

From: Officer Commanding, "E" Flight Detachment, Drigh Road.

To:- Headquarters, 292 Squadron, R.A.F.

Date:- 5th September, 1944.

Ref:- 292/K/INT/1

Report for two weeks ending Saturday 2.9.44 from F/Lt. Almack O/C "E" Flight. Drigh Road, to Wing Commander, Starling O/C 292 Sqdn.

1. No report was tendered by us last week because up to Friday we looked like having nothing to say, then came your copy of A.M. Signal regarding Swatter dual control sets. Acting on the information the signal contained we looked like having a lot to do, but owing to half-holidays and weekend habits of this station, nothing definite could be done before Monday. However here is the whole story.

2. Saturday morning August 26th F/Lt. Wilson and myself went over to Mauripur Airport. This is where all incoming air freight lands and is sorted. We phone every day to enquire after our dual sets and the three officers and all N.C.O's have details of the spares we are expecting and our phone No. We have even chalked all this up on their office wall. Armed with your copy of A. M. Signal, we enquired for our dual sets and were told they definitely had not arrived. I insisted on inspecting their books for the last two months and after two hours searching found our spares, also receipt for them from 301 M. U. Drigh Road, who had went over and collected same. By the time we got back, 301 M. U. had closed for the week-end so nothing further could be done before Monday Morning.

3. Monday morning we waited on the door step of 301 M. U. stores. Yes, they had our dual sets, neatly unpacked and labelled Sea Otter Dual control sets 292 Sqdn. 301 M.U. Drigh Road where they had been for weeks.

4. I reminded the stores officer that I had been constantly enquiring for these and that I had told everyone concerned to notify me immediately if these should arrive as they were very urgently required. After that I was very rude. I eat with the chief officer in this Section at the same table, and at every meal have bemoaned the dual sets. I think I mentioned constipated Red tape worms among other things.

5. Any way we now have two dual sets and it took us just half a day to get the two fitted.

6. This Friday 1st of September, flying training commenced. The first pilot to go solo on the S/Otter was Sgt. Greyvensteyn. Two aircraft we are using are JM771 and JM773. Both without wireless of any sort, and both with engine Temps that only permit local flying at minimum revs and boost also without any known fuel and oil consumption figures.

7. JM678 is being fitted up as a prototype for mod-testing, F/Lt. McGregor of test and research Delhi gave us authority under A.M.S.I. Org/AD/Tech/8 the arrangement being that when we have this aircraft completed and tested to what we consider our operational requirements, that drawings, all mods and performance figures be submitted to S.E.A.C. so that they can approve and sanction the rest of our aircraft being fitted up likewise. This after we had induced F/Lt. McGregor to fly with us in Swatter to fully appreciate our many difficulties.

8. Our three major snags at the moment are A. Since G/Capt. Rutter has been on leave work on the Swatters not yet passed test has practically ceased and this is particularly true of all wireless work. B. We ourselves have a hopelessly inadequate staff to service our training aircraft, help with production Swatters and modifications, and generally carry on as a flight. Please expedite posting of more maintenance personnel as per urgent signal of last week. C. We have no aircraft spares whatsoever and since Delhi have hopelessly lost the three months original packet sent out to us from the U.K. Our Spares position does not look lie getting any better just yet.

9. Re Walrus flight Ceylon R.K.S.O. Columbo has 21 months spares for our Swatters but states that it may take three months to get the spares on to Karachi for me, so as soon as two Swatters are operationally serviceable I propose flying down with the two aircraft. It will be a good training trip. Converting F/Lt. Bird on one Swatter which I shall leave with him complete with dual so that he may convert his pilots. Sending one crew back to Karachi by any means I can. This is not difficult and loading the most urgent spares into the other Swatter and flying it back here myself. I was hoping to ask you to fly our spares up per Warwick. Anyway it is to be hoped we shall see you over here before this Ceylon trip comes off. I feel you could do us a power of good one way and another.

10. Enclosed copy of our flying training programme and test pilot report on the Swatter for friend Hoche. Incidentally out of three solos by different pilots we have had two wing tip floats damaged by cross runway winds on landing and the chief test pilot nearly bit the dust same way. Should further evidence be called for please let me demonstrate to Hoche.

11. This letter is supposed to go to-day by Air Courier.

N.B. Report has been held up awaiting Chief Test Pilot's observations on Sea Otter.

Flight Lieutenant, Commanding,
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