

411 (Grizzly Bear) Squadron RCAF

Fighter Command records state at Fairlop

There is no record of 411 Squadron being at Fairlop

ORB's state

From Hornchurch
5 to 16 February 1942 (*)
Return to Hornchurch

(*) the grass landing strip of Hornchurch was waterlogged.



Aircraft

Spitfires

12 – no further details given

Pilots –

Arundel,	Sgt
Boomer, K.A.	F/Lt
Evans,	P/O
Firth,	P/O
McNair,	P/O

Mitchell, John Lewis	F/Sgt	Lost in the Channel 13 February 1942 age 23 Remembered on the Runnymede Memorial
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Newton, R.B.	Acting F/Lt
Sharun,	F/Sgt
Turner, P.S.	S/Ldr DFC & Bar
Whalley,	P/O
Weston, R.C.	F/Lt

Strength on 1 February 1942:

Officers 3, Officer Pilots 15, Airmen Pilots 17, Ground Crew 224,

Total 260

Canadians on strength: Canadian Officers Non Flying 2, Canadian Officers Flying 15,

Canadian Sgt Pilots 17, Canadian Ground Crew 58

Total 132

Notes from ORB's

Hornchurch.

1 Feb 1942. In the afternoon the Squadron dug themselves out of the snow around the camp.

4 Feb. Arrangements made to continue flying at the Station's satellite – Fairlop – until aerodrome becomes serviceable again.

Fairlop.

5 Feb. Ground crew and equipment proceeded Fairlop in morning and 12 aircraft during the afternoon. 64 Squadron making similar arrangements.

6 Feb. Owing to unfavourable weather little flying carried out from Fairlop. Normal routine.

7 Feb. Convoy Patrols during the day.

8 Feb. 'B' Flight Scramble and two pilots carried out a patrol at 15,000 feet. No enemy aircraft were seen.

9 Feb. No flying owing to bad weather.

10 Feb. With great improvement in weather conditions Squadron carried out a Channel sweep with 12 aircraft together with 64 Squadron at Fairlop as well and 313 (Czech) Squadron from Rochford.

12 Feb. During the morning a report came through that the German Battleships Gneisau, Scharnhorst and Prinz Eugen, plus enumerable E Boats and flak ships were steaming through the Channel on their way, presumably to Heligoland Bight. A very strong enemy fighter escort was in the vicinity covering their progress. 411 Squadron, in conjunction with all other operational units in the area went into action. The Sector we had to patrol did not bring the Squadron into contact with the main enemy convoy. Patrols continued during the day but no enemy activity was encountered.

While acting as close escort to Hurricane bombers near Dunkirk, heavy flak from shore batteries was encountered, and one aircraft piloted by (Can) R71684, F/Sgt Mitchell, J.L. was damaged. His engine was still functioning and he appeared to be in no difficulties although smoke was pouring from his aircraft. Height was regained however and he was told to follow his section leader, F/Lt. R.C. Weston back to the English coast. This manoeuvre was carried out for approximately five miles when the engine apparently seized. For some unaccountable reason this pilot did not bale out, but attempted to force land his aircraft in the Channel. He landed all right but aircraft and pilot disappeared beneath the surface immediately. Although a search of the area continued, no trace other than a large patch of oil was discovered. He has been officially designated missing, believed killed. Although with this Squadron only a short time, F/Sgt Mitchell was a very popular N.C.O. and had only recently been recommended for his Commission. 12 Aircraft took part in the operation and all but one returned safely. The Squadron put in 45 hours during this date.

15 Feb. Normal ground training.

16 Feb. Pilots returned to Hornchurch in the evening.