

WO V.E. Mitchell RCAF

Deployment to South Africa and Subsequent Capture

1. Scotland, Gourock to Freetown, Sierra Leone via troop ship.
2. Gold Coast coastal boat to Takoradi, Ghana, large Air Force Base where “we put wings on aircraft”. Did two trips in 1 Spit VB.

(of the 25 pilots in squadron, 12 went to Takoradi)

- 1st Trip – Pan Am (three day trip) to Cairo, Egypt, went on leave stayed in hotel and toured.
- Went back to Takoradi, Ghana picked up Hurri's, hit vulture in Kano, Nigeria. Flew to Cairo, Egypt.
- Back to Takoradi picked up Spits back to Cairo, Egypt.

The trip was 3000 miles and eight or nine stops for refueling. It was 2.5 days in a Spit but 3 days in a Hurri (they carried 90 gallons in a regular tank and 90 gallons in an extra tank.

The squadron (92 RAF) arrived in Cairo and stayed in tents just outside Cairo Airport at LG92. They had been sent to replace 80 Sqn Hurricanes. (11 went to replace them, CO, two Flight Commanders plus eight others including myself (V.E.M)

The CO flew the Hurricane while ten flew in two bi-planes Fairey Gordons (gunner's cockpit held four people). A Fairey Battle (another very slow aircraft) navigated the route.

At LG92 (Station) there were no showers, had to “go up the road for one”

There is a map of the route from Takoradi and Cairo, that we took.

Action and bailout: There were other patrols prior to this one

17 July 1942 During operations near El Alamein, Egypt - shot down in flames and captured by German Artillery unit. Covered in oil and injured taken by car further out into the dessert. An officer gestured for me to get out, I refused, and it seems an argument ensued between the other Germans in the car. Eventually they drove me to an encampment.

- Flew by transport to Tobruk, Libya to the island of Crete, Greece and stayed overnight in a jail.
- Train to Brindisi, Italy to Rome.
- Flew to Frankfurt, Germany and sent to a Stalag IX-B (?). Then to Stalag VIIIB Darmstadt, Germany.