

TOP SECRETD.D. Ops. (A.D.) 1.METEOR SQUADRONS

With reference to your query (attached) on the progress of the Meteor Squadrons, the following is the information you require:-

- (a) Since the renewed flying bomb activity 616 Squadron, stationed at Andrew's Field, has carried out up to last night (15th March) 15 anti-flying bomb sorties, with no claims. (In the previous session last year the same squadron did 260 anti-flying bomb sorties, resulting in 11 claims).

The aircraft position of 616 Squadron is:-

- 4 Meteor Mk.III, with B.23 engines, at B.57 airfield, Brussels.
- 15 Meteor Mk.III, with B.37 engines, at Andrew's Field.
- 3 Meteor Mk.III, with B.37 engines allotted, not yet received. (These aircraft should arrive today or tomorrow).
- (b) 504 Squadron, which is due to re-equip with Meteor IIIs (B.37 engines), is still at Hawkinge with Spitfires in the bomber escort role, and I understand that C-in-C. Fighter Command is unwilling to move it until the 20th March since he is somewhat short of squadrons available for escort work, due to anti-BIG BEN and anti-flying bomb commitments.

- (i) On or about 20th March 504 Squadron will move to 1335 Conversion Unit (Meteor) at Colerne, where the pilots will commence flying on the Meteor I/III with the B.23 engine. ~~They~~ <sup>will</sup> be re-equipped with the Meteor III with the B.37 engine from that date onwards at the rate of about 3 to 5 per week, which means that they should be fully re-equipped on or about the 20th April.

- (ii) At the same time the squadron echelon will be working on the jet engine at Colerne and also, of course, learning airframe maintenance; simultaneously courses of instruction for the ground crews will be held at Glosters (airframe) and Locking (engine). These courses are approximately of two weeks' duration each.

- (c) (i) No. 1335 Conversion Unit (Meteor) at Colerne <sup>HQS</sup> at present on strength:-

7 Meteor I with B.23 engine  
8 Meteor III with B.23 engine.

There is in addition one more Meteor III with B.23 engine at present at the E.C.F.S. which will be transferred to Conversion Unit immediately.

(ii) The establishment of the Conversion Unit is:-

Meteor I	{ B.23 engine }	8
Meteor III	{ B.37 engine }	6
Oxford II		4
Martinet		4

The Conversion Unit has, therefore, at the moment 1 Meteor over establishment, but of its strength 8 are Meteor IIIs with B.23 engines, which should be Meteor IIIs with B.37 engines.

Fighter Command's plan is to equip 504 Squadron with B.37 engine whilst it is at the Conversion Unit and to go on using the Meteor with the B.23 engine on the strength of the Conversion Unit until these are used up by normal rates of wastage; ~~and~~ thereafter to keep up the established strength with the Meteor III with B.37 engine ex works. (You will remember that production should eventually work up to 30 B.37 engines <sup>per month</sup> per month).

(d) In addition to all the above, there is one Meteor III with a B.23 engine at C.F.E. Tangmere.

*Wing Commander*

Ops. (A.D.) 1.  
16th March 1945.

Wing Commander. (8)