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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation) 56 Squadron, R.A.F.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
B.51. Merville.	OCT.1.	1944	Two shows were arranged for the day, both of them being against DUNKIRK. The first at 15.00 hrs. was against a gun position just S.W. of the old town, the target was heavily camouflaged, but a number of hits were observed, after the bombing attack the area was strafed, the flak was practically negligible. The next show was at last light, heavy cloud overhung the target area and a large amount of flak was put up, most of it being tracer. The target was a stores site, due south of the town. Only Red section bombed, the remainder were unable to locate the target. During the bombing dive P/O C.D. Learning, Red 3, was hit fair and square in the radiator, and baled out a minute or so later and landed safely just behind our own lines. The aircraft landed in the middle of a farm yard. P/O Learning was picked up by the C.O. in his car about 6 hours later.		
	OCT.2.		P/Lt. A.W. Bower led the squadron to ANWERP, where just north of the town a gun site was effectively bombed and strafed by ten aircraft, the remaining two did not take off. Later on during the afternoon S/L. E.G.S. Matthew D.F.C., led the squadron on an armed recon. in central Holland, 1000 and barges were successfully attacked. P/O V.J. McFarlane D.F.M., carried out an air test, thus ending a fairly quiet day.		
	OCT.3.		The weather was very bad, the only flying was a weather recon. by P/O V.J. McFarlane, D.F.M. accompanied by P/O J. Linzel (Dutch), the weather was even too bad for this to be concluded, and after landing at B.37 they returned to base.		
	OCT.4.		The weather was dull for the second day running, P/O A. Harman carried out an air test which was the total effort for the day.		
	OCT.5.		At lunch time an armed recon. was carried out in the UTERDRECHT area, the sections split up near the target area, and not a lot of enemy ground transport was seen. The sections encountered bad weather en route for home, and all came in on the "beach". S/L. E.G.S. Matthew D.F.C. flew to Biggin Hill and then to Tangmere.		
	OCT.6.		Two shows were laid on, the first, during the morning was against stores at Dunkirk using bombs. Light flak was encountered and bombing results were good. The second show was against enemy positions at BALSBOIS with bombs and guns. Very strong flak was thrown up and 5 aircraft failed to return to base. Sgt McFee, J. force-landed at an airstrip at COURTRAI, the damage being elevator controls shot away. P/O R.R. Clarke (RAAF) crash-landed, the damage being practically all over - both wings damaged, engine damaged and goodness knows what. Sgt McFee was unhurt but P/O Clarke had a bad state of mind and a bruised arm. W/O Roney, S.C. (RNZAF) in W for William is unfortunately still missing, nothing has been heard of or from him. In the absence of S/L. E.G.S. Matthew, P/O V.J. McFarlane D.F.M. (RAAF) led the squadron. S/L. Matthew returned from Tangmere via Alkmaar.		
	OCT.7.		The only operation was a wing show, our part was to bomb some houses near BURENHOOT, which the enemy was using as a mustering point for his counter attack against the Polish troops there. The other three squadrons swept the area with cannon and machine gun fire, and our boys went in with bombs, as the opposition was light we went in to straf as well. The army co-operated by laying red smoke on the target area, which included some dense wooded areas not shown on our 1:100000 maps.		74

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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation) 55 Squadron, R.A.F.

No. of pages used for day.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
B.51. Merville.	OCT.1.	1944	Two shows were arranged for the day, both of them being against DUNKIRK. The first at 15.00 hrs. was against a gun position just S.W. of the old town, the target was heavily camouflaged, but a number of hits were observed, after the bombing attack the area was strafed, the flak was practically negligible. The next show was at last light, heavy cloud overhung the target area and a large amount of flak was put up, most of it being tracer. The target was a stores site, due south of the town. Only Red section bombed, the remainder were unable to locate the target. During the bombing dive P/O C.D. Leeming, Red 8, was hit fair and square in the radiator, and baled out a minute or so later and landed safely just behind our own lines. The aircraft landed in the middle of a farm yard. P/O Leeming was picked up by the G.O. in his car about 5 hours later.		
	OCT.2.		P/O A.W. Bower led the squadrons AIRFIELD, where just North of the town a gun site was effectively bombed and strafed by ten aircraft, the remaining two did not take off. Later on during the afternoon S/L. I.G.S. Matthew D.F.C., led the squadron on an armed recon. in central Holland, H.Q. and barges were successfully attacked. P/O V.J. McFarlane D.F.M., carried out an air test, thus ending a fairly quiet day.		
	OCT.3.		The weather was very bad, the only flying was a weather recon. by P/O V.J. McFarlane, D.F.M. accompanied by P/O W. Lindel (Dutch), the weather was even too bad for this to be concluded, and after landing at 0.07 they returned to base.		
	OCT.4.		The weather was dull for the second day running, P/O A. Harnan carried out an air test which was the total effort for the day.		
	OCT.5.		At lunch time an armed recon. was carried out in the BARBON area, the sections split up near the target area, and not a lot of enemy ground transport was seen. The sections encountered bad weather en route for home, and all came in on the "beach". S/L. I.G.S. Matthew D.F.C. flew to Biggin Hill and then to Tangmere.		
	OCT.6.		Two shows were laid on, the first, during the morning was against stores at Dunkirk using bombs. Light flak was encountered and bombing results were good. The second show was against enemy positions at BLESKENS with bombs and guns. Very strong flak was thrown up and 3 aircraft failed to return to base. Sgt McKee, J. force-landed at an airstrip at COITRAI, the damage being elevator controls shot away. P/O R.R. Clarke (RAAF) crash landed, the damage being practically all over - both wings damaged, engine damaged and goodness knows what. Sgt McKee was unhurt but P/O Clarke had a bad bruise on his head and a bruised arm. W/O Roney, G.C., (RMZAF) in W for William is unfortunately still missing, nothing has been heard of on the 6th. In the absence of S/L. I.G.S. Matthew, P/O V.J. McFarlane D.F.M. (RAAF) led the squadron. S/L. Matthew returned from Tangmere via Banuxton.		
	OCT.7.		The only operation was a wide show, our part was to bomb some houses near PURTHOUT, which the enemy was using as a mustering point for his counter attack against the Polish troops there. The other three squadrons swept the area with cannon and machine gun fire, and our boys went in with bombs, as the opposition was light we went in to strafe as well. The army co-operated by laying red smoke on the target area, which included some dense wooded areas not shown on our 1:100000 maps.		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
	7 Oct.		Eleven direct hits were scored and subsequently a congratulatory message was received from the Army thanking the squadron for its co-operation. Unfortunately our squadron arrived over base with very little fuel and the circuit was very crowded, which meant that we had to land on a runway at LILLE VANDERVILLE, about 20 miles away. There being no servicing facilities there, a servicing party was sent from base but it did not arrive until dark. The pilots returned to base by M.T.		
	8 Oct.		Early this morning the squadron fetched the aircraft from Lille Vanderville, weather was not too good. During the afternoon two air tests were carried out. No operations came through during the day, squadron was on 60 minutes except for a short period when this was reduced to 30 minutes, the wing was released early at 17.00 hours.		
	9 Oct.		The weather was very poor, a show laid on in the afternoon in support of the Canadian Army at Breskens was cancelled for some unknown reason.		
	10 Oct.		To-days flying consisted of two air tests by F/L. W.J. Cleverly and Lt. E.D. Thompson, SAAF		
	11 Oct.		The only operation carried out was against some field guns in the Bergen Op Zoom area, bombing results were very good and the squadron also strafed the target. S/Ldr I.G.S. Matthew D.F.C led the squadron, there was slight flak in the area, and Lt. C.D. Silva SAAF see landed at Lille Vanderville owing to shortage of fuel, returning later in the day. Three air tests were also flown this day.		
	12 Oct.		The twelfth was a busy day, three shows were carried out and the Commanding Officer S/Ldr I.G.S. Matthew D.F.C. led on all three occasions. The first operation was against a heavy gun site in the Breskens area, hits were observed in the target area which was a number of gun pits interconnected with trenches and dug-outs, really a target for heavier bombers, the flak was intense but no one was hit. The C.O. had to return owing to u/s R.T., and F/Lt. V.J. McFarlane DFM took over the lead. The second show was against more heavy guns in the Bergen Op Zoom area, hits were observed and the area was heavily strafed. The last was again directed against heavy guns, this time in the CAMPDOUT, north of Antwerp, the Army was to have laid red smoke on the target and obeying the instruction 'No smoke no bombs', we brought back our eggs, there was not enough fuel or time to attack alternative target ZUID BURELANDY, near WALCHEREN. F/O R.J. Hetherington RCAF returned from BRUSSELS and W/O Leigh, B.G. from ARONS, where each had been directed by control owing to very heavy weather near base, when returning from the early morning show. One air test was carried out by F/O A. Harman.		
	13th Oct.		Two shows were carried out during the day, the first led by the Wing Commander Flying, W/Cdr R.H. Harries D.S.O., D.F.C. against a heavy A.A. battery near Breskens, S/Ldr I.G.S. Matthew D.F.C. flew as the Yellow section leader. The second operation was to SCHOONDYKE near Breskens, against buildings used as strong points. F/Lt. V.J. McFarlane D.F.M. led the squadron which went off in sections of three at 15 minute intervals, both shows gave excellent results. F/Lt. A.W. Bomar flew to Ixanne and back and one air test was carried out.		
	14 Oct.		The only show to-day was bombing and strafing an enemy gun site near Bergen Op Zoom, the commanding officer led the squadron, and results were fair although the target was difficult to locate. Two air tests were also flown during the day.		

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R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I., para. 2340 and War Manual Pt. II., chapter XX., and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

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to locate. Two air tests were also flown during the day.

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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.

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	15.Oct		The squadron operated in sections of two against the Breskens area where houses used as strong points were attacked with 15 second delay bombs and cannon and machine gun fire, the aircraft went off at 15 minute intervals, results were very good but unfortunately the weather clamped right down and 10 aircraft landed at COURTRAI, the last section F/L. G.L. Starkey (RCAF) and S/O J. Lanzel (Dutch) did not take off.		
	16.Oct.		The ten aircraft from Courtrai returned at lunch time. In the afternoon two sections of four aircraft were airborne, taking off 15 minutes apart to patrol the Breskens area for gun flashes, with alternative targets to bomb and strafe in case no flashes were seen. Sgt McNea, J. was hit whilst in the area but he managed to force land near BRUGES.		
	17.Oct		The squadron was airborne in three separate sections during the morning, sections taking off at 15 minute intervals, the duty was to patrol, bomb and strafe the Breskens area again some M.T. was discovered and destroyed. Before lunch-time three sections were again airborne - at 15 minute intervals as before- over the same area. F/L. V. J. McFarlane, DFM, (RAAF) found a German H.Q. and dump (supposedly) which when attacked blew up with some considerable violence. During the afternoon two more sections were airborne over the Breskens area, one of these sections had to return early due to bad weather which cancelled any further flying. There were three air tests flown during the day.		
	18.Oct		Three sections were airborne over the Breskens area early after lunch. Bad weather had stopped flying in the morning and closing in caused the last section off (yellow) to land at Antwerp before proceeding to base. S/L. I. G. S. Matthew flew twice as No. 2 to W/Cdr R.H. Harries, I.R.C. D.S.O. who went bombing Dunkirk. Two air tests were flown to-day.		
	19.Oct.		Three sections were airborne over the Breskens area early in the morning to search for gun flashes, then bomb and strafe. Little activity now to be seen, some M.T. was beaten up. Just after breakfast a further three sections were put up over the area on the same duty. In the evening a further patrol by three sections showed better results, Red section found, bombed and strafed a gun position and an ammo. dump. Yellow section also found a gun position which was attacked. More flak was seen than has been seen for days in this area. F/L. W.J. Cleverly flew to Igagne to-day.		
	20.Oct.		Flying was limited by bad weather to one air test. Sgt Farborough left on posting to 84 G.S.U. via 1st P.T.O.		
	21.Oct.		During the afternoon the squadron was airborne with bombs to attack a 'defended position' just south of BISSCHIN near Bergen op Zoom, six bombs fell in the target area, four were near misses and two were brought back. Cloud was low over the target, there was a fair amount of flak, F/L. E.A. Smith (RCAF) was hit in the wing and crashed on landing. Two airtests today.		
	22.Oct.		Bad weather prevented any flying.		
	23.Oct.		Bad weather prevented any flying.		
	24.Oct.		Bad weather again interfered with flying, nevertheless two airtests were flown.		
	25.Oct.				
	26.Oct.		No flying again the weather being bad on each day.		
	27.Oct				

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