

Bright Lights And Fruit Marvels On Flight East

RCAF Flying Boat Passes Debris of Battles on Libyan Desert — Gorge Oranges

Flt.-Lt. Burton G. Johnson, of Windsor, senior photographer of the RCAF overseas public relations directorate, recently completed a trip to the Far East with a Canadian squadron. His account of the flight follows.

(Written for the Canadian Press)
By **FLT.-LT. BURTON G. JOHNSON**

With the RCAF in the Far East, June 16—This is the story of how "D for Donald" flew to the Far East, "D for Donald" being an RCAF flying boat, part of a Canadian squadron which has entered a new theatre of war.

It was early in the morning when the batman came charging into my room in a Northern Ireland town. "Sir, you are to get aboard the aircraft right away," he said. "There's not even time for a shave or breakfast."

In a few minutes we were on the dock waiting for the dinghies to take us out to the aircraft.

WATCH THE EGGS!

Everybody thought at least the dinghy was sinking when, as we got in, Sgt. Jesse James, a wireless operator from Cheshire, Eng., shouted, "Look out!"

But it wasn't quite as bad as that. "Watch out for those eggs," he yelled. "I want them fried, not scrambled in the bottom of the boat." L.A.C. Gordon Hooper, of Winnipeg, detailed to look after rations, did a quick rescue job.

We came alongside and as if on a routine duty flight each man went about his work. Everybody had a job. The air gunners mounted the armament in the blisters forward, the riggers went to the nose to clear the mooring lines and the wireless operator checked his apparatus.

Then the dinghy bearing the captain, Sqdn. Ldr. J. E. Scott of Galt, and the second pilot, P.O. S. V. Kembry of Calgary, came alongside. The wireless arrangements were checked personally by the captain with P.O. L. Lumsden of London, Ont., a wireless operator air gunner.

SET FOR GIBRALTAR

Sgt. W. J. Jackson of Toronto, our navigator, set a course in the general direction of Gibraltar. Hours later we made our first landfall.

That evening we sat out on a hotel verandah and marvelled at the bright lights—there was no blackout.

Next day we were off again down the Mediterranean. Evening found us over the Libyan desert, a horrible contrast, dotted with the debris of a hundred battles.

At the next stop we donned tropical kit and what was more important, for a few pennies, gorged oranges and other fruit.

I made the next hop with Sqdn. Ldr. L. H. Randall, of Bristol, N.B., and Second Pilot Sgt. L. E. Gardiner, of Woodstock, Ont., a former lawyer. Others in the crew included P.O. J. Williams, of Oaklake, Man., an observer; P.O. R. A. Lasser of Powell River, B.C., wireless operator, and Sgt. C. G. Kensit, of London, Ont., the armorer.

NEW COMPANIONS

Nightfall found us over the deep rich blue of the sea. I had new companions now. The pilot was a Flt.-Lt. Fursman and his co-pilot, F.O. the Hon. Hugh Fielding, and other crew members included P.O. George Vivian, of Neepawa, Man., observers, Sgt. Thomas Kelly, Winnipeg, a former druggist.

Our last lap completed, we came down at early dawn without incident. We were met by the commanding officer of our squadron, Wing Cmdr. J. C. Plant.