

Robert L. Stone to Jacob Stone
Childress, Texas, 14 August 1943.
Typed letter, 2 pages.

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Aug 14

ARMY AIR FORCES
BOMBARDIER SCHOOL
CHILDRESS, TEXAS

Saturday Nite.

Dear Dad —

I can't tell you how swell it was to talk to you last night. I've wanted to call for quite some time but getting a call through is a real orgy — well worth it though, when the call finally got through. This past week was a very tiring but interesting one. Everyday we reported to the flight line at 12:00 and didn't get through until 5:30. There's an operations board where our missions are posted. Every day I flew at least one bombing mission. All week we flew dry runs until yesterday when I dropped my first bomb — quite exciting! From now on we'll be dropping several every day until we're through. The pilot and bombardier instructor assigned to me are just swell. Two great guys: After awhile we'll fly solo mission with only the pilot and no instructor along.

On each mission two student bombardiers go along. While one bombs, the other takes pictures of the impact. There's a camera hatch in the rear of the ship and you stick the movie camera out of it when you hear "bombs away" over the interphones, and start grinding. We take pictures to give statistics an accurate record of the impact.

Since we've started bombing I've become comfortable for the first time since I've been in this God-forsaken State. On the ground the temperature is anywhere from 105° – 115° while up at 12,000 feet we're actually cold when the mercury drops down to 60°. Believe it or not we take a sweater along cause it's so cold up there. The heat has been unbearable out here and they say it's the hottest spell they've had here in years — just our luck!!

Before I forget, I wonder if you'd do me a big favor, Dad? I'd really appreciate it if you could get me a thermos bottle to take along when we fly. 'Twould be swell if you could arrange it. Also, I'm in dire need of a good shaving brush and the P.K. hasn't much to offer. If you could get me one I'd really appreciate it, Dad.

The grind out here continues unrelentingly day after day. We lost two more kids out of our class cause they just couldn't take it, so they quit. We've lost an amazing number because of air sickness. Riding in the rear of an AT-11 is no joyride on a rough afternoon. It's not like any other plane and even fellows who've had a lot of time at pilot training just can't take it. Our instructors and pilots say they'd be sick too if they had to ride in the back. On this score I've been darn lucky in not being affected even on the roughest days we've had.

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That certainly is swell news about Ken. I certainly think he's a lucky guy and can't envy him enough. Being stuck out here in Texas without a chance of getting home doesn't make for too bright a future. I really think he has a swell set-up and his getting engaged just makes it perfect. Tomorrow our class has to take the "64" which is the long complete physical you get if you are a member of an aircrew. It's the one we took about six months ago down at Nashville when we were classified.

Can't think of any other news to report from Shangri-La. We don't do a darn thing here but go to ground school and fly. I've been to town (which is nothing) only once in seven weeks. It just isn't worth it. This is really an indescribably miserable place. In fact, we don't understand why we're not getting overseas pay. After this, combat ought to be easy. Every morning for P.T. they run us around the track 8 times making a little over a mile. Then some days we get the obstacle course which is a looloo. They have us doing things I never thought possible before. We do 'em though! Again, Dad, it was swell to talk to you and we'll have to do it again some time before long. It's so darn lonely here that it's good to hear from home.

My love to all —

Bobby

P.S. I'm writing Ken and Bunny a joint letter that I'd appreciate you're getting to Bunny cause I don't know her address. Have her be sure to save it for Ken until he's in again.

A/C R. L. Stone 12120188

Class 43-15

Squadron 7 Flight D

Childress, Texas

Notes:

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