

after a little soloing and then formation flying.

KINGFISHER

SEAPLANES

Except for the thrill of the rather long take-offs, which were like a glorified speed-boat ride, and the altogether different feel of the landings, there was nothing new about Kingfisher in their true form as opposed to the landplane version except that they were a little heavier and trimmed up better. Two "check-outs", one with an instructor piloting and the second with positions reversed, was all that was necessary before one was allowed to solo. A far more complete syllabus than in any previous squadron followed, and an excellent course it was. Two cadets flew in each plane and took turns piloting, and two planes usually flew together, though such sections were often joined by one or two others to form a division. Bob Stix, of Scarsdale, N. Y., a Dartmouth "contemporary," was my "buddy." Everett Frothingham, from Newburyport, and

Norman Lawrence, from upstate N.Y., two much younger fellows, were the others.

FORMATION

NAVIGATION

FLIGHTS

After formation flights up and down the river we were ready for navigation hops out to sea. These always started from the mouth of the S.T. John, and to get there we merely followed the river downstream just north to Jacksonville then east to the jetty. From there we had a triangular course to work out, usually one that had two geographic or set legs and a third involving relative motion to an imaginary ship going on some course and at a certain speed from the starting point. Eventually this was made harder, a change in "Point Option" being sent to us over the radio, and this was where the acting radio man came in. Besides receiving and deciphering messages he had to transmit position reports, also in radio code, but the pilot was supposed to work out the

navigation. This called for trimming up the plane so it flew itself with a minimum of "supervision", good wind estimations and quick, but accurate figuring on the plotting boards. When there was quite a lot of figuring to do, it was all right to ask the "radio man" to take over for a bit, though this wasn't considered good practice for the obvious reason that the average radio man couldn't be expected to fly very smoothly or even safely under many conditions. As I remember, we flew at 1,000', probably as an extra margin of safety, though that was too high to expect the winds to be the same as those on the surface, the waves being our only guide (discounting attempts at making wind estimates with drift sights and smoke bombs). Needless to say at the end of our problems, which might have averaged fifty nautical miles to a leg, we often found ourselves far off course. Chose pilots (instructors following us) were

not always along, and so when an unfamiliar coast line loomed up, we had to decide whether we ^{were} too far north or too far south, but no one ever got seriously lost.

GUNNERY

We had two kinds of gunnery - firing at target sleeves towed by ~~an~~ assigned planes, using one set of "nuns" for the free or swivel gun of the rear cockpit and another for the fixed gun that fired through the propeller. Free gunnery consisted of three nuns. The first was nothing but flying formation on the sleeve a little ahead of it. The second and third were made together, a pass being made, again parallel with the sleeve, but with enough excess speed so that a steep turn could be made up and over the tow line. The two chances for the rear gunner to fire were when first passing the sleeve and again during the turn, but since the rear gun was only a defensive weapon, these nuns were of little use except in getting one

used to swinging the gun. Fixed gunnery runs were much like those used by Navy fighter planes, though it's hard to imagine as slow a plane as the Kingfisher ever being used offensively. We made either low side runs, S turning in to come in from below on either quarter, or high side runs, the same from above, or overhead runs, involving a half roll and dive or almost a split S. H. It's were few and far between in all our gunnery exercises, but not too much was expected from the one fixed .30 and one free .30 of each plane.

DIVE
BOMBING

Dive bombing was the most exciting exercise we practiced. We dropped miniature bombs of a few lbs. each on 200 ft. round targets, one of which was in an out-of-the-way cove a little way upstream and another in a similar place downstream. Starting from about 3500 ft. we pushed over into dives of around 70 degrees releasing the bomb and starting to pull out at 2000 ft. and seldom