

Robert L. Stone to Jacob Stone and Beatrice Stone

Mariana Islands, 9 February 1945.

Autograph letter signed, 5 pages .

[draft]

In Flight

Feb. 9th, 1945

Dear Dad & Bee—

This morning brought to a close a very pleasant and relaxing rest leave on Oahu and Kauai. It seems like only yesterday we were on our way up, and here we are heading back to combat again. Luckily we don't have to fly a ship back but are traveling as passengers on an ATC ship.

I hardly know where to begin, what with all that's happened since I last wrote. We never expected to be up on rest leave so soon, but one night we landed from a mission and were told to be ready to leave the next morning. Needless to say, we wasted no time in packing and making ready to go. Actually our rest came at a very opportune moment because our next to last mission was a real rough one and all of us were pretty badly scared. We were all too jumpy to fly for awhile so a rest leave was quite welcome. Incidentally, we now have twenty-two missions to our credit which leaves us eighteen to go. It's been a long nervewracking pull, and we've still got alot in front of us. At least we've gotten over the half way mark, none the worse for it (considering everything).

Upon checking in on Oahu, we went to one of the rest camps for combat crews out at Waikiki. For the first few days I had a [2] number of things to do in Honolulu. There are always a bunch of little things you find you need "down under" and of course there's no place to buy them. Arranged for a couple of phone calls which always involve red tape; censorship, and lots of time. I can't tell you how good it was to talk to you and hear your voices again. Trans-pacific calls are always a real thrill for me—a treat that I'd like to enjoy more often. 'Twas swell talking to Bunny.

I went in and had a swell talk with Mr. Kellett, Dad. He's an awfully attractive gent and I was glad to have met him. The day I went in he invited me to his club for lunch, and I met all of his friends. They have a gang that eat together every day similar to your crowd at the Luceon Club. It was [*strikeout*] very pleasant meeting Mr. Kellett because he's an A-1 fellow.

When we arrived at the rest camp, most of us turned in our names to go and stay on a ranch if an invitation came through. They make all arrangements for you to go over to the other islands and visit with different families. Bill and I went over to some people on Kauai. Their name was Hansen, and they ran a large sugar plantation. Never have I been treated so royally or enjoyed myself more. They were the nicest people you'd ever want to meet, and they opened their home to us as if we [3] had been life-long friends. They had nothing planned for us but wanted us to do whatever our fancy desired. The food was really a treat—we had all the fresh meat, vegetables, milk, butter, and eggs we could eat. There's no rationing on the islands and what with their farm on the plantation we absolutely ate like kings. During my stay, I put on eight pounds. A couple of days we went to the beach, drove all around the island, went around the plantation with Mr.

Hansen, and in general took it easy. Every morning we slept as late as we wanted (they insisted we did) and then had breakfast. During the day we did just whatever we wanted and Mr. & Mrs. Hansen were always agreeable to anything. One night we all went up to their mountain home (something like Alderbrook) and cooked supper. A couple of meals we were all invited to friends of theirs. One day we went to a real Hawaiian feast where they ate raw fish and various other strange foods.

I can't adequately describe the Hansens and expect to do them justice. He was about forty and was born on Kauai. Had gone to college in the states and came back to Kauai to run the plantation. (The Hansens and all their friends are quite well to-do financially.) He was an all-around guy with a swell sense of humor. Mrs. Hansen is also around forty but looks nearer thirty. She's a very attractive gal [4] with all kinds of pep—really a swell person. Together they made ideal hosts and did everything possible to make our stay a pleasant one, and believe me they succeeded! We couldn't have had a better or more restful time. Nothing was too much for them to do for us. We are like kings and drank nothing but the best scotch—Canadian Club if you please! All in all, it was a real treat to visit the Hansens and happily enough they were very fond of us. In fact, they insist that we come back when we finish up our missions. We'll certainly do it, if we possibly can.

I was certainly glad to hear that you got away to Virginia for a few days rest and relaxation. It must have been fun to have a little vacation.

In answer to a couple of questions in your letters, before I came on rest leave. My wisdom tooth is alright and it hasn't bothered me for quite awhile. You asked what happens if a man on a crew is sick for a mission or so. Well, anyone from a crew [*insert: not*] flying on that mission can take his place as well as some extras who are around. The boys are anxious to go because they get in another mission that way.

It seems that I've been rambling on altogether too long so I'm going to put an end to it now. I did have alot to write as I've [5] been putting it off regularly for the last couple of weeks. I hope you can make out my scrawl which is quite messy, since we occasionally hit rough air. This letter ought to make fairly good time because I'm going to mail it at the first stop instead of taking it all the way "down under."

My very best to everybody, and I'll try to write again in a few days, when I have a little time.

All love—

Bobby

P.S. I really dread the thought of returning to eat C-rations and live like a primitive man [*inserted: again.*] The good food and a few conveniences of civilization are really a treat to come back to. Imagine shaving with hot water!! Rest leaves are a mighty fine institution!!!