

Dive Bombers and Other Birds title suggested by IFRS*

Four Years of an Ornithological^{to} Naval Dive Bomber Pilot during World War II

Early in July, 1941, I found myself with a B.S.F. degree just received from The University of Michigan, and though actually I had been a candidate for a Master of Forestry degree and had fulfilled all requirements except for finishing my thesis, there loomed up in front of me a totally new and much more important problem — the holding of a low Draft number! The question was, then, whether to wait (in suspense) for the Draft to catch up with me or volunteer for something first. This was something I hadn't allowed myself much time to think about up until then, but it didn't take long to see the desirability of the second course. The possibility of flying, which had been in the back of my mind for some time, seemed worth investigating, especially as I seemed to possess the necessary preliminary qualifications of good eyesight, under 27 years of age (by considerably less than a year), college

* MARGINAL NOTES ADDED IN 1991, SOME 45? YEARS LATER!

education (my seven years being more than enough by five years!), etc., yet had no very special qualifications other wise. Flying would be something new and different and looked as if it would be ^{at least any rate,} more interesting and perhaps worthwhile than any other form of service.

With the above thoughts in mind, I went to the most convenient Army recruiting center in Boston and was directed from there to the Army Base in South Boston, my obvious object being to investigate the matter while there was still time. Well, the person that I supposed was the one to supply me with full information seemed so disinterested that I presently left slightly annoyed and little better informed than before.

Remembering vaguely that the Navy also did some flying, I located their recruiting headquarters, at 150 Causeway St., and was received so enthusiastically that I had signed

SIGNING

UP

signing up

July 1941

up for a physical examination almost before I knew it. The examination came something like a week later, on July 15, and found me "Physically qualified and temperamentally adapted for duty involving actual control of aircraft, flight training, U.S.N.R." Then I signed something, took an oath and became a seaman second class V-5 on inactive duty. Since there was something of a bottleneck in the training program, the authorities agreed to allow me a definite period, until Sept. 1 and later Oct. 1, before being called to active duty.

My idea was to finish my thesis, but unfortunately the summer passed away all too rapidly for this to come about. "Last flings" couldn't be resisted. A little time was spent at Squam with the family, and then came a trip to Katahdin with Joe Bradley. I spent August in Ann Arbor working on the thesis, but probably because the

KATAHDIN

subject matter was never reduced from all that I could find out about New England's forests and wildlife, past and present, and such interrelationships as I could figure out, the only end that came in sight was the end of the summer. Around the end of August there was a "rushed" trip in my model A Ford roadster, Betsy, to Huron Mt., in Michigan's northern peninsula, to visit The Edwardes, one especially. Betsy, however, behaved abominably breaking down twice on the way up, causing me to arrive 36 hours late, and many times on the way back to Ann Arbor. Events in between might have dimmed the remembrance of those rather grim rides. It was more fun with company, as I had driving east to Squam, ^{with} friend, O'Connor, though we went practically all the way on three cylinders. About the only really successful event of ^{Troy} the summer had been a production of The Gondoliers, made all the more enjoyable because

my friend, Frank Fletcher, was also in the house.

The extra month in Groton helped the thesis somewhat, but order to report at 0800 on Oct. 9 at Squantum coming in a day or two earlier than that found me only too willing to go and "get it over with." An account of the four years on active duty follows.