

Aug.

~~Sept~~ 6-7/44

Dear Folks:

I'm most reassuring
to hear that Ma and Jack
got up to Squam and that
things are as they should
be up there (within striking
distance of perfection).

I sometimes wonder
what woodchucks did
when there weren't any
vegetable gardens to
devour, that is, when the

e
primaeval forests covered
all of New England. Of
course it wasn't all deep,
dark forest, but certainly
the woodchuck has
prospered with civilization
as few animals have.

(It seems that we
won't be going to sea,
except for a short cruise
of a few days on a baby
flat-top for qualifying

landings possibly within
 a week, for some little
 time now after all.

which makes this strange
 person begin to wonder,
 among other things, for
 more vital things, what
 sort of an early season
 southbound bird
 migration they have
 out here. Probably it
 isn't marked like that
 at home often is, especially

following cold waves, and
 it may mostly come too
 late. We'll be getting
 training all along by
 the way. Though much
 of it will be to keep
 our hand in, and we
 may get more experience
 after we leave - even
 if some of us have
 deteriorated some dive
 bombing ability (give
 out of five it was -

not often done, but under

such good conditions

not deserving of much

more than a P.S., one

or two others in the

squadron, having done

it). Our insignia is

being worked on, but

so far as I know the

final design has not

been decided upon.

I'll try to remember

to send a picture or a

snapshot or two, but
 we're not even supposed
 to have cameras aboard
 the station, to say
 nothing of the hanger
 area, where we can
 do all the unposed
 sitting in planes we
 want. Too many silly
 things like that would
 make a navy career
 for this Joe a rather
 remote possibility!

Our weather has²
been improving, and
we've been able to
get out to sea for
gunnery exercises. We
were really all set
this morning - no fog
or anything - when
one gunner was so
accurate as to shoot
the tow line attached
to the target sleeve,
which of course immediately

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tumbled into the sea.

Another day passes so
I'll try and conclude the
news from here.

The Merry Widow

was most enjoyable. The

hero's voice making up
for his smug strutting

and the heroine contributing

not a little. A week

ago Tuesday I managed

to get to the final of

a series of Beethoven
 concerts by the Budapest
 String Quartet, having
 also been to one of the
 earlier ones. This last
 program, like the other,
 consisted of an early
 opus, a middle one and
 a late one. The last
 two, to my delight,
 turning out to be two
 we have at home
 (Opus 59, no. 1; Opus 131).

Yes, San Francisco is
 obviously the cultural
 center of the Far West
 and must be flourishing
 as usual during the
 winter with its said
 to-be-excellent symphony
 orchestra, etc.

Last Saturday I went
 for a pretty good bike
 ride from almost down-
 town Oakland. Heading
 more or less north east

I ~~soon~~ ^{soon} hit the hills
pumping for quite a
while, but finally
resorting to wheeling
the bike except in the
less steep places.

Woods, largely pine
(species?) and eucalyptus
(picturesque, non-native
now so characteristic
of much of California),
covered the final slopes
leading up to the ridge

night flying now and unfortunately no likelihood
of the fog rolling in to spoil it. Love Took

though ~~subalpine~~ house
extended almost all
the way up. "Round-Top"
turned out to be a
convenient objective. It
is 1750 ft. above the
Bay not counting a
fire tower and the
new would have been
fine except for the
haze. That to the east
of the very barren
remainder of the coast
range was better. What a coast
coming down!