

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
B.88 (Hesch)	4.3.45		Duff weather kept all a/o grounded throughout the day and the off time was put to advantage by giving the pilots a few "gen" talks in the Rec. Hall this afternoon and showing February's combat films.		
	5.3.45		The Squadron's got off at 08.10 hrs. this morning and carried out a Fighter Sweep into the REHNE/OSNABRUCK/MUNSTER Area. No "Hum" a/c were encountered and the boys all returned safely at 09.30 with an uneventful report. Duff weather closed in later in the morning and the Wing was finally released to training at 13.00 hrs.		A.32
	6.3.45		The Wing was released until 13.00 hrs. to-day due to duff weather. There was very little improvement in weather conditions in the afternoon and the evening finally rolled around with no flying being carried out.		
	7.3.45		The weather was rather doubtful for flying to-day but we got in two patrols in the HILBERG Area before 10.00 when the weather cleared right in. The weather improved somewhat after the lunch hour and the "Hans" worked in a combined fighter Sweep with 412 and 442 Sqdns. Except for bring back some information on train movements, the Sweep proved as uneventful as the morning Patrols. Enemy a/c were reported but just couldn't be contacted by our Sqdn.		A.33
	8.3.45		No flying was carried out to-day - Hitler's friend "Duff" weather was present so an a/o recognition test was conducted by F/L Paschuk in the morning. In the afternoon some of the pilots were transported to HILBERG for Swims.		
	9.3.45		The Weather to-day was more in favour for flying and the Squadron had 12 a/o airborne at 10.15 hrs. on a combined Fighter Sweep with 402 and 411 Squadrons. The Sweep took in the DORSTEN/HAMM/OSNABRUCK Area and all a/o returned safely at 11.54 with nothing to report. Everybody was surprised when the Wing was released as this was one of the finest flying days we've had for some time.		A.34
	10.3.45		The weather turned for the worse again to-day and 401 probably would have remained grounded all day if a call hadn't come through from G.C.C. saying the sun was active in the OSNABRUCK Area. S/L Kleray, the O.C. led 12 a/o off at 16.02 and the Squadron was vectored around to where the "Jerries" were supposed to be, but no contact was made due to weather conditions. The Squadron landed at 17.35 with a Nil report.		A.35
	11.3.45		The weather was a little better to-day but 401 carried out only one mission. It was a combined Fighter Sweep with 442 Sqdn. in the RADERBOHN/CHINDEN/OSNABRUCK Area. 12 a/o undertook the Sweep which proved uneventful.		A.36
	12.3.45		Fair flying weather again to-day and 401 was on Patrols on the HILBERG/REHNE milk run. 35 sorties were carried out altogether. It seemed like it was going to be just another Nil report day. However, the second last patrol of the day being carried out by F/L L.N. Watt and P/O D.M. Horsburgh spotted an Me. 262 flying merrily along at about 2500 ft. just W. of REHNE. F/L Watt jumped in and after two short bursts saw him going down in smoke. He had to break off the attack then due to very accurate flak from our own guns. The Me. 262 was confirmed later, however, by the Army as destroyed. Good eye "Len"		A.37

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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

R.A.F. Form 540
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No. 401 Squadron, R.C.A.F.

of (Unit or Formation)

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
B.88 (Hesch)	13.3.45		The Squadron did two shows to-day. They were both combined missions with 411 Sqdn., the first being an escort job to Invaders bombing the REHNE A/D. The second was a Fighter Sweep in the REHNE/OSNABRUCK Area. Both shows proved uneventful as far as contact with enemy a/c was concerned, but P/O A.R.W. McKay (GN J.56281) ran into difficulty and failed to return. Just W. of REHNE, Bud reported over the R/W that his engine had packed up, and that he was baling out. He went into cloud just at that time and he was not seen again. Bud was a quiet chap whose presence will certainly be missed. - Good Luck fella wherever you are.		A.38
	14.3.45		Combined Fighter Sweeps are still the Order of the Day and 401 Squadron got in one Sweep in conjunction with 442 Sqdn. The "Hans" took off at 12.45 and carried out an uneventful Sweep of the REHNE/OSNABRUCK/MUNSTER Area. They were down again at 14.10 hrs.		A.39
	15.3.45		The Wing was released until 15.00 hrs. to-day and gave the boys a chance to wear off the effects of last night's entertainment. A Wing party was held at the R.A.F. Officers Club in AULST, and by the looks of some of the boys, quite a number attended and quite a number had a good time. We got back to dive-bombing to-day after being off that kind of operation for awhile and the first mission by 12 a/o took off at 13.20 hrs. and landed at 14.25. No claims were made on this mission. The second show took off at 15.20 and headed for the same target again, the DORSTEN/BOHEM railway line and scored 3 outs.		A.40
	16.3.45		Duff weather held the a/o on the ground to-day so advantage was taken of the time out to show a picture in the Rec. Hall on Russian aircraft and General Camouflage. A film was shown in the afternoon also for the amusement of any pilots who wished to attend.		
	17.3.45		Weather this morning was against flying operations but in the afternoon things cleared up sufficiently to take a crack at a German Post in a little village E. of REHNE. This was to be a Wing Dive-bombing effort and the Hans were first off and first into the target. When the boys got over the target it was necessary to circle a little until cloud cleared and then they went in - and up came light and heavy flak, accurate and intense. They boys say they even think they saw the enemy's kitchen sink coming up - but they got the target. Three bombs directly on the buildings and 3 more within a 50 yd radius.		A.41
	18.3.45		S/L Kleray, the O.C., of 401 got away to-day for a well earned week's rest in the U.K. Did I say rest? During the O.C.'s absence, the Squadron will carry on under the capable leadership of F/Light Commanders P/L "Johnny" MacKay and P/L "Bud" Ker. To-day we were handed another Dive-bombing mission. The target was the MUNSTER/COESFELD line. Due to low cloud and haze it was impossible to see the target however, and another line was attacked with good results. Two outs were observed but it was impossible to observe the results of the other bombs.		A.42
	19.3.45		We seem to be getting into good weather again. To-day was exceptional to what we've had to put up with lately. Squadron Fighter Sweeps was the Action for to-day, and 401 carried out three such Sweeps		149

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B.68 (Hessch)	19.3.45		in the LINHENT/MUNSTER/OSNABRUCK Area, but no enemy a/c were contacted and with the exception of bringing back ground information, the missions were fruitless.		A.45
	20.3.45		The weather is still holding good with excellent visibility but 401 Squadron was only ordered up twice. Both missions were Fighter Sweeps in RHINE/OSNABRUCK/MUNSTER Area and both proved uneventful. Where are those Jerries?		A.46
	21.3.45		<p>To-day is the first day of Spring and surprising enough the weather is actually in keeping with the calendar.</p> <p>The Squadron was a little busier to-day and the types of operations was quite varied. We began with an early weather Recon carried out by 4 a/c. They reported good weather and full activity in several enemy areas. The second show was a Medium Bomber escort in which 8 a/c took part. Uneventful. Another bomber escort was the next mission. This was a combined show with 4 a/c from this Sqn. and 4 from 412 Sqn. Also uneventful. A combined Fighter Sweep was next on the list. 8 a/c led by P/L MacKay and 8 a/c from 412 Sqn. The Sweep was in the HAHN/MUNSTER Area but it was uneventful. Another combined Sweep was carried out in the RHINE/MUNSTER/OSNABRUCK Area by 12 a/c of our Sqn. and 12 from 412. The result was the same, no enemy a/c sighted or contacted. The last show for the day was a special "Blackout" patrol carried out by 4 a/c led by P/O D.F. Church. Again there was nothing to report.</p>		A.465
	22.3.45		<p>The day started out slightly doubtful as far as weather was concerned with ground fog. However, this cleared shortly before 09.00 hrs. and the remainder of the day was beautifully sunny. In fact the sun's invitation was so compelling that several of the pilots couldn't resist and they dragged out their bathing trunks and soaked up a little good old vitamin D.</p> <p>Flying activities for the day consisted of two uneventful escort jobs covering Marauders and Invaders bombing SIEGEN, GR. BECKY, OAKE, WUERREN and AHAUSE.</p> <p>P/O Thomas ran into a little difficulty with locked-up wheels when he came into land and was congratulated by the C.O. for unlocking them while in the air by maneuvering his a/c.</p>		A.46
	23.3.45		<p>Another flying day. Beautiful clear sky, no wind and pilots filled with enthusiasm to take advantage of the weather - but despite everything comparatively little flying was done.</p> <p>A Fighter Sweep consisting 12 a/c led by P/L's MacKay and Ker took off at 09.10 and covered the OSNABRUCK/GUESLORF/HAHN Area. No enemy a/c were contacted and the Sqn. returns with nothing to report except information on a little ground movement.</p> <p>The next show was an Armed Recon. carried out by 12 a/c in the HAHN/BIELEFELD/MUNSTER Area. Some Met. was encountered and they returned with a claim of 7 Met. destroyed and damaged, one H.D.T. damaged, one mobile gun damaged.</p> <p>The boys were given quite a moral boost tonight. A special briefing was held at 20.00 hrs. for all Officers of the Wing. At the briefing we were given information concerning "F" day - the zero hour for the crossing of the Rhine - this push was anticipated to be a very deciding factor in deciding the fate of Germany, not whether she would be beaten or not, but how soon.</p> <p>The C.O. gave a general talk on the coming operation and the part which this Wing would play in it. Then a more detailed briefing was given by the Wing Commander Ops, W/C Northcott and it was felt that if the Luftwaffe was to make any appearance in the defence of Germany</p>		A.47

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(Unit or Formation) No. 401 Squadron, R.C.A.F.

No. of pages used for day

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B.68 (Hessch)	23.3.45		<p>it would be at this time.</p> <p>Everybody left the briefing room with a clear idea of the importance of the part that this Wing was to play in keeping the Luftwaffe off the backs of our advancing ground forces. The eagerness with which the pilots went to bed to-night looking forward to to-morrow's operations boded ill for any Hun that dared to challenge our supremacy in the air.</p>		
	24.3.45		<p>The day dawned nice and clear and our pilots took eagerly to the air on the first patrol at 06.45 under the leadership of W/C Northcott.</p> <p>The Wing's job during this new push was to maintain a full Squadron Standing Patrol throughout the day from ZUTPHEN to WINTERSHUIJK. Five Patrols in all were carried out by this Squadron, all but the first being led alternately by Flight Commanders, P/L MacKay and P/L Ker.</p> <p>The last Patrol was down at 19.45 hrs. and some of the boys think they're entitled to be credited with a little night flying. But the Hun pilots? Hairy a sign.</p> <p>Good news was available to the boys of the Sqn. to-day, in connection with our very popular P/O G.D. Cameron DFC, who was arraigned before a Court Martial on a charge of "negligently handling a revolver in such a manner as to cause it to be discharged, thereby injuring P/O Ballantyne, a member of 411 Sqn."</p> <p>The incident took place just after midnight on the 27th, 28th January and the date of Court Martial finally set for to-day. Everybody knowing of the occurrence considered it an accident and the Court, after hearing the evidence apparently were of the same opinion and P/O Cameron was acquitted with a clear record.</p>		A.48
	25.3.45		<p>We flew five Patrols again to-day in the same area as yesterday and enemy a/c were again conspicuous by their absence.</p> <p>However, 412 Sqn. patrolling in the same area ran into 12 Me. 109's and destroyed 5 with no loss to themselves.</p> <p>Our own D.C., S/L Kleray, with his ever ready smile, got back from leave to-day in time to lead the last Squadron show of the day. Our claim for the day was 1 Met. damaged and much information on ground movements.</p>		A.49
	26.3.45		<p>Operations for 401 Squadron were changed to-day and we were put on Armed Recon in the DOSEN/HALTER/HAHN/MUNSTER Area.</p> <p>Four such missions were carried out in all to-day, with S/L Kleray supplying leadership on all four shows. The day's claim was very good indeed with 16 Met. destroyed and 75 Met. damaged, plus 1 loc. damaged.</p> <p>The second "do" up at 10.25 was the most fruitful single show of the day, with 22 5 Met destroyed and 45 damaged in the area S.E. of DOSEN.</p>		A.50
	27.3.45		<p>The weather was too good to last and to-day broke with customary Holland mist and low cloud which remained nearly all day.</p> <p>We sent up a two man Weather Recon. at 14.05 who returned 40 minutes later reporting 10/30 at 800/2000 ft. Towards evening, however, the Weather broke and at 17.10 hrs. 401 got 10 a/c airborne on a Patrol. They were down at 18.40 with an uneventful report.</p>		A.51

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
B.85 (Reesch)	28.3.45		<p>The weather was none too good but four Armed Recon were carried out in the Borten/Dorsten and Sudlohn/Dalmen Areas.</p> <p>The first show took off at 09.30 and the last one was down at 18.05 hrs. Four Met, 4 TRGS destroyed, and 38 Met, 1 loss, 4 TRGS, 2 tanks damaged was the claim on ground targets to-day.</p> <p>The high light of action however, took place when the Sqdn. was vectored after enemy a/c in the DUBEN/OESFELD Area shortly after 1600 hrs. F/L J. MacKay (CAN J.18855) was the only member of the Squadron who caught up with them. He led the Squadron in cloud and when he broke cloud spotted 6 Me. 109's. He gave chase to the rear one and destroyed it. While endeavouring to join up with the Squadron, he spotted another Me.109 slipping along the deck. He dropped after it and saw the pilot bale out after his burst of gun-fire.</p> <p>F/L Johnny MacKay now has 10 enemy a/c destroyed and 3 damaged to his credit. Nice going Johnny.</p>		A.52
	29.3.45		Rain and low cloud kept us grounded to-day. However, the all-Canadian "Blackout" show was here and gave two shows, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, so we had some much enjoyed diversified entertainment.		
	30.3.45		<p>The weather was none too good to-day. Somewhat cloudy, with the sun peaking through at intervals.</p> <p>Our commitment to-day was patrolling from REEDE TO BURSTENFURT and REEDE TO BORKEN. Four such missions were carried out, the first up at 09.55 and the last down at 19.50. The claim for ground targets was 4 Met. destroyed, and 18 Met. loss and 10 TRGS damaged.</p> <p>Misfortune rode with the Squadron to-day when two a/c "pranged" when landing. One was an error in judgment and the pilot, F/L W.C. Connell overshot the landing strip. "Bud" came out of the accident without injury but it was indeed unfortunate as the trip in which the accident took place was to terminate his second tour.</p> <p>The other accident happened at the same time, when F/O I Campbell, D.W., a newcomer to the Sqdn. mistook a ploughed strip to the left of the runway for the landing strip. His a/c nosed over and broke in two but he escaped with a shaking up. As his windshield shield was siled up at the time and it was close to dusk he is being given another chance.</p>		A.53
	31.3.45		<p>Front line Patrols were the commitment for the day. However, the weather was not of the best and cloud was prevalent all day, so we got in only 3 missions. S/L Kleray, led two and F/L J. MacKay led one. All shows proved uneventful.</p>		A.54
			<u>FLYING TIMES FOR MONTH OF MARCH, 1945</u>		
			Total Operational Hours - 988.55		
			Total Non-Operational hours - 14.30		
			Total Operational Sorties - 686 sorties		

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			<u>POSTINGS IN FOR MONTH OF MARCH, 1945</u>																	
			<p>F/L E.A. Ker ITC (CAN J.18834) - posted in from No. 402 Sqdn. w.e.f. 1.3.45</p> <p>F/O L. Bay (CAN G.19361) - posted in from No. 85 C.S.U., w.e.f. 4.3.45.</p> <p>F/O J.P. Francis (CAN J.28886) - posted in from No. 442 Sqdn., w.e.f. 12.3.45.</p> <p>F/O R.C. Gudgeon (CAN J.42269) - posted in from No. 85 C.S.U., w.e.f. 22.3.45.</p> <p>F/O J.M. Ashwin (CAN J.17890) - posted in from No. 85 C.S.U., w.e.f. 21.3.45.</p> <p>F/O I Campbell, D.W. (CAN R.160881) - posted in from No. 85 C.S.U., w.e.f. 20.3.45.</p>																	
			<u>POSTINGS OUT FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH, 1945</u>																	
			<p>F/O G.A. Hardy (CAN J.17167) - posted out from to B.P.C. (en route) w.e.f. 9.3.45 (Tour expired)</p> <p>F/L O.E. Thorpe (CAN J.22149) - posted to B.P.C. (en route) w.e.f. 9.3.45 - Tour expired.</p>																	
			<u>QUALITIES FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH, 1945</u>																	
			<p>F/O A.R.W. McKay (CAN J.35291) - Reported Missing on 12.3.45</p> <p>F/Lt. H.P.M. Furniss (CAN G.1081) - Reported Missing on 2.3.45.</p>																	
			<u>STRENGTH (AS AT 23.59 hrs. 31.3.45)</u>																	
			<u>AIRCREW</u>																	
			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>R.C.A.F.</th> <th>R.A.F.</th> <th>TOTAL STRENGTH</th> <th>EST</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Officer Pilots</td> <td>29</td> <td>0</td> <td>29</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Airman Pilots</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		R.C.A.F.	R.A.F.	TOTAL STRENGTH	EST	Officer Pilots	29	0	29	14	Airman Pilots	1	0	1	12		
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Operational	Spitfire L.F. IXB	16	12																	
			<p>W.T. Kleray 5/6 (W.T. Kleray) Squadron Leader, Officer Commanding, No. 401 Squadron, R.C.A.F.</p>																	