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(2043-319) Wt. 22450-3224 21,500 3/39 T.S. 780
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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

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R.A.F. Form 540

of (Unit or Formation).....No. 14 Squadron.

No. of pages used for day.....

Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices
Port Sudan.	JULY 1940.			
	3rd	1030	No flying was carried out on 1st and 2nd July. 3 aircraft took off for a reconnaissance flight to photograph ZULA, DECAMERE, GURA, ASMARA, MASSAWA. Weather conditions were quite good. 2 aircraft were equipped with vertical cameras and panchromatic film and one with an oblique camera and infra red film. After photographing ZULA the Flight Commander, F/O. S.G. SODERHOLM, completed a run over DECAMERE and made a sharp turn towards the coast, the other two aircraft lost touch with him in the high cloud. They returned home alone after photographing MASSAWA. The Flight Commander's aircraft did not return, his crew was 562891 Sgt. THAYHURN B.L. and 545075 LAC. DAWSON J.C.	APPENDIX "A"
	4th.	1400 1700	A raid was planned on ZULA but was cancelled due to bad weather. The squadron was again instructed to stand by at 1400 hours to bomb Italian troops which had captured KASSALA, but again weather conditions cancelled the plan. At 1700 hours one aircraft escorted a merchant ship away from PORT SUDAN until nightfall.	APPENDIX "D"
	5th.		A projected raid on ZULA was again cancelled due to bad weather conditions. No other flying took place.	
	6th.	0800	5 aircraft took off loaded with hand 24 x 40 lb. anti-personnel bombs, 250lb. G.P. bombs and incendiary bombs, to destroy aircraft at ZULA aerodrome. They returned at 1400 hours; the raid was undoubtedly successful in destroying some aircraft, but the extent of the damage was difficult to assess as, unless a direct hit is obtained, the marks left by pieces of shrapnel from the high fragmentation bombs are not recognised from photographs. No opposition whatever was encountered, and the attack was delivered from an altitude of 5-600 feet. A number of aircraft were dispersed round the aerodrome, from the photographs taken they appear to have been SAVOIA 79. 2 of these suffered direct hits.	APPENDIX "A"

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Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices.
PORT SUDAN	6th (Cont).		The jetty was covered with stores and petrol in tins.	
	7th.		5 aircraft took off for a high level bombing attack on ZULA hangars, but were forced to return owing to weather.	APPENDIX A APPENDIX E
	8th.		Information received that convoy B.N.1. (British Northbound No.1) enters 14 Sqdns. escorting area at dawn. "C" Flight (F/Lieut. D.C. STAPLETON AFC.) assisted by S/Ldr. C.R. TAYLOR (No.254 Wing detached) commenced to carry out the plan for escorting, as previously arranged. In accordance with this general plan, 5 aircraft led by O.C. "B" Flight (F/O. C.G.S.ROBINSON) took off to attack the stores previously photographed on the jetty at ZULA, in order to keep the Italian Squadron too fully occupied to interfere with the convoy. These aircraft were armed with another ^{also} unit-designed gun-mounting enabling the second gunner to fire through an arc from forward quarter to rear quarter. Thus five aircraft, originally desinged to mount one rear gun, now mount three each. It is hoped that this will further deter enemy fighters, and enable formations of five to encounter opposition successfully.	APPENDIX A APPENDIX F
		0615	The convoy flight picked up the convoy B.N.1. at 0615 and seven patrols of approx. 6 hours each were carried out ahead of this convoy. Visibility was bad, and aircraft had to be recalled an hour before dusk. The convoy was not a large one and consisted of 5 tankers, one Naval supply ship, and three merchant vessels. The ocean escort consisted of 2 Cruisers ("LEANDER" and "CARLISLE") 2 destroyers, and 2 escort sloops. No attacks were made on the convoy, although from the activities of "B" Flight - details below- it seems that the Italians were definitely looking for the convoy.	APPENDIX A APPENDIX J
		1200	At 1200 hours 4 aircraft of "B" Flight returned, having successfully attacked ZULA aerodrome jetty. On the return journey an enemy S.81 bomber was encountered East of the DAHLAK ARCHIPELAGO on a Southern course, having presumably been looking for the convoy. ^{C.G.S.R.} F/O. ROBINSON, the leader, broke up his formation, and	

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3240 and W. Manual, Pt. II, Chapter XX

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para. 2249, and War Manual, Pt. II., chapter XX., and
notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

No. 14 Squadron.
of (Unit or Formation).....

No. of pages used for day.....

Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices
PORT SUDAN.	8th. July 1940	(Cont) 1200	after attacking the E.A. from eastern and quarter, saw it crash into the sea and break up. The Flight then resumed its journey home. P/O ^{R.F.} WILLITTS, whose windscreen had blown in during the dive to attack, sustained a cut eye and landed just inside the border at AQIA to obtain assistance. "B" Flight Commander returned later in the day and brought him and his aircraft in.	
	9th.	0500	Escort was again provided by "C" Flight for B.N.L. which was intercepted at 0500 hours approximately in position 70 miles east of PORT SUDAN. Visibility this time was good, and five regular patrols of approx. four hours each were established over B.N.L. At 1430 hours the convoy reached 14 Squadron's North escort limit (Lat. 20° 50' N) and passed out of our care. For the two days escort work 70 hours flying was done by five machines and five crews.	APPENDIX A
		1430		
	10th.	0500	5 aircraft, led by the Squadron Commander, took off at 0500 hours and joined 5 aircraft of 47 Squadron over SUAKIN, with the intention of bombing ASMARA Aerodrome, but on reaching their objective they found low cloud obscuring their target and turned for home. Turning aside at MARSA TAQLAI they bombed the listening post situated at the Eastern side of the landing ground. Bombs fell very close to the buildings and photographs show bombs bursting in a good line across a group of buildings. In the evening an aircraft escorted a Naval vessel, entering the harbour, for half an hour.	APPENDIX A APPENDIX G
	11th. 12th.		All Flights carried out practice bombing. High to low level. Four aircraft, led by P/Lt ^{D.C.} STAPLETON, made a rendezvous with at SUAKIN with 5 aircraft from No. 47 Squadron, and proceeded to ORTUMLO aerodrome (MASSAWA) to carry out an attack on the hangars, (14 Sqn. in the lead). The attack was successful, and bombs from the first four aircraft fell directly	APPENDIX B APPENDIX H

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Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices.
PORT SUDAN	July 12th. (Cont).		on, and among, the hangars, doing considerable damage. The Flight was attacked by enemy fighters, but all four aircraft returned safely. One aircraft from the 47 Squadron Flight was shot down over the target, either by fighters or A/A fire.	
	13th.	1700	Some practice bombing and air to ground gunnery took place in the morning and afternoon. At 1700 hours 2 Martin 167 bombers, accompanied by 1 Blenheim, landed. The Martin aircraft were officered and crewed by French who had escaped from Syria and Algeria. They stayed the night, and left for ADEN the following morning. They were dressed in R.A.F. uniforms, and were accompanied by a senior French Army officer from Syria, on his way to French Somaliland.	
	14th.		No operational flying was carried out.	
	15th.	0445	One aircraft took off to escort a ship into the harbour from a point 5 miles East of SANGANAB lighthouse; this was accomplished successfully. At 1400 hours	APPENDIX B
		1400	2 aircraft left to do a reconnaissance of the area KIBKIB, NACFA, EL GHENA, KARORA and especially to report movement seen on the road connecting those places. Very successful photographs were taken, though little movement was seen of a military nature. At EL GHENA one of the aircraft was hit by a few bullets from a machine gun, but no damage was done.	APPENDIX B
	16th.	0915	4 aircraft took off to make a rendezvous with 47 Squadron aircraft at SUAKIN and proceeded to ASMARA with the intention of bombing the aerodrome buildings, a lot of cloud was encountered over the target with base about 1500 feet. 47 Squadron commenced the dive from 13000 feet, followed closely by 14 Squadron aircraft. Bombs were released about 1000 feet above the target. Just before this happened the aircraft passed through a dense cloud, but the Flight Commander reported that, on emerging, the aircraft were still in perfect formation. Very little was seen of the bomb bursts. 5 photographs, taken by a rear gunner,	APPENDIX B APPENDIX I

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Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices
PORT SUDAN.	16th July 1940.	(Cont)	showed 4 or 5 bursts, and a fire starting in a motor transport yard some 3/4 of a mile away from the aerodrome buildings. One aircraft of 47 Squadron failed to return. Anti-aircraft fire ^{was} of medium intensity, 2 shells burst near to this Squadron's formation and pieces of shrapnel penetrated the aircraft, cutting the actuating gear cables in the Flight Commander's aircraft.	
	17th.		Two aircraft did a second reconnaissance of DIFMEIN ISLAND, KIRKIB, EL GHENA, KARORA. Vertical photographs showing good definition were taken, no military movement was observed, nor were the aircraft fired upon.	
	18th.		No operational flying took place.	
	19th.		At approximately 2330 of the 18th, news was received that aircraft were being flown from Libya to Eritrea by the Italians as reinforcements. At 0330 five Wellesleys led by "C" Flight Commander set off for AGORDAT in an endeavour to destroy these S.79's. At AGORDAT 3 Aircraft were seen - two near to the hangars and these together with the buildings were attacked. As very little A.A. fire was encountered, the flight split up and carried out individual attacks - several direct hits on buildings and workshops were observed. The two aircraft near the hangars were thought to be damaged but confirmation could not be obtained from the photographs as dust from the bombs obscured the area. All our aircraft returned safely with no damage whatsoever to themselves.	APPENDIX "O"
	20th.	1500	At 1500 hours a formation of 5 Wellesleys, under "B" Flight Commander, took off to bomb ASMARA Aerodrome buildings. A most successful low level attack was carried out in the face of very heavy ground machine gun fire, and direct hits were scored on the hangars, and a whole salvo fell on a long building just behind the hangars, which was presumed to be a workshop. 4 excellent photographs	APPENDIX "O" APPENDIX "X"

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Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices.
PORT SUDAN	20th July 1940	(Cont)	show direct hits to perfection. The engine of the Flight Commander's aircraft stopped when over the target, on receiving the bullet in the rocker gear, but commenced firing again after a few revolutions. He endeavoured to make a forced landing at AQIQ for the same reason, but the engine picked up again and he made his way to PORT SUDAN guided by a "Chance" light placed 7 miles South of the aerodrome. Several other aircraft were extensively damaged but all returned safely, and none of the crews were injured.	
	21st.		No operational flying.	
	22nd.		No operational flying. ^{A.D.} Squadron Leader Selway accompanied by the Squadron Intelligence Officer flew to the Wing.	
	23rd.	0930	4 Wellesleys under "C" Flight Commander took off to bomb the Air Force quarters and Submarine bases at MASSAWA on the ABDEL KADR peninsula. The attack was made from 17800 ft in a North to South run. Anti-aircraft fire was encountered before the bombs were dropped. Very few of the crews saw the bomb bursts, but the photographs show them to have disappeared burst rather to the West of the target, though the distance and distribution was good. Ten minutes after leaving the target the formation was attacked by a CR.42 Fighter. This attacked from the rear and was undoubtedly hit by our rear gunners' fire, a flash being seen by three of our gunners on its starboard side by the engine, after which it appeared to stall and fall away, finally being lost in the haze near the ground.* Our aircraft returned safely with no marks of bullets or shrapnel, and landed at at 1445. * The loss of one fighter was later reported by the Italian radio.	APPENDIX "B" APPENDIX "C"
	24th.		No operational flying.	
	25th.	1215	^{D.C.} Four Wellesleys led by Flight Lieutenant Stapleton left to attack a Fuel Storage Depot at MASSAWA. They carried 250 lb G.P. bombs. The attack was made from 15000ft. First class photographs taken with a 20" lens show the bombs falling	APPENDIX "B" APPENDIX "C"

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No. 14 Squadron.
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Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices
PORT SUDAN	25th July 1940	(Cont)	very close to a long building slightly to the North of the target, and probably connected therewith. Anti-aircraft fire appeared to be controlled to allow the fighters to climb without fear of being hit. A determined attack was made on the formation some 10 minutes away from the target by 3 CR42s. One of our aircraft received some serious damage, but all returned safely with no casualties. The fighters were reluctant to come in to close range, and our gunners contented themselves with a few short bursts, reserving their fire for close quarters.	
	26th		The day was marked by the visit of the A.O.C. in C., Air Chief Marshal Sir ARTHUR LONGMORE, who landed about 1800 hours, leaving at 1700 hours for ERKOWIT. The visibility in the hills was, however, so poor that the Bombay in which he was travelling was forced to turn round and land again at PORT SUDAN. Sir ARTHUR LONGMORE stayed the night at the Red Sea Hotel. No operational flying was carried out.	
	27th		The A.O.C. in C. flew to ERKOWIT with the Squadron Commander and 1 escort aircraft. No operational flying took place.	
	28th	0628	One aircraft took off at 0628 for a reconnaissance flight over the islands lying off the coast near PORT SUDAN, visiting BARRA MUSA KEBIR, where an oil streak was still issuing from the submarine ^{"MAC ALLE"} wrecked on June 15th. BARAKUT and the	APPENDIX 6
		0845	TELLA TELLTA Islands were also visited. The aircraft landed at 0845 with nothing further to report.	
	29th.		No operational flying took place.	
	30th.		The Squadron took part in a series of heavy raids on KASSALA, by 254 Wing, with the intention of endeavouring to make the Italian black troops retire from their positions, and with the hope that they would retire up the Eritrean road	APPENDIX 6 APPENDIX N

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PORT SUDAN	30th July 1940	0730	which leads through a narrow defile. This squadron despatched 3 machines at 0730 hours, and 3 more at 1230 to bomb the railway station and troop positions on the West side of the GASH river. The first ^{three} aircraft, under "B" Flight Commander, scored direct hits on railway labour lines which were said to contain troops, but were badly shot up from machine gun, an air gunner receiving a head wound. The 2nd Flight did not encounter such heavy ground defences, and one pilot reported a direct hit on a round machine gun post. They returned at 1700 hours and reported that a flight from another squadron was arriving as they left.	APPENDIX "B"
	and	1230		
	21st.	1700	1 aircraft took off to take a mosaic of KASSALA, this was successfully accomplished from 800 feet. While doing this work the pilot observed Blenheims from 45 Squadron detachment bombing the station. At 0630 3 aircraft, led by "A" Flight Commander, took off to bomb the fort at KASSALA. They were carrying 4 x 500lb. G.P. and 4 x 25lb incendiary bombs on each aircraft. Take off, ^{with a 10 overload} was accomplished without difficulty. Hits were scored on a group of storehouses in the fort target area. No opposition was encountered except some rifle fire. All four landed at PORT SUDAN at 11.45 hours.	APPENDIX "D"
	31st.	0615		APPENDIX "C"
		0630		APPENDIX "P"
		1145		
	27 th .		<p style="text-align: right;"> <i>D.C. Stapleton</i> Flight Lieutenant, Commanding, No. 14 Squadron, Royal Air Force. </p> <p> <i>The Squadron Commander Squadron Leader A.D. SELWAY took leave to Palestine for 12 days and the command of No. 14 Squadron was temporarily taken over by Flight Lieutenant D.C. STAPLETON A.F.C.</i> </p>	