

SEPTEMBER, 1942

NEW  
B(12)

conserved his gas for the expedition. I remember seeing boat-tailed grackles for the first time on the first trip, when we stayed at the hotel, Stix's friends being away. We had a very good time as it was meeting a very pleasant family, who gave us an excellent brunch Sunday morning.

CANOE  
TRIP

On another day off Dave Kenting and I hired a canoe and paddled several miles up the creek that one crosses on the way from N.A.S. to town. Though we didn't see any alligator or particularly interesting birds, the ill-defined banks lined with swamp hardwood made the atmosphere seem pretty tropical, and to paddle a canoe again was more than enjoyable in itself.

The operational training course lasted from late August to the end of October, bad weather here and there after a nearly perfect if hot summer prolonging it a little. In this time my total flight <sup>time</sup> was boosted from just under 300 hours

to well over 400, over half of this being in sea planes. It was a good course, ably directed by Lt. Karabin, but included very little we hadn't had before. If it had been possible to practice real coast recoveries with a cruise, going through the whole and rather tricky procedure of landing in its wake as it turned and then taxiing up to its sled to be hauled aboard, we'd really have been prepared for VO-VCS duty, which probably is the toughest form of aviation sea duty. As it was we did try some simulated coast recoveries, an improvised sled being towed behind a launch in the river, though this was something to do little more than "aim" for since it wasn't substantial enough to support a plane.

NIGHT

CATAPULT

SHOTS

Night catapult shots were the only other new exercises for us, but they were about as exciting as anything I've ever done or should care to do in the way of flying. Sitting there waiting to be

catapulted into inky space was indeed a very helpless feeling, and about all we could do was sit tight and hope for the best. We had longer regular night flights, but on the only one to sea, the chase pilot, a young fellow scarcely more experienced than us, didn't like the way the sky merged into the sea with practically no horizon discernable and made us turn back before we got very far out. Our last several day flights were particularly long, about four hours, combining some pretty complicated navigation, a little gunnery and even some dive bombing all within that time. As before we flew in groups, but no longer took turns piloting, even one of us having an assigned aircrewman to fill his rear seat. My gunner's name was Gandy. He was rated as an AMMTC, but was <sup>completely</sup> inexperienced as an aircrewman, and though he came along all right, I don't know what happened to him after we finished the course. "Ernie" Wood, Paul Garble, "Rash" Roschio, "Tim" Brennan, who had

got board time the same time I did  
back in Squadron 11, Ed Frang and Joe  
Dauchy were the other boys besides  
the original three I often flew with.

FIRST

LEAVE

NOV. '42

HOME

Leave came with November and  
lasted for two short weeks. It was my  
first leave from the Navy, and the first  
time home in practically eleven  
months and so naturally, was  
made the most of. The only thing  
that could have been better about it  
was the time of year. Though even so  
the fall and I spent several days at  
Squam, and Nance was there for one.  
As usual I climbed old Morgan, for the  
20<sup>TH</sup> odd time. I also managed to get  
down to Gardiner, which was the last  
time I saw Garity before she died.  
Even with these two trips I seem  
(from Pa's diary) to have been fairly  
gay about Boston, perhaps the best  
evening there being spent at a dance  
in the company of (when she wasn't  
running off with some one else) Tom  
Stacy, who seemed about a foot taller

Squam

Gorton

Gardiner

DECEMBER, 1942

than when she was just a few years younger.

When we got back from leave our various orders had not come in as expected. The demand for cruiser and battleship sea plane pilots happened to be at a low ebb at that time, but we figured that it would be just a matter of time before each of us, in one, two or three reported to the U.S.S. 20 and 20. The U.S.S. 20 and 20, like many of our predecessors, to any one of several inshore patrol squadrons in the Caribbean area. It therefore came as quite a surprise when some fifteen of us, after only a week of being shore pilots for some of our cadet friends, in the case of some of us, got orders to VSIB Instructor School at Miami. VSIB, a scout-bomber, meant carrier type planes and therefore goodbye to sea planes. The idea was to make us into assistant instructors for use in the Jacksonville area, which was becoming less of a primary and intermediate flying center, but more of a

UNEXPECTED

CHANGE  
OF DUTY

TO MIAMI

DEC. '42

preoperational and operational training base.

At Miami (actually N.A.S. Opa-  
locha) we weren't exactly welcome, all  
the instructors already being busy  
instructing their cadet students, and  
so we were left pretty much to our  
own device. To make the transition  
back into land plane, which most of us  
hadn't flown in <sup>for</sup> five months, as early as  
possible, we flew first in OS2V land  
planes and then SNJ. Then after  
supervised "cockpit checkouts" we  
successively checked ourselves out up  
in the air with the SBC-3, an obsolete  
biplane scout-bomber no longer used  
for dive bombing, the BT-1, the ancestor  
of the SBD series and though no longer  
first line still an excellent dive  
bomber, and the TBD, which had then  
only recently been replaced by the TBF  
as the Fleet's regular torpedo bomber.  
We did have several supervised dive  
bombing flights, but not enough to get  
used to diving from 8000 ft. instead of

VARIOUS  
PLANES