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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

FORM 541.

DETAIL OF WORK CARRIED OUT

By No. 617 Squadron.

SECRET

PAGE No. _____

FOR THE MONTH OF May 1943.

(*) 2221 WL 2456-56 60,000 2/42 I.S. 700
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DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES.
				Up	Down		
SUMMARY OF OPERATION CARRIED OUT BY SQUADRON ON 16/17th. May. 1943.							
<p>On the night of 16/17th. May, 1943, nineteen aircraft of No. 617 Squadron took off to breach a number of important Dams in and around the Ruhr area. There were three primary targets, namely the Mohne, the Eder and the Sorpe Dams, and three alternative targets, the Lister, the Ennepe and the Diemel Dams.</p> <p>The Squadron trained for six weeks, paying particular attention to map reading and accurate low level bombing.</p> <p>The attack was divided into three waves. The first wave of 9 aircraft subdivided into three sections of three aircraft each, took off at 10 minute intervals, in perfectly clear weather, and with a full moon to assist them. They were detailed for the Mohne and the Eder Dams, in that order of priority. The second wave, consisting of five aircraft, took off to attack the Sorpe Dam, taking a different route, but timed to cross the enemy coast at the same time as, though at different points from, the leading section of the first wave. The third wave, consisting of the remaining five aircraft, formed an air bomb reserve and took off three hours later, each detailed for one of the alternate targets, and all detailed to be prepared to attack the Mohne or Eder Dams in the absence of any direct orders in the air to carry on to the alternative targets.</p> <p>Wing Commander Gibson, on route to the target leading the first section of the first wave, met about twelve searchlights, and some concentrated light flak at the lakes 10 miles N.E. of Haltern, which was reported to Group by W/T, and passed by Group to all the other aircraft. On arrival at a point 10 miles from the Mohne Dam, the formation went over to R/T control, and each individual attack was controlled by W/Cdr. Gibson. There were between seven and ten light flak guns around the target, believed to be mainly 20 mm. One or two were located on the Dam itself, and there were two positions on the N bank of the Lake on each side of the Dam. W/Cdr. Gibson attacked first and dropped his load accurately. Four other aircraft then attacked under his control, one of which was seen to be hit by light flak during its run up, and overshot with its load. The Dam was seen to breach on the fifth attack, and this was reported to J Group by W/T. The remaining four aircraft were then diverted to the Eder Dam, one of these however had been shot down on the way to the target, and only three attacked. One load was seen to overshoot, and this Dam was seen to breach, after two successful attacks. This fact was also reported by W/T to Group Headquarters.</p> <p>Of the five aircraft detailed to attack the Sorpe Dam, two returned early, one is known to have attacked, and two are missing without trace. A sixth aircraft from the mobile reserve was also detailed by W/T to attack the target, and did so successfully. The two aircraft attacking both reported that the crest of the Dam was seen to crumble for some considerable distance.</p> <p>Two of the remaining four aircraft of the mobile reserve were detailed to attack the Sorpe Dam, one attacked successfully and one is missing, and it is believed did not attack. The fourth aircraft was detailed by W/T to attack the Lister Dam, and acknowledged the order. There is no further trace of him, and it is not known if he attacked it. The fifth aircraft successfully attacked the Dam at Ennepe.</p> <p>The most important consequence of this operation is that the Ruhr industries will be deprived of a great deal of their industrial water for the coming summer. The immediate effect of the floods from the two Dams breached was to cause devastation and disruption throughout the valley of the Ruhr as far as Duisburg, and serious flooding below the Eder Dam at Kassel, and other places down the Weser Valley.</p>							

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One Document, being the original of the attached Xerox copy

has been removed to the Museum

30.iii.71

H. Anderson
Asst. Keeper.

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1943
May
16/17

FOR THE MONTH OF May 1943

DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES
				UP	DOWN		
16/17	Lancaster III ED. 932G.	W/Cdr. G. P. GIBSON SGT. FULFORD J. P/O. H. P. TANNILL P/LT. R. E. G. HUTCHISON P/O. P. H. SPAFFORD P/SGT. G. A. DALLING P/LT. R. D. TREVOR ROYER	CAPTAIN. P/LTR. NAV. W/O-TR. A/B. P/GUNNER. P/GUNNER.	2139	0415	MOHNE DAM 1 Mine, 60ft., 0028hrs. Identified the target and carried out first attack on the Mohne Dam. Came under light flak from guns around the target, but dropped his mine accurately and then directed the remainder of the attack by R/T. He also flew alongside one a/c as it attacked, machine gunning the defences to allow it to attack undisturbed. He then carried on to the Eder Dam and indicated the target to searching a/c and stayed to assess the results.	G.
	ED. 925G.	P/LT. J. V. HORGWOOD. SGT. BRIDGMAN C. P/O. K. BARNSHAW. SGT. MINCHIN J. P/SGT. PRASER J. W. P/O. GH. GREGORY. P/O. A. F. BURCHER.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2139	-	MOHNE DAM 1 Mine, was seen to be hit by flak on the run-up and to have engine on fire. He overshot with his mine, which struck the M. parapet, and then flew on for a few minutes before crashing in flames. It is believed that he may have climbed sufficiently for some members of his crew to escape by parachute.	
	ED. 909G.	P/LT. H. B. MARTIN. P/O. T. WHITAKER. P/LT. J. F. LEGGO. P/O. L. CHAMBERS. P/LT. R. C. HAY. P/O. B. T. FOXLEE. P/SGT. SIMPSON T. D.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2139	0319	MOHNE DAM 1 Mine. 60ft., 0038 hrs. Mine burst about 20 yds. short. Starboard outer fuel tank P and ailerons damaged by cannon fire, aircraft landed safely at base.	
	ED. 877G.	S/LDR. H. M. YOUNG. SGT. HORSFALL R. SGT. ROBERTS C. W. SGT. NICHOLS L. P/O. V. S. MACCAULELAND SGT. YEO A. G. SGT. IBBOTSON L.	AS SHOWN	2147	-	MOHNE DAM 1 Mine. Missing. Was seen to make an accurate attack with his mine and then accompanied W/Cdr. Gibson to the Eder Dam, and back to the Mohne, when the attack was finished. He was not heard on R/T after this, and is believed to have flown over Hamm on the return journey and been shot down there.	A
	ED. 906G.	P/LT. D. J. H. MALTBY SGT. HUTTON J. SGT. NICHOLSON V. SGT. STONE A. J. P/O. J. FORT. SGT. HILL E. SGT. SIMMONS D.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2147	0311.	MOHNE DAM 1 Mine. 60ft. 0139 hrs. Made a direct hit with his mine, and the Dam was seen to breach.	J

8

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DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES
				Up	Down		
1943 12/17	Lancaster III ED. 932G.	W/Cdr. G. R. GIBSON Sgt. RUDOLF J. P/O. H. T. THORNTON P/Lt. R. B. G. HUTCHINSON P/O. F. H. SPANFORD P/Sgt. G. A. DEERING P/Lt. R. D. TREVOR ADRIAN	CAPTAIN P/ENG. H.V. P/O. TR. P/O. P/GUNNER. P/GUNNER.	2139	0443	LOHNS DAM 1 Mine, 60ft., 0328hrs. Identified the target and carried out first attack on the Eder Dam. Came under light flak from guns around the target, but dropped his mine accurately and then directed the remainder of the attack by R/T. He also flew alongside one a/c as it attacked, machine gunning the defences to allow it to attack undisturbed. He then carried on to the Eder Dam and indicated the target to searching a/c and stayed to assess the results.	G.
	ED. 929G.	P/Lt. J. V. HOLGOOD. SGT. BRIDGEMAN C. P/O. K. BARNSHAW. SGT. MICHOLIN J. P/Sgt. PRASER J. W. P/O. G. H. GREGORY. P/O. A. F. BLACHER.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2139	-	LOHNS DAM 1 Mine, Was seen to be hit by flak on the run-up and to have engine on fire. He overshot with his mine, which struck the parapet, and then flew on for a few minutes before crashing in flames. It is believed that he may have climbed sufficiently for some members of his crew to escape by parachute.	M.
	ED. 909G.	P/Lt. H. B. MARTIN. P/O. I. WHITTAKER P/Lt. J. F. LEGG. P/O. L. CHILBERS. P/Lt. R. C. HAY. P/O. B. T. FOXLEE. P/Sgt. SIMPSON T. D.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2139	0319	LOHNS DAM 1 Mine. 60ft., 0038 hrs. Mine burst about 20 yds. short. Starboard outer fuel tank and ailerons damaged by cannon fire, aircraft landed safely at base.	
	ED. 877G.	S/LDR. H. M. YOUNG. SGT. ROBERTS M. SGT. ROBERTS C. W. SGT. NICHOLS L. P/O. V. S. MACCAUSLAND SGT. YEO A. G. SGT. IBBOTSON L.	AS SHOWN	2147	-	LOHNS DAM 1 Mine. Missing. Was seen to make an accurate attack with his mine and then accompanied W/Cdr. Gibson to the Eder Dam, and back to the mine, when the attack was finished. He was not heard on R/T after this, and is believed to have flown over Hamm on the return journey and been shot down there.	A
	ED. 906G.	P/Lt. D. J. H. MURPHY SGT. MITTON J. SGT. NICHOLSON V. SGT. STONE A. J. P/O. J. FORT. SGT. HILL E. SGT. STEPHENS D.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2147	0311.	LOHNS DAM 1 Mine. 60ft. 0139 hrs. Made a direct hit with his mine, and the Dam was seen to breach.	J
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DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCE
				UP	DOWN		
1943 10/17	Lancaster III ED. 929G.	F/LT. D.J. SHANNON. SGT. HENDERSON R. F/O. P.R. WALKER. F/O. B. GOODALE. F/SGT. SULLIVER L.J. SGT. JAGER B. F/O. J. BUCKLEY.	CAPTAIN. F/ENG. NAV. W/OPT. A/B. F/GUNNER. R/GUNNER.	2147	0406	EDER DAM. 1 Mine 60 ft. 0139 hrs. Diverted from the Lohne to the Eder Dam, attacked first and registered a direct hit, but no result was seen.	L
	ED. 937G.	S/LDR. H.E. MAUDSLAY. SGT. MARIOTT J. F/O. E.A. URJUHART. SGT. COTTAM R. F/O. H.J.D. FULLER. F/O. W.J. TYTHELLIGH SGT. M.C. BURROWS.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2159		LOHNE DAM. 1 Mine. This aircraft is believed to have been damaged on the way Z to the target, as something that could not be identified was seen by the light of the moon to be hanging underneath it. The mine overshot and struck the parapet, detonating instantaneously. The pilot was spoken to afterwards by R/T. and was heard to reply once, when he sounded very weak.	
	ED. 864G.	F/LT. W. ASTELL. SGT. KINGSLEY J. F/O. P.A. WILE. SGT. GARRSHOITZ A. F/O. D. HENKINSON. SGT. GARRIS F. SGT. BOLITHO K.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2159		LOHNE DAM. 1 Mine. When leading his formation on the way to the target, appeared to become uncertain of his whereabouts, and on reaching a canal crossing, actually at the correct place, turned S. down the canal, as though to search for pinpoint. He fell about 1/2 mile behind his accompanying aircraft, doing this, and got slightly off track. He is believed to have been shot down by light flak shortly afterwards.	B.
	ED. 912 G.	F/O. L.G. KNIGHT. SGT. GRAYSTON R. F/O. H.S. HODDAY. F/SGT. KELLOW R.G. F/O. H.G. JOHNSON. SGT. SUTHERLAND R. SGT. QUINN.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2159	0420	EDER DAM. 1 Mine. Was the third aircraft to attack the Eder Dam. He made two W runs and released his mine on the second one, making a direct hit and breaching the dam.	
	ED. 921G.	F/LT. E.L. MUNRO. SGT. APPELBY F. F/O. F.G. MURBLES. SGT. PIGEON P.E. SGT. CLAY J.H. SGT. HOWARTH W. F/SGT. H.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	2129	0036	SORPE DAM. 1 Mine. Aircraft was hit by light flak and at Vlieland on the way W to the target, which put the intercomm. out of action and forced the aircraft to return with his load to base.	

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1	2	3	4	5	6
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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

APPENDIX

A.F. FORM 541.

DETAIL OF WORK CARRIED OUT

By No. 617 Squadron.

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Page No. _____

FOR THE MONTH OF May 1943

(Notes) WA 2095-25 61,000 2nd Ed. 1.5. 700
 (1994-2111) WA 2521-2147 1028 1947 T.S. 700

DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES
				Up	Down		
1943 May 16/17	Lancaster III ED 936G.	F/LT. J.C. MCCARTHY SGT. RADCLIFFE J. F/SPT. MURPHY D.A. SGT. BROWN R. SGT. JOHNSON G.L. SGT. BAYSON R. S/O. D. ROBBIE	CAPTAIN. F/ENG. NAV. W/OPTG. A/B. F/GUNNER. R/GUNNER.	2201	0323	SORPE DAM. 1 Mine. 30ft. 0046 hrs. Had trouble with his compass and took of 20 mins. late. Flew his route in reverse direction as a consequence. Had difficulty finding the lake, due to mist, and on locating it, found the run along the Dam was made very difficult by the presence of a small hill at either end. The mine was dropped and seen to explode in contact with the Dam. Part of the crest of the Dam was seen to crumble.	T.
	ED 936G.	S/O. G. RICE. SGT. SMITH H. F/O. R. MACFARLANE SGT. GOMBLE G.B. F/SPT. THOMASHER W. SGT. MAYNARD T. SGT. BURNS S.	AS SHOWN ABOVE	2131	0047	SORPE DAM. 1 Mine. Aircraft struck the sea in the Zuider Zee E. of Texel and lost its mine, which is believed to have exploded.	H.
	ED 934G.	SGT. BYERS V.W. SGT. TAYLOR A. F/O. J.H. WARNER SGT. WILKINSON R. SGT. WHITTAKER A. SGT. JARVIS R. SGT. McDOWELL R.	AS SHOWN ABOVE	2130	-	SORPE DAM. 1 Mine. Missing without trace.	K.
	ED 927G.	F/LT. R.N.G. BARKER. SGT. WILLIS S.L. F/O. F.S. BURGESS. F/O. C.H. WILLIAMS. SGT. A. GILLESPIE. F/O. H.S. GLINE. SGT. LINDELL D.	AS SHOWN ABOVE	2128	-	SORPE DAM. 1 Mine. Missing without trace.	E.
	ED 910G.	F/O. W.H.T. OTTLEY SGT. MARDEN R. F/O. J.K. BURGESS. SGT. GUTHERLIN J. F/SPT. JOHNSTON L. SGT. TEEB R. SGT. STRANGE H.	AS SHOWN ABOVE	0009	-	LISTER DAM. 1 Mine. Missing, acknowledged his diversion to the Lister Dam, no further trace.	C.

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DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES
				UP	DOWN		
	Lancaster III ED. 8650.	R/O. L.J. BURGESS SGT. PEGGUS B. SGT. JAYE T. R/O. L.G. WELLS SGT. ARTHUR R. SGT. LONG H. P/SGT. BRADY J.G.	CAPTAIN. P/ENG. NAV. W/O/TRA. A/B. P/G. I/G.	0011	-	SOME DAM. 1 Mine. Missing without trace.	S
	ED. 8669.	P/SGT. TOWNSEND W.C. SGT. POWELL D.J. R/O. C.L. HOWARD P/SGT. CHAMBERS G. SGT. FRANKLIN G.E. SGT. WEBB D.E. SGT. WILKINSON J.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	0014	0615	HEAVY DAM. 1 Mine. 60ft. 0337 hrs. Mist on the reservoir caused this aircraft to make 3 runs at the target. Mine dropped accurately on third attempt and seen to explode. Returned over Holland in broad daylight.	0
	ED. 9189.	P/SGT. BROWN K.W. SGT. PETERSON H.B. SGT. HEAL D.P. SGT. HENSTONE H.J. SGT. GANNON S. SGT. ALLATSON D. P/SGT. MACDONALD G.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	0012	0533	SOME DAM. 1 Mine. 60 ft. 0314 hrs. Shot up a train on the way to the target, on arrival at the target, was hampered by mist, so dropped some incendiaries in some trees, and used the resulting fire as a landmark whilst waiting for the mist to clear. Dropped mine accurately and saw it explode.	Y
	ED. 9243.	P/SGT. ANDERSON C.T. SGT. PATTERSON D. SGT. HUGENT L. SGT. HICKLE D. SGT. GREEN S. SGT. SWAN A. SGT. BUCK R.	AS SHOWN ABOVE.	0015	0530	SOME DAM. 1 Mine. Was unable to reach target, due to mist in valleys, mine returned to base.	Y

P. P. Brown
 WING COMMANDER,
 COMBAT CREW, 617 S. U. DRON, R.A.F.