

**Robert L. Stone to Jacob Stone, Beatrice Stone, Don Stone, Jim Stone, Ken Marks, and
Barry Marks**

Childress, Texas, 12 September 1943.

Typed letter, 2 pages.

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Sept 12

Sunday.

Dear Dad, Bee, Don, Jim, Ken, and Barry —

Here another two weeks have elapsed and believe it or not I'm still plugging along. It's been a particularly tough period since we've been getting up at 4:20 in the wee hours of the morning and we're in the air by 6:00 when it's still pitch black. We fly until noon when we go to lunch. In the afternoon we go to ground school and have P.T. Then by 6:00 we're all through for the day since we don't have any more night classes.

Our class hasn't done too well in the last two weeks and we've lost quite a few more. Right now our class is about 70 — when we started with 105 just twelve weeks ago. I've had several close calls but have been lucky enough to have just squeaked by. It's just a little over six weeks to go and we'll graduate. You'll really have to keep 'em crossed that I can stick it out and be here when the wings are passed out. I've never worked or wished so hard for anything like this before and I only hope and pray that enough breaks are with me to get by. I'm not kidding when I say that we live day to day in fear that we may throw a wild bomb or mess up a navigation mission and be on our ear. You've just got to be on the ball all the time. With the constant mental strain on us it's tough not to bungle occasionally. Here, however, you just can't afford to.

Before I forget, Dad, thanks loads for the shaving brush, which was just what I wanted. I hate to bother you with something like that but you can't get anything at all out here. At least not such a nice soft brush as that one.

Thanks all of you for your various letters. I'm afraid I owe everyone mail but this joint letter will have to go the rounds, as much as I'd like to write you all separately.

I was certainly jealous when I heard that you'd been home, Don. I'd give anything you can name to get home, even for just a day. I guess I'm silly even to think about it, so I'll just say you're a lucky guy, Done, and it's swell you got such a break.

Last week we started in on our combat bombing in which we bomb battleships, docks, truck convoys, and oil refineries that are painted on the ground. This isn't score bombing and it's either a hit or a miss. We throw 60 combat bombs and must have a certain percentage of hits if we are to graduate. In combat bombing we do evasive action and the bombardier flies the ship by means of automatic flight control which is operated through the bomb sight.

Bee, you asked about our navigation. Well, when we're bombing, the pilot just flies straight out to the targets since they're only 50 or 60 miles out. We do, however, fly one long straight-navigation mission a week. In a few weeks we may fly combination missions and navigate out to midlands targets and bomb them and then navigate back.

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A week from tomorrow our squadron is going out on maneuvers which last for about five days. It's meant to be quite an experience since you live and fly under combat conditions. Live in tents, do K.P., load, fuse, and prepare our own bombs. It's really meant to be tough but it's an unbeatable experience since it is just what we'll be up against in combat. I'll write you all about it when I know more myself.

Have very little to write in the way of interesting news since our life is so routine with flying and ground school day after day. For one more week we'll get up at 4:20 and then we start night bombing and sleep most of the morning since we're bombing most of the night. Still don't do anything over the weekends since the facilities around here are non-existent. We see an occasional movie on the post and spend a lot of time playing cards. It's not a very varied or enviable life, but there just isn't anything else to do.

I won't drag this already too long letter out anymore. Please be sure that this does the rounds 'cause I just can't write you all. I think of you and miss you all —

Lots of love —

Bobby.

A/C Stone, R.L. 12120188

Class 43-15

Squadron 7 Flight D

Childress, Texas

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Notes:

Typed copy of GLC09620.044.01.