

AWM 65

[3792]

MURRAY, ERNEST WINGFIELD
R.A.F.

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES
ACCESS STATUS

OPEN

✓ See Misc. Enc: 972 AW-21 (D.F.C.)
✓ See M. E. Enc: 223C.
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

NRA

OFFICERS AND AIR CREWS

R.A.F.

The following biographical details are required for use at R.A.A.F. Overseas Headquarters, LONDON.

SURNAME.....MURRAY.....NUMBER.....
CHRISTIAN NAMES.....ERNEST WINGFIELD.....
AIR FORCE RANK AND MUSTERING.....S/LDR.....S811.....
DEGREES, DECORATIONS ETC.....DFC, M.I.D., 1.1.46.....
PRESENT APPOINTMENT AND LOCATION.....
DATE OF BIRTH.....1917.....PLACE.....BLACKALL.....
EDUCATED.....South Port School, Queensland.....
DATE OF ENTERING SERVICE.....Commissioned 1938.....
PREVIOUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE.....
PLACES OF TRAINING.....
CIVILIAN CAREER AND ACTIVITIES.....
SPORT (TEAMS REPRESENTED), RECREATIONS, CLUBS ETC.....
FATHER.....
WIFE.....
CHILDREN.....
HOME ADDRESS.....BLACKALL QUEENSLAND.....
SIGNATURE.....
DATE.....
DATE EMBARKED.....
DESTINATION.....

(These forms are to be filled in and handed to the Adjutant of the Unit immediately after receipt).

Acting Squadron Leader Ernest Wingfield MURRAY No. 11 Squadron. This officer has participated in many sorties, most of which have been carried out during recent operations in Libya. He has at all times shown great skill and resource. In December, 1941, during an attack on enemy concentrations in the Mekili area, Squadron Leader Murray's aircraft received a direct hit from a small shell which cut the aileron controls and bent the throttle controls. In spite of this, Squadron Leader Murray maintained formation and, on return to base, landed his aircraft without causing it further damage. He has set an excellent example.

Notes On Careers.

Captain Cross D.F.C. was born at **EAST COSHAM, HANTS,** in 1911. He was educated at **Hilsea College, PORTSMOUTH** and was commissioned in 1930. While in command of a squadron he was posted as missing after the sinking of H.M.S. **Glorious**, but was later reported safe. He was awarded the D.F.C. in September 1940, when still a Squadron Leader.

Wing Commander Rosier was born in 1915 at WREXHAM. His home is at

972

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST OR USE ON CLUB TAPES BEFORE
0830 HOURS ON THURSDAY, 16th DECEMBER 1943. THIS EMBARGO
SHOULD BE REPEATED OVERSEAS BY PREFACING ANY MESSAGE WITH
THIS EMBARGO

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No. 12346

"CGM. FLIGHT" - DESERT TO ITALY

Pilots of a Communication Unit of the R.A.F. in Italy fulfil many duties in their busy life - they are air-postmen, messengers, carriers and taxi-drivers all in one.

As Sqdr. Ernest Murray, D.F.C. from Blackwall, Queensland, the commanding officer of the unit, explains, "Our work ranges from routine mail runs to rush jobs carrying passengers. We are likely to be rung up at any time to take some notability or staff officer from here to there and quite often we have had to land in the dark with car headlights providing a flare path."

Twenty-three-years-old Corporal Tom Jones of Tipton, Staffs. tells of the occasion when they set out to rescue the crew of a Blenheim that had force-landed in the desert about 80 miles south of Bagdush, "in the middle of the blue."

"We were searching for them for three days," he said. "We had a couple of motor bikes in the aircraft and two M.P.s went out in wide circles looking for the crew. We managed to find two. They had been eating desert snails to keep alive. Another thing we often did was to drop food and water to isolated landing grounds and units when the khamsin, the desert wind, made ground movement impossible. Occasionally we carried out a travelling pay parade combined with a flying N.A.A.F.I. It was funny to see the chaps receive money with one hand and then pay it back again with the other for the N.A.A.F.I. supplies we brought for them."

Corporal Jones has been with the unit since its formation in March 1941. As a rigger he has completed 250 hours flying and the most striking change he has noticed during his two and a half years service is in the types of aircraft used by the communication unit.

"We started off with a Valentia, a couple of Gladiators, two Lysanders and a Percival Proctor," he said. "They were the latest types in those days. Now we have Mustangs, Spitfires, Hurricanes and a few Fairchildes for passenger carrying."

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The unit's most prized possession is "C for Charlie", a Mustang single-seater, which is flown chiefly on long-distance courier jobs.

"But we have recently acquired a curio too," said P/O. Robert Stewart, of Bishops Stortford, one of the pilots. "It is an Italian Caproni low-wing passenger-carrying monoplane. When we get it going it will be used as a sort of aerial taxi. At the moment there is a certain amount of sorting out to be done by very amateur interpreters, as three languages are employed to label the controls."

The members of the Communications Unit are proud of their record and of their motto - "All in good time." These "Air-Postmen" have collected operational returns each night from the squadrons of the Desert Air Force so punctually that many officers check their watches as the Communications pilot flies over. The well-known passengers they have carried make an imposing list which includes the King of Greece, the Duke of Gloucester, Air Chief Marshal Tedder, the present First Sea Lord, Admiral Cunningham, the new Viceroy of India, Field Marshal Wavell, General Alexander, and the Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey.

1

AWM 65