

of some interest
in spots, with more
or formation flying
an R. and interesting
in not including common
places among my four
choices in order. R.



NAVAL AIR STATION
JACKSONVILLE

May 19, 1942

Dear Folks,

It's been nice to get news about the Richards Estate in wartime - new plantings, gardens, etc. The paper birch shouldn't have any trouble, but I wonder about the beech, a "tolerant" species in nature seldom growing up except in fairly dense shade - just the opposite of the birch.

The story about the fox-loving "rebel" soldier was a delight as was the description of the whole party.

I'm so glad Kemp and Whit dropped in and how delightfully unconventional to arrive at 7:30 and with two strangers! Ackerman was a graduate assistant when I was majoring in geography and was always pleasant if rather reserved. The other two are unique though, aren't they? I should have been sorry if I hadn't got the chance to drop in on them last Fall.

Things here are progressing after a fashion but there's still a somber note in the air -

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consistent failure. Three times now, to pass
the final navigation course. Next Sunday
I shall try again and then repeat the course
if that doesn't work. The last couple of
weeks it hasn't been given so I've just
taken a exam, each harder than the last
and that much further away from when
I took the course. The same trouble
continues - slowness and difficulty with
one part, which makes the whole.

I'm now through ^{with} Ryan, nice little
planes, and hence finished with primary
formations and all primary training.
which brings one to an intermediate
squadron with much bigger planes,
around four times as powerful as Ryan,
at the main station here. First ride
should come tomorrow after an
oxygen chamber test, which might have
some influence on my future duty. I
put down P.B. (VPB) as first choice, catapult
seaplane (VO-VCS) as second, instructor as third,
omitting carrier work, the fourth alternative,
but I don't care very much what I get.
They're all good, and each has its
advantages and disadvantages.
Formation in Ryan was quite fun.



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There were three of us who practiced a few days together, first in V formation then in line (the second plane a little above and behind the first, etc. - echelon). During the check the check pilot rode with one of the other men, ~~an~~ enlisted man instead of the usual sandbag riding in my plane and in the remaining one - for flight pay - our first real passenger. The check pilot said we weren't bad, but that I was a little erratic. When not leading (we changed leads), one has to vary throttle and ^{also} has to shift constantly to keep in position, which is of course hardest in a climbing or gliding turn. On a bumpy day it's tricky.

May 20

Went up to 16,500' in Or chanter without O₂ and to 35,000' with - no ill effects. No hop in SN-J yet.

No ill "affair" definitely over. May seems to be my best month for birds!