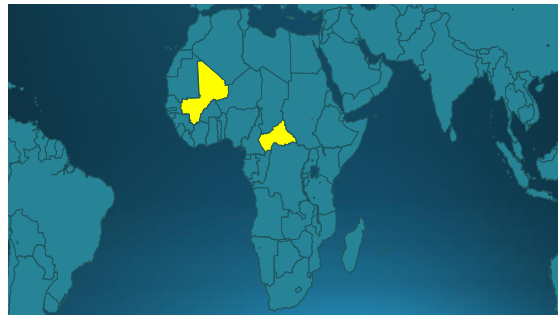




At the Tuesday December 13th meeting, Grant Skomorowski gave a presentation on his experience flying in Africa. He flew Dash 8 aircraft in Africa for several months in 2018-2019 and he returned this past summer.

Grant is retiring as a Captain with Voyageur Airways. From a base in Bamako, he was flying Dash 8 aircraft operating in support of Dutch and Swedish troops involved with the UN Peacekeeping mission in Mali. He made five full 2-month on/2-month off rotations. Recently, Grant was in the country of Central Africa Republic where he flew the Dash 8 on a 1-month deployment with the UN Mission, MINUSCA.



The flying schedule in Mali was relatively light, and Grant was able to become immersed in the ex-pat African life and had good exposure to the local culture. His experience in CAR was short, but it was a good exposure to a very different environment.

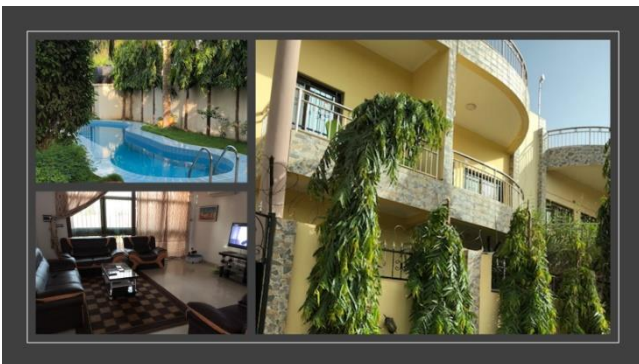


The operation in Mali consisted of flights from Bamako to Timbuktu and flights from Bamako to Gao. While the airports were in hostile areas, the runways were paved (and long), and the airports had reasonably good facilities. While ATC was limited, there were RNAV approaches to the airports served.



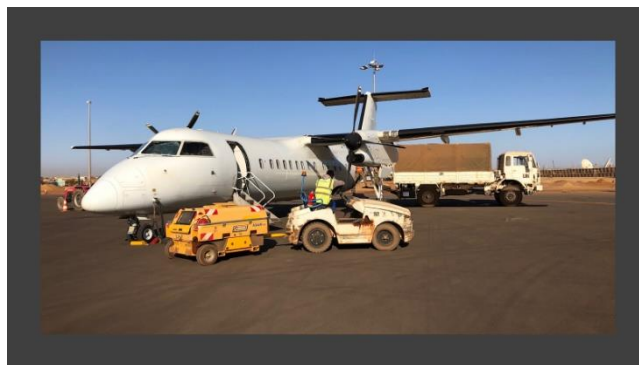
The operation in the Central African Republic (CAR) consisted of flights to several airports within the country, with placenames all starting with the letter “B”: Bangui, Birao, Bossangoa, Bria, Bouar, Birao, Bangassou, Berberati, Bambari, and Bouar. Most runways were unpaved, the airports had very limited facilities (if any), ATC was virtually non-existent, and the only instrument approaches were those at the capital city of Bangui.

Work and life in Africa is very different from work and life here. The experience was worthwhile, eye-opening, and very rewarding.



Crew Accommodations - Bamako

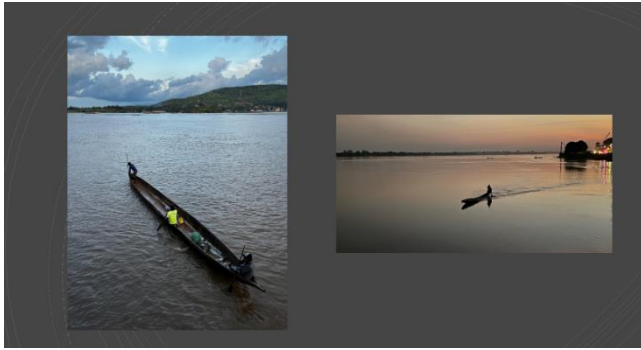
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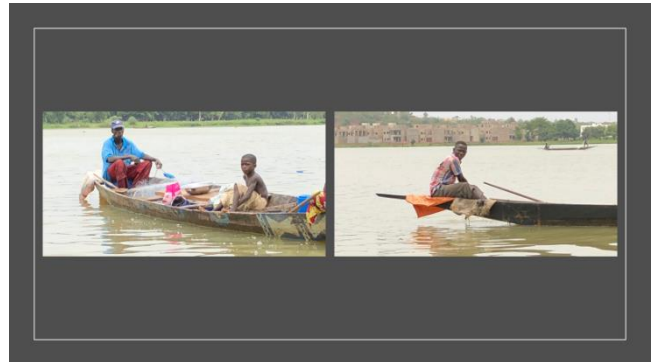
On the ramp – Gao, Mali



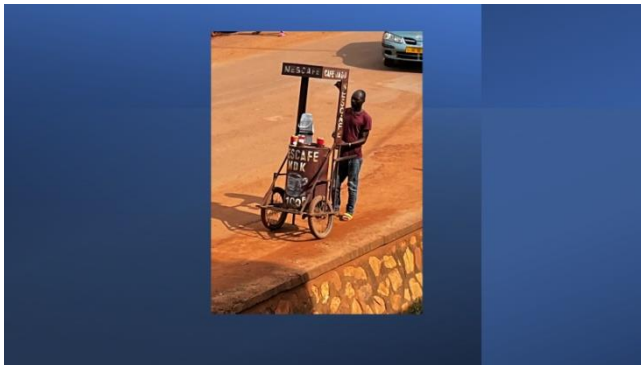
Typical City Buses – Bamako, Mali



Dugout Canoe, Ubangi River - Bangui, Central Africa Republic



Commercial fishermen, Niger River – Bamako, Mali



Mobile Coffee Stand – Bangui, Central Africa Republic



Africa faces (children with beautiful/intense eyes) – Bamako, Mali

Voyageur Airways, based in North Bay Ontario, is a diverse aerospace company. Besides having an extensive heavy maintenance program, it operates a fleet of Bombardier CRJ (jet) and DeHavilland Dash-8 (turboprop) aircraft with current operations in Canada, and six aircraft operating from five bases in Africa. This is down from Voyageur operating over 12 airplanes in Africa some five years ago. UN contracts come and go, but the landscape has become more competitive as 'local' African operators from Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa have become more sophisticated, capable, and competitive.