

R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I. para. 2949 and War Manual, Pt. II, chapter XX, and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 3a

of (Unit or Formation) 183 SQUADRON

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	References to Appendices
B77	1.	3.45.	In the morning the weather was v/s, but by the afternoon it had cleared sufficiently for a Section to attack an 88mm Gun position in farm buildings at B973377, east of WESSE. Rocket and cannon strikes were observed. Later, a Section led by S/Ldr. J.R. GILLEN DFC attacked another Gun position at A.057409 (N.W. of XANTEN). Rocket and cannon strikes.		
	2.	3.45.	Despite bad weather, two aircraft accompanying two of 198 Squadron attacked four barges on the RHINE between XANTEN and REES. The next show was abortive due to weather, but later in the afternoon there was a Wing effort on a half-built pontoon bridge at XANTEN, where the Huns were apparently trying to evade the trap that is closing them in, the Scottish and Canadians from the North, and the Americans from the South. The pontoons were 'pranged' despite bad weather.		
	3.	3.45.	Again the weather was bad in the morning, but cleared in the afternoon. Under F.O.F. control a 'Winkle' was carried out, and mortar positions were well 'pranged'; also a strong-point, (buildings) was attacked and left in flames.		
	4.	3.45.	Weather duff; no flying.		
	5.	3.45.	Weather still duff for Ops, but good enough for several aircraft to be ferried from 146 Wing, where 257 Squadron is disbanding. It has been decided that 183 again return to their original weapon, the bomb, but this time to two 4,000 pounders - 1. For that reason, four bladers are replacing the older kites. W/O. NEWSOME and F/Sgt. BARBER were posted in from G.S.U.		
	6.	3.45.	Still the weather is too bad for flying. W/O. GILLIGAN was posted in from G.S.U. Unfortunately, Capt. 'TCM' MEEK (G.A.A.F) was sent to hospital. He has been suffering from stomach trouble for some time, but we hope to see him back soon.		
	7.	3.45.	No flying again today.		
	8.	3.45.	In order to keep the aircraft (and pilots) in good condition, there was a little practice flying in the afternoon, but the weather was unfit for Ops.		
	9.	3.45.	At last the weather improved. In order to give the boys some practice in the gentle art of 'dive-bombing', interdiction targets were supplied on the railway from AMERSFOORT to ZWOLLE. Seven shows were carried out, and the bridge over a river just N.E. of ZWOLLE was destroyed.		
	10.	3.45.	Again the weather was v/s for Ops, although it was good enough for practice flying in the afternoon. P/O. VIC WITHEY after spending a few days at the F.E. P. left us to go for a mid-tour rest. There was the usual send-off last night.		
	11.	3.45.	Weather still the same. The Wing was released for practice flying in the afternoon. Some of the boys received their first instructions on tent erection when the Dispersals were changed.		

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
B.77.	12.3.45.		Practice flying was carried out in the morning while the Wing was released. An important target came up in the afternoon, but unfortunately the weather did not clear sufficiently.		
	13.3.45.		The whole Squadron waited all day to bomb the special target, but the weather again prevented it from being destroyed. However, in the afternoon the C.O. led a Section of 3 aircraft to bomb from low level Headquarters Buildings N.E. of MUEBGEN (E.8067). F/L.J.B. PURKIS DFC placed two lovely 1000 lbs bombs in the buildings, and which, from photographs taken later, did a great deal of harm.		
	14.3.45.		Today, by way of a change, thick mist took the place of low cloud. For the first time on the Squadron, a photograph of damage inflicted was taken from our own P.R. aircraft. It showed yesterday's target scattered over a number of fields. F/O. P.W. D'ALBENAS who was lost over HOLLAND on the 24th January 1945 returned to Base. Everyone was pleased to see him again, and gave the usual celebration. Two Interdiction shows were carried out, and the ZWOLLE-DEVENTER line was cut at Z.9226.		
	15.3.45.		The weather was still very bad. An Interdiction show was carried out without results being observed. The rest of the Squadron airmen personnel, with the exception of four, were posted to the Serviving Echelon; some of them after two and a half years unstinted service in the Squadron.		
	16.3.45.		No flying at all due to the weather. A few aircraft were swung for a compass check.		
	17.3.45.		The whole Squadron stood by all day again, but still the weather was not good enough for Ops. Preparations for the next move were made, when the pilots began hacking out tent pegs. F/O. D'ALBENAS left us for ENGLAND. He is not allowed to fly on Ops, and hopes to return to CANADA.		
	18.3.45.		The whole Squadron stood by until 5 pm before the weather cleared up enough to start off. A General's Headquarters was very successfully pranged by low-level bombing, and everybody felt quite pleased as we had waited four days for the weather to become ideal for such an important target.		
	19.3.45.		The weather was perfect, and the Squadron had quite a busy day. The C.O. led a Section in on the Castle SCHULLENBURG, at low level, while W/O. SUTTON led the rest of the Squadron in on the Dive-bombing. A Photo Recce by F/L. C.N. WALLEY DFC showed that the Castle had been well and truly destroyed. F/L. L. RICHARDSON DFC led a further Section of four in a low-level attack on a Battalion Headquarters Near ALKERSK where many direct hits were claimed. Although 164 Squadron had left the buildings burning we headed for home with a 200 ft column of smoke rising from the target. F/L. C.N. WALLEY DFC once more took photos as proof of our claim of One Headquarters destroyed. Everybody spent the evening packing kit for our move in the very near future.		
	20.3.45.		The weather was perfect once again, and to help along our friend the General once again, we attacked his Staff Offices at HILVERSUM. S/Ldr. J.R. CULLEN DFC led the dive to the target which was destroyed. A House north of the target building unfortunately got in the way and was left smoking. F/L. C.N. WALLEY DFC took some more photos of quite a good effort by all concerned. Tonight, 'pack-up' is the order, for we are moving to B.94. NIMESSEN tomorrow morning. Our billets have been very comfortable and the Airfield good here at GILZE, and so I think it is with a bit of regrets that we leave it for our forward base.		

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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.

of (Unit or Formation) NO. 18 SQUADRON, R.A.F.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
B.91.	21.3.45.		<p>Early morning found the Wing bustling about in preparation for moving off to B.91. The Squadron was the second to become airborne after breakfast, and all made successful landings on our new strip. Although not so wide as the runways at GILZE it is very long, and of the American type. This tracking pulls the aircraft up very quickly. Our aircraft are quite well dispersed and tents have been pitched for dispersal, and a special collapsible parachute room erected. Operations and our tents are next to each other, and after a little clearing up, the site is quite comfortable although there is a lack of the luscious green grass of the Normandy Orchards. The Aerodrome Construction Unit have done an excellent job in a short time, and cleared sites for 'messing', etc. Dust, and old friend of those who were in Normandy, has now returned in full force, and so all the aircraft are once again fitted with dust filters. There has been very little 'binding' and taking it all round, I think we are going to be reasonably comfortable. W/O. BUTTON DFC led the Squadron on a dive-bombing attack on an Ammo. and Petrol Dump and Paratroop Billets disguised as a village South of WEEZE. The target was left behind with many bright red fires burning. W/O. J.A. CHRISTIE took some very good photos of these fires when the Squadron had returned and reported that many direct hits were obtained.</p>	
	22.3.45.		<p>Today the Squadron was released for practice bombing on the new range at HERTOGENBOSCH. Quite a number of sorties were carried out. The rest of the day was spent in cleaning up our camp sites and digging trenches etc. In the past week the Squadron has received 8 new pilots - some of whom have had operational experience in ITALY. They are all now operational, and it won't be long before they are thoroughly at home in the midst of our present happy throng.</p>	
	23.3.45.		<p>It was a perfect day once again, and the C.O. led a Section of four on to the Church at RANDWILJK. The target was thoroughly demolished. At noon the C.O. took off with the Squadron once again and attacked a petrol Store N.E. of ZWOLLE. All the bombs were direct hits and the factory left on fire. Towards evening F/Lt. RICHARDSON DFM led the Squadron in an attack on a Factory which is being used as a V.2 storage site, West of ROTTERDAM. Despite intense light flak, all the bombs fell on the target which was blown up to 2,000 ft following the explosion of the leader's bombs. We were sorry for 609 Squadron which had come out behind us, only to find no target left to 'bang'. P/O. E.M. DENNEY led a Section of 2 on a photo recon of the target area, but had to return due to a thick low mist.</p>	
	24.3.45.		<p>For such an important day the weather was perfect. All Squadrons were up early, and briefed for their part in 'Operation Varsity'. It was the duty of the Wing to act as anti-flak for the air-borne landings, and according to the 'strawberry' received from the A.O.C at the end of the day, this was carried out with a fair measure of success. S/Lt. CULLEN led three missions out to the Battle Area, and there they split up. Each Section patrolled independently, and attacked any flak position that they were able to pinpoint. The aircraft was crammed with fighter aircraft, and I am sure all were impressed when the long line of Dakotas commenced to cross the RHINE and drop their precious cargo. Ninety-nine sorties were flown in four hours, which is something of a record, and despite the intense flak, no casualties were incurred. There weren't many targets through for us in the afternoon, but S/Lt. CULLEN took 12 aircraft to bomb a Radar Station at HALLE. Due to the thick smoke from the Battle Area visibility was nil, and bombs had to be jettisoned without the target being attacked.</p>	

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Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
B.91.	25.3.45.		S/L. GULLEN DFC, set outwards with ten aircraft to bomb the Radar Station at HALLÉ. The target was found to have been already damaged by 196 Squadron, however we bombed and cannon-strafted, but claimed no direct hits. F/L. FURKIE DFC went up to the SUDBURY ESE with a Section of four aircraft and bombed Burgin in HULLINGHAM HARBOUR. No claims were made, and intense light flak experienced. In the evening the Pilots had their first 'liberty run' into NIMMERS. All thoroughly enjoyed a film at the Anna Garrison Theatre.	
	26.3.45.		Early morning found three Sections taking off at ten minute intervals on 'Interdiction'. The first Section led by S/L. GULLEN successfully cut the line near CHORAN and damaged a troop carrier. The second Section led by F/L. FURKIE DFC hit the Rail/Canal bridge S.W. of DEEDEN, and F/O. BRIDGE with the third Section claimed no hits. In the afternoon S/L. GULLEN DFC led twelve aircraft to the HOPSTEN and ACHNER Aerodromes. Visibility was very poor, and cloud base varied between 5,000' and 8,000', but the Squadron forced on, and successfully also bombed the Aerodromes without casualties, despite the intense flak of all descriptions. Weather was deteriorating fast, but W/O. E.W. BODLEY led a Section of four on Interdiction, and cut the line at a level crossing South-east of HENSEN, a further cut 200 yards East was made. Ten plus Met was also attached, moving S.W. on the HENSEN Road, but no claims were made. F/O. E.H. DENNEY led another Section out later, but the weather became too bad, and so before returning to Base, he bombed the line near MUEBBERG, and cut it in two places.	
	27.3.45.		Thunderstorms in the morning prevented Operational flying. About six o'clock in the evening, despite a thick haze, F/O. R.F. BOGOT went off with a Section of four on 'Interdiction'. The Rail Line was cut in three places S.E. of SWOLLE. Our first film at B.91 was filmed in the Officer's Mess Mess, and was quite a success.	
	28.3.45.		A misty rain and low cloud prevented all operations except three 'air tests' in the afternoon. The Squadron spent most of the day cleaning aircraft which had become quite dirty after our recent busy period. A pilot's 'liberty run' into NIMMERS was carried out, and all enjoyed themselves at the cinema. We are all very pleased to note the rapid progress of the landings East of the RHINE, as we feel that we helped in some small measure towards the initial successes of the undertaking.	
	29.3.45.		The weather was again unfit for flying, and when the Squadron was released the boys took the opportunity to tour part of GERMANY. The following pilots arrived from HQ GSU between the 17th and 22nd. F/S. D.L. LANCASTER, W/O. R.P. IRIBROND, (RAAF) F/O. S.J. DONNELLY (RAAF) W/O. A.F. STORER (RAAF) W/O. S.L. FERRIS (RAAF) F/O. M.J. BALLEW, SGT. J. FORD and W/O. S.R. LANE. (RAAF).	
	30.3.45.		In the afternoon the weather cleared sufficiently, and two shows were carried out. The first on an ammunition dump, and the second, a big success, on a General's H.Q. The latter was left partly demolished and blazing furiously, as was seen from the photographs taken.	
	31.3.45.		Despite the fact that the strip runs North and South, and there was a strong westerly wind, four Armed Recon were carried out in the ALBELD AREA, in the falling light. Results:- 3 MET destroyed, approx. 15 damaged. Notice was received that F/L. PROSSER, now on rest, has been awarded the D.F.C.	

 S/L.
 Squadron Leader, Commanding.
 No. 183. Squadron.