

Robert L. Stone to Jacob Stone and Beatrice Stone

Mariana Islands, 17 March 1945.

Autograph letter signed, 4 pages.

[draft]

The
Marianas
March 17th, 1945

Dear Dad & Bee—

Here's your Pacific Ocean reporter again with very little in the way of new developments from this theater.

All of your various letters have been coming through regularly and are appreciated, as always. This morning a box of food arrived and as you know, it was most welcome. A tasty snack always hits the spot between our otherwise drab meals. Many thanks for your thoughtfulness in remembering my love for good eats.

We finally broke into the home stretch and now have thirty-one missions under our belt. It may not seem like much to fly nine more, but each raid is twelve hours which is a long, hard pull. The last few raids are always the toughest (that is mentally) because every little thing is magnified way out of proportion. [2] The tension on a crew plays hell with you until you've finally flown your 40th. Once you have most of your missions completed, you're constantly thinking about flying the last few. Before a man has completed his tour of combat duty, he's mentally been through the tortures of the damned.

I was certainly surprised when you sent me that press release, Dad. I had no idea it would ever be printed. While on rest leave our crew was interviewed, but we thought nothing would ever come of it.

You've asked numerous times if I'd heard from or about Barry. As yet I've had no word from him, but I know it's because he's too busy to write. You must have faith that he's O.K. and that no news is good news. Before too long the campaign ought to be over, and you can expect to hear from him but until then you'll just have to wait and keep your fingers [*inserted:* crossed.] [3] As soon as I have any word of him or his outfit, I'll of course let you know, providing it is within censorship regulations. I know that a war of waiting and hoping must be hell on you with five sons all scattered around the globe, but so far God has been kind and you've handled yourselves beautifully. We've all been through alot, but I guess it's been no tougher than for you who are at home. I've been through a number of close calls when at the time there seemed to be no chance, but somehow everything worked out for the best. It doesn't take long in combat for a man to become a real believer in God. Although it's been an unpleasant lesson, I've learned after several personal experiences that you should never give up

hope no matter how black things are at the time. Often that's hard to do but it helps alot if you can force [3] yourself to look for the best. 'Nuff said or I'll be rambling for pages!

Once again the rainy season has started out here and we have from eight to ten downpours a day. Naturally we have to wallow through seas of mud wherever we walk.

That's about all for now so I'll say adieu until the next time I have to write.

Love to you all—

Bobby