

Group Photo Of Trainees In Bulawayo



This is a picture from the first stage of our training in Bulawayo.

After I had passed health exams and I was judged suitable, they told me, "now you will wait for your turn to be sent to Rhodesia".

After twenty days, they loaded us up in some small, two-engine airplanes. Inside the airplane there were 20 of us.

We left Cairo and we had to land every two hours for refueling. Our journey lasted three days. The first night I remember we stayed in Khartoum.

We messed around with women there. We went to women, all together. It had been months since we gotten even close to a woman. The second night we got off in a place that was called Dola, because the weather was really bad and we had to stop our journey and land.

Dola was in Northern Rhodesia. I remember the airport there, the guards had mosquito nets in front of their faces. There were that many mosquitoes. We stayed there for one night.

In fact, in the hotel that we stayed, came a Greek guy who was a barber. The hotel manager had notified him and he came to keep us company for a while. I can say that wherever I went with all these journeys, I didn't find one place that there weren't any Greeks.

Next morning we left early and got to Bulawayo. The ITU was there, the Initial Training Unit. We started having theory classes, teaching us a bit of everything. I knew very little English then, but I learned it there.

In my class at the beginning we were only three Greeks. The rest were English and South Africans. We did all the theory about flight. How does the airplane fly, for what reason, how do the engines

work, everything.

We stayed at Bulawayo for three months. I think we did our first flights at this first stage of our training. Everyone registered himself to become a pilot. And it is there that I was rejected because I failed the landings. So later on, I registered for the position of navigator.

I preferred it, because air navigation is all about trigonometry. For the second part of our training, a special course on aeronautics, we would go to East London, in South Africa. We went to East London at the beginning of 1944.

Every training session (it was three of them) lasted three or four months. In East London we specialized in air navigation. Navigating with the radio, or with the stars.

Later, we were also trained in night flying. That was right in the end when we went to Cape Town.