

Russ
Keller

By a very curious coincidence a new instructor appeared and turned out to be the older brother of Pat Coolidge's husband, Willie Keller. Russ had been on the Ranges for two years, and I had not known him before. We had some very pleasant walks together and would have had more if he hadn't been sent to Melbourne for fighter training, only to get back just a short time before I left. In that time, however, he became a very good friend indeed. He was one of the most polite, considerate people I've ever met, and altogether a prince of a gentleman, and it hit me pretty close when I heard he was lost off Kyushu.

OAKES AMES

Because I so often made such unusual use of my days off, I didn't get to know many people off the station but did meet a few, including Professor and Mr. Oakes Ames, of Ormond. Having heard he was a botanist I stopped in one time, which turned out to be the first of several, each pleasanter than the last. Without a car it seemed too much trouble to bother much about girls, though there were several attractive ones including two knock-outs, Miss Forester and Jordan Phillips, seen more than once. As a

Apr. 1944

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whole, however, there wasn't even a contest between the birds, the bees and the trees on the one hand, and wine, women and song on the other once Marilyn took left.

APRIL, 1944

Leave

BIRDS

WASHINGTON

WITH A.H.R.

Orders to Comm Fair West Coast, at San Diego came in in early April, 1944, by which time N.A.S. Daytona Beach had been pretty well turned over to operational training in fighters - F4F's and FM's, later to be replaced by F6F's. Since it was a poor April for weather up north, leave might have been even better than it was. Green-winged Teal and Greater Scaup seen down at the Moat brought my all-time ^{quitting} bird list up to an even 150 species. ^{had on route,} I stopped in Washington to see Nance, staying at an officers' club. We had a more than pleasant Easter week-end together, going to Easter Service in the National Cathedral, walking from the Jefferson to the Lincoln Memorial and by the cherry trees, seeing the art galleries, etc.

N.Y.

WITH H. & E.

SAN DIEGO

From Anston I took ^{the} train to N.Y. to see Ham and Edie and my little nephews, and a show* and a museum or two before flying to San Diego. Arriving a day early and then having to wait another two days for orders gave me a good chance to look around the countryside, and for this I was ^{* by a remarkable coincidence met Nance, my airman & parents there.}

more than lucky to be able to hire a car at Coronado, where I was staying. Driving all the way around the bay and further to the north, I added quite a collection of new birds such as long-billed curlews, shovellers, northern phalaropes in great flocks and a good representation of land birds.

MAY 1, 1944

VB-17

IN ALAMEDA

power?

I joined VB-17 in Alameda on May 1 and found the squadron already pretty well organized. LT. Comdr. Bob Ware and LT. Hugh ("Nick") Nicholson were, as expected, the skipper and exec. respectively. Nick soon made LT. Comdr. and left to become the fighter exec. and eventually the skipper of the fighter-bombers, and Doug Yerxa, our senior lieutenant from old VB-17, replaced him. Also above me were Lieutenants Bob Bollinger and Fred Bowen and, just outranking me because of a lower file number, ^{LT. (j.g.)} "Cady" Pyne, all these like myself former instructors never having been to sea. There was quite a bunch of lieutenants junior grade returning from the old squadron, including Van Stone, Vair, Bristow, Walker, Chinn and a whole bunch of ensigns, the majority of them from Daytona. Charles ("Dusty") Duse became and remained my wingman for the whole time.

WINGMAN

Henry, Goss and Richel were the only others of my former students who stayed with the squadron for the whole cruise, Kocheva (sp.?), King and Calcutt (sp?) leaving the squadron, the latter to be killed later, as were Claus, Davis and Stecker while still with us, in California.

~~Washed by Max,~~
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The whole air group was based at Alameda for six months. Though we had short stays at Vernalis, just inland of the Coast Range for night flying and at Fallon, Nevada, for rocket firing. At Alameda the fog interfered with flying somewhat, especially for the first part of the morning and at night, but we got plenty of flying in and were perhaps even overtrained, if anything, at the end of the period.

7. HELLDIVERS

S B 2C-2, better known as "Helldivers", were new to all of us except the boys from the old squadron, and it took a little time to get used to them. Compared with the SBD's they were appreciably faster and better climbers, but much heavier on the controls. We were lucky enough to get S B 2C-3's to train with, and, with their increase in horsepower from 1250 to 1900 and various other improvements, they were far superior to the worse than mediocre S B 2C-1's & 2's.

Yes, they were a lot more work to fly, the use of tabs being necessary almost wherever throttle or atti-