

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

FEBRUARY

21-2-1944 (D-106)

Location - Acklington

The first written entries can be made today as the first two Officers posted to this Unit arrived. Sqn/Ldr Crook (Signals) late of Morcombe (sic) and the Far East just proceeded (preceded?) the Adjutant, Flt/Lt Clemmell from HQ 12 Group, Watnall. Authority and date of forming of the Unit are 16th February 1944 and will be part of 85 Base Group when fully formed. Attached to the Wing and on the same Station will be 147 Airfield and to form at Drem will be 148 Airfield. Acklington is under 12 Group and Drem under 13 Group HQ. Squadrons will be - 147 Airfield, 409 RCAF, night and 322, Day and at Drem 148 Airfield 29 Night and 486 Day Squadrons.

22-2-1944 (D-105)

Location - Acklington

The Adjutant reported to the Station Commander, (Wg/Cdr Barthold) and discussed the question of accommodation. It was decided that the Wing Hq should occupy the present Met Office under the FCO. 85 Group requested that the Adjutant make an early visit to see the Personnel at Group and collect information and necessary papers on the formation of the Units under its control.

23-2-1944 (D-104)

Location - Acklington

No further arrivals. Adjutant travelling to 85 Group HQ.

24-2-1944 (D-103)

Location - Acklington

The Adjutant spent all day collection information and seeing Staff Officers.

25-2-1944 (D-102)

Location - Acklington

Photocopy of entries are illegible

26-2-1944 (D-101)

Location - Acklington

The proposal of moving to the Met Office has been vetoed by Higher Authority and instead the first real efforts at administration has been made by sharing the WAAF (G) Office. Movement books were opened. Officers now number four. Signed in officially and filled in forms. There being nothing else for the Technical Officers, they were sent on Pass. Letters that had been received were filed and the first signs of organisation were made. During the evening, two further officers arrived, of Movement Liaison - Flt/Lt Harrison and F/Off Preece.

27-2-1944 (D-100)

Location - Acklington

The HQ Office was again moved - to the Squadron Leader Admin Office. The last nights arrivals were dispatched back to their last Units until required. The day was spent in further improvements in office organisation in preparation of (sic) the Airmen's arrival. 12 Group were phoned for a discussion whether the Unit should not form separately from the Airfield owing to lack of accommodation, chiefly caused by a

number of Training Units and the fact that the main function of the Unit is operational control. It was suggested that Newcastle (Blakelaw) with their Ops Room would be a better location or a vacant Airfield between Acklington and Drem.

28-2-1944 (D-99)

Location - Acklington

The morning was normal routine but in the afternoon, movement was made to prepare the Station Flight Office consisting of three rooms for use as the HQ Station Flight. Personnel took fright and found other accommodation. Visit by Wing Commander Graham of Sector HQ Blakelaw and the proposal of a move to Blakelaw premises was discussed and agreed. Discussed later with Group Captain Eeles (No. 85 Group) who thought proposal was sound, but information would be phoned in the morning.

29-2-1944 (D-98)

Location - Acklington

The first Airmen arrivals came overnight - a Corporal Cook leading in three ACH/GD and one Clerk GD. The whole party started on preparing office accommodation. Walls were distempered and the first signs of life began. In the afternoon, the Adjutant went to see the proposed Private Houses that might accommodate the whole Unit. Two large houses were capable of housing all the Unit, but no office accommodation would be available without dispersal to the SHQ or another house about 1.5 miles away. A difficult problem has arisen, and the advice of the CO is wanted as authority for the move arrived by Signal in the morning. At Acklington the Airmen of the Unit are living in the furthest hut on the Airfield, lately occupied by the RAF Regiment. Officers are dispersed over several huts but generally the Station is organised.

MARCH

1-3-1944 (D-97)

Location - Acklington

Acklington. Cold day with bitter northwest wind. 20 and more Airmen arrived, chiefly Clerks SD and arrangements were made for them to go to the local GCI at Northstead where 15 and 2 Sergeants were sent after tea. The occupation of these personnel is the main consideration at the moment as with no apparatus they are lost. More furniture is required for the office which is taking shape. Snow fell from tea time and became a blizzard.

2-3-1944 (D-96)

Location - Acklington

Authority for the move to Newcastle is confirmed and advance party is arranged but on phoning details, it is learnt that the possibilities in Newcastle have been given to USA AA Brigade and after confirming this new situation with HQ the whole proposal is dropped. Weather continues fine but with bitterly cold wind. The Adjutant goes to Church Fenton to see a contemporary Wing stationed there and get information.

3-3-1944 (D-95)

Location - Acklington

Visit by Adjutant to No. 21 Base Wing at Church Fenton and on the way back to BAO and BRSO at Clifton, York. No further moves in the accommodation question but the use of an Ops Room appears essential until mobile equipment is rendered.

4-3-1944 (D-94)

Location - Acklington

Further exploration of the local facilities is made and some premises in the village temporarily evacuated by the RAF Regiment may be suitable. Strength of Unit is now 14 Officers, 4 SNCO's and 65 Other Ranks. Weather very cold.

5-3-1944 (D-93)

Location - Acklington

Milder conditions with change of wind. Adjutant flown to Turnhouse to see if one room and accommodation could be made available there but without success. Squadron Leader Mawhood (Wg/Cdr Ops) arrived in the evening, also Group Captain Widdows, SASO, 85 Group visited the Station. Discussions on move to Newcastle resumed. Typhoons and Spitfires of 56 and 222 Squadrons practice dusk landings, 1 typhoon missing completely and 1 Spitfire swerved on take off and crashed.

6-3-1944 (D-92)

Location - Acklington

Local weather remained fine and mild but a number of aircraft put down because of poor conditions elsewhere. Squadron Leader Mawhood makes a Sector recce in a Beaufighter of 409 Squadron and studies possible sites for GCI's.

7-3-1944 (D-91)

Location - Acklington

Squadron Leader visits Newcastle with Wing Commander Reid, CSO,. Arrangements made for a 5 day defence course for 12 Airmen to start tomorrow. A batch of Airmen sent on leave while opportunities exist. F/Off Gibbs joins Unit as Intelligence Officer. Present strength is 12 Officers (5 detached), and 76 Airmen including 5 SNCO's. Flt/Lt Robertson arrives for Ops duties.

8-3-1944 (D-90)

Location - Acklington

Nothing of any interest during the day while awaiting discussions on where Operations Room is to be formed. Further inspection of the local Ops Room. Squadron Leader David (Controller) reported for duty. Airmen's living quarters inspected and arranged accommodation to other for Ops Room personnel in Nissen-Ville. 12 Airmen detailed for a 5 day defence course and the first batch of 19 sent on leave. Weather fine and mild.

9-3-1944 (D-89)

Location - Acklington

Group Captain Clark arrived to take command.

10-3-1944 (D-88)

Location - Acklington

CO with Squadron Leader Mawhood and the Adjutant visit Newcastle to renew the question of moving there. The Operations Room and living quarters are inspected and everything points to the suitability of the project. The proposal is again raised with Higher Authority.

11-3-1944 (D-87)

Location - Acklington

The Adjutant with a party of men visited the living premises at Newcastle and make preliminary checking up of accommodation. 85 Group assumes administration of this and other Units forming in 12 and 13 Groups. Airmen interviewed by CO. Inoculations are to be started tomorrow.

12-3-1944 (D-86)

Location - Acklington

Interviews of Airmen continued and selections made. General discussions on training programmes; W/T practices carried out. Short, sharp game of hockey played during afternoon against an Airfield team, which was lost 1-3. Lieutenant Colonel Challen of AFU visited and discussed Signals and lines of communication. Strong north wind blows.

13-3-1944 (D-85)

Location - Acklington

Wind continues to blow but bright and sunny. At 10.30 parade of all Officers and men for an exercise march of just over an hour. Signal received from ADGB authorising move to Newcastle. After lunch, Adjutant with a committee, visit Newcastle and the proposed premises to spy out accommodation and make plans. Movement Order No 1 produced.

Movement Order No. 1

(Air 26/41)

INFORMATION

The formation of 24 Base Defence Wing is to take place at RAF Station Blakelaw, Newcastle.

INTENTION

To move No. 24 Base Defence Wing from RAF Station Acklington to RAF Station Blakelaw, Newcastle on the authority of ADGB Signal No. A34 dated 12th March 1944.

EXECUTION

The move will be made by road in two parties as under:-

- i) Advanced Party (as listed in Appendix A) to move on 15th March 1944.
- ii) Main Party (as listed in Appendix B) to move on 16th March 1944.
- iii) One Coach and one 3 tonner will be required each day and will be supplied by RAF Station Acklington.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

ADVANCED PARTY

- i) Transport to pick up Officers' Kit from outside N.C.O.(officers') quarters at 09.15 hrs, on 15th March 1944.
- ii) Airmen detailed will have kits packed and ready for loading on to transport at 09.30 hrs on 15th March 1944 outside No. 24 Base Defence Wing Headquarters.

MAIN PARTY

- i) Transport to pick up Officers' Kit from Officers' Mess at 09.15 hrs on 16th March 1944.
- ii) Airmen detailed will have kits ready for loading on to transport at 09.30 and 14.30 hrs outside No. 24 Base Defence Wing Headquarters and 09.45 and 14.45 hrs at Nissen Ville.
- iii) Stores and non-technical equipment will be loaded at Wing Headquarters at 09.30 hrs

APPENDIX 'A'

Advance Party Leaving 09.30hrs on 15th March 1944

(Sqn/Ldr) Clennell	LAC Townsend	Cpl ?
(Fit/Lt) Robertson	AC Fokes	Cpl ?
W/O Barber	AC (Whitelaw?)	LAC Digbey
Cpl Christopher	AC Allcock	LAC ?

LAC Bell?	LAC Devereux	LAC ?
LAC Hounsell	LAC Peate	LAC ?
LAC Painter	LAC Winfield	LAC Poplars
LAC Humphreys		LAC Parker

APPENDIX 'B'

Part No. 1 Leaving 09.30 hrs on 16th March 1944

C.O. D de B Clark	Cpl Avery	LAC Crawford
Sqn/Ldr David	Cpl Cox	LAC Dixon
F/O Carris	Cpl Clarke	LAC ?
F/O Ross	LAC Batchelor	LAC Foston
F/O Griffiths	LAC Baylis	LAC Fuller
F/S Little	LAC Bernard	LAC Holliday
Sgt Thomas	LAC Chapman	LAC Harker
Sgt Hiscock	LAC Culling	LAC Mallon
Sgt Cheeseman	LAC Conradi	

Part No. 2 Leaving 14.30 hrs on 16th March 1944

Sqn/Ldr Mawhood	Cpl Riches	LAC Price
F/L Hunt	Cpl Sharp	AC Stanley
Flt/Lt Young	Cpl Selby	LAC Taylor
F/O Boddey	LAC Evans	LAC Tabernacle
F/S Williams	LAC Leach	LAC Unsworth
Sgt Price	LAC Mayo	AC Waite
Sgt Wintrip	LAC Moor	LAC Whitworth
Cpl Stanford	LAC McLinlay	AC Wakefield
Cpl Davey	LAC Minnett	LAC Wilson

Personnel Proceeding Direct from Leave and Detachment

Sqn/Ldr Crook	Flt/Lt Harrison	F/O Gibbs
F/O Preece	F/O Jarrett	Cpl Loader
Cpl Ainsworth	Cpl Evans	Cpl (Foot????)
Cpl Percy	LAC	LAC Prickett
(??? Smith)	LAC Penney	LAC Patrick
(????????ay)	LAC Simmons	LAC Connock?
(???) Phillips	LAC Allen	AC Winbolt
(???ilson)	LAC Ramsden	AC French
(??) Allen	LAC Percival	

NOTE

Operations Record Book for Headquarters states 11 Officers and 60 Other Ranks. Excluding those on leave or detachment, the above shows 11 Officers, 8 SNCO's and 57 Airmen, a total of 65 Other Ranks).

14-3-1944 (D-84)

Location - Acklington

A working party dispatched to Newcastle during the morning to move and arrange furniture in the living premises. These consist of two large houses in the Gosforth suburb of Newcastle adjoining the Great North Road and called Culzean Park and Meads Lodge and a little over 2 miles from Blakelaw, the Sector Station HQ. It is decided that all the Ops personnel and kitchen cooking arrangements are made in Culzean Park and the Officers and domestic staff live in Meads Lodge. The first and top floors for the Officers which allows for one room converted into an anteroom and up to 5 officers sleeping in the others. The SNCO's and airmen have rest rooms in

Culzean Park house. These premises are recently vacated by WAAF personnel now accommodated in the Blakelaw Camp. Rations are drawn for the advance party due before lunch next day. An exercise march is held in the morning. Weather still remains fine. Non Technical equipment of the Wing is delivered to Acklington.

15-3-1944 (D-83)

Location - Acklington

The advance party of most of the domestic staff with the Adjutant and F/F Barber leave Acklington at 10.00 hours with a load of non technical stores. The Cooks serve lunch in Culzean Park the first meal under the Unit's own work. Cleaning and preparation of the two house almost complete by the evening. A second load of stores received as well as rations.

16-3-1944 (D-82)

Location - Acklington

The main party in two parts leave at 10.30 hours and 14.30 hours for Newcastle and the two houses begin to fill up. The first full meal being tea of 11 Officers and 60 Other Ranks. Except for a shower in the afternoon weather remained fine and rather mild. A visit to the Ops Room by the CO in the evening for taking over purposes

17-3-1944 (D-81)

Location - Acklington

The day started with a Pay Parade for the Airmen followed by a talk by the CO on Security and a parade of all Ops Room personnel and a march to Blakelaw. The Ops Room was taken over and Officers appointed to various sections. At 12.00 hours a parade and march back to living premises for lunch, a march of 40 minutes. A coach is then provided for the afternoon party when more preparations are made. Weather fine and warm. A great deal of difficulty is being experienced in the office by the lack of a typewriter as it is almost impossible to borrow one for sufficient length of time to make necessary Unit Orders, letters and POR's.

18-3-1944 (D-80)

Location - Acklington

Watches in turn visited Sector Ops for plotting practice. Others marching to and from billets prepared the tables and maps required for setting up our own Operations Table. Telephone lines are to be arranged in a few days. Discussion with Sector HQ Staff on allocation of domestic services of laundry, shoe repairs, etc. The Admin Offices are situated in and around the Operations Room wall. Domestic staff practiced putting up marquees.

19-3-1944 (D-79)

Location - Acklington

More practice at Sector Ops. Plotting and preparation of our equipment with W/T practice. Normal training carried out.

20-3-1944 (D-78)

Location - Acklington

Normal working day with practice and preparations in the Ops Room.

21-3-1944 (D-77)

Location - Acklington

Adjutant visits Group HQ for a conference on establishments. Wing Commander Flying, W.E Oxspring reported for duties.

22-3-1944 (D-76)

Location - Acklington

Adjutant visits RAF Welfare and Air Ministry for supply of comforts and office equipment. Visit by Group Transport Officer, Squadron Leader Pearce.

23-3-1944 (D-75)

Location - Acklington

Adjutant returns with Ford Utility, the Unit's first MT. Ops Room practiced in plotting and W/T. Small (Stores) Marquee situated in grounds of Meads Lodge to be Officers' Dining Room.

24-3-1944 (D-74)

Location - Acklington

Visit by Group Lands Officer and a site at RAF Woosington for appropriation of land for GCI site during the morning. Group Signals (Lincs) visit in the afternoon. Plotting practice carried out with other watches doing marches. Weather fine and mild.

25-3-1944 (D-73)

Location - Blakelaw.

Information received for seven officers and 27 Other Ranks of Ops stating to go on assault course tomorrow. This rather hinders the training programme for the Operations Room. Application made for future requisitioning of land for other Units due shortly.

26-3-1944 (D-72)

Location - Blakelaw.

First ancillary Wing Unit arrived; 5133C WSU with 11 vehicles and were sent to be accommodated at Woosington which had been arranged on the visit on the 24th. 7 Officers and 27 Other Ranks of Ops Room personnel sent on exercise at Stapleford Tawney. The remaining personnel did some practice in the Ops Room and marching exercise. CO's inspection of living accommodation held. CO went by road to Charter Hall to site accommodation for a GCI

27-3-1944 (D-71)

Location - Blakelaw.

CO with Wg/Cdr Ops visit Acklington by road to be present at a Window Exercise 'Eric', also lecture on night interception; also visited RAF Station Bulmer. Details of administering the MSU at Woosington arranged. Ops Room personnel held marches and cleaned out premises in Ops Room.

28-3-1944 (D-70)

Location - Blakelaw.

CO visits GHQ and later Stapleford Tawney where he receives information on the importance of the exercise that our party are to take part in. Normal days training at home.

29-3-1944 (D-69)

Location - Blakelaw.

CO returns and decides to take Wg/Cdr Ops to Stapleford Tawney to join in with the exercise. Wg/Cdr Flying returned from Acklington and takes command. Weather much colder with sharp night ground frost.

30-3-1944 (D-68)

Location - Blakelaw.

CO with Wg/Cdr Ops left at 06.35 hours by road for Stapleford Tawney and arrived at 15.00 hours. Training continued in the morning while the afternoon is wholly devoted to exercises. 5133C MSU have moved in to old W/T site and are generating.

31-3-1944 (D-67)

Location - Blakelaw.

Wg/Cdr Flying by road to Acklington (147 Airfield) for flying and returned in evening. The Unit has now the 17 Officers posted to complete the establishment and 91 Other Ranks of the 115. Of these, 10 have not joined as yet being at GHQ. 9 Officers and 28 Other Ranks are away at Stapleford Tawney on Exercise 'Trousers' and a continuous exchange of 5 Other Ranks are being trained at Blackpool for driving.

APRIL

1-4-1944 (D-66)

Location - Newcastle

Advance information received of the arrival of two of the three GCI's, the two GCI/COL's and the MRU. The siting of them had been arranged. Wing Commander Flying went by air to Charterhall. Normal training and practice in W/T carried out.

2-4-1944 (D-65)

Location - Newcastle

The first reasonable rainfall fell during the night and continued all day. The difficulty of dispatching 8 Camp Kits to the detachment on Exercise "Trousers" from Acklington to Kings Cross eventually overcome by a visit to Acklington. The M.O. carried out 5 further inoculations. Wing Commander Flying returned from Charterhall by air.

3-4-1944 (D-64)

Location - Newcastle

Rain, fog and haze all day. Normal indoor training programme carried out including a 'scrub out' of the premises.

4-4-1944 (D-63)

Location - Newcastle

Rain, fog and haze continued. Indoor training continuing on the W/T buzzer. Visit to Acklington made for initial stores orders.

5-4-1944 (D-62)

Location - Newcastle

Drizzle and low cloud all day. Indoor training on W/T and marching exercises.

6-4-1944 (D-61)

Location - Newcastle

During the afternoon the CO returned by road from Exercise "Trousers" and Lt Col Leith, RAF Regiment reported for duties as also Flt/Lt5 Garner, Intelligence Officer for the unit. At 13.00 hrs convoy of three units, GCI 15121, MRU 358 and COL 15129 arrived at RAF Blakelaw. They were escorted to Woosington and the 34 odd vehicles parked for lunch. After that the COOL was sent to Acklington and accommodation was found in Woosington for the personnel of the other units, where they are to be sited in due course. Owing to five days of rain the ground would be very cut up if movement was made today, which for the first time was warm and sunny. GCI 15128 have travelled direct to Charterhall and arrived safely.

7-4-1944 (D-60)

Location - Newcastle

Visits by the CO and other members of the Wing to Woosington to complete the siting of the GCI (15121) and the MRU (358). The remaining personnel from 13 Group arrive. The strength of the Unit with few exceptions is now completed. The

establishment has been increased by another 24 Wireless Operators, but these have not yet been posted. Accommodation in our living quarters will be overcrowded and more space will be required.

8-4-1944 (D-59)

Location - Newcastle

CO by road to Charterhall via Acklington to visit the GCI 915128) and see how they bare sited and accommodated. Another room in the Operations Block taken and re-shuffling of accommodation now allows a larger room for the Orderly Room and a room for Lt5 Col Leith who will be setting up for the administration of the Regiment Squadrons. Discussions on administration and pay arrangements with the Wing ancillaries and decided to pay all under 147 Airfield.

9-4-1944 (D-58)

Location - Newcastle

Conference in the afternoon held in the Operations Room of the GCI's, MRU and COL from Woosington, Charterhall and Acklington on Communications system and Signals arrangements and set up. Siting of the MRU at Woosington is proving difficult. The GCI at Woosington have been operating and find good average viewing. The Charterhall GCI, owing to lack of equipment (damaged), have not been "on the air". A coach load of Wing personnel sent to Acklington Stores for kitting of various articles including blue-grey battledress. Three D.F. Units each of three men and two vehicles and are to be trained.

10-4-1944 (D-57)

Location - Newcastle

CO to Acklington for a lecture on night interception to 409 Squadron. A parcel of land requisitioned near Ponteland for the MRU who are to move in tomorrow, map reference Q2 669929. The three D.F. Units have been placed on the MSU site for the time being to be given their training and to check up their gear. The Signals Officer in Berwick to look for sites for C.15129 COL. Unit now at Acklington and two possible places are suggested for requisitioning. For Easter Bank Holiday the weather has been marvelously fine, sunny and warm. Sqn/Ldr White, Group MLO, visited the Unit for discussion on procedure.

11-4-1944 (D-56)

Location - Newcastle

Full march up of the Operations Room Crew to the Operations Room at Blakelaw. The parade now numbers over 50 not including the 30 away. In the afternoon practice with Sten guns on the range. Lands communications with the GCI at Woosington and the MRU established and an endeavour to contact aircraft made but without any success. Direct communication. Direct communication with the GCI at Charterhall also made. Sqn/Ldr David (Controller) to Berwick to make formal requisition for site for COL 15129 at map reference QU 508705. A party of Air Formation Signals, one officer and 31 other ranks, arrive and are accommodated at Woosington. It is understood that, on this day, the major portion of Exercise "Trousers" takes place at which our 8 officer and 27 Operations Room crew are taking an active part.

12-4-1944 (D-55)

Location - Newcastle

During the morning, communications between the GCI's made and an attempt to contact aircraft made but without success. Practice in Ops. Room while other watches have practice rifle firing on the 25 yard range. The personnel are now all kitted in blue battledress. In the afternoon R/T contact made with aircraft of 409 Squadron calling on (illegible). The Wing is using Idris I as it's call sign.

13-4-1944 (D-54)

Location - Newcastle

Col. Harton of Group Headquarters visited and had discussion. For the first time the Wing control aircraft, this occurred during the morning and was again practiced in the afternoon. CO Prospecting a site for COL at South Shields. Lt Col Leith with Col Horton to Drem. GCI/COL 15130 arrive at 18.00 hrs and are accommodated for the night.

14-4-1944 (D-53)

Location - Newcastle

CO to Acklington for lecture on interceptions to 322 Squadron. During the morning and afternoon aircraft are controlled by the Wing and successfully handed over between GCI's, and a late watch is brought on for night controlling for the first time. A plot of ground just outside the inner wire of the station has been allotted by the (illegible) and preparations are made to use it for a preliminary site for the Wing to occupy. The site for COL 15130 is again visited on the coast just south of South Shields and agreed upon and if not common land, to be requisitioned.

15-4-1944 (D-52)

Location - Newcastle

Weather very poor and as a result no flying possible and nothing for the operations to control. CO to Stapleford Tawney by road.

16-4-1944 (D-51)

Location - Newcastle

Weather continued to be poor and no flying, and again no controlling possible which is annoying as the machinery was just working. The GCI's are to pack up in a day or two and go south for re-equipping so the break will be of some days.

17-4-1944 (D-50)

Location - Newcastle

Weather possible for the afternoon for flying and the remaining GCI at Berwick were practiced with using night and day aircraft from Acklington. Col 15130 at South Shields now operating but no land communications.

18-4-1944 (D-49)

Location - Newcastle

Normal day routine training. A party dispatched to Stapleford Tawney with the kits left by the members of the Unit who will not now be returning from Exercise "Trousers". Instructions for the GCI at Charterhall (15128) to move to Woolsington to replace 15121 who are going to Chigwell for re-equipping. The COL 15129 at Berwick also move off and return to Chigwell for re-equipping.

19-4-1944 (D-48)

Location - Newcastle

Conference at Group Headquarters attended by the CO, Wg/Cdr Flying and Adjutant concerning impending movements south of all Units. Morning and afternoon Operations Room practices with aircraft.

20-4-1944 (D-47)

Location - Newcastle

Visit by Wg/Cdr Duncan of AEF and Flt/Lt Harlington of C and D of Headquarters, 85 Group. GCI 15129 are operational at Woolsington and during afternoon aircraft are

practiced. The morning is spent in field training. Air Formation Signals Unit start taking in the land lines set up between Operations Room and Woolsington.

21-4-1944 (D-46)

Location - Newcastle

During the morning a film on Camouflage shown to all personnel in Station NAAFI. Unit Commanders of MRU, GCI, Col and MSU attend briefing in Operations Room and hear plans for move South on 25th in one convoy. Practice with day aircraft on GCI and COL in the afternoon. MRU are taking down equipment in readiness for move.

22-4-1944 (D-45)

Location - Newcastle

Major parade in light marching order and a long march with assault practice took up all morning to lunch time. Afternoon practice in Operations Room with GCI and a big inoculation drive to complete Unit. Details of move to Stapleford Tawney arranged. Convoy to consist of 63 vehicles, 10 motorcycles and 265 personnel including officers. The journey to take 3 hours starting from assembly point at Woolsington and stopping nights at Doncaster and Collyweston. The Unit has now been in existence two months and is to strength in the original establishment ie 17 Officers and 115 Other Ranks.

23-4-1944 (D-44)

Location - Newcastle

General cleaning up of Operations Room and closing down in the offices. All Units confined to camp on information of move to Stapleford Tawney for security. A further meeting of all Unit Commanders in Operations Room for final briefing of convoy and routes. The Wing move to be made by 10, 3 ton vehicles of an S & T column.

24-4-1944 (D-43)

Location - Newcastle

The day spent by all Units closing down and cleaning up and by the afternoon assembling at Woolsington with the exception of the Wing which on the arrival of 10 S & T vehicles loaded and lined them in an adjoining road to Culzean Park House. These 10 vehicles carried the personnel of the Wing except for a rear party and the stores and formed the last Unit in the convoy. Slight difficulty in the evening owing to insufficient rations which was easily corrected (by) a run to the stores. Weather fine and bright. Pay parades for Wing and MSU.

NEWCASTLE - DONCASTER

25-4-1944 (D-42)

Location - Newcastle

Convoy of the first 54 vehicles consisting of the MRU (358), GCI (15128), COL (15130), MSU (51330), MSSU (309) and three Units of BSU (5040, 5041 and 5042) moved off with Gp/Capt Clark leading with the blue flag at 08.00 from Woolsington. Almost at once a breakdown occurred which delayed the start for nearly an hour. The route was via Blakelaw to the Town moor where the Wing section were to tack on to the end then all the way on the A1. This unfortunate start was easily made good by lunchtime. Stops were made every two hours and well on time, the convoy arrived at Doncaster Staging Camp for the first night stop. Wing Cooks supplied hot tea and soup on the journey made in one of the three tonners. All arrived safely without further incident. Hot meal was served at the Camp and personnel accommodated in the Grandstand of the racecourse. Weather was fine and warm.

DONCASTER - COLLYWESTON

26-4-1944 (D-41)

Location - Doncaster.

Second day of journey South started at 08.00 hrs from the vehicle park at Doncaster after breakfast served at 06.30. Fine morning and all vehicles got away in 10 minutes. Lunch at 12.15 hrs by the roadside after normal 10 minute halt at 5 10.20hrs. Stamford was reached and passed by 15.00hrs. South of Stamford the convoy stopped and refilled by tankers while the advance party went on to Colly Weston (sic) to arrange accommodation. Convoy pulled in to the airfield and lined one of the roads. Personnel were well accommodated in the dispersal sites and fed on the communal site. Beautiful warm weather.

COLLYWESTON - STAPLEFORD TAWNEY

27-4-1944 (D-40)

Location - Collyweston.

Third day of the journey like the others started away at 08.00 in sunshine. One vehicle No. 23, left at the start but made the journey arriving a few minutes after the rest had completed. Speed was cut down but even then arrived at the Metropolitan Police Control an hour before time which should have been 14.30. Held up at Brookmans Park until police escort arrived and then moved off gain in three sections at ¼ hour intervals. Lunch had been taken on the roadside at Welwyn. One vehicle failed in the last mile but all the rest were in Stapleford Tawney at 17.30 hrs. The last lap through the suburbs of North London well escorted by the Police. Accommodation was found in dispersal huts around the airfield, each Unit having an area to itself. The journey was completed without accident and considering the size and weight of the convoy was a good performance. The weather could have been called hot on the last day and brilliantly fine. The Wing pitched a marquee for messing and cooking was in the open for officers and airmen. Admin offices had been arranged by the few of the Wing personnel that left the Wing three weeks ago and had been left behind from a second exercise. This second exercise, like the first, consisted of 6 officers under Wg/Cdr Mawhood and 27 airmen and is taking place down south for several days.

28-4-1944 (D-39)

Location - Stapleford Tawney.

Weather continued to be warm and fine. The day spent in organizing, equipping and practice driving on a ramp. A percentage are to be allowed SOP's during the stay. Typewriter and duplicator, long wanted by the Orderly Room, obtained from the Air Ministry Stores. The CO, with the CO's of GCI, MRU, MSU and COL on a long, all day journey to the Eastbourne area (via Group HQ) to search for sites for all the Units for the Wing. S/Ldr David and 14 Other Ranks sent off on exercise to take place in Southern area.

29-4-1944 (D-38)

Location - Stapleford Tawney.

Imprest Account opened by the drawing of £500 from North Weald and first payments made. Accumulation of 4 days administrative correspondence dealt with. First discussions on the move to Eastbourne area and arranging details of Signals Units and in particular the arrival of Air Formation Signals.

30-4-1944 (D-37)

Location - Stapleford Tawney.

CO to Sussex to make more sitings and requisitionings and away all day. Pay Parade held for 15130 and paid out of Wing Imprest. Weather continues fine and warm. MRU leaves Stapleford Tawney for re-equipment at Chigwell.

MAY

From this point, the information available is solely from the Operations Record Book of 24 Base Defence Wing Headquarters not 24 Base Defence Wing itself. Accordingly, we are missing the detailed daily records of that element which actually landed on Juno Beach on D-Day. Headquarters itself was not at sea until 10th July 1944 and actually landed in Normandy on 12th July 1944 and set up in Meuvaines.

1-5-1944 (D-36)

Location - Stapleford Tawney.

Arrangements made for the move of the Wing from Stapleford Tawney to Sussex. The Wing to be near Wartling in requisitioned fields with a GCI. Other Units to perform operation requirements between Chailey, Seaford and Hastings. The Wing movement in three parties, the advance party to travel tomorrow and the main party the next day with a rear party to follow a few hours later. The main party will consist of 85 vehicles and will be routed through London. 10 S&T Column vehicles arrive this evening for loading. Signals officer off to Wartling to prepare communications.

2-5-1944 (D-35)

Location - Stapleford Tawney.

Advance party of passenger car and a 1 tonner got off at 10.00 and arrived at 16.00 hrs at the field just north of Wartling and pitch camp and prepare for arrival of main party. Also arriving and accommodated in same fields are Units of Air Formation Signals. Administrative Offices to be accommodated in disused vicarage. RASF Station Friston to be parent station for rations and some stores. Weather fine and warm

3-5-1944 (D-34)

Location - Stapleford Tawney.

Main convoy of 85 vehicles left Stapleford Tawney at 07.00 hrs, a last minute change of starting time to an hour earlier. Convoy escorted right through London and over London Bridge via Purley Way to Forest Row where split was made and Units go off to their various sites. GCI 15121 to RYE, 15128 to Chailey, 15130 to Seaford, 15129 to Fairlight at Hastings and the rear party of the convoy consisting of the Wing and MSU continue on to Wartling where they arrive at 14.30 without incident except for congestion with other convoys on the move. The afternoon is spent in pitching tents and arranging accommodation in the fields that have been prepared by the Advance Party. Weather is fortunately fine and warm and nothing much is noticed of the inconvenience of camp routine. Cooking is in the open necessitating the building of field kitchens. Rations are supplied by RASF Station Friston, about 12 miles away where also stores have to be obtained. Particular difficulty in obtaining adequate water supply and a visit to the nearest airfield at Deanland (149 A.F.) is made for assistance. The Camp site is situated in fields between the fork of roads from the village of Wartling as they branch to the North, two fields being used, one of which has a kidney shaped pond and leads to a second and larger field. The first field is used for kitchens and dining marquees while the second of which only the out edge is

requisitioned for living tents, all tents being pitched near the hedges leaving room for other units which will be arriving in due course. The Wing has still away on exercise 7 officers and 42 men and the main GCI 15083. All private, outgoing mail has now to be censored.

4-5-1944 (D-33)

Location - Wartling.

A busy day for all ranks making camp. A supply of water received from 149 airfield is got in a tank while a loaned small bowser supplies the domestic requirements. Weather which started fine turns to a cold wind making tent pitching difficult. An old Vicarage in the village recently occupied by an Army unit is used for Administrative offices. Arrival of part of Air Formation Signals for which the RAF have to supply accommodation and domestic stores. Lines of communication are laid but Unit appears remote and isolated.

5-5-1944 (D-32)

Location - Wartling.

Camp building continues. Return of Wing Unit from exercises and a considerable increase in population. Difficulty is experienced in building, cooking and living by half a gale and heavy showers in cold weather.

6-5-1944 (D-31)

Location - Wartling.

Sharp frost but fine bright morning but still a cold wind. Arrival of more and more small Signal Units. The Camp now consists of 280 bodies and requires considerably more equipment and stores than are available both for living and cooking. Requisitioning of small plots of land all around for the siting of Units. GCI 15083 arrives and sited near Wartling GCI.

7-5-1944 (D-30)

Location - Wartling.

Again a sharp frost overnight. Delegation of Camp duties now necessary to share in the administration of the camp. Extra equipment brought in by the various Units are pooled and marquees are provided for cooking and dining halls. Communications are not yet available between Wing and sub Units but AFS now at full strength and camped on their own are laying lines. Arrival in the afternoon from Chigwell of 358 MRU, the last of the main Units in the organisation. They are to live on their technical site near RAF Wartling and the Wing Ops Room set up. CO to Group headquarters for conference on future policy.

8-5-1944 (D-29)

Location - Wartling.

(Nothing entered).

9-5-1944 (D-28)

Location - Wartling.

Visit by CMO from Group and discussions on the needs of the camp. Weather slightly warmer and remains fine. Setting up of Wing Ops Room while 15083 GCI starts receiving. Domestic site continues to grow and now is of 26 officers and 305 airmen. Visit to 149 airfield where useful items of domestic equipment are supplied. More requisitioning of small plots for Signals Units. CO to Group headquarters again. Short passes reintroduced for all ranks. Camp duties arranged, arranging of Watches and general improvement all round. Weather fine to warm during midday but nights are

still rather sharp, as well as disturbed by the vibrations of heavy bombing over the Channel.

10-5-1944 (D-27)

Location - Wartling.

Organisation of the Camp continues in fine weather. Ops Room staff visit Mobile Ops Room which is placed on a site near Wartling on the Pevensey Marsh nearby 15083 GCI to one side and the MRU to the other side. Ops Room staff divided in to Watches again and first signs with increasing communications between Units of work in the Ops Room. Night Shift come on for practice.

11-5-1944 (D-26)

Location - Wartling.

OC again to Group for discussions. Lines of communication now allow plotting to be done and an evening watch work until nearly 04.00 hrs. MRU not fit operational but information from the Pevensey static site is used. Camp site improving with more equipment available. The vicarage is almost completely filled with administrative staff offices. Surprise arrival of two MSU Units of 55 men.

12-5-1944 (D-25)

Location - Wartling.

Pay Day in the field and the Unit Imprest pays out £1,300 to the Units in it's area and satellites. Runs to Wembley and Bicester for equipment and stores. Weather continued fine and much warmer. Evening Watch goes on duty for plotting practice and to test li8nes and apparatus.

13-5-1944 (D-24)

Location - Wartling.

Further communications laid on to the Ops Room and arrangements made for a 24 hour watch to start but in the early hours, after some practice plotting which included the first plotting of operations to the channel, the watch is closed down until the morning. Weather has turned cold and windy with threatened thunder storms. Arrival of further MSU Units who are sited in a field just south of the village.

14-5-1944 (D-23)

Location - Wartling.

Bright morning but chilly wind. From today a 24 hour watch is started. The watches were marched to and from the domestic site for exercise. Visit by Gp/Capt Moon and Wg/Cdr Ops of 25 Wing also Signals Officer from Group and Group Padre. Church parade held and marched to and from church for exercise. The church service taken by the Wing Padre, Sq1n/Ldr Adams. At night the Ops Watch plot E/A travellin west of Wing area during a raid on Poole and western areas.

15-5-1944 (D-22)

Location - Wartling.

Weather continues cold but with bright intervals but insufficient rain to lay the dust which which vehicles are making in the used parts of the fields. Normal working day of watches with the added interest of some hostile plots inj a small scale raid on Portsmouth area. F/Off Gwyn Jones arrives to take up appointment of MT Officer in the Wing. GPO postal address of the Wing is to be 'Army Post5 Office, England', from the 17th and cards issued to all Units to advise.

16-5-1944 (D-21)

Location - Wartling.

CO to Group headquarters for conferences. Normal working day with small general improvements made. Signal communication by landline almost complete. Weather very cold with rain most of the afternoon. Wg/Cdr Flying arrives by air at lunchtime in an Auster and puts down in the field occupied by the MSU's and takes off again for West Malling where he has been flying with the airfield on offensive operations over France.

17-5-1944 (D-20)

Location - Wartling.

Normal watches are now running smoothly for 24 hours. Weather remains cold for time of year. Arrangements made to take between 60 and 100 men over to Bexhill daily have been working days. Visit by Group Catering Officer. Sqn/Ldr Bagshaw posted for MLO duties.

18-5-1944 (D-19)

Location - Wartling.

Flt/Lt Jarrett, Equipment, attached from headquarters to assist in the more rapid preparations of the Unit. CO to Group for final briefing conferences during the morning, visit by Gp/Capt Cunningham and F/Sgt Rawnsley from 11 Group Night Ops during the afternoon.

19-5-1944 (D-18)

Location - Wartling.

Name of the Unit which has been 24 Defence Wing changed to 24 Base Defence Sector with an immediate result of a much wanted increase in establishment. As a result, 4 officers arrive for various duties including Sqn/Ldr Ford to be Sqn/Ldr Administration for the Unit. Normal working day. Weather continues cold but fine generally. Flt/Lt Miller, MO, posted and arrives for duty with headquarters. Conference of CO's of ancillary units for briefing purposes.

20-5-1944 (D-17)

Location - Wartling.

Two Signals Units arrive and are accommodated with the MSU's. F/Off Glen, Catering Officer, arrives on loan from Group headquarters. The messing arrangements are now that some 300 airmen are messed on the Unit domestic site and almost an equal number in small units around the same area where it would be difficult by distance and work for them to be messed centrally. All the Officers of the Units are messed together. Preparations in hand for the approaching move of certain elements of the Sector and Wing Ops. Room is dismantled and re-set in a mobile van.

21-5-1944 (D-16)

Location - Wartling.

Late in the morning an unexpected directif from headquarters makes a rush to get away a party of W/Ops by the morning. Further preparations by Units to move off in the near future. Watches in the Ops Room have been reduced to day only. Unit now in existence 3 months. The establishment increased from 17 officers and 115 other ranks to 26 officers and 5 attached officers and over 200 other ranks.

22-5-1944 (D-15)

Location - Wartling.

The part of W/Ops off at 0630 the first movement, other Sections which will be moving. Anticipate Pay Day and £1,500 is drawn from the Bank for the Imprest Account to meet the needs during the week. The weather is fine continues cold. Active preparations continue.

23-5-1944 (D-14)

Location - Wartling.

Final preparations made for the movement of the Advanced Element as during the day it is learned that 15083 GCI are to move off at 0845 hrs tomorrow and the Sector portion with (illeg) and Naval and Army (illeg) at 0630 the following morning. Great activity by the Equipment Section to acquire all the necessary stores etc.

24-5-1944 (D-13)

Location - Wartling.

At (illeg) the heavy vehicles of 15083 make the dangerous exit from their places by Wartling GCI on Pevensey Marsh and all get safely across the small bridge over the dyke and so on their way for an experimental loading on to a land (sic) craft before going to the concentration area. The rest of the day is spent by the Ops Unit getting ready to move and transfer the Ops Room to another vehicle and getting organised. Accountant Officer, F/Off Bempton arrives to take up duties.

25-5-1944 (D-12)

Location - Wartling.

With breakfast at 0415 the main party of the Advance Element under Wg/Cdr Mawhood consisting of the Ops Room, 554 EMSH, the Naval and Army Units get off on their way to the Concentration Area at 0630, a convoy of 31 vehicles and nearly 200 men and officers. We wished them God Speed and Good Luck on their great adventure on a brilliantly fine morning. As they passed the rest of the camp a slight mist was lying over the marshes giving the appearances as if they had been flooded during the night. The rest of those left behind continued to organise and build up stores and equipment. The Sector headquarters has little resemblance to the Wing as it knew itself in the beginning. The village of Wartling is crowded with transport, with vehicles coming and going from the drive in the old vicarage. The one Inn, The Lamb, is packed to the doors every evening. Overhead great fleets of aircraft pass from their missions over the Channel and the ground and air vibrates continually.

26-5-1944 (D-11)

Location - Wartling.

15128 GCI moves from Chailly and occupy the site vacated by 15083 and set up "shop". Weather still fine and a bit warmer but Pay parade in the marquee owing to the wind.

27-5-1944 (D-10)

Location - Wartling.

The hottest and finest day of this year so far. A contingent of the RAF Regiment arrive and take over guard duties on the domestic site. Rations for about 350 a day which have been drawn from Friston are to be drawn directly from RASC Boxhill.

28-5-1944 (D-9)

Location - Wartling.

Another scorching day. Whit Sunday. Normal and routine preparations continue. CO to Group headquarters for further discussions. (remainder of entry illegible)

29-5-1944 (D-8)

Location - Wartling.

(illegible)

30-5-1944 (D-7)

Location - Wartling.

Very slightly cooler but still brilliantly fine. (illegible)

31-5-1944 (D-6)

Location - Wartling.

(illegible)

June

1-6-1944 (D-5)

Location - Wartling.

Still no rain and improvement in weather. 5167U Mobile Signals Unit move off at 06.30 hrs. Movement Order received for 15129 and taken by Commanding Officer to Seaford in the evening. Imprest Account taken over by Accountant Officer from Adjutant. A quantity of mail for the advanced element has collected and is sorted out for delivery.

2-6-1944 (D-4)

Location - Wartling.

Weather fine with thin, occasional cloud. 1st Echelon of 15129COL with 14039 and 5225J. 5231P MSU move off from Seaford on their way to concentration area in a convoy of 31 vehicles. 15130 from Fairlight move over to Seaford to take over. The largest number of aircraft notified in one day and night makes continued journeys to and from the Channel. CO visits advanced element with mail and laundry.

3-6-1944 (D-3)

Location - Wartling.

CO to Group headquarters for conference. Mobile Dental Service arrives and sets up shop in Domestic Camp for inspection and repairs.

4-6-1944 (D-2)

Location - Wartling.

Church service held in village church. Unit provides the choir. Normal day of preparations. Wg/Cdr Flying arrived by Auster and lands on MSU site. Wind freshens considerably and he return journey is a rough trip.

5-6-1944 (D-1)

Location - Wartling.

Warning Order received for move of 15083 GCI 'B'; Echelon. Work in Operations Room is closed down and work only on preparation of vehicles, this releases the watches for other duties and RAF Regt guard is returned to their Unit. Great air activity.

6-6-1944 (D-Day)

Location - Wartling.

At 06.30 hours, 'B' Echelon of 15083 of 5 vehicles and including the CO, Sqn/Ldr Young and Flt/Lt Robertson move off. Flt/Lt Sparks in charge of 15083 contingent. The writer also went to drive back a vehicle containing luggage and for experience. The convoy was routed to Uckfield and then on A272 to Winchester then on A303 to Amesbury to appoint a few miles just south of the town which it was to reach at 1800 hours. Sqn/Ldr Young acted as D.R. A fine sunny morning with slight high cloud and the countryside looking its best. Earlier there had been a sharp shower and all through the early hours great air activity had been noticed and it was suspected that

glider aircraft had been going over the camp in great numbers, but it was not until the 10.00 hours stop at Wisborough Green that the full importance of the day was known. 'D' Day had arrived and was being announced over a wireless set from a nearby house. The rest of the journey was uneventful; except that several unofficial stops had to be made to keep down to the time of arrival. Very little traffic and no signs of anything unusual. On arrival at 1800 exactly the convoy was escorted to its park and personnel marched to Camp No. 7. These arrival Camps are well organised and dispersed over a wide area. Accommodation was allotted, nominal roll handed in and supper provided. A large glider force flew over on their way all evening but one of the thought(s) most in our minds was how were our friends who are now 'over there'. All personnel are restricted to a 6 mile radius and 22.30 hours from camp.

7-6-1944 (D+1)

Location - Wartling.

D.2 Day (in fact D+1!) and at base nothing much to report. A D.R. (Despatch Rider) sent with mail and official letters to the CO. It is learnt that the Advance Element are doing their stuff. Weather cold and bleak with low cloud and wind, but still no rain to speak of.

8-6-1944 (D+2)

Location - Wartling.

D.3 Day. Wg/Cdr Flying makes short visit by air and gets away just before the rain sets in. Preparations of Units for next phasing and MSU's are closing down.

9-6-1944 (D+3)

Location Wartling.

Low cloud and rain nearly all day. Col. Leith and Sqn/Ldr David visit CO and take official mail etc. RC Padre, Sqn/Ldr Conroy, is posted and arrives, more supplies of stores equipment are acquired.

10-6-1944 (D+4)

Location - Wartling.

Weather slightly better and greatly improved by the evening. Continuous air traffic which is particularly heavy at night. Ops Room vehicles removed from site. MSU have packed away gear and prepare vehicles. Local civilian photographer is busy taking photos of all personnel for exchange of 1250 (RAF Identity Card more properly known as F1250) to new style. DR to CO element with mail.

11-6-1944 (D+5)

Location - Wartling.

Fine morning deteriorates to low cloud and scotch mist by evening. This period of poor weather must be hampering operations over the Channel. Church Service in village church. Normal routine preparations and gathering of stores and equipment.

12-6-1944 (D+6)

Location - Wartling.

Weather continues fine but chilly. Units continue to prepare for moving and all W/T communications have been closed down. Very little air activity noticed. Movement order received for two 'J' Units who are to be off in the morning.

13-6-1944 (D+7)

Location - Wartling.

Flt/Lt Garner and Flt/Lt Allen, Intelligence Officers, went off with the two 'J' Units at 06.30 hrs. Further movement orders received for this 'B' and later this 'C' Unit.

Considerable activity and last minute preparations, as the warning orders was (sic) after the movement orders.

14-6-1944 (D+8)

Location - Wartling.

The two large 'B' and 'C' Units after rather delayed start get away at 07.30 and 08.00 hrs. Altogether some 40 vehicles. This will mean a considerable drop in the population of Wartling sites. With the Units went Sq1n/Ldr Bagshaw, SMLO, P/Off Linthwaite and a small contingent of Headquarters Operations Room personnel. Understood that the Advanced Element have several successful interceptions to their credit and are putting up a good show.

15-6-1944 (D+9)

Location - Wartling.

Lt Col Leith with Flt/Lt Bodday go off on their own to join another unit that is on the way over. Normal routine work. Weather closing down, low cloud, and drawing (sic) rain. During the night the first of rocket planes fly directly over headquarters and continue at the rate of about 3 an hour all through the night (presumed to be 'Doodlebugs').

16-6-1944 (D+10)

Location - Wartling.

Chief interest is the periodic flying over of rocket planes at intervals most of the day. The 'beams' appear to be over headquarters or very near. The planes are met with a lot of light A.A. fire from local stations but not until the afternoon when a Spitfire got in behind one was a kill made. It is proposed on Group Instructions at the request of the CO to send a Watch over in the early morning by air or emergency transport.

17-6-1944 (D+11)

Location - Wartling.

A party of 26, the Watch referred to yesterday, with Sq1n/Ldr David and F/Off Ross do not in fact get off until 18.00 hrs, but it is understood that they will have an accelerated passage. Rocket planes continue to fly over and about but not until late evening when the rate is almost 2 a minute does the activity become serious. Considerable difficulty is being experienced to get private mail of those who have gone over sent overseas. Some bags have been returned to this Headquarters no less than 3 times after any assurances by the APO that they know the location and could send them. Six bags of mail were sent by D.R. to Concentration Area and put in charge of B and C Units that left on 14th as a final effort. Pilotless planes continue to roar overhead at frequent intervals.

18-6-1944 (D+12)

Location - Wartling.

Normal routine day with strong North East wind but clear and chilly. Pilotless planes continue to shoot across Headquarters and receive a shower of light AA which appears chiefly ineffective.

19-6-1944 (D+13)

Location - Wartling.

Group Captain Clark receives a Mention in Despatches for his work in 11 Group, so also an LAC Mills from the Middle East. Unit supplies guard for Thunderbolt that has made wheels up landing near Pevensy Bay, the pilot being completely unhurt. Pilotless plane are now being very effectively dealt with by day and night fighters, a

very large proportion are shot down and the chief interest is the nearness to the Camp at which they explode.

20-6-1944 (D+14)

Location - Wartling.

Many more pilotless planes destroyed dropping near He3adquarters removes some of the window glass. Visit by Command Postal Officer. Wind still strong and rain from North East. Flt/Lt Garner and F/Off Allen return from Concentration Area for a few days as their departure has been delayed. Understood that 148 Wing are now at Hunsdon.

21-6-1944 (D+15)

Location - Wartling.

Bitter cold and overcast morning with strong North East Wind which must be delaying our overseas operations, but clearer in the evening. Countermeasures against pilotless planes seem to be having effect as few have been over to use the cloud cover during the day but in the evening a good crop are destroyed in the neighbourhood.

22-6-1944 (D+16)

Location - Wartling.

Nothing of interest to report. Routine preparations. Pilotless planes continue to operate and many are brought down. Fortunately none very near the Camp. No direct news of those overseas has yet come in.

23-6-1944 (D+17)

Location - Wartling.

Normal days work of preparations. Visit by Group Staff Officers of Organisation Branch. Fly bomb nuisance continues, many being shot down. Weather warm and fine.

24-6-1944 (D+18)

Location - Wartling.

Visit by Wg/Cdr Campbell, SPSO, and Sqn/Ldr Ogden-Swift after arrival at Deanland by air. Fly Bombs nuisance continues but not during the day.

25-6-1944 (D+19)

Location - Wartling.

Wg/Cdr Mawhood from the Advanced Element arrives in the evening for a short visit to discuss the handling of private mail which has not been received in France yet, also items of equipment urgently required. This is our first news direct of those who went out first. The landings and operations was made without any trouble or casualty or loss in any way. A really marvellous achievement and organisation.

26-6-1944 (D+20)

Location - Wartling.

Wg/Cdr Mawhood unable to fly back from Hartford Bridge (264 Squadron doing the ferry work) owing to continuous rain and low cloud. Discussions at Group Headquarters, many of the offices have closed down in Headquarters and rooms are being vacated and cleaned in preparation for leaving.

27-6-1944 (D+21)

Location - Wartling.

In heavy thunder showers, mWg/Cdr Mawhood leaves Hartford Bridge after further discussions at Group. Decided to allot 9 tons of shipping space for static equipment

that has now collected to be taken in advance of the rear party. This should account for about half the equipment and items that go to make up the Headquarters.

28-6-1944 (D+22)

Location - Wartling.

A Fly Bomb was burst over the breakfast table by 5 Tempests and the nuisance continued all day after a fairly quiet night. Stores being packed and marked and made ready for shipment. 15121 GCI at Rye to get their marching orders for tomorrow morning.

29-6-1944 (D+23)

Location - Wartling.

Weather fair, nor Fly Bombs until late in the evening when Tempests take a good toll. Chief work during day was continued packing of stores and equipment and marking. Rain during the night. 15121 COL seen off at Rye have an accident with an overturned vehicle but no damage caused.

30-6-1944 (D+24)

Location - Wartling.

Three 3 tonners arrive from Group during afternoon and are loaded to capacity with 97 assorted boxes crates and bundles. It is thought that there is more than 9 tons dead weight. The movement of these goods now will greatly help the eventual move of the Unit. Cloudy and fine but Fly Bombs using cloud cover fly over in great numbers during the morning and night. It is thought by most that this has been a cold and windy month and not favourable for invasion landings and operations over the Channel also for living in tents.

JULY

1-7-1944 (D+25)

Location - Wartling.

July opens in a downpour of rain and low cloud which does clear until the afternoon. Fly Bombs continue normally until the weather becomes clear when they are shot down as usual. The 3 tonners get away with the stores and equipment just before 0900 with a small make up of tents in one of the Units 30cwt (illeg) under the charge of Sgt Baker.

2-7-1944 (D+26)

Location - Wartling.

Rain again all night and driving Scotch Mist all morning until clearing in the afternoon. The very near departure of the Air Formation Signals attached to this headquarters has left the Headquarters almost devoid of outside telephone communication and completely off the lines. Only one FBY via Wartling and one GPO on the Herstmonceaux exchange remain and DB Service has had to be rearranged.

3-7-1944 (D+27)

Location - Wartling.

The morning started in what could be called a monsoon, torrential rain, mist and a thunderstorm discomfort was added to by an almost sleepless night owing to Fly Bomb activity. At 0100 hours a damaged Bomb flashed over Headquarters and Camp just over the trees and went off a few seconds later on striking the ground a little distance off. A lucky miss as several others were also brought down nearby. The

AFS are now contained within themselves and ready to move off, three of the Unit officers including the MO are to go with them.

4-7-1944 (D+28)

Location - Wartling.

A quiet night except for some bumps before midnight and weather considerably improved. Fly Bomb activity increases in the afternoon and the domestic area of the Unit seems to be straddled with bomb bursts.

5-7-1944 (D+29)

Location - Wartling.

Little to report on the Unit. Normal preparations and packing. Fly6 Bom nuisance continues with near misses. Weather poor.

6-7-1944 (D+30)

Location - Wartling.

Brilliant day. Routine work.

7-7-1944 (D+31)

Location - Wartling.

A section of the Headquarters staff including the Adjutant held to readiness to proceed at a moments notice. Tempest aircraft found landed successfully on marshes near 358 MRU. Ambulance sent out but pilot uninjured. Higher percentage of Fly Bombs seem to have been shot down causing several near misses.

8-7-1944 (D+32)

Location - Wartling.

During the afternoon instructions received for the Admin party to move off on arrival of vehicles. This party to move in two portions. One party of four with water bowser and about a ton of equipment that had been asked for to be loaded on one articulator that was going overseas and the second party of 17 that were to go by air. At 20.00 hours the articulator arrives and is loaded and with the water bowser drives off to Gosport for embarkation. Air party are to go in the morning. A fine day turning to rain showers.

9-7-1944 (D+33)

Location - Wartling.

As will be seen by the foregoing, the Unit is divided into two parties. Those of the Advance Element in France and the rear party at Wartling. This diary has been written from the rear party as to now no direct information about the doings of the Advanced Element has been received. The writer has been with the rear party and is now going to overseas to join to join up with the Advance Party at their Headquarters. The journey was made with the Unit 200 gallon water bowser direct from Wartling to Gosport with three others and an articulator carrying urgently required stores and equipment. The party reached Gosport at 02.00 hours and reported to the embarkation officer at 08.00 hours. After changing their money they went to the "Hards" but at this point a query arose over their embarkation and it was almost cancelled. However, at 11.30 hours they with the bowser and articulator embarked on LCT N.516 and pulled away from shore and anchored in a freshening breeze that almost reached gale force in Stokes Bay. Rain also set in. Several Flying Bombs during the night.

10-7-1944 (D+34)

Location - Gosport (Stokes Bay).

LCT N516 and the small party remained in Stokes Bay all day in uncomfortable conditions and weather. The party live on 24 hour and 'Compo' rations.

11-7-1944 (D+35)

Location - Gosport (Stokes Bay).

At 03.30 hours the LCT sets off to the accompaniment of much Flack from their and other ships AA as a number of Flying Bombs that pass near and over their way NW. Sea rough. Weather however improves and by 16.30 hours the LCT is among the ships off the French coast. After a time the LCT moves westwards and anchors for the night off the newly made port. Today is D+35.

12-7-1944 (D+36)

Location - Normandy (presumed to be at the Mulberry harbour at Arromanche?)

At 07.30 hours the LCT moves into harbour and beaches at 08.30 hours. Disembarkation at 10.00 hours. The articulator is followed inland and the water bowser and the writer arrive at 24 Sector Advanced Headquarters at 10.30 hours. The Ops Room and settlement are at the village of Meuvaines about 2 miles inland. It is discovered that the air party that had left Wartling after sea half had arrived the day before. The Ops Room built of vehicles is sunk below ground level and the tents of the personnel are in adjoining orchard. It is proposed to form a domestic site with the arrival of the latest party in wooded fields about a mile nearer the coast. The new arrivals are therefore sent down to build the necessary offices.

13-7-1944 (D+37)

Location - Meuvaines.

The building of new domestic site started in earnest. Visits to 85 Group Advanced Headquarters and a search for the 9 to 12 tons of stores that were sent in advance on 30th June but it appears that they have not yet arrived. Enemy activity caused a sharp burst of AA in the early hours.

14-7-1944 (D+38)

Location - Meuvaines.

Site building continues with tent and marquee pitching. A journey to Bayeaux produces about a ton of wood planks and beam for building purposes.

15-7-1944 (D+39)

Location - Meuvaines.

More tents pitched and a supply of nails acquired from the Army. It is noticed that each night is disturbed with a sharp burst of AA from the batteries on each side of the Domestic Site.

16-7-1944 (D+40)

Location - Meuvaines.

Site completed and all airmen move down for sleeping and messing. Weather has been warm and dry. Roads very rough and dusty. CO returns from short visit to England.

17-7-1944 (D+41)

Location - Meuvaines.

Officers' site adjoining field to airmen's site complete and occupied. Noisy night with large movements of tanks along the road adjoining the site. Continuous gunfire in the distance. Small issue of bread made, the first in this country.

18-7-1944 (D+42)

Location - Meuvaines.

Weather continues fine. Road causes much dust with heavy vehicles and tanks. Offensive started S.E. of Caen. Flack splinter at night wounds Cpl Riches but not seriously though he is sent to hospital for piece to be extracted. One Ju88 destroyed under control of 15129.

19-7-1944 (D+43)

Location - Meuvaines.

Nothing to report.

20-7-1944 (D+44)

Location - Meuvaines.

Normal routine. Visit by AVM Steele to Ops Room and lunch at Domestic Site. NAAFI goodsnow being received including beer and whisky. Overcast, sultry and later rain.

21-7-1944 (D+45)

Location - Meuvaines.

Pay parades, the first to be made in France. Heavy lashing rain showers. Much mud.

22-7-1944 (D+46)

Location - Meuvaines.

Continued unsettled weather but less rain. Life under canvas very damp. Normal and routine work.

23-7-1944 (D+47)

Location - Meuvaines.

Weather fair and fine. Church services held in marquee. Usual daily routine and preparation. Request sent up for the rear party to join up.

24-7-1944 (D+48)

Location - Meuvaines.

Dust returns to the roads. OC prospects village for possible building to house Headquarters but this area is very lightly built over and chiefly consists of small houses and farms. The choking smoke of the screen blow through the Camp at night.

25-7-1944 (D+49)

Location - Meuvaines.

In the evening a very good cinema show is put on in the airmen's marquee worked and operated by STO. Much appreciated. It is proposed to have a nightly showing and a change twice a week.

26-7-1944 (D+50)

Location - Meuvaines.

Owing to a recent casualty caused through friendly flack (not serious) a real effort is made (illeg) shelters has been taking place. The nightly visit of E/A at any hour (though only usually (illeg) and concerned chiefly with mine laying) causes an outburst of gunfire. The camp lying almost a mile inshore from the large harbour, which is heavily defended, receives quite a large proportion of that which goes up and which must come down. Frequently gunfire is directed at friendly aircraft.

27-7-1944 (D+51)

Location - Meuvaines.

Normal routine work and night noises and gunfire. Understood rear party are on their way. (illeg) bath parties of 30 arrive at Cruelly daily.

28-7-1944 (D+52)

Location - Meuvaines.

Rear party expected to arrive but did not do so. Two outbursts of gunfire, first at leader of several hundred of our bombers which go over and second period at a few that return singular over this area.

29-7-1944 (D+53)

Location - Meuvaines.

At 08.00 hours the Rear Party under the charge of Sqn/Ldr Ford arrives at the Camp complete. The rest of the day is spent in preparing tents and finding accommodation. The party is 111 strong and by far the largest of this Headquarters to arrive in one batch. This brings the Headquarters up to establishment and a much needed assistance in personnel and equipment.

30-7-1944 (D+54)

Location - Meuvaines.

Settling in of personnel continues. A marquee is set up for a (illeg) the first time this has been possible during this Unit's existence. Weather fine and warm and a night free from the usual gunfire.

31-7-1944 (D+55)

Location - Meuvaines.

Domestic Site almost complete. The three fields taken on the junction of the (illeg) Asnelles-sur-Mer Lane are laid out as follows. The first field of 1½ acres is being used for transport, Medical and equipment establishments. The other two (illeg) appear to be orchards growing Cyder (sic) Apples. From the MT field an opening to the officers' field of 12 tents and a marquee used as a mess with cooking tent adjoining. Another opening through the hedge leads to the airmen's cooking marquee and towards the road at the top end are the airmen's living quarters of 15 tents. At the top end with an entrance to the road might be called the Administrative Quarters consisting of the Sqn/Ldr 'A' office and tent, Adjutant and Orderly Room tents with a 3 tonner converted into an office with lean-to tent which houses the Accountant Officer. At the lower end of the field the usual domestic offices of latrines, ablutions etc. The Sgt's Mess have taken over a portion of the next field and put up three living tents and a marquee for Mess. This (remainder illegible).

AUGUST

1-8-1944 (D+56)

Location - Meuvaines.

From the start of this month a summary of the Operation Room logs will be included in this diary. It is hoped in time to write up the Operations from 'D' Day but this will most likely be as a continuous narrative rather than a diary. Domestic affairs will take second place and only events affecting all will be mentioned. A Glossary of Terms used in the Operations is as follows:-

Operation Winelodge, Restriction of Naval Guns in G.D.A Fighters allowed to operate.

Operation Bluebottle, Fighters not allowed; Naval G.D.A who will fire at any aircraft.

Operation Purblind, Attacks by Fleet Air Arm aircraft assisted by Wellingtons which illuminate by flare enemy surface craft which have been followed and plotted by our GCI's. Control of fighters necessary.

Squadron Call Signs:-	Pantry	409 Squadron.
	Tessa	219 Squadron.
	Nursemaid	264 Squadron.
	Doval	488 Squadron.
	Jungle	410 Squadron.

Dull morning changing to sunshine late in the day, much dust. The acquisition of a farm near the camp has released the Equipment Section marquee for an airmen's recreation room. Operation Bluebottle in force until 03.00 hours but extended throughout the night. Operation Purblind cancelled owing to the weather in the UK which also interfered with night fighters and only nine operated including reinforcement for 21 Sector. The waves of E/A at 23.21 and 0001 hours estimated at 10 and 15 aircraft. Tessa 20 and 34 both abandoned stern cahses in the first wave but in the second, Jungle 17 and Limestone 17 both claimed a JU88 destroyed. 'Window' used in both attacks which seemed directed at the front line. Adequate liaison with LWS 6066 could not be established and no A/C allocated to them.

2-8-1944 (D+57)

Location - Meuvaines.

During rest of this day and evening a Polish Armoured Division arrived and camped in the locality. Only four fighters allowed owing to weather here and in UK, one of these Nursemaid 25 investigating an X Raid while patrolling south of C. Patrol identified a JU88 and shot it down. No E/A within 40 miles until last fighter returned after which several approached both land and sea. IAZ's unmolested and after flying around, returned. Weather closed right down early morning.

3-8-1944 (D+58)

Location - Meuvaines.

Although the mornings are misty and there is a heavy dew the days are hot and fine. The chief result of this weather is that the roads, which have been beaten out of all shape, cause miniature dust storms each time any traffic goes past. The camp is covered and continually a haze of dust drifts in from the road. The daily bathing parade is cancelled as passengers return much the worse for the trip and bathing in the sea much preferred, also this can be done daily with finer details attended to in the camp ablutions. A fair amount of E/A activity during the evening Tessa 34 under 15083 had to sake off an enemy fighter. An E/A photo recco flew over dropping flares, the main attack developed at 02.00 hours 'Window' being used as usual. 35 E/A approached from the East and were directed against battle area. In twenty minutes 5 E/A were destroyed Tessa31 claiming two JU88, Nursemaid 15 was badly shot up in the combat and tried to make A8 but failed. Pilot and Navigator successfully baled out. At 01.14 hours Tessa 23 was fired at by a friendly aircraft and damaged in port engine but landed safely in 21 Sector after flying the gauntlet through the fire of both IAZ's. Although they had been warned the Sector operated 24 fighters, although warning had been given that weather was closing down in the UK. LWS tried to become operational but without success. As well as the 5 E/A destroyed the AA claimed 3 others.

4-8-1944 (D+59)

Location - Meuvaines.

Fine weather and the dust continued. At night Winelodge and Purblind in operation, Hun put up a very poor show and at 01.00 had three of his few aircraft destroyed by 21 Sector and a probable by Poultry under 15083. During Purblind period 15083 claimed a JU88, LWS still u/s.

5-8-1944 (D+60)

Location - Meuvaines.

The quietest night since 'D' Day. 23 fighters operated but no Huns appeared. Still hot fine and dusty. Much sea bathing during the day.

6-8-1944 (D+61)

Location - Meuvaines.

23 fighters were operating, the night watch started with difficulty and a fair amount of E/A. About a dozen at midnight attacked in the battle area coming in from the south and south east. Tessa 31 destroyed a JU88 Pantry 14 was shot down by an enemy night fighter and crashed near B.4 the pilot W/Cdr Beverage baled out successfully but the Navigator was lost.

7-8-1944 (D+62)

Location - Meuvaines.

August Bank Holiday in Normandy was a blistering hot day with the usual accompaniment of dust. At noon with a small colour hoisting ceremony the RAF and Group Captain pennant were hoisted in the larger of the fields near the main Meuvaines road. The first time this HQ had flown their flag. In the evening a Fortress making a forced landing crashed and set fire to a dump of fuel 3 miles to the south and there followed a spectacular blaze, most of the crew were saved by the prompt action of the Poles encamped there. At night a thousand bombers passed over on their way to bombing south of Caen. Operation Winelodge in action. Owing to various reasons at one period only one fighter was available in the pool. Only isolated raids by six enemy aircraft however occurred in this Sector and of these three were destroyed by Nursemaid 27, Pantry 39 and Tessa 43 under control of 15083. It is thought that Nursemaid 27 was hit by fragments from his bursting JU88 and an emergency landing was made at B.5. Not so9 much "Window" used.

8-8-1944 (D+63)

Location - Meuvaines.

It is noticed at night that local LAA have an eight barreled Bofors on what appears to have that effect in a practice shoot as no enemy aircraft passed near to HQ. Two waves of enemy aircraft well to the south, in the first wave a little "Window" is used and in the second none. The first wave at 23.20 in the St Lo area and Pantry 45 claimed a damaged JU88. On the second attack at 0100 Tessa 34 under v15083 claimed two JU88 and Nursemaid 17 under 15121 JU88 probable. Operation Winelodge in force, Purblind had been cancelled. A.O.C., A.V.M Steele visited the Operations room during the night with W/Cdr Compton.

9-8-1944 (D+64)

Location - Meuvaines.

In this heat and dust of the afternoon 358 MRU arrived and report, and were later taken to their selected site about a mile east of Crepon and what appears to be very near the centre of three landing strips, they unlimber and pitch camp by dusk. A L.W.S. outfit also appears and is sent on to the Group Headquarters. This Sector had a quiet night, most of the activity appeared in the American St Lo area. One enemy aircraft fighter destroyed and another lost owing to Nursemaid's guns jamming. At 0120 Purblind operated and finished up 0520. Can Can 37 homed to B.5 and belly landed both crew saved but one wounded slightly.

10-8-1944 (D+65)

Location - Meuvaines.

During the day nothing of interest to report. At night Winelodge in operation. Evening started with an attack by about 35 enemy aircraft with much "Window" directed chiefly on the Eastern beaches. The Sector had a satisfactory bag of 3 JU88, 2FW190 and 1JU88 were destroyed and one JU88 damaged. Difficulty with 15083 R/Y occurred otherwise score might have been better. 15129 had technical trouble too during the critical period. Just before 0300 another ten enemy aircraft passed through the southern part of the Sector towards the west and a Do 217 was destroyed, twenty three aircraft were operated of which eight had technical trouble but chiefly after combat, they were however all recalled just before 0500 owing to weather closing down both sides of the channel. A telephone exchange is now in operation on the domestic site operated by Unit operators. This gives lines to ten phones and is connected to the Admin exchange on the technical site by two lines. Interest has been aroused by the possibility of leave during next month.

11-8-1944 (D+66)

Location - Meuvaines.

It has been suggested that today has been the warmest day, brilliantly fine weather continues. A party of 10 airmen with S/Ldr 'A' represent this unit at the opening by S. of S. for Air of the Malcolm Club at Cruelly in a chateau recently occupied by 83 Group. The roads between are just dust tracks having been pounded by heavy traffic, for 100 yards each side the country is covered in dust, houses in villages look like a winter snow scene. It is said that a fog of dust rises to 2000 feet over the British Sector. At night it was quiet compared with recent nights. Pantry 39 destroyed a FW190 on his way to patrol lines when under 15083. About 8 enemy attacking the beaches from the Seine using "Window" just after midnight. Although a number of contacts nothing developed, later Tessa 43 was sent out to investigate a X raid and claimed a probable destroyed JU88. Twenty four fighters were controlled during the night but were withdrawn owing to weather (mist) at 0500.

12-8-1944 (D+67)

Location - Meuvaines.

It should be stated that the early difficulty of long delays in the delivery of private mail and newspapers has now been correct. Mail on average takes 4 days to arrive after posting. More often than not newspapers are received the same evening, this is a good effort and appreciated by all. No9 hostile aircraft over this area during the night when Winelodge was in operation. Sector controlled 24 aircraft, Just after midnight Pantry 31 under 15083 GCI sent after a X raid reported a

combat with a Do217 and as a result had port engine damaged and was given an emergency homing to B.5. At the same time a report received that a Mosquito attacked a 2 Group Mitchell which also received damaged to port engine that made base successfully in the UK. It is hoped as a result of this misunderstanding that closer control of the activity of each will be made and the movement of 2 Group aircraft through this area.

13-8-1944 (D+68)

Location - Meuvaines.

Fine and brilliantly hot weather continues, bathing parties on the beach all day during off duty periods. The beach however is being shelled by a long range gun from near Houlgate aimed at the shipping but several shells fall too near not to be noticed and especially during the night. Operation Winelodge at night except for the period 0230 to 0430 when Bluebottle is used. 24 fighters controlled during the night, just after 0100 a small wave of about six enemy aircraft approached from the east. Three long contacts made, one of which was broken off because of return fire and the other two targets were too fast. Purblind action started at 0230 but owing to weather and lateness of flare dropping Wellingtons not successful.

14-8-1944 (D+69)

Location - Meuvaines.

Strong northerly breeze all day brings clouds of dust blowing through each site. Shelling of this area is continued all day and night by long range enemy gun. After an interval for repairs to the projector the Cinema opens for the evening performance. Operation Winelodge at night, luckily we had two fighters in the pool, early which enabled them to be in position by 22.15, ten minutes later about six enemy aircraft entered over our area from south east and two minutes later Pantry 20 shot down a JU88, at the same time Doval lost his vision another through evasion. At 23.15 about 50 enemy aircraft attacked from the east and south east and flooded area with "Window", as a result of 14 contacts Doval 28 and Jungle 17 had hits on a JU88 the latter had an engine put on fire by return fire but was landed safely. One aircraft sent to reinforce 21 Sector who were hard pressed. At 0600 another raid started with about five enemy aircraft, Doval 30 lost his visual through evasion in the Caen area.

15-8-1944 (D+70)

Location - Meuvaines.

The weather breaks in the evening with a thunderstorm. Although we do not get sufficient rain to wash the dust off the tents, the storm causes havoc in the balloon barrage, many being burnt down, during the night the weather clears again. As a result of the weather, operation Bluebottle in action at night. Twenty two fighters were operated by the Sector. At 22.10 about six enemy aircraft approached battle area from south east using a little 'Window'. The main attack started at 23.00 about twenty enemy aircraft from the east and with this and other isolated raids some thirty enemy aircraft were reported. 'Window' was extensively used. The following claims are made Tessa 17 under 15083 a JU188, Tessa 18 a JU188 destroyed and another damaged under 15129.

16-8-1944 (D+71)

Fine, bright and dusty again even after yesterdays shower. 15121 GCI move and are operational from a new site. At night the enemy attacked shipping at 22.15, although fighters were well placed 15121 had difficulty. However Tessa 34 and Dorval 19 under 15121 destroyed a JU188 and a JU88, and Pantry 40 and Dorval 37 under 15083 claimed a JU88 destroyed and another damaged. Dorval 19 with engine trouble was homed back to B.5 where they eventually made a good landing having been heavily engaged by local flack for their trouble and despite use of broad I.F.F.. Only 10 to 15 enemy aircraft operated.

17-8-1944 (D+72)

Location - Meuvaines.

Just at dusk guns opened up on approaching enemy aircraft over harbour and a balloon or an enemy aircraft received a direct hit as a large burst was seen in the sky. The enemy put up three small

waves at 22.30, 02.20 and 04.20 of about 30 aircraft over beachhead or well out to sea, 'Window' was extensively used. A bomb or crashed aircraft heard at 22.42. His purpose for these raids are thought to be diversions, while he attempts to get ground forces over the Seine. No luck during the night but if aircraft had asked for help earlier on losing contacts, some results may have been obtained.

18-8-1944 (D+73)

Location - Meuvaines.

The news today indicates clearly that the enemy's ground army has been soundly defeated. At the moment, the enemy's line nearest this Headquarters is about 12 miles away but no indication that he has withdrawn very much in the area along the coast. Operation Winelodge until Bluebottle started at 22.25 when Purlblind in operation. The night watch was made difficult by a large number of friendly fighters crossing area (the S/L's chases these in practice and got several colours of the period), line difficulty also interfered. There was slight enemy fighter activity using 'Window' extensively. Pantry 16 shot down a JU88. Later 15083 spotted an enemy aircraft coming in from the south and Derval 36 got a contact and after a long chase got down a Do217. Twenty seven fighters were employed but several had to return and Doval 38 given an emergency landing at B.5.

19-8-1944 (D+74)

Location - Meuvaines.

A party of Sector personnel sent to 358 MRU to assist a complete one day change of site. The previous site was to (sic) o airfields to be safe for their towers. Dust blows through the camp all day until weather breaks at tea time and rain in a considerable quantity falls until evening when it clears a bit. Operation Winelodge in force when a small number of enemy aircraft appeared at 21.40 over battle area from the east. Only one fighter available who was unlucky not to obtain a kill owing to a bent weapon. The main attacks started at 23.40 over battle area by about 20 enemy aircraft. As a result Jungle 40 under 15121 destroyed a JU88 and Pantry 33 under 15129 destroyed a Do217. Jungle 40 developed engine trouble but made a successful one engine landing at B.5. Later weather closed in at UK and five fighters were landed at B.5.

20-8-1944 (D+75)

Location - Meuvaines.

Weather overcast and occasional showers of rain. Just after midnight a stick of bombs aimed at HMD Erebus Monitor which fortunately do no damage cause quite a blast on the domestic site. Officially only one wave of about 20 aircraft approached battle area and a few went on to the anchorages coming inland. 'Window' was used as usual. Ten contacts, 5 visuals on friendlies. Doval claimed a JU88 and was the only success. This is D+75 and our official score is 76 destroyed. Weather closed in the early morning with low cloud and rain. Owing to a message from 38 Group of an aircraft in distress at sea F.O.B.A.A. sent out a H.S.L. but 484 G.C.C. scrambled 2 Spit IX who dashed off into the air and having Mark III I.F.F. they were new and could not use it. They were controlled by 15121 and by luck after passing through balloons were brought back safely to B.4.

21-8-1944 (D+76)

Location - Meuvaines.

Rain most of the day and most of the night washes out both our and enemy air activity. Quietest night since 'D' Day. Roads now a mass of mud.

22-8-1944 (D+77)

Location - Meuvaines.

Bright hot intervals during the day and sultry night turning to thunderstorms in the early hours. No operational flying possible here or in the UK. A few Black Widows operated but had to return to base. A large P of W Camp less than a mile from Ops Room caused concern on the part of security and was investigated.

23-8-1944 (D+78)

Location - Meuvaines.

The remaining two Units of the Sector arrive 15128GCI and 15130COL with 14051 who by some chance land in 21 Sector area. They are temporarily being placed in the sites formally (sic) occupied by 15083. This Sector has not yet room for their dispersal. 15128 lost by accident a vehicle in the UK. It should be mentioned here that while on the subject the move of this Sector has been completed without a casualty either by enemy action or by accident and the only loss has been as mentioned above, a fine performance considering the Sector now numbers 1200 personnel and about 300 vehicles. The day was hot and damp turning to steady rain at nightfall.

24-8-1944 (D+79)

Location - Meuvaines.

Fine and warm. The battle area is out of normal range of our major units but an L.W.S. (Sniper) has been followed up and Pantry 18 under their direction claimed a JU88 damaged out of 10 or so enemy aircraft that operated. The night near base was quiet. B.17 at Capriquet near Caen with 148 airfield is now serviceable and can be used for emergency night landing.

25-8-1944 (D+80)

Location - Meuvaines.

A quiet night. No enemy aircraft and only four fighters owing to weather and these were landed at B.17. Winelodge in operation until 04.10 followed by Bluebottle. 'Y' service report enemy fighters north east of Roen giving weather reports only. Met Section have arrived and set up business on the Ops site and produce weather reports

26-8-1944 (D+81)

Location - Meuvaines.

409 Squadron land at B.17 and for the first time in this Sector a night Squadron is to be controlled operationally. 25 fighters operated uneventful patrols as there was no enemy, but several hundred friendly bombers passed in and out, one given an emergency landing at B.17. Doval 15 (W/Cdr Hane) shot up by Black Widow. It is very annoying having 21 Sector poaching in our Sector and still more so if they attack our aircraft. A party of 40 airmen sent to Army Rest Camp for a weeks rest at Port-au-Bessen.

27-8-1944 (D+82)

Location - Meuvaines.

Early morning move by 15128 GCI down to the forests 12 miles S.S.E. of Lisceaux (Q615697) to join up with the L.W.S. that has been trying to operate down there. Communications are by wireless. No further activity in our area. 15082 GCI of 21 Sector is trying to control aircraft from its position in Paris but without any result although there was hostile attacks. Five Capstan (409 Squadron) aircraft flown off from B.17. Many friendly aircraft fly over during the early part of the night. CO has been prospecting for a COL site near Seine area.

28-8-1944 (D+83)

Location - Meuvaines.

No enemy activity in this area. Twenty six fighters controlled of which 5 are 409 Squadron from B.17. Both 15128 and the L.W.S. are very 'Sick' in their new position in the South East.

29-8-1944 (D+84)

Location - Meuvaines.

From first light a section of day aircraft are controlled under Sector arrangements by 15121 COL for the first time. This patrols the beachhead and is supplied by any of the day Squadrons in the area. At night no activity but the difficulty of communicating between 15128 and Sector also between the L.W.S. and aircraft and 15128. It is understood the L.W.S. following up the Army are in the Rouen area. Twenty five fighters controlled under Sector. Operation Winelodge in operation. Weather unsettled with heavy clouds and showers of rain.

30-8-1944 (D+85)

Location - Meuvaines.

For the last few weeks the CO has held conferences of Officers i/c Sections at 14.30 to discuss internal affairs and be given directives. These conferences are held on Thursdays and Fridays. Today the conference chiefly referred to a certain move of the Sector Headquarters and Operations in the very near future. The general indication is that the unit will follow the advancing Army up the north coast of France. Bright warm intervals followed by sharp showers of rain most of the day and evening.

31-8-1944 (D+86)

Location - Meuvaines.

Another uneventful night. Twenty two fighters operated with result no enemy fighters in the area. Five aircraft of 409 Squadron operated. Bluebottle in force. Several aircraft had to return early for technical reasons and one made a landing at B.17 on one engine. A.8 was u/s so we reinforced 21 Sector with three fighters.

On the whole the month has been hot and dry, the chief complaint being dust. The roads being little more than tracks have been smashed by the continuous stream of heavy traffic night and day. The weather has been of great assistance to our land operations and has been fine just when it was necessary. A complete change has come over the work of the Sector. The enemy has retired from our skies as fast as he has been driven back on land. The almost complete absence during the few nights of any hostility is record of this. It has been decided that this Sector is to follow up the advancing Army and so dispose of the Units that air cover is given all along the coast of France. This move will be in the next few days. So completely has the situation changed that the expected leave promised to start next month has been postponed along with the Army who very rightly are now going all out. A copy of this Sector's Location and Strength Statement is attached to show present dispositions.

SEPTEMBER

1-9-1944 (D+87)

Location - Meuvaines.

At 14.30 the CO had a conference of all available officers. He outlined clearly the 'Operation Overlord' as it had been planned, how it had conformed in general to the plan and the part that the Sector were to take in the operation. The advance of the Army had now exceeded the original plan and the policy of the Sector had had to be changed from one of static lines of defence to a mobile role. This Sector was to follow up the advance and become mobile. An advance party capable of giving coverage behind the Army is to go tomorrow and make a new operations site at Yeveto (subject to the enemy being cleared). The whole of the Sector to move forward as soon as possible after. The present Operations Room to be used as an Air Raid Warning and Reporting Centre for the local beaches and harbour. Activity in preparation for the move, units are reforming as well as two new MRU's arriving from the UK. A Flight of RAF Regiment arrive for protection of the Advance party. At night a few enemy aircraft apparently to cause a diversion on the withdrawal from Le Havre operate in Seine estuary, two are destroyed. One enemy aircraft passed low over Sector Headquarters and when well passed (sic) is fired upon by distant N.A.A.. Altogether estimated 12 enemy aircraft operated. Doval 15 destroyed a J1188, 15083 and Jungle under 15121 a FW190. 'Window' freely used and Doval thinks he caught the 'Window' sewer(sic). Winelodge in operation until 01.25 when weather deteriorated both here and in the UK and Bluebottle was put in force. B.17 airfield becomes u/s during the afternoon owing to runways sinking. 409 Squadron are to move temporarily to B.6 to operate.

2-9-1944 (D+88)

Location - Meuvaines.

At 08.15 the Advance Party comprising of 26 vehicles sets off from its assembly area towards Boos S.W. of Rouen. Other smaller units including the Regiment party go at intervals after. It is planned

to meet and make up with 15128 GCI who have been operating just west of Rouen together with several MSU's for communication purposes, & a Light Warning Set. The whole party are expected to make Boos during the day. The morning is clear and bright but later a wind from west amounts to half a gale and continues all day with showers of rain. During the afternoon and evening a live ENSA show is given in the recreational marquee. No enemy activity but 19 aircraft operated from the UK and six of 409 Squadron from B.6. Despite no landlines or VHF ground - to - ground communication with the forward element they are kept supplied with two aircraft for 15128 and one of 6091 L.W.S. all night by means of air-to-ground relay messages. Tessa 40 returned to base with R/T failure. Lt Col Leith by air to UK from B.14.

3-9-1944 (D+89)

Location - Meuvaines.

Fine day after a stormy night. No patrols flown from UK owing to weather. No enemy activity and the only aircraft seen by 15083 were our own, for the first time since 'D' Day. A Party is to contact the Advance Element now at H.400393 near Neufchatel N.E of Rowen with mail and documents. 15121 move forward to Boos and on to Advance Element. 15128 are at Boos.

4-9-1944 (D+90)

Location - Meuvaines.

No enemy activity during the night. The small party of men with mail and documents and spares starting at 08.45 arrive at Advance Element at 17.45 having called at 15128 at Boos. The journey is made via Caen, Lisieux, Elboeuf, L'ont de L'Arch where the Seine is crossed to Boos then on to Rouen. Roads are of good surface except through towns which have in many cases been reduced to rubble and are crammed with all kinds of traffic rushing up to the front line and others returning empty for more. The Advance Element are preparing to move to Lille area, 15121 are returning to Boos and 15128 are to go forward in the morning after night operating with the A/E.

5-9-1944 (D+91)

Location - Meuvaines.

Mails are collected and the communication party returned to base via 15121 and 15128 who are preparing to try and catch up the Advance Element that left at dawn for Lille from N.400393 near Noufchatel. Return made by same route in face of avalanche of traffic going North and East. At night no enemy aircraft activity. Aircraft scrambled for 21 Sector. Altogether 24 aircraft operated from B.17 where 409 Squadron have returned. All pilots report that Le Havre is in flames owing to continued enemy resistance there and our bombing. Six aircraft from UK operated with Advance Element now at Lille Vandeville.

6-9-1944 (D+92)

Location - Meuvaines.

Arrangement made with Group Communication Flight for an aircraft to fly urgently needed maps to Advanced Element now at Lille. A load was made up of mail, cigarettes (of a free issue), 200lbs of bread including further cigarettes from a NAAFI stores. Owing to necessity of contact and operational instructions to the CO this aircraft was used by Gp/Capt Stewart C.S.O and Sqn/Ldr Crowther. The load was divided and the second aircraft went as well. These were the first aircraft to land at Lille, they were met be(sic) Advanced Element. Runways still u/s, the major part of A/E moved off to Brussels area and goods that arrived in were sent on by road. Both aircraft returned just before weather closed in for a wet and windy night. No enemy activity in this area.

7-9-1944 (D+93)

Weather continues poor all day. To augment Advanced Element transport (illeg) 4 x 3 tonners of 313 S & T Column sent with a jeep and 3 controllers. A further load of mail, bread and 250 gallons of petrol sent. At night 4 aircraft operated under the Rear Sector of which 2 Capstan were handed to Forward Sector now operating on an airfield NE of Brussels. All four aircraft landed safely back at Tangmere owing to weather at base (B.17) Closing in. No hostile activity Nursemaid aircraft also directed back to Tangmere

8-9-1944 (D+94)

Location - Meuvaines.

CO returns by air in the afternoon from Forward Area for conference at Group Headquarters. An uneventful night. Weather closed down in UK after 23.00 hours. Only first detail from UK patrols. Forward Sector took over six aircraft of 409 Squadron direct from UK. One aircraft returned with bent weapon. Cols showers and hail during the day.

9-9-1944 (D+95)

Location - Meuvaines.

Ten boxes of compo rations sent by air with private mail to Forward Sector. First nip of winter in the air following a cold night. Six 409 Squadron operated under Forward Sector and 13 under Rear including 7 under 15121 at Boos. Six Nursemaid aircraft sent from B.17 to 9 patrol under 21 Sector. CO to Group Headquarters for conference.

10-9-1944 (D+96)

Location - Meuvaines.

Weather continues fine but with showers. Night are bright but cold. 3 x 3 tonners are sent to the Advance Element for transport purposes. These taking a further supply of rations, petrol and bread as well as an extra few personnel. Lille to report at night on operations. Advanced Element are operating north of Brussels with the L.W.S. still further towards Antwerp.

11-9-1944 (D+97)

Location - Meuvaines.

Wind almost a gale with heavy rain, cold at night. CO flown to UK between storms from B.14. Discussions on proposal to move Sector to Amiens area started. A Recce party to site and look for suitable accommodation.

12-9-1944 (D+98)

Location - Meuvaines.

Recce Party under Sqn/Ldr Ford with SSC go to Amiens and district to find suitable sites and accommodation and are away for 40 hours. No night activity at Base but information to hand that the Advanced Element have claimed a JU88 in the Antwerp area.

13-9-1944 (D+99)

Location - Meuvaines.

Return of Recce Party who have made preliminary requisition of a house at St Fuscian, 4 miles south of Amiens. The movement of the Sector is in the air and general preparations are made. Advanced Element being taken over by 25 Sector who are moving up from Brest - Loire area for the past few days and for some time there will be little to report from the operational side of this Unit. The enemy are not showing any activity, let alone as far as Normandy.

14-9-1944 (D+100)

Location - Meuvaines.

Conference held by CO on proposed move to Amiens area, general outline is that the whole Sector moves on 16th and 17th in several small convoys. S & T vehicles will be allotted to carry as much as possible. A Rear Party may remain with surplus stores to be collected later. Arrangements made with A.P.O. at Crepon for mail to go direct to Amiens A.P.O. Packing up of units starts in real earnest. The main details for the move will be found in a movement order attached. Advanced Element leaves Brussels area and retires to meet main party in due course at St Fuscian.

15-9-1944 (D+101)

Location - Meuvaines.

During the early part of the morning, 30 S & T vehicles arrived and are distributed to the various sections for packing and loading. It is considered that with care the whole of the equipment and stores can be accommodated and no Rear Party will be necessary. Operations Room reduced to

skeleton staffing and equipment and packed up. Domestic Site reduced to the minimum for the night sleeping only. The Advanced Element having arrived at St Fuscian will take over operations. The weather is fine.

16-9-1944 (D+102)

Location - Boos.

Camp is called at 05.00, breakfast at 06.00 and the final loading of tents and cookhouse takes place. Start at 08.00 as however delayed until 08.25. The morning is fine but chilly. The main convoy of 26 vehicles is preceded by a small convoy of Intelligence and Met Section and followed later by the main Ops Party who came off last night watch. All told some 140 to 160 vehicles arrived at Boos for the night, which is spent in the open. Weather during the day is warm and fine but a heavy dew falls at night.

17-9-1944 (D+103)

Location - Meuvaines.

Before dawn the first convoy is away and at ½hour intervals the remainder go off. Day is again fine and fairly warm. On arrival at St Fuscian it is discovered that the Advanced Element have gone to Boves where better communication and accommodation are available. Boves is a larger village and is six miles further on and 5 S.S.E. of Amiens and has previously by the German Air Force who left sufficient hurriedly on 31st to leave all the building intact and with few demolitions. Small lines and communications are almost intact except for junction boxes. A large building is to be used for accommodation for the Ops Room and Admin Offices. A large private house with building for a mess and sleeping accommodation while other house in the village are vacant, since enemy and are available for other Sections, for the night however, the vehicles are unloaded in the private house grounds and tents put up. S & T vehicles are urgently required for other duties. The M.S.U's are given a site over the railway as a temporary measure. N Messing is to be in marquee on the house grounds.

18-9-1944 (D+104)

Location - Boves.

A day spent in the rain making preliminary arrangements for accommodation the Sector, allocation of offices. The Ops Room are to be built on the large recreation room in an enemy built house near the main railway lines. Along this line travel all the main cables to various parts and except for joining up the A.S.P.S. have very little line work to do. The other rooms in this building are allocated for offices. The temporary Ops Room will function in the mobile vehicles outside until the changeover can be made. It is now known that 80 to 100 W.A.A.F personnel will be shortly arriving and will require accommodation. They are Ops Room staff.

19-9-1944 (D+105)

Location - Boves.

German Air Force stores and equipment have been taken to furnish and make necessary accommodation. The foundations of buildings the Operations Room started and a large quantity of wood is acquired. Admin Offices little alteration. Rations are drawn from Amiens. The A.P.O. at Amiens are receiving mail as arranged.

20-9-1944 (D+106)

Location - Boves.

About 50 amateur carpenters of the Ops Room staff have been in the new Ops Rooms, others are arranging the Domestic site and getting loads of coal. Some medical equipment is obtained from ex G.A.F. sources and will require checking by a Medical Officer, the Unit M.O. having now been posted away.

21-9-1944 (D+107)

Location - Boves.

Building continues. An excellent is found about 3 miles from the village and is suitable for W.A.A.F. accommodation. This releases a proposed house in the village which will now be occupied by the M.S.U. The MT and Equipment are now accommodated in a house in the outskirts of the village on their own.

22-9-1944 (D+108)

Location - Boves.

Building of the Ops Room continues and a general improvement in the accommodation as the Sector spreads into its allotted places. 358 M.R.U. arrived during the afternoon and are to be sited north of Amiens. S.R.O's show a large number of places out of bounds and persons who collaborated with the enemy during their occupation.

23-9-1944 (D+109)

Location - Boves.

Nothing of interest to report and less of operations but the operations rooms are taking shape and signal lines are being connected up.

24-9-1944 (D+110)

Location - Boves.

Visit by A/Cm Pearce S.A.S.O. who inspected this layout of the Sector on his way with the move of 85 Group to Ghent. Wing Officer Stevens also visited and was shown the proposed W.A.A.F quarters which appear to be satisfactory. Her party came by air to Amiens Clisy airfield which is only a few miles away and is now occupied in part by 149 Wing who fly 410 Night Squadron. Building is nearly complete. Two very impressive Operations Rooms will be ready tomorrow.

25-9-1944 (D+111)

Location - Boves.

During the afternoon the controlling was transferred from the Mobile to the new Operations Room and almost full symphony of watches started. CO and Wg/Cdr Ops visited areas along the Channel coast for further sites and in particular for A.S.R. control centre. The Filter Room which adjoins the Ops Room is not quite working owing to a shortage of communications.

26-9-1944 (D+112)

Location - Boves.

The Filter Room came into operation during the afternoon for the first time since leaving Meuvaines. The building of those two rooms is a credit to the versatility of the Clerk SD's. Comprising the building the Met Section are taking the next position of the floor for a small office and another Section is being taken for A.A. and S.L.L.O. offices. This leaves a space to be converted into a rest room for the W.A.A.F's eventually.

27-9-1944 (D+113)

Location - Boves.

Nothing of interest to report. Watches now in full swing again, but very little to be shown. No fighter activity and great difficulty is to get a fighter to control at night. Weather has restricted flying and all that can be got into the air are passed forward to 25 Sector.

28-9-1944 (D+114)

Location - Boves.

Normal days building and completing of offices. Nothing to report from Ops. 149 Airfield with extra squadrons on their hands have borrowed 30 ridge tents and a marquee which this Sector are not at the moment using.

29-9-1944 (D+115)

Location - Boves.

F/Off McTurk with three airwomen arrived by air at Clisy during the afternoon as the advance party for the main party due on the third. The first W.A.A.F to be in this area are 3a and are billeted in the village while their equipment arrived and their hostel prepared.

30-9-1944 (D+116)

Location - Boves.

The proposed W.A.A.F Hostel is the large house previously used as a college for the study of Trout Rearing and Fishing is about 3 miles south of this village. A large place well constructed and ideal for conversion into a Hostel. Main difficulty at the moment is the matter of heating as most of the plant has been damaged by the Hun. Besides the pending arrival of the W.A.A.F's to this Sector the month has been chiefly noted for the move from the rather bleak beachhead to the wooden inland area. To living in tents in field to mostly house for accommodation in a village near a town. Indoor Ops Rooms have been constructed almost equal to a static Happydrome (sic) instead of the cluster of vehicles sunk below ground level and covered with tarpaulins. Several of the J.G.C.I. Units have also found house accommodation in and around their sites. Radar coverage has been given from the beachheads to the River Somme but this has been extended subject to a visit today by the CO to Group Headquarters, now at Ghent to the Pas de Calais area or Belgian frontier.

OCTOBER

1-10-1944 (D+117)

Location - Boves.

Equipment for W.A.A.F Hostel received and unloaded and found to be deficient of bedding and may postpone the arrival of the main party. A game of Rigger played by this Headquarters staff against Amiens F.C. (French) was lost 15 - 17.

2-10-1944 (D+118)

Location - Boves.

Further active preparations made for the reception of the W.A.A.F. party and after many phone calls concerning bedding etc it is arranged for the Paliasses to be sent from the A.S.P. at Caen. The Unit appears to be in no mans land between the old base and the new forward area around Brussels. The A.S.P. is moving from Caen to Ghent in the next few days and this is the Unit for all equipment and stores. Personnel have to be routed to and from the UK via the B.P.C. at Cruelly, several of these movements are of urgent nature and entail a journey by non existent transport organisation. A dozen Ops Room staff attached to 25 Sector.

3-10-1944 (D+119)

Location - Boves.

Just a few minutes after 11.00 hours the four Dakotas landed at Clisy airfield with the 80 W.A.A.F. of the main party. They were met and taken with their kits in lorries to their Hostel. Owing to a small bridge between the village of Boves and the Ops Headquarters and their Hostel being under repair a diversion is necessary and the journey of 3 miles is nearer 7. This bridge should be repaired in a week. The W.A.A.F's spent the rest of the day settling in. The day has been cold with rain.

4-10-1944 (D+120)

Location - Boves.

W.A.A.F's continue to settle in their quarters. Water is still a main problem. At W.A.A.F. Hostel a visit to Paris has gained permission for the repair of the hot water system at French Government expense. At the moment no hot water system either for washing or heating is workable, owing to damage caused by the enemy. At the Ops Headquarters the water system has again broken down owing to the pump burning out. No lavatories are therefore available and outside lavatories have to be made. Not satisfactory for W.A.A.F's. It is hoped to get this repaired shortly. A.O.C. intended to visit but after landing at Clisy returned at once owing to weather closing down.

5-10-1944 (D+121)

15129 GCI who had come up from the beachhead area and stayed at Clisy for the last few days moved off to Le Treport area and are sited to form eventually an A.S.R. reporting centre. At the same time M.S.U's for fixer and signals will be sited in the Fecampand Boulogne areas. 15081 will be moving up to the Lille area and a far wider area of covering will be possible. CO to W.A.A.F. Hostel for a lecture and in the afternoon a short evening watch is manned by W.A.A.F. for the first time. Bridge is still up so the long detour has to be made with the watches.

6-10-1944 (D+122)

Location - Boves.

Fine day and the first on which all watches are manned by W.A.A.F's. Further six Clerk SD's attached for duties with 15129 and 30 others attached to 25 Sector in Brussels area. Understood that 15083 are now gone to the St Omer district.

7-10-1944 (D+123)

Location - Boves.

Little of interest to report for a normal working day. Water in system in the Ops Headquarters now working satisfactory (sic). A hose in the village main street catering for Sector Sick Quarters, one of the rooms thus vacated will be used for W.A.A.F Admin.

8-10-1944 (D+124)

Location - Boves.

Very normal Sunday with routine work. Suspected enemy in district are hunted during the afternoon. There have been several reports recently of enemy elements hiding in the large woods a mile or so SE of this village. Radiators in Ops Room are put in order and heated up.

9-10-1944 (D+125)

Location - Boves.

F/Off McTurk to Group Headquarters at Ghent for dicussions on W.A.A.F Policy Establishment and equipment.

10-10-1944 (D+126)

Location - Boves.

A recreational building Salle Des Fetes in this village taken over to be converted into a Recrteational Room and Cinema. The Cinema has been showing at the W.A.A.F Hostel on several occasions but not as yet for the RAF.

11-10-1944 (D+127)

Location - Boves.

Routine work and nothing to report.

12-10-1944 (D+128)

Location - Boves.

CO to the UK by air to collect Sector Oxford and discussions. Decide to move out personnel from sleeping quarters in Chateau site owing to overcrowding and general discomfort. The recreational building is to be temporary accommodation.

13-10-1944 (D+129)

Location - Boves.

Normal routine working day. The quest for more and more accommodation continues. Squadrons from Amiens Clisy Airfield are now being housed in the village.

14-10-1944 (D+130)

Location - Boves.

CO returns to Clisy by air. Construction of Guardroom for night picquet completed with prefabricated Jerry hut.

15-10-1944 (D+131)

Location - Boves.

Personnel in Domestic Site are moved to accommodation in village and with the reduction owing to 50 Clerks S.D. being attached to 25 Sector there will now be accommodation for cookhouse under cover in buildings in Domestic Site.

16-10-1944 (D+132)

Location - Boves.

Cookhouse moves from tents and marquee to buildings in domestic site. Mobile Dental Unit arrives for operations in Sector. Heavy rain most of the day.

17-10-1944 (D+133)

Location - Boves.

Weather continues poor with rain at intervals. Nothing to report. Having at last got a flagpole and got it fixed the RAF and CO's flags are hoisted again in front of the Ops building.

18-10-1944 (D+134)

Location - Boves.

A certain amount of difficulty is being had over the maintenance of buildings with our water sources. A local French plumber is constantly engaged putting one or other of the water pumps right. Each house or building has its own pump and when these fail the sanitary arrangements also become impossible.

19-10-1944 (D+135)

Location - Boves.

A gang of five French workmen engaged through Civil Affairs for the erection of Airmen's living huts on the domestic site. They are working to put up further living quarters to reduce the congestion. The workmen are fetched and returned by our transport daily. In the evening the Salle Des Fetes opened as a Cinema with a speech by the CO and a performance of conjouring (sic) by Sqn/Ldr Cable (15128GCI) who is quite understandably a member of The Magicians Club. The room holds about 250 for a performance and was attended by W.A.A.F.

20-10-1944 (D+136)

Location - Boves.

Continuous rain almost all day. Random 27 returns to 149 airfield in poor conditions, got lost and crashed a few miles away, the crew being killed.

21-10-1944 (D+137)

Location - Boves.

Poor weather conditions continue, but a Dakota after being delayed nearly two hours brings contingent of seven W.A.A.F's to Clisy where they are met and taken to W.A.A.F. Hostel. W.A.A.F. population now 90, latest arrivals are for domestic duties. Rugby match v 11 L of C. Lost 3 points (1Try) to Nil.

22-10-1944 (D+138)

Location - Boves.

Weather still poor and nothing of interest to report.

23-10-1944 (D+139)

Location - Boves.

Low cloud, rain and drizzle, everything static.

24-10-1944 (D+140)

Location - Boves.

Visits by Group Postal Officer and Flt/Lt Stewart of 2nd T.A.F., Movement Liaison at Amiens. 14038 A.M.E.S. now operating on its own at Caen and is to move up to Calais thereby reducing our coverage to the West and over the old beaches which is taken over by an Army organisation but at the same time the depth of the Sector has been increased in the Lille area.

25-10-1944 (D+141)

Location - Boves.

A delegation of visiting Allied personalities on a sight seeing tour called at Clisy and were given lunch at the Sector Mess. The party included representatives from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Netherlands, China, Greece, Brazil and Yugoslavia and were flown from Northolt via Cherbourg etc. The weather was a poor for flying as possible and after lunch the rest of the journey to Ghent was made by road

26-10-1944 (D+142)

Location - Boves.

Nothing to report. Even the weather is against us.

27-10-1944 (D+143)

Location - Boves.

Six women war correspondents under the guidance of Group P.A. Officer visited Sector and in particular W.A.A.F. organisation. The night turned out fine with quarter moon. Owing to a 'doubtful' that landed at Clisy, the Air Raid Warning was sounded at Amiens. Group Captain Ellis stayed the night. Light and power supply off all day owing to a change over of mains and not restored until well after dark.

28-10-1944 (D+144)

Location - Boves.

Brilliant morning turned to heavy showers in the afternoon. 8 patrols flown at night under 15130 and 15128 from 219, 409 and 410 Squadrons but all uneventful.

29-10-1944 (D+145)

Location - Boves.

Owing to absence of Padre in UK the only Service held to-day was in the evening, under the direction of the O.D. Padre from 149 Airfield. Nothing to report at night.

30-10-1944 (D+146)

Location - Boves.

Four aircraft from 410 Squadron returned owing to weather from 25 Sector. One A/C patrolled for 15128 but no other activity.

31-10-1944 (D+147)

Location - Boves.

Ten patrols flown from 25 Sector and one aircraft patrolled for an hour on 15130. Weather closed in and became u/s for the rest of the night. There is little to report for a summary of the month. The weather has been very poor and now the Unit have settled into winter quarters for the most part the static atmosphere is becoming apparent. Operationally few aircraft have been flown at night and this Sector has had difficulty the services of any on several occasions with 15121 at Rouen, 15129 at Le Treport, 15083 near Lille and 15130 near Calais and 15128 near Amiens, the coverage of this Sector is very considerable. 358 M.R.U. are just north of Amiens. The coverage given in the Caen area by 15130 is now taken over by an L.W.S. under A.A. control. The Calais covered by 15130 promises to be the most eventful as with 14038 Type 14, a watch is being kept on the surrounded enemy in the

Dunkerque area. The enemy here is being supplied nightly by air. So far no contacts have been made. The Sector score remains at 98 destroyed.

NOVEMBER

1-11-1944 (D+148)

Location - Boves.

Squadron Leader 'A' and Adjutant return from Group Headquarters after an Administrative conference with 25 Sector. A low flying HE 111 damaged by A.A. over Dunkerque passed at zero feet over Sector and Clisy but faded eastwards before anything could be done about it.

2-11-1944 (D+149)

Location - Boves.

Nothing of any interest to report.

3-11-1944 (D+150)

Location - Boves.

Normal routine working day.

4-11-1944 (D+151)

Location - Boves.

The A.O.C. (A.V.M. Steele) accompanied by the P.M.O. Group Captain Howarth arrived at lunch time for an informal inspection of the Sector Headquarters. They stayed the night after a visit to 149 Wing Headquarters at Clisy airfield and left early the following morning.

5-11-1944 (D+152)

Location - Boves.

Sunday evening Service conducted by O.D. Padre from 149 Wing followed by a concert given by members of the Sector in the Salle Des Fetes. A hockey match in the morning versus Amiens was lost by 8 - 0, the local team containing several international players.

6-11-1944 (D+153)

Location - Boves.

Visit by Sqdn. Leader Ogden-Swift and Flt/Lt Wilson, P1 and P2 of Group Headquarters, the journey was by air to Clisy. Normal routine work.

7-11-1944 (D+154)

Location - Boves.

More rain all day. W.A.A.F. are now transported by a requisitioned single decker bus. Considerable difficulty had to be overcome to get the bus working. Carburettor has to be obtained from Paris. Spares from Amiens and tyres provided.

8-11-1944 (D+155)

Location - Boves.

Water pump motor on Ops Site burnt out again, causing a complete shortage of water.

9-11-1944 (D+156)

Location - Boves.

Arriving from recent discussions at Group Headquarters a meeting of the Sector Ancillary Units was held at Sector Headquarters. This meeting will be a monthly affair to discuss Sector Administration. Poor weather restricted all flying and no patrols were flown.

10-11-1944 (D+157)

Location - Boves.

Electric failure most of the day and night again causes inconvenience as a shortage of water (sic). Walrus of 276 Squadron did A.S.R. patrol between Boulogne and Dieppe. Eight aircraft patrolled by Sector during the night.

11-11-1944 (D+158)

Location - Boves.

During the night a Mosquito of 604 Squadron (UK) and one of 219 Squadron patrolled in Dunkerque area against supply dropping enemy aircraft. Three 219 aircraft from B.16 (Amiens Clisy) patrolled 25 Sector and one damaged on landing owing to undercarriage collapse. Crew OK> During the day 4 Mosquito of 219 patrolled Paris for the visit of Mr Churchill. In the village a party of Sector Headquarters paraded at 14.00 and was present at the Armistice Celebrations at the Town Hall and the War Memorial.

12-11-1944 (D+159)

Location - Boves.

Usual patrols of 219 and 604 Squadrons but nothing to report. Weather rather tricky.

13-11-1944 (D+160)

Location - Boves.

Nothing to report. Five uneventful patrols made up from 409 and 209 Squadrons flown in Dunkerque area. During day Walrus of 276 Squadron flown in Boulogne Dieppe area.

14-11-1944 (D+161)

Location - Boves.

Six aircraft patrolled by Sector from 604 Squadron in Dunkerque area and one from 409 Squadron. An unidentified track plotted south of Amiens may have been an American A/C.

15-11-1944 (D+162)

Location - Boves.

Two aircraft of 219 Squadron patrolled by Sector. Weather poor.

16-11-1944 (D+163)

Location - Boves.

Weather stopped all flying day and night. Limited number of 48 hour passes started for Paris for Sector personnel.

17-11-1944 (D+164)

Location - Boves.

Weather again stopped flying during the night from Sector base but in the early hours an unidentified aircraft plotted from Amiens to Dover and another track which may have been the same aircraft from Boulogne to (illeg). A B17 landed B. (illeg) with engine trouble.

18-11-1944 (D+165)

Location - Boves.

Weather continued to be very rough with wind and rain. Aircraft of 219 Sqn and 409 Sqn patrolled in the Dunkerque area but with nothing to report. 276 Sqn Walrus did A.S.R. patrol (remainder of entry illegible)

19-11-1944 (D+166)

Location - Boves.

408 Squadron are at B.48 in place of 409 with 219 Squadron patrolled eight aircraft under 25 Sector in forward area. One A/C of 219 had a successful combat with a JU87. This Sector had six aircraft of 604 Squadron from UK on uneventful patrols in Dunkerque area.

20-11-1944 (D+167)

Location - Boves.

(illeg) Squadron from B.46 patrolled 6 A/C under 25 Sector in forward area. Contact obtained on a possible JU87 (illeg) but not engaged owing to contact being lost. This Sector had two A/C of 604 Squadron over Dunkerque area on anti supply dropping. Weather became non operational.

21-11-1944 (D+168)

Location - Boves.

One A/C of 219 Squadron and one of 410 Squadron patrolled under 25 Sector. Normal Dunkerque patrol was provided by 25 Sector. Usual Walrus A.S.R patrol flown. More rain and Wing flagpole blown down.

22-11-1944 (D+169)

Location - Boves.

8 aircraft of 488 Squadron and 8 of 219 Sqdn on patrols in defence of forward area under 25 Sector. Seven A/C of 604 Squadron from UK flown under 15130 over Dunkerque area. One A/C of 488 Squadron had contact and visual with Ju188 but lost contact before engagement could be made owing to technical trouble.

23-11-1944 (D+170)

Location - Boves.

Court of Enquiry held on absence of AC1 Hanover of 358 M.R.U. Absent since posting on 2-8-1944. Weather reduced all operational flying to nil.

24-11-1944 (D+171)

Location - Boves.

(illeg) 219 Squadron flew 4 A/C under 25 Sector control in forward area. Several contacts obtained but no combats. Weather still poor with much rain.

25-11-1944 (D+172)

Location - Boves.

604 Squadron from UK patrolled aircraft between Somme and Dunkerque. An aircraft of 488 Squadron scrambled from Lille to investigate several unidentified tracks in the Dunkerque area but without making any visual. By 1 - 7 Sector knocked out of 85 Group football competition in game at Conrai against 508 Wing.

26-11-1944 (D+173)

Location - Boves.

An aircraft on 488 Squadron on returning to Amiens crashed on landing owing to a motor outing. Crew unhurt. Several unidentified tracks in the Dunkerque area but no interceptions.

27-11-1944 (D+174)

Location - Boves.

Normal patrols flown from Glisy and 604 Squadron from the UK under 15130 but no joy. Weather improving.

28-11-1944 (D+175)

Location - Boves.

More flying at night than usual owing to better conditions and usual patrols sent from Clisy to forward area in greater strength. 604 Squadron again under 15130 from UK. M.S.U. Headquarters run a very successful dance in a reconditioned hut that they have put together after it was left behind by the Hun.

29-11-1944 (D+176)

Location - Boves.

Fine day for the first time for weeks. Routine patrols from Glisy in forward area. One A/C of 219 Squadron shot up by ground flak in the moonlight but returned safely.

30-11-1944 (D+177)

Location - Boves.

Nothing to report of interest. In fact for the whole of the month there has been very little to report. The most that can be said is that there have been a few unidentified tracks in this Sector which may have been hostile. Except for patrols of 604 Squadron based in the UK over the Dunkerque area there has been no need for any other patrols on the Sector area owing to the lack of hostile activity. From the domestic point view general improvements have been made in the living conditions and the civilian workmen have been employed on odd jobs of reconstruction and repair. A rather static situation prevails.

DECEMBER

1-12-1944 (D+178)

Location - Boves.

Usual patrols flown and most of the time seemed to have been spent in chasing themselves. Several Crews have reported seeing Big Bens on their way up to the Forward Areas. At home the W.A.A.F's have a house warming party.

2-12-1944 (D+179)

Location - Boves.

Normal patrols under 25 Sector from Glisy and UK aircraft under 15130 in Dunkerque area.

3-12-1944 (D+180)

Location - Boves.

Heavy showers during the day but weather mild for time of the year. Nothing of interest to report, usual routine work, no flying owing to weather.

4-12-1944 (D+181)

Location - Boves.

Three Canadian aircrew who had baled out of Lancaster in Rouen area evacuated to UK by air from Glisy. Remaining crew of two are being buried by 15121 G.C.I. at Rouen and the others are missing. Usual patrols from Glisy at night. Heavy bomber formation pass over here on way to Ruhr.

5-12-1944 (D+182)

Location - Boves.

Gang Show given in concert room was very well enjoyed. Weather improved but still heavy showers at times. From Glisy Flt/Lt Stevenson of 219 Squadron while under 25 Sector destroyed a ME110.

6-12-1944 (D+183)

Location - Boves.

Routine patrols and normal working day. Nothing to report except that heavy contributions (sic) of our bombers going out to the Ruhr. 10.00 Christmas Cards arrived for distribution.

7-12-1944 (D+184)

Location - Boves.

Four raids in Dunkerque area were investigated but produced no contacts. Sector Admin Officers have 2nd Admin Meeting.

8-12-1944 (D+185)

Location - Boves.

After many months negotiations a photographer was loaned to the Unit from 149 Airfield to take photo of all personnel on this Sector numbering about 170 for the new style Identification Cards.

Christmas mail is now in full blast, with the Christmas Cards making up the main loads. Christmas parcels were supposed to have been sent in some days and made the mail up to as many sacks as there were parcels before. Nothing from Operations or routine work to report. Weather still squally but colder than of late.

9-12-1944 (D+186)

Location - Boves.

Group Captain Moon arrives by air from 25 Sector for discussions and stays the night. Rugby match against 488 Squadron at Glisy lost 13 - 17. Little flying owing to poor weather conditions. At night it would seem an ammunition dump caught fire west of Amiens as the sky is lit with flames and a barrage of bursts can be heard.

10-12-1944 (D+187)

Location - Boves.

After a fine morning weather deteriorates to a gale and rain. Commanding Officer off for Manston by air but returns owing to the weather before crossing the coast. The Sector Church is dedicated today by Wing Commander Wilkie, Chaplain i/c 85 Group. It is understood this is the second church dedicated since 'D' Day in this country. One raid plotted during the night but no action taken.

11-12-1944 (D+188)

Location - Boves.

Routine patrols on 25 Sector and one on 24. Nothing else to report.

12-12-1944 (D+189)

Location - Boves.

No enemy action but usual flying from Glisy.

13-12-1944 (D+190)

Location - Boves.

First allocation of 48 hour passes to Paris started. Still nothing Operational to report but patrols recalled early owing to weather.

14-12-1944 (D+191)

Location - Boves.

No flying owing to the weather.

15-12-1944 (D+192)

Location - Boves.

No flying and nothing to report.

16-12-1944 (D+193)

Location - Boves.

Usual defensive patrols but no enemy action.

17-12-1944 (D+194)

Location - Boves.

Nothing to report and little flying.

18-12-1944 (D+195)

Location - Boves.

Considerable more flying during the night in support of forward areas owing to enemy counter offensive below British Area. Fine day and warm. Nothing to report, however, from this Sector.

19-12-1944 (D+196)

Location - Boves.

Flying as usual. News of considerable enemy penetration. The first definite information received on proposed leave scheme to start at new year.

20-12-1944 (D+197)

Location - Boves.

No flying owing to thick fog. D.C.M. at Glisy presided by S/Ldr Grant of 15121 and F/Lt Garner of Sector Headquarters as Senior Member.

21-12-1944 (D+198)

Location - Boves.

Fog continues and still no flying. Flt Lt Clennell to act as member of D.C.M. An intruder at W.A.A.F. Hostel chased off by the Guard after shots had been fired each way.

22-12-1944 (D+199)

Location - Boves.

Fog and rain but turning finer in the afternoon. Christmas celebrations spent with Pantomime written and produced and acted by members of this Sector and given in the Salle Des Fetes under the name of 'Cinderella'.

23-12-1944 (D+200)

Location - Boves.

Routine patrols. No enemy action in this Sector but W/Cdr Green had successful combats with Junkers 88 under 25 Sector and returned on one engine. A certain more vigilant atmosphere owing to rumours of saboteurs. Weather fine with slight haze, a prospect of increased air activity.

24-12-1944 (D+201)

Location - Boves.

No enemy activity in this area but aircraft from Clisy had a busy night and destroyed 5 Junkers 88 and one M.E. 110 and damaged three Junkers 88, all this over the battle area under 25 Sector. 200 children of the village given a tea party in the Salle Des Fetes. Weather turns cold and frosty with haze.

25-12-1944 (D+202)

Location - Boves.

Weather very cold but bright. Aircraft from Glisy destroyed two Junkers 88 and one ME110 with another claim for a damaged, all in the battle area. Otherwise a traditional RAF Christmas Day with Officers serving the airmen's dinner which was in two parties. This had been preceded by a visit of the N.C.O's to the Officer's Mess. A dance was held in the evening at the M.S.U's recreational room. But behind all this extra guards and vigilance is kept and at the same time leave rosters are being prepared by the allocations that are to start in the New Year.

26-12-1944 (D+203)

Location - Boves.

Weather still cold, everything frost bound. Glisy had a further success during the night. Nothing to report from Operations in this Sector.

27-12-1944 (D+204)

Location - Boves.

Enemy action reported over a wide area in this Sector but no action as aircraft in this Sector were grounded owing to fog. Incident reported at Boos, (15121) of hostile aircraft shooting up B.81 and at the same time enemy aircraft later identified as a M.E. 210 crashed into the sidings at Longeau after shooting up the area. The need for vigilance is confirmed.

28-12-1944 (D+205)

Location - Boves.

Continued fog and cold. One unidentified aircraft in area but no action owing to all landing grounds being closed down. 15128 and 15121 G.C.I. to up hooks and move.

29-12-1944 (D+206)

Location - Boves.

No flying. Weather still impossible in this area. Pall of rain in the morning made all roads icebound.

30-12-1944 (D+207)

Location - Boves.

Weather slightly clearer and warmer. One hostile and two X raids reported in the Calais area. On posting of Accountant Officer, F/Lt Clennell becomes Imprest Holder.

31-12-1944 (D+208)

Location - Boves.

Several meetings at which the CO gave the news of the closing down of the Sector as such in this area to reopen later in Belgium. The movement of all Units will take place in the near future. The day closed with the first leave party of 9 going to the UK for leave. They were seen off on a bright moonlight night with the ground covered with a light fall of snow. The train left from Amiens at 0030 hours. There has been little to report during the month from the Operational side and nothing also as it affects this Sector. 24 Sector can almost be said to be closed with the Old year. To summarise this Sector's existence would be appropriate here. Formed at Acklington on the 21st February and while a large percentage of the personnel were being gathered together an attempt was made to find an Ops Room and after an unsuccessful attempt some days before, eventually went to Newcastle on 16th March 1944. Here the first plans of this Sector's reporting arrangements were made and the Sector's layout practiced with the arrival of the G.C.I.'s and M.R.U. Before anything could be completed a large proportion of the personnel went on Exercise 'Trousers' and later on Exercise 'Fabius'. This never allowed the Sector to get together until weeks after the Invasion. With personnel and G.C.I.'s still away on exercises, the main body went to Stapleford Tawney. The experiences of long distance travelling. After a few days the Sector HQ went to Wartling to pitch tents and distribute the G.C.I.'s over Sussex for practice in reporting and living under conditions that would be expected. The Sector really came into being in this period and grew as personnel and equipment and size out of all recognition for the original conception. Here all the preparations for 'D' Day were made and on the 27th May, the first Sections moved off to the concentration area. Those that remained after 'D' Day had the discomfort of being in direct line from the Buzz Bombs at the height of their activity. A great number falling around the area covered by this Sector. Unit after Unit came over to the Continent until by the 17th August the whole Sector was over and got going for the first time complete in every Unit. It cannot be said that it was entirely luck that brought this Sector over without a casualty either to personnel or equipment or vehicles. To those that landed on 'D' Day the greatest credit is due for this amazing record. The practice of the exercises, the hours of thought and preparation and the organisation all combined to make this possible. The 'D' Day assault party (some 220) opened up on the air and started operating on D+1 at 0300 hours. A fact that has never been equaled and attempted before. From then until the middle of August, 98 enemy aircraft were destroyed under control of this Sector. The area in the Sector included the Mulberry and all the British beaches to the front lines. The Ops were soon built into a pit and covered in, and later, a domestic site made at which the Sector personnel lived until September 16th when the advance made it possible and necessary to move up to the Amiens area. The actual advance of the armies had been closely followed by a mobile reporting room unit which advanced with the Army and sometimes in advance of it almost to Antwerp and who received the acclamation of the newly liberated peoples. This flying squad of the Ops Room was actually taken over by 25 Sector recently arrived on the Continent and returned to the main party near Boves near Amiens. The Sector has been there ever since. The enemy has not troubled us and so there has been little or nothing in the way of Operations but a Operations Room and Administrative Building was made that was equal to a Home station and made not by works services but by personnel of the Unit. Little by little, living conditions

and daily routine have been improved until little to choose between this and some Home stations. Early in October the W.A.A.F arrived to add another homely touch to this Sector.

January

1-1-1945

Location - Boves.

The first news this morning was that the CO had been honoured in the New Year's list with the C.B.E. and Wing Commander Mawhood (W/C Ops) with the O.B.E. The day was brilliantly fine but cold with a slight covering of snow. A day of great air activity in the Forward Area but nothing over the Sector. The only reporting available now is from a Type 15 of 15129 moved to the site of 15128 and 15083 and the 358. M.R.U.

2-1-1945

Location - Boves.

Further to the honours mentioned yesterday news is today received that S/Ldr Linnimore, CO of 15083 and Sgt Cheesman D.C. (now with 25 Sector) have been awarded the M.B.E. and the B.E.M. The present position of the Sector is as follows, 15121 on the way to Calais from Rouen complete with M.S.U's. 15130 at Calais on their way to Vignecourt, site of 15128 who have gone to Melsbrook under 25 Sector. 15129 are not operating together with the two Types 14, but a Type 15 of 15129 with 358 M.R.U. are given local area reports. 15083 are reporting to 25 Sector. As a result the Sector is almost non-operational. The CO to Headquarters No. 85 Group for conference on future of Sector.

3-1-1945

Location - Boves.

At noon, the Sector became completely non-operational although 358 M.R.U. continued reporting. It is proposed to close the Operations Room with effect from 0830 hours tomorrow when watches will cease. Administration of 15083, 15121 and 15128 are taken over by 25 Sector. Daily conferences being held by the CO with Section Commanders.

4-1-1945

Location - Boves.

W.A.A.F. personnel are to be flown back to UK on the 6th and will remain at Digby until required in the new set up. Leave to be granted. Operations Room broken up and equipment packed away. The premises are going to be taken over by 149 Wing complete with the many improvements that have been made by this Sector.

5-1-1945

Location - Boves.

General closing up of Operations Room. Lines severed. W.A.A.F. are packing up but date of actual move not yet announced, although the local district is cleared of snow outside and all around are received reports of snow and roads covered in ice making travelling difficult.

6-1-1945

Location - Boves.

The non-arrival until too late in the day of the four Dakotas to carry the W.A.A.F. Detachment to UK postpones their movement and after packing up their Hostel they are returned for another night to their disappointment. As a result a number of airmen of 410 Squadron slept in the now empty Ops Room.

7-1-1945

Location - Boves.

Weather a bit better and at 1100 hours the W.A.A.F. party takes off with a prospect of a rough passage. However the journey is completed without incident. As soon as W.A.A.F.'s are away the work of cleaning up and handing their Hostel over to 410 Squadron put in hand and complete by late afternoon. W.A.A.F.R. equipment is stored.

8-1-1945

Location - Boves.

Fifteen S & T Lorries arrive and are loaded with equipment for Sections as they close down. Weather turns cold with snow.

9-1-1945

Location - Boves.

Some seventy lorries have now arrived and are being held at 149 Airfield while loading is taking place. No operational business and all offices closing down. Cinema is kept going and is to be packed up last. Usual evening held by CO but no date of move.

10-1-1945

Location - Boves.

Nothing of interest to report except a heavy fall of snow making roads exceptionally difficult.

11-1-1945

Location - Boves.

Nothing of interest to report except a heavy fall of snow making roads exceptionally difficult.

12-1-1945

Location - Boves.

Information is received from Group Headquarters that Advance Party is to move tomorrow and preparations made accordingly. Bitterly cold night.

13-1-1945

Location - Boves.

Advance Party under Adjutant and Equipment Officer and a representative number of airmen eventually move off at 0900 hours after difficulty in starting engines owing to cold. The four vehicles which included a small line section of A.F.S found the going extremely difficult and cold but arrived safely at 1615 hours at Ghent. Here they are shown temporary accommodation in an old dilapidated house in which for the next two days in bitter weather they are to live.

14-1-1945

Location - Boves.

A tour of the proposed accommodation is made by the Advanced Party personnel and several small buildings and one large building are seen in the St Denus Westrum district west of Ghent. It is decided that the large building will accommodate the airmen (250 including some of the A.F.R.S.), small buildings will do for the Sgt's Mess, M.T. and Equipment and a cluster of chalets on the canal will accommodate the officers. A house on the main road is allocated as S.H.Q. Owing to entire lack of heating and light and very little sanitary facilities, and the fact that most water systems are frozen, a considerable amount of organisation will have to be put in to make the premises habitable.

15-1-1945

Location - Boves.

A tour of the new premises with the Works Flight and a summarise of the most urgent work is got. The main party moves in the morning in two sections. A small first party under S/Ldr 'A' comes right through with personnel who are required as extra working party for preparation. The larger section make Lille for the night and are staged under Army arrangements. Weather still cold but slightly better.

16-1-1945

Location - Ghent.

The earlier arrivals spend busy morning preparing and making accommodation. The Main Party arrive just before lunch. All personnel are being temporary (sic) housed in the large building until other accommodation is almost literally thawed out. A tour of the site by CO. Conditions are most primitive and it will be some while before any form of comfort will be had. Lack of heat and light until a few lamps are obtained add to the discomfort. Catering also present difficulties owing to lack of suitable accommodation.

17-1-1945

Location - Ghent.

Working parties on unloading and releasing vehicles and improving habitation. Officers' Mess not opened until accommodation available in the chalets.

18-1-1945

Location - Ghent.

Work of rehabilitation (sic) continues. Considerable exchange of currencies made. Gale during the night with some rain.

19-1-1945

Location - Ghent.

Leave party due to leave is postponed for 24 hours. All vehicles have been offloaded and returned to S & T.

20 to 30th -1-1945

Location - Ghent.

These ten days are spent in building up the Domestic and Administrative accommodation of the Sector. Each day an improvement is made to the living conditions. The accommodation is now set out in an arc about a mile long. Just under a mile from Group Headquarters where the eventual Operations Rooms are going to be is a house just off the Courtrai Road used for Sick Quarters. A few hundred yards further another private house is being used as S.H.Q. This also includes the admin, telephone exchange and Sector Post Office. Turning off the road and round the perimeter of St Denus Westrum Airfield the next house is just before crossing the Courtrai Ghent Railway. This is much need of repair, is used by the police and is being used as a Guardroom.; Across the railway another small house (also badly damaged) is being used by the Equipment Section, ancillary works such as cobbler, tailor, and also by the barber and armoury. A drive leading off at this house goes out to the grounds of the main Airmen's building, a large well constructed building previously used for religious purposes. Besides giving sleeping accommodation to 200 airmen, there are also rooms for the Dining Hall, recreation room and a Chapel for the C of E Padre, Cookhouse and ablutions and out houses are behind. Continuing, a house and outhouses to the right contain the M.T. and Equipment Section while to the left is a small private house occupied by the Sgts. Continuing and turn to the right a number of chalets are reached near the canal, the larger being used by the Officers as a Mess and the others as sleeping quarters. It will be seen that the Sector is well dispersed. W.A.A.F.'s when they arrive will be living together in the town in a school. The chief difficulty of all these buildings and particularly in the weather just experienced is the heating as there is a very acute shortage of all kinds of fuel. A good deal of work will have to be made to improve the conditions of many of the houses which are in a poor state. Several Flying Bombs noted and at least one dropped close.

31-1-1945

Location - Ghent.

Thaw sets in, wind and rain; and many details are seen for the first time. The month has been non-operational. The W.A.A.F.'s are still in the UK and will not be required until thye Ops Room is completed. A new establishment is received to accomodate W.A.A.F.'s on the new move requirements and a further establishment is being considered which will eventually more than double

the present numbers, chiefly with W.A.A.F. substitution. The month has been spent closing down, moving and rehabitating (sic) in severe winter conditions while a number have been on leave to the UK.

FEBRUARY

1-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Almost a warm day compared with recent conditions. Normal routine work on domestic affairs.

2-2-1945 to 9-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

For the whole of the week there is of course no operational information to report. Building up Domestic Site continues. Some of the Ops Room personnel are doing work at the new Ops Room in 85 Group building where a rosta (sic) of Duty Air Staff Officers is being maintained by the controllers. Weather has been warm but with rain and low cloud on many days, ground is very wet and flooded in many places.

10-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

S.H.Q is moved to a house slightly larger and with more grounds and about 350 yards nearer Group Headquarters. The building is very damp and requires a lot of windows replacing and general work services. M.T. Section are also moved to a set of buildings off the main road and behind S.H.Q. where living accommodation is also available for the drivers.

11-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

After a fairly fine morning it rains from midday to next day continuously. Work on the Ops Room seems slow and there is a lot of work still to be done. A discussion is held on the proposed establishment of the G.C.C. and it is pointed out that it would take some time after it had been approved to gather the personnel from the UK to man the proposed se-up as the new establishment is nearly double that of the original number that operated at Boves.

12-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Nothing to report.

13-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Normal routine administrative duties.

14-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Brilliantly fine day. Co by air to Tangmere to collect Ops Room Equipment.

15-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Fog, mist, rain. Increased in V1 activity noticed.

16-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Weather still poor until afternoon. Further 24 hour postponement in leave duties making the fourthso far this month.

17-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Low cloud and fog continues. Normal routine duties.

18-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

CO arrives back from Tangmere cross channel boat and transport from Calais owing to unsuitable flying weather likely to continue.

19-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Flying almost possible. Considerable air activity above the cloud to and from the UK bases which lasts all night. First signs of when the new Ops Room is likely to be completed is noticed and discussions are held of the possibility of acquiring sufficient personnel on an establishment not yet approved but much increased and the date of their availability.

20-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Weather dull, routine administrative work. Nothing to report.

21-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

The Sector completed a tear of its formation today. Weather fine and Spring like and the combination of these events may have been the reason for one of the Controllers to buy a new hat. 20 Belgian workmen taken on for labouring and odd jobs.

22-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Weather still fine but cooler. Heavy air activity overhead and during the night the distinct crumping of V1's with some not too distant.

23-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Weather cooler and dull again. With still no news of the proposed setup work is proceeding slowly.

24-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Certain celebrations held to mark the end of the first year of this Unit but it is also announced that the Sector as it has been known is to be disbanded, the operational staff will form part of 85 Group Unit.

25-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Work on the Ops Room continues and it is now showing it's shape. Discussions on telephone layout.

26 to 28-2-1945

Location - Ghent.

Nothing further to report. A small number of the Digby Detachment have arrived more or less as an Advance Party to prepare the accommodation. Nothing much can be done until the new establishment is known

It is at this point that the available Operations Book entries cease.