

MORE
BIRDS

than anything else, was most interesting because of its loud notes, which seemed to proclaim its character at once. An almost pure white kite hovering over the meadows was the most exotic-looking member of the hawk family even though we did see both a white-headed eagle and a white-headed hawk unless we got the two confused. One or two inconspicuous members of the Old World Warbler tribe, a straw-berry finch, three or four members of the peewee tribe and a couple of swallows made up the list.

COUNTRYSIDE

The Leyte countryside we saw was mostly open, coastal plain, which varied from narrow to wide. Palms were the only conspicuous trees except for the bits of forest on the slopes to the west. Shabby native villages, mostly constructed of palm thatch, were frequent along the road, which was, incidentally, very dirty. Altogether the landscape was somewhat disappointing. The mountains were not only inaccessible but, because of low clouds, usually inconspicuous.

HEADING
HOME

When it became a sure thing that we were to head home, there was, of course, much rejoicing and, frankly, relief, and we didn't mind

when two other air groups came aboard as passengers. The trip back to Pearl was very pleasant. Most of the places had been left behind, and so there was all the room in The World on the flight deck for sun bathing, which everyone did. We had 2 days in Pearl, though, unhappily, I had the duty the first full day. On the second just for luck I tried for a plane at Barber's Point after failing to get one at Ford Island, where we were docked, and, by George, they gave me an old SBD. I'd have paid a visit to Kani, the only island I'd ^{so close at hand,} never seen, if it hadn't been that Pearl Park was at Kani, which meant, of course, that I went there and received a warm welcome.

PEARL

HARBOR

SBD

TO MILO

+ BACK

RETURN

TO THE U.S.
7/2/45

Less than a week later we were in Alameda and not long after that on our various ways home for thirty days leave. I flew as far as N.Y. and got slightly delayed by a blunder before going the rest of the way home by train. A stop in New Haven to see Doug Yensen's mother was the only other delay.

GROTON

+ SQUAM

Groton was pleasantly serene and Squam even better. The previous time being nearly equally divided between the two. Nance wangled a leave of a week for Squam, so ^{five} ~~four~~ members of the family

Mts. Morgan

+ Percival

Squam Range

W. Rattlesnake

Absent

Members

End of War

San Diego

were present. Various guests, including Joe Bradley, Chrissie Lowell and friends of Jack's made things even better. An ascent of Morgan and Percival with Jack and then one with five of us of the whole range winding up with a picnic in Sandwich Notch were the most enterprising things we did. A late start for Sandwich Dome wound up atop West Rattlesnake, which I'd never climbed before, and the views of the Lake seemed about as perfect as possible.

I was too bad not to have a full family, but with Henry in Okinawa (our paths had crossed, possibly at Hawaii) and Ham and family in Bermuda it was hardly possible.

Well, all too soon I was headed west again. Though sure signs of peace were in the air, and, sure enough, the big news came when I was on the train from Boston to New York. It all expecting the papers to say all leaves were extended, as they could well have been, I was disappointed that they ^{were not} ~~did not~~. Of course it was the old story when I got to San Diego - just another dive bomber pilot. I had rather wanted shore-based duty overseas in aerial photography in fighters, but they persuaded me to join another

SEPTEMBER, 1945

Squadron
82in active
duty?

TERMINAL

LEAVE

1937 FORD

NATIONAL

PARKS

VB Squadron, giving me a choice of several, however. I instead of choosing 17 I picked 82 hearing that the former was going to be based in the desert at Fallon, Nev., whereas the latter was going to get Watsonville or beautiful Monterey Bay, and besides few of my particular friends were back with 17. As it turned out, I could just as well have gone to 17 because both 17 and 82 released all men eligible for release and requesting same. None of us had to worry about points as DFC* or better being all that was necessary.

I barely got to know the people in VB-82 and only just managed to get my flight time to date before my terminal leave started, Sept. 12. In the meantime I had bought a car, a 1937 blue Ford coupe, with the intention of driving home in it and seeing some of the sights on the way. I didn't get very far ^{far} the first day, in fact spent several days in Oakland. At one time I had vaguely hoped to get Joe Bradley to climb Mt. Whitney with me, but had to be content with going to the Top of the U.S. and back (from the short easterly approach) by myself. That was after visiting Kings Canyon and the Giant Forest, which, of course, meant crossing the

* DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS