

September 28, 1944.

A/T Robert L. Bock, 17199786,
Section 1, Perrin Field,
Sherman, Texas.

Dear Bob:

Henry Shenk came into my office with your letter yesterday which was the first time that I had learned of the passing of your father. I have been very busy with war work and with coaching schools at Boone, Iowa, and Topeka, Kansas, in the late summer, and we have had our daughter Jane living with us since her husband, a Navy flier, received orders that the wives of the men were to be sent home. She is expecting a baby in a very short while. Then we had our grandson from Palo Alto with us quite some time, and now we have Mary, our oldest daughter with us, and she will be here for some time yet.

Bobby Allen graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School last Saturday morning, and he and his wife, Jean, drove in Monday night. We have had quite a busy household all summer, and this together with my war activities and other mine-run duties have kept me on the go.

Henry did not tell me of his first letter when you advised him of the death of your father.

I was very certain, however, that when you left Lawrence you would not get to see your Dad again alive. The symptoms that you described to me of his condition assured me that it would have been a miracle that he survived. Bob, these are the things that make us older in years and wisdom. They come to all of us, but none of us are ever ready. When they do come we must shape our philosophy according to the situation. We live for the living, and while we have reverence for the passing, yet if we dwelt too much on the past we would have the philosophy of the ancient Chinese.

Your mother and your sister are the ones that you must comfort and cheer. Naturally you will have to be brave, as men's sons before have been. You are in the armed service and naturally there is a strength about that calling that people unconsciously revere. While they desire to have you home, yet they admire the thing that you are doing because although war is terrible, yet through the thousands of years men have gone to war to defend their loved ones. And that is the idea of America - that you are in this war to see the things that Hitler and Hirohito advocate do not come to pass. We may as soldiers and sailors wisecrack about the idealism of this or that, but someone has said that you never find an infidel in the American forces in the South Pacific.