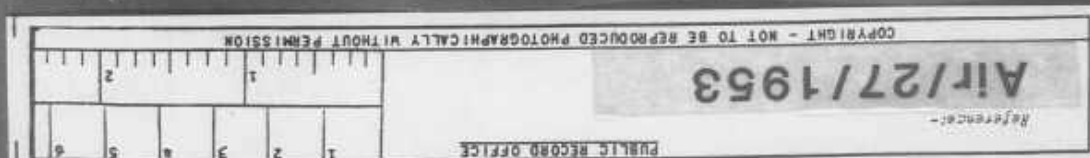
OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. ONE

of (Unit or Formation) No. 501 Squadron

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
Hawkinge.	4/2/44		The squadron returned to HAWKINGE from detachment to SUTHERLAND-ON-SEA. The air party arrived at 10.30 and shortly afterwards resumed operational flying. The weather reconns were flown over the Abbeville area, and three sections went on A/S/R Searches off Dungeness without result.		
Hawkinge.	5/2/44		There were two early weather reconns covering the area Gravelines-Dieppe, and one section went as escort to shipping in the Thames estuary. The Squadron went as fighter cover to Mosquitoes attacking a Noball target near Yvetot. There was no incident. Four sections were engaged on A/S/R search in the area Le Touquet to 25m. South of Hastings without result.		
Hawkinge.	6/2/44		Four weather reconns were flown during the morning, and at midday the Squadron escorted 24 Mitchells to Noball target near Abbeville. No bombing was seen as 10/10 cloud at 4000' covered the target. Three aircraft patrolled off Dungeness without incident.		
Hawkinge.	7/2/44		No operational flying due to low cloud.		
Hawkinge.	8/2/44		Two early weather reconns were flown and then the Squadron went as close escort to Mitchells in 3rd attack of Ramrod 527 attacking Noball target 4/A/74. The operation went off according to plan, no bombing was seen. One section took a lame Mitchell to West Malling. There were many patrols covering the withdrawal of Fortresses from France.		
Hawkinge.	9/2/44		Three weather reconns were flown, and three sections were engaged in A/S/R searching in company with the Walrus off Dungeness and Beachy.		
Hawkinge.	10/2/44		Two weather reconns were flown at first light, then the Squadron went as close escort to Boston's 2nd attack Ramrod 540 to Noball target near St. Pol. The operation went according to plan except that the bombers did not bomb. The Squadron was led by Capt. Fuchs (F.F.), S/Ldr Barnett being grounded for medical reasons.		
Hawkinge.	11/2/44		The C.O., S/Ldr Barnett, was ordered to Sick Quarters and Capt. Fuchs assumed command. There were three weather reconns sent out, and an A/S/R search off Deal without result. 3 Sections went on patrol over Somme estuary and Abbeville to cover withdrawal of some Fortresses. No contact was made with the Fortresses and no incidents were reported.		
Hawkinge.	12/2/44		Two early weather reconns were flown and one section had to land at Manston. Low cloud made flying difficult and only one A/S/R search in the afternoon off Dieppe without result.		
Hawkinge.	13/2/44		Two weather reconns and a shipping reconn were flown in the morning. 3 E/R boats were seen in Ostend and 2 E/R boats in Calais. The Squadron made a fighter sweep over the area Le Touquet - St. Pol - Gravelines without incident. 5 Sections escorted and covered the Walruses picking up the crews of Marauders 50m. S. of Dungeness.		00



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Page No. _____

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Hawkinge	14/2/44		The day's activity consisted of three weather reccos. and two A/S/R searches All without incident.	
Hawkinge.	15/2/44		There were two early reccos, then the Squadron went as close escort to Mitchell's attacking targets in the Cherbourg peninsula. The operation went according to plan, bombing results were fair. Heavy accurate flak around bombers. In the afternoon the Squadron went as close escort to Mitchell's attacking targets S. of Le Treport. Bombing results were good, there were no incidents. G/Opt. Maxwell visited the new dispersal.	
Hawkinge.	16/2/44		Two weather reccos were flown.	
Hawkinge.	17/2/44		No operational flying. A visit was paid to Swingate R.D.F. Station.	
Hawkinge.	18/2/44		Two early weather reccos were flown, one section landed at Friston on the return on account of poor visibility in the snow. They had attacked a truck containing German soldiers on a lorry on a road South of Poix. They sustained no damage.	
Hawkinge.	19/2/44		There was no operational flying on account of low cloud, snowstorms and bad visibility. The squadron in the morning saw three quad-craft films and a security film.	
Hawkinge.	20/2/44		Four weather reccos. were flown during the morning. There were two spotting patrols off Deal and Dungeness, both without result. A section sent to look for an enemy minefield S.W. of Barak saw groups of 8, 4, & 3 mines and obtained fixes. A shipping recco to Dunkirk found a little shipping in Dunkirk and R/R boats in Calais & No.1, 7/Lt Seaton, fired on a barge in outer harbour, Boulogne.	
Hawkinge.	21/2/44		Two weather reccos went out soon after first light. A section was sent to look for the minefield S.W. of Barak and saw groups of mines. While the No.1 stayed at sea-level his No.2 climbed and gave fixes. The squadron went as close escort to Marauders bombing Beaumont-le-Roge airfield. R/V was made above 10/10 cloud and the bombers went as far as a point estimated over Le Havre; cloud was 10/10 over whole area.	
Hawkinge.	22/2/44		There were two early weather reccos.. The squadron with four s/c of 349 Sqn. went as close escort to 72 Marauders attacking Gilze-Rijen airfield in Holland. The operation went according to plan except that 20m. S.W. of Walcheren, P/O S.H. Chessman's s/c was seen to go out of control just as he dropped his long range tanks; He was seen to bale out and he fell into a heavy sea. An international broadcast was sent out. On the target bombing results were excellent the Marauders getting good hits on hangars and buildings. One large fire was seen burning. After bombing part of the Marauder force split into small dispersed boxes, making duty of escort difficult.	
Hawkinge.	23/2/44		There were the usual weather reccos covering the French coast & 80-90 miles inland from Gravelines to Dieppe. On the weather recco the section came down to shoot up a lorry-load of Germans near Hesdin. A shipping recco sent to	

SECRET.

References to Appendices

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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. _____

of (Unit or Formation) No. 501 Squadron

No. of pages used for day _____

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Hawkinge.	23/8/44	(cont.)	Boulogne saw only hoppers there. One section continued to search for mines in the area S.W. of Berck. Sections went on shipping reconns to Ostend and Dieppe. The Ostend section attacked and damaged a 1000/1500t. coaster just off Zebrugga Mole. It stopped and much grey smoke was seen to come from amidships. The Dieppe section attacked soldiers working on fortifications on Pt. de St. Quentin, and probably killed two.		
Hawkinge.	24/8/44		The C.O. (S/Ldr. M.G. Barnett.) went on leave. F/Lt. D.H. Seaton assumes command in his absence. The day's activity consisted of weather and shipping reconns, which revealed only a small coaster in Ostend. Two sections were scrambled for hostile aircraft reported over Gris-Nez. There was no result. One section went as escort to the Walrus E. of Dover.		
Hawkinge.	25/8/44		There were three early weather reconns, including one to Flushing. A section was called on to escort the Walrus on an A/S/R search. The aircraft developed engine failure & Capt. P.G. Delange baled out at a low altitude. H.M.N.L. 376 arrived at the spot ten minutes after he had gone into the water but were unable to recover him. The rest of the day's operations consisted of patrol searches and further escort for the Walrus, which had to taxi back to the English coast.		
Hawkinge.	26/8/44		The day's activity consisted of four searches, the first two for a dinghy, the third for an aircraft believed down in the sea S. of Beachy, and the fourth for enemy mines.		
Hawkinge.	27/8/44		No operational flying.		
Hawkinge.	28/8/44		Apart from 2 sections doing patrol over Rye and Hastings and a weather recon to Le Touquet, most of the day's activity lay in discovering, watching and photographing a 4000-5000ton cargo ship in the outer harbour Boulogne. After the ship had been attacked by Bomphoons a section took off and photographed the ship at 1000' taking two exposures on the F.24 camera. The C.O. (S/Ldr. M.G. Barnett.) returned from leave and resumed command.		
Hawkinge.	29/8/44		The squadron's efforts during the day were in getting weather reports and in finding out the whereabouts of the 4000-5000ton ship located in Boulogne. The morning reconns were prevented from seeing into the harbour by snowstorms, but in the afternoon the ship was seen moored inside the avant port on the East quay.		
Hawkinge.	30/8/44		During the month the Squadron flew 341 sorties; the following being an analysis of them: Sweeps 9. Shipping reconns 17. Weather reconns 46. A/S/R searches 23. Defensive patrols 16 and mine searches 4. The changes in personnel were: F/Lt Raymond posted to the squadron and P/O Cheeseman and Capt. P.G. Delange missing from operations. F/Sgt G.D. Wild was posted to 5 F.D.C. Besides operational flying sections went to Biggin Hill to practise dusk landings and cine-gun exercises were carried out		

M.G. Barnett
Squadron Leader, Commanding,
No. 501 Squadron, HAWKINGE.

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