

# NAVY

during World War II

My four years in the Navy were perhaps more remarkable for the fact that ~~before~~ <sup>up to</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> training was all for eventual combat duty and started <sup>in the fall of 1941</sup> months before the attack on Pearl Harbor <sup>and put</sup> the U.S. ~~into~~ immediately into active warfare, I didn't get into combat until my 30th birthday, on February 16, 1945, ~~some~~ <sup>some</sup> years after the Japanese <sup>had</sup> started retraining, as a badly beaten foe. <sup>all that time up to that date my</sup> <sup>had</sup> <sup>retrained</sup> dull, but ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>actually</sup> <sup>very</sup> <sup>interesting</sup> <sup>before</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Pearl</sup> <sup>Harbor</sup> <sup>attack</sup>.

The reason I signed up and started training was that the War in Europe had <sup>become</sup> <sup>after several years</sup> <sup>active</sup>, ~~disastrous~~ <sup>disastrous</sup> and ~~threatening~~ <sup>threatening</sup>, that the U.S. passed a draft law to strengthen its armed forces in case it got directly involved. I could have been drafted and put in the infantry but chose not to wait and see ~~and~~ <sup>but to</sup> <sup>sign</sup> <sup>up</sup> <sup>for</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>flight</sup> <sup>training</sup> <sup>program</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Army</sup> <sup>Air</sup> <sup>Force</sup>. ~~When~~ <sup>the</sup> <sup>recruiting</sup> <sup>office</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>Boston</sup> <sup>seemed</sup> <sup>totally</sup> <sup>indifferent</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>inquiry</sup>, I recalled that the Navy also was involved in flying and <sup>immediately</sup> <sup>headed</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>its</sup> <sup>recruiting</sup> <sup>office</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>The</sup> <sup>North</sup> <sup>Station</sup>, where I <sup>was</sup> <sup>an</sup> <sup>immediate</sup> <sup>very</sup> <sup>warm</sup> <sup>welcome</sup> <sup>due</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>signing</sup> <sup>up</sup> <sup>before</sup> <sup>I</sup> <sup>knew</sup> <sup>it</sup>. <sup>so</sup> <sup>called</sup> <sup>elimination</sup> <sup>My</sup> <sup>flight</sup> <sup>training</sup> ~~took~~ <sup>place</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Naval</sup> <sup>Air</sup> <sup>Station</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>Essex</sup> <sup>Mass.</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>related</sup> <sup>ground</sup> <sup>Squadron</sup>. <sup>Training</sup> <sup>took</sup> <sup>place</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Naval</sup> <sup>Air</sup> <sup>Station</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>outlying</sup> <sup>airfields</sup>. <sup>The</sup> <sup>course</sup> <sup>lasted</sup> <sup>from</sup> <sup>early</sup> <sup>October</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>early</sup> <sup>December</sup>. <sup>The</sup> <sup>main</sup> <sup>accomplishment</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>reach</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>solo</sup> <sup>stage</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>have</sup> <sup>ten</sup> <sup>hours</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>soloing</sup>. <sup>But</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>our</sup> <sup>case</sup> <sup>we</sup> <sup>were</sup> <sup>actually</sup> <sup>given</sup> <sup>some</sup> <sup>"advanced"</sup> <sup>instruction</sup>. <sup>Our</sup> <sup>planes</sup> <sup>were</sup> <sup>small</sup>, <sup>yellow</sup>, <sup>two</sup> <sup>seat</sup> <sup>bi</sup> <sup>planes</sup> <sup>with</sup> <sup>radial</sup> <sup>engines</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>about</sup> <sup>725</sup> <sup>horse</sup> <sup>power</sup>. <sup>Officially</sup> <sup>they</sup> <sup>were</sup> <sup>N3N's</sup> <sup>(Trainer</sup> <sup>number</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>built</sup> <sup>by</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Naval</sup> <sup>Aircraft</sup> <sup>Factory</sup>) <sup>and</sup> <sup>nick</sup> <sup>named</sup> <sup>"yellow</sup> <sup>perils"</sup>, <sup>From</sup> <sup>"Dive</sup> <sup>Bombers</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>Other</sup> <sup>Birds"</sup> <sup>p.14.</sup> <sup>"Between</sup> <sup>dual</sup> <sup>flight</sup> <sup>we</sup> <sup>solved</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>were</sup> <sup>allowed</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>considerable</sup> <sup>area</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>sky</sup> <sup>over</sup> <sup>Boston</sup> <sup>Harbor</sup>, <sup>from</sup> <sup>Deer</sup> <sup>Is</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>Nantuxet</sup>. <sup>The</sup> <sup>extremely</sup> <sup>irregular</sup> <sup>shore</sup> <sup>line</sup> <sup>together</sup> <sup>with</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>scattering</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>islands</sup> <sup>made</sup> <sup>these</sup> <sup>flights</sup> <sup>almost</sup> <sup>scenic</sup> <sup>tours</sup>. <sup>Making</sup> <sup>simulated</sup> <sup>emergency</sup> <sup>landings</sup> <sup>on</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>various</sup> <sup>islands</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>quite</sup> <sup>exciting</sup>.

~~the choice of making in big seaplanes, for long distance scouting~~

The "choice" of big seaplanes, for long distance scouting, small seaplanes, for catapulting off battleships and cruisers, for scouting, and carrier type planes, for fighting with fighters, torpedo planes and dive bombers. My first choice of big seaplanes was turned down. Having seen a movie on dive bombing I felt that the prospect of doing that myself seem too formidable, which left small seaplanes. The training ~~was~~ was interesting and enjoyable. It ended with a catapult shot off a wharf, a short leave and expectation for duty in the Pacific. But no, the authorities decided there <sup>were</sup> too many of us, as battleships and cruisers were becoming obsolete, as were small seaplanes while more planes were needed for the new carriers. So, with more training, as landing on and taking off from a practice carrier in Lake Michigan, in SBD's, we seemed ready to head for the Pacific again, until they needed us as instructors. This was using SBD's and went on for months, all in Florida.

Eventually I joined a squadron and spent most of the summer of 194<sup>4</sup> in California training with it and then with the air group it became the dive bombing squadron of: receiving the new SB2C "Hell-diver."

Before ~~had~~ ~~been~~ ~~seen~~ ~~before~~ ~~in~~ ~~opinion~~ ~~of~~ ~~me~~ ~~and~~ ~~others~~ ~~before~~ ~~all~~ ~~this~~ ~~many~~ ~~hours~~ ~~had~~ ~~been~~ ~~seen~~

~~Before all this many hours had been~~

Before all this many hours had been spent flying the predecessor of the Dauntless, the SBC-4 biplane dive bomber, its maneuverability making it great to fly. The SBD, however, was far better <sup>than</sup> dive bomber, and the SB2C-3+2 Helldiver a little better still, in my opinion.

After the pre-emption training that all Navy aviation cadets get I had the choice of ~~courses~~ "rescuing" etc. etc.

My final serious dive bombing etc. etc. and including both practical instrument and several dozen of I remember correctly generally stereotypical around 800 feet, dipping one or two bombs at about 200 feet & immediately pulling out of the dive but not going below 200 feet or so.