

Arrival on
West Coast

San Diego

Then Alameda.

Archie Coolidge



U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION
ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

May 2-3, 1944

Dear Folks,

Now that I'm finally reasonably settled down and have bought some notepaper, I can easily drop you a line. "Easily" sometimes seems to be a necessity with me.

The trip out was uneventful, though it almost got off to a poor start with one piece of baggage missing for a while in Grand Central and others to be repacked to get down to 40 lbs., which meant not getting out to Great Neck and

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seeing only a minimum of Ham.
There were stops at Washington,
Nashville, Little Rock, Dallas,
El Paso, Tucson, Phoenix,
and one other somewhere.
Though I got out only at
Washington, El Paso and one
of the Arizona stops, I forget
which. There was a lot
of magnificent desert scenery
from down in western Texas
on. No one threatened to
put me off, though one
of the several pretty
stewardesses we had (one
at a time) mentioned she
had ^{once} put off two major
generals for a couple of second



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lieutenants, who as ferry pilots had higher priorities. So despite a late start we dropped into San Diego about noon on Wednesday, less than 18 hours out of New York and, incidentally, 36 hours early for me.

The next three nights I spent at the Del Coronado Hotel, a relic (sp.?) of the eighties or nineties, but still very swanky though half taken over by the Navy. Everyone in the world from

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people I hadn't seen since
college days to others
also just up from Daytona
was there. They pretty
well took up the evening.
By day I waited, first to
checkⁱⁿ, then to get orders to
check out, and the most
enjoyable way to do that
seem to be to hire a
Mercury and drive all over
the countryside, interesting
in itself, but naturally
especially so for the birds.
I could have used my
monocular spotting scope
and one of my bird books



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to advantage. ^{had they arrived} Long-billed curlews, shovellers and phalaropes were the most exciting new species for me.

The country around San Diego is very rugged, coastal hills for instance soon giving way to peaks several thousand feet high a little way inland. All is pretty barren of trees, what few there are occurring mostly singly or in small groves.

Down there I was assigned to VB-17 soon after checking in, and sure enough Mr. Ware was listed as the skipper. It was just when finding

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all this out that I ran into
Archie, who should now be
aboard his small carrier. He
seemed in good form and
helped me get squared away
with baggage, etc.

Well I came up here
by train, nearly missing a
vital connection at Los Angeles
because of having boarded a
milk train at S. D. by mistake.
They told me it was an
extra, which was erroneous,
~~but~~^{so} I assumed it would
follow right behind the
other hopelessly crowded (not
even standing room) one.
Since I did make it (by about



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Three minutes (after a five hour
ride up) and did get a seat. It
turned out all right except for
the sweat.

For a while I wondered
about addresses and thought
at first to disclose our present
location wouldn't do, but
here the ~~located~~ note paper
~~and~~ heading, and you have a
map, which will show that
we are just south of Oakland
and across the bay from
the truly fascinating city of
San Francisco. What you have

but no fee. I've only seen a bit of Frisco. I love to all
P.S. I just got better. Don't want cap cover. My leave of course was up to scratch. I couldn't
help being under the circumstances!

is my permanent address. It
does look like if we might
be in this country for
several months yet, but
we very likely will move
away from fog to do most
of our flying. There is
considerable organizing to do,
though we are fortunate in
retaining some of the members
of the old Bomby 17, and
I'm just as glad to find
quite a number of them
and others senior to me.
I'll tell more as I find
out that it's ok to do so.
There are more trees here than
God and still plenty of hills.