

Less dull,
in fact more
cheerful.
Fair rates in
Ryan

R.



NAVAL AIR STATION
JACKSONVILLE

May 8-9, 1942

Dear Folks,

I thought still flying, or rather supposed to be (Actually I've got grounded for a few days - since Wednesday, because of a heavy, throaty cold). I'm keeping my fingers crossed about everything. The reason - close to a washout even with Board time. On Monday I got a "down", principally because of overshooting the small field - no, that was Sunday; and on Monday and Tuesday got two "ups", but they were pretty awful rides. The last especially. The chief pilot admitting he was a Santa Claus to give me an "up", and he knew my predicament. You can imagine how nervous I was, and that ~~did~~ not help things a bit. If I hadn't been quite so much up against it, I might have done better. The main thing is that the ordeal is over. On Wednesday came the first ride, dual then solo, in Ryan how

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wing monoplane. They naturally are quite a bit different, gadgets working differently and the shape handling differently. They are a little smaller than S termans and the nearly identical N3N₂ of Squantum and must be powerful, hence poorer climbers, but they are a triple speeder on the level, 80-85 knots instead of 75-80 cruising speed. They are primarily for primary formation flying, having excellent visibility. The student flies from the front cockpit instead of the rear, as in "yellow pencils", either "dualing" or soloing. My instructor, same one, succeeded in making me wonder if I could fly the plane at all, but on soloing later in the afternoon I found it wasn't difficult and ^{was} also fun. The first real check and the formation stuff may be difficult. Next week should tell the story, and after that I should be through at Lee and flying much bigger and faster North American trainers (SNJ's). The ground school news is both



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good and bad. The bad is that I've flunked exams in the last two navigation courses, so like some of the other guys I'll just have to keep on trying. The good news is that ground school is now officially over and that I've passed the last two radio and blinker code tests, hence haven't had to go to night radio this week and won't have to next. With so much pressure on in both flying and navigation, each worked against the other, the combination proving just too much for the life of me, but now with less pressure I should be able to at least clean up the latter. This week we finished up ship ^{and plane} recognition, except for special work in advanced squadron, and had an interesting week of "practical" gunnery, shooting pistols, machine guns, trap and sheet - to get the idea of aiming ahead of a moving object.

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Perhaps, Pa, I shouldn't have sent that rather haphazard list of possible service jobs in the event of failing here. It seems to have made it look as if I was running around like a chicken with its head chopped off, but actually it was ^{made} very much on the spur of the moment and just to put forward a few ideas. It is questionable that the Navy would just let me go, but if certain rumors are true, such would not have been an impossibility. A large number of washed out cadets especially those with college degrees, are offered A.V.S. commissions or rather more or less apprenticeships for the same, but these are not compulsory as far as I know. In the past some cadets have succeeded in getting into the Army Air Corps, and, speaking of bombardiers, there are no such special jobs in the Navy yet, bombing being done by pilot, co-pilot, navigator or enlisted man - I don't know which. No, I should not have to rejoin the Navy if entering another branch, but it would be possible to get denoted since there are a few ^{former} V-7 ensigns now cadets here. I admit that most



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Typical intelligence work would call for a quicker mind than such as I possess, but there are certain information jobs on ships offered some non-flier, mostly lawyers to be sure. That mightn't be so bad. I did not seriously consider sub in the regular army, and I don't think I'd like V-7. At any rate I don't have to worry right now, but I may as well say what I think and that is I'll be lucky if I do get all the way through. When is hard to say, but probably July or August, when one should get at least 15 days leave. I'm a little afraid I'm going to get cruise or battleship catapult sea-planes, which don't particularly appeal to me. It would mean a more typical navy life, more routine, seasickness, etc., but it's the navigation that would frighten me most.

New about the "growing" Richard
entata is most interesting. Wish I
were there to lend a hand. I'm not
sure farming isn't more up my alley
than flying.

Maybe I better write to Olive, but of
course entirely out of the blue - no,
not quite. I did promise her a letter
last time I saw her. Her post sound
deadful.

I've been rather hot here, but
for some reason our magnolias
aren't in bloom yet. I mean to find
out what kind they are. The out-
standing water weed, water chestnut or
water hyacinth, is, however, in its full
purple bloom - acres of it covering
calm spots along the river. Yesterday
came ~~in~~ the first real rain in weeks,
and to-day is actually cool, not
much over 60° F. as yet, though by
noon it should be pleasant.

No flying at all tomorrow so
maybe by Monday I'll be all O.K.

Love to all
Toots

P.S. It is apt to be cool above 3000' or so.