

Wing Commander Robert T. P. Davidson
Wings: Log of the R.C.A.F, December 1943
Winco's Log Book Shows He's Piloted 55 Species of Aircraft.

Commercials, war and the mechanics of scientific flying may have taken the thrill and adventure out of the air but W/C Robert T. P. Davidson, Vancouver, flying Winco of a Typhoon bombing squadron, finds his thrill in variety. During lengthy service career he has flown fifty-five different types of aircraft over England, Egypt, Greece, Crete, Palestine, the Western desert, Ceylon, Greenland and Iceland.

Of all these scattered lands, he finds the Balkans and Greece the best for flying. "Perhaps it is because that part of the Mediterranean reminds me of our West coast with mountains going right down to the sea, trees, and snowy peaks," he says.

Although W/C Davidson has spent most of his times with the RCAF as a bomber pilot, the Winco has knocked down five enemy kites. Here, too, variety has been the key-note with five different types on his list, two Italians, a 506 Cant floatplane and a CR42 fighter; a German Ju52 troop carrier; a Japanese version of the Seversky 97 bomber and a Zero.

Both Japs were shot down on 15 April 1942, described by Davidson as "the biggest day of my life." His outfit was on its way from the Middle East to the Burma front but was diverted to Ceylon. They had only been on the island two weeks when scores of Jap planes swooped down.

Our four pilots were in readiness when the Japs were sighted. Before Davidson and his fellow pilot could takeoff, fifty Jap fighters were over the drome. "There were some hectic battles over the island that day," says the Winco. "Our squadron got twelve confirmed, seven probalbes and ten damaged."

Being with the first squadron into Greece and the last out provided Davidson with more hectic experiences. Bombing from Grecian bases wasn't soft. "We were always getting shot at," he says. There was plenty of fighter opposition from the Italians until RAF fighters came over from Egypt. Then the Germans arrived. Sore point with the pilots was the loss of all the mess silver when they were finally pushed out of Greece. They flew their ground crews to Crete.

When Hurricanes were sent over, Davidson and other bomber pilots helped out. They had orders to go back to Egypt in their Blenheims. "I wasn't there long, being sent back in a Hurricane," the Winco says.

Getting out of Crete was even more trying than the exodus from Greece. Forty-five men were piled into Sunderland flying boat and carted over to Egypt in the middle of the night.

Reforming the squadron and converting from Blenheims to Hurricanes, Davidson's squadron did a stint on the Western desert. "I got my Hun the Ju52 when I was out on a ground strafing job. I caught him Halfaya Pass, and shot him down," he says.

A later and more peaceful war scene came when he ferried a Boston across the Atlantic by the hippity-hop route, via Labrador, Iceland and Greenland, a climatic extreme from the temperatures of the Middle and Far East.

Now he is flying Hawker Typhoons, the Winco says, "We can do a bit of pushing around ourselves with that sort of stuff to fight with."