

AUGUST 1944

appointing, but doubtless it would have been different if my cruising radius on the ground had been better.

Fresh
salt-water
cruise,
on Takanie
Bay
Aug. '44

practice
landings

Before leaving the States everyone in the air group had to make some more carrier landings, an escort carrier, the Kaiser-built U.S.S. Takanie Bay (CVE no. 89) being made available for that purpose. Accordingly, we all packed aboard with a number of planes and headed out on what ^{for} many of us was our first salt-water cruise, a three-day affair. Those who had been out before had to make only one or two landings, as I remember. We who had once qualified on the Wolverine or Sable, out of Glennview, had to make four, and those few who had never qualified at all had to make eight. The weather was fairly rough and made the little ship pitch so much that landings were tricky, and several of the boys messed wires and bounced into the barrier* or part way into the catwalks.

Albatrosses

For me the cruise was interesting ornithologically. Black-footed Albatrosses followed the ship most of the time. Though not large compared with the famous Wandering Albatrosses, the ship followers of southern oceans, and mostly

* a wire high enough to catch a plane's nose and

brown instead of mostly white. They were the first I had ever seen and were fascinating to watch as they glided in irregular zig-zag behind the ship just above the waves and occasionally landing and swimming about 15 feet for garbage. Two kinds of shearwaters*, one all dark, the other light below, as well as the pearly-gray Fork-Tailed Petrel, were also seen. Of the owl family the California Murre and Tufted Puffin were the only ones positively identified. The puffin, with its huge orange-red beak, black body, white face and yellow tassel behind the eye, was a veritable clown in appearance.

Besides the Tabaric Bay we also went over the Ranges for a couple of days shortly before we left, almost everyone getting two practice attacks and two landings on the old ship. As before various birds were seen but no new species.

We left the States and our plane (our no longer) on the Hollandian,^(CVE-97) a Boque-class escort carrier, catching her at San Diego, and after an uneventful trip of six days arrived at Pearl Harbor. As we had expected, we found we were due to proceed to Hilo, Hawaii, over 200 miles to the southeast, immediately. For this trip

run its propeller! * PINK-FOOTED & SOOTY

Other
birds

Range
(CV-4)

off 15

Hawaii

11/3/44

11/9/44

Hilo

11/10/44

Hawaii

incidentally

NOVEMBER, 1944

AV-17

Those who didn't fly in transports went on an overnight trip in a very comfortable seaplane tender, the U.S.S. Cumberland Sound

We were a month at Hilo, and a very interesting and enjoyable month it was. There were plenty of planes in good condition, so we got in a good bit of flying even if we didn't particularly need it. Our squadron was cut down to 23 pilots and 15 planes.

SCENERY
(VOLCANOES)

The scenery around Hawaii was something to behold from the air. Two massive volcanoes, Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea, form the bulk of the island, the first still active and occasionally violently so, the second quite dormant, but both not far below 14,000 feet in height - the highest island mountains in the world with the exception of those on New Guinea, and from their ocean base, some 18,000 below the surface, the highest of all. Mauna Kea is slightly higher though a little less massive and regular in shape. The result of weathering over a longer period. Mauna Loa, with its not infrequent outpourings of ~~lava~~ lava, is more than holding its own against weathering, being in effect, a huge, smooth dome with no appreciable gullies cut by the streams.

like its neighbor. Both mountains are said to accumulate considerable quantities of snow in some winters, though while we were there only Mauna Kea had any, and this was in traces. These mountains were each, of course, extremely interesting to fly over, Mauna Kea because of its snow, little cinder cones and a tiny pond near the top, Mauna Loa because of its two huge craters, Kilauea on a low shoulder (the main feature of the readily accessible portion of Hawaii National Park), and another on the very top of the mountain. An even larger crater, Haleakala (said to be the largest in the world), on the nearby island of Maui and itself also a part of the National Park, was interesting to fly over too.

COASTAL
SCENERY

Almost more spectacular than the volcanic marvels was the scenery along the northwest, windward side of the islands, where the streams resulting from the torrential rains have carved great gorges, some of them over 2000 feet deep and with nearly vertical walls often lined with waterfalls. The verdure from all this wetness is almost unbelievable, even the cliffs themselves being green from vegetation, and the waterfalls, many of which appear only after heavy rains.