

strikes on one vessel. Weather good.

G. J. W. L.
Squadron Leader, Commanding,
No. 272 Squadron, R.A.F.

R.A.F. Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I.,
para. 2349, and War Manual, Pt. II, chapter XX, and
notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 1

No. 272 Squadron, R.A.F.

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
Alghero.	Sept. 1st.		The new month opened with the personnel at Alghero standing by to proceed to Italy, and with the detachment operating from Borgo, Corsica.		
Borgo.		0050	Four Beaus on a shipping strike found no target but one of the aircraft fired 8 x 60 H.E. R.P. into the dock area at IMPERIA with resultant explosions.		
		2345	Four aircraft were airborne on a strike. R.P. strikes were scored on an armed coaster and then in face of intense opposition strikes were observed on a destroyer leading a convoy of four ships. The destroyer stopped. Possible R.P. hits were scored on the other ships.		
Alghero.	2nd		The Squadron is to move off to-morrow. Final checks were made on vehicles and only essential items of domestic equipment were left unladen.		
		1800	S/S. Macquieiro swung on take-off for BORGO and crashed his aircraft. The crew was unhurt but the Beaufighter was badly damaged.		
Borgo.		0120	Four Beaus on shipping strike, but only one (Pilot - S/O. U.N. WEST.) found a target. He attacked and damaged two schooners and 2 barges with R.P. and cannon, making five attacks in all.		
		2015	One Beau on armed reconnaissance found four ships of 500 tons, on which a sighting report was given. The Beau then attacked the shipping and scored 6 R.P. hits on one vessel. This sighting resulted in three more Beaus taking off but they were obliged to return owing to bad weather, before reaching the target.		
Alghero.	3rd	0600	The rail party, consisting of one officer (S/O. J. O. Latimer) and 119 O/Ranks were conveyed to the railhead in Alghero where they boarded the train for UAGLIARI. Unladen technical equipment and barrack stores were also loaded and the party arrived in Uagliari the same evening, where they embarked on the liberty ship "John C. Breckenridge".		
		1600	The road party comprising 22 vehicles carrying 3 Officers (The Adjutant - S/L. P. MacDonald; The Engineer - S/L. A. V. Tynon; the Medical Officer - S/L. D. Laing) and 50 O/Ranks, started out. Good time was made over the hilly route and a halt for the night was called North of MACOMER.		
Borgo.	4th	0220	Three Beaus attacked four ships of approximately 1500 tons each off SESTRI LEVANTE and R.P. strikes were scored on one vessel. One aircraft (Pilot - S/O. A. S. Reynolds; Navigator S/O. N. A. Young) failed to return. They were seen to carry out an R.P. attack on one of the vessels but were not heard of afterwards.		
		0445	Four aircraft were airborne on a strike, of which two Beaus attacked shipping in SESTRI LEVANTE harbour. The flak was intense but both machines made good runs. On a second attack however, S/O. U.N. West's aircraft was hit by the terrific barrage, burst into flames and crashed into the sea where it burned for fifteen minutes. Neither he nor his Navigator, S/O. S. J. Burgess, were seen and they are reported as "Missing." So the Squadron lost two valuable crews in one night; four airmen whose enthusiasm for this job was a by-word. They will be badly missed.		
Uagliari		0600	The S.S. "John C. Breckenridge" set sail. The vessel was crowded with personnel but the airmen were by no means uncomfortable and the short sea voyage promised to provide a welcome break in general routine.		

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2	1								
AIR 27/1578									
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AIR 27/1578				1 2					
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Page No. 2

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
Cagliari.	4th	1200	Meanwhile the road party had set off again at daybreak and very fast time was made on the good highway which exists the length of Sardinia. Cagliari was reached at noon. The vehicles were drawn up in the transit-car park for the night and it was anticipated that loading would commence the following day. Two aircraft were airborne to search for the missing crews but no sightings were made.		
Borgo		0640	Four aircraft on a shipping strike sank one of two barges found, and damaged the other.		
Borgo.	5th	0001	Three more Beaus sank an 800-ton coaster, one of three vessels sighted and also a 1300-ton ship burning fiercely.		
Cagliari.		0235	The loading of the vehicles on the S.S. "San Blake" began at mid-day and the night was spent on the deck of the half-loaded vessel.		
Naples.		1700	The rail party arrived at Naples and anchored in the Bay for the night. The crossing had been quite uneventful.		
Borgo.	6th	0235	Four Beaus attacked four ships of 1000 tons each, runs being made on "flak" guides. The A.A. fire was intense but in spite of this and the bad visibility possible R.P. strikes were scored on two of the vessels. One aircraft (Pilot r/S. J. Horsford - Navigator W.O. J. G. Watson) failed to return and no clue exists as to its fate. Both men had been with the Unit several months and a high regard was felt for their offensive spirit. W.O. Watson was a spare Navigator, since his pilot had been grounded a month earlier, and he stepped in for r/S. Hubbard, who was sick.		
Naples.		0650 1000	Two Beaus carried out an abortive search for the missing crew. The S.S. "John G. Breckemridge" docked and the rail party was conveyed to No. 3 B.P.D. at Portici where they were to kick their heels for the next 14 days.		
Cagliari.			In Sardinia the last vehicles were hauled aboard the "S.S. San Blake" but because of wireless trouble the ship did not weigh anchor that day.		
Cagliari.	7th	0600	The road party left Sardinia and as they sailed out into the early morning mist shrouding the harbour no-one was sorry to leave the shores of the Island which had been their home for seven months.		
Borgo			No operations to-day. Eight Beaus flew to Falconara, Italy, for an important mission on the morrow.		
Falconara. (Italy.)	8th.	1025	This day will be memorable; The Squadron achieved the greatest success ever to be gained by a Unit in this War. Eight aircraft, with Squadron Leader Rose in the lead, were airborne to attack the liner "REX", proud ship of the Italian Merchant Navy, once holder of the Atlantic Blue Riband - a vessel of 51,000 tons which had been observed to leave its secluded, jealously guarded anchorage at TRIESTE. Our aircraft were given a fighter escort of Mustangs which successfully dealt with an "F" boat which opened up with everything it possessed. There was very heavy A.A. from TRIESTE harbour but none from the "REX" itself. The Beaufighters pressed the attack home with the greatest determination and 59 x 25 lb. R.P. found their way into the target, fifty-five of the strikes being below the water-line. Not one of our aircraft was hit and all returned safely. The "REX" began to burn but Beaufighters from the Balkan Air Force arrived later in the day to pour more shots into the blazing hulk, which later went to the bottom, still burning fiercely. 272 Squadron have been officially credited with this prize and has the honour of claiming the destruction of a vessel which is the largest to be sunk by direct assault in this, or in any other, war.	(see App. "A")	

(*10506-9305) Wt. 54051-8312 150W 17/48 T.S. 700
 (*10504-9305) Wt. 55167-845 160W 17/48 T.S. 700

The Beaufighters pressed the attack home with the greatest determination and 59 x 20 lb. R.P. found their way into the target, fifty-five of the strikes being below the water-line. Not one of our aircraft was hit and all returned safely. The "REA" began to burn but Beaufighters from the Balkan Air Force arrived later in the day to pour more shots into the blazing hulk, which later went to the bottom, still burning fiercely. 272 Squadron have been officially credited with this prize and has the honour of claiming the destruction of a vessel which is the largest to be sunk by direct assault in this, or in any other, war.

cont3

R.A.F. Form 540

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para. 2349, and War Manual, Pt. II, chapter XX, and
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OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 3

No. 272 (Beaufighter) Squadron.
of (Unit or Formation)

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
Naples.	Sept. 8th	1400	While the Squadron's aircraft were putting up such a magnificent show the SS. "Sam Blake" was ending its run to Italy and in the afternoon dropped anchor in the Bay of Naples, where it stayed for 24 hours, much to the chagrin of all. However, solace was found in aquatics from the ship's side.		
Borgo.	9th		The eight machines returned in triumph from Falconara, the crews to be applauded and congratulated by everyone in Corsica who could get near them. No operations today.		
Naples.		1800	The S.S. "Sam Blake" pulled into dock and all the personnel with the exception of a nucleus of drivers required for unloading the trucks were taken to the B.P.D. where they fell in once more with their comrades.		
Borgo.	10th	0235	Two Beaus airborne on an uneventful shipping strike.		
Borgo.	11th	0105	Three Beaus coasted along SAVONA to SESTRI LEVANTE but saw no shipping.		
Borgo.	12th		) Nil Operations.		
Borgo.	13th				
Borgo.	14th				
Foggia. (Italy)	14th		To-day six aircraft with seven ground crew were flown over to Foggia from where it is intended to switch the Squadron's offensive effort to Adriatic targets. It was also decided to use Falconara as an auxiliary base.		
Naples.			The unloading of the trucks had progressed but slowly. Information had been received that Terquinia was no longer to be our destination but that FOGGIA had laid claim to our services. So we said farewell to No. 328 Wing with whom we had worked so well and passed into the hands of No. 323 Wing. Today the majority of the vehicles had been hoisted ashore and a start was made for the new home. E/Lt. A.V. Eynon (Engineer) took charge of the party and a halt was made for the night a few miles East of Ariano.		
Foggia.	15th	0825	Two Beaus patrolled islands from CORFU southwards but only attacked a 10-ton Gaïque which was left sinking.		
		1400	The Advance party from Naples arrived. One truck overturned about three miles West of Ariano when it ran into a ditch to stop when both foot and hand brakes had failed. No injuries were sustained by either driver or passenger. Considerable damage was done to the vehicle and wireless equipment carried. At a subsequent investigation the driver was absolved from all blame.		
Foggia.	16th	0510	Two Beaus carried out an Armed Shipping Recce in the Fiume area and crippled a 800-ton M.V. Squadron Headquarters and men were accommodated temporarily at No. 199 Army Transit Camp, being unable to set up Camp on the airfield because of the shortage of serviceable tents. Meantime enquiries were conducted of the Town Major and Wing Headquarters with a view to finding alternative housing in the town.		
Foggia.	17th		No operations. Two more vehicles arrived from Naples with a number of the erstwhile "rail party."		141
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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AIR 27/1578				1 2	
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Page No.

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
Foggia. Falconara.	18th	0449	No Operations. 2 Beaus on shipping strike attacked two barges and 5 schooners with good results and also shot up a motor lorry.		
		0820	Two more aircraft on a strike found no shipping but one aircraft attacked SENJ harbour with R.P. scoring probable hits on a 50-ft launch.		
	19th		No Operations. The remainder of the personnel arrived from Naples and more aircraft were flown in from Borgo, Corsica. There are now but three aircraft over there, undergoing inspection. They, too, will then be flown across and "B" Flight groundcrews will be brought over to the mainland as and when shipping is available.		
Falconara.	20th	0650	Three Beaus searched from Venice to Salvore Point to Parenza. Definite R.P. hits were scored on a stationary schooner and cannon bursts registered on a 100-ft. M.V. It was learned to-day that W.O. W.H. Billing (missing whilst operating from Borgo) has been commissioned.		
	21st		No operations. Owing to acute shortage of aircrews seven complete crews have been attached to us from No. 255 Squadron. Being Night fighter crews their specialised A.S.V. and A.I. knowledge will be an asset in night attacks.		
Falconara) Foggia.)	22nd		Eight sorties were flown during the day on armed recce, during which a schooner and a barge were damaged.		
Foggia.	23rd	0455	Two Beaus on armed recce TRIESTE - POLA - FIUME left two schooners on fire and damaged a third.		
Foggia.	24th	0840	Three aircraft on a strike attacked 3 "E" Boats by light of Wellington flares but no results were observed.		
		1849	Two Beaus airborne on an armed recce damaged a stationary motor-trawler, one barge and two motor-launches with cannon and R.P.		
Foggia.	25th		After considerable and persistent effort the Adjutant has managed to take over three admirably appointed buildings in Foggia Town, which will accommodate the entire Squadron. It is intended to move the day after to-morrow. Six sorties were flown during the day but the only target found was a barge which was left burning furiously.		
Falconara.	26th	0500	One of two aircraft on an armed recce was shot down by A.A. fire from Selo. The missing crew is P/Lt. F.H. Roden and P/O. A.C. Porter who were greatly admired for their flying ability, which, coupled with intense popularity with all ranks, makes their loss all the more untimely.		
		0520	Two Beaus, patrolling from Ravenna to Cape Salvore badly damaged a large barge off GRADO.		
		1705	Two aircraft on armed recce made no sightings.		
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(*10886-9905) WL 1918-513 1624 6143 T.S. 700

R.A.F. Form 540

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

Page No. 5

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No. 272 Beaufighter Squadron.

No. of pages used for day

1700 Two aircraft on armed recce made no sightings.

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(*4086-9305) Wt 2452-2522 150M 17/43 T.S. 700
(*4086-9305) Wt 2522-2523 150M 17/43 T.S. 700

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

R.A.F. Form 540

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of (Unit or Formation) No. 272 Beaufighter Squadron.

Page No. 5

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET.	References to Appendices
Falconara.	Sept. 27th	0445	S/L. R.H. Rose and F/O. E.G. Myring on armed recce had a good time. They left a M.V. blazing and set fire to two schooners and damaged a third.		
Foggia.		0515	Two other aircraft on recce scored cannon strikes on three small vessels off GRADO. Squadron Headquarters moved into the new billets in town, to be followed on 28th Sept. by the Officers and Air men.		
			Up-day, Wing Commander G.R. PARK, D.F.C., ex No. 335 Wing, arrived to take over Command of the Squadron from Wing Commander D.H. Lowe, who is being stood down operationally tour-expired.		
Falconara.	28th	2015	Four Beaus on shipping strike severely damaged a large M.V. and scored strikes on 3 M.V. and a large barge.		
	29th		No operations.		
Foggia.	30th		Six air craft were airborne during the day on armed recce, during which four armed trawlers, a coaster and a barge were damaged.		
So ended September, 1944, with the Squadron at the top of its form. Fresh fields conquered and fear struck into the heart of the enemy manning the supply ships which hug the Eastern shores of the Northern Adriatic. The sinking of the "REX" was an event which will for ever be a source of pride for every man on the Unit, whilst successes since that great day, although by no means so spectacular, will have a telling effect on the Hun's ability to maintain his long and precarious supply lines. Since leaving Sardinia several new faces have appeared amongst the ground crews and seven airmen were left behind at the D.F.D. for posting to other Units. The Unit's new home is well established and all ranks are more than pleased with the comfortable billets occupied at present.					
			<i>[Signature]</i> Squadron Leader, Commanding, No. 272 Squadron, R.A.F.		

142

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1 2 3 4 5 6