My dear Else,

Raymond

William Foster
with Bob Cole
My dear Ellee,

[Image of William Foster with Bob Cole]

[Signature]

William Foster
with Bob Cole
Cover Picture

The picture on the cover was taken in the Rohner house on Latta Road in Greece, NY. No date has been established as to when it was taken. The fact Else passed it on indicates it was a special occasion to her.

Dedication

This is an account of a couple separated for an extended period of time by the tumult of a war. It is dedicated to all those who were engaged in that war and were separated from their loved ones and their chosen way of life.

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William Foster & Bob Cole
Preface

The past fifty years have seen many accounts of the sacrifices made by those who were part of World War II. Those stories define the characteristics of the men and women who have become known as “The Greatest Generation”. This tale recounts the military life of Raymond L. Rohner. It is not a tale of battle but rather an account of a love story – the love of a soldier for the wife from whom he was separated. That love and Ray’s character are revealed in the letters he sent to his “My Dear Else”. It gives a personal view to the challenge of all who were forced to leave loved ones to be part of a war.

We of the current age would do well to consider those challenges and how they were faced by one member of “The Greatest Generation”.

It is not practical to include all of Ray’s letters. Those included represent a view of Ray and his situation during his time in the Army. In most cases the actual letter is included but in some cases the contents are transcribed for clarity or to meet size limitations. All the original letters are in possession of the Local History Division of the Rochester Public Library.
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Chapter 1

Pre War

Our story was created by:

**Raymond Lincoln Rohner**  
Born: February 12, 1912   Bronx, NY

His parents were:

Emil Ulrich Rohner   Wilhelmina Augusta Goller  
4/2/1880 Trogen, Switzerland   8/2/1883 Jersey City, NJ  
Arrived in USA 8/29/1889  
Died: 8/3/1915 New York City   Died: 8/26/1953

Our story recounts the letters Raymond wrote to his wife:

**Else Margarethe Schmidt**  
Born: April 4, 1912   Bronx, NY

Her parents were:

Friedrich Wilhelm Schmidt   Anna Rosina Babette Schad  
5/22/1875   12/28/1879  
Neukloster, Hanover, Germany   Kitzingen, Bavaria, Germany  
Died: 6/1/1938 Bronx, NY   Died: 12/22/1959 Queens, NY

There is no record of how or where Raymond and Else met. We know they were both living in the Long Island suburbs of New York City. It is possible they both worked for Wallerstein Laboratories on Madison Ave. in Manhattan. The first letter found from Ray to Else appears to have been written on Sunday, 8/30/1936. It apparently was written from Indian Lake Lodge at Ragan’s Farm in Millerton, NY. The postcard below shows a picture of the camp.
Darling Ely,

This is hardly a propitious spot to write you a quiet letter from. The chef is morbidly inclined and insist on singing every now. He's rendering bacon and the mesh of the old minuets at the same time.

The joint is near by two clear jowells. They seem to have gone to school with Disraeli; they're both so so diplomatic. One of them came over at breakfast this morning and with a solicitous smile asked us if we minded sharing our eggs with the flies. We compromised and threw the insects the bacon. I'm glad I brought some arsenic along. We got along marvelously already.

But then I don't suppose I could get along with anybody but you right now. It still seems so strange to be leaving you. The conception that you were some sort of ame had been brewing in my mind since I first met you. And you must have known. No two people could possibly devote themselves so whole-heartedly to
sarcastic remark as we did without some feeling of cohesiveness whether we recognized it or not. Enuff of this tho, you'll probably read this after breakfast and hardly be in the mood for it.

This place is like the you. I don't think there's an annual meeting there's even a bunch of "you and loves" (so are they one and the same thing? I figs Theawning is down stairs and somehow I back it up.

We're quite a time getting used to town so if you get here or move or once which say practically the same thing, that I love you, just one away until the tomorrow and read it then.

Did I remember to tell you I adore you and that my amorous terms are limited and that I'm not even happy anymore since you've the 2 and find here.

Love Raymond
Ray’s letter of 9/21/1936 gives a view of his interest in poetry and tells us he is attending school, probably City College of New York otherwise known as CCNY.

Dear [Name],

Between the crows dream and calls
When the lorry is beginning to gleam,
Comes a poem in filling the gullet
Which is known as Tony in minutes
with you!

To meter, no rhyme, no swing, no run, no more since
you went away.

Adopting your habit of lunch hour scribbling
Doesn’t do my digestion as list of the principal
good. But this if do have to invite to go or
don’t or rather don’t I have to or are you going
to invite some if you aint send this back.

Swansea dancing last night. Some mob came
the music no beer brand new penetration.
Winger’s brother Al was down so I know you
got up safely. It still seems much better
that you went up that way. Even if it did
done to go see Bill’s Dormitory Saturday
night to encourage my libido, friendly
it is how good received dreamer of the stodgy
variety, she cancelled her weekend and came over
both nights. Yes freedom.

By now, if you are at all as adept at printing
yourself as I think you are, you should have
the childish devotion of that lone deaf and dumb
mate. You are sooo beautiful and then you'd
do have too much in common. With them
that is. And you complainants are always
"mis-written and miseducated" on t'otherays.

With you gone and no school yet
what am I going to do. I keep dreaming
every night and most of the day! At
any rate will you write soon

Love
Ray

Over the next years Raymond wrote to Else anytime they were apart. The following letter from 11/12/1936 is fairly typical of his thoughts about Else and paints a picture of his personality.
Dear Flee,

It seemed so odd not seeing you at the end of the weeks grind, I felt I really ought to do something about it. This is it. For others not seeing three men in a horse is beyond me perhaps the reason for my equetown leanings except in women. Do you like canaries? This place is awfully warm first because of that allorno kind of game mother and roll
dinitely not worrying you if you grow rubber
tires and keep canaries. Sorry I can't imagine any other reasons for not worrying you. Except that I'm stupidly in love with you which is distinctly not flawedillious at all. It's strange writing I love you. It seems so tame, after having thought of you for so many centuries, so to hardly not anything I feel about you. Well go paragraph it yourself then can't say want!
Amid your words which to my chronologically
constituted mind remain met in this thesis (Or hell of
a note in writing letter) - I've only known but one or
two. That unhappy start静脉 went below & surface.

This fact bothers me not. It makes little difference how
I feel what state this is nor where it leads. A life
such as mine has been puts the mind in a casket
when it becomes too tumultuous, and has physically till
equilibrium has been reestablished again. What bothers
the very manner of my home is that it
should be the cause of bothering you at all, For
myself some sort of hellfire seems but the
natural penalty for loving you. It would seem
little enough! I've been happy actually happy since
I've known you. And if I don't seem too glow as Joseph
does with a new found dream that's a reality it's
because the time period of years is hard to tear
off or perhaps I'm afraid it is a dream? Of course
it isn't. Kissing you has been a repetitive
destiny which isn't is the realm of the
subconscious!
Probably you are right about something sounding silly (even you forgot it?). But mean to sort of dump that letter of yours in out of the affing the last two times. The more you put it away comes. This stick sticks to the paper too well and the ideas won't come out of the envelope. The letter writing has gotten to have all the stigmas of a double life. But please please don't dilly and waste. It gives me a sense of guilt to look so closely into anyone as fine as you are and not be able to do something or undo something. As it was the hunt had begun when I know the result. What the hell is the injustice of a physics report if it makes you write a letter such as that. Believe me this blind, somehow you never manage to count these things to do which are so obviously wrong...so wrong. I never appreciate their absence when I do them.

Please don't exaggerate think me too going anywhere with you. I seem to have no choice but to make you that the place the weather or the company makes little difference believe me even to have the trappings. I see love you and anything without you has hurt nobody me there.
School work has become a chore since you became you and every prof. a whisperer. Someway I hope will come to realize, both of us, that it’s a time consuming evil that must go on. Remember the importunate impotence that bothers both of us! What shall we do with it?

This letter has no beginning nor end just as so many fine winter you and never mailed. I will mail this too. I hope in some sort of clumsy way I’ve been trying to tell you that it won’t happen again, that Sunday night torture; that I’m glad you’re more than just one simple word (any shit has a body) but mostly I love you with a completeness that surpasses anything the ear known before or can hope to ear feel again.

Ray

For the next several years the letters to Else continued to express his love for her. Careful reading shows Ray was holding down a full-time job and attending school in the evening. Later letters will reveal he was conducting
an orchestra several nights as well. The following letter describes Ray's life at home with his mother.

Dear Uncle,

I suppose you believe me implicitly at least to think so. Perhaps we should listen to that supermind telepathy program that follows the Ford show on Sunday nights!

I got up on the writing box in my room last night just before my mother called me. Some show she asked and paused all over. What if figured mother one of those winter colds? Will mail this grunts. The thermometer where was the thermometer dug up one of my own no fear take off shirt put schnapp's together hot water brand lemon call sabol Bals.

Do this do that Time 11:30 half naked him put poor Else no letter. So at least I meant to write. Torn it late but mother feels better and received your letter. I finished the exam and got a 90 and I want to tell you just like I allways seem to like to crow too you about it. When this happy I like to tell you and when I'm mad (3)
I always think it's better to be angry alone where I can answer all my own questions and perhaps swear without inflicting my uncomplimentary mood on you.

I liked that note. It was something you said that wasn't easy to imagine either physically or mentally. I've come to know that admissions don't come easily from you to me which probably is at least fifty percent at least, my fault of approach of attitude.

Some of the ideas you wrote of I never knew about and made me hesitate every time I had an idea and to present it backhanded as it were and not put it so clearly so it might have a great push in the misunderstanding direction.

Don't touch on the fireworks we sat on so uncomfortably? You know how I learned or was taught not to like fires? But I don't believe I could be made to like them now by large continuous doses. But it might be induced to try red-collared sliced potatoes and their red parsnips and their beets in plums. Perhaps I might learn even to like the smell of roasting beets or at least not too horribly mug over and bitch at the
thought of them. But lets and lets and lets I'm sure would kill me or the administrator. Not to draw this analogy to murder or suicide could we substitute religious flavor for lets? a poor substitution or rather companion but they're just words, the idea does not hang from them! It's something I thought we were on a way to doing until Sunday night. Can't ask you to stretch the potato - parsnip - beet - potatoes stage a little longer?

I hope someday everything will be better fireworks your son - now - my bed - your feet and all. Till then and before then I suppose comes exams and sleep - eyes open for just a second but I spent a dime already alright alright I call you tomorrow night Bye sugar by sweet bye beautiful Lover you? Stupid of course honest
The romance of Ray and Else was fulfilled when they were married on July 3, 1938. That did not bring an end to cards describing their love. On September 11, 1938 Ray sent Else the following “Anniversary Card”.

He added the following to the card.

To this point we have focused on Ray’s letters. On their third anniversary, July 3, 1941 Else sent a card to Raymond that expressed her feelings. It appears on the next page.
I love you when you're hungry And I have to cook your dinner
And when you flick your ashes On my nice clean floor, you sinner.

I love you when I have to sew The buttons on your coat
And even when you tease me Though it sometimes gets my goat.

And on our anniversary day I might as well admit
That there's one guy who takes my eye And HONEY you are it
With love Ever
Else also provides a report on their celebration of that third anniversary on July 3, 1941 with the following note on a postcard from the restaurant where they ate that night.

![Image of a restaurant interior](image1)

**CASTLEHOLM**

New York's Most Popular
SWEDISH RESTAURANT
344 West 57th Street (In the Paris Vendome)
World's Famous SMÖRGASBORD
SWEDISH CUISINE PAR EXCELLENCE
COCKTAIL LOUNGE SUMMER GARDEN
Dancing Nightly to the Rhythm of our
CASTLEHOLM NORSEMEN
For Parties and Reservations Telephone
Circle 7-0873

**POST CARD**

It rained cats & dogs, but we enjoyed ourselves. The food was heavenly and slightly to the theater. My accent got so thick, if pleasant rep.
She also kept the ticket stubs from their other activity that evening.

Raymond and Else lived in an apartment at 83-21 Vietor Ave., Elmhurst, Long Island, NY. Raymond was continuing to work, attend school, and conduct an orchestra. Later letters indicate Else was also employed.

The arrival of World War II did not immediately affect the subjects of our story. Raymond was in school and a bit above draft age so he was not in the first of those drafted into military service.

During 1942 the draft age was expanded to increase the number of potential draftees. That would have a serious effect on our love story.
Chapter 2
Military Training

As Raymond's thirty-first birthday arrived, the Selective Services had raised the maximum age of draftees and eliminated many of the employment and educational exemptions in efforts to expand the number of men eligible to be drafted. Those who were drafted had no choice as to the branch of military service. Those who chose to enlist had some choice in picking a particular part of the military. Raymond took the enlisting route and with his chemical education was assigned to a special Army training program. He enlisted on 3/6/1943 and went to the Induction Camp at Camp Upton on Long Island. His first postcard to Else was sent 3/12. Another followed shortly thereafter.
By March 18 Raymond had arrived at Camp Pickett in Blackstone, VA, for Basic Training as part of the 6th Medical Training Battalion.

Dear Elise,

Greetings from Blackstone, Virginia. Camp Pickett from your old friend the 5th veteran Pat Raher. How we got here is a long story. Up at 3 A.M. at Upton. Board @10 AM. Off @11:30 AM. Chowed and 1 AM — a 22-hour stretch. Will get reclassified assigned to Infantry. So far it has been a little lousy this move. Places contain a med corps and as well as some others. I have been assigned to the Hospital Corps which will be done 11 MORE. Right now the idea is to get a couple of wooden coat hangers, some scotch tape, black and white thread and needles which I hope you will wrap and send me very soon, you can hang up your uniforms or coats without hangers so don’t keep them in boxes. Hanger bags are hooks which must be up so I look like I’ve been in a washer.

Tough as usual getting set but here a great hanger now which is a little better. He never takes a little letter here than at Upton. The sunshine is better. The damned mud sticks here too.

Hot soldiers medical handbook today a sentry duty 選個 yahoo something to study besides other guys dishes looks

United States Army

T.March 18, 1943
7:25 AM
An excerpt from the following day's letter, 3/19, provided a description of the “grub” at Camp Pickett.
Raymond’s letter ends with the following.

A description of Ray’s daily activities was included in the beginning of his letter of 3/28/1943. His words prove the strain of Basic Training.
My dear dear Schostal. how I wish you were here with me & haven’t been able to write you since that’s I think & you must be looking in vain for something in the letter box. Have just not had time.

Friday & Sat were two tough days. Fri we had veg classes a short time 20 min for supper then much to a bed & got 2nd typhoid shot in right shoulder. blade broke more beds in barracks scrub floor with scrub brushes set up foot lockers & shoes & then to bed at 9:20 finished lights out is 9:30 have a bed check is 11 o’clock which is when you have to be in bed or are counted AWOL Saturday up 5:30 2 regular classes terrific headache from shot or cold I don’t know which borrowed a aspirin. Indoor inspection all dress up stood at attention display foot lockers their come around & inspect you God help the guy who has a hair out of place. Our platoon won the plaque for best for the week which makes us all rather happy.

United States Army

Sunday aft. 12:45 PM.
time. Then back to classes drill fields etc till 5 o'clock at which time Sarg says take 8 men & clean such & such bldgs so I am it by this time I am ready for the classes & just manage to drag myself around. Missed chow on account of this & got cold stuff in barracks at 6:30 Am lived 6:45. Had restless sleep till 1 o'clock this morning then up lit a cigarette which was a mistake I found out quick. My voice is gone today but they tell me it will be back tomorrow. I hope. Had breakfast & came back & washed all my dirty wash which made a tuffull. Yeh they have a laundry here I know, but when does it start? Then answered all the mail I got all week with postcard while my wash dried. Did not wish to write to you before lunch as the last I got from you was postcard. I was hoping for more info on your new
job— you tell me about. Hope you sell the car without trouble. We have to go through the same basic training to toughen us up so we can travel behind the troops the medics serve. Drill calisthenics, defense against small arms, against chem attacks, arm organization and organic, roll packs, tent work, everything you could think of. Tell you do not say more about job. I got the check & a letter from S&O yesterday & will send it to you as soon as I learn how to send a regimental letter out of this god forsaken hole in Va. Some of the boys are going into Blackburn today but I think I will go back to bed & try to get ahead of my cold. You should hear the bothers when the lights go on in the moon, it sounds like a consumption house. The Corps tells me the first 3 weeks all the groups are like that. We have 2-3 guys in heaps now.
with soda I guess. They erect the windows must be wide open when you sleep at + you know what happens to this guy under those cond. Santa: I am a little discouraged today I hope it is just the cold. Wanted to go to church but didn’t have the ambition to change to my OD’s but I did read that piece in the book for today at about the time you did + Hope God heard me! Well no mail from you at 12 o’clock so I guess I just missed you. Go by mailing a sbole late. My head keeps getting bigger so I guess I’ll go back to bed. The boys are bringing back cough mix. from Blockstone to till tonight at 9:30.

Yours lyre
Royce
Wednesday
March 31, 1943

Dear schmepatik,

Hurray! Hurrah! Run up the flag. I have a night to myself oh boy oh boy.

Classes till 2 o'clock today. Then a three mile hour hike. Back at five, stand retreat, eat supper, back, set up full pack on bed again, take shower, clean underwear, eat 10 & ice cream. My friend brought up for me. I went to see a show

Schneider (Arthur churchman) a little fat really pretty blond kid said hello & talked for a minute & found all was well with him then to the day room to write to you.

Well kid I’m beginning to
At this point we will continue this letter in transcribed form to simplify reading.

.... feel better again, thank the lord! Because for a while I began to wonder if I ever would get better. I still sound like a frog when I talk & coughing all night lost me some shuteye & left me behind the 8 ball for the next day. Some of the boys upstairs are falling over with measles etc. But so far I’ve had just the run of the mill cold & spent most of Sunday in bed. Last night I almost had a night off but – The cook told the topkick he wanted 4 big (boy I wish I was a shrimp big guys get all the work) to move & clean 3 giant gasoline stoves. The top kick he tells Sarg Stevenson of our platoon he needs 4 guys to move stoves. So they grab me & 3 others okay 15 min work. When we get to mess hall we also clean & the Sarge calls the cook a son -------- but still it took 1 3/4 hours & night was shot. He says he’ll fix the cook. I get more damn hard work while the rest of the plat rests, shovel coal, move beds, all on my own time & to hear them everything takes 15 minutes. I feel like a king with 2-3 hrs off. Found some Epsom salt, the Sarg did & took a good shot & its done world’s of good for me. Now I eat vegetables & meat hexclusively. If I could find 15 minutes a day at any specified time to have a go it would be nice. Will now takeup your last two letters bit by bit & hope to disillusion you on a couple ideas you have about the army.

Sunday’s March 28

some of the ink has run from the sweat on the hike which came thru my woolen undershrt & thru my fatigues.

Dammit the hell if you dont get some sleep you’ll be sick now cut it out understand!! I mean that just tell people no, now listen I want no excuse! Glad you had the fish chowder. You can’t write here unless you have the time at night & maybe 1 or 2 nights a week this happens. Get to church on time it gives you a chance to get settled. Get that color film took please I want you in color pleasepleaseplease. I received money . You cant buy milk unless you have free time to go to the Post Xchange (PX) & buy it. Fruit we get & I eat oranges all Floridas which are not so hot for eating. I love you too!

March 29’s also wet

Hope you get all that stuff to Alice’s & I am sorry I could not help you more. Just write typewriter or no. Am enclosing induction paper for what its worth at this point. Damned red tape about your B.C. No name tapes. Bought indelible ink & print name & serial number right on the clothes & all Did you know about Rocks The lieut. had a “night of fun” if I had known they wouldn’t count noses I would have enjoyed missing it. Local talent all corn. More of the damned synthetic bug juice they serve with every meal.
No money from Wallenstein Life Insurance policy I paid nothing for it, the firm did. I have received 1 mo check & as soon I can get to the post office before 7:30 P.M. I will sign it & sent it regist. must have free time there again Will be glad to get a package. If you can’t cash check use it as a base to open a new account somewhere in a Savings bank. To tell the truth have just tasted Alice’s cookies don’t tell her but had no appetite for 3-4 days & less time. If you talk too much when you eat you get sick don’t accept invitations or shut up I mean this.

The last page of this letter must be seen as it was written.
A fast locker looks like this & stands just so and that is all. Sugar is in one side when you want it & in the other there is something for the next meeting. All the Country Club will try & get something off to them all for the next meeting. The country here is so nice in the hills when you get a chance to look at it. All big & fine this straight as a die & will grow right good when we get some rain. Now I must quit this too about goodness & a couple of yesterday notes from close. Be good, write or phone once around something. Wont sick please. If job is too much dont stick with it.

You know about me a going to church when we were first married. Well I like to go now & the reason I know is because you are such a fine person to be with. 

I've never met anyone who practiced what they preached on Sunday all week till I knew you & now I've figured out that there really is something to this religion of ours. 

I knew I prayed while I was sick or now I don't think I'll ever be ashamed to do it again it helped a lot & slept after it which is something I hadn't done in quite a few nights. There is so much more conviction & spread by knowing a true Christ than hearing one speak. 

So now I said what's been running around in my head a long time.
The letter of 4/8 described KP Duty.

Dear Else,

This is the end of a long hard day which began at 5:30 this morning. I drew the marvelous job of dipping or sterilizing which consists of taking very dirty utensils into a large bucket strainer—hanging on top of a 20 gallon aluminum pail of boiling water—putting them in there for 1-2 min hard but don't pull away. When you figure 3 dishes per man per shift & do six shifts for 200 men that's some heating, but it's ours for a while now. In between you feel potatoes, potatoes or clear spinach.

The letter of 4/11 described a “Night Problem”.

A night problem is when you go out as the sun sets with full packs & tent surrounded in the woods for 3 hours, run through the bush chasing imaginary enemies unload equipment from truck & then wide awake. Our next one is Monday night 8-10 P.M. this after getting up at 5:45 A.M. & having a full story of classes & marching. Please don't underline that if it gets any warmer.

All of Ray's letters contained such detail of his activities. They also contained paragraphs like those shown below.
4/13/43

Why schotsie if you miss me so much don’t you write more than a card to me? I can write more than a card! Schotsie do you still love me. Do you remember how it feel to be kissed every five minutes or did you forget already. I hope not as there may be a long time before we see again.

4/14/43

Yes schotsie I have never regretted for a second being in love with you. You brought something to me it had been missing. A calm confidence that I needed a peace of mind a quieting of soul. I hope just begun to appreciate I am more able to stand this stuff because I know you are there in thinking & loving me even tho we both know it will be a long time before I see you or is a long time already. Good night my sweet someday we shall have a home together again & I shall sit at night & read with you on the seat with a dog at our feet. Tell the schotsie sleep tight & if you are home come of me & can be with your love Raym.
With that accomplishment Ray was able to consider what might lie in his future as he describes in his letter of 4/24/43.

Dear Tice,

Well well you want some good news. Yeah well well well. Take you little snots up.

My name was called out with 2 others out of the 82 that took the show at morning inspection. We were sent in to get dressed in C.O. as we shaved and shaved until over to the classification office. Expecting an interview with a Major Jeff. When we got there no interview just fell out in triplets.

1. What about our education? Guns popped up naturally.
2. When will it happen? When will you get your orders. Alternative.
3. None can be marked. If you are shipped out of here before basic is finished your papers will follow you and you will appear before a board there. If you will all go to some college or school because you passed the exam. When will this happen nobody knows.
With that positive news Raymond celebrated Easter with the following letter of 4/25/43.
It is not hard to see the joy in Raymond’s words. But in the Army, as in life, joy can be short-lived. The physical requirements of Basic Training returned as he describes in his letter of 5/4/43.
My dear Else,

Well tonight was very tired tonight. For 2 hours we marched out of our tent or door at our normal rapid pace which got us nice a washed up on the lock slightly wet just through a layer of the snow one. 10 min. rest up a atom. Well the next that head off the march he walked but he was 6 ft 3 inches & boy he walked. They had the little squint up front & they couldn't match the stride & started to five well we ran we all ran like a bunch of 300s —. Hole in the development of you ran twice as much to close this hole of the guy in front began to run again — 2 miles of this turn around & run the whole — distance back again. When you figure that a fast walk comes a mile in 20 min. That would make 4 miles in 80 min. Well we did that distance in 45 min. 3 sec. you have no conception of the strain swept fatigue on my. The men wore full pack helmet canteen belt gas mask legging & fatigue. I was so exhausted by the end of the third mile that I could not run any more & so I got a little & didn't come in last but darn near the end of the battalion. 15 min. rest. The march back to barracks 4:30 change to 2D. 5 mi. a leisure & stand silent at which time you nearly fall on your face then started to march your picture but don't show whistles in the evening of the day — Frankforter. So come upstairs & lay down for an hour & then take a shower & lay down against & started to try to
write this.
Again his mood changed with an idea that he describes in letters of 5/7, 5/8 and 5/9/1943.

5/7/43

Now I'll tell you tight. They are starting to give 36 hour passage out of C.S. & this weekend. Since I have your name I don't think I'll be stuck next weekend & P. should get me in the middle of the week or maybe I can get as far.

5/8/43

The 36 hr passage they said give you live are packed Richmond & if you get stuck past this limit you really are in trouble so NY seems out. Then if you come to Rich not get over a 1000 or so hr pass you see a lot of you anyway if I get no place you can still come into camp stop at the service club. Don't you think this is a good idea too?

Will write more tomorrow. Dream about you tonight be good. Write to me or maybe I'll see you next week we very sorry. I hope it goes. I hope we will. Yours forever...

5/9/43

I will send every effort to get a 36 hr pass for Richmond next week and will let me know immediately how you are coming. If by bus the bus will meet you in the bus terminal waiting room. If by train I will meet you in the R.R. waiting room where there are 2 woman on duty most of the night at the W.S.O. booths. The general setup is as follows.

You are to ascertain the following items

1. Method of travel - R.R. or bus.
2. The exact name of the stations that are on W Broad St.
Ray's plans for the weekend with Else were dashed by his duty assignments as shown in the telegram he sent on 5/15/43.

Else's visit to Virginia did occur the following weekend. She traveled by train from New York to Richmond where she and Ray were able to spend time together. These few words from Ray's letter of May 22 summarize their time together.

With the end of Basic Training Raymond was able to get leave to visit Else in New York over the first weekend in June 1943. For the rest of June he was assigned various jobs while waiting for orders to his next assignment. His letters showed his frustration with the situation but always returned to the two times he spent with Else. Those thoughts are summarized in a poem in the letter of 6/17/43.
Finally on June 28 he received his orders for his next assignment.

The following day he wrote reporting on his new location at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. We know that place as Virginia Technological University.
Dear Elie,

One fifteen in the afternoon at V.P.T.

We got here at about 10 o'clock this morning. We got a couple of blankets and caught an hour's sleep and then washed and the meal seemed very good—back now at five until 8:10 when some sort of military formation takes place. We are housed in what seems like a restoration of Washington's lodges at Valley Forge. It's a very college dorm but reminds me of nothing so much as a white washed cell block. I have an upper in an attic bedroom and no showers are given to us temporary men. Tomorrow morning we begin homes and interviews as they tell us so will expect to be busy. No footlockers are provided so we have but one closet for 3 of us in the room.

The next day, 6/30/43 he added the following information about his new assignment.
On July 1 he described the examinations he was taking.

With their fifth anniversary approaching, Raymond sent the following telegram to Else on 7/2/43.

The following excerpts from Ray's letter of 7/4/43 give an image of his thoughts and desires.
So you froze in bed. Too cold. I wasn’t around to put a little heat into you. Remember how I used to warm you up on a cold night. Real done like this. Keep you awake. Eek.

And you used to say no no heat ment yes as I well knew because you kept getting closer to me. Think grandma for the gown I can see you in the thin one now and feel my arms around you as my hands go next you & you lean against me & kiss me. I miss your knees darling I miss the feel of your arms the look in your eyes the touch of your skin & the love of your heart. Grandma probably right I will get as much enjoyment as you out of the nightgown. I can still hear your answer when I ask you what you have on for & you say in a little loving voice take it off! Gee I wish you were here now & smiled the Georgette one. Ad love you to
In his letter the following day, Raymond describes his interview with a Major regarding his future assignment with the Army.

This morning after 3 hour wait I got my interview was accepted in the 9 classification in Chemistry. Just what the mean don't know yet that is what field or what study.

Tomorrow morning at 8 I start my refresher course Math (Calculus) Drawing (Design) English (?) Physics till
12 o'clock this is every day. After is devoted to Phys. ed. & Milit. drill.

A fellow is the same class -9 A.M. who has been here 2 weeks got shipping orders today for Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh.

The major said he didn't know where I'd go - depends on the orders that come in. About July 12 is the beginning of most of the courses here. So now you know why I tell you to keep my gift - it may be going any day now who knows. But its to another school.
With some idea of his future Army career Ray was free to work on a plan for Else to visit him at VPI in Blacksburg, VA. His letters included detailed instructions for Else and the detailed handwritten maps of where she should go so they could meet. He even included the postcard showing Else where to find the meeting place. The date set for the meeting was Saturday, 7/17/43.

All the planning and preparation proved to be unsuccessful as explained in Ray’s letter of 7/16/43. Just for the record he had already called her and sent a telegram to cancel Else’s journey.
To my dear sweet Else,

yes dear it came last night. Pruitt and I went to the movies to see the "Oxbow Incident" and while in the Rubenstein room I told him I was being shipped to Carnegie Tech. Since I had my own bulletin board 2 minutes before I went to the show and since he is continually joking I stayed for the show and immediately after I tore to the bulletin board of Co-E when sure enough it was up. But still not on Co-T board. What to do. The telegraph office was closed. Later in that letter comes a description of what Ray expected in the coming days.
The reference to being paid referred to the common problem of pay records taking several months to catch up with the soldier. It was not uncommon for pay to be delayed several months.

Despite such problems Raymond moved on to the next step in his military training.
Chapter 3

Carnegie Tech - Pittsburgh

Ray's trip from Virginia to Pittsburgh is described in his first letter of 7/18/43 as follows.

My dear Elke,

The train got into Pittsburgh at 8 o'clock this morning after what was a long long trip. We left Bochum at 12:15 yesterday & layed over in Chestersburg till 5:10 - Changed trains at Rooseluck & then rode the evening away till 12:30 AM when we reach Shenandoah junction. I was supposed to pick up the B & O train there at 10:30 but it was late and it was 2:00 before I boarded it. It was then road to Pitt & got off & looked for someone to meet me & I found up in the Salvation Army trailer at the station getting a sandwich & cup coffee free.
His second letter of that day describes his situation at Carnegie Technical Institute.

My Dear Else,

Scribbling this at the U.S.O. as you can very well see. Got an interview today with a "Herald" told him about my chemistry and stressed the food work — so be say well you'll be around here several weeks during which time you will take some courses in Chem. decided when you speak to Dr Warren head of the chem dept. + then you will be assigned perhaps (?) to the gourmenteur corps lab an dehydrated food at Phila or Chicago.

I despensed my aluminum co experience a built up the food angle. This all sounds too good. Maybe if I pray hard it will come true. See Dr Warren at 8:30 tomorrow morning. Hope he doesn't ask too many questions. N.B. I met the president of the Carnegie Inst. while waiting we had a charming chat.
even shook his hands discovered that A

group.

Moved after that my address is
P.F.C.

R.R. ASN 332626048

Co C Pi Kappa House 33023 U.

Communications Tech.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Am off from Sat to Monday 6:00 AM. I could
come home & back for 81
you make the trip for 12.11 round.
you never saw Pittsburgh & some of its stuff.
I think it would be more interesting if you came
here once we would start anyhow. Nice
time last Sat & Monday off. Will back that
day. Will have tons of car. As you
will note from the enclosed booklet which you
should study. The West End Hotel is pretty
close to my section. I would give me two
nights with you. If I could get together
in time after seeing you two nights. A low
timetable of Penn. You take cab to hotel.

I will call you Thurs night at about
8 at 66899 - collect 58 & the
operator say the call go right then.
should have more dope & you should
have made up your mind. Will subsequently
send list of what more I need.

I want you this to the post office so
you get it as near as latest
I will always love you. Raymond
This time Ray's plan to have Else visit him were successful as shown in the following mementoes.
With Else safely back in New York Raymond returned to his laboratory work and seeking information on his future. A portion of his letter of 7/27/43 addresses both subjects.

Yesterday afternoon we had Battle one of the boys told me I had 3 4 5 chem engineers laying up in the Chem lab so I trotted up and incidentally told Dr. Stempel so that I had collected them. He told me he had some plans to ask me. Where did it work how long who were in my chem field and had I taught what did I want to do. I told him I'd like to go back into industry lab. Two of the guys will be returned to the enlisted reserve corps for teaching positions at 50 per munter has it that we will be sent back in labs. Rumor says the Mellon Institute has offered to take all the graduate chemists the ASTP at C Tech.
Ray's positive feeling about his training is contained in a paragraph from his letter of 7/28/43.

His letter of 8/3/43 gives further sense of his dedication to the courses he was taking at Carnegie Tech and why he didn't travel to NY to see Else.
Perhaps you think that since I am so close that I should be home more often. But Else at camps there is little to learn & no necessity for study. Here however this course we have is very demanding as all qualitative work is. The prof has gone for two weeks & we have to work out on our own.

There is no military classes on Sat & I worked for a while & can work in the lab for four hours straight & yet something done in one piece.
Despite his lab work Raymond did work on a visit to see Else as shown in his letter of 8/11/43.

He finished that letter with the following words.

at that enough news for tonight Remember love you want to see you so cross everything too the house has one interesting mord about it hope everything looks right of these are a million things your loving husband
There are no letters from the following week because Raymond wangled a 10-day pass and spent the time with Else in New York. He reported on his return to Carnegie Tech in a letter of 8/25/43.

For the remainder of August Raymond tended to his lab work as rumors about his future swirled around him. Those rumors said nothing of the possibility of his being sent to teach at a college or receiving an assignment in private industry. Some rumors indicated he would be sent to an Officers Training Course. The predominant rumor was that the people in the Army Special Training Program would be returned to the regular troops. That was not a pleasant possibility. As September arrived Raymond’s chemistry class work continued and he began a series of new courses in Physics and Chemistry as mentioned in his letter of 9/1/43.
September was a month of attending classes and surviving rumors of Raymond’s next assignment. It was during this time that he created his unusual style of writing as shown in the letter of 9/4/43. No doubt it took Else time to decipher this form. It is no easier for those of us who try to read them today.
Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County • Historic Monographs Collection

I just got your 2nd of Thurs 6:50 A.M. I hope by now you are over your illness tonight. I sent another from my father's place. Your goods are at the railroad. "Just" got your 2nd of Thrusday 6:50 A.M. I hope by now you are over your illness tonight. My father sent another from his place. Your goods are at the railroad.
Ray’s letters do describe some of his extra assignments during his time at Carnegie Tech as shown in the letter of 9/18/43.

Saturday 18 Sept 1943

Cold & quite rainy

My dear sweet endearing wife,

Today I have to answer two letters from you. One from last night & one from today, at twelve o’clock.

I just finished my last formation as company commander at twelve o’clock & I feel that I did the job up pretty good. I’ve received no complaints or some compliments from the men. For the formation were thankful that we, the sergeants, didn’t mess up the cadence or change step too often. Of course Mr. Puckel didn’t say anything which may be good & couldn’t be bad at least he hasn’t pushed a word to the marching company as he used to do. The men down under other commanders, I am glad the job
Despite his activities, all Raymond’s letters contained details of how much he loved and missed Else. They all ended with words like those taken from the end of a letter dated 9/5/43.

There are for you
X X X X X
before
so you know I squeezed
you with it
your loving husband
Rayne

There is a gap in letters for 9/11 and 9/12 when Raymond managed a three-day pass and visited Else in New York. Upon his return he learned a new class of army trainees was expected in the coming week. Still there was no word on his future. He addressed a time even further in the future as part of his letter of 10/1/43.
Again on 10/2 & 10/3 Ray was able to spend the weekend with Else in New York. His last letter from Pittsburgh was dated Tuesday evening, 10/5/43. Apparently he received his orders the following day as such things usually occurred on Wednesday. He was instructed to report for duty upon the USS Evangeline at New York City. Evidently he did receive the 10-day furlough before reporting. Thus ended Raymond's time in the Army Special Training Program.
Chapter 4
Voyages

At last, after Army indoctrination, education and training, Raymond is going to sea to practice all he has learned. His assignment aboard the ATP Evangeline begins in Brooklyn and takes him to the South Pacific and many ports on the US West Coast.

The ship, the former ferry S/S Evangeline, shown here from a post card while working the Eastern Shipping Corporation ferry route, was requisitioned by the US during WW II to be used as a troop transport.

The ship was built as a ferry in 1927 by the William Cramp and Sons Ship and Engine Building Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Evangeline was 365 feet long and displaced 5,002 tons. It saw service with her sister ship Yarmouth between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and Boston, Massachusetts in the summer and in the Caribbean during winter months. When the Army appropriated the ship early in World War II it was converted as a troop transport. The first test of the ship as an Army transport was a North Atlantic run to take troops to Europe. This proved that the ship was not suited for the rough North Atlantic so it was assigned to take troops to the Army campaign in the South Pacific. While Raymond was aboard, the ship was modified to serve as a hospital ship. After the war the ship was returned to civilian service. On the night of November 13, 1965 it burned at sea in a tragedy that cost 90 lives.

Raymond chose to write his letters to Else on his first voyage in a small notebook. It was written as a series of letters and later mailed to her as the “only letter of the voyage”. In fact, he wrote a few other letters as we shall soon see.
Following his first voyage which ended in San Francisco at the end of May, 1944 he began to write individual letters and mailed them whenever he could.

Here is his "letter" to Else describing his first voyage on the Evangeline.

What follows is a transcription of this "letter" using his words, grammar and punctuation. First, on the back of the cover is the ship’s ports of call.

NY 1/18/44
Arrived New Orleans 1/23/44
Left New Orleans 1/27
Arrived Canal Zone Left 1/30
Into Pacific 1/30
Bora Bora, Society Islands 2/12
Left Bora Bora 2/14
Crossed International Date Line 2/18-19
Milne Bay, New Guinea 2/25
Left 2/27
New Caledonia 3/4
Bora Bora 3/10
Hawaii 3/18
Left 4/13
His diary begins:

This is your one letter for the whole trip. I got back on board at about 5:45 PM Jan 17 after leaving you at the subway station and the lieutenant asked for me about 6:30 and said he was sorry but it wasn't his idea to call us back. Bentley I'll tell you (even tho I don't have to, you know) didn't get back till 12M. January 18-Shove off without fanfare into the ice of the Hudson & so out to the harbor nice day, nice sailing. In the morning completed cleaning remove shelves & made up some APC capsules. From the 18 to the 23rd we worked in the morning making up stock solutions & cleaning & had the afternoon off. At that rate I suppose you wonder why I wait till the 27 to write this but during the afternoon I have been painting our cabin white which because of its small size, presents many intricate problems in painting - how to paint the wall white & leave the bed uncoated when one is secured right next to the other. But now all is done except the floor & Frankie is going to do that or else. We connived a rug too & a water pitcher & holder. The beds & lockers & trim are battleship gray. On the back of the door in a wooden frame that held the regulations for passengers during peacetime I have put up your picture & it makes faces at me every time I go outside (Our pinup girls are down so I have to look at you sweetheart). We now have our bed boxes (sort of end tables or night tables secured to the wall too instead of clamped to the bedrail.

On the night of the 22 at 6:30 we picked up a pilot at the mouth of the Mississippi & since we had painted the bed wall we two slept down in the hospital. The morning of the 23, Sunday we were up to New Orleans & docked at 9:40. Workmen came aboard doing odd jobs & shore leave was granted at about 3 o'clock – 3 men had to stay on so Rasulo, Leinhos & I volunteered to stay on with the guarantee that we would get off at 8 AM on the 24th & have all day off. We split the watches up & I got a good night's sleep in anticipation of a tough day on Monday. The Lt. was sick most of the way down & is so now altho why I don't know Eva has not rocked as much as the S.I. Ferryboat. “Revelry” is held every morning at 7:30 but he just about manages to blast attention! He hasn't been in the dining room for several days. He is still quite unassuming & pleasant & the detachment runs very smoothly. I have been taken off my exposed battle station on the sun deck & am back in the hospital on alarms which is a whole lot better. On the way down off Miami we had gun practice shooting the two aft 3 inchers and the 5 inch. Quite awesome bang to both of them. Battle stations during practice & one minor injury.

The PX opened & I bought me 2 cartons of butts & the sheath knife total $2:37. Today the 27th I bought 2 more cartons, 3 cakes of Lux & 4 pr of
shoelaces $1.20 and just completed a deal with an AB for $6.50 Evy money for $5 American. I hope to trade some of the butts for souvenirs where we are going cash being not much valued. Also bought some candy 24 – 5c. Nestles with nuts for 72c a box. Bought two & have begun to eat into them along with the peanuts you bought me. ---- On the way down had several suspected T.B. Cases amongst the crew & had to use some special staining technics but no positive - shucks all that work for naught. Have been batting my way thru Look, Time & 50 Amer. Short stories in the few hours I've been off & not painting. The days have all been beautiful & of course getting warmer & the sun gives you a burn very quick. We had oysters for dinner & liver for supper today. Believe it or not I put away an orange or two every day & a rose sagrada last night to keep me “regular”. Wrote a two page letter to you on the 23 & gave it to Frank to mail along with his. he did not call home as he had to wait 5 hours to get thru. His resume of the town helped us off to a good start early the next morning.

One of several exceptions of Ray’s statement that the booklet would be his “one and only letter” was this one he wrote as the ship was in the Mississippi. This may be the letter he asked Frank to mail for him.
Togo dear Eline,

I've gotten used to the chilly hotel work in that I can write you from there. We hit the delta last night and have our feet in the muddy waters of the father of rivers now. Francis anticipated calling this pop the wild west, I hope it's my misfortune to be C.Q. tonight.

During the trip we painted our cabin white and almost half the rest of our belongings look very well in white upstairs. Coming down as we did we had quite a bit of fine time despite the small size we just managed today to finish the job, looks nice and clean.

The field rolling goes well as well as the dog chasing. I anticipate being a bit busier after we leave here. The rattleshirt says we are headed for the Louisiana republic about the canal. Letters from there will take a long time going up to you so don't expect too many; I will get one off whenever I get the opportunity to mail one.

The trip down was very smooth and of course the water is just the same color as when you and I came down to Westmore. The food continues excellent and abundant and I am once again on my way to being a perfectly finecompose glutton.
Well I had kept up on my French and could get about the "quartier" there. I had some-six tins of Spanish so it could haggle a strenvate that for you.

Bought another knife - Sheath type $1.45 equivalent to the $6.00 ones we always wanted.

We saw several movies on the way down one of which was the old one "Sun Valley" with "Enysaiein" the ski scene made me miss my heart out. Ray would love to follow along with you again on some good snow. As it is she's getting a snow blower in January.

The sun shines on my window now.

Frank is well & behaving himself very nicely but is worried about his mother.

I trust all the family is well - that you have gotten there the week well after Mother's disappointment. My thoughts are often with you. I have followed your route this morning with my watch.

That's all from me - from Way down south in A

Un voir. Adios soon.

Rayne

Following is a continuation of Ray's notebook.
Jan 24. The three of us hit N.O. Razz Lienhouse & myself. First to the Army base to try & get some furlough money - no good, red tape. Then aboard trolley car marked St. Cloud & off to Canal St. the Broadway of N.O. After trotting the length of Canal Street buying post cards we made for the nearest U.S.O. to get info to write cards. Tour planned for 1:30 PM of the French Quarter. Trolley ride there $.07 car marked St. Charles which is a circuit route which showed us many old residences including Loyola & Tulane Univ. & ended on Canal St. again. Lunch at one of the many USO's & then bought a belt alligator upon returning to the Carondolet St. USO found tour was off & started out alone on Royal St. & walked its length following Tour #1 route outlined in book. In one of the courtyards bought & sent a vase & two pictures also a box of pralines on Canal St. Turned off Royal to Esplanade Ave saw old US Mint thence to Decatur st & saw old French market thence to original Ursilene Convent crossed street to Beauregard House for refreshments & foot rest: Thence to St. Louis Cathedral having our picture taken went into Louisiana Nat. Hist museum & then to the Cabildo where we saw the pirate La Fittes detention several dungeons a typical Creole house revolutionary relics Napoleon’s death mask & Grant’s. Out & into Cathedral & moseyed about inside avoiding the give what you like tour. Thence to Canal St & then to the Court of the Two Sisters for a beer. (Falstaff Jax Regal) From there to Glucko for Shrimp Cocktail Gumbo Soup Trout Stake Lemon Meringue (phony) pie & Coffee $1.35 & .25 for soup extra. Went to barber for shave 35c, 5c for shine boy to spruce up for Jax Beer Program broadcast at Roosevelt Hotel, University room 7:30 PM, 8:30 PM NY Time, Station WWL tickets picked up at the USO previously. Thence to YWCA Gravier St. to dance & trotted a few for a short time. Thence 1 more beer & back to ship after buying the Times Picayune. Back to ship 11:30.

The above is an outline. Canal Street is very wide & lined with shops of every chain imaginable drug liquor 5&ten stores besides innumerable bars several hotels & quick lunches. It appears very modern & to a certain extent resembles Broad St. in Richmond even to the degree of cleanliness. Mile of dimes and fourth war loan going on simultaneously. It is the only street in N.O. which approaches “big city” proportions the rest being mostly tributaries to the main artery & realizing it. We did look in only at the Juny Hotel cocktail lounge & it look as charming as the St. Mority roof & appeared just as expensive. The french quarter is characterized by a second story long porches lined with iron grill work railings & the bldgs are Greenwich Village like. The section is very conscious of its tourist attractions & the streets are lined with antique shops of the Madison Ave Silver Plate type. Dives abound & there is a charge for the atmosphere viz 20c a bottle of local beer. The Cabildo has an interesting courtyard because of its prison cells. Some of the
courtyards are very pretty with balconies & a plethora of plants & vines. The temperature was something between Spring and summer & sun glasses felt good during the midday. On the trolley ride we saw some pretty Southern Colonial homes which you would have admired & for the first time saw palm trees alive outside of an undertaking parlor. 4 stories straight up & then the fronds. They are quite common and the large ones quite old. Whole avenues are lined with them mile on end, so called Floral trail. The streets in the suburbs off the trolley car route are unpaved rutted, not guttered dirty & lined with tumble down shacks of typical Southern unpaintedness & untidiness. Quite a few of the bldgs are of good size & warehouses abound. No sight of Miss. Steamboats but lots of Navy ships.

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Paid
Rasulo owes 3.85
Leinas 0.50
Jan 31 $4.35

Following is a post card sent to Elsa during his time in New Orleans.
The next notebook entries follow.
Friday 1/28/44
Still looking at funny face in the doorway. Up 7 – revelry - breakfast 1/2 grapefruit bacon scrambled coffee toast & muffin – filled a couple of bottles - beautiful day lunch – Pork chops etc. - Up to the room finished painting the floor & cleaned up sink & mirror & now you look out on a sight you deserve deluxe clean painted cabin. Today we change to Suntans so will shower put on clean under clothes & clean suntans already have changed sheets on bed & will shave. The trip continues peaceful & I am glad our room is done & you can once again walk on the floor. - We got a new chaplin on board at N.O. Short very stout Italian looking kind of guy - so far said just good morning to him – he is not very neat. The dining room is hot and during blackout the ship heats up something awful. We are sleeping with the fan going. Ah what memories of other sea voyages this brings. I think so often now that I should have called you from N.O. Of course then I did not know where we were heading & I am not sure now but it looks like Panama then the locks & then to New Guinea. Across the aisle from us are two swell guys Masters at Arms Appleby & Bethesda of about the age spread as Frank and I. So the alley is not as dead now. Found some gonococci today first case.

Sat 1/29/44 – Nice hot day smooth sailing – did a load of wash – not much work for the Army tho. Wrote to you & hope to get it off when we go thru the Canal Zone but you can’t tell.

January 31, 1944
January 30 we arrived at the Canal Zone at 11:30 AM and was struck by its lush vegetation springing up as if from the very ocean itself we pulled into a pier & refueled & in the evening were allowed to walk on the pier & half a mile on shore to the gates but no farther. There was a catholic mass held on the pier but the two promised Protestant services failed to materialize. The Syrian chaplin having to get some suntans so I guess he forgot When we came into the Canal you were just leaving church! It sure was hot hanging next to the pier as it cut off the beautiful breeze we had in the harbor. Thanks for those sun glasses again. It would be about impossible to look out to the shore with the glare of the water without them & many of the boys eyes hurt without them. Of course the palm trees grow profusely the water is a dark green the earth a reddish clay & the sky blue & of course we had white clouds to complete the picture-ideal color movie stuff. The war map you gave me is up on the wall along with one of Frank’s & is consulted at least 10 times a day. This morning we left the pier and started thru the first lock at 8 AM. Pulled thru by 6 electric engines 3 on either side running on cogs, steel cables
to the ship. There is nothing unique about the transfer. You enter at low
water, gates close & water is pumped in till you are at the next lock's level
when you move on & so you are elevated to the large Gatun lake which is
huge & clotted with islands and fresh water. The cut is thru quite
mountainous and the vegetation very thick & impenetrable. Most of the trip
Eva made at slow pace & we were out of the locks in a peaceful Pacific by 4
PM. The scuttlebutt says now its to Samoa to refuel & thence to Australia. 12
days in the first jump & then 8 days more. The Lt got off the letter to you on
the 30 of Jan. We are off by our lonesome tonite. I wonder if this will
continue. The Mexico our companion on the way down is ahead of us
somewhere. I now have the distinction of getting a GI haircut while sitting on
a garbage can while going thru the canal zone. You should see the whole
detachment with the short haircuts I set the style for. Even Guido got one.
Tomorrow night darn it I have C.Q. 4:30 PM to 7:30 AM. The doc a typical
kid went to Colon last night to get some souvenirs while hes gone a case of
appendicitis develops get Rohner for a white count. The transport
Commander Leo the Leon Quinn has a squad car out and gets the Doc
arrested, argument not so smooth yet between the two of them, & the case got
put off & we retired at 11:45. Never a dull moment aboard this ship. 9 PM
now. Last night attacked “baloney” tres’ good. Am still working my way thru
50 short stories. You know I love you. If you could just be here on this trip
with me. What a sunset tonight.

Feb 2, 1944 Wednesday
Just finished a liverwurst & domestic swiss 3 decker & a cup of coffee &
found it good. 10:15 PM now & you in NY are two hours ahead of time so I
guess you are asleep. The Pacific has not a ripple in it & Little Eva rides on
at top speed as if she were in the Hudson. We are supposed to cross the line
on Friday & of course will be initiated prob. have the rest of my hair & my
mustache cut off. Got second & final shot of Cholera today Typhus & yellow
fever to go yet. Took a shower & changed underwear & set the dirty stuff to
soak including the dirty suntan shirt & my garters. Sleep in my shorts with no
sheet on top & the fan going so you can imagine how hot it is. Saw what was
reputed to be a waterspout today. Am eating one light meal a day because of
the heat. Doing some blood counts after hours & the whole ship is loused up
with foot fungus so I'm doing a good trade in ointments. Gave Bobo $2
yesterday. Gee suntans get dirty quick!
Things I wonder about – Is my schotsie well – does she still smile as in the
picture I wish I knew you were alright. How the pictures came out & what the
family said. How Rose is & Joe. What mom is doing. How my sweetheart is
going along with the Doaks – But mostly when will I see you again!
Goodnight

Thursday Feb 4, 1944
Up as usual & sweated most of the morning in the dispensary making up medicines, looking for syphilitic spirochetes – found none but did find two out of three cases of gonococcus. Tonight at 3 AM we cross the equator & get us initiated into the sons of Neptune. I wonder if they'll beat the head off us. Today Lt Gruberg needed a pair of shorts to get a sunburn so he cut off a pair of pajamas so now he has blue flannel shorts oy, oy. Not much new good night.

Feb 4 8:30 PM – 11:30 PM N.Y. Time – Are you sleeping yet well stay awake till I tell you all that happened today. While I was sleeping at 4 AM. 4:10 to be exact we crossed the equator so that started the Shellbacks off on their initiation plans for us Pollywogs, those who hadn't crossed yet. During the morning they stopped in the pharmacy for all sorts of dyes & equipment. In the afternoon at 2 o'clock they started. Since everyone on the ship except the Captain & a few others were polywogs they selected a few from each group (viz the medics the navy the merchant marine the troops) to go thru the setup & as it was they had 40. While sitting reading in the dispensary the doc comes back after going thru the rigamarole & he sure is a mess. So I had a good laugh & decided to go forward to the foc'sle head to see what cooked. I just got to the end of the companionway when I run into my bosum companion Appleby - He sez Ah, there you are! Go back to your cabin & take off everything except your shorts – vey is mio. I was on their list - there was no alternative but to go along peaceably. So they led me to the foc'sle head blindfolded me & led me before the captain & I was given to understand that this was Neptunus Rex. He read my name off told me if I'd like to get back to Elmhurst I'd have to go thru the ritual, etc. etc. so they lead me on sit me down one fellow paints on my back another opens my mouth throws in a pill tosses something that burns worse than tobasco sauce after it and then washes your mouth full of salt water – Asked if you like it you open your mouth to answer & get some alum rammed into it. Then you are lead to the barber, in which after sitting down in the “chair” in some embarrassing stuff your whole head got lathered with some sticky stuff & you were shaven with a board the excess lather being scraped in your mouth. then out the porthole as it were. One of the vents was laid down & you were forced to crawl thru it as you got to the larger end a saltwater hose was aimed at you & the blindfold was ripped off. Not knowing just what you were in, the sudden brilliance of the sunlight after the darkness plus the hose battering at you the effect was
baffling. You should see the shorts I wore they are soaking now & resemble somewhat a batch of soiled diapers oh me.
I was at a disadvantage not knowing what would come next not having been a spectator before becoming a participant. It was fun watching others go thru. The captain who is a jovial rotund humorist was all dressed up in grass skirt crown & carried a 3 prong fork symbolic of his office, and there were many variations to the theme including buckets of lather dumped over the head & paintings of various personal parts which could only take place with an all masculine audience. Even the billygoat, a mascot of the engineers on board was used as a kissing mate for my friend Rayulo. Sgt. Dunnegan took a beating too as well as Capt Leo the Lion Quinn who is having some of the square corners rounded off his head & humanized in other ways. Altogether a funny slapsticky afternoon & getting the stuff off was not too bad except for the dye on my back which will be with me for several days. The nights are quiet & peaceful & the days are sunshiny yet with 10-15 minutes squall every other day to ruffle a glassy sea. I am gradually accumulating a batch of clean but unironed shirts so some night I'll have to sweat & iron them. Got a little sun today but am taking it very slowly. Remember Jones's Beach? I wonder how you are? My mind keeps feeling somehow that you have not been well these last two days, I hope not. Perhaps its just I miss you so that even when I am laughing I wish you were next to me enjoying the jokes too.
Well I'm now a Shellback & will get my certificate tomorrow to add to all my diplomas at home.
Have you tried liverwurst & swiss cheese yet? I guess not. Well I'm going to have one now down in the galley & then to write to Pruitt & Lack. So long kid, stay well & think of me I'm afraid I'm a little behind on my Bible & Prayers so I will read some tonight. Goodnite my one & only wonderful wife xxxx.

Sunday nite Feb 6, 1944 9:45 – 1:45 N.Y. Time so you should be asleep. Went to church at 7:30 PM & it lasted over an hour. The troops have a young chaplin with them who can sing as loud as Austin and spiels off hymn verses from memory & seemed well liked & certainly led the singing. Our Baptist Syrian minister gave the message & while it was rather long for the cramped & hot officer's mess hall it was full of good Bible references, personal touches from the Holy Lord & was worth hearing. Arranged my pistol belt with canteen sheath knife a couple of rolls of candy some gauze cigarettes & iodine plus a small flask of alky & checked over my life jacket whistle & light so all would be ready in an emergency – that is more so ready. I hope I won't need it. Played Sax for an hour or so this afternoon & really had me a good time &
was surprised at how it came back for its been a long time. Last time in Canada.
Remember Jackman, Me? Goodnight. I hope you had a pleasant Sunday & prayed as I did for you. May God be with you. Remind me to tell you of a personal experiment I made with the mic. When I see you.... R.

Feb 8, 1944.
Tuesday 8:30 & since the clocks went back an hour again last night I guess its 1:30 AM Wed. morning with you so I hope you're asleep & not up & sick again somehow I feel you are better again. I had C.Q. Last night so had no time to write – Yesterday the rest of the medical corp went up to see & learn how the 20mm machine guns work as the naval officer on board seems to think we will be short handed in the guns on the way back but I couldn't see my way clear to climbing up in those turrets neither to learn nor to eventually operate them – so far as I can see it is in contradiction to the Geneva agreement for a Medic to operate the guns and further would be a precarious spot at any time being a logical target. The boys ate it up for most of them the feel of a gun has much glamor for them, could be they wouldn't like the feel of lead tho. Of course Rohner always draws a quiet night on C.Q*. The one mental case that we had aboard confined to his room on C deck decided he'd break up a mirror & chair last night so he had to be brought up for the mental ward & I sure was glad to hear the lock snap on that door. Seems voices tell him to do things & no one knows what next. A little Paraldehyde quieted him down & now he sleeps most of the day. There is a case in the hospital now of facial paralysis of one side which presents a funny job at night, one has to put a piece of tape on the eyelid & pull it shut & tape it so, so he can sleep.
Up at 6:30 this morning no water till 7:15 reville at 7:30 so how can one shave? Usual breakfast & filled a couple of bottles & so had the rest of the day off. Till suddenly at 3:30 PM Franky comes yelling for me the doc wants some 5% Sol Bicarb. for why? He gave some guy a box of Phenobarbitol tablets & the jerk took the whole box at once & anesthetized himself so the doc had to pump out his stomach. That doc strikes me as crazy handing out whole boxes of dangerous stuff to soldiers on the way across. This added to some other tricks he's done don't give me too much confidence in him. So all in all not much new got a little more sunburn & the buckle on my watch band which has shown brass under its plate of other metal has started a little dermatitis from the sweat so I'll carry it in my pocket for a few days. I am my usual healthy self & am eating one light meal a day. I wonder if it is cold in N.Y. Whether you're used to your fur (?) coat yet. How the office & the Doak's are going. How the pictures are & what its like to hold you next to me again I'm afraid I'd chew your ear off if you were here now. Believe we are
heading for Bora Bora now & will get there for my birthday when I can begin my 3 new books. Goodnight.

* CQ – In charge of quarters. A duty assigned to an Army man, a commissioned petty officer, to act as an administrative person for the unit outside of normal business hours

Hello Numbskull. Wed Feb 9. Well kid here I am in the sack again writing to you. By now you must have my Panama letter & know where I am going. I hope – I wonder how you are? Made up some after shower lotion for Leo the Lion Quin - Wanted to put turpentine in it but the doc told me he'd court martial me if I did! Had a urine to do today Took a shower & clean linen on the bed & a load of wash to do & then I will have 3 shirts to iron - veh is me! Not much to do today so had it easy except for dispensing 1 qt of castor oil a tablespoon at a time to about 300 guys with diarrhea. Not much new except I miss you. Wish you would keep a day to day account when you can't write. Forgot to think about sissa's birthday present when I wasnt with you. The nights are terribly warm with everything shut down. Got my hooks on a V mail form & will write you tomorrow with hopes of getting it off at Bora Bora on Saturday. Goodnight my sweet.

It seems like a good time to take a break from Ray’s notebook to look at the V-mail letter he sent to Else on 2/10/1944.

A “V” Mail letter was a microfilm copy of a real letter. The microfilm could be shipped easier and cheaper. When it arrived in the US the film was printed in readable size. Below is a sample of V-Mail Ray sent to Elsa.
Returning to the notebook.
Feb 11, 1944 –
Didn’t write in here last night as I composed & copied your V mail letter & wrote one to Pruitt & that seemed to take until 11 o’clock hope you conclude something from my intimations also wondered if you were over at Viola’s for her birthday & what you got done on her picture. How are you today I wonder. We are now six hours behind NY. It is now 2:20 AM of Feb 12 1944 for you I hope you are sleeping well. Today we slowed down to 7 knots as we cannot make Bora Bora today any more but will hit it first thing in the morning, we hope to get a swim there & much needed cargo of water. Oh yes last night I went to the nightly church meeting which to my disappointment consisted of sitting still & waiting for someone to stand & relate an experience with God so not much was heard. Found another gonnorhea case today & it looked very beautiful under the mike. Am also doing quite a bit of urine analysis. Sat in the sun and started You Can't Go Home Again by Wolfe not too good yet. Doc sure is a nice guy & promised to try to get our mail off. I hope so. Rest an hour or two every afternoon & getting a little fatter. Wish I had a letter from you. Oh well, tomorrow I can look at my cards I hope. Birthday in Bora Bora which is quite a ways from Penn. where I’ve spent to many. Wonder how your birthday pic. came out. Goodnight sweet.

Feb 12, 1944  Bora Bora. Society Island.
Up at 5 AM & watched as we pulled into the bay & dropped the hook at 7:30. Palms all along the shore – cocoanut type most of island green except for high square cliffs at the pinnacle. Well at breakfast the doc turns around tells me to get 3 - 4 men to open some pyrethrum (a fly killer & mosquito) bombs & spray the ship every 3 - 4 hours so I fill bottles & spray the ship then comes the chlorination of the water we are taking on, so the doc figures out the dosage to go in so he sez check my figures so I find he has twice the amount it should be so I gotta find him again so he sez I'm right so I gotta get the engineer so he's got no bucket so the chief engineer sez you do it for us I'll give you two ass’t to take you around so I weigh the dose out for each tank dissolve it & climb amongst the engine 145°F & pour it in & I am thinking it is one Hell of a Birthday for my shorts & pants are soaked thru with sweat & I work harder than any other day on the trip. So I have a veal cutlet for lunch & a piece of Struesel cake & no wax on it either. Soooo I sweat somemore and spray the damn ship again. By 3 oclock we have our fuel & we move to a pier & begin taking on water thru a 4” line which for 300 tons means we will be here till tomorrow noon at least. At 3 oclock we got liberty so cutting down a pair of hospital pajamas to make shorts I went swimming about a block from the ship nice clear water & not as warm as Nassau back at boat for shower shave and supper. During the morning we also traded with the
bumboats for trinkets which you'll see, palming off Ralieghs even in trades. After supper Limehouse Frank & a Grik sailor named George started our walk of the island following the one & only coastal road we walked past barracks & native villages. Finally we came to a tin roofed shack which appeared to be a store so walking in we saw an oriental woman (pregnant as almost all of the women are,) & one of the boys said “Chinese?” & she pointed to the wall & said Chang Kai Shek which seemed to be the extent of her English. I saw a nice carved head in a dark brown wood so we talked in Pidgen English & poor French & I bought it & she had change in American Dollar Bills, too, which in a previous purchase of a bracelet was a great difficulty. After walking about 4 miles out we turned came back & Limehouse bought some wooden bookends & in passing one of the native huts Frankie stops & calls, we rush over, Frank Sinatra was singing the girls were screaming & swooning in the studio & the orchestra was playing Sha Sha Baby You're Honeys off to the Seven Seas - The Hit Parade from N.Y. - Boy Bora Bora on a Sat nite & you home in N.Y. maybe hearing it too. It was then about 6 P.M. & should have been about 12 M by you. So we wended our way back passing & looking in at a free movie(open air under a thatched roof. but no seats & our legs were tired so we caught a lift & were dumped near the ship, went on board, ate & then to bed.

Feb 13,14 1944 C.Q.
Wait, wait, forgot to tell you I opened my Geburstag cards & was so happy to read your note on the back it is always so nice to hear from you even tho you wrote it so long ago. Mum sent me $5. Thank her in case I forget. last night & what a night 3 admitted to hospital & 1 top joint of a finger amputated 3 rd finger of left hand on a typist got smashed in a blackout door boy was it hot in that operating room – Morphine in arm. When we were finished everybody was soaked & exhausted so ate & to bed. Boy what nights on C Q I have. The doc sez he hates to see me come on. Left Bora Bora at 9 AM in the morning Feb 14 1944 out of sight at 11 AM. Valentines day opened your card you would look like the funny face if you'd wear your hair in braids. Do you know I love you. Quiet day except for a couple of catheter cases. Did some reading & sleeping. 2:45 A.M. for you oh oh better say goodnight or you won't be able to get up tomorrow.

Feb 15 – Hot breezeless day cabin like a hot box tonite Took a shower & looked for some more bugs under the mic but found none - Dislocated elbow put back in place – dull repetitious day wish it would cool off or rain more often of all places to send me who loves the heat so much!
Feb 18-19 1944 & I mean just that for at 6:29 it was Feb 18 & at 6:31 tonight it was Feb. 19 for we crossed the International date line at 6:30. Nothing of any signif. has happened in the last few days except that today I got a reaction to my yellow fever shot which was 5 - 6 days ago. Wokeup at 4:30 AM with a terrific headache slight cold & an awful pain in the neck but it is better now. 2 other guys felt it too today. Hope its gone tomorrow. Been playing my flute with Rasulo & in the hospital tonight where we have a guitar player & the wheelsman came down who plays a mandolin so even the doc came in & listened poor patients. I am halfway thru The Robe & it is very fascinating. A little cooler today but we still have a week to go. Wonder how you are & what you are doing this nite. Wish you were with me. Are you writing what's doing let's see if I can make you from way out here I hope so for you'll have so much to tell me you'll have forgotten half of it. C.Q. Tomorrow night I'm anticipating a major operation. No revelry tomorrow: goody. Goodnight.

Feb 25, 1944 Up at 7 AM (the clocks had been moved ahead an hour during the night - the way I figure it it is now 2 AM Feb 25 where you are now) Sighted land this morning, New Guinea & during the morning we drove up Milne Bay & dropped the hook at about 2 P.M. Of course I got my old spraying job back & the spray has been put out twice. About 800 troops got off & tonight there is a movie but it is so hot with all those people in a small unventilated compartment that I passed it up. To boot we were put to work cleaning troop compartments despite the orders from Bklyn army base that this was not our work but we are a long way from Brooklyn I guess. First night under the mosquito nets – I wish I were home with you. Wrote you last night & it will be mailed today I guess, also to mother & Aunt Ella. No mail from you here as yet. The Lt. wants me to go to O.C.S. - I wonder if I should I'm a little sick of being spit on by moronic sargeant The shore is very much like Bora Bora with no natives The entire bay is surrounded by high mountains. Troops debarked in amphibious boats. The Lt. went ashore but claims there is nothing there. Goodnight – just a little disgusted. Here our port in U.S.A. will be Frisco.

Feb 25-6-7
Arrived at New Guina – Sanduson. Went ashore on the 26th & rode back & forth on Churchill Blvd by catching lifts from the enormous number of trucks continually using it. The road runs the periphery of the bay & has different outfits encamped all along it. We went 8 miles one way to the east to go to the PX & then 28 miles west to the Australian canteen where we changed some money & had a glass of water. One can have no idea of the rudimentary
shelters the men live under & how crude even the hospitals are. Atabrine & mosquito bars are advertised even along the highway – speed limit 20 mph. There is nothing but soap & hardtack for sale at the PX & a few cans of peaches & pears at the Aust. canteen. Bought an Aust. monogramed match holder of copper the only souvenir I could find came back on board at about 4 hot & dusty & washed up. Started to see the movies but was jerked out after 10 minutes to stevedore about 60 cases of books out of the hot hold for the chaplin. By the time that was thru I was so soaking wet I lay down & read & then to bed. This morning the 27th we pulled out at 6 A.M. for New Caledonia. I improved (?) my shorts by taking them in at the waist & cutting the legs off at a new angle. I'm glad to be rid of Guinea nothing there but heat slime dust & mosquitoes.

March 1 at (8:10 P.M. & halfway around the world still )
Payday $35.60. Wrote 3 V mail letters last night to you & 4 to other friends & 2 more tonight one to the Labs & one to Bob & Edith. I know they aren't very interesting but I wrote what I can. I hope to drop them all when we reach New Caledonia on Friday the 4th of March. I wonder if you are well tonight? The pictures we have on this trip are very poor & if I were not in the middle of the Coral Sea I shouldn't waste my time on them. It has been quite cool & pleasant these last two days & I am getting some tan back again. The doc was ill again today altho the roll is almost imperceplible. Talk continues about changing the ship to a Hospital ship, transferring her to the West Coast, returning us by rail to Bklyn Army Base and a million & one other ideas. All I wish is to be near you & see you once in a while or at least hear from you once in a while so I know you are well & happy. We have it quite easy now & stand C.Q. 8 hours every other day. Goodnight.

The following are more examples of V-Mail Ray sent to Else.
My dear Newcastle, It is now some five days since I last wrote you. Of course we anticipate a stop shortly, so we can come back to
the good old state. I hope this letter may arrive there. While I
receive no mail on this boat service, you can appreciate how
inconvenient it is after seeing the accompany of mine. We
would like to hear more about what you think of the letter. Please remember
me to Karl and the Borches. I presume their children will have
grown quite a bit. By the time I see them again.
Everyone in the Detach has borrowed the book quite
agree with me that it is a very good book, at the
Chevalier's suggestion. I am reading Ben Hur. I almost
feel I could send my way from house to house
via the post, without it. The car is coming
along, much to the disgust of the others who will be
down with the rats in the hold soon with it. The
dock; who appears of your photograph, by the way, is
breaking up on his front in order to be ready to
undo the nails at our next stop. Despite my
disappointment for the "language of romance" it was to
let it roll off one's tongue again. We have had
quite a lot of freedom these last few days. We are
as we've dumped our troops and so we've received some
sleep and caught

V...MAIL
There isn't much chance that we will arrive at our home post so I shall telephone you from where I land so don't hesitate to write yourself if you have the phone being 11:00 A.M. if you now have some new or two of letters written to send around to the address I shall tell you. If it is impossible to get home perhaps I can run up to 27th and 4th for a day or so and take care of a long standing drinking engagement as well as getting toward a proper upbringing. We all have quite a bit of time to think on board and I have made quite a few resolutions I hope I can keep when this damned war is over and of course almost all of them concern our life together but they shall have to wait my writing till this is over. The doc is most anxious to see me off to CTS. It truly has a private holds little glamour but I wonder if every year doesn't it change above & suddenly become all the difference in the world, and all the variance is in (cents).
To Mrs. M.L. Roper
831 Victor Ave., Kimberlty L.I.
New York City
New York

MARCH 1 1944

To: M. L. Roper

From: Pfc. R. L. Roper

638 26th St., New York City

C/O P.M., New York

S要加强东南太平洋

Frank: I continue well, physically and financially. We did manage to get a few gifts of our foreign tours which we will send home, the Native showings handcrafts similar to those in Nassau. My insurance must soon be due as will the rent, the latter in the contribution column, but the former will arrive as a special batch in which the due times you! I wonder if mother is in Paris. Yet, if whether Vida is well. There is not much more news except that everyday brings me closer to you no matter how long it will be before I see you. I trust that your household are getting along just as famously as when I left. These long separations always affect me adversely—my imagination pictures you in all sorts of trouble of illness but honestly hope that all is well with you. Give my regards to all the family and remember I'll always love you.

V-MAIL Raymond
March 6. Monday, the same as yesterday.
We got into N Caledonia on the 4th in the morning & it is a beautiful harbor & dropped the hook at about 10:30. The officials (Doc etc) got off but we were allowed no shore leave so got me a haircut, chlorinated the new water we got on board and watched as two barges came alongside with 500 troops Soldiers Marines Sailors & Merchant Marine & 2 females got aboard. Ugh to the femmes. Hospital scrubbed and cleaned & inspection The soldiers have been over for about 25 months & most of them have had malaria 2 or 3 times. They have recurrent attacks now that they've been taken off Atobrine & the hospital is almost full. I am byway of becoming a great blood smear taker & can see the parasites in my sleep after studying so many slides. It is good professionally to see them so clear & precise but the guy I got the blood from is usually not feeling so good. The doc worked out a new sched. so I now work from 12 - 4 P.M. officially & any other time they can find me. We, the doc & I, are getting around to bull sessions & do quite a bit of arguing about Semites Prot, Catholics the army cast system. Last night up to twelve at it with – Chief Engineer, Chaplin, Doc, a former French Teacher (of the office staff now) Master at Arms & Rasulo the kid from Yonkers who expects his C.D.D. (Certificate of Disability for Discharge) for poor eyesight, progressive myopia. For the rest the trip goes on steadily & we expect to reach Bora Bora again soon to Refuel & Water. Sometimes I miss you so much it hurts inside of me & I think of all the inconsiderations I've treated you to & hope they wont occur when I get out of this. Frankie had “A Tree Grows in Bklyn” & I am reading it now “Ben Hur” remains half read. The Chaplin is a stout unkempt man with always dirty glasses & was previously a hard shell Baptist who travelled about setting up tent evangelical meetings & he is not the man for this job being completely out of touch with the men. His preaching is of the closed eyes generality type. I know that one's religion should not depend on the men who teach it but you & I know that to a large extent it does! And so I have many moments of shall I say backsliding (which I don't hope to excuse) I only wish you were closer with your faith to bolster me once in awhile. Yesterday we recrossed the date line which accounts for two Mondays & now once again you & I start a week together & it is now 4 P.M. Monday aft. with you. I hope you are busy for I find time passes easier that way when one doesn't think except for the mechanics of work. I have to wash a bucket of clothes now I've had soaking since 8, they are very dirty & you can thank the army if when I get back I heed your admonitions & dont get them so dirty.
The great lack in the army is to find a mind I can sharpen my own on. So many almost all seem to think the smutty joke is all the conversation needed for a day! Read a mystery yup me I did. Had a joke you might think is funny
but wont laugh out loud at. They's sitten around a table 2 goils & 2 men when the goil says I gotta power my nose, so do I sez the other goil The man reaches in his pocket & gives them each a nickel & sez Don't spend this all in one place Am I going down to the rest of the army's level. Nope I got you. Gotta wash now oh my poor delicate hands and no cream out in the Coral sea for my hands. I love you do you hear me you pretty long legged skinny German XX I have my arms around you. Im 400 miles closer every day.

March 10 11 12 13
Early on the tenth we hit Bora Bora & snagged a cable of the submarine nets around one of our screws & towed the tending barge several hundred feet & then it had to be untangled. We took on water oil & I went thru my chlorination act. Did a little trading as you will see when I send all of it to you. Didn't go ashore as I worked in the aft. & had CQ at night which was just as well. We got 4 patients – 1 bed wetter, 1 suicidal 1 Angina Pectoris & 1 broken back. The doc was ashore all day & all night till 3 AM making love to some Polynesian babe.
11Th Started going in wide circles this afternoon rudder struck at hard right so hove too for several hours while the engine room crew fixed it.
Sunday the 12Th – Up at 10 got some air – chased down a little kidney & urine trouble made a few solutions & read “Victoripa 4:30” which is fair. Played Monopoly at night & managed to hang on till next to last. Some bulsh afterward. Lay awake in bed for 2 hours thinking of you & wishing you were with me.
March 13. Up at 10 for boat drill & then swept out & now writing to you. Wish you had the luck to have your letters reach me.

Helloe Sweetheart – March 15 10 A.M. which makes it quitting time for you in New York. Well I'm coming a little bit closer but not much today. Yesterday they decided Eva's engines were not in good enuff shape, there was oil in the drinking water & the generators were breaking down so we revised our course & are now heading for Hawaii maybe Honolulu for some sort of repairs & from there it looks like Seattle. Up early this morning got an hours sun and & my washing done except for rinsing when the water comes on. Life goes on day by day just itching for a letter from you dreamt about Grandma last night. We passed the equator yesterday morning at 8:30 & I figure we should arrive Saturday. Its still warm. What do you say. Goodbye.

March 20, 1944 – 9:30 PM Hawaii time.
2:30 AM March 21 & you are sleeping. Well I've lots to tell you. Saturday afternoon we pulled into Honolulu harbor, took on some water which thank
goodness had enuff CL2 in it moved out to Pearl Harbor & they took our troops off. Lt. Gruberg was on the ball so we got Sat. night passes & took off. There is not much evidence of the damage at Pearl Harbor except 1 or 2 hulks & some masts erected on land from the battleships sunk. Frank Leinhos & myself caught a bus & at 3 tokens for 20c rode 20 minutes to Honolulu over a fair wide blvd. Our first impression of the town was disappointing since everything was closed tite but we did taste some ice cream & some coke which was along time no see Jan 18 to be exact. This didn't prevent us from pounding the streets, visiting a street carnival, eating hamburgers & getting back at 9:30 exhausted. Sunday Irwin and I took off promptly after lunch we changed our money from plain U.S. to U.S. stamped with Hawaii on the back, bought a map some snapshots & once again pounded the streets with a million sailors for companions, jip joints of the Coney Island type were all over. We found a U.S.O. & ate there washed up & looked in store windows. At 4 PM we went to St Andrew's cathedral an Episcobel one (High) raced thru a couple of psalms & managed to just stay with the Bishop as he looped thru the litany. Back to USO more ice cream walked some more Irwin bought shorts kaki & generally wore ourselves down. Back on wrong bus waited at gate for merchant marine transportation & back to read two papers & Newsweek in bed & so to sleep late.

Monday: Up for breakfast & with Sgt Bently & Percy to town changed money & while the boys got haircuts bought you a present caught up with them again & off to Sears Roebuck after Purchasing combination ribbons for Pacific & American theatres & goodconduct medal. Bought a pair of shorts at Sears some Collin's cement & thence to Academy of Art.(Desrip. Follows) Thence up king street for pants shoes and hat for the Sgt & then to eat Chop Suey 70c Up Hotel St. to Bookstore & bought Flowering of New England. & around the corner at Bishop S to another Bkstore bought Outline of Organic Chem for $1.25 which I always wanted then a Bb sax reed 50c & a paper & we were ready for home. Caught bus back ate & we had movies, The Invaders with L. Harword. So now to bed. Hope to get to Waikiki Beach tomorrow.

Tuesday March 21 Wed 22 10 AM. 3:30 PM by you. Up Tues morning late & hung around & straightened up till after dinner when Irwin & I took off from the middle of town took a bus to Wakiki located the Royal Palms Hotel the most sumptuous on the beach which is now an army & navy enlisted mans center & went swimming (trunks 20c + jock) water cool not much of a width of beach but water gets deeper very slowly nice swim showered & then drank 3 bottles of beer & ate some peanuts walked a little more & came to Malikua – a recreation center with a beautiful
dine floor (empty then) & so caught a bus to city & trotted around some of
the streets looking in shops ate at Army Navy Y 95c beef spinach fr fried &
bottle milk & back to ship & bed. Bottle Zonite 60c.

Wednesday March 22 boy the time is sliding by very fast I have been gone two
months from you now & have heard nothing but this writing to you even if it
wont get mailed for a while yet takes some of the longing out of my heart.
Sweetheart I sent you a fixed text cablegram today & you'll get it soon 3 - 4
days he said (69c). Bought you a wooden figure today but wont describe it so
it will be a surprise. Got my name put on the back of my watch today (for 25c
not bad) also some more souvenirs. Ate some more ice cream. With Sgt
Bently delivered our medical requisition to the Port Surgeon he said we
would get all the stuff if we went out again & none if we went back to the
states I hope I see no supplies. Doc. says we will be made a Hosp. Ship in
Frisco which would jerk us off I hope & send us to NY. Yahoo!
And now for some of the descriptions. The academy of art is a one story
building set up in 2 squares since a large part of the ceilings are glass the
pictures are displayed under the most favorable light. The two center courts
are beautifully landscaped as are the gardens around the edge. Not so many
pictures so can see each some modern rooms some jade & a beautiful lanai
for service men. Sears Roebuck is typical, way out of town, as big as the
Queens Blvd store but not quite the selection Japanese & Chinese salesgirls
but still a lot of things that are scarce in N.Y. are here. The Royal Hawaiian
Hotel is undoubtedly the most beautiful hotel in a most scenic setting at
Wakiki. We wouldn't have been able to set foot in the lobby in the old days.
All done in pink stucco, four stories high with enormous big blue U with cacti
all along the top set in each notch which contrasts nicely. The beach is
narrow and is in the shape of a crescent. the water stays at neck level for
hundreds of yards & the rollers slide right along the whole length & the
surfboard rolls along, sort of like pushing it along. Of course the Wakiki
neighborhood is full of souvenir shops & other hotels but of course the prices
correspond to the class of neighborhood & are untouchable. Honolulu the
city itself is full of souvenir shops high priced for they can sell anything to the
hoardes of sailors & soldiers who are in everyday. Coney Island has the
same nature cheap leather & shell trinkets at high prices. All the shops are
Japanese owned & staffed who do alright with English. Lots of tattio shops
dirty pictures & houses of ill repute all over town, beer sold weekdays 12 - 4
6 chits as you come in the door & you surrender one every time you order,
when 6 are gone your drinking is done at that shop all the rest are crowded so
its done for the day. Long queus form in front of each joint before 12. I tell
you this from observation & not experience. Lots of dirty coke & sandwich
joints too. The natives live in one story wooden houses on stilts pretty clean shoes outside slippers inside. Few white people doing business & they seem to be English.

March 29 – Long time no write. 3 PM which makes it 8:30 PM by you I wonder what you're doing on a Wednesday night at the end of March. Sunday I intended to go to an Episcopal church but didn't make it in time 10:30 so landed in a Lutheran one & it sure brought back memories. I had forgotten much of the ritualistic things & especially how long one stands but the sermon was good & service men made up all but 8 - 10 of the congregation. It was good to hear the minister say too “Glad to see you. Come back again” went out from there to Wakiki & walked up & down & in & out. We have been having pictures on board. Different each day & have discovered the Block Recreation center which shows a pic every night too so we've been seeing 2 a day for the last 2 days. Washed this morning & will iron tonite. The town & beach offer little to do now since we've seen all of it.

April 13, 7:00 AM. Left Pearl Harbor for Honolulu Pier 8 took on about 500 mixed passengers Civilians Marines Sailors Soldiers and 33 wounded all in good condition including 2 diabetics so I am literally up to my neck in urine. Going to Frisco & from there don't know where 8:30 PM & were off. Looking forward to your letters -

April 16.

Arrived San Francisco 9 PM & dumped troops. Wed 4/13/44

I know this isn't as complete as yours is that I got last night but sometimes one doesn't feel like writing. Don't be surprised at any strange men that call you up as some are going to N.Y. & will ask them to communicate with you. Writing more in letter, tho news right now is not good & I am hoping it will turn better. Believe me I love you thank you for all the letters the diary the pictures your cards but mostly thank you for sending your love to me over these many miles that separate us.

Ray’s journal is complete. He mails it off to Else in New York and begins his letter writing which continues until he meets Else in San Francisco.

We should note the journal had a number of diagrams and sketches that we could not scan so they are not included.
Chapter 5

Back and Forth

The Evangeline has finally arrived in San Francisco where it is to undergo repair and refit in preparation for her next voyage to the South Pacific. The shafts and propellers will need particular examination to determine if any damage occurred as a result of the ship striking the submerged cable in Bora-Bora.

Once fit for sea again, she will make one more voyage with Ray aboard. We don’t know specifically what ports of call they made, wartime censorship prohibits Ray from revealing where they are, but we can guess that the “Eva” is where the Army is in the South Pacific.

Raymond’s letters continue. The first is transcribed for ease of reading.
“April 23, 1944
2:30 Sun Afternoon
5:30 by you
Slight drizzle
Outside but
not admitted by
“native sons”

Dear Else,

This is the letter to end all my prevasicating in answering yours which I now have all stapled together (cards diary Vmail & all) so will tell you what I’ve been doing since yesterday & then go thru them one at a time.

Yesterday afternoon I mailed all my letters one to you etc. & mother’s day card to mom & then Limehouse & I rode a trolley out to the hills and back stopped at Pepsi Cola at Market St for to see Aunt Julie back to ship for supper 4:00 P.M. slept till 8 washed and visited 2 nearby branch U.S.O.s to “case” them & then went to the Stagedoor Canteen out here, 5000 sailors, 500 soldiers, 50 women, Navy Dance band (good) & lots of smoke, so we hung around saw some poor entertainment & one good act Georgie Price (Viola will remember him) ate a liverwurst sandwich 3 cookies cupacawfee & a glass of milk – tickets, that’s all you get – had 3 steps of a dance and pounded our way back to the ship. To Bed.

Up this morning at 8:00 breakfast washed shaved & made church just at 11 & now into this mission report? What luck?? I am now a an authority on Korea. So what Ate lunch at Pepsi & back to ship to write to you.

You of 3/17/44  Letter #5

No fun here in S. F. without you either kid, I know why soldiers stand at street corners! Sounds like that congregational dinner was a Hell of a lot of work. Lucky Kluge hope she makes it alright. Glad you escaped secretaryship of club. What’s the idea of the leather frame for my pic ain’t I handsome enuff. Put me back in the bedroom where I belong you hear me, I love to be distracting. Francis deliberately misleads his mother seems he thinks not to break changes too quickly. Don’t tell her too much. His pop more reasonable. All the resolute I’ve made have nothing to do with what we’ll do in the future but with how much I’ll love & caress you! I can’t hurry home they won’t let me!

Letter #4 VMail

You 3/13/44  Glad to hear you went walking Hows Elaines heart affairs cooking. No good beer here so I don’t miss the pastrami so much. I will telephone if I have significant news but it will be usually at 2 or 3 A. M. Seems they lift the “delays” (telephone parlance) at 10:30 here so it take till 11 or 12 to get a rapid connection so its 2 or 3 in the morning by you. Glad
you like the pics & vase, eat the praline for it will be stale before I get home.
Are you “me Else”? yeah tell me taken tell me.

Letter #3

You 3/10/44  Glad coupons arrangement is working so nicely you may add
Bentley’s wife to the corp. next trip. Hey that scrap back idea sounds good
keep it up & you must keep the diary even if you don’t manage to write in it
every day. Rec’d Pauls letters + one straight from him & from John & from
Anton & will answer all soon. Not too much info in any of them and Joeseph
too. Thanks for digest of & Seitzs letter. Glad snapshots are nice. Sorry you
have to wait a month between letters. To Hell with the cleaning the dust will
be there tomorrow Mr. 13182 is the Doc & the guy who often puts K. H. Co.
on the censor stamp in ink is often R.L.R. youll note if you look. Taute Lissie
sure talks a lot & that matches mother very nicely. If you think for one minute
you fooled mom on my photograph you are crazy. She often sees & doesn’t
say so just wait and see. She probably examined it closely while you took off
your coat I wanna see your new suit cause I like green first & because I like
you in green most. Save the $20 refund on tax when you get it! 3 ribbons on a
bar now American Pacific & good conduct. Hair is growing in again &
mustache trimmed to norma.(?). Still got my money belt.

Letter # 2

3/7/44  Don’t mind you typing under these wartime conditions at all. Hope
you enjoyed Caspanos. Im afraid they spoiled Frankie a little bit. Mom wrote
and told me about the chapel visit. Guess her arm will be O.K. by now. Quite
some stuff from with sis as she wrote me. Got letter from Karl about house.
You don’t say you escaped the program committee --- Did You? “No Time for
Love” is what is wrong in our situation too. Wish I knew Paul’s exact
location.

2/28/44  Letter #1

The airmail letter was from Panama 1/31/44 & the Feb 10 from Bora Bora
Vmail. Boy it sure was hot in that place just wait till we hit it again in the
summer veh is min. I cant do any traveling Hollywood or otherwise till I
know if I get a furlough if not I can sight see. After so much sea ocean & air
& sun you get pretty well fed up. Get a map of the Pacific area a good big
one & I can tip you off better.

Easter cards

Thanks for both of them. I showed the guys the funny ones & now they
about know what you look like Well now the diary!! To Hell with the U.S.
Govt & their $111 income tax. F James sure can make his mom worry. Glad
Rose is better. Sure wish you hadn’t seen your country cousin. But I’m
undiscourageable we’ll hit it yet. Meningitis fatality way down to about 15%
in army. Water which closed hole. Glad you weigh 143. How do you
combine S.S. & church Exact sched. for Sun. Morning please! What were my 1943 earnings just for the hell of it? Ha Ha you aint got T.B. I saw “Old Acquaintance Too“ in Honolulu. Got letter from Spechts – Roselyn sure is not good Keep going up kid 144 looks good. You do model tell Mrs Madsen – for me! So you got a black sweater at last! Hey hit the boss for a raise again to match your new machine. Piss to your 89 bowling score! Sure would like to gulp a couple of Brownies & make you mad again. Whose giving you tips on where I’m going & docking? Listen to him & put it with info from letters & if it makes sense O.K. if not take my sayso. Where is your umbrellas? Oh yes you tell me later sorry sorry. So I’m not a godparent. Will handle rest of diary later on.

I met Fred Post in Honolulu U.S.O. playing ping pong. Same guy stationed in Hawaii, hasn’t heard from Alice lately.

All my love goes with this letter
Raymond

$20 fare
To Seattle from
here
April 26, 1944

I.T. Ramine

My dear wife,

Well no mail again today & questioned the guy who went over & still give you 20-1 that never went over there. Not much doing today up for breakfast, bring around the Doc. is going up to Fort Matson to find out what he said this afternoon & hope it's something! The East Coast is still a possibility for this ship but not a probability. Worked on the answers to the O.S. questionnaires today & of course they want to know everything. CQ tomorrow we will try & fill some of them in. Of course there are immeasurable copies & stuff I could use your agile fingers & your patience with them. I'm gettingumpy & impatient with waiting around. Folks around as long as I've been here at $1.80 an hour for soldiers so if I get no furlough maybe I can make some money. Kind of sitting around.

Had ourselves a nice last night & finished some souvenirs. We took the cable car which resembles a trolley trolley & then went into the Park Hopkins Hotel lobby which is all done in Pickled Pine so called. Then, from there we took the elevator to the 19 floor & the combination of the lift plus the floors really get you up high. The view arrangement is like this
The entire effect is astounding to even the cynical New Yorker of the view stupendous. Like being in a lighthouse with all the comforts of home. So we (Collins, Bentley + I) brought a drink gazed + left for the Francis Drake hotel cocktail lounge. Think glass moulded indirectly lighted ceiling, black leather upholstery to ceiling. Bought another drink then to the Peacem Room in another hotel very dark indirect light joint minor stones + tomatoes with 50 stores in their eyes. Finally to the Palace bar where they have a true offshoot Paris of Toussaint Read Pyne painting + then back to the ship. At 11:45 Bentley very funny + gay + Tobin cold sober (along with Collins) thinking how much fun being alone with you could be. Maybe that's why so many people frequent the waterfront sleep bars. They bring back no memories of before the war whereas the bottle ships remind one of chopper's line, only swimming for free if the news kept of some back to some good news. Hope you didn't mind my spending a couple of drinks last night but I sure was getting down as the month.
My dear sweet Else,

Just got your May 27 letter & haven’t had time to decode the sentences yet. Map not up yet. 9 more copies of your Eleavane poem made this morn. Got best one, the head for the real estate joke. Pay day today & am sending enclosed money order which leaves me with plenty. No card yet that you wrote. Alfred & I going up to the model shop to get a ship like I have he is much taken with mine. Eating aboard now steak for lunch. Will prob write more tonite want to go to P.O.

Yours in a hurry

Love Raymond

1 Somebody had to go.

2 Herbie says the John in compartment A2 is working.

    Alfred opens his eyes & sez et tu

    So now the John is Baritones Room.

Use c/o P.M. address till further notice.

Cash M.O. please.

All this chit-chat and still no word on when the ship will be ready for sea. Apparently there is some work to be done to repair the damage done in Bora-Bora. In his next letter Raymond has gotten some thin, almost transparent paper and has written small so as to get as many words on the paper as he can to conform to the wartime restrictions.
Dear Else,

I just received a card from you by going up to Fort Monroe as well as a tow of stuff from the P.M. for the crew of the ship Commander Forbes. 

It will all go to the first F.O. now—where the C/O P.M. & F.C. go and1 I believe will all go to the first F.O. now—where the C/O P.M. & F.C. go and1 I believe

If you are going to stop at the office are a big whole in your salary. I think please don't worry that I can't sell it.

I notice of F.O. who take you to dinner Thursday for writing so promptly and for sending Anton's letter along too. I thought of you Sunday at church. I'm afraid I wrote the wrong date.

Ray's attempts to conserve space often results in letters that are difficult to read but Else never seems to complain. Ray changes to a different paper for the remainder of this letter. Let's pick up on page 3.
We've all our stuff stored now in fair shape and locks all around. No suitable weather yet for taking pictures. Rain and drizzle.

Bought two books "10,000 Jokes, Toasts & Stories" which is a sort of can you top this. "Living Biographies of Religious Leaders which treat of 12 of them & so I should know who John Huss Calvin & Fox were when Donk preached on them next."

You've got some paper today as I find answering all my letters has exhausted my supply.

Want to see a show yesterday sort of like the Paramount & saw "Island in the Sun." (?) at a movie stage show.

-Alfred bought the life & tennis
Boys, I know just what you're doing up to Oct 4 now which takes care of the summer now how about the winter? Ha ha.

Had steak and bread yesterday at last.

If at some future time you should see in the first sentence of one of my letters the expression (10) times do as follows:

Take the first letter of the first word of the second sentence which is the beginning of the code word because you which will correspond to an area from left to right on the map and split it up the year into 10 equal parts. Then label these ten parts into another key. The rest of the word in the code sentence now
Here Ray describes his “code” to tell Else where he is.

refers to the small area, very
Because I love the heat

This will save to better locate things
so keep an eye out for the words two
times” any place in the letter.

Don’t mind your typists to me
I get so much more that way. Must be
some mess at the office. Keep away
ignore those new men at the office.
They may be more than this one. I was afraid you would be staying too long to make it. If funds allow and no work does not require you to stay, then I will send you something.

Hey, don't you go on a diet like you were a coffin. Now you are even heavier. You're worse than making it 150 now serious?

Will send you something film that looks together.

Weekdays mean write every day. They're fun to write. S.F. address seems to be sending it. It's delayed at Fort Monroe should expedite my getting them.

Last catalogue on those motor scooters you thought would be good for me. Their strength will only climb a 9% grade (up 1 ft in 9 ft) as if I will take it out as the Seaford car. It is a little fast. Also get maps from
two companies on waterproofing cellar. Both recommend pointing up the interstices with good cement and then applying their waterproof coating. Will send tomorrow.

Forge air mail envelopes with your single page letters still curving in very poor condition.

Will kid hope on Bill + Rita + what the name of the kid (?) soon. We may go about the 25th of Seattle may be our home part where known. Life not coming aboard but the final step will be Oakland for bottom work so it will be awhile. George must stay lonely & business + remember what fun we had on furlough.

Your - Craig
11:20 AM Wed. June 7
Watcha doin at 2:20 in the
dust & noise in the office
or is it over now

Dear Else,

This is undoubtedly because I have to fill my face again. Today I can just about compress my fingers enuff to hold a fountain pen. Yesterday Frankie & Herbie worked from 2 PM to 12 midnight and I from 3:30 to 12. Trucknen de luxe with calloused hands oh me my body is not used to physical labor. Last night I slept like a baby got up for breakfast & went back till 10:30. I feel pretty good now. Often the hand truck we used weighed more that the boxes especially those big boxes of Kotex.

Alfred went up again to the model shop & bought a hand drill & some bits, more wood & a bell for his model. He worked all day yesterday on it & will soon be even with me.

We will go to drydock on Saturday & how long we will be there is dependent on what they find wrong with the screws. To scrape & paint the hull takes but 48 hours.

The work over here is progressing slowly but is drawing to a close. They have so many men working that much is done every day.

Just ate & will wait now to see if I can get a letter from you before I finish this.

Well just got two of your letters plus the newspaper enclosure. Thanx we heard rumors about it but didn’t know how serious or how close it was to you the CP gas I mean.

You write nothing new from Viola on the Massapequa project – Whats old? Did they go and & what then.

Your letter June 2 4:45 PM arrived here June 7 at 12:30 PM as did yours of June 1 12:45 PM. Glad you got some of mine.

So a cheap dress is now $8 & you get to fix it yet. You should see the price of clothes out here – sky high.

Tell Gracie to keep away from The Merchants of the Movies or they’ll sell her a bill of goods.

Will try to scribble a line to Blocks but not too enthusiastic about it.

Sure sounds like you inherited a nice job with Pam & the mail. Do you suppose they’ll have such significance that they must be forwarded. Wish you’d had some help on that Brownie tour. I’ll be glad when thats over altho I bet the kids won’t be. Gotta or hada send you the money so I’ll have a stock when I get back.
Carpy didn’t get into any trouble when he was high but forgot where he put his keys & money for a day or so but found them safe. Too bad I don’t drink – I’d be broke in no time.

True there’s a closet in our room but with all the junk we two have we can’t get it all in.

Now we have a large drawer 3 ft wide for which we made a cover & have it shoved under the bed. So to Hell with the footlocker.

Alright so you put velvet on the hatracks you gagask, I’d have done it but just didn’t get to it.

Couldn’t understand why you hadn’t heard from the Mr Carpona can now.

What the – are you adopting the Adams kids?

Very cold and windy out nights here but very pretty full moon – miss my arms about you!

Guess Clarence will be off soon Didn’t know he’s in Navy.

Well baby will rest awhile and then go to work & get some of the stiffness out of me. Thanx for all your letters. Be good & get some sleep & stay well cause I love you

Rayme
Dear Stupid,

Well worked again last night with the same house. Company only lasted one night. Must get 3 1/2 hour sometimes. Went past today after dinner and all went out had 
$3.87 which will last me for three weeks. Don't think they'll put me on any more. Have plenty of meat I won't have anything. Have plenty of money. Have read the ten Commandments 12 times since I've been here. Write me and let me know what you want me to do. Must have been a tough day Saturday. Spent all day writing letters and got your letter. Must have been some time since I saw you. I'll write you a long letter this week. Please write as soon as possible. You have plenty of meat. Write me and let me know what you want me to do. I'll write you a long letter this week. Please write as soon as possible. You have plenty of meat.
On Sunday, June 11, the ship goes into drydock at Alameda. Ray describes his impressions.
Dear Lee,

Today we moved to deck 2 and have just finished getting the water pumped out. The bottom is pretty well cratered with coral but the point of the hull looks good underneath. The crew involved with the cable at Havana looks surprised so we shouldn't stay long in the area. Of course the steering engine is to be fixed here also.

No mail from you today so I will attempt to send your letters on at least some mail before you get this, if not tonight.

Went to an attended Episcopal church today and have never heard such a poor uncoordinated singing during service in a long time. Even the kid said he thought we would have done better staying home. Besides we missed dinner.

The Captain regularly spends 500.00 dollars on maintaining the ship. I wonder?

Saw the Judy Hardy pitch last night and found it good as well as the other feature film in White.

Will get off now and think about where to go next. You should see what it's like.

Missed you in church this Sunday.

As my name theme song for this trip by
On June 20 comes word of the next adventure of Raymond and the “Eva”.

Dear Else,

Last night the two kids & I saw the Buffalo kid picture & I found it good as you did. In fact I sold them on your review of it & they were not disappointed. When we come out Campy called up me dry now you must know we are still about. So for tomorrow we get supplies aboard at 2 P.M. There we go for a run aboard.
Ray goes on to describe the work to be done before getting the ship to Seattle. The next day Ray finds he's out of paper to write Else. Two days later he manages to find some paper and writes again. Before leaving San Francisco the ship finds herself with other problems as Ray describe in his letter of the 24th of June.

My dear Else,

No letter from you today but I got one yesterday afternoon so I can answer that.

Lots of work today getting things in shape for the super dooper inspection on Monday & to all intents and purposes we shall have to work tomorrow too. Since there was no water yesterday or today we are in a swell fix. Finally shaved tonite from a bucketful I shared with Carpy. We all are going to the Y tonite for a good scrubup.

Yesterday afternoon Lime & I toolted around Chinatown & made some purchases some of which I am sending to you via Parcelpost & which must not be opened till after 5 on July 3rd. You hear me!

When I got back from our walk the guys for the chlorinator were here but due to water complications they will be back to finish the job on Monday.

Spent the evening playing a little sax & reading the chlorinator handbook. To bed early & slept past breakfast this A.M.
Still have some dough left so will have a beer or so tonite if I don’t fall asleep first!!

Well I see we have our mapreading right at last. It should work out nicely. We are still leaving on Tuesday & still going to Seattle & from there we’ve got a 4 weeks trip to make & we’ll be back again to either S. F or Seattle. So it won’t be so long without hearing from you. One thing you didn’t do for me this trip, Write me a letter not to be opened till some day in the future ah well I have your old diary to read.

Glad you liked Jacobowsky & sorry you tangled with Piccadilly Management, it takes so much out of the evening when one has an argument.

Boy it isn’t warm here at all. The night in the noodle factory we near froze under 2 blankets.

See if you can keep Sat’s clear now will ya life’ll be tough enuff during the summer now.

Will prob. take a run to Honolulu for the short trip who knows tho.

Gotta bath now & mail a package to a sweetheart & this letter. Be good & get plenty of rest I’ll kiss you right on the lips tonight or the reasonable (?) facsimile over my bed.

Yours as (I love you) ever

Rayme

The days in San Francisco don’t seem to have gotten dull as we read in this next letter of 29 June 1944 as Ray makes Sergeant!
Ray goes on to say *The work on the ship looks but half done so we expect to be here awhile yet. My sargeant papers came thru.*
*All my love to you with this letter*

*Raymond*

Ray has gotten promotion with little fuss.
Chapter 6
At Sea Again

The ship finally got underway and ends up in Seattle, WA. in time for the Fourth of July and thus begins another chapter of Raymond and the Army as the “Eva” begins her second voyage to the South Pacific. Ray writes on the 5th:

Thanx for the anniv, card    Wed July 5, 1944
I forgot the other day.    3:35 P.M.

My dear sweetheart.

This will be my last letter to you before we leave on this short (?) trip for it is going off with the M.Ps. The advance guard is already on & we are to load & get off real soon.

Yesterday after taking a gang to the hospital & listening to a lecture Al & I beat it to the P - I office & Bill took us for a scenic drive on the way home. After polishing off a couple beers we roasted franks & ate potato salad & watermelon & lots of other stuff which made up for missing lunch. So then we went for boat and canoe rides & sat around the beach fire until 10 P.M. when Irma a friend of theirs drove is into town & so to bed.

This day we are fixing & working out duty schedules for the coming trip. Oh yes we did get in about 3 hands of pinochle yesterday but as you write in y’r June 27 letter I got today one doesn’t improve by not playing.

Happy to hear you walked but wish I could have been in on Hilda’s Ice Cream. Tell her so! Give my congrats. to Dick. Hurrah for Karl he’ll soon be a good superintendent. Hope the color pics turn out well. I trust your are happy at moms & that you will enjoy a months home cooking.

It will be nice to come home to dinner again, you’ll probably be spoiled & wont like the greasy vest when you get back. Give my regards to Grandma & my mom. May God watch over you all till I get back. I hope He will forgive my not going to church these many Sundays but no passes, so cant do. Be good now & don’t try to do too much & get sick. See Dr. Connel some cool evening before maybe something happens. I leave Seattle Schmidt’s in good health – Bought a case of beer in return for all their hospitality but that’s all I could think of. Maybe hell send you a copy of all the pics he took.

Remember this guy in the Pacific still loves you please, till I get to kiss your again. Rayme
As you will see the following letter is in a V mail format similar to a couple that we've experienced before. This one comes in a two-part version. Raymond sent very little V mail. Apparently “The Tub” as Ray likes to call it, has crossed the Equator once again, but now Ray, as a “Shellback”, is on the administration end of the line crossing ceremony.
My dear Ellen, Seems like you’ve done little instead of one but times are tough all over. Due to our unique flexibility we’ve gone on with no chance of mailing anything off to you. When we crossed the line we hoped for a celebration, instead we’ve jogged along among the medical shells without seeing the Poppies than their faces. So far our model has slow but satisfactory progress. Stopping on the raging main require a lot of sympathetic inflexion of the mind. The doc has initiated some writer closest to the detachment more in the group. It has been so warm that many of us have taken advantage of the extra light available in the hospital area to sleep there. Entirely continue well but we don’t get the same lift from them again but the one starts faster so I don’t anticipate much of a reaction. We have no Collins aboard so we are forced to the books we have for our intellectual enjoyment.

V-Mail
In his letter of September 1, 1944 and Ray remarks on Army discipline and a number of other subjects.
My dear Eliza,

The intense sun in these parts hurts my eyes every time I glance out the window. Conceding my normal anxiety, it will be a welcome change. It is hard to reconcile the overtness to the loud speakers with this environment. It would be more appropriate if they played 'Boots Boots --- they're no discipline from the war. The fact between water houses, some of us are beginning to look for Sanga himself.

To add to our discomfort we are now forced to wear shirts when eating in the field, which removes the best advantage to eating down there and adds to its many disadvantages. This war is teaching us the value of Democracy, not because of the cost of fighting it, but because we begin to appreciate what it is like to live in an absolute dictatorship such as this army becomes under certain individuals. The intrepidity of free will is always imbibed with power, we are not children.

Once again we are off one of those S W forays, from out here which the Tonkinese wound in the South Sea, Foreign Island. Combined with an only blue sea, white clouds & sunshine.
I can see how mankind the uninitiated could be 
actually. Of course it is a dark-lying, malaria- 
infected swamp with jungle covering reality 
inside, nothing in discernment. I saw my feet 
walking in a long time yesterday the sight was 
annoying in my chest was not done by poison but was simply 
our natural aches of cruelled bodies. Even 
her Cinderella bosom slept as mild her breasts 
resembling two deflated sausage balloons. 
Her warm reminiscences was numbed as much when 
she began to scratch that I thought I saw 
track of Prince in the Bronx Zoo. 
As it most places the natives come out in small 
boats but these have very little to trade except 
some任命的 that amount to all of the 
constant ward. Nevertheless drink was brought 
 yesterday the nude legs being especially 
riches floating 1 shirt for inconceivable. 

The heat makes concentration on anything 
more involved than a fairy tale almost impossib 
and the old Cosmopolitans would have made 
good reading even if the stories were mostly 
true which are impossible of logical relation. 

But the fire is often now for the light 
will put that in a shape he will show the amount 
of time & when notfinally get to reading them. 

The detachment is the round of the weeks self 
as one leaves day follows another so that we 
are counted only on Tuesday when checks self 
are received and remain at the week one Sunday.
when there is no famine. We did get an appendectomy from another ship. The patient lived despite some
fever in the post-operative but we all thought the
surgeon would have to get some solution
intravenously after all the preparation they did.
The doc has done a few minor ops and the sur-
gical team seems quite well now. Doc has promised
to put down the needle on my big toe and take
one for all time my supposed nail problems as
soon as things are quiet.

Tout de + know well and the box on both
our heads is slowly growing so that our position
to K and ad is slowly fading. Hackett has
written to the Army Institute for info on the
resistance paper which they offer in connection
with quints in few colleges. He recommended
it. Homework & school will make life is for away
for the youngsters in the detachment.

We hear the good news from France but
I find it hard to evaluate it. Whether Germany
hasn't withstood another winter of bombard and
being on the factories it is hard to tell from here
since we are deprived of the usual "report from
Stockholm of a recently returned traveler from
the Reich." If all the thousand of Nazis have been
killed or captured as the dispatches say it is
hard to picture what their removal is made of.
The dice must be getting this close to
the net about them differently a smaller
scene each day.

Of course the Pacific is coming in so
more interesting battle of SUCH FORCES. With the maps we were equipped we followed the enemy's progress as we would track a rabbit with considerable success. Sometimes we would only see it, but could not catch it.

So far we were not near the middle of the grid, or the rocket range. Once you saw these slopes you can appreciate the difficulties inherent in maneuvering the immigrants of paper from the island. We are still about a long way to go and it can't help but feel that moving through the shallows, and through it, leaving the tactics to provide of entertainment (the next to another great book) would be easier.

Carpin has gotten off several letters more than I because he had another boat with the chlorination gel well known habit of proximation. Since our men you people are still in close contact I reassure my guilty conscience with the hope that you hear about us even if not from me for awhile. When I look at the long list of people I should write to I start my usual grumblings. I feel particularly guilty about Roddy and Paul. The group on board is quite old and have been in the field before. An enormous number of them troops to the call every morning and some of the last to buy.

The wind from your home we left our boat and try to keep a little pace lest we remain a little. Can imagine you getting out the same books and digest and rejuvenating what winter clothes you've left.
If it's the reputation of models children
are alongside and have been all morning playing
in godliness which is entirely unattainable in
her mind, and they all gained together and some
it was a startling experience when we expected
some monks to jump out of the jungle, to hear
the strain of Stand up Stand up for Jesus come
floating up in this smooth voice. The words
were then owned distinct but the music was
unmistakable. Since this is
one of the
fields for mediocrity, I wonder if coming the
money we back home have put in the half
envelope marked foreign mission has actually
gotten half way around the world with a message.

I trust you are well and not preoccupied
with your books and web work, for I
wonder sometimes about old threads and new places, whether the
living is worth the energy of the WPA with its
the silence from the struggle. From where I am a
Canadian nurse, many 45's, Department
in Wellington, say in Kedzie Hospital, more
study & work. While the beat is on there's
continuously unique voices appear, rarely but
becoming newer, one of the better things
in the history and the future which a
world as the reference for two changes
some standing words after 

from standing words after
When Ray gets an ingrown toenail tended we're treated to his dramatization of events.

My long legged Sweetheart,

Rainy Thursday, and cool too, for a change. What better to do than get off a letter to my unheard of wife; I can spare you ten minutes after all the time I've vested this last week. Doubt the necessity and even I believe I can show cause.

(On the 20th the mostest colossal event of the trip occurred – Doc got around to cutting off a section of one of my infamous ingrown toenail. Tickets for the event were gone two weeks in advance & scalpers prices prevailed on the opening night. The house lights dimmed, the star tramped out into the livid glow of the operating lights in Hawaiian shorts & a long flowing gown while the bit players grouped themselves about the prostrate patient, trembling in awe of such unearthly cleanliness aboard this now cockroach infested tub. With a Lionel Barrymore grumble of “Novocaine Syringe”, a flash of chromium, & a significant look over the operating masks at Kildare MacDonald, the action started. Snip, scrape, cut, tie, hemostat, sulfia, gauze, sponge; on it went. Half hour later the last pat was given the last strip of adhesive tape and the audience let out a sign of grief - for the Sergeant wasn't dead, dammit. But they are, of course, awaiting with drooling anticipation the next presentation of Lux Radio Theatre entitled “The Left Toe” (with the hope that a burial at sea will furnish a decent climax.)

Soo, I've been taking it easy for about a week now after a day or two in bed; where my hunger wasn't satisfied with the crusts brothers Carpano & Limehouse got for me hardly assuaged my raving appetite. Once again I'm eating regularly & except for a slight limp & a shuffling gait I remain fairly normal except when Doc changes the dressing & the bloody ole' gets another shot of disinfectant & Gruber personally tests the reflexes of the sole of my foot.

Some unprintable -------- is holding our mail down at our first port of call & we are becoming exasperated & sullen with the delay. Its now over a month since your last letters arrived, each day brings a rumor & bedtime a contradiction, and a mail bag would.......and Ray goes on about shipboard
life but more importantly to him, how Else is doing and how he’d dearly love to be with her.

On October 22, 1944 Raymond seems to be in a port that he rather likes and we find him in good humor.
In his October 24, 1944 letter Ray describes his feelings about leaving a port he liked on paper that is so thin it's translucent.
Oct. 24, 1944
Somewhere in the
SSW Pacific

My dear Else,

Weigh the anchor, deck dept stand by fore and aft, all ashore that’s going ashore,- so once more we are off and as the setting sun tints the strutted masts a bloody red we wave a fond farewell with fervent prayers that we will be back in this fine port in less than ten years time. Deign, please, to judge from the jocund salutatory opening, what a fine city we found. In my world-wide (ahem) travels I’ve seen no urban neighborhood that so closely resembles our own New York. But for the different names on the windows a tendency to make a’s in the language into ai’s and a few “foreign”, native soldiers it did not require much concentration & I was back in N.Y. again. Even the architecture of the buildings is similar stretching from our moderns such as the MaGraw Hill bldg on 42 street thru the brownstones to the baroque of the Gould Mansion on Fifth.

The Amer. Red Cross had at least two estab. that I know of and provided us with a fine trip out of the city to a scenic spot about 67 miles out & threw in lunch to boot. We got some pictures so eventually you will see some of the beauty too. Needless to say with film as scarce as it is everywhere, we don’t shoot everything indescriminantly any more but save the precious stuff for what we hope are superdoopers.

We went to two legit shows-Malnar’s “The Plays the Thing”, which tho I’ve known it for years I’d never seen. It was excellently done at a play house out of the city which while not quite so crude poignantly reminded me of The Cherry Lane Theatre in the Village (Remember the night we were rained out in the 2nd act of The Drunkard?) Three acts with coffee (?) & a solitary cracker to warm us at the second interval “Victoria & Her Hussar” was quite a different sort of thing - a musical comedy & a revival at that. The soprano lead must have been playing it for old times sake for the romantic appeal of a horse at 64 years of age definitely - 273 degrees Kelvin. The high notes made me shiver in unison with the scenery & I caught myself rising on the seat to help her get somewhere near F above high C without her blowing a lung. I guess in wartime one doesn’t retire the old hacks to the ‘sun & pastime’ anymore. Suffice it to say that the chorus in GI parlance was well stacked up. Guess I’ll soon belong to the bald headed rows! It was a Nelson Eddyish thing with uniforms in scarlet & knee breeches.

Then too, I saw Doc Wassel. I know I am far behind you on this! Outside of its appeal as a medical picture and Cooper’s outstanding portrayal of Cooper the story was quite a bit better than the film.
On several evenings when the queues were too long in front of the theatres we went to the Trocadero or “The Troc” as it came to be known. Two orchestras, one an all girl Spitaling on the off beat gang & the other a jam outfit. The floor is bigger than any I’ve seen and the roof manages to support itself without pillars so the unbroken breadth of dancing space is inviting. There was no lack of dancing partners for the now-departed Yanks had established a good rep - which I promptly managed to ruin. Of course you my pet are not hep anymore - you haven’t done the “Hoky-Poky”. Yipes lass I’ll have to show you that squar dance. Rumba Conga Bomba Tango they do a little of all these down here. I waltz!

On two days we went riding – once with the junior 3rd mate & once with Woody an engineman, out of town a way - about as far as Westchester would be from N.Y. On the first day got a beautiful ride but the second day got one of those powerful beasts who turned on a dime. Got out about a half mile & took a quick corner & the saddle & I ended up under the horses belly – the saddler had left the cinch much too loose & secured by a buckle only – so we promptly secured it with the old ranch tie & from then on the horse & saddle & I proceeded in the usual fashion. About $1.60 for 2 ½ hours. Except for the invariable aches and pains & a set of hands which have no strength from holding the beast in till we could hit a flat stretch I am recovering once again at sea.

We did the zoos & parks and the hotels. At the last the schnaps schedule is very peculiar. Lounges 3 - 4 PM & 5:30 - 6:00 PM. Bar 11 - 6. Not a drink to be had after six oclock in town except bootleg. I must be getting to be a true inebriate – 5 rum collins in 30 minutes up & cold sober – you guessed it no alcohol in the drinks, so after that experiment quits buying the orange juice.

Made some purchases which I hope will surprise you when you get them. Bought a book or two & a map.

Ray continues for another 5 pages but we will move along to November 10 when Ray finds a B flat tenor sax player to join his happy band.

Nov. 10, 1944
Somewhere, no where
in the S.W. Pacific

Dear sweet Else,

I certainly cant complain about being short changed at the N. York end of this interrupted conversation we carry on; once again three of yours within the ten I last received and now ‘my time is your time’, so here goes. Did I
never tell about how garrulous I become after plowing thru the mis. copy of the Mirror you sent. I just take the dope from Winchel’s column and lord it over the other New Yorkers. The last copy had a description of Staten Island as ‘a remote borough of axe murders & farms’. Frank’s ego went down fifty percent. I have yours of Oct ?, 10 and 21.

We are once more hove to (in state) and waiting the word from the war lords who manufacture our destiny. So today there is not even a brand new rumor, count this day wasted.

Found a boy in the crew who has been pushing a B flat tenor sax & so we teamed up with my E flat managed to get some harmony. Last night we added the chaplin’s organ & the resulting mess was cacophony at its worst. Ruled up a couple of oak tag folders this morning & will attempt to write a couple of parts. You know how weak I am on transposition, so the results will probably be very poor.

Did I tell you that about a week ago we did a bunionectomy (just what it sounds like). Essentially it consists of an incision above the bump, flapping the skin back, chiseling off the extra outcropping bone, sewing up, and casting the big toe back into a straight line position. The old steward that had it done was quite comic on the way out of the anesthetic - claimed his sandals should be taken off, they were too tight. Lying abed now he says his feet hurt him as much as if he had shoes on!

The tonsilectomy the doc performed on the Jr. 3rd mate Williston with whom I’ve gone horseback riding several times. He has been along with us since we left N.Y. in January, a record for the crew on this rust-bucket. His fiancé is a S. Bklyn gal & teaching him Brooklyese over his Wisconsin drawl never fails to provide amusement.

Since we’ve been here the Ch. Steward managed some cigars & cigarettes to replenish our dwindling hoards. Alfred & I can once again sit back like “hidalgos” after supper & smoke an “El Ropeoh Grande” provided the ventilators are working.

The weather is full of brilliant sunshine and devoid of breezes so that by the afternoon the heat has penetrated even down to B deck. Going back to nature is our solution. I shall most certainly detest clothes more than ever after this war. Beware.

Got the mattress and pillow out in the sun today.

Ray goes on and tells us he’s got clean bed linen and a fan. He’s in heaven! We move along to the first of December 1944 and find Ray in a down mood with some complaint about the hot weather.
Dec 7, 1944

Somewhere in the S. W. Pacific

My dear Else,

Well this is the third anniversary of the war and from the speed the shindig is moving we shall probably celebrate the tenth before its time to go home. Damn the Nipponese the bugs and good old tropic isles. As you can imagine it is once again nice and warm.

You should have received the tray – a coaster by now from Limehouse’s uncle – wonder if you liked it, I hope so. Bert had one sent home too.

Frankly there is little new here plugging along at our usual rapid clip. The Chief Engineer is in our room reading. He & I have become almost cronies despite our radically different character – he bitches all the time & I only intermittently. By helping him we can find out what’s cooking in the engine room. Hope he tips us off before a boiler blows apart. I enjoy clotching with him since I have no Plymouth to take apart any more & miss fixing things.

Made some spars this afternoon and stained them tonight. Gave the rigging a glance this afternoon on the plans and quickly shut them up. Seems like too much when viewed as a whole; but rope by rope I think it will come along. The two texts we bought on boat model bldg are very nice and complicated putting so many things extra in that they are confoosing. Wish you were here to enjoy the makeshift we employ to surmount our lack of space and tools.

Is Oklahoma still playing? The records go on interminably outside our port.

Had a game of Pinochle a few nights ago – lost, No cash.

Once again being under an ally who has his own doctors we are only slightly busy despite the great bacteriologist Von Leuhenhok Grubing. Pilenoideal cysts, a little high blood pressure & thats about all thats doing. Got me a first rate sunburn on my back which promptly singed off my prickly heat & good riddance to it. My toe is wholly free of bandages and looks as if it might come out quite good.

No mail since Oct 25 when we were down south and we are hoping for some at this next port which will be tomorrow. Wonder where the Christmas packages are right now.

This should reach you about Christmas Eve. I only wish I could write all the happiness & good wishes I have for you. But the pen stumbles a little & the chest gets an iron band around it. This year will make two in a row I’ve missed. Give my love to Mother Sister & Walter as well as your family for you shall probably see them all that evening. May the New year bring us better luck. Goodnight, love, I hope you like everything you get!
Ray's last letter of 1944 was written on Christmas Eve from aboard the Evangeline.

Somewhere in the
Central Pacific Area
Dec 24

My dear Elze,

Well there's no ten more shopping days to Xmas eve there if you've not got it all done now your time has run its course! Guess I just had better not develop that theme too far in case you did forget someone or something & are still irritated by it.

It is really Dec 23 tonite but this won't get off for a day or so... the predated heading. Looks like your packages miscarried & the cards you sent will have to substitute. Doc with the aid of a R. Cross worker we are carrying has made quite a splurge with the Christmas decorations for the so many patients. Wooden tree, garlands, lights, wrapped gifts etc “Pop”, a character actor from Hollywood aboard here, is going to play Santa and has been busy for days conniving hip boots & mop beards. All we shall need for a complete celebration is some ‘Jungle Juice’.

Occasionally we have a little trouble with out disturbed patients in which case Rohner’s weight is worth more than his mentality. It is hard to see where all their strength comes from.

We are busy gathering together our souvenirs & boxing them just in case we ever get home.

Not much news aboard 'cept our nurse has an uncle & aunt on St. James Ave. in Elmhurst. Tch Tch must behave now!

Keep wondering if you have a new job yet?
Hope you liked your plant!

Love
Raymond

The Evangeline returned to San Francisco early in 1945 as reported in the following telegram.
Raymond was granted a furlough that allowed him to spend January with Else in New York. The telegram below tells of his planned arrival in New York.
Chapter 7

Time on Land

As January 1945 came to an end Raymond’s time with Else came to an end. He again boarded the train but this time he was headed west – away from his Dear Else. He reported his arrival in San Francisco in the telegram below.

![Telegram Image]

The same day he wrote the following letter. By now the reader can get a sense of Ray’s attitude by the size of his words.
February 1945

The other one went at 4:30 P.M. This one is at 7 P.M. after supper with a telegram into the evening.

Franciscan Hotel
350 Geary Street
San Francisco
Zone 2

Dear Sweet Elsie what a joy it was to receive your letter and to have this news this gathered today.

Reading what a long a trip we had. After such a happy goodbye it was difficult to hold back the tears after climbing our stuff down in a car at 12:30 a.m. it was time for us to go to bed. We all sat in a coach which got fixed off all alleen dressed again we went for the three cheers and found between all of civilization so we stayed in the restaurant for the night and was well

aside was full too pretty cold out and we had to take a ride with me sitting on it. About 3 AM much of the train emptied out - west bound we NY from Schenectady. C.F. is plant and we all got some sleep in a seat. After our next stop, we got all the exercise it was a third long. Chicago we went to the USA at something in Chicago we went to the USA at something where and was well afraid because the cold was so strong before the cold of

the cold of the cold and I took a chance. Had a good cold air there in a restaurant and hotel but too cold to walk for 1/4 hour it was very much cold inside of

14. But all the colds are out of and I got up again and led us to go to 14 at the C N W station.
I'd like to say that Robert once again came to our rescue. He went to the platform near the train, waited for the train to arrive, and then met us at the exit. We sat in the 2 reclining chair coaches. We all managed to ride in the front of the train to Chicago.

The days were long, and one day, we walked the rest of the coaches to lunch and fell into a train where the driver was. We were lucky to have made the whole trip from Chicago.

Arriving at Chicago, we felt relieved and happy. We met a friend of ours, and we walked around to visit. We saw John Daly and met him to discuss the details of the trip. John's wife, Jane, was there. She lived in a furnished bedroom with no cooking privileges for $20 a month. The bus stop of Fort TT was exactly four miles away.

Tomorrow, we will visit the emergency housing authority and meet Sister Adele, who is a former nurse. She was the one who picked us up on the train. She was kind and sweet and made us feel welcome. Even though the train was a bit crowded, it was worth it to come out.

I realize the following advantages:

- Tough ride for some by train
- Easy ride by air, but economy offset by expenses.
3. Cost - 2 lbs. 1 lbs. almunit
4. Giving up your job - possibly you might
find something good out here - neither suggest
nor recommend this the banks would keep us
for quite awhile.

5. You can take all your clothes out with
you (4 mins by train 150 lbs. baggage fare by rail).
You may have to have some sent to you
after you have an address here.
6. You would have to get considerably tough
out of bank & carry it with you as I was
checked.

Against all this we would have a month
or more together.
When I said you could go to H. A. Simon's
flats with Willie or Beachie or someone of
you wanted to hang around.

If too many people you know and the city.
either

That the story laid - you leave the country

to do the trip to make the job to quit.
If you come we shall find somewhere to
live if I have to, should not a war. What do you
think the country or not if do not know,
will continue looking & trying.

Love forever
Else did make the journey to be with Ray in San Francisco. That is obvious as there were no letters exchanged during the rest of February. Evidently because the Evangeline was not ready to sail Ray had lots of free time. There is no explanation of why but by March Ray was attending a “Officers Candidate Prep School”. That idea was mentioned in previous letters. Else and his addresses show on the following envelope.

Ray’s experience in Officers Candidate Prep School was not pleasant as can be seen in his letters.
Dear Flee,

Point main my handwriting the hands are not so steady after all the work today had last night at 11 PM except 5 this morning. What a dayI worked out for everything I did throw the rifle around not great out of ditchies and came a 5 minute talk on organization of the army tomorrow get one 15 minute current events - gotta study 2 plus times read down the newspapers 7 that paper for meetings tomorrow. Very tired so my mood is pretty low, if I get enough deuter tomorrow I should not get off I will have to attend another week of this hell without melatonin I still have your last wish to have stayed on Five.

Write please

Raymond

April 9, 1945
9:20 PM.

Dear Flee,

Dormquiet leader for tomorrow till five o'clock tomorrow which includes getting a lot of work done in the latrines. Drew 4 gigs today too which is fair some hard six or more. Also had my explore at post of normal of armw which was a 15 minute assignment and I did it in 11 for which I got hell - ask me. Tomorrow calcium will demonstrate on four services in 10 minutes I hope they come out O.K.

Hope your job is continuing peaceful I don't go beyond it isn't worth it. Better had my chance whereas go to bed.

Lone

Raymond

Honors from yellow
Dear Flee,

March 9, 1945

Today I saw my niece—yesterday I missed and it was a shame. I found a place to eat at a little shop near the station and got myself a sandwich. I found the field and got my clothes washed. I went to work after which I had to exercise to give me some strength. I got them off partly and got my finger showed off by the nurse. She then put them in the radiostation until we came around. Today got back again for not keeping my rifle but down. Got only 4 days today. Hurry up.

Wondershow I will talk tomorrow for 10 minutes. Hope my niece comes back. Subject: Combat patrol. A hell of a lot of them. What about that? Ask me which is my favorite. It is the one I think best. Remember your letters and am very thankful. Love you.

[Signature]

April 17, 1945

Dear Flee,

April 17, 1945

Well we are almost at the end of another day, or of course another tough one. Yesterday afternoon I was very hot and humid as we fought with constant enemy, and I fell down the shades. Including what little breeze there was, we went off with a snarling sound, and we were from the days all the way to Friburgh. The A.I. got caught as the closed windows last night, going 5:00 to 6:30, which is the only free time we have—previously three hours. And I heard company. They are still running the rest off and picking up pay for winding a final attack. But your Sunday 20th letter yesterday must come today. Still no word from the boat. Have no assignment for tomorrow so few writing. This is the last home we have for study hall at night. Pretty tired but the body is sleeping and some of the rest is coming off. There won’t be too much going on. Will go to the middle of night work.

[Signature]
April 18, 1945

My dear Wife,

Here I am with no assignment tomorrow again. Wonder if they have put me on the squad team for the afternoon material to practice on? Did give one encore in the field today but nothing fascinating about it. With all my window washing done here a welcomes purpose for tomorrow I was able to get an extra fifteen

hour of study which I feel good. Two hours of drill with a ten minute break between was a thrill just before noon today was a swell relief. At noon I got a milk at the PX for lunch replaced some of the canteen but the milk slipped with me till the evening.

I am also thankful to have received that package with me.

Was just finished reading your Monday April 10th letter and enjoyed it. Glad to hear you are well that you are keeping up and not giving too much trouble to the folks of Bellin. Suggestions about your conversation about home? I trust the plane will do it tad what in simulated cold and that you have a job unless you manage to get a raise. That would ease your mind about money and you can go to LA. with a job unless you manage to get a raise. That would ease your mind about money and you can go to LA.
There are no more letters from Ray’s time at Officers Candidate Prep School. As a matter of fact there are no letters until August. Apparently Ray did not make it through that program successfully. Since the war ended in Europe on 8 May 1945, it could be the Army determined it no longer needed more officers and terminated the program. The Evangeline had probably sailed so Ray spent that time with Else while awaiting a new assignment.

In August that new assignment arrived. That is the next chapter in our story. We should include the birthday card Ray sent to Else in April 1945.

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A Birthday Wish for my Wife

To tell you that I love you
Chapter 8
Final Voyage

As was previously indicated Raymond spent a good bit of the summer of 1945 in San Francisco with Else. We have no record of that time. By August Raymond was ordered to go to San Pedro, CA, and report to a ship named the John Lykes.

The Lykes was a C1-B Ship built by the Maritime Commission – one of 173 built during the war. It was 418 feet long, 80 wide, displaced 8000 tons with a top speed of 14 knots. When configured as an Army troop ship it was capable of carrying nearly 3000 troops. At the time Ray boarded her, she had just returned from Okinawa with mail and deceased servicemen’s belongings which they had picked up in Ulithi. Rumor is that the John Lykes is going to Manila and in the letter following another rumor has it that hostilities have ceased.
SAT  Aug 11, 1945

8:35 P.M.

Dear Ingrid,

I thought I might call you tonight, tell you all was well but decided to board my luggage and write you instead. Since we can still sleep aboard the ration money amounts to only \$1.70 a day and I believe I am protecting within that. Let me see:

Breakfast - 62
Milk + pie - 21
Fast et B - 25
Nurse's Thr - 30
Scenic RR. - 25

Supper - 65

I have walked that long
8 2.38 Bakersville, Hopetown

back and forth. It is quite a town more interesting and less commercial than L.A. It is not just another Atlantic City but a substantial city, city is not right but full of people. I was told there was a great deal of shopping about - that much from going through the window shopping alone but

Unconfirmed Dispatch Routes
ARMY AND NAVY Y. M. C. A.
921 South Beacon Street
SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA

My favorite sport. The hotel are
quite high & look clean and substantial
that is those on the beach. The town
has its coronary ones too. Bars are
not too numerous & of a better class
than S F's--each comes with one police!

What I really started to write this
letter for—Bill said as follows—
he has a vacation coming soon, will
take it as soon as war is over &
gas is opened up (—which appears to
be imminent tonight!)—He would
head for Seattle passing S F. & could
pick you up. This appears to be a
good setup. Also it may be so much
Schmidt snow! Along these lines
it may be good to be prepared by
ridding yourself of that sheet seq.
& lepce. I will not need any of that
stuff as let it go. Better send it to
Alice & let Mr. F. toss it in his cellar. We
can let it lie there till I come home.
Keep in touch with Bill on this.
Willie let me read a letter from Alice in which she wrote:

The bell out of chime for not thanking Grammar for her last present. She seemed to be in a particular solemn and sarcastic mood. Bill was very irritated with it. So would I be.

Well, I'ld the feet hurt a little long now so I shall have a glass of milk and work my way back to the ship sooner or go to bed.

T.A. - P.O.E. is awaiting orders from Washington - the paper says this probably means a further delay in my sailing. I believe I shall know ahead of time sufficiently to call you the night before. I should call Valencia about 7:30 PM. so that definiteness should free your evenings after that. No letter from you yet. Just situation snap. I shall continue to write you constantly.

Love
[Signature]
Ray doesn't seem impressed with the news about being home for Thanksgiving. We'll see. But on the 15th Ray writes....

Aug 15, 1945

Yesterday while sitting on the fan tail I heard from across the inlet a navy boat with the loud speaker of the radio hooked into the P.A. system. The words “Japanese accept” came clearly across the water. This at 3:30 P.M. I tore up
to the radio shack & was almost squelched by my boys up there. Naw der just bringin it to da Whitehouse. I finally needleed them into trying another station & slowly the tension mounted till at 4 o'clock the words I as a human being & I as a soldier have waited so long for, “The War is Over”.

Everyone was so happy to hear the words. But not much could be done in the way of celebration since we were all restricted to the ship tho the Navy had passes. At least we heard the whistles blow & the boats in the harbor did a good job for half an hour. Since we had moved to Terminal Island we could only imagine what was going on in San Pedro. Via the radio we heard what the big towns were doing from N.Y. to Frisco. The troops which we had taken aboard looked happy & glum at the same time. Happy because it was over & yet sad that they had to do a stretch out there nevertheless. They are mostly young kids in the army about 5 1/2 months. This morning they had a resurvey. 38 or 75 pts got you off the boat. Some left but not many. This ship carries just about as many as my old ship did but it is not nearly as crowded since there is enormous deck space over the cargo holds.

This A.M. I filled up a load of bottles and put them in the dispensary & ward besides cleaning the junk out of 3 drawers & getting a little order into things.

At 400 P.M. we threw the ropes off & left the harbor. I wondered if we should be back by Christmas. I sure would like to spend one at home. Johnny Tara told me we are going to Eineweitok (?) & from there to Manila. We are due at the first port on Aug 30. Perhaps by then censorship regulations will be off & I shall be able to tell you about it since I cannot yet find it on our map. There are 4000 miles to go before then & we shall see what happens.

After supper I was playing chess on the fantail & losing when Pence brought up your Aug 10 letter. It was a very heartening thing to get just as the land was fading in the distance. Guess Charlie made it now before he sails the war is over! I hope you got home safely from work yesterday. It would break just as you went home.

Well s’all for tonite. Not too happy but I have hopes of getting a break when we come back. I wonder if you will keep in touch with Mac & watch the points come down? Your vacation trip should be more imminent now, the last word we heard was that gas would be released soon!

Yesterday we rec’d $13.50 in subsistance. I have some $32 now with me.

Thur. Aug 15

Today we are definitely under way. We are now eating below decks since the messhall upstairs was too small seating only 8 comfortably at a time. Since we are 28 enlisted men aboard and but an hour to eat it was a hurly-burly rush to get all fed. The new mess hall holds 18 at a sitting & while it promises
to be much warmer the pressure is not so great. Chicken for lunch & steak for supper. I seem to be eating less so maybe I shall not be so bulgy when I return.

Ray’s letter continues but we will end it at this point. Now the war is over but what of Raymond and the SS Lykes? What we learn is that on the 21st of August Raymond is in Pearl Harbor and Else is still in San Francisco.

**Tue Wed 21-22**

Tue the ph-lab was so full of washed clothes I couldn’t see enuf space to write and Wed morn we sighted Maui at 8 and Oahu by 9 we tied up in the stream at 4 P.M. & have been there ever since. We did get a paper here at Pearl Harbor but the discharge news is not too good 75 pts or 37. Guess it will be a long time before we are loosed. Picture last night on deck “Nine Girls” no sound.

Ray writes a number of letters describing the voyage. In the letter of August 28 we find that all is not well aboard ship.
Tuesday at 7:45 Aug 28
I certainly have been nervous in my scrapping. Not because it was too busy but mostly because it was uncomfortable. My heat rash has broken out on my shoulders again which is only on this trip. Itches like hell. Slept on deck last night with one blanket I was actually cold. Toronto hurried. Sun since we had a 100 cases of food poisoning. As we were not equipped well enough the cause will ever remain a mystery. But if you ever hand a hundred guys nothing at once you won't soon forget it. I mixed paragonin and


wasmuth solution till it was worn out.
One guy went into shock + had to be treated with adrenalin but all are better now. O C + Seph continue to keep our hospital going as well as some Vincent's disease which I trust will not spread any further.

The boys go on with me spending most of my time on deck in shorts only. Read two books Freedom Road in which I shall save for Walter for his rugged compassions + "Lie Down in Darkness" a pathetic novel.

Not doing much typing but in the hold + cant lug the machinery down. Washing every other day so the volume doesn't get too bad. Made me
The SS Lykes sails into September and Raymond shares with Else that he's anxious for discharge.
6 Sept 1945
Leaving Eniwiok
For Ulithi at 2 PM

My dear darling,
Verily my cup runneth over! Today they lifted censorship and I can really write you and, too, they tell us that tonight we shall not have blackout. This letter will not go off till we reach Ulithi Sun afternoon but I must sit down & begin today to tell you all about this trip or I shall not be done by then. It will be such a pleasure to interrupt my narrative now and then, tell you I love you wish you were pressed against me, could see your nose wrinkle when you lafed could slip my arms about your waist & kiss you behind the ear.
Wish (unreadable) having nothing but good news on the air – 45 pts & 34 years & you dont go over and all such sort of things. You prob realize that the wars end doesn’t mean much to me except as I get closer to getting the hell out. Letters to the boys indicate the Fontana is chock full of replacements & 85 gets you off to the reception center. We are still heading West & so I hope that by the time we come about the age limit will be so low that I can squeeze out.

Ray’s letter continues on for two more pages but only the following paragraph is pertinent to our story.

Hessers are a peculiar family alright hope the old man doesn’t make a pass at you! Beat the dough outa Mitchell – we don’t know when you’ll quit right now much depends on this trip you may be there a couple of months yet if Bill doesn’t show up for a vacation & I’m heading back to S.F. I am not confining you to S.F. & leave the entire matter up to you about going to L.A. or elsewhere. Let me know any plans you have for going East. What union salesgirls clerks or bookeepers will you have trouble with?

Next we learn that the ship is enroute to Manila after stopping at both Ulithi and Eniwetok.

Wed Sept 12, 1945
Out of Uliyhi 1 day en
Route Manila Est
Time of Arrival (ETA) Sat
My dear longlegged sweetheart,

Almost the 15 of the month & I keep wondering when & if you are going to Bills. At Ulithi I received 2 letters one from my sweetheart & one from mom. Yus was postmarked Aug 30 which was earlier than the last dever’d at Eniwetok of Aug 31; Moms Aug 28.

Enjoyed yo Paragraph from Viola’s letter and of course mom wrote in a very different manner. How the Hell does she expect people to do things for her. I’m sure they were doing their best. She evidently needs a good toning down again. Then she bleats about none coming up – who would!

Your truth telling costs us more dorayme. Of course I don’t know just how you could have squeezed around it.

Where we go from Manila will tell a big story for both you and I, & I think you might just as well stay on at C.of P.

For some reason we are going to skip Taclahen since they want us in Vanilla by a certain date. Why? Also the engines are not in good shape, hurrah! Also Doc is anxious to get back & will refuse to allow troops aboard unless we get our sterilizer fixed since one more operation would clean us out of sterile equip.

I wonder where my late mail from you is? Wish I could maybe pray once in a while. Say the Lord’s prayer every so often but I’m afraid I think of you instead of listening to myself.

Haha I paid my lesson - money while at Ulithi. Thought I was a poker player – me the dope. Cost me $1.60 but since that is all the recreation doe I’ve spent in a month I consider it a cheap way of learning I should not gamble!

Teaching one of the cooks to play chess – more my game I guess.

We will forego the rest of this letter. The problem with the sterilizer did not get resolved as we see in the next letter.

14 Sept 1945
San Bernadino St.
Middle Phillipines

Dear Else,

This morning at 6 we saw the first islands & have been passing small ones every few minutes. The Strait is quite wide about 8 miles at the narrow section. I saw my first volcano today & it was cooking a little at the top too! 7000 ft and a perfect cone shape with bits of white cloud hovering about half way up and just enuf smoke coming out of the top to make it resemble an Indian Tepee. Most of the islands look uninhabited but close scouting with the glasses show some people along the shore line. Several fishing boats with
outriggers & brown sails have passed us & what people we could make out seemed small.

This aft. at 2 we had another appendectomy which took 1 1/2 hours one of the traveling docs doing the slicing with Ralph (Conant) assisting. So far Joe is living and in good shape.

Movie tonite after 2 chess games, one of which I lost. We were rained out which sent me down to finish this letter to you. Tomorrow about noon we will arrive in Manila & I will get this off. All of us will be glad that the convicts we are carrying will get off & nothing much else will disappear.

Discovered an Armed Forces Book called “The Sea Witch” a story of clipper ship days which I was hoping would be a salty tale but somehow the author sneaked in a woman already & the poor clipper “Sea Witch” is in the background now.

I am fairly happy aboard tho this is a dirty ship. Shower go on deck & you are ready to shower again. I live in shorts & somedays look rather healthy with a sunburn. Often I draw a long sigh & wish so hard. Its been over a 6 months since I’ve seen you I keep wondering about around & of you.

Will try & get another letter off in Vanilla if I can while we stay there Meanwhile you’re always in my dreams night & day

Love darling kisses a squeeze & my hand on your bosom tonight

Rayme

It seems the SS Lykes is in the Philippine Islands and will soon be in Manila. In Ray’s next letter of the 19th we get his impressions of war torn Manila.
My dear Tom,

Don't think I wanted to write you again even that touch off
reminded me of my short letter to you today. We arrived
here on Sat. & hung about outside the barracks till Sunday
at 7am when they took some troops off via Boyneford Monday
morning we went in - well will I remember that
we got shore leave about 10 o'clock to Rodgers & 14 other
who had not been to Manila. Before took off despite the
fact that we knew the ship was pulling away from the
pier at 2 o'clock. Our parties were good till 6 o'clock & we
were hoping to catch a boat out to the exchange. We,
all 15 of us boarded a small boat & landed in helltown
at a deep sea port. Most everyone either dies or goes blind
from the drink & they sell these for $2.00 to 3.00. We satisfied
ourselves with looking at the people & their funny customs.
They have multi-storied horses hooked to two wheeled carriages.
The people inside as well as the carriages themselves
are as long as the house. When the policeman gives them the
signal it looks like a miniature chariot race where
all the drivers know the bell & all of the horses. The horses
are often mounted & completely cover the horses. Since we had
no idea where we were we jumped off the track & asked

doctors gaping all the while - all the time - and were up to
excommunicating the thing. They took to the question.

All of the Philippines are clothed in - G I clothes, except some
of the old ladies who have worn old dresses on. The dress of
the puffed child's type is made of a stiff cotton or

lightly and priced very low. The material itself being stiff &
some fine for cold. With us clothes left.

The money exchange rate is as follows: 1 peso for $0.01
and 50 cents to the peso. And money is hard to find. All
transactions are in paper money.

To get back to the story. From the docks we began to
the nearest shopping center. The first was still
at its peak. We were looking around the hotel.

The hotel was clean and general. The city to the nearest
group of stores. Some were nice churches or smaller hotels.

The taxis with 10 pesos prices $5. We had come
in the outfit and had made a mistake before on clipper.
The hotel was clean all the way there, but the worse a
police time in. Comer's were nice, having a flat time getting
along my own, but the bed was 6½ ft. so when we reached yr.
& it quit. We wondered up the street - dirt pitching junk,
poor, houses, monore with site; no sidewalk, most time
shops; they really had nothing to sell that at street price.

Turned a corner saw a woman standing by leaning over in a lot
review a few bookshelves. Time to occur more or less to
just enough to continue. She charged by the hour where I got you something

baked. The other came to make available and once we were getting hungry decided to eat. That where
We leave this letter and move along to his last letter from sea explaining he is on the way "home" for discharge and expects to be with his beloved soon.

Mon Oct. 1, 1945
½ way bet. Ulithi & Eniwetok

My dear wife,

Whether you will receive this as a letter or read it at the end of this trip I don’t know. It seems like ages since I last wrote you & it has been weighing on my conscience until tonite I must really make a beginning on this – my tale
of happenings on this dull ship. First let me say that sick call has been avg heavy mostly about a hundred every morning & medicine man Rohner has had his hands full with the usual aspirin & cough syrup prep. The ship is loaded forward with air corps personnel who seem to be a particular brand of hypochondriacs and must have medical attention for the slightest skin imperfection. The hospital has been full since we left Leyte – not only our own sickly but those 6 litter patients they put aboard there. They are a fine bunch of goldbricks – one is bed ridden with dermatitis & has no more of a skin eruption than a blond movie star has on her buttocks. Enuf of the medical comedy.

Yesterday we lay becalmed. The olde John L. had rusted thru her condenser. You see they burn oil under boilers to make steam at high pressure which blows itself against (impinges) upon the turbine blades much as wind hits a pinwheel & drives it around. Of course the turbine blades are hooked to the screw which in turning drives the boat. Only fresh water can be used in the boilers since salt water would leave scale & soon clog up the back tubes. Since fresh water is scarce steam from the turbine is condensed by running it thro tubes surrounded by cool sea water. The condenser had rusted thru & salt water was contaminating the condensate. They plugged over 250 holes in it. We got underway again last night at 9 after losing 12 hours.

They still predict Frisco by the 17th & I hope so. We may poss. stop at Pearl for meat & water.

Every so often we have movies on deck, some broken down films. Tonite we saw “Christmas Holiday”. Reading another L.C. Douglas book “Disputed Passage”.

If there was more to this letter we did not find it.

Ray was soon to be discharged after the “John L” arrived back in San Pedro October 17. He was assigned as a Military Policeman at Fort Mason and lived in San Francisco with Else. Else decided to visit a cousin in Burbank, California, and receives this letter, actually two letters in one envelope, from Raymond as he begins the process to clear out of the apartment and pack everything for shipment back to New York. He writes….

Sat 5:15

Dear Else

Got this aft. off & found Paul’s letter (enclosed). Started packing as soon as I found Mrs. Silva had left my wash out & it was twice as wet as when I hung it out. Jim called & I am meeting him at Ft Mason where we will see the show. He will come home & sleep with me. Packed the sealed-beam-box with iron and writing stuff & padded it well with underwear etc. Duffle bag full
now too with a little room in the top but still it will eventually be packed to the hilt. Still in the M.P.s so hit the S G who had gone home for the aft so left a note for Mon. Have tomorrow off too. Raining like hell here hoping you did not have too unpleasant a trip.

Lots of love  write Hdquters

Rayme

Sunday Nov 25
Still 1338 Alabama

Hello Honey,

Sort of scrapping the bottom today as far as morale goes but have accomplished a lot (I think) so I breath a lot easier.

After having my laundry loused up yesterday by the rain I sorted all the remaining junk we had in the room & prepared my bag for home-coming(?) & barracks bagged another group for shipment home as well as ramming your iron & assorted laundry into a carton. Another bag with stuff to go to Fort area for use in the b__ M.P.’s idea of duty. The last, I took over to the Noodle Factory before I met Jim.

He came in on the bus and was all needled up about taking off for Beale not later than Thurs. His records are all in order & he has that bubbling look. He was appalled at the predicament I was in (So am I!) We hit the movie and saw not one (1) but two (2) stinkers, “Divy Doug Williams” a schmaly production about a clarinet player and that 11 year old piano prodigy we read about & enjoyed the music & suffered the drahmah. The second had Richard Dix in “The Whistler”. It had no connection with the artist of the same name. Richard would do better putting out his stuff in a butcher shop since he now has a corner on a scare commodity - ham. After the show I’ll let you guess where we went to the PX & whether we had malted etc & hence home & to bed by 12:30 after a lot of commiserating.

Aunt Julie got us up at 8 & Jim was wondering whether you wouldn’t like to ride back even if some miracle doesn’t get us out simultaneously. Being anxious to know how you had made it I raised you out of bed. No doubt you now have enuf Vit A for a long time after yr 12 hours on a milk train! Glad you got there alright! Some day you will write or tell me the story.

Jim went to church while I roped all the ctns & locked the B.B. so at 10 we took off for Amer. Exp. Made it & got the stuff off for $12.24 & one shoulder a bit lower than the other from carrying Fountain Chow, fried chicken which tasted good since we had missed breakfast. Caught an hour shut eye on the bunk & saw Jim to his bus. 2:00 PM. To S Adele’s church to deliver 3 items. Found dinner over and she busy with her hair all up with a new “perm”. She gave me the music chant & the pic you asked for. Still had my ironing to do
so took off. Walked to Market & trolleyed home. Found my wash dry at last so dampened it (which looks silly on paper) darned my socks ironed paid 2 toll calls to Mrs. Silva turned down a bowl of soup & will now attempt to find a 8c (found) stamp, mail this, return the bottles, wrap up a waste bundle to dump outside, get some supper, fold my shirt, wrap up my G.I. shoes, and get to bed.

Here’s the deal. Jim still has hopes that we can all ride home together - but I haven’t. He anticipates being out completely by Fri. or sooner. We cannot communicate with each other since I am moving around & he will be. So - He will call you when he it out for the dope on me when he it out so if we can put it (the trip) together in any way poss. we will (He has the Charleston no.) I will of course notify you of any spectacular movements or authoritative rumors. He will hang a day or two if the deal can be put together OR you might poss chg. yr mind about riding with him alone.

“The Case For & Against Your Travel with Jim” For – you ride comfortable across country to P. Penn can clean up at his house & ride plane to N.Y. economical. See country. No ride in a 3c mile R-R. coach sitting up which may be all the res. we can get. Against – You leave L.A. soon. No husband. He grabs a 3c a mile ride via bus or R.R.

You will have 4 or 5 days to make up yr mind on this & it really seems like a good deal to me for you even if it means we shall be separated a little longer. He offers you the hospitality of his haus in Penn if you don’t get out the same day. The trip would prob. start at Bakersfield as planned. If you don’t care to go O.K. If you do O.K. At any rate put in res. By air for 2 at L.A. even if we don’t use both or 1.

You loving husband who hopes you are enjoying yourself. Regards to R.B.K. H & D etc. Rayme

Ray was discharged at the end of November. We don’t know if Ray and Else returned to New York together but we do know that they later went to Rochester, New York where Ray was the Head Brewmaster at Genesee Beer for a number of years before retiring.

Raymond passed November 23, 2004 at the age of 92.

Else followed January 4, 2008 at 95 years of age.