

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,~~
~~Washed by Max,~~

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-

SOME
SENTENCE

5 OUT OF 5!

DIVING

lude was changed. For diving they proved to be very good, though they were so balanced that it was too easy to pull too many G's when pulling out of a dive and so strain the wings. The almost constant west wind at our bombing target (near Antioch, close to the confluence of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers), together with the fact that we usually preferred to dive down wind, made it easier to score hits than under tough conditions, two of us, "Stud" Vail and myself getting five out of five within the 50 foot circle one time. The other four of us (one of whom missed every time) getting ^{eight} ~~four~~ more bullseyes among them; and that was in a contest with another division that really was swamped. As in the SBD we usually pushed over at at least 8000 ft; ^{dove at roughly 70°} and released and started to pull out at 2000-2500 ft., trying not, but not always succeeding, to avoid low pull-outs (below 800-1000 ft.). By this time Leland Ives had become my gunner-radio man, in the rear seat.

For gunnery and navigation we went seawards, as we did for radar practice. Making radar approaches above the overcast on vessels below it and breaking out of the clouds just in time to make

a simulated glide bombing attack or low level bombing run was one of the most enjoyable and seemingly effective things we practiced.

The
countryside
we flew
over

The country around San Francisco Bay was very interesting to fly over, the coast line being so irregular all the way from Monterey Bay to Point Reyes, our usual limits, and the topography and vegetation being so varied. Even in the Coast Range some of the mountains, as around Santa Cruz, are pretty well forested, while those near the Great Valley are completely barren, as is much of the valley itself.

Tamalipas (sp?), north of the Golden Gate, and Diablo, just south of the junction of the two rivers, were our favorite landmarks and, with fog or haze so frequent, were very useful. We crossed the Sierra two or three times and in fair weather got magnificent views. One time from the vicinity of Lake Tahoe, at perhaps 12,000 ft. ^{a few days after I had climbed the mountains} I caught sight of Mt. Shasta, close to 200 miles to the north, with a new mantle of snow.

Mt. Shasta
200 mi. away

Sometime in late summer, ^{our squadron was} ~~we were~~ cut down to 36 pilots and crewmen and 24 planes. That brings me to my last leave before going overseas, everyone in the air group in staggered groups, getting five days off between late summer

SEPTEMBER, 1944

Trip to
Mt. Shasta
(+ back, by
train, bus &
hitch-hiking)

and early autumn. More or less on the spur of the moment I headed alone for Mt. Shasta, the most convenient exciting-looking place I had never visited. It turned out to be almost ideal. I stayed at a very comfortable motel just outside the town of Mt. Shasta and used my two legs to get around but made no decision to climb the mountain until after starting up the trail. As it turned out, I'd never have made it to the top if it hadn't been for some luck. Before tackling the "big boy," however, I warmed up on Black Butte, walking the several miles to its base and then up the $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles and 2000 ft. plus in 65 minutes. The top of this steep cinder cone is actually over 6000 feet and gave me wonderful views of Shasta. There is a fine lookout at the top, which gives protection from the wind, and the fire warden there, an ex-Marine ace of the last war (2 or 3 planes) was very congenial and hospitable (coffee), so much so that it got dark even before I got to the bottom of the cone, on the opposite side of that ascended.

Black
Butte

ascend

Shasta itself involved a little more pre-