

OPERATION OVERLORD - THE ROYAL AIR FORCE LANDING IN NORMANDY OMAHA BEACH

The operation which involved members of the Royal Air Force landing on the Normandy beaches on D-day and in the days following, effectively began on 1st January 1944 when Group Captain William George Moseby was posted in to RAF Church Fenton in order to set up 21 Base Defence Wing. Along with its counterparts No's 24 and 25 Base Defence Wings, this unit would be tasked with supplying and maintaining a radar capability from D-Day onwards for the purpose of detecting enemy aircraft movements in the skies over and approaching the invasion beaches and directing Allied aircraft to intercept and destroy them thereby maintaining air superiority in the skies from D-Day onwards.

Transcript from Public Record Office Reference:- Air 26-40 21 Base Defence Wing (Later Sector) Operations Record Book

JANUARY

1-1-1944 (157)

Group Captain William George Moseby, DSO, DFC, (Service Number 37327), arrived at RAF Church Fenton to set up 21 Base Defence Wing (21BDW).

3-1-1944 (D-155)

G/C Moseby went to Headquarters 12 Group, 85 Group, A.E.A.F. and A.D.G.B. for briefing, the establishment of the Wing had not been formed so the postings were held up. Plans were made to take over the Emergency Operations Room as the Wing Operations Room. Sites for Ground Controlled Interception Radars (G.C.I.s) and Chain Overseas Low Radars (C.O.L.'s) were selected and HQ No. 12 Group and 85 Group were informed.

7-1-1944 (D-151)

F/Off C.F. Birch posted in to the Wing for Intelligence Duties.

12-1-1944 (D-146)

Gp/Capt W.G. Moseby visited 85 Group and 12 Group to discuss the training programme.

13-1-1944 (D-145)

The following officers were posted:

Sqn/Ldr A.M. Anderson, DFC.,	Ops G .
Flt/Lt Twining	Ops G.
Flt/Lt V. Harrison	Ops G.
Flt/Lt F.R. Pender	Ops G.
F/Off R.I. Henty	Ops G.
F/Off L.A.W. Sparks	Ops G.
Flt/Lt C.F. Saunter	Movement Liaison.
F/Off C. Morgan	Movement Liaison.
F/Off Chapman	Movement Liaison.
F/Off F.R. Preece	Movement Liaison.
F/Off P.M.R. Turner	Fighter Control.

15-1-1944 (D143)

The following Officers were posted to the Wing:

Flt/Lt I.C.D. Clowes	Adjutant.
Sqn/Ldr G.T. Symons	Signals 'G'.
F/Off E.C.L. Catling	Ops G.

19-1-1944 (D-139)

349M.R.U. arrived at RAF Church Fenton.

21-1-1944 (D-137)

No. 15072 Mobile G.C.I. arrived at RAF Roecliffe.

22-1-1944 (D136)

No. 15081 Mobile G.C.I. arrived at RAF Catfoss.

F/Off W.T. Rogers	posted for Fighter Control duties.
F/Off G.F. Williamson	posted for Tech. (Sigs.) duties (Supy).

24-1-1944 (D134)

No. 15074 Mobile G.C.I. arrived at RAF Donna Nook.

25-1-1944 (D-133)

S.O.A. No. 12 Group, Wing Commander Muir, visited the Wing.

26-1-1944 (D-132)

No. 15082 Mobile G.C.I. arrived at RAF Hibaldstow.

27-1-1944 (D-131)

A conference was held at RAF Church Fenton and was attended by the following:-

Group Captain W.G. Moseby, (21 Wing),
Group Captain Manton (Church Fenton Sector),
Group Captain Burns (12 Group),
Wing Commander E.C. Wolfe (85 Group Ops 2),
Squadron Leader Hughes (85 Group, Ops. 3)
Squadron Leader A.M. Anderson (21Wing).
Wing Commander Budd (141 Airfield),
Wing Commander Watson (142 Airfield),
Wing Commander Allington (264 Squadron),
Wing Commander Maxwell (604 Squadron),
Wing Commander Graham (Newcastle Sector),
Squadron Leader Arnott, (234 Squadron),
Squadron Leader Higham (12 Group Ops 3),
Squadron Leader Huntingdon-Whiteley (Church Fenton Ops),
Squadron Leader Innes (130 Squadron),
Squadron Leader Mills (Newcastle Sector),
Squadron Leader Neillson_(Patrington),
Squadron Leader Roberts (12 Group Ops 2a),
No. 85 Group Signals Officer.
Sector Signals Officer, Church Fenton.
No. 309 Mobile Signals Servicing Unit (MSSU) arrived at RAF Church Fenton.

29-1-1944 (D-129)

Three calibration runs done by 264 Squadron for mobile G.C.I.'s.

30-1-1944 (D-128)

Three calibration runs done by 264 Squadron for mobile G.C.I.'s.

FEBRUARY

1-2-1944 (D-126)

W-Cdr McKenzie, S.P.S.O., A.E.A.F. visited Church Fenton.

C.O.L. 15073 arrived at Staxton Wold.

Total strength of other ranks (OR's) posted to the Wing to date is 57. Officers of 21 Wing invited to farewell cocktail party in the Mess given to G/Capt Manton, Sector Commander, on handing over Sector to G/Capt Thynne.

The first practice interceptions with the mobile G.C.I.'s were carried out, consisting of two sorties by 264 Squadron with G.C.I. 15082 (Kirton) and one sortie by 264 Squadron with G.C.I. 15081 (Catfoss).

2-2-1944 (D-125)

Practice interceptions were carried out with the mobile G.C.I.'s both by day and night whenever the weather was suitable. 604 Squadron made two sorties with G.C.I. 15081 (Catfoss) and 264 Squadron one sortie with G.C.I. 15072 (Fenton), one sortie with G.C.I. 15081 (Catfoss) and one sortie with G.C.I. 15082 (Kirton).

3-2-1944 (D-124)

Brigadier G.L. Richardson, Brigadier Burnell, Colonel Nicolson and Major Nestor of 9th Air Defence Command visited Church Fenton. In the evening they went to the Happidrome at Patrington to watch Bullseye Exercise from Searchlight and G.C.I. Cabins. Before the Exercise, Colonel Nicholson flew in a Beaufighter of 604 Squadron. 604 and 264 Squadrons carried on their practice interceptions with the mobiles.

4-2-1944 (D-123)

The American Officers visited 31 Anti Aircraft (A.A.) Brigade, Tadcaster, the mobile G.C.I. at Catfoss, and witnessed practice interceptions carried out by 604 Squadron. They also visited the Humber Gun Brigade HQ and in the evening the G.O.R. to watch another Bullseye and local Co-operation.

The training programme with the mobiles was carried on.

5-2-1944 (D-122)

The American Officers visited M.R.U. and the E.O.R. in the morning and returned to London in the afternoon.

Total strength of other ranks posted to the Wing to date is eighty four.

All the Mobile GCI's carried out practice interceptions.

6-2-1944 (D-121)

The usual flying programme was carried out with the mobiles.

7-2-1944 (D-120)

Brigadier Horwood, D.S.O., CO of 105 AA Brigade visited the Wing. Lt B.J. Madder attached from

16 Air Formation Signals to arrange D.R.L. Service. A full flying programme with the Mobiles was carried out.

8-2-1944 (D-119)

GCI 15072 moved from Roelcliffe to Church Fenton. G.C.I.'s 15081 and 15082 carried out their usual Practice Interceptions.

9-2-1944 (D-118)

Sqn/Ldr Emms, Tech Signals posted from 309 MSSU to Sector HQ for attachment to the Wing until 29-2-1944. Only one practice interception carried out due to the weather. D.R.L.S. service started to 142 Airfield and the Mobiles.

10-2-1944 (D-117)

First practice interception carried out with G.C.I. 15072 since being moved to Church Fenton.

11-2-1944 (D-116)

Mobiles carried out full training programme.

12-2-1944 (D-115)

Total strength of other ranks posted to the Wing to date is ninety seven. All Mobile G.C.I.'s did full training programme.

13-2-1944 (D-114)

No flying due to the weather.

14-2-1944 (D-113)

No practice interceptions with the Mobiles due to the weather conditions.

15-2-1944 (D-112)

No practice interceptions with the Mobiles due to the weather conditions.

16-2-1944 (D-111)

Improvement in the weather conditions enabled full training programme to be carried out by the Mobiles.

17-2-1944 (D-110)

No practice Interceptions with the Mobiles due to the weather conditions.

18-2-1944 (D-109)

No practice interceptions with the Mobiles due to the weather conditions.

19-2-1944 (D-108)

G.C.I. 15081 moved from Catfoss to Catterick. Total strength of OR's posted to 21BDW to date is one hundred and eight.

20-2-1944 (D-107)

141 Airfield provided aircraft for practice interceptions with the Mobiles, but this was not possible from 142 Airfield due to the weather conditions prevailing there.

21-2-1944 (D-106)

141 Airfield again provided aircraft for Practice Interceptions, but the weather again prevented 142 airfield from being used. G.C.I. 15081 moved from Catterick to Scorton.

A conference was held at 21 Wing HQ to discuss "Self Putting-on Trials" and was attended by:-

Gp/Capt W.G. Moseby, DSO, DFC, (21 Wing),

Colonel Smith (160 A.A.O.R.),

Wg/Cdr A.M. Anderson DFC, (21Wing),

Major Hanson (160 A.A.O.R.),

Captain Kyle (105 Anti Aircraft (A.A). Brigade),

Captain Parsons, Army Operational Research Group (A.O.R.G.),

F/Off C.F. Birch (Intelligence Officer, 21Wing),

Mr Humphreys (A.O.R.G.).

22-2-1944 (D-105)

The "Self Putting On" trials were commenced in the morning by one aircraft of 604 Squadron controlled by G.C.I. 15072 (Fenton) and were continued at the rate of two sorties a day until the afternoon of the 25th when they were concluded and considered most successful. 604 Squadron did a calibration run for G.C.I. (15081) at their site at Scorton and the normal Practice Interceptions were carried out.

23-2-1944 (D-104)

A full training programme was carried out with the Mobiles.

24-2-1944 (D-103)

Air Vice Marshall John Beresford Cole-Hamilton, 85 Group, visited the Wing A full training programme was carried out with the Mobiles.

25-2-1944 (D-102)

Full training programme was carried out with the Mobiles.

26-2-1944 (D-101)

No Practice Flying due to weather conditions.

27-2-1944 (D-100)

No Practice Flying due to weather conditions.

28-2-1944 (D-99)

Improved weather conditions allowed a full flying programme to be carried out from both Airfields.

Total strength of other ranks posted to the Wing to date 113.

29-2-1944 (D-98)

The only flying was one sortie by 604 Squadron with G.C.I. 15081, the weather conditions being bad.

MARCH

1-3-1944 (D-97)

Good weather conditions permitted a full flying programme to be carried out with the Mobiles, both by day and night. Six sorties in all were made.

Squadron Leader G.T. Symonds, who never arrived, was posted back to H.Q. 85 Group.

2-3-1944 (D-96)

The flying programme was carried on with the Mobiles.

3-3-1944 (D-95)

The weather still held good and the training programme was continued. The following Officers were posted to Wing for Ops "B" Duties:

F/Off F.C. Pyne, P/Off A.K. Slade, Flt/Lt E. Urry.

The following Officers were posted from the Wing:

Flt.Lt F.R. Pender to A.D.G.B. F/L E.C.L. Catling to A.D.G.B., P/Off I.A.W. Sparkes to A.D.G.B. F/Off R.I. Henty to Tangmere, F/Off F.R. Preece to 24 (B.D.) Wing,

4-3-1944 (D-94)

21BDW Operations Record Book; (*PRO Ref: Air 26-40*).

The training programme was carried out as usual. The first sortie under C.O.L. Staxton 15073 control was carried out. 5131A Mobile Signals Unit arrived at Church Fenton.

5-3-1944 (D-93)

The weather permitted the training programme to be carried on as usual.

6-3-1944 (D-92)

Only one sortie was carried out with the mobiles, as they had had more than their agreed proportion of P.I.'s) and the rest of the flying was done under Static G.C.I. Control.

7-3-1944 (D-91)

The usual training programme was carried out.

8-3-1944 (D-90)

The usual flying was carried out from 141 Airfield but there was no flying from 142 Airfield due to weather conditions in the North. C.O.L.15074 moved from Donna Nook to Church Fenton.

9-3-1944 (D-89)

A full training programme was carried out with the Mobiles and 604 Squadron sent twelve aircraft on Exercise 'Eric'. F/Off R.E. Lee posted to the Wing for Ops "B" duties.

10-3-1944 (D-88)

The training programme was continued as usual. No. 21 Wing was transferred from 12 Group to 85 Group.

11-3-1944 (D-87)

The usual training programme was carried out. Wg/Cdr B Ingham attached to the Wing for W/Cdr Flying, duties.

12-3-1944 (D-86)

No flying took place from 141 Airfield due to weather conditions, but 2 sorties were flown from 142 Airfield.

13-3-1944 (D-85)

(Entry illegible)

14-3-1944 (D-84)

The Mobiles controlled aircraft from 604 Squadron in 'Bullseye' Exercise and fighter affiliation, and aircraft from 264 Squadron were controlled by static G.C.I.'s. Four aircraft from 264 Squadron were scrambled but no enemy aircraft entered their area.

15-3-1944 (D-83)

The usual training programme was carried out. Three aircraft from 264 Squadron were scrambled but no joy. The Mobile Operations Room arrived at Church Fenton. G.C.I. 15082 moved from Hibaldstow to Church Fenton. G.C.I. 15072 and C.O.L. 15074 moved from Church Fenton to White Waltham.

16-3-1944 (D-82)

The normal training programme was carried out with the Mobiles and both Airfields sent aircraft south on Exercise 'Eric'.

17-3-1944 (D-81)

Practice flying as usual with the Mobiles.

18-3-1944 (D-80)

Usual training was carried out. Four A/C of 264 Squadron and two A/C of 604 Squadron were scrambled to intercept raids approaching the Humber area but they proved to be friendly. Wg/Cdr B. Ingham posted to Wing for Wg/Cdr Flying duties. Sqn/Ldr F.W.E. Ainsworth posted to Wing for Tech Signals duties.

19-3-1944 (D-79)

The usual training programme was carried out. Four A/C from 264 Squadron and four A/C of 604 Squadron were scrambled to intercept raids approaching the Humber area. One A/C of 264 Squadron had two combats under RAF Patrington control and claims one DO.217 destroyed. No claim is made in the second combat. H.Q. 21 Wing moved to The Poplars, Church Fenton.

20-3-1944 (D-78)

No practice flying due to weather conditions. 309MSSU moved from Church Fenton to Newtown near Chesham.

21-3-1944 (D-77)

Only one sortie done with Mobiles due to weather conditions. Four A/C from 264 Squadron were scrambled but enemy activity was too far South. One A/C 604 Squadron, (Ft/Lt Surman and F/Sgt Weeton), on attachment at Castle Camps was scrambled under Searchlight control, had two combats resulting in one JU. Ju.88 destroyed and one JU 88 damaged. G.C.I. 15072 and C.O.L. 15074 left White Waltham for Chigwell.

22-3-1944 (D-76)

No flying with the mobiles.

23-3-1944 (D-75)

Only one sortie was controlled by the Mobiles.

24-3-1944 (D-74)

Twenty four aircraft took part in an exercise 'Eric'. 124 Squadron being under control of G.C.I. 15082.

25-3-1944 (D-73)

The training programme was carried out as usual.

26-3-1944 (D-72)

The training programme was carried out as usual.

27-3-1944 (D-71)

The normal training programme was carried out. Both 604 Squadron and 264 Squadron sent A/C on Exercise 'Eric'. G.C.I.15082 had four A/C of 124 Squadron under their control in this exercise.

28-3-1944 (D-70)

No flying on account of weather conditions. G.C.I. 15072 and C.O.L. 15074 arrived at Church Fenton from Chigwell.

29-3-1944 (D-69)

A 'Bullseye' exercise was carried out under the control of the Mobiles. C.O.L. 15074 left Church Fenton for Staxton. G.C.I. 15082 left Church Fenton for White Waltham.

30-3-1944 (D-68)

The normal training programme was carried out. Two aircraft from 604 Squadron and two aircraft from 264 Squadron were scrambled but the enemy activity did not develop in this area. Flt/Lt Peter Frank Travers Wakeford (Service Number 40446) attached to the Wing for Ops "G" duties.

31-3-1944 (D-67)

A Command 'Bullseye' Exercise was under the control of the Mobile Operations Room. C.O.L. 15073 left Staxton for Bempton.

APRIL

1-4-1944 (D-66)

8 aircraft of 264 Squadron, 7 aircraft of 604 Squadron and 6 aircraft of 124 Squadron took part in Exercise "Eric".

A meeting was held at the "Poplars" with Gp/Capt Moseby presiding to appoint an Officers' Mess Committee, a Sergeants' Mess Committee and the P.S.I. ready for the time when the Wing went under canvas.

Wg/Cdr O.A. Guggenheim (RAFR, Service Number 81524) posted to the Wing.

2-4-1944 (D-65)

No flying due to weather conditions.

3-4-1944 (D-64)

Weather still unsuitable for flying. The Orders previously issued for the Wing to go under canvas were postponed on instructions from the S.M.O. 141 Airfield on account of the weather conditions. A.M.E.S. No. G15073 arrived at Bempton from Chigwell.

4-4-1944 (D-63)

21BDW Operations Record Book; (PRO Ref: Air 26-40).

The training programme was still held up owing to weather conditions.

5-4-1944 (D-62)

Bad weather continued.

A.M.E.S No. G15082 arrived at Church Fenton from White Waltham.

6-4-1944 (D-61)

A slight improvement in the weather permitted 2 sorties to take place before it closed in again. M.S.U. 5140Q arrived at Church Fenton from Chigwell.

7-4-1944 (D-60)

Improved weather conditions permitted the normal training programme to be carried out. M.S.U. 5140Q attached to A.M.E.S. 15073 at Bempton.

8-4-1944 (D-59)

A full training programme with the Mobiles was carried out both by day and night. The Wing went under canvas.

9-4-1944 (D-58)

The normal training programme was carried out. M.S.U.'s 5141Q and 5142Q arrived at Church Fenton from Chigwell.

10-4-1944 (D-57)

The good weather continued and the training programme was carried out. M.S.U. 5141Q was attached to A.M.E.S. No. G15081 at Scorton.

11-4-1944 (D-56)

A full training programme was carried out.

12-4-1944 (D-55)

The training programme was carried on from 141 Airfield at Church Fenton but the weather conditions prevented any flying taking place from 142 Airfield at Scorton.

13-4-1944 (D-54)

Weather closed in at Church Fenton but flying was again possible from Scorton.

14-4-1944 (D-53)

The normal training programme was carried out. A.M.E.S. No. G15082 left Church Fenton for Patrington.

15-4-1944 (D-52)

This was the commencement of Exercise 'Driver' in which 264 Squadron took part. The normal training programme took place with 604 and 124 Squadrons.

16-4-1944 (D-51)

No flying was possible due to weather conditions. C.O.L. No. G15073 moved from Bempton to Church Fenton. M.S.U.5140Q moved from Bempton to Hunmanby. A.M.E.S. No. G15072 moved from Church Fenton to Patrington.

17-4-1944 (D-50)

21BDW Operations Record Book; (PRO Ref: Air 26-40).
All Squadrons were occupied taking part in Exercise "Driver".

18-4-1944 (D-49)

264 Squadron took part in Exercise 'Driver' and had 5 aircraft scrambled at night. No flying was possible from Scorton due to weather conditions. A.M.E.S. No.G15082 moved from Patrington to Church Fenton.

Gp/Capt W.G. Moseby and Flt/Lt I.C.D. Clowes left Church Fenton for a conference at 85 Group that took place at 10.00 hours the following morning.

19-4-1944 (D-48)

No flying was possible due to weather conditions.

The following Officers were attached to the Wing for Liaison duties:- Lt/Cdr A.T. Shaw (RNVR), Lt A. Ingham (RNVR) and Lt G. Wilson (RNVR).

20-4-1944 (D-47)

604 Squadron and 264 Squadron took part in Exercise 'Driver'. 6 aircraft of 264 Squadron were scrambled to intercept enemy aircraft approaching the Hull area. F/O Corre and P/Off Bines obtained a contact on an enemy aircraft which lead to a combat resulting in 1 Me.177 destroyed. All Units recalled to RAF Church Fenton.

4 vehicles and 18 men of 5131A went to Stapleford Tawney.

21-4-1944 (D-46)

Wg/Cdr A.M. Anderson and Sqn/Ldr Trollope left Church Fenton with M.O.R., A.M.E.S. No. G15082 and certain personnel detailed from other units to take part in Exercise 'Fabious'. F/Off Rogers posted from 21 Wing to A.D.G.B.

22-4-1944 (D-45)

All Units were busy packing up ready to leave Church Fenton.

23-4-1944 (D-44)

The Main convoy consisting of Wing HQ & the remaining Mobile Units left Church Fenton for Sopley spending the first night at Lutterworth Army Staging Camp.

24-4-1944 (D-43)

The convoy left Lutterworth Army Staging Camp for Zeals where it stayed for the night.

25-4-1944 (D-42)

Main convoy left Zeals for Sopley and the new camp was pitched in Sopley Park.

26-4-1944 (D-41)

The Mobiles were set up at the following locations:-

Sopley Park:- 21 Wing H.Q., 349 M.R.U., 15073 COL, 5131A M.S.U., 5228J M.S.U., Air Formation Signals.

Spyway Barn, Worth Matravers:- 15074 COL & 5140Q MSU.

Langford Waver, West Wellow:- 15072 GCI & 5227J MSU.

Swineham Farm, Wareham:- 15081 GCI, 5141Q MSU & 5226J MSU.

Exercise 'Fabious':-15082 GCI, 5142Q MSU, M.O.R. & 5131A attachment.

30-4-1944 (D-37)

Captain E.W. Straw (Royal Marines) attached to the Wing.

MAY

1-5-1944 (D-36)

Flt/Lt Jarrett attached from 85 Group for Equipment duties.

3-5-1944 (D-34)

A.M.E.S. No. 15073, 596F and 5228J units moved to Warren Hill, Christchurch.

5-5-1944 (D-32)

Lt J.K. Morland, and Lt M.B. Denny, Royal Marines, attached from R.M. A.A.O.R.

6-5-1944 (D-31)

604 Squadron, having arrived at Hurn, carried out two practice interceptions with 15073.

7-5-1944 (D-30)

No practice flying took place.

Captain T.D. Catchside, Lt R.K. Mays, and Lt J. Shankland, R.A., attached to the Wing from 162 A.A.O.R.

8-5-1944 (D-29)

604 Squadron carried out one practice sortie with the Mobiles.

Flt/Lt I.C.D. Clowes was detached to A.M., Belgrave Square.

Flt/Lt McCarthy posted to the Wing for Adjutant duties.

A.M.E.S. No. G.15072 moved from Sturminster Marshall to Sopley.

9-5-1944 (D-28)

604 and 488 Squadrons both carried out Practice Interceptions with the Mobiles.

Flt/Lt F.H. Ainsworth posted from the Wing to Peterhead.

10-5-1944 (D-27)

The training programme was carried on.

5276 'D' arrived at the Wing.

11-5-1944 (D-26)

604 Squadron carried on the training programme.

12-5-1944 (D-25)

A full nights training was carried out.

5159 'J' unit left for Llanassa, Prestatyn.

13-5-1944 (D-24)

Another full nights training programme was carried out.

5293 'J' unit left for 24 Wing.

14-5-1944 (D-23)

The nights training programme was interrupted by hostile activity and the Mobiles being ordered to close down. Four aircraft from 604 Squadron were scrambled which resulted in two contacts.

Ft/Lt Surman and F/Sgt Weston claim 1 D.O. 217 destroyed. F/O Macdonald and Sgt Baird claim 1 J.U.188 damaged. 488 Squadron had 8 aircraft scrambled which resulted in 5 combats.

15-5-1944 (D-22)

Two Mosquitoes of 604 Squadron had combat between Cherbourg and the Isle of Wight claiming one Do.217 destroyed and one Ju.88 damaged.

16-5-1944 (D-21)

488 Squadron carried out training programme.

Offensive patrols to intercept aircraft carried out by 604 Squadron North of Cherbourg. Claim one Ju.88 destroyed South of the Isle of Wight.

17-5-1944 (D-20)

488 and 604 Squadrons carried out training programme.

18-5-1944 (D-19)

488 and 604 Squadrons carried out training programme.

19-5-1944 (D-18)

488 Squadron carried out practice.

20-5-1944 (D-17)

No entries.

21-5-1944 (D-16)

Wg/Cdr A.M. Anderson and certain detached personnel left Sopley.

23-5-1944 (D-14)

F/Off S.D. Cooke (Intell.) Sqn/Ldr A.P. Crowley (Sigs), Flt/Lt Rycroft (Med.) Sqn/Ldr Patley (Admin) posted to 21 (B.D.) Wing.

F/Off Avery,(Equip), Flt/Lt A.R. Boughton (Accts.) Captain R.M. Straw, Lt J. Moseland, Lt Henry, (Royal Marines), attached to 21(B.D.) Wing.

Wg/Cdr B. Ingham, DFC, promoted to War Substantive rank of Sqn/Ldr w.e.f. 16th February 1944.

24-5-1944 (D-13)

Five aircraft of 604 Squadron were scrambled on uneventful patrols. Practice flying was also carried out.

Eight aircraft of 488 Squadron flew uneventful patrols. Training programme also carried out.

25-4-1944 (D-12)

604 Squadron carried out training programme.

F/O Murson (A&SD) posted from this Wing to R.A.F.N.I.

26-5-1944 (D-11)

604 Squadron carried out a training programme.

F/Lt Burr attached to Wing from 60 Group.

27-5-1944 (D-10)

Five aircraft of 604 Squadron scrambled on defensive patrols. Practice flying also carried out.

28-5-1944 (D-9)

The following Officers posted to this Wing w.e.f. the dates stated:-

F/Off A.M. Johnson, (Accts), 20-5-1944. Flt/Lt R.H. Miskin, Flt/Lt G.R. Peerless (A&SD), P/Off R.T. Walford, (A&SD Int.), P/Off E.F. Barber, (A&SD Int.) w.e.f. 21-5-1944.

An aircraft of 604 Squadron (pilot, F/Off Miller and Navigator, Warrant Officer Catchpool) airborne with four others on defensive patrol at 22.45 hours on the 27th. Attacked an enemy H.S.L. in the

Channel at 00.14 hours. Strikes were observed on the boat, but, when orbiting for a second attack the pilot was called off by the Controller (Ft/Lt Richards, North Matravers G.C.I.).

29-5-1944 (D-8)

An aircraft of 604 Squadron (Pilot, Ft/Lt Harris, Observer, Sgt Hopkinson) was scrambled in the early hours of the morning for a 'bogey' in the Cherbourg area. The 'bogey' was identified as friendly and on setting course for home our aircraft was engaged by one of our own night fighters and just north of Start Point and shot down. The pilot managed to bale out and was rescued by the Navy but the Observer, apparently unable to jettison the door was drowned. Our aircraft was showing (unreadable) lights and I.F.F.

30-5-1944 (D-7)

Five aircraft of 604 Squadron scrambled on uneventful patrols. Practice flying was also carried out.

31-5-1944 (D-6)

No entries.

JUNE

1-6-1944 (D-5)

The Troops were employed getting everything ready to leave for Embarkation Port on the following morning. All British Maps were given in and further items of equipment were given to the men.

Everybody was going to be briefed at 15.00 hours but this was postponed three times as W/ Cdr Anderson was not available for the briefing. Eventually at 2200 hours Squadron Leader Trollope gave the troops a talk and an idea as to what the job in hand was. He then briefed the Officers afterwards. Immediately after this, everyone retired in order to be ready for an early start in the morning.

2-6-1944 (D-4)

Breakfast at 06.30 hours and the first three craft loads left D.2 at five minute intervals starting at 09.05 hours, the other two craft loads not leaving until the afternoon. The convoy moved at very slow speed to the embarkation port and all were embarked by 17.30 hours and the L.C.T.'s pulled out and anchored in the harbour. As soon as the LCT had been anchored, rations were issued to the troops as very few of them had eaten since breakfast. They eventually bedded down for the night, some in vehicles and others sleeping on the top, there being an issue of two blankets per man. Very few of the craft had any conveniences or accommodation at the disposal of the troops although one or two of the craft did manage to have some of the rations cooked in the cook-house.

3-6-1944 (D-3)

The day was quite uneventful. It was a beautiful, sunny day and most of the troops spent the day lying in the sun, there being nothing else they could do, although a few of them bathed off the LCT. The day's rations were issued in the morning and they were in sufficient quantity but soon became very monotonous after a day or two.

5th to 8th-6-1944

The attached report covers these days.

D-Day

The first echelon of 21 (B.D.) Sector embarked in five LCT's on 2-6-1944 at Portland where they remained in harbour until Sunday, 4-6-1944.

At approximately 04.00 hours the Armada left port and set sail for the English(French?) coast but before reaching Poole the whole fleet turned around and was back in port again by 07.00 hours, where it remained until 04.30 hours on the following morning. This time the Armada set sail for the invasion of the Continent, and the rendezvous off the coast of Normandy was reached soon after daybreak on 6-6-1944. The sea voyage was completely without enemy interference. Enemy aircraft were conspicuous by their absence, none being seen at all during the voyage. The sea was rough with a South West wind blowing.

The first attempt at landing was made at 11.30 hours on 6-6-1944; the convoy moved towards the beach, the vehicles, all with their engines running, ready to disembark when the ramps were lowered, but as the convoy approached the beach it was observed that this beach was still under machine gun fire as heavy shell fire and it was obviously impracticable to land the convoy then, as without warning it withdrew until 1700 hours. During this time, considerable shelling of the cliffs was being done by the Navy to try and silence the shore batteries that were established on the cliffs, continually shelling the beach. This went on right up to the time of landing. At 1700 hours the convoy again headed for the beach, an order having been given to land.

As the convoy drew close to the shore, it was observed that this beach, which was St Laurent about one mile to the West of Colleville beach where it was supposed to land, was under heavy shell fire from 88mm guns; these guns had got the range of the beach and were consistently shelling the American vehicles which were lined up at the head of the beach and unable to get a way as the exits were blocked, but nevertheless, in spite of this, it was apparently decided suitable to land 21 (B.D.) Sector. Most of the craft were landed in about 4' 3" of water so that immediately they (*the vehicles?*) struck a hole they were drowned. In all, 27 vehicles were landed but out of this lot, only 8 were driven off the beach, although a number were salvaged later in varying stages of disrepair.

LCT 649 was landed considerably further out to sea than the other craft on a sandbank with about 4' 3" of water but the vehicles very soon dropped into the water about 6' deep and were drowned. The men having to scramble on top of the vehicles to avoid also being drowned. All the vehicles from this craft were lost except one which never got off the craft as there was difficulty in starting the engine and the skipper refused to wait. It was noticeable that the skipper of this craft had only one interest and that was to get the vehicles off and to be away as soon as possible., having no consideration whatever for the fate of the vehicles and the troops he was disembarking. It is considered that this skipper did not look after his craft in the best interests of the men on board, as on no less than three occasions he got so far behind the convoy that one of the accompanying launches had to order him to close up on account of the risk he was taking. There was great difficulty in getting the men from this craft ashore as there was considerable distance to swim, but they were all safely got ashore in the end and nobody was drowned.

Very soon after the vehicles were landed, they came under further shell fire from an 88 and a number were destroyed in this manner as it was impossible to move them off the beach, both exits being completely blocked. This beach was more or less deserted except for the fact that American wounded who had been lying about since the first assault and the crews of American vehicles that could have been pulled out of the water with little ill effect to them or their equipment were left stranded in the water and the tide quickly came up and went over the top of them and they were lost to sight until the tide went down again. It was reported that in view of the fact that the Emergency Medical Services were almost wiped out and the fact that the beach was still under heavy shell fire, that it was decided not to land the elaborate beach organisation that was to be set up to deal with the disembarkation of the follow up Units. In spite of this fact, however, it was apparently decided that it was a fit time to disembark 21 (B.D.) Sector.

The whole Unit came under heavy shell fire while they were on the beach and the troops were got to the top of the beach as soon as possible and dug foxholes in the shingle and there they remained until the situation could be reviewed and a place found for the Unit to be moved to, it being obvious that the front line was about a mile off the beach.

The Padre, Squadron Leader Harding, gallantly reconnoitred the little village of Les Moulins which was situated at the westerly coast (sic) of the beach; he came back and reported that this village was not under fire and also gave some cover. Squadron Leader Trollope then went over the beach and ordered everybody to move to this western end of the beach, the troops at this time being scattered in craft loads. For the next two hours, all personnel who were not wounded were employed at the exit of the beach, helping either to pull out some of the vehicles from the sea with a bulldozer which had now arrived on the scene, or with carrying wounded, both our own and the Americans off the beach. The doctor, Flight Lieutenant Ryecroft (sic) with the aid of the Padre, a lot of the time under fire, were continuously employed rendering wonderful medical aid to the wounded under the worst possible working conditions from the time of landing until late the following afternoon, when all the wounded were got to the American First Aid Post, overlooking the next beach. All the serious cases were evacuated to the UK that night except Wing Commander Anderson, who remained until the following day, to have his arm x-rayed and also to see what was going to happen to the Unit.

When this work at the beachhead was completed, the Unit moved up the road to this small hamlet of Les Moulins. Some of the wounded were taken to a courtyard of a house in this village, the rest being taken to a convenient crater on the beach, above high water mark and were made as comfortable as possible under these conditions for the night. The rest of the Unit spent the night lying on the edge of the road at the entrance to the village which was situated between two thickly wooded hills and in most places there was a low wall on the side of the road which rendered them some shelter from the continuous sniping that went on all through the night. These cliffs were full of snipers that had underground passages like rabbit warrens, honeycombing the whole area.

Soon after dark, 6 Junkers 88's, the only enemy aircraft so far seen or heard, came over and dropped two bombs on the beach, one of these named aircraft was shot down by the Navy. At intervals, throughout the night, there were odd bursts of fire, from the Ju 88's bursting just above us.

7-6-1944 (D+1)

At 0500 hours, Squadron Leader Trollope went up the road to see if it was possible to move the Unit further inland as it was obviously in a very dangerous position where it was, apart from the fact that it was blocking the road should further transport be disembarked. Actually, nothing was disembarked on this beach after 21 (B.D.) Sector till late the following afternoon. The result of the reconnaissance showed that it appeared possible to move a mile or so up the road but just before this move took place, Flight Lieutenant Effenberger who was sent up this road to find a position to park the convoy, came back and reported that the road was now under cross machinegun fire and that he had been fired at a number of times, on one occasion having his steel helmet knocked off. From later experience, this fire is considered to have come from the Americans, who were trigger conscious and repeatedly mistook the RAF Blue for the enemy.

At about 1100 hours, the 88mm guns opened up on the beach with greater determination, as the Unit, after a further reconnaissance, moved up the road and pulled into a field about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile up as Transit Area No.3 was still not open. This field was full of American snipers, who were firing over our heads into the wooded hill at random. There was also a certain amount of return fire from the enemy snipers but nobody was seen to be hit. At approximately 1400 hours, Major Kelakos, Intelligence Officer, 49th A.A. Brigade, contacted us in the field and he told us that

General Timberlake suggested that the Unit pulled into Transit Area 2, at the top of the hill overlooking the next beach to the East and adjacent to his Headquarters. This was the first official contact of any sort that had been made with the Americans since landing.

The convoy moved out of this field almost immediately, through the village of St Laurent where terrific rifle fire was taking place and went to Transit Area No. 2 where it settled down for the night. This place was pretty crowded but the troops managed to find room to dig foxholes for themselves to sleep in. It was an extremely noisy position as there was cross shell fire going on overhead between the Navy and the 88mm guns which were again shelling the beaches.

The military position during the whole of this period was extremely precarious, the bridgehead reported not to be anywhere more than two to three miles deep. Wing Commander Anderson, who had been wounded in the wrist, and Squadron Leader Trollope contacted General Timberlake of the 49th A.A. Brigade in the evening and the position was reviewed. It was decided to move the convoy next morning, June 8th, to field nearby so that the equipment could be examined to see if it was possible to get any of it operational. By that time, Squadron Leader Best and the other technical officers who had worked unceasingly by salvaging equipment of all sorts from the beaches, ranging from vehicles down to small items of equipment from derelict vehicles and it was considered that it would be possible to set up and become operational if a site was selected, the original site still being in the hands of the enemy. Squadron Leader Trollope again saw General Timberlake and a site was selected overlooking the cliff, just behind No. 2 Transit Area. The convoy moved there in the afternoon and the equipment was set up ready to become operational on the following night.

Wg/Cdr A.M. Anderson; Contacted Gen Timberlake re precarious position of the GCI. Wg/Cdr noted as wounded.

Sqn/Ldr F.J. Trollope; At 0500 reconnoitred road further inland from Les Moulins. With Wg/Cdr Anderson. Saw Gen Timberlake, twice, re site for radar.

8-6-1944 (D+2)

Convoy moved this morning to 'a field nearby' so that the equipment could be examined. Convoy moved in the afternoon from Transit Area 2 to a cliff behind it where the equipment was set up ready for operational use on the following evening.

9-6-1944 (D+3)

By the afternoon of the 9th, the Military position in this Sector had improved to such an extent, the bridgehead now being seven to eight miles deep, that a signal was received ordering G.C.I 15082 to start packing up immediately preparatory to moving the following morning to the original site selected for them to come to on 'D' Day, this area now being cleared of the enemy. The work of packing up was started immediately, hence the Unit did not operate on the night of 9-6-1944 but moved to the new site on 10-6-1944.

Our camp was organised and the equipment was all put in order to operate at night. Salvage work was still in progress on the beaches and personnel were employed obtaining equipment of all sorts to carry on with. The water problem was still difficult as we had no water cans and the drinking water was some way off. A certain amount of clothing was obtained for the troops as a number of them had lost everything they had and stood up in the clothes in which they had swum ashore. The Americans continuously sniped at the RAF blue, so denims were given to as many of the troops as possible to avoid this. There was considerable improvement in the Military situation during the previous 24 hours as a result of an Armoured Division having been landed and gone into action and the bridgehead was said to be something like 7 or 8 miles in depth and both Trevieres and Isigny were reported to have fallen and the Americans were still pushing on.

Reports from the British beaches were also encouraging, stating that Bayeux and Caen had both been captured by the British but all reports on the military situation are stated to be very unreliable and vague.

At approximately tea time a signal came in ordering G.C.I. 15082 to pack up at once preparatory to moving first thing in the morning to the original site selected for the Unit to proceed to on D-Day. The packing up was commenced and the Unit was non-operational that night. There were the usual odd raids at intervals approaching the beaches and a terrific barrage of fire kept going up and one or two enemy aircraft were reported to be destroyed.

10-6-1944 (D+4)

The technical equipment of G.C.I. 15082 which was serviceable, left first thing in the morning for the new site (the one originally selected for D-Day) and the rest of the convoy followed on, after lunch, a distance of about 8 miles, leaving the Wing Operations room behind to remain until G.C.I. 15072 arrived. The main convoy arrived at approximately 05.00 hours and the domestic site and cook-house were prepared.

A liaison visit was made to 70 Wing and the Type 14 was operational that night. A few small raids kept approaching and in the course of the night, a score of one destroyed and one damaged was obtained. Altogether, there were 16 contacts obtained but 7 of these turned out to be friendlies and the rest of the contacts were lost. The new site was greatly appreciated by everybody as the Unit was completely on its own and free from the everlasting letting off of rifles by the Americans which was going on at the other sites.

D-Day Landing Report

Set up at the new site and operated that night and claimed one enemy aircraft destroyed and one enemy aircraft damaged.

Up to and including the 9th of June, there were large numbers of snipers in the area around St Laurent and sniping was going on almost incessantly day and night, there was also a terrific barrage at intervals every night from the heavy guns when enemy aircraft were reported in the area. On no occasion was there reported to be more than (*unreadable*) enemy aircraft over the beaches during the night. These snipers were firmly established, some in underground tunnels, others in thick, jungle-like woods surrounding the village. It is reported that some of these had secured themselves in trees by the means of nets and were firing smokeless ammunition and hence almost impossible to find until they gave themselves up when their ammunition had run out. The total casualties of the Unit were one Officer, Flight Lieutenant Highfield and 9 Other Ranks killed, one (*unreadable*), five Officers (Wing Commander Anderson, Squadron Leader Harrison, Captain Rowley, Flying Officer Williamson and (*unreadable*) Barnes, US and 31 Other Ranks wounded.

11-6-1944 (D+5)

The day was more or less uneventful. Sundry liaison visits from an to the Americans were made. The military situation in the American Sector had improved considerably and the Foret de Berlay, where a Panzer Division was reputed to be, was captured. There was no enemy activity from the air during the night in this Sector.

12-6-1944 (D+6)

The military situation continued to improve and a straight line was now established from a point around Caen to a point North of St Lo. In the course of the night, G.C.I. 15082 were successful in having 3 enemy aircraft destroyed. There were no big raids but odd single enemy aircraft kept coming up. There was a certain amount of confusion at the beginning of the night as the F.D.T.

(Fighter Direction Tender) handing over the fighters had R/T trouble and could not contact the fighters, thus, the first raid was over before this Unit was given a fighter. Wg/Cdr Brown, Sqn/Ldr Best and Sqn/Ldr Tohill nearly got into the enemy lines near Carentan on their way to Utah beach, through taking a wrong turning. The beachhead here is very narrow and these officers had grenades thrown at them as well as being sniped at.

13-6-1944 (D+7)

Various liaison visits from and to the Americans took place. In the evening Gp Capt Moseby, Sqn/Ldr McGrath, Ft/Lt Evans and Lt Madder (of Air Formation Signals) arrived as the advance party of the second echelon. The night was quite uneventful, there being very few enemy aircraft about. G.C.I. No. 15082 carried out nine patrols but all proved to be uneventful. The military position in the American Sector continued to improve and the Utah and Omaha fronts were joined but there was only a narrow bridgehead in the Carentan area, the front line being within 3 miles of Carentan. The other forces were within 3 miles of St Lo.

14-6-1944 (D+8)

Sqn/Ldr McGrath went on a recce visit to the Cherbourg peninsula to find a site for G.C.I. No. 15072 on which to set up if the military situation warranted it. The A.O.C. (Air Officer Commanding) paid a visit to Sector Headquarters and spent most of the evening in G.C.I. 15082 Operations Room watching the Controller. It happened to be a night with a fair amount of activity going on all the time and in the course of the evening, Operations got a Ju88, 1FW190 destroyed and 1 FW190 damaged. In addition to this, there was a considerable number of contacts on friendlies. The second echelon of 21 Sector and the remainder of the first echelon which had remained at the original set-up near the Omaha B beachhead moved into the site at T.595905 where G.C.I. No. 15082 had set up and this became Sector Headquarters for the time being. The Sector Operations set up but was unable to become operational that night. The military situation in the American Sector continued to progress and considerable advance was made in the Sector East of St Lo and the position was also improved considerably in the Carentan area which had been an enemy stronghold and up to this time was more or less in the hands of the enemy who were now pushed out about 3 miles from the town which closed the route to the Peninsula.

15-6-1944 (D+9)

G.C.I. 15072 moved out to a position in the Cherbourg peninsular T.375940 but were non-operational at night due to VHF trouble. The day was uneventful except that word came through that the twp LCT's which were missing from the second echelon had landed safely on Utah beach and were to proceed to Headquarters the following day. There was considerable enemy activity at but unfortunately the weather was bad over in England and 264 Squadron appeared to be about the only squadron which was operating and there was a great shortage of fighters in the pool, it being impossible to get the fighters which were required. The results were very disappointing as out of 7 contacts on enemy aircraft, one only resulted in a combat and that a 'damaged' and all the rest were lost. The following officers were posted to the Sector as replacements for casualties sustained:- W/Cdr Hay, Operations, F/Lt Wiseman & F/Lt Tasker (Ops G).

16-6-1944 (D+10)

The remainder of the second echelon arrived at HQ and the Wing Operations Room became operational. It was also hoped that the G.C.I. 15072 at O.3904 would be operational by night but this was not so as there were communication difficulties with the lines. The night was a quiet one with very little enemy activity but G.C.I. 15082 were successful in having a Ju88 and a FW190 destroyed.

17-6-1944 (D+11)

The day was spent trying to improve communications with the Operations Room which, up to date had been very restricted. The night proved to be a record as with enemy activity estimated at 15 to 20 aircraft the Sector were able to claim 7 destroyed About 50%. 6 victories went to G.C.I. 15082, 3 Ju188's, 1 Ju88 and 2FW190, 5 of these while Sqn/Ldr Trollope was controlling and 1 while under the control of Ft/Lt Wiseman. Sector Operations claim 1 FW190 (Ft/Lt Tasker). The military position was continuing satisfactorily. About the only Sector of note, where there was any appreciable change, was in the Peninsula where St Saviour to La Vicente was taken early in the day, the troops were pressing on to cut the Peninsula. An advance was also made in the Gaumont area, East of St Lo, where there was apparently very little opposition. The position at Carentan was still rather doubtful, the enemy still being within 1½ miles of the town. G.C.I. 15082, who had set up in the Cherbourg Peninsula became operational but only obtained one contact on an enemy aircraft which was lost.

18-6-1944 (D+12)

There was very little enemy activity during the night, the estimate being ten to twelve enemy aircraft over the area out of which a Ju188 and a Ju88 were destroyed by aircraft under the control of G.C.I. 15082 (Ft/Lt Nodes).

19-6-1944 (D+13)

This was again a quiet night the estimate being 12 enemy aircraft. Five contacts were obtained but all were lost before combat took place, due either to "window" or excess speed.

20-6-1944 (D+14)

Gp/Capt W.G. Moseby went on recce run up Cherbourg peninsula to see G.C.I. 15072, also to ascertain how near the proper site had been cleared of the enemy. The military position was going ahead in this area and the Allied troops were within 4 miles of Cherbourg, Valognes having already fallen. There was slight enemy activity at night amounting to 12 sorties, G.C.I. 15082 (Ft/Lt Wiseman) got 1 FE190 destroyed. Three contacts were obtained and well held on enemy aircraft but all had to be broken off as the hostiles entered the IAZ. The gunfire was so intense and could not be stopped that on all occasions the fighter was forced to break away

21-6-1944 (D+15)

Preparations were made for moving some of the Signals Units up into the Cherbourg Peninsula as the military situation in that area was fast being cleared up and Cherbourg was likely to fall at any time. The night was an extremely quiet one, this being the first night since the Unit set up that no raids entered the Sector although a few raids were seen in the adjoining sector to the East. The following are now the locations of the various Units:-21 Sector HQ, MSU5131A and G.C.I. 15082 near Longueville, Ref T.595905; G.C.I.15072 and C.O.L.15073 near Ravenoville, Ref .03904; C.O.L.15074 near Longueville, Ref T.595865.

22-6-1944 (D+16)

Further recce's were made to the Cherbourg Peninsula. Flt/Lt Chapman, Flt/Lt Fountain and Mr Cox went to Tocqueville to make the final arrangements for setting up the Sector Headquarters. A chateau near Tocqueville selected and requisitioned for the Headquarters. Cherbourg had, as yet, not actually fallen, but the fighting in that area appeared to be comparatively light. The night was again a quiet one, out of 6 raids reported as entering the Sector, one Ju188 was destroyed by an aircraft under the control of G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr Trollope).

23-6-1944 (D+17)

The Third Echelon of 21BDS arrived at Utah Beach and went up to the site which was to be Sector Headquarters near Tocqueville. The following morning, Gp/Capt Moseby and an advance party proceeded to the Chateau to arrange the layout of the new headquarters. There was very little enemy activity at night, the official estimate being 5 in this Sector, out of which 'Jungle' 25 claimed to have shot down a Ju188. This was considered to have been a friendly aircraft, 'Jungle 41', which was seen to go down in flames at approx. the same position and time.

24-6-1944 (D+18)

Third Echelon arrived at the new Headquarters and commenced to settle themselves in although it was known that the enemy were only about 4 miles East and there were no friendly troops between them and the enemy. Various members of the Unit from the present headquarters went up to the chateau to see the lie of the land and to make arrangements for the setting up of their own sections. The night was again quiet, the official estimate of enemy aircraft being about 6 in the Sector, out of which C.O.L. 15074 claimed one Me410 destroyed (F/O May) and one Ju188 damaged (Sqn/Ldr Ross)

25-6-1944 (D+19)

In the course of the night the enemy in the Cherbourg area started shelling the direction of G.C.I. 15072 and the new Headquarters. G.C.I. 15072 were forced to pack up and make a hasty retreat during the night. The shelling continued during the day and headquarters were ordered to disperse, which they did, leaving only a holding party. In the course of the day the military position was well in hand and word came through in the evening that the Americans who had previously surrounded Cherbourg were now fighting in the streets from house to house. The enemy activity at night was almost negligible, only 4 hostiles entered the Sector but no interceptions were made..

26-6-1944 (D+20)

Wg/Cdr Maxwell of 604 Squadron arrived by air in the evening at the Sector Headquarters at Longueville where he spent the night. The evening was spent between G.C.I. 15082 and the Operations Room but was quite uneventful largely due to the weather conditions as it rained in deluges most of the night and was really non-operational.

27-6-1944 (D+21)

Wing Commander Maxwell went up to see Gp/Capt Moseby at the new Sector Headquarters near Tocqueville and spent the night. News came through to this headquarters at approx. 1700 hours that the batteries and pockets had been cleaned up and that Cherbourg was now in our hands, except for the mopping up of a few snipers and an odd machine gun nest. In consequence of this information, Sectors Headquarters personnel which had evacuated to Reveille were immediately moved back to Headquarters and G.C.I. 15072 moved back to their site and became operational at night. The Commanding Officers of 410 and 488 Squadrons arrived at Sector Headquarters at Longueville in the evening and spent a considerable part of this night in the Operations Room, but there was practically no activity in the area during the whole night except for one or two odd raids which appeared.

28-6-1944 (D+22)

Sqn/Ldr Trollope took the Commanding Officers of 410 and 488 Squadrons up to the new HQ at Tocqueville and then all returned in the evening including Wg/Cdr Maxwell who went on to visit C.O.L. 15074 and 24 Sector, where he spent the night. There was again very little activity in the Sector, only 3 enemy aircraft estimated to have entered it out of which, a fighter controller of G.C.I.

15082 (Ft/Lt Wiseman) destroyed one Ju88. Considerable activity was observed to the east in 24 Sector.

29-6-1944 (D+23)

Nothing of interest occurred during the day and there was no activity at all during the Night although a few raids were observed in the adjoining Sector to the East. It turned to rain in the evening and rained heavily off and on all night.

30-6-1944 (D+24)

Gp/Capt Moseby went from the new Sector Headquarters near Tocqueville to the old site at Longueville to look around with Sqn/Ldr Trollope for a new site on the coast on which to set up G.C.I. 15082 as the patrol line for fighters controlled by G.C.I. 15082 was now over the sea instead of being south of the I.A.Z. where it originally was before they first set up. The site was selected at T.577937 which is between St Pierre du Mont and Grandcamp. During the night there was slight enemy activity on the eastern boundary of the Sector. 3 minelayers just entered the Sector. A Ju188 was shot down by a fighter controller of G.C.I. 15082 (Ft/Lt Nodes).

**REPORT ON THE LANDING OF THE FIRST ECHELON
OF NUMBER 21(B.D.) SECTOR ON "D" DAY, 6th. JUNE 1944**

The first echelon of 21 (B.D.) Sector embarked in five LCT's on 2-6-1944 at Portland where they remained in harbour until Sunday, 4-6-1944.

At approximately 04.00 hours the Armada left port and set sail for the English(French?) coast but before reaching Poole the whole fleet turned around and was back in port again by 07.00 hours, where it remained until 04.30 hours on the following morning. This time the Armada set sail for the invasion of the Continent, and the rendezvous off the coast of Normandy was reached soon after daybreak on 6-6-1944. The sea voyage was completely without enemy interference. Enemy aircraft were conspicuous by their absence, none being seen at all during the voyage. The sea was rough with a South West wind blowing.

The first attempt at landing was made at 11.30 hours on 6-6-1944; the convoy moved towards the beach, the vehicles, all with their engines running, ready to disembark when the ramps were lowered, but as the convoy approached the beach it was observed that this beach was still under machine gun fire as heavy shell fire and it was obviously impracticable to land the convoy then, as without warning it withdrew until 1700 hours. During this time, considerable shelling of the cliffs was being done by the Navy to try and silence the shore batteries that were established on the cliffs, continually shelling the beach. This went on right up to the time of landing. At 1700 hours the convoy again headed for the beach, an order having been given to land.

As the convoy drew close to the shore, it was observed that this beach, which was St Laurent about one mile to the West of Colleville beach where it was supposed to land, was under heavy shell fire from 88mm guns; these guns had got the range of the beach and were consistently shelling the American vehicles which were lined up at the head of the beach and unable to get a way as the exits were blocked, but nevertheless, in spite of this, it was apparently decided suitable to land 21 (B.D.) Sector. Most of the craft were landed in about 4' 3" of water so that immediately they (*the vehicles?*) struck a hole they were drowned. In all, 27 vehicles were landed but out of this lot, only 8 were driven off the beach, although a number were salvaged later in varying stages of disrepair.

LCT 649 was landed considerably further out to sea than the other craft on a sandbank with about 4' 3" of water but the vehicles very soon dropped into the water about 6' deep and were drowned. The men having to scramble on top of the vehicles to avoid also being drowned. All the vehicles from this craft were lost except one which never got off the craft as there was difficulty in starting the engine and the skipper refused to wait. It was noticeable that the skipper of this craft had only one interest and that was to get the vehicles off and to be away as soon as possible., having no consideration whatever for the fate of the vehicles and the troops he was disembarking. It is considered that this skipper did not look after his craft in the best interests of the men on board, as on no less than three occasions he got so far behind the convoy that one of the accompanying launches had to order him to close up on account of the risk he was taking. There was great difficulty in getting the men from this craft ashore as there was considerable distance to swim, but they were all safely got ashore in the end and nobody was drowned.

Very soon after the vehicles were landed, they came under further shell fire from an 88 and a number were destroyed in this manner as it was impossible to move them off the beach, both exits being completely blocked. This beach was more or less deserted except for the fact that American wounded who had been lying about since the first assault and the crews of American vehicles that could have been pulled out of the water with little ill effect to them or their equipment were left stranded in the water and the tide quickly came up and went over the top of them and they were lost to sight until the tide went down again. It was reported that in view of the fact that the Emergency Medical Services were almost wiped out and the fact that the beach was still under heavy shell fire, that it was decided not to land the elaborate beach organisation that was to be set up to deal with the disembarkation of the follow up Units. In spite of this fact, however, it was apparently decided that it was a fit time to disembark 21 (B.D.) Sector.

The whole Unit came under heavy shell fire while they were on the beach and the troops were got to the top of the beach as soon as possible and dug foxholes in the shingle and there they remained until the situation could be reviewed and a place found for the Unit to be moved to, it being obvious that the front line was about a mile off the beach.

The Padre, Squadron Leader Harding, gallantly reconnoitred the little village of Les Moulins which was situated at the westerly coast (sic) of the beach; he came back and reported that this village was not under fire and also gave some cover. Squadron Leader Trollope then went over the beach and ordered everybody to move to this western end of the beach, the troops at this time being scattered in craft loads. For the next two hours, all personnel who were not wounded were employed at the exit of the beach, helping either to pull out some of the vehicles from the sea with a bulldozer which had now arrived on the scene, or with carrying wounded, both our own and the Americans off the beach. The doctor, Flight Lieutenant Ryecroft (sic) with the aid of the Padre, a lot of the time under fire, were continuously employed rendering wonderful medical aid to the wounded under the worst possible working conditions from the time of landing until late the following afternoon, when all the wounded were got to the American First Aid Post, overlooking the next beach. All the serious cases were evacuated to the UK that night except Wing Commander Anderson, who remained until the following day, to have his arm x-rayed and also to see what was going to happen to the Unit.

When this work at the beachhead was completed, the Unit moved up the road to this small hamlet of Les Moulins. Some of the wounded were taken to a courtyard of a house in this village, the rest being taken to a convenient crater on the beach, above high water mark and were made as comfortable as possible under these conditions for the night. The rest of the Unit spent the night lying on the edge of the road at the entrance to the village which was situated between two thickly wooded hills and in most places there was a low wall on the side of the road which rendered them some shelter from the continuous sniping that went on all through the night. These

cliffs were full of snipers that had underground passages like rabbit warrens, honeycombing the whole area.

Soon after dark, 6 Junkers 88's, the only enemy aircraft so far seen or heard, came over and dropped two bombs on the beach, one of these named aircraft was shot down by the Navy. At intervals, throughout the night, there were odd bursts of fire, from the Ju 88's bursting just above us.

At 0500 hours, Squadron Leader Trollope went up the road to see if it was possible to move the Unit further inland as it was obviously in a very dangerous position where it was, apart from the fact that it was blocking the road should further transport be disembarked. Actually, nothing was disembarked on this beach after 21 (B.D.) Sector till late the following afternoon. The result of the reconnaissance showed that it appeared possible to move a mile or so up the road but just before this move took place, Flight Lieutenant Effenberger who was sent up this road to find a position to park the convoy, came back and reported that the road was now under cross machinegun fire and that he had been fired at a number of times, on one occasion having his steel helmet knocked off. From later experience, this fire is considered to have come from the Americans, who were trigger conscious and repeatedly mistook the RAF Blue for the enemy.

At about 1100 hours, the 88mm guns opened up on the beach with greater determination, as the Unit, after a further reconnaissance, moved up the road and pulled into a field about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile up as Transit Area No.3 was still not open. This field was full of American snipers, who were firing over our heads into the wooded hill at random. There was also a certain amount of return fire from the enemy snipers but nobody was seen to be hit. At approximately 1400 hours, Major Kelakos, Intelligence Officer, 49th A.A. Brigade, contacted us in the field and he told us that General Timberlake suggested that the Unit pulled into Transit Area 2, at the top of the hill overlooking the next beach to the East and adjacent to his Headquarters. This was the first official contact of any sort that had been made with the Americans since landing.

The convoy moved out of this field almost immediately, through the village of St Laurent where terrific rifle fire was taking place and went to Transit Area No. 2 where it settled down for the night. This place was pretty crowded but the troops managed to find room to dig foxholes for themselves to sleep in. It was an extremely noisy position as there was cross shell fire going on overhead between the Navy and the 88mm guns which were again shelling the beaches.

The military position during the whole of this period was extremely precarious, the bridgehead reported not to be anywhere more than two to three miles deep. Wing Commander Anderson, who had been wounded in the wrist, and Squadron Leader Trollope contacted General Timberlake of the 49th A.A. Brigade in the evening and the position was reviewed. It was decided to move the convoy next morning, June 8th, to field nearby so that the equipment could be examined to see if it was possible to get any of it operational. By that time, Squadron Leader Best and the other technical officers who had worked unceasingly by salvaging equipment of all sorts from the beaches, ranging from vehicles down to small items of equipment from derelict vehicles and it was considered that it would be possible to set up and become operational if a site was selected, the original site still being in the hands of the enemy. Squadron Leader Trollope again saw General Timberlake and a site was selected overlooking the cliff, just behind No. 2 Transit Area. The convoy moved there in the afternoon and the equipment was set up ready to become operational on the following night.

By the afternoon of the 9th, the Military position in this Sector had improved to such an extent, the bridgehead now being seven to eight miles deep, that a signal was received ordering G.C.I 15082 to start packing up immediately preparatory to moving the following morning to the original site selected for them to come to on 'D' Day, this area now being cleared of the enemy. The work of packing up was started immediately, hence the Unit did not operate on the night of 9-6-1944 but

moved to the new site on 10-6-1944 where it set up and operated that night and claimed one aircraft destroyed and one enemy aircraft damaged.

Up to and including the 9th June, there were large numbers of snipers in the area, around St Laurent and sniping was going on almost incessantly day and night, there was also a terrific barrage at intervals every night from the heavy guns when enemy aircraft were reported in the area. On no occasion was there reported to be more than (illieg) enemy aircraft over these beaches during the night. These snipers were firmly established, some in underground tunnels, others in thick, jungle-like woods surrounding the village. It is reported that some of these had secured themselves in trees by the means of nets and were firing smokeless ammunition and hence almost impossible to find until they gave themselves up when their ammunition had run out. The total casualties of the Unit were one Officer, Flight Lieutenant Highfield and 9 other ranks killed, one missing, five officers (W/Cdr Anderson, S/Ldr Harrison, Capt Rowley. R.A., F/O Williamson and (illeg) Barnes, U.S.) and 31 other ranks wounded.

JULY

1-7-1944 (D+25)

G.C.I. 15082 moved their technical equipment to the new site selected for them between St Pierre du Mont and Grandcamp at (T.5496) and were on the air and fully operational by night. There was more activity by night than there had been for some time, waves of hostiles appeared believed to be mine-laying. There were estimated to be 6 aircraft in the first wave and 20+ in the second but unfortunately the weather had closed in very badly and there were no fighters on patrol at the time. One fighter (219 Squadron) did arrive during the course of the raid and obtained a contact, but due to the fact that he was in cloud all the time, he was never able to obtain a visual.

2-7-1944 (D+26)

The weather was again bad but the number of enemy aircraft was estimated at three aircraft out of which one Ju188 was destroyed (Ft/Lt Nodes) and an unidentified probably destroyed (Sqn/Ldr Trollope) by fighters under the control of G.C.I. 15082.

3-7-1944 (D+27)

The day at Longueville was spent in packing up everything except the equipment that was wanted for the night's operations preparatory to leaving the site as soon after 0600 hours as possible for the new Headquarters at Tocqueville. The advance party of the Wing were fully employed getting the new Operations Room rigged up ready for operations the following night. The night was again fairly quiet with enemy activity estimated at only 6 aircraft, one of which, a Ju188 was shot down by a fighter controlled by G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr Trollope).

4-7-1944 (D+28)

Sector Operations left Longueville at 06.30 hours for their new Headquarters at Tocqueville and arrived at 13.00 approx. The rest of the day was spent unpacking and getting all the equipment ready for operating at night. This was to be the first night of the changeover from the Mobile Ops to Transportable Ops. Set up in a large room in the Chateau Tocqueville. C.O.L. 15074 moved from Longueville to a new site near La Parnelle, (O.3620) where they set up and were operational at night. The night was a quiet one with only a few minelayers in the Sector but no interceptions were made.

5-7-1944 (D+29)

The day was spent working on the Operations Room as there was still a lot of work to put in and improvements to be made to get things working to the fullest advantage. Personnel were working all the time under considerable disadvantage due to the lack of Communications with outside Units. There was the makings of a first class set up when everything was brought to perfection which only time and experience could do. The night was an extremely quiet one, the only enemy activity reported coming from C.O.L. 15074 who reported that a fighter under their control had a visual on a Do.217 (Dornier) but lost it.

6-7-1944 (D+30)

A very quiet night and no enemy aircraft entered the Sector. Locations of Units at the present time:-

Sector HQ, A.F.S., and 5131A in O.3626 Tocqueville.

G.C.I. 15072 -).3229, Renaville; C.O.L. 15073 - O.2626, Carnville;

C.O.L. 15074 - O.3620, La Pernelle; G.C.I. 15082 - (T.5493).

7-7-1944 (D+31)

G.C.I. 15081 moved to their new location T.053993 near Barneville and expect to be operational on the 8th. It was estimated that approximately 6 enemy aircraft operated in the area out of which G.C.I. 15082 destroyed a Ju88 and Me410. 'Jungle' 28 who destroyed the Ju88 was apparently hit in combat and was forced to bale out over the sea but nothing was heard of him afterwards.

8-7-1944 (D+32)

No enemy activity appeared in the Sector at all during the night. G.C.I. 15081 became operational. Sqn/Ldr (Rev) C.J. O'Mahoney posted to the Sector.

9-7-1944 (D+33)

There was no enemy activity in the Sector but enemy aircraft which appeared to be mine-laying could be seen in the adjoining Sector to the East but we could not get much information about them as the telephone line was out and the only means of communication was over the R/T.

P/Off L. Bigmore, P/Off C.M. Davis and P/Off B. Rose posted to the Sector for Filter duties w.e.f. 3-7-1944.

10-7-1944 (D+34)

There were the usual patrols but no enemy aircraft activity occurred in the Sector during the night. F/Off A.W. Henderson posted to the Sector for Signals duties w.e.f. 13-6-1944.

11-7-1944 (D+35)

There was originally reported to be enemy activity in the Sector but it afterwards transpired that one enemy aircraft apparently approached G.C.I. 15081 and dropped one bomb about half a mile from the site.

12-7-1944 (D+36)

There was slight enemy activity during the night estimated at 3+ probably mine-laying about 20 miles East of Barfleur. A fighter of 604 Squadron obtained a contact but lost it and no further could be given by control on account of the concentration of 'window' in the area. Captain Holloway and First Lt Gusten attached to Sector for AA Liaison duties from 14 A.D.C.

13-7-1944 (D+37)

There were no enemy aircraft plotted in the area but it is possible that there may have been two or three minelayers in the Sector. A type 15 was set up S.E. of Jobourg.

14-7-1944 (D+ 38)

21BDS Operations Record Book (PRO Ref:- Air 26-40)

No enemy activity seen in the Sector.

15-7-1944 (D+39)

There was no enemy activity in this Sector though a considerable amount could be seen to the East in the adjoining Sector with a fairly heavy concentration of 'window'.

16-7-1944 (D+40)

Nothing of interest occurred during the day. There was slight enemy activity estimated at three or four aircraft which entered the Sector but no interceptions were made. A considerable amount of 'window' was observed in 24 Sector and there was a certain amount in this sector.

17-7-1944 (D+41)

Rather more activity was seen during the night than there had been for some time. It was difficult to state the number as they were plotted as X-raids but the bulk of them proved friendly but one Ju188 was shot down by an aircraft of 604 Squadron when under the control of G.C.I. 15081. A fighter of 410 Squadron had a combat but the result is not known due to R/T failure immediately after the combat. The official number of raids was 10+ appearing singly.

18-7-1944 (D+42)

The Air Officer Commanding 85 Group visited the Sector arriving for lunch and stayed the night. He first looked round Sector Headquarters and then accompanied by Gp Capt W.G. Moseby, paid a visit to G.C.I. 15072 during the afternoon and spent some time in the Sector Operations Room during the evening. The night was quiet one only enemy aircraft being definitely plotted and this was damaged by an aircraft of 604 Squadron while under the control of G.C.I. 15081. It is possible there may have been one or two more hostiles during the night which were plotted as X-raids and never identified. C.O.L. 15074 moved to a new site at O.960287 which is S.E. of Jobourg.

19-7-1944 (D+43)

There was considerably more activity during the night than there had been for some time. At 22.45 hours 6+ enemy aircraft were seen by G.C.I. 15081 approaching from the south but in spite of the fact that a request had been made for fighters to be sent to the pool earlier there were none available. Between 23.10 and 23.40 hours, G..C.I. 15082 reported enemy activity off the beaches estimated at 8-10 aircraft dropping fairly extensive 'window'. These were considered to be chiefly mine-laying. At 23.50 hours G.C.I. 15082 reported 'window' being dropped by an aircraft going West towards Barfleur and shortly afterwards bombs were reported being dropped in the vicinity of G.C.I. 15072.

20-7-1944 (D+44)

The weather turned to rain about 1600 hours and continued to rain off and on most of the night. There was no enemy activity at all during the night partly due to the weather conditions.

21-7-1944 (D+45)

9th Air Force Planning Document for "Overlord" 1st April 1944.

This is the date at which it was planned that the 21 Sector involvement would cease and hand over to the IX Air Defense Corps (ADC).

21BDS Operations Record Book (PRO Ref:- Air 26-40)

Bad weather conditions continued and it rained hard most of the day with low cloud. There was no enemy activity seen in the Sector during the night and only 4 fighters operated due to the weather being almost non-operational. At 22.45 hours a low flying aircraft was reported North of this Headquarters and at 22.50 hours G.C.I. 15072 reported hearing a bomb drop but no damage has been reported.

22-7-1944 (D+46)

A gradual improvement in the weather as the day went on and by nightfall conditions were reasonable and fighters flew uneventful patrols. At approximately 02.45 hours, 4 enemy aircraft entered the sector from the East where considerable enemy activity had been seen with extensive 'window'. The enemy aircraft had approached shipping from the direction of the Seine and mine-laying was suspected but no interceptions were made.

23-7-1944 (D+47)

Weather conditions had returned to normal and the normal patrols were flown. There was rather more enemy activity during the night than there had been for some time. At approximately 01.00 hours 10+ enemy aircraft entered the Sector from the East. The aircraft appeared to be mine-laying over the battle front. Extensive 'window' was used and no interceptions were made. One fighter while under the control of G.C.I. 15081 should have had a contact as he was with an aircraft plotted as hostile for 20 minutes but at the end of this time he said his weapon was bent.

24-7-1944 (D+48)

The first detachment of 6 aircraft of 604 Squadron arrived at A.15 during the afternoon and had a state of readiness during the night out of which two went off on uneventful patrols. The crews came to Headquarters, 21 Sector, for accommodation. The night was another very quiet one, no enemy aircraft having been seen to enter the Sector. There was 'window' seen in the extreme East of this Sector but it is extremely doubtful whether any hostile entered this area.

25-7-1944 (D+49)

A quiet night with only one enemy aircraft seen to enter the Sector. This enemy aircraft entered the Sector from the East, dropped 'window' and went straight out again. Two fighters based at A.15 went on patrol.

26-7-1944 (D+50)

A little more hostile activity was noticed during the night. Very soon after it got dark, at 22.40 hours, 3+ enemy aircraft approached from the South but no interceptions were made. At 22.40 hours, 3+ enemy aircraft approached from the South but no interceptions were made. At 23.30 hours a single Ju88 suspected of mine-laying was intercepted by a fighter of 604 Squadron (F/Off Truscott and F/Off Howarth) under the control of G.C.I. 15072 (Ft/Lt Tasker) and was destroyed. It is possible there were a few isolated raids in Isigny Bay later in the night but it was impossible to identify them. Sector tried to home a Bomber Command Mosquito to Maupertus which had run short of petrol due to going off course when his instruments became u/s from the effects of lightning. This aircraft however had insufficient petrol to make it, so the pilot ditched the aircraft about 4 miles from land, 12 miles East of Cherbourg. The pilot and navigator were both picked up by the Navy with only minor cuts and bruises.

27-7-1944 (D+51)

A lone raider, a Ju88 was destroyed by a fighter of 604 Squadron (Ft/Lt Miller and W/O Catchpole) which was based at Maupertus; this was the first combat of night fighters based in France. This aircraft was controlled by G.C.I. 15081 (Ft/Lt Smith). A few other scattered raids intermingled with friendly bombers were observed in the Sector, but it was impossible to say how many.

28-7-1944 (D+52)

This marked a revival in the activity shown by the Hun. At 22.40 hours 4+ enemy aircraft appeared from a south westerly direction and from this wave 2 Ju88's were destroyed in T.24 and T.25 by 'Derval' 21 while under the control of G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross). At approximately 22.40 hours the largest wave of enemy aircraft that had been seen for some time appeared from the East and operated over the battle area and the sea. This wave was estimated at about 30+ out of which three were destroyed by fighters under the control of G.C.I. 15082. 'Dorval' 23 claimed a Ju88 destroyed (Sqn/Ldr Trollope), Limestone 27 claimed a Ju88 destroyed (Ft/Lt Nodes) and Jungle 33 claims a Ju88 destroyed (Ft/Lt Wiseman). At 05.00 hours hostile tracks appeared North of Isigny but owing to 'window' it was impossible to estimate the number of enemy aircraft. Three fighters stationed at A.15 carried out uneventful patrols and Jungle 21 landed at A.15 due to engine trouble.

29-7-1944 (D+53)

The Hun was again active during the night. At 22.30 hours 5+ appeared from a Southerly direction but no interceptions were made. There was then a long quiet period until 05.15 hours when a raid estimated at 25+ appeared and attacked the battle front S.E. of St Lo. Dorval 44 while under the control of G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross) claims 2 Ju88's and 1 Do217 destroyed and 1 Ju88 probably destroyed. Jungle 23 (P/Off MacKenzie) while under the control of G.C.I. 15082 (Ft/Lt Nodes) claims 1 Ju88 destroyed and as he was short of petrol landed at A.15. Three fighters based at A.15 flew uneventful patrols. Dorval 14 (Sqn/Ldr Bunting) while under G.C.I. 15082 was hit by enemy flak and crashed in T.8242 at 00.46 hours.

30-7-1944 (D+54)

There was considerably less enemy activity during the night than there had been on the two previous nights. The only enemy activity noticed in this Sector was at 01.00 hours when 5+ enemy aircraft were seen to operate over the battle area; out of these (Sqn/Ldr Maitland-Thompson) 604 Squadron claims 1 Ju88 destroyed while under the control of G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross) in T.46. Three fighters based in France flew uneventful patrols. Dorval 38 landed at A.15 at 22.43 hours with slight engine trouble and Tessa 23 and Nursemaid 29 landed at A.15 due to bad weather at base.

31-7-1944 (D+55)

A reduction in the scale of enemy activity probably due to the weather conditions. After a very hot sunny day, fog started to rise just before dark and these conditions spread to the U.K. At 23.50 hours 10+ enemy aircraft appeared from the South and operated mainly in the Cherbourg area and were reported to be dropping flares. A Mosquito of 410 Squadron (F/Off Maclay and F/Off Walsh) claims a Ju88 destroyed while under the control of G.C.I. 15082 (Ft/Lt Nodes) at 00.01 Hours. Between 00.30 hours and 01.00 hours a number of X-raids were plotted but none of these were actually identified as hostile. At 01.00 hours all fighters were recalled as the weather in the UK was closing in fast. Altogether 10 fighters operated but none of these were based in France.

AUGUST

1-8-1944 (D+56)

The Hun showed signs of becoming more active again probably partly due to a spell of bad weather in the UK and Northern France and the fact that he knew we should have difficulty in putting many fighters in the air. Two waves came over of 10 and 15 respectively, the first wave operating in the Cherbourg area at about midnight and the second wave over the battle area at 03.00 hours. An aircraft of 488 Squadron (Ft/Lt Hall) while under the control of G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr Trollope) destroyed a Ju88. At 01.50 hours all fighters were recalled due to the weather deteriorating in the UK. Another 9 fighters from the UK and 3 based at A.15 (604 Squadron) of which Ft/Lt Perry and F/Off Wall crashed on landing and were both killed.

2-8-1944 (D+57)

Considerable enemy activity during the night and weather conditions even more in favour of the Hun than on the night before as his bases in Holland and Germany were reasonably clear while the UK and Northern France closed right in. The first wave of enemy aircraft estimated at 20+ appeared from the South at 22.50 hours and out of this lot 2 fighters of 488 Squadron claim a Do217 destroyed (Sqn/Ldr Somerville) while under G.C.I. 15081 control (F/Off May) and Dorval 22 while under the control of G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr Trollope). The second wave of 12+ appeared at 0400 hours. A fighter of 488 Squadron (W/O Maclay), while under the control of G.C.I. 15081 (F/Off May) claims a Ju188 and Ft/Lt Plumer, 410 Squadron, while under G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr Trollope) also claims a Ju188. Before this activity had ceased, fighters were recalled due to the weather closing in at base, but one fighter was sent off later but had no joy. There were two further bits of activity of approximately 6 enemy aircraft operating over the battle area. The Flight of 604 based at A.15 moved to A.8 but nothing took off during the night owing to the weather.

3-8-1944 (D+58)

The night was fairly active mostly consisting of small raids of from 4 to 6 A/C which operated over the battle area. The total estimate for the night was 28+, one raid just after midnight estimated at 10+. One Mosquito (604 Squadron) based at A.8 (Ft/Lt Foster and F/Off Newton) claim one Do 217 destroyed while under G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross). Ft/Lt Crosby (264 Squadron), W/O Patrick (488 Squadron) and Ft/Lt Jameson (488 Squadron) each claim one Ju88 destroyed and Ft/Lt Dinsdale (410 Squadron) claims one Me110 damaged all under the control of G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr Trollope and Ft/Lt Nodes). Ft/Lt Corbett, (219 Squadron) landed at A.8 uninjured after being with 24 Sector and shot up by a Stirling. Ft/Lt Beverley and his operator after being in combat with a Ju88 under 24 Sector, baled out successfully on their way to A.8. Both pilot and operator were uninjured.

This was the first night that 'Black Widows' of 422 Squadron based at A.a5 operated under our control. They had nine uneventful patrols.

4-8-1944 (D+59)

There was a considerable decrease in the enemy effort compared with the previous nights. The first wave of 3 enemy aircraft appeared at the extreme South of the Sector just after midnight and out of these, F/Off Dinsdale of 410 Squadron, claims one Feisler Storch destroyed while under the G.C.I. 15081 (F/Off May). At 00.45 hours, the second wave of enemy aircraft appeared, estimated at ten, from the South East and out of these, F/Off Shaw of 488 Squadron, claims one Ju188 destroyed and one Ju88 damaged and Wg/Cdr Haine (488 Squadron) claims one Ju 88 destroyed, both under G.C.I. 15082 control (Ft/Lt Wiseman). The third wave of three enemy aircraft operated S.E. of St Lo about ¾ of an hour later. Night 'Black Widows' flew uneventful patrols.

Capt Tamble (U.S.AAC);- Attached from 71st Fighter Wing. Capt Kay, A.A. attached from 42nd S/L Unit. Capt Holloway U.S.A.;- Attachment ceased.

5-8-1944 (D+60)

G.C.I. 15081 moved to new site situated at T. 133327 and C.O.L. 15074 moved into 15081's site at T.055933. The activity during the night was again not very extensive, what there was, being in the St Malo area. Ft/Lt Haddon and F/Off McIlvenny of 604 Squadron under G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross) claim one Ju188 destroyed. Two Mosquitos of 488 Squadron, Dorval 21 & 27 claim one Do217 each while under G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross). Eight 'Black Widows' flew uneventful patrols.

6-8-1944 (D+61)

There was a revival in the enemy activity and it turned out to be a pretty busy night. G.C.I. 15082 plotted 20+ enemy aircraft in this area and due to communication difficulties, it was impossible to estimate the number of enemy aircraft in 15081's area but there was considerable activity over the battle area. Ft/Lt Surman and P/Off Weston claimed two Do217's and one Me110 destroyed, F/Off Macdonald & F/Sgt Baird claim one Ju188 destroyed, Ft/Lt Hooper and F/Off Hubbard, all of 604 Squadron, under G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr McGrath) claimed one Me410 damaged. But was hit himself and has not been heard of since. Wg/Cdr Hughes & Ft/Lt Dixon of 604 Squadron under G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross) claim one Ju88 destroyed. A Mosquito of 410 Squadron, Sqn/Ldr Somerville under G.C.I. 15081 (F/Off May) claims one Ju88 destroyed. Ft/Lt Jameson of 488 Squadron when under G.C.I. 15082 (Ft/Lt Wiseman) claims one Ju88 destroyed and another Mosquito of 488 Squadron claims one Ju 188 destroyed under G.C.I. 15081 (F/Off May). A 'Black Widow' of 422 Squadron, Lt Axtell and F/Off Crew under G.C.I. 15074 (Ft/Lt Sharman) claims one Do217 probably destroyed. Lt Garden and Lt Morrison in another 'Black Widow' claim a Ju188 as probably destroyed, as it dived through cloud when being chased and a terrific explosion was seen below although no guns were fired.

7-8-1944 (D+62)

Another busy night. F/Off Macdonald and Ft/Lt Elliott claim one Ju188 destroyed and F/Off Smith and F/Off Roberts both of 604 Squadron under G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross) claim two Do217's destroyed. Ft/Lt Cross and W/O Smith of 604 Squadron, under G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr Trollope) claims one Ju188 and one Ju88 destroyed. One 'Black Widow', 422 Squadron, (Lt Anderson and Lt Morris under G.C.I. 15082 (Sqn/Ldr Trollope) claim one Ju88 destroyed. One 'Black Widow', 422 Squadron, Lt Smith and Lt Tierney under G.C.I. 15081 (Ft/Lt Smith) claim one Me110 damaged. Jungle 19 under G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross) claim one unidentified. The enemy activity was estimated at 20+ in the St Malo area and two waves of approximately 6+ over the battle area.

8-8-1944 (D+63)

The enemy activity was on a rather reduced scale. There was one wave of 20+ that came in from the East about midnight and out of these, F/Off Wood and F/Off Leafe of 604 Squadron, while under the control of G.C.I. 15081 (Sqn/Ldr Ross) claim one Do217 destroyed. A few enemy aircraft operated in the southern half of the Sector at approximately 02.30 hours and out of these, a 'Black Widow' of 422 Squadron, Lt Rurnens and Lt Meran, under G.C.I. 15082 (Ft/Lt Wiseman) claim one Ju88 destroyed.

F/Lt Twining attached to C.O.L. 15074.

9-8-1944 (D+64)

An Uneventful night with practically no enemy aircraft entering the Sector.

10-8-1944 (D+65)

The first wave of enemy aircraft, about 6+, came into the Sector from the Eastern beaches at about 23.30 Hours and during this attack, F/Off Daber of 264 Squadron under G.C.I. 15072 (Flt/Lt Tasker) claims one Ju188 destroyed. Wg/Cdr Hiltz, under the same controller also claimed a Ju88 destroyed. There was no further activity until about 03.00 when a few isolated enemy aircraft appeared from the South a few miles East of Avranches.

11-8-1944 (D+66)

264 Squadron arrived at A.8 during the day and operated from there at night. There was very little enemy activity during the night, but it is estimated that about five enemy aircraft made very scattered raids between 02.00 and 02.30. Flt/Lt Miller and P/Off Catchpole claim a Do217 probably destroyed under G.C.I. 15082 (Flt/Lt Nodes). Unfortunately he was involved in an accident when landing at A.8. An aircraft of 264 Squadron (Flt/Lt Davison and F/Off Willmott, DFC) was engaged by flak and his R/T became u/s. He came in to land at A.8, after making an unsuccessful attempt to land at A.15. Flt/Lt Miller came down and not knowing he was there, owing to R/T silence, crashed into him. F/Off Willmott DFC was killed and the other three members of the crews were slightly injured. In view of the unserviceability of the runway after this accident, two aircraft of 604 Squadron landed at A.15 and one of 264 Squadron landed in the UK.

12-8-1944 (D+67)

No enemy aircraft plotted in the Sector but considerable 'window' was seen East of Domfront, between 02.45 and 03.30 hours. 22 fighters patrolled uneventfully. Flt/Lt McCarthy posted from 21 Sector to 85 Group.

13-8-1944 (D+68)

Another quiet night with no enemy activity plotted but 'window' was laid west of Cotentan Peninsular.

Flt/Lt Fergusson;- Posted to 21Sector for Adjutant duties. Lt Kelly;- Attached on temporary duties from A.A.A.O.D.

14-8-1944 (D+69)

The Hun was a little more active during the night and two waves were plotted, one of 12+ and the other of 6+. Lt Gordon and Lt Marson of 422 Squadron, 'Black Widows', while under the control of G.C.I. 15072 (Lt Mills) had a combat with a Me177 which they claim as destroyed and were themselves hit. F/Off Smith and F/Off Roberts, 604 Squadron in a Mosquito, had a visual on a Me410 dropping 'window' but it peeled off in the flak and was lost before it could be engaged. F/Off G.F. Williamson re-posted for Signals duties from 85 Group. He was one of the D-Day party who was wounded.

15-8-1944 (D+70)

21BDS Operations Record Book (PRO Ref:- Air 26-40)

A quiet night with no enemy activity reported in the Sector.

Capt O'Brian, Capt Thomas, C.A.C. attached for temporary duties from 55th Brigade.

16-8-1944 (D+71)

Approximately 6 enemy aircraft entered the Sector from the East at 02.30 and were suspected of mine-laying. Ft/Lt Corre and F/Off Bines of 264 Squadron in a Mosquito had a visual on an enemy

aircraft and were unsuccessfully fired at but were themselves unable to open fire before overshooting and contact was lost.

17-8-1944 (D+72)

Only very slight enemy activity in the Sector. 3 enemy aircraft entered the Sector from 24 Sector but no interceptions were made. Weather closed in at A.15 and a 'Black Widow' diverted to Middle Wallop.

18-8-1944 (D+73)

Only one enemy aircraft was seen in the Sector and this a Do217 was shot down by a 'Black Widow' of 422 Squadron (Lt Kohler and Lt Test) while under G.C.I. 15082.

19-8-1944 (D+74)

A quiet night and no enemy aircraft were plotted in the Sector. One aircraft was diverted to A.15 on account of the bad weather conditions at A.8.

20-8-1944 (D+75)

Slight enemy activity was observed during the night. Two small waves of approximately six enemy aircraft in each entered the Sector. The first wave operated North of the beaches and the second one, the battle front, but although there were several contacts, no combats were reported. The first sortie was made by a Walrus of 276 Squadron detached Flight, A/S/R stationed at A.23C. The Walrus went in search of a F.47 reported in the sea but only found wreckage of a vessel thought to be the same size as a H.S.L. (High Speed Launch?).

21-8-1944 (D+76)

It rained for practically the whole of the 24 hours with such low cloud, this was the first occasion since D-Day when no fighters at all either from France or based in the UK went on patrol. The squadrons based in France had their state reduced to one at readiness and the rest at sixty minutes from the time they came to readiness.

22-8-1944 (D+77)

A very quiet night with no enemy activity seen in the Sector. The weather in the UK completely closed in and no fighters from that side operated, 24 Sector had to be reinforced from here. In the course of the night the weather also closed in, in France so that there was no flying at all during the latter part of the night.

23-8-1944 (D+78)

Another quiet night with no enemy aircraft entering the Sector. G.C.I. 15082 were non-operational as they were packing up ready to leave at dawn

24-8-1944 (D+79)

G.C.I. 15082 moved at dawn to a new site at Auteuil Racecourse but were not operational that night. There was (sic) no enemy aircraft seen to enter the Sector during the night. One Walrus of 276 Squadron went on A/S/R patrol but saw nothing. C.O.L. 15073 moved to 15082's old site.

25-8-1944 (D+80)

No enemy aircraft were plotted as entering the Sector during the night but a 'Black Widow' of 422 Squadron, under C.O.L. 15073 control, claims a Ju188 as probably destroyed but this is thought to be a Mosquito of 488 Squadron which was fired on at the same position and time as alleged combat with the Ju188 took place. The Mosquito was hit but managed to land safely at its base in

the UK. A fighter of 604 Squadron managed to contact G.C.I. 15082 at their new site at Auteuil and did a patrol with them. Two Walrus aircraft of 276 Squadron did an A/S/R patrol in search of a Marauder crew but nothing was seen.

26-8-1944 (D+81)

A very quiet night with no enemy aircraft entering the Sector. The weather kept closing in at intervals during the night and only eight patrols were flown. G.C.I. 15082 moved again, this time to the Racecourse at Longchamps, Paris.

27-8-1944 (D+82)

Two Mosquitos, one of 604 Squadron and the other of 264 Squadron, flew A/S/R near Les Sept Isles in the morning. There was no enemy activity plotted at night. Thirteen uneventful patrols in the Avranches and Paris areas were flown by 604 and 264 Squadrons. One aircraft had contact on an aircraft in the Paris area which was too fast for his and may have been hostile.

28-8-1944 (D+83)

Another quiet night during which no enemy aircraft were plotted in the Sector. Fourteen aircraft of 604 and 264 Squadrons flew uneventful patrols in the Paris and Avranches areas. Ft/Lt Sandeman and F/Off Coates (604 Squadron) reported possible contact in Paris area at 23.05 but his R/T then ceased.

29-8-1944 (D+84)

(re the above) The next that was heard of the aircraft was a report that the pilot had baled out and was safe. He was on patrol in the Paris area under G.C.I. 15082 and had a combat in the course of which they were shot down. Flt/Lt Sandeman was thrown out and landed safely but F/Off Coates was killed.

No enemy aircraft were seen to enter the Sector but a number of fires were seen in the Paris area. There were only two patrols during the night due to the weather conditions and both these aircraft had to land at B.17.

Wg/Cdr O.A. Guggenheim attached to 2798 RAFR Squadron.

30-8-1944 (D+85)

Again no enemy aircraft seen to enter the Sector and it out to be a very quiet night. No aircraft were able to operate from A.8 due to the runway being unserviceable and nothing being able to take off. This was due to something being done to the runway and the equipment doing it breaking down and leaving it in an unserviceable state. There were only four patrols in the Sector during the night, two aircraft based in 24 Sector and two from the United Kingdom.

31-8-1944 (D+86)

No enemy aircraft again entered the Sector during the night and a searchlight exercise was carried out.

SEPTEMBER

1-9-1944 (D+87)

Only one patrol was flown during the night and that was an unsuccessful attempt to contact G.C.I. 15082. There was no enemy aircraft seen to enter the Sector. Sqn/Ldr Lovell posted to the Sector from Middle Wallop for Controller duties.

2-9-1944 (D+88)

An extremely quiet night. Due to the runway at A.8 being unserviceable, no fighters were able to take off but no enemy aircraft were plotted in the Sector.

3-9-1944 (D+89)

Another quiet night with no enemy aircraft entering the Sector. The runway at A.8 was still unserviceable but three Mosquitos of 264 Squadron operating from B.17 patrolled the Cherbourg area. A Walrus of 276 Squadron went on an uneventful A/S/R patrol during the day to search for the crew of (Flying) Fortress but none was seen.

Capt D.H. Straw and Lt. H.M. Denny of Royal Marines attached Sector. Capt Wakelin attachment ceased.

4-9-1944 (D+90)

No fighters based in the Sector were able to operate due to the unserviceability of the runway at A.8 but one aircraft from 24 Sector and six from the United Kingdom reinforced the Sector but there was no enemy activity. The weather was bad with hard showers at intervals all day and night.

5-9-1944 (D+91)

No fighters based in the Sector operated due to the runway at A.8 still being unserviceable but six aircraft from B.17 and one from the UK reinforced the Sector; there was no enemy activity.

6-9-1944 (D+92)

The weather was again very bad with intermittent showers most of the day and night. Two aircraft from B.17 reinforced the Sector but there was no enemy activity.

7-9-1944 (D+93)

The weather still continued to be very bad throughout the day and night. A.8 was still non operational and three aircraft flew weather tests but found the weather unsuitable. One aircraft was scrambled from B.17 to investigate an X-raid which was later identified as a friendly.

8-9-1944 (D+94)

Showery weather continued with very heavy, intermittent showers. No aircraft were yet able to operate from the Sector due to the unserviceability of the airfield. Six aircraft carried out uneventful patrols in the Sector operating from B.17. There was no enemy activity in the Sector.

9-9-1944 (D+95)

No enemy activity in the Sector during the night. Eight fighters of 604 Squadron based at B.17 flew uneventful patrols in the Cherbourg area. During the day, 604 Squadron moved from A.8 to B.17. G.C.I. 15081 moved from Granville (T133327) to O-313293. Two Walrus of 276 Squadron A/S/R patrolled to take off wounded from a destroyer but found it impossible to land due to the rough sea.

10-9-1944 (D+96)

There was no enemy activity in the area during the night. Eight fighters operated from B.17 and flew uneventful patrols in the Cherbourg area. One Walrus of 276 Squadron carried out one A/S/R patrol in search of possible Minelayers or U-Boats near Sark. Only five small fishing boats seen. GC15072 moved to Granville (T-133327).

11-9-1944 (D+97)

No enemy activity reported in the area. Eight fighters of 604 Squadron flew uneventful patrols in the Cherbourg area from B.17. G.C.I. 15072 moved back from Granville to O-313293.

12-9-1944 (D+98)

No enemy activity in the area. Seven aircraft of 604 Squadron based at B.17 flew uneventful patrols in the Cherbourg area. G.C.I. 15081 moved from O-313293 to 'an unknown destination in Holland'.

13-9-1944 (D+99)

The weather closed in during the night and only two aircraft went on patrol in the Sector. There was no enemy activity. During the afternoon a Walrus of 276 Squadron took off on A/S/R patrol in search of a barge with ten men in it but saw nothing.

14-9-1944 (D+100)

The weather closed in during the early part of the night and only two uneventful patrols were flown in the Cherbourg area by aircraft based at B.17. A third aircraft was airborne but returned to base with R/T trouble. There was no enemy activity during the night. A Walrus of 276 Squadron was ordered off on a A/S/R patrol by Sector as one of the D/F stations thought they heard a 'Mayday' given on a bearing of 320° from A.15. A search was made but nothing was seen.

15-9-1944(D+101)

There was no enemy activity in the area during the night. Seven fighters based at B.17 flew uneventful patrols in the Cherbourg area.

16-9-1944 (D+102)

There was again no enemy activity in the area during the night. Seven fighters patrolled the Cherbourg area uneventfully. The first two fighters were late in taking off due to a Marauder crashing on the runway and hence the runway was unserviceable.

17-9-1944 (D+103)

At 09.00 hrs a Church Parade was held for all officers and airmen not on duty, in celebration of the anniversary of the "Battle of Britain" Sunday. The service was held in front of the Chateau. There was no enemy activity in the area during the night and only three fighters went on patrol during the night as the weather closed in. One Walrus of 276 Squadron was ordered off on an A/S/R patrol to investigate a position where a yellow flashing light had been reported but nothing was seen.

18-9-1944 (D+104)

There was no enemy activity during the night and the standing patrols had been cancelled so there was no flying during the night. One Walrus of 276 Squadron was ordered off during the morning on a A/S/R patrol to search for a Marauder reported in the sea but nothing was seen.

19-9-1944 (D+105)

There was no enemy activity during the night and no fighters went on patrol in this area.

20-9-1944 (D+106)

HQ 85 Group Operations Record Book:-

Minutes of a meeting held at Headquarters 85 Group on 20th September 1944 at 14.00 hours to Discuss the Details of the Return of 21 Sector to the UK.

Present:- A.V.M. C.R. Steele, C.E. D.F.C. AOC.
 A/Cdr H.M. Pearson, CBE SASO.

A/Cdr D.W. Lane.	AOA.
G/Capt F.J. Taylor, CBE.	D/AOA.
G/Capt C.M. Stewart.	CSO.
Wg/Cdr H.V. Campbell, OBE	SPSO.
Sqn/Ldr J. Baines.	S/L Movements.
G/Capt W.C. Moseby, DSO, DFC.	OC 21 Sector.

1. The AOC stated that 21 Sector was to be returned to the UK and that to economise in shipping space, certain items of equipment would be retained in (sic) the Continent. It was explained that 21 Sector will be in a position to obtain replacements for such equipment when they are back in the UK if they are called upon to return as a Base Defence Sector. The following decisions were taken at the Conference and at subsequent discussions:-
2. RADAR EQUIPMENT
 - i) 15081 has been detailed for duties at Zeebrugge.
 - ii) The 451, 462, 432A, 432D, 409 and 456A vehicles with the Type 25 spares from 15072 G and 15062G will be allotted to 15092C and 15093C C.O.L.'s in No. 25 Sector. In addition, the Type 25 trained mechanics from 15072 will be posted to 15092 and 15093 C.O.L.'s. This will bring these C.O.L.'s up to Type 25 specification and enable them to be used for reporting and interceptions.
 - iii) The Type 14 Mark III, 14101, complete with spares and crystals from 15073C will be allotted to 15130C of 24 Sector.
 - iv) The remainder of the 21 Sector Radar Units including 15082 will return to the UK.
 - v) The 432A and 409 vehicles from the 15092C and 15093C will be returned to 15072 and 15082 GCI's.
3. SIGNALS EQUIPMENT
 No Mobile Signal Units should leave the Continent Movements at present. CSO to submit to 2nd TAF proposals for re-allocating most of these Units to 24 and 25 Sectors and to request disposal instructions for the remainder. The CSO will arrange for the echelon of 309 MSSU, now with 21 Sector, to be split and added to the echelons added to 24 and 25 Sectors.
4. SIGNALS PERSONNEL
 No Signals personnel, other than those mentioned in para. 2 (ii) above, will be transferred to other Units. It was decided, however, that No. 21 Sector Signals Officer is to be exchanged with No 25 Sector Signals Officer.
5. AIR/SEA RESCUE
 2nd TAF had been asked for a decision regarding the deployment of 276 Squadron and 32 and 33 Marine Units. It was decided, however, that provisional arrangements will be made for the three MUU's Type Q in 21 Sector and used for Air Sea Rescue to be allotted as follows:-

24 Sector	- 1 (taking their total holding to 2).
25 Sector	- 2.
6. AIR FORMATION SIGNALS
 Air Formation Signals are not part of 21 Sector, and Units and equipment will be withdrawn on the movement of 21 Sector to the UK and used where not (sic) needed. Vehicles Type 301 (MTE21) will be retained in No. 2 Company, 16 Air Formation Signals and not returned to the UK.
7. METEOROLOGICAL SECTION

The Meteorological Section attached to No. 21 Sector Headquarters will be attached to 104TSF and be used to provide information for non-operational aircraft in the Western area of the British Zone.

8. **OTHER PERSONNEL AND GENERAL FIELD EQUIPMENT**

All other personnel and Field Equipment will be returned to UK with No 21 Sector. On arrival in the UK they will be sent to IBSLEY and await further instructions.

9. **No. 142 WING**

A proposal has been made to 2nd TAF that No. 142 Wing Headquarters should be retained in the Continent and used to accommodate Coastal Command Albacores used for Air/Sea Interception operations and also on Air/Sea Rescue detachment on an airfield in Belgium or Holland. If this proposal is approved the Wing will remain with its Field Equipment and Transport (less transport on the establishment of the servicing echelons).

10. **No's 264 AND 604 SQUADRONS**

These squadrons, with their servicing echelons, will return to the UK and be based at Church Fenton and Acklington. They will operate under ADGB and be serviced by their present establishment in order to be available to return to No 85 Group if required. While in the UK, these Squadrons will be re-equipped with Mosquito XXX aircraft.

10. **EXECUTIVE**

The decisions taken at the meeting will be put in to effect on 23rd September 1944.

The Minutes were signed by Air Commodore H.M. Pearson, Senior Air Staff Officer, HQ No. 85 Group.

21BDS Operations Record Book (*PRO Ref:- Air 26-40*)

There was again no enemy activity during the night and no fighters went on patrol.

Gp/Capt Moseby proceeded to 85 Group Head Quarters to attend a conference with the A.O.C. to decide on the future of 21 Sector as the commitment with the American Sector finishes on 23rd. It was decided that the Sector Head Quarters would return to the UK with G.C.I.'s 15082, 15072 and C.O.L.'s 15073 and Col 15074 while the attached Signals Units would all remain on the Continent and be attached to other sectors.

21-9-1944 (D+107)

There was no enemy activity during the night but two fighters based in 24 Sector flew uneventful patrols in the Cherbourg area till the weather closed in. A start was made on the packing up of the camp preparatory to moving at any time at short notice after the 23rd September.

22-9-1944 (D+108)

There was no enemy activity during the night and no fighters operated in the area during the night. This was the finish of the Sector's commitment with the Americans and as soon as the night's operations completed, the process of packing up was started ready to move as soon as the order came through.

23-9-1944 (D+109)

Packing continued throughout the day as it was considered likely that the main party would move the following morning and everything was loaded before the day was out ready to move at short notice.

24-9-1944 (D+110)

The main party waited all day for the order to move but this never came through.

25-9-1944 (D+111)

Main party was ordered to set off for Utah beach. All the troops' kit was loaded up and everybody was ready to start when the order to move was cancelled and the bedding etc. for the night was unloaded again.

26-9-1944 (D+112)

Order to move came through again first thing in the morning and the party left Tocqueville for the United Kingdom via Utah beach at approximately 1030 hours. All vehicles were embarked during the evening ready to leave on the morning tide.. Set off at 10.30hrs approx from Tocqueville for the UK via Utah beach. All vehicles embarked by evening in readiness for a departure on the morning tide.

27-9-1944 (D+113)

The party was accommodated in 7 Landing Ship Tanks (LST's) and 1 LCT. The bulk of them left on the morning tide and after a very rough crossing arrived at Southampton the same evening and eventually got to RAF Ibsley at about midnight. The rest of the party left Utah on the evening tide and did not arrive at Southampton until the following day.

A General Court Martial was held at the Chateau, Tocqueville at 1100 hours to try LAC Sissons of 15074 C.O.L. Unit. The Court consisted of:-

Wg/Cdr Barnett (Judge Advocate),
Wg/Cdr Ian Herbert Arthur Hay (President).
Flt/Lt E. Urry (Defending Officer).
Sqn/Ldr Lovell (Member).
Sqn/Ldr Frederick Joseph Trollope (Member).
Sqn/Ldr Peter Frank Travers Wakeford (Member).
Flt/Lt Boughey (Member).

28-9-1944 (D+114)

The remainder of the main party arrived at Ibsley and the day was spent getting everything ready for everybody to proceed on leave as soon as possible

29-9-1944 (D+115)

The day was spent getting Leave Passes, Ration Cards, etc., made out and all leave started the following day leaving only a small holding party till the rear party arrived who were to act as the holding party.

30-9-1944 (D+116)

Leave commenced.

OCTOBER

2-10-1944 (D+118)

Rear party arrived at Ibsley from Tocqueville.

3-10-1944 (D+119)

The rest of the main party which had remained at Ibsley proceeded on leave and left the rear party as a holding party.

F/Off Collier;-

Posted in to 21Sector for GCI Controller duties w.e.f. 12-9-1944.

Flt/Lt Dougall;-	Attached to 85 Group w.e.f. 24/9/1944.
F/Off A.W. Henderson;-	Posted from 21 Sector to GCI15081 (in Holland?).
P/Off Jones;-	Posted in to 21 Sector for GCI Controller duties w.e.f. 12-9-1944.
F/Off Mansfield;-	Posted in to 21 Sector for GCI Controller duties w.e.f. 12-9-1944.
Sqn/Ldr O'Mahoney;-	Attached to 85 Group.
Flt/Lt Overbury;-	Attached to 85 Group w.e.f. 24/9/1944.
Sqn/Ldr C.E. Spurgeon;-	Posted from 25 Sector to 21 Sector for Signals duties.

8-10-1944 (D+124)

Sqn/Ldr Harding (Padre) posted to 83 Group.

10-10-1944 (D+126)

Personnel of the main party who went on leave with the initial batch returned for duty. As nothing was known for what purpose the Sector would be required, the job of completely overhauling all equipment was taken in hand and this is how the airmen were employed for some time to come. This was a job urgently needed as most of the transport and technical equipment had had a lot of racketing (sic) about in France.

16-10-1944 (D+132)

Owing to lack of Operational duties the personnel of the Sector and sub-units were split into 12 Flights with two officers in charge of each one and the Flights commenced a course of training in Drill, PT, etc., also lectures and organised games. Certain Flights were to be detailed for daily fatigues both on the Camp and in the District.

19-10-1944 (D+135)

Sqn/Ldr Trollope, attached to C.H.L. Hopton.

23-10-1944 (D+139)

Wg/Cdr O.A. Guggenheim, posted to 1308 Mobile Wing.

24-10-1944 (D+140)

Sqn/Ldr Lovell, posted to No 3(P) A.F.U..

1-11-1944 (D+148)

The Sector still having no Operational commitments, the troops continued to be occupied by duties and training in Flights as was done from October 15th onwards.

5-11-1944 (D+152)

Flt/Lt Nodes, attached to RAF Hopton.

6-11-1944 (D+153)

Flt/Lt W.D. Wiseman, posted to Hopton.

10-11-1944 (D+157)

As from this date, the establishment for 21 Sector was cancelled but no decision had been arrived at as to what was going to happen to the personnel or to whom they belonged. In the meantime, the normal routine was carried on till some further information was received as to what was going to happen.

12-11-1944 (D+159)

Gp/Capt William George Moseby D.S.O., D.F.C., awarded the American D.F.C. as from 25-10-1944.

14-11-1944 (D+161)

The Commanding Officer, Group Captain Moseby, DSO, DFC, was attached to 51 O.T.U. pending posting. Wing Commander Hay assumed command of 21 Sector.

It was published in the London Gazette that the Military Cross had been awarded to the following officers who were part of No.1 Echelon of No. 21 Sector who landed on the beaches of Normandy on 'D' Day:-

S/Ldr F.J.Trollope. 15082 G.C.I.

S/Ldr G. C. Harding, 21 Sector HQ, Chaplain.

Sqn/Ldr N. Best, Tech Signals, attached to 21 Sector.

F/Lt R.N. Rycroft, 21 Sector H.Q. Medical Officer.

The following "Other Ranks" were awarded the Military Medal:-

F/Sgt Eckersall, (GCI 15081) Radar Mechanic.

LAC Reid, Medical Orderly.

19-11-1944 (D+166)

The first batch of postings for airmen arrived and from this date onwards, odd postings were coming in at intervals.

Operations Record Book entries ceased as at this date.