

Churchill's Navigator - John Mitchell

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John Mitchell had a remarkable career. An RAF Volunteer Reserve officer, he was mobilized on the outbreak of war and just missed going to join a Battle Squadron in France where he would have undoubtedly been killed. He was instead posted to 58 Squadron flying Whitleys, surviving a tour of operations in 1940/41 including ditching in the North Sea. Awarded the DFC, he was sent to the US, becoming involved in the development of the first navigation training simulators with the famous Link Trainer factory. There, he was awarded the US Legion of Merit, signed by Harry Truman. Returning to the UK in 1942, he was personally selected to join the crew of Winston Churchill's private aircraft, one of the early prototype Avro Yorks called Ascalon. For two years he navigated Churchill to conferences around the world - from North Africa to Italy, the Middle East to Moscow, including the famous Teheran and Yalta conferences. He also flew 'General Lyon' (aka HM George VI) on several occasions for which he received the LVO - an order that was personally in the gift of the sovereign for services rendered. After the war he enjoyed an eventful career as an air attachÃfÂ©, including an intelligence posting to Moscow and was senior navigation officer for the long range exercises over the Pole in the converted Lincoln, Aries III. His is an exceptional story, told with wit and verve to acclaimed author Sean Feast who has added his usual authoritative and informed insights. A worthy successor to Sean's latest book A Pathfinder's War.

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