

son-in-law I then knew, I had also met on a double date, and though one eventually got to know quite a number of the nice people of the neighborhood, she remained the most congenial of the young ladies.

Just before entering Squadron 14 ~~_____~~ I had finally got to the beach again, joining a crowd at the Innlet, consisting of Sam Reed and Charlie Brund, cadet friends who had been a couple of years behind me at college, and also more or less in the party, Dave Gardner^{opel of him} and Joe Kennedy, classmates I had never particularly known, and a friend of the latter, the last two being emigrants. We all went to the weekly dance at the Inn and the next day lay around on the beach.

The next day off was the first of many spent at Mrs. Reid's, at Atlantic Beach. She took in paying guests and had a lovely-looking daughter, Caroline, who, however, was more often than not off on a date. I'm afraid I was more interested in the local avifauna than

HARVARD
CLASSMATES
(BOTH LOST
LATER)

!

EARLE SUMMER, 1942

BICYCLE

in Caroline. Hiring a bicycle at nearly Jacksonville Beach, I rode out to the little town of Mayport near the mouth of the St. John after a shorter jaunt to the jitty and back. Near Mayport I found that a large area of salt marsh was a wonderful place for birds. Clapper rail, which could be seen right beside the road, and beautiful black-necked stilts, were the new birds for me, but only less pleasing was the sight of a few willetts, a pair number of snowy and American egret*, little blue heron and white ibises and many least terns. Wilson's plover, Louisiana heron** and wood ibis*** were other "new" birds, seen there at a later date.

BIRDS

6/22/42

NEW SPECIES

Actually, my list of Florida water birds had started during those first trips to the beach back in January, royal terns and black skimmer, seen at Matanzas Inlet, the inlet south of St. Augustine, and the next one south of the St. John, being the first "new" birds of this group. Black vultures were added

* ~~WOOD~~ GREAT EGRET ** TRI-COLORED HERONS *** WOOD STORKS

4/19/42
OKEEFENOKEE
(OUT OF ORDER)
BIRDS

shortly after that, and along in April on a trip to Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia with Bob Marshall I saw my first red-collared wood pecker and sandhill crane, though the view of the latter, which were flying, was poor. The only other new water bird seen previous to the Mayport trip was the white ibis, which appeared in late April around Lee Field, soon becoming common. Usually flying in good-sized flocks these remarkable birds kept beautiful formations.

ENSIGNS
WITH
AND
WINGS!
AUG. 21, '42

Well, finally on Aug. 21 a group of us dressed in whites, ^{for the first time} adorned with gold wings and shoulder boards with a single stripe across the end of each and caps with wide chin straps and new device consisting of crossed anchors and over them a shield with an eagle sitting on it. Reporting to the Captain, Captain Price, we were sworn in as ensigns, then becoming commissioned officers for the first time. At the same time we were designated naval aviators, having finished the course in flight

NAVAL AVIATOR
NO. 15,001

training, the only reason we were being
 commissioned in the first place.
 It may have been because we were
 supposed to be first, naval officers
 and second, naval aviators, that the
 Navy didn't see fit to present us
 wings, as the Army does its pilots,
 though that didn't stop us from
 thinking we were something. Under
 the circumstances it was impossible
 to think of ourselves as anything but
 primarily ^{even if we had to buy our wings} aeroplane pilots. Practically
 all our training had been connected
 directly or indirectly with flying,
 the amount of time ~~being~~ spent learn-
 ing how to become a naval officer
 having been close to nil. Some of us
 had come very close to "washing out",
 so it felt all the better to come,
 though. An ensign was just an
 ensign, or so it then seemed to me,
 whereas a naval aviator not only
 had special insignia, but collected
 with his flight pay half again as
 much as his base pay, and there

no doubt about it we thought our main job was pretty glamorous.

The wind was taken out of our sails to considerable extent when we discovered we were to continue as students under the new operational training program. This was somewhat of an anti-climax, but what we minded most of all was the postponement of our leaves home. To add insult to injury they made us wear white cap covers with our otherwise khaki uniforms, to distinguish us from our ensign instructor, actually a perfectly reasonable order, but they also made us continue with the Gene Tunney program of daily required exercise, which as cadets we had had only our last month or so as such. I would have ^{been} more enjoyable if this exercise had not been supervised, since we had had nothing but supervision in almost everything we did for many months. A large swimming pool, however, had been