

OCTOBER, 1941

reported for duty

OCT. 9, 1941

NAVAL AIR

STATION,

SQUANTUM,

MASS.

My kind and very paternal parent drove me to Squantum and left me feeling rather like a lost sheep. Another physical examination was one of the first things on the program, and that gave us a chance to observe our fellows in most intimate fashion. There were eighteen of us to start with, and in a few days late comers brought the total to twenty-five. We constituted Flight 67. Because I was the elder of the only two who had had previous military training, in my case six weeks of business near C.M.T.C. the summer of the previous year, I was designated the student leader of the group. There were, of course, other groups or flights there senior to us, and as they graduated, others arrived, and in ^{it turn,} became more senior. The student leader had to muster the boys, make out duty lists, supervise details and act as a general go-between between the student and Lt. Commander "Shorty" Arnold, our commanding officer. Our uniforms were Marine khaki or green (without

blouses) with fore and aft caps and no insignia. We had non-regulation, dark blue, wool jackets for cold weather. Off the station we wore our civilian clothes.

OUR
PLANES

It didn't take long to get into the swing of things after a fashion. Our barracks were right by the field, and when not otherwise occupied we could watch the progress of the boys who had got to the flying stage. The planes were sturdy little yellow biplanes, "yellow perils", or, officially, "N3N's" (Trainer number three built by the Naval Aircraft Factory), powered by seven cylinder radial engines of about 225 H.P., though our only contact with them the first week or two was in helping to start them or sitting in them ready to use the breaks in case they jumped the "chocks" while the engine warmed up. The rest of this early period was spent in drilling or in ground school, the

outstanding subject of which was radio code. It was somewhat of a surprise to find "dots" and "dashes" called "dits" and "dax". A little listening, however, made the reasons seem obvious.

We started to fly as instructors and planes became available. My instructor turned out to be a first lieutenant in the Marines, Lt. Hoey. Despite red hair he was a quiet, understanding sort of person, though perhaps a little too easy going. About all I can remember about the first flight was his saying, "You take over," or the equivalent, and my hardly daring to move the stick. The air was pretty rough and throwing the plane about a bit, and of course it felt as if one had hardly any control over the plane at all. Subsequent "hops" didn't seem so bad. On one of my first flights Mr. Hoey flew me over our house in Groton, but I seem to remember no one to wave to.

Those with no previous flight training (a few in our group had had

FIRST
TRAINING
FLIGHT