

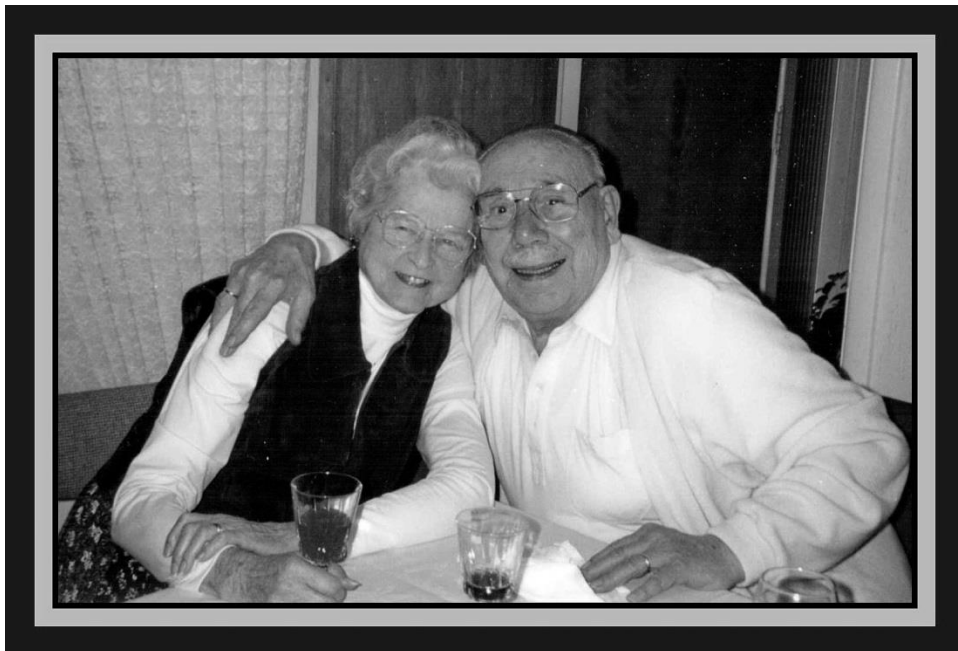
My dear Elsie,



Raymond

William Foster
with Bob Cole

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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.

Printed
April 2014
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

4/2/1880 Trogen, Switzerland

Arrived in USA 8/29/1889

Died: 8/3/1915 New York City

Wilhelmina Augusta Goller

8/2/1883 Jersey City, NJ

Died: 8/26/1953

Our story recounts the letters Rayond wrote to his wife:

Else Margarethe Schmidt

Born: April 4, 1912 Bronx, NY

Her parents were:

Friedrich Wilhelm Schmidt

5/22/1875

Neukloster, Hanover, Germany

Died: 6/1/1938 Bronx, NY

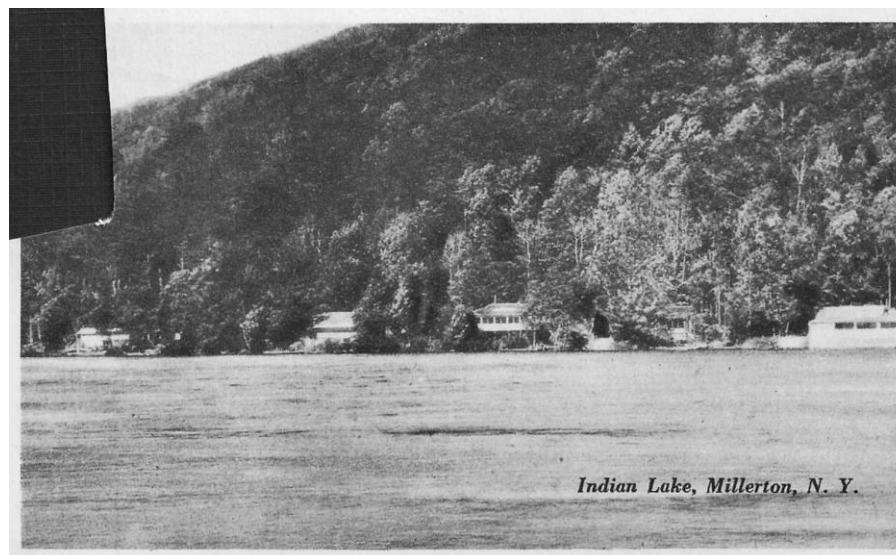
Anna Rosina Babette Schad

12/28/1879

Kitzingen, Bavaria, Germany

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.



Sunday
(Before church!)

Darling Elsie,

This is hardly a propitious spot to write you a first letter from. The chef is morbidly inclined and insist on singing even now. He's rendering bacon and the wench of the old ninty nine at the same time.

The joint is new by two clever Jewesses. 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 ^{it} asked us if we minded showing our eggs with the flies. We compromised and threw the insects the bacon. I'm glad I brought some arsenic along. We get along manulously already.

But then I don't suppose I could get along with anybody but you right now. It still seems so strange to be loving you. The conception that you were some sort of acme had been brewing in my mind since I first met you. And you must have known. No two people could possibly devote ~~to~~ themselves so whole-heartedly to

sarcastic remarks as we did without some ^{it} feeling of cohesion whether we recognized ~~to~~ or not. I miff of this tho. you'll probably read this after breakfast and hardly be in the mood for it.

This place is like the gov. I don't think there's an animal missing there's even a bunch of "goes and lambs" (or are they one and the same thing) Joe's Thesaurus is down stairs and I nearly can't look it up.

We've quite a time getting mail into town so if'n you get two or more at once which say practically the same thing, that I love you, put 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're there and ⁱⁿ 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.

Monday Sept 21

Dear Ella,

Between the cream cheese and rolls
When the boss is beginning to glow,
Comes a pause in filling the gullet
Which is known as my ten minutes
with you!

No meter, no rhyme, no swing, no sun, no moon since
you went away.

Adopting your habit of lunch hour scribbling
doesn't do my digestion a bit of the proverbial
good. But then I do have to write to you or
lost or rather don't I have to or are you going
to write soon if'n yuh aint send this back.

Svenska dancing last night. Some mob some
be music no beer brand new perspiration.
Wiggs' brother Al was down so I know you
got up safely. It still seems much better
that you went up that way. Even if I did
have to go see Girl's Dormitory Saturday
night to assuage my libido. Incidentally

it is low grade perverted drummer of the stoncher variety. Sis cancelled her weekend and come over both nights. Yea freedom.

By now, if you are at all as adept at orienting yourself as I think you are, you should have the slavish devotion of that lone deaf and dumb mute. You are sooo beautiful and then you'd have so much in common. With the mute that is. Ah me compliments are always "mis-written and misinterpreted" on Mondays.

With you gone and no school yet what am I going to do. I know, dream 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.

Thursday the Twelfth

Dear Elsie,

It seemed so odd, not seeing you at the end of the week's grind, I felt I really ought to do something about it. This is it. No others but seeing "three men on a horse" why three, nevertheless on a horse is beyond me perhaps the reason for my equestrian leanings except in women. Do you like canaries? This place is awfully warm just because of that alluring bird & gave mother. I shall definitely never marry you if you grow rubber trees and keep canaries. Sorry, I can't imagine any other reasons for not marrying you. Except that I'm stupidly in love with you which is distinctly not Havelockellie at all. It's strange writing I love you. It seems so trite, after being bandied about for so many centuries, as to hardly fit anything I feel about you. Well go paragraph it yourself then I can't or won't!

About your moods which to my chronologically
 constituted mind comes next in this thesis (One hell of
 a note in coming letters) - I've only known but one or
 two. That unhappy one that expects me to believe & disprove.
 This fact bothers me not. It makes little difference how
 I feel what state I'm in nor where it leads. A life
 such as mine has been puts the mind in a casket
 when it becomes too tumultuous, and lives physically till
 equilibrium has been established again. What bothers
 the very marrow of my bones is that I
 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 to glow as Joseph
 does with a new found dream that's a reality it's
 because the ^{cynical} the veneer 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
 ecstasy which isn't in the realm of the
 subconscious!

Probably you are right about something sounding silly (insane word that). I've meant to sort of drag that letter of yours in out of the office the last two times I've seen you but it won't come. The ink sticks to the paper too well and the ideas won't come out of the envelope. This letter-writing has gotten to have all the stigmas of a double life. But please please lets not duck and write. It gives me a sense of guilt to look so clearly into anyone as fine as you are and not be able to do something or undo something. As it was the hurt had been done when I knew the results. What the hell is the significance of a physics report if it makes you write a letter such as that. Believe me I'm blind. Somehow I never manage to correct those things I do which are so obviously wrong so wrong I even appreciate their baseness when I do them.

Please don't ever again thank me for going anywhere with you. I seem to be content just seeing you that the place the weather or the company make little difference. Believe me even to Louis 16 trappings. I do love you and anywhere without you has but half of me there.

School work has become a chore since I've known
you and every prof. a whisperer. Someway I hope
we'll come to realize, both of us, that it's a ^{terrible} time
consuming evil that must go on. ~~from the~~ The
impetuous impatience that bothers both of us!
What shall we do with it?

This letter even as yours has no beginning
nor end just as so many fine letters you and
never mailed. I will mail this tho. 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 mood (any chit has a body)
but mostly that I love you with a
completeness that surpasses anything I've
ever known before or can hope to ever 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.

Jan 11, 1938

Dear Liebchen,

I suppose you believe me implicitly ~~at least~~ at least I think you do. Perhaps we should listen to that super-mind telepathy program that follows the Ford hour on Sunday nights!

I got as far as the writing box in my room last night ^{imposes} (in my room) when mother called me. Seems how she ached and pained all over. What, I figured another one of those winter colds? Will nail this pronto. The thermometer - where was the thermometer dig up one of my own no fear take off shirt put schnoppes together hot water bind lemon call Sabol Bros. do this do that Time 11:30 half naked bum feet poor Else no letter.

So at least I meant to write. Tonite its late but mother feels better and I 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 to you about me. When I'm happy I like to tell you and when I'm mad (?)

I allways think its 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 did that wasn't easy I 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, ^(what emphasis!) at least, my fault of approach & 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 as clearly as I might have, a great push in the misunderstanding direction.

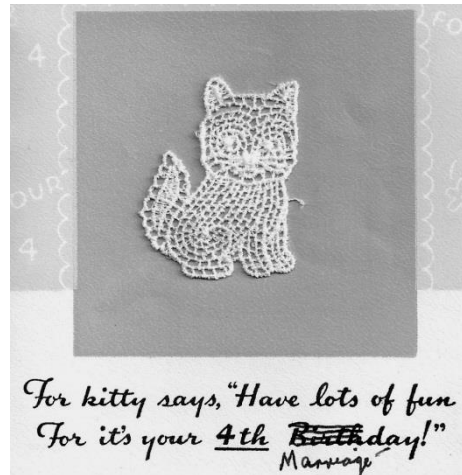
Dare I touch on the fireworks we sit on so uncomfortable? You know how I learned or was taught not to like beets? ~~It~~ I don't believe I could be made to like them now by large continuous doses. But I might be induced to try red-collared sliced potatoes and then red parsnips and then beets in flannels. Perhaps I might learn even to like the smell of cooking beets or at least not to wrinkle my nose and belch at the

thought of them. But beets and beets and
 beets I'm sure would kill me or the
 administrator. Not to draw this
 analogy to murder or suicide could
we substitute religious fervor for beets?
 a poor substitution or rather comparison
 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 I ask you to stretch
 the ^{red} potatoes - parsnip - beet-in-blancs stage
 a little longer?

I hope someday everything will be
 better fireworks - your arm - mom - my head -
 your feet and all. Till then and before
 then I suppose comes exams and sleep
 - eyes operator in just a second
 but I spent a dime already alright
 alright I call you tomorrow night
 Bye sugar bye sweet bye beautiful
 Love you? Stupid of course honest
 Love Raymond

ugh 12 o'clock

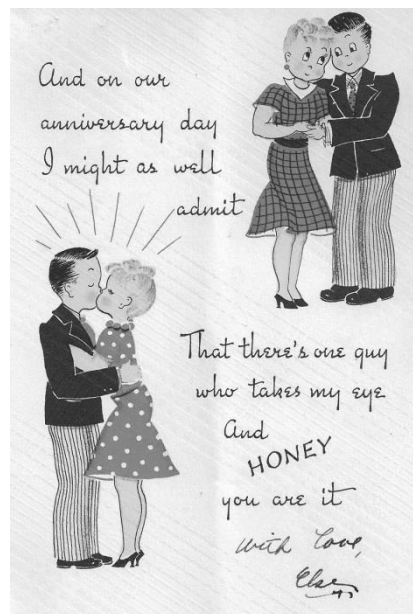
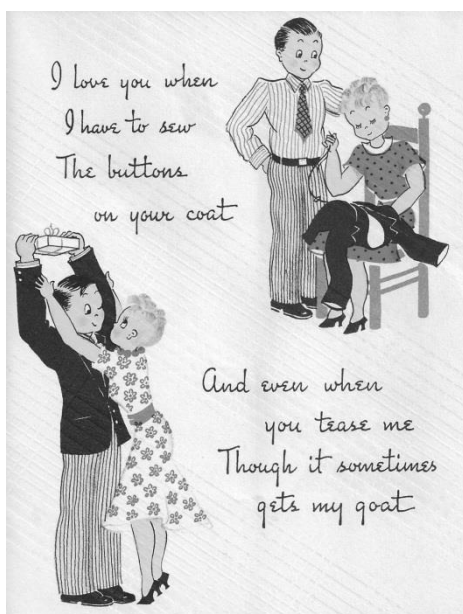
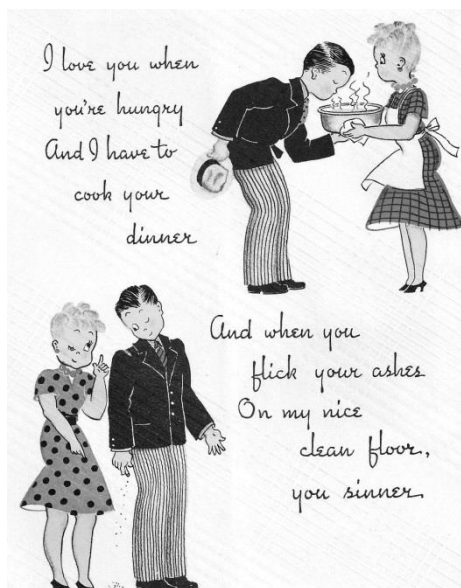
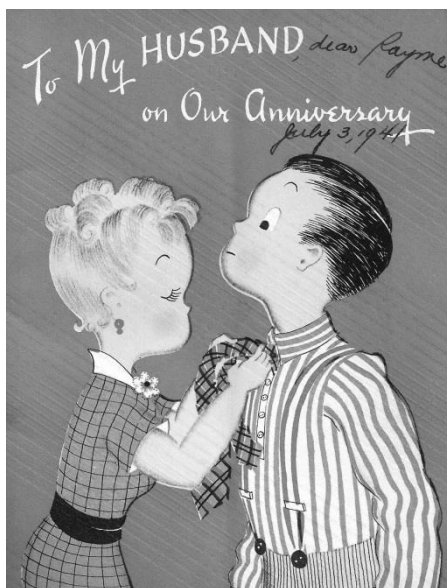
The romance of Ray and Else was fulfilled when they were married on July 3, 1938. That did not bring an end to cards describing their love. On September 11, 1938 Ray sent Else the following "Anniversary Card".



He added the following to the card.

A third of a year & I grow
to love you more each
day
Raymond

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.



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.



CASTLEHOLM
NEW YORK'S MOST POPULAR
SWEDISH RESTAURANT
344 West 57th Street (In the Parc Vendome)
World's Famous SMÖRGÅSBORD
SWEDISH CUISINE PAR EXCELLENCE
COCKTAIL LOUNGE SUMMER GARDEN
Dancing Nightly to the Rhythm of our
CASTLEHOLM NORSEMAN
For Parties and Reservations Telephone
Circle 7-0873

POST CARD

You
Address
It
We'll
Mail It

ALBERT ARENSEN PRESS NEW YORK MADE IN U.S.A.

*It rained cats + dogs
but we enjoyed ourselves.
We saw Gary Cooper in
per grand folk at the
actor. My dress got so
wet, it shrunk up.*

7/3/41

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.

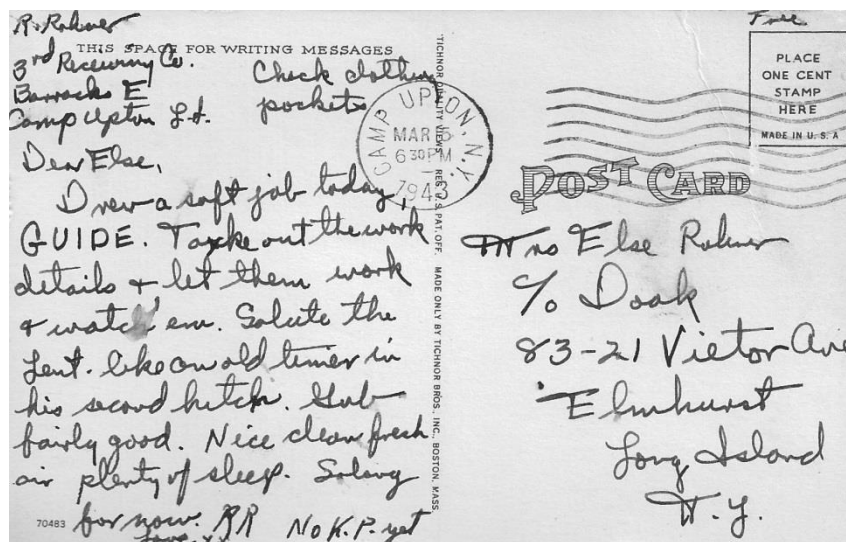
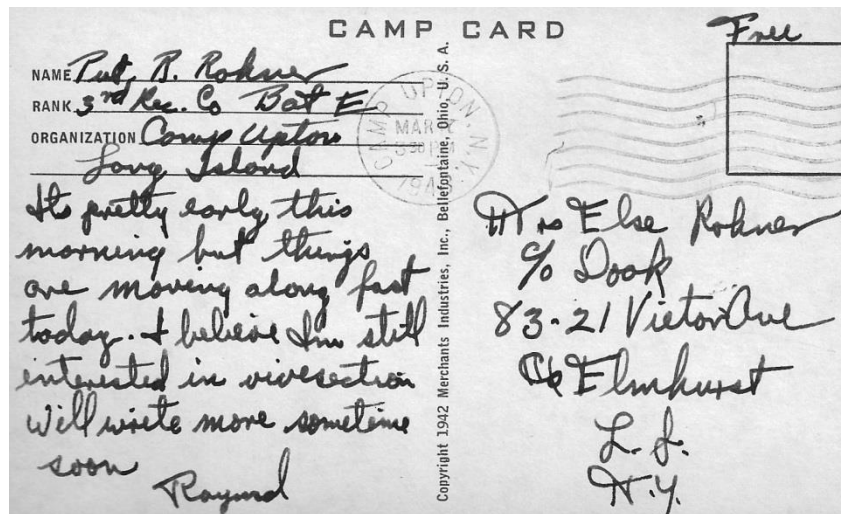
The arrival of World War II did not immediately affect the subjects of our story. Raymond was in school and a bit above draft age so he was not in the first of those drafted into military service.

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.



UNITED STATES ARMY

Thurs. March 18/1943
7:25 AM

Dear Elsie,

Greetings from Blackstone Virginia, Camp Pickett from your old friend the 5 day veteran Pat Robner. How we got here is a long story. Up at 3 A.M. at Upton - Board @ 10 A.M. - off 11:30 P.M. Chow Bed 1 A.M. - a 22 hour stretch. Will get reclassified assigned to barracks Co + platoon a little later this morn. Place contains a med. corps as well as some others. I have been assigned to the Hospital Corps + will be here "whe". Right now I'm in a dither to get a ⁵⁻⁶ couple of wooden coat hangers, some scotch tape, black + white thread + needles which I hope you will wrap + send me very soon. You can hang up your uniforms or coats without hangers so have to keep them in barracks bags or sacks which mangle them up so I look like I've been in a wringer.

Tough as usual getting set but have a foot locker now which is a little better. The mess tastes a little better here than at Upton + the sunshine is better + the damned red mud sticks too.

Got a soldier medical handbook today + sentry duties book yahoos something to study besides other guys books + heads

Bunch of people here commending us that sound
just like water only more so. Don't know too
much around here yet 'cept it isn't raining
any more & it looks like we work here. Still
cold at night.

Begin to write now & let me know
everything. Don't send any grub yet
looks like we get enough to eat here
anyway.

Lot of Cokes here all great pushers.

Boy that was a tough ride from camp &
did we get dirty. They have quite a few
facilities here. Note address on envelope
it is supposed to be correct. Got my
half of a tent & pegs today but my shoes
fit pretty good & I'm not worried.

I want to get this out now as
I don't know what's up for the
afternoon. Love it from the State
of Presidents from Lincoln.

An excerpt from the following day's letter, 3/19, provided a description of the "grub" at Camp Pickett.

Let me tell you about the grub—
if it's left over from the meal before
they mix it together add mayonnaise
& a lettuce leaf & that's salad. It is
not odd to see kidney bean & white
bean salad & lima beans for vegetables.

all in one meal. In fact beans are definitely the vegetable here. Stew hash & stew are the variety of meats. Butter once a day coffee? with sugar once & synthetic orange drink & grape drink the rest of the time. Breakfast greasy potatoes, oatmeal without milk $\frac{1}{2}$ grapefruit if you get one. In fact I haven't had a glass of milk since I was in the army. Going down the P.X. for a whole bottle tonight.

Raymond's letter ends with the following.

Richmond is 60 miles from here
This place is hell & gone. Please
write often & I will if I have
anything left at the end of the day
Love
Raymond
Regards to
Dad's mom
& sis.

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.



UNITED STATES ARMY

3/28/43

Sunday aft @ 12.45
P.M.

My dear dear Schatsie how I wish you were here with me I haven't been able to write you since T has I think & you must be looking in vain for something in the letter box. I have just not had time. Friday & Sat were two tough days. Fri. we had reg classes a short time 20 min for supper then march to a bldg. & get 2nd typhoid shot in right shoulder blade back move beds in barracks scrub floor with scrub brushes set up foot lockers & shine shoes & then to bed at 9:20 finally lights out is 9:30 here & bed check is 11 o'clock which is when you have to be in bed or are counted AWOKE. Saturday up 5:30 2 regular classes terrific headache from shot or cold I don't know which borrowed 2 aspirins. Indoor inspection all dress up stand at attention display footlocker then come around & inspect you God help the guy who has a hair out of place Our platoon were the plague for best for the week which makes no dif either way

to me. 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 cleaners + just manage to drag myself around. Missed chow on account of this + got cold stuff in barracks at 6:30 In bed 6:45. Had restless sleep till 7 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 tubful yeh they have a laundry here I know but when does it start. Then answered all the mail I got all week with postcards 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 thru
 the same basic training to toughen us up
 so we can travel behind the troops the
 medics serve. Tili Courtesy drill alisteria
 defense against mech att. against chem attack
 army organization med. organiz. roll packs tent
 work everything you could think of. To
 bad you do not say more about job.
 I got the check + a letter from Gray
 yesterday + will send it to you as soon
 as I learn how to send a registered
 letter out of this God-forsaken hole
 in Va. Some of the boys are going into
 Blackstone today but I think I will go
 back to bed + try + get ahead of my
 cold. You should hear the barrocks
 when the lights go on in the morn. it
 sounds like a consumptives home.
 The Corp tells me the first 3 wks
 all the groups are like that. We
 have 4-5 guys in hosp. now.

with colds I guess. + they insist the
windows must be wide open when you
sleep at + you know what happens to
this guy under those cond. Schoteie 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 O D's but I did
read that piece in the book for today
at about the time you did I hope
God heard me! Well no mail from
you at 12 oclock so I guess
~~it~~^{you} just missed you it by
mailing a shade late. My
head keeps getting bigger so I guess
I'll go back to bed. The boys are
bringing back cough mix. from
Blackstone so till tonight at 9.30
Bye bye

Royce

Let two form cords
 opening your all time
 let me know if you
 know anything from
 how or if they is
 any trouble. Should
 expect some sort of
 money bet. Agent
 \$-30. Love
 Payne

Wednesday
 March 31, 1943



My dear schnepstick,

Hurrah 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 ^{Pat (Nathan Dickman)} ~~Pat~~ brought
 up for me, went to see a Gus
 Schneider (Austin church man) a little
 fat rally pally 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 foot locker looks like this & stands just so

shoes under bed all faces to top with laces & shined

pack stopped on bed

foot locker

Tie

top tray of trunk

overcoats

bagging loaded

socks each rolled

handkerchief folded

shoelick

books

tailcoat

gilet

shirt

socks

shoe brush

Tray tipped up for inspection

Trunk bottom showing

All rolled

more of same

Woolblitz

Towels

summer socks

Winter underwear

Every item must be in place clean & neat at all times so can you imagine the headaches.

Well sugar maybe you know by now you are kept running & changing all day til you go to bed & there is no time for anything except resting. Get big card from Friendship Club & will try & get something off to them all for the next meeting. The country here so nice on the hikes when you get a chance to look at it. All big big Pine trees straight as a die & smells good. Its quarter to nine now & must quit & read over todays & a couple of yesterdays notes from class. Be good sweet & please dont run around so much & forget sick please. Its job is to much dont stick with it

I have you even if I don't & cant write

An excerpt from the letter of 4/4/1938 revealed Ray's thoughts on religion.

You know about me & 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 know I prayed while I was sick & now I don't think I'll ever be ashamed to do it again. It helped a lot & I slept after it which is something I hadn't done in quite a few nights. There is so much more conviction in spread by knowing a true Christian 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 Elsie
 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 consist of taking every dish & putting it into a large basket strainer & hoisting on top of a 20 gallon aluminum pot of boiling water putting them in leaving for 1-2 min hoist out drain & put away. When you figure 3 dishes per man per meal & knives & forks for 200 men that's some hoisting but it's over for a while now. In between you feel pentatse porcupins or deer spiroch.

The letter of 4/11 described a "Night Problem".

A night problem is when you go out as the sun sets with full pack & ~~lost~~ around in the woods for 3 hours, run thru the brush chase imaginary enemies unload equipment from tracks & then walk back & fall into bed. Our next one is Mon night 8-10 P.M. This after getting up at 5:45 A.M. & having a full day of classes & working. Please don't ~~sub~~ with that it gets very warm.

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 use more than a card! Schotsie doesn't tell
 love me. Do you remember how it feels to
 be kissed every five minutes or did you forget
 already. I hope not as there may be a
 long time before we can again.

4/14/43

Yes schotsie I have never regretted for a second
 being in love with you. You brought something to
 me I had been missing. A calm confidence that I needed
 a peace I needed & a quieting of soul I have just begun
 to appreciate. I am more able to stand this gaff here
 because I know you are there thinking & loving
 me even tho ~~we~~ we both know it will be a
 long time before I see you & 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 3 seats
 with a dog at our feet. Till then schotsie sleep tight & if
 you are lonesome dream of me & I can be with you
 then
 Love Raymond

The term "schotsie" is a German word meaning "Sweetheart".

Raymond's two top priorities were Else and Basic Training. Beyond that was a concern as to his future in the Army. As part of Basic he took a series of tests to evaluate him for that future. His goal was to qualify for a medical position that might offer the chance to further his knowledge in that subject. Not mentioned was the fact such a position would eliminate the chance of being either a foot soldier or a battle-field medic. His letter of 4/20/43 describes the results of his first such examination.

Well well you want some good news
 yeah well well well - Haha you little
 snooks. ^{Up & passed my exam.} My name was called out with
 21 others out of the 82 that took the exam at
 morning inspection & we were sent in to get
 dressed in O.D.'s so we shaved & shaved went
 over to the classification office expecting an
 interview with a Major Jeff. When we got
 there no interview just fill out in triplicate
 (3) sheets about our education. Ques. popped up naturally
 When will we hear? - When you get your orders. No interview?
 No we are too rushed. If you are shipped out of
~~here~~ here before basic is finished your papers
 will follow you & you will appear before a board
 there. Yes you will all go to some college or
 school because you passed the exam. When will
 this happen nobody knows.

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 Ellie
 Well kid Fri. aft they called out my name with
 the others & we went up for an interview
 I was about tenth & some were accepted
 for training & some weren't so you know
 I was on edge. When I got in saluted &
 sat down they asked about my degree &
 whether I could really speak German
 so I told them about my 3 1/2 yrs
 in college & that I could hold a
 conversation ⁱⁿ & write German. They
 then asked if I had ever spoken it at

home + I said yes but quite a while ago. So they said I qualified. Which with what I can glean from authorized + rumor sources means this. Finish basic here, hang around 1 wk to 1 mo, or leave any time. Go to a Star Camp - a reception center for A.S.T.P. trainees + then will be shipped from there to a college for a course that may last about 9 months. That last sentence is on fairly good basis. The following things may go wrong yet! The central A.S.T.P. may not approve of all this - it was a field unit of it that O.K. me - this is unlikely. They may select a course for me which is beyond my depth as they did to one fellow + he is back here waiting to go to Off Cand. Sch. I understand we are allowed to select 3 colleges none of which may be their choice + order to go to. Maybe there will be more tests too.

With that positive news Raymond celebrated Easter with the following letter of 4/25/43.

April 25, 1943.
11 o'clock

My dear Else,

Easter Sunday morning & it is beautiful here for several reasons, 1 i talked to you 2 i opened your card which came yesterday 3 I am with you now singing in church with you & if I listen I can hear the choir, 4 you got my flowers & hope you like them & remember me & that I think of you always 5 The sun is shining like it should on Easter. 6 I went to church in the open & it was pretty nice, tho the minister who gave the sermon got stuck like a schoolboy taking Public Speaking 1 several times.

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 Elsie,

Well tonight I am very tired tonight. For 2 hours we march out over hell & Dale at our normal rapid pace which got us nice & heated up & the pack slightly wet just thru one layer, the canvas one. 10 min. rest up & stem. Well the Sgt. that lead off the march he walked but he was 6 ft 2 inches & boy he walked. They had the little squints up front & they couldn't match the stride & started to run well we ran we all ran like a bunch of crazy —. Holes in the ^{line} developed & you ran twice as much to close the hole & 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 covers a mile in 20 min. That would make 4 miles in 80 min. Well we did that distance in 45 min 5 sec. You have no conception of the strain sweat fatigue futility of the pace. We wore full pack helmet pistol belt gas mask leggings & fatigues. I was so exhausted by the end of the third mile that ~~even~~ even my Sergeant Stevenson stopped riding me & I could slow up a little & didn't come in last but damn near the end of the platoon. 15 min rest — 1 hr march back to barracks 4:55 change to D.D. in a hurry & stand retreat at which time you nearly fall on your face then ^{upstairs} to drop your pistol belt & hat chow which blows the crowning of the day — Frankfurters. So I come upstairs & lay down for an hour & then took a shower & lay down again & started to ~~try~~ 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

can we we
Now hold on tight. They are starting to give 36 hour passes out + tried 6 this weekend. Since I have ground now + don't think I'll be stuck next weekend + K.P. should get me in the middle of the week + maybe I can get a pass

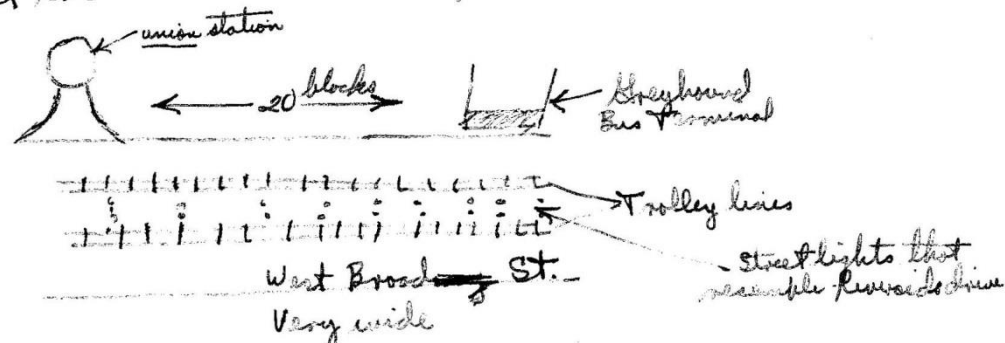
5/8/43

The 36 hr passes they ~~not~~ give you here are marked Richmond + if you get stuck past this limit you really are in trouble so N.Y. sends out. Then if you come to Rich + get only a 10.30 or 30 hr pass I can see a lot of you anyway + if I get no pass 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 sweet + remember maybe I'll see you next week one way or another I hope I hope I hope I will Yours forever ~~ever~~

5/9/43

I will bend every effort to get a 36 hr pass for Richmond next week end. And you let me know immediately how you are coming. If by bus then I will meet you in the bus terminal waiting room. If by train I'll meet you in the R.R. waiting room where there are 2 women on duty most of the night at the U.S.O. booth. 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.
- 3 Trains & Buses Time of leaving + arrival.

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.

CLASS OF SERVICE		WESTERN UNION		1201		SYMBOLS	
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.		A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT		NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD		J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT	
The filing time shown in the data line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination							
YA79		SV228 9 NL XC=BLACKSTONE VIR 12		1943 MAY 15 PM 8 45			
MRS ELSE ROHNER=		OR					
83-21 VIETOR AVE ELMHURST. LI NY=							
STAY HOME WILL TRY FOR NEXT WEEKEND LETTER		FOLLOWS=					
RAYMOND ROHNER...							

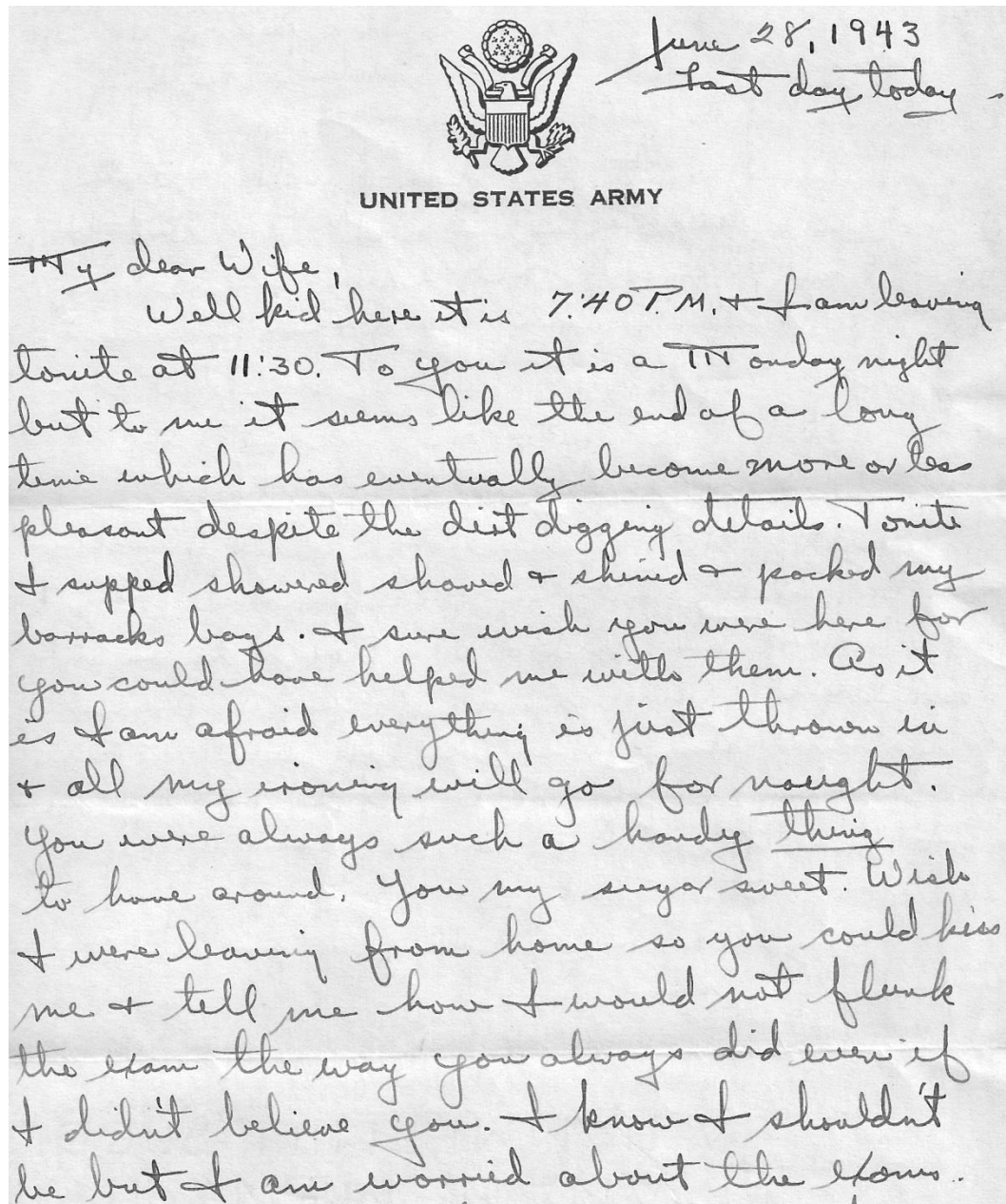
Else's visit to Virginia did occur the following weekend. She traveled by train from New York to Richmond where she and Ray were able to spend time together. These few words from Ray's letter of May 22 summarize their time together.

*Scottie is was a wonderful 15 hours
I spent with you. You know it was almost like an
old time Sunday of the pre war type only now I
get heaps more lovin in a shorter time it seems.*

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.

*Here's one for you sweet. Not very good either.
Stardust of Thoughts
I think about you often, I write you every day
But there's so very little that seems worthwhile to say -
It's either rains or shines its either hot or cold
The news is all uninteresting or else its all been told
The only thing that matters is the fact that you are there
And I am here without you its lonesome everywhere
I think about the way you smile and recall your touch.*

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 Elsie

One fifteen in the afternoon at V.P.I.
 We got here at about 10 o'clock this morning
 got a couple of blankets & caught an
 hour's sleep & then lunched & the meal
 seemed very good - back now & free till
 2:10. when some sort of military
 formation takes place. We are housed in
 what seems like a restoration of Wash-
 ington's Hqtrs at Valley Forge. It is a
 reg. college dorm but reminds me of
 nothing so much as a white washed
 cell block. I have an upper in an
 iron bedstead & no sheets are given to
 us temporary men. Tomorrow morning
 we begin exams & interviews as they tell
 us so will expect to be busy. No
 footlockers are provided & 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.

We found out several things today. That for college grads Chemistry was open, which is me, medicine is closed of course. The setup for a chem grad. is a 12 wk refresher course 7 day furlough & then out into a lab. perhaps as an army type chemist. (?) However they have no feeling at this outfit you know your stuff or your out. Seems like they have a Chem prof. here who interviews you & puts the axe to you too. So I will have to get by him. They consider Chem grads as almost finished trained & just the refresher to polish them into something the army needs. That was my #1 choice.

On July 1 he described the examinations he was taking.

Today it was so cold down here we wore field jackets all day & I found a thermo over in the lower barracks that read 60°F & it's been getting warmer all day - so it must have been 55° here this morning. This morning we had a math exam that was a bummer for me & really hurt my brain out. This aft. a Chem exam. which sure was comprehensive as all hell & while I finished all of the ones which is unusual for all these types of exams since they are all sectioned & timed I don't know if they are all right. You begin pt. 2 when the hammer drops whether you are finished with pt. 1 or not.

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

CLASS OF SERVICE		WESTERN UNION		1201		SYMBOLS	
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.		(28)				DL=Day Letter	
A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT		NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD		J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT		NL=Night Letter	
						LC=Deferred Cable	
						NLT=Cable Night Letter	
						Ship Radiogram	
The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination							
RUA552 8 NL=BLACKSBURG VIR 2							
MRS RAYMOND ROHNER=OR							
83-21 VICTOR AVENUE ELMHURST LI NYK=							
I RAYMOND TAKE THEE ELSE FOREVER AND EVER=							
RAYMOND.							
943 JUL 2 PM 9							

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 bad I
wasn't around to put a little heat
into you. Remember how I used to
warm you up on a cold night. Real
close like this. #. Kest you awake tho didn't it

And you used to say no no but meant
yes as I well knew because you kept
getting closer to me. Thank Grandma
for the gowns 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
kisses darling I miss the feel
of your arms the look in your
eyes the touch of your skin &
the love of your heart. Grandma
is 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 off! Gee I wish
you were here now & inside the
Gorgette one. I'd love you to.

death & come you with kisses from
your head to your toes with stops
all along my sweetheart darling!
Would you like that? Tell me yes
you'd better come down next weekend
sugar I could stand some loving
its been three who now hasn't it?

In his letter the following day, Raymond describes his interview with a Major regarding his future assignment with the Army.

This morning after a 3 hour wait
I got my interview & was accepted
& in the 9A classification in
Chemistry. Just what this
means I don't know yet, that
is what field or what study.
Tomorrow morning at 8
I start my refresher course
Math (Calculus) Drawing (Lettering)
English (?) Physics, till

12 o'clock this is every day. Aft. is devoted to Phys. ed. & Milit. Drill.

A fellow in the same class - 9 AChem who has been here 2 wks got shipping orders today for Carnegie Tech in Pittsburg Pa.

¹ 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 tho. So now you know why I tell you to keep my gift - I may be going any day now who knows. But it's to another school

so stay at this one. Hope it
not So. Cal. or Idaho.
Goodnight gotta go to bed now
Love from your passionate Hubby
to his sweet snookie.

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.

My dear sweet Else,
 yes dear it came last night.
 Pruitt + I went to the movies
 to see the "Oxbow Incident" +
 while in there Rubenstein comes
 + tells me I was being shipped
 to Carnegie Tech. Since I had
 perused ^{my} the bulletin board 2
 minutes before I went to the show
 + since he is continually joshing
 I stayed for the show +
 immediately after tore to the
 Bulletin board of Co E where
 sure enuff it was up. But still
 not on Co F board. What to
 do. The telegraph office was

The telegraph office was closed. Later in that letter comes a description of what Ray expected in the coming days.

The order does not specify when I leave but it is presumed by all to be Saturday about 12 from here. I was given my clearance sheets this morning. The order reads R.L.R. will rpt without delay to cmd officer & is hereby transferred from Pvt to Private First class at Carnegie Tech. Pittsburgh Penn. The P.F.C. gives me \$4 a month more if I ever get paid again.

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.

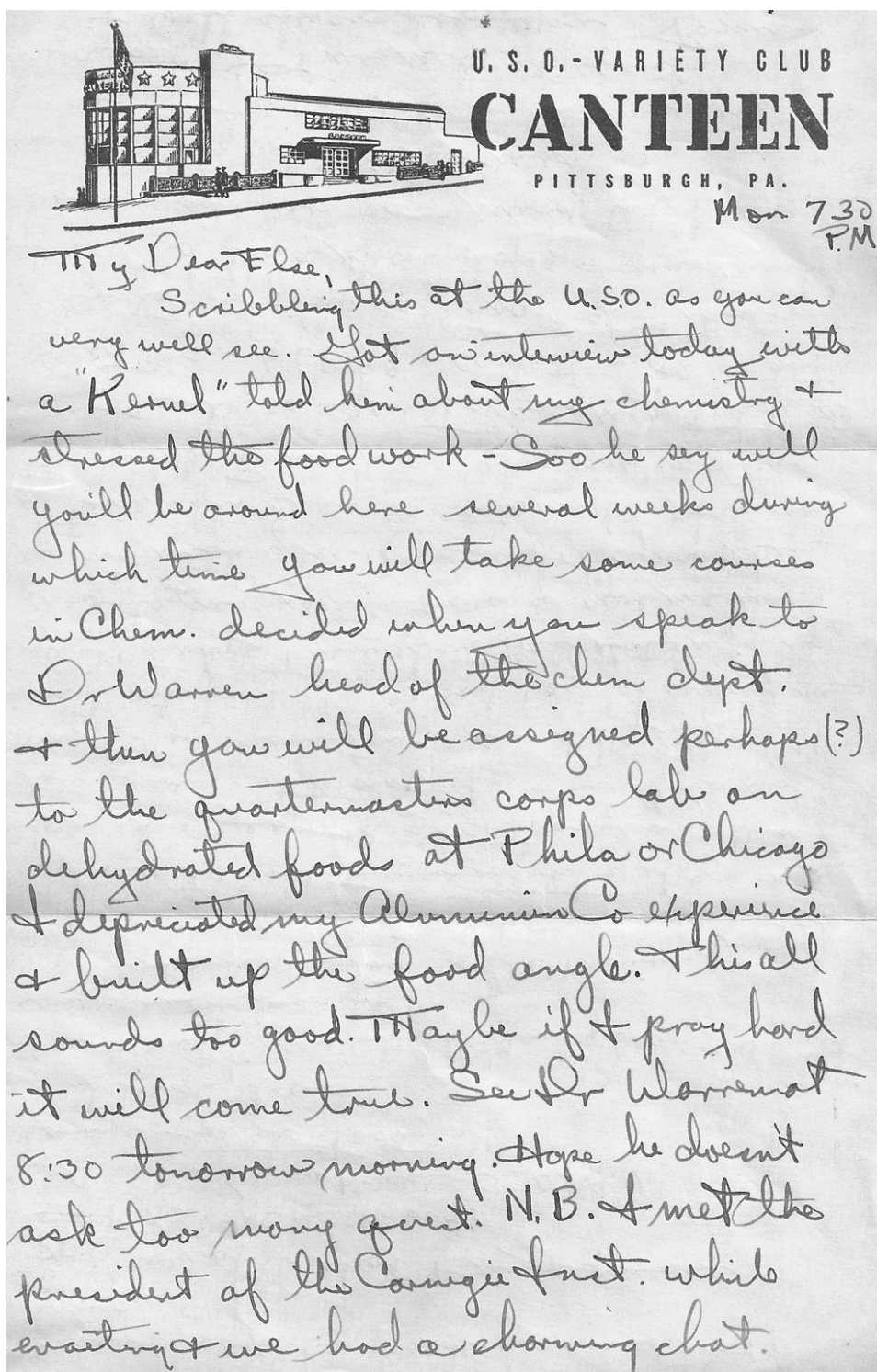
Chapter 3

Carnegie Tech - Pittsburgh

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

My dear Else
 The train got in Pittsburgh at 8 o'clock this morning after what was a long long trip. We left Boakburg at 12:15 yesterday & layed over in Christensberg till 5:10 - Changed train at Roanoke ^{Supper at 6} & 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 10:00 but it was late and it was 2 before I boarded it. We then road to Pitt & got off & looked for someone to meet me & ended up in the salvation army trailer at the station getting a sandwich & 2 cups coffee free.

His second letter of that day describes his situation at Carnegie Technical Institute.



even shook his hands discussed the 9 A group.

Moved after that & my address is

P.F.C.

~~P.F.C.~~ R.R. ASN 32826048

CoC Pi Kappa House 3302 S.U.

Carnegie Institute Tech.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

I am off from Sat 3 to Monday 6:00 A.M. I could come home & back for \$11

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 come here since we would eat out anyhow. Nice hotels here. Get Monday off & ride back that day. Will have town saved by then. As you will note from the enclosed booklet which you should study The Webster Hall Hotel is pretty close to my section & would give me two nights with you if I could get up together in time after seeing you two nights. I enclose timetable of Penn. You take cab to hotel.

I will call you Thurs. night at about 8 at Haw 6-6899 - collect - 88 & the operator say the calls go right thru. I should have more dope & you should have made up your mind. Will subsequently send list of what more I need.

I won't forget this to the postoffice so you get it I see note at 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.

NOT GOOD FOR PASSAGE

140M 3-41 P.D. 238
AGENTS STAMP
JUL 23 '43
10 BROOKLYN N.Y. 10
55 PIER ST.

THE JEFFERSONIAN

COACH RESERVATION IDENTIFICATION

Applies Only in Direction Shown and on Date Stamped

SEAT 22 CAR 22 LEAVE 6:15 P M.
(Standard Time)

FROM New York

TO Pittsburgh Ticket No. 469057

This check should be shown when boarding train and presented to conductor with ticket. Please retain for identification and show to conductor upon request.

If You Cancel Trip Please Notify Agent at Once

N. Y. CONDUCTORS PUNCH CUT
Wash.
Hbg.
Alt.
Pgh.
Cols.
Inds.
St. L.

851 ROHNER MRS R L 7/23 350T-115C
8321 VICTOR AVE
ELMHURST NEW YORK

HD

GUEST ACCOUNT
HOTEL WEBSTER HALL
FIFTH AVENUE AT DITHRIDGE STREET
Pittsburgh, Pa.

No. 466176

BILLS ARE PAYABLE WHEN PRESENTED

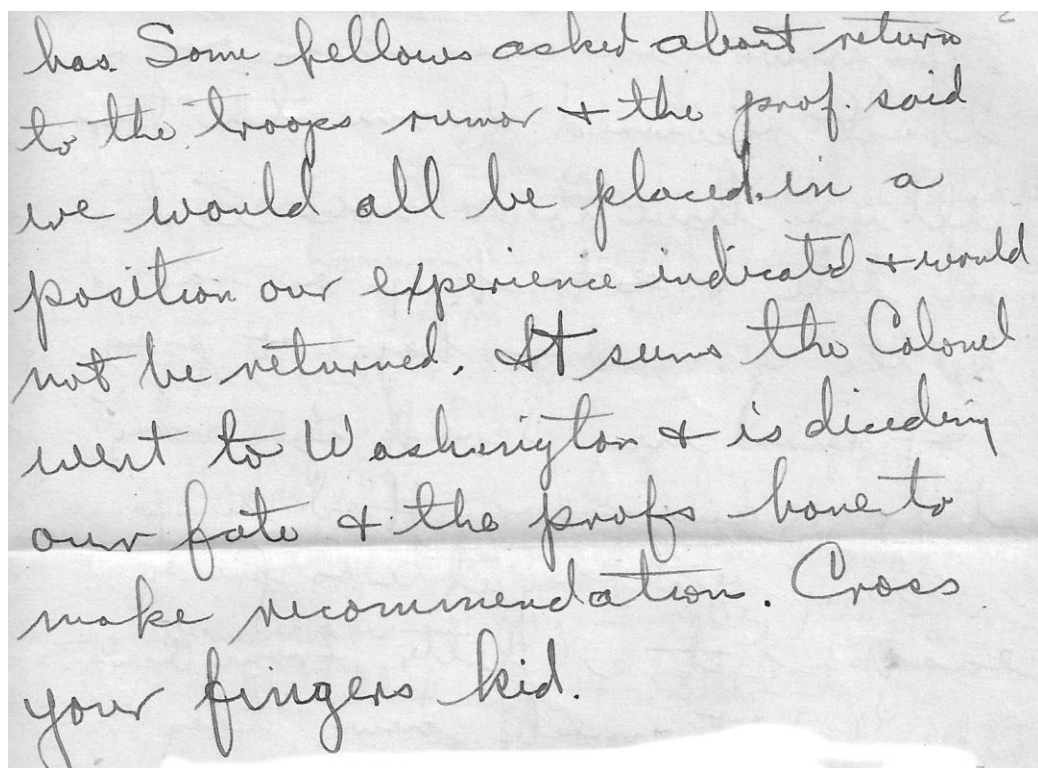
Memo	Date	Explanation	Amt. Charged	Amt. Credited	Balance Due
	1	7-24-43 MISCEL.	★ 3.50		★ 3.50
	2	7-24-43 ROOM	★ 3.50		★ 7.00
	3	7-25-43 PHONE	★ 0.11		★ 7.11
	4	7-26-43	3.50		10.61
	5				
	6				
	7				
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Thank You

Last balance is amount due
unless otherwise indicated
Retain this receipt

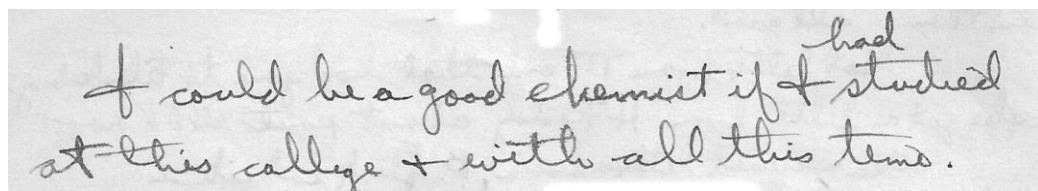
With Else safely back in New York Raymond returned to his laboratory work and seeking information on his future. A portion of his letter of 7/27/43 addresses both subjects.

yesterday afternoon we had Bact lab +
one of the boys told me I had 34,5
chem unknowns laying up in the Chem
lab so I trotted up + incidentally
told Dr. Stempel ~~so~~ that I had collected
them. He told me he had some ques
to ask me. Where did I work, how long,
who under me, my chem field, had
I taught, what did I want to do.
I told him I'd like to go back in ^{an} the industry
lab. Now - 4 of the guys will be
returned to the enlisted reserve corps
for teaching position at \$50 pr +
rumor has it that we will be sent
back in labs. Rumor say the Mellon
Institute has offered to take all the
graduate chemists the ASTP at C Tech.

A photograph of a handwritten note on lined paper. The handwriting is in cursive and somewhat slanted. The text discusses rumors about returning to the troops and the role of professors and the Colonel in deciding the fate of the students.

has. Some fellows asked about return
to the troops rumor + the prof. said
we would all be placed in a
position our experience indicated + would
not be returned. It seems the Colonel
went to Washington + is deciding
our fate + the profs have to
make recommendation. Cross
your fingers kid.

Ray's positive feeling about his training is contained in a paragraph from his letter of 7/28/43.

A photograph of a handwritten note on lined paper. The handwriting is in cursive. The text expresses a desire to be a chemist if the writer had more time to study at college.

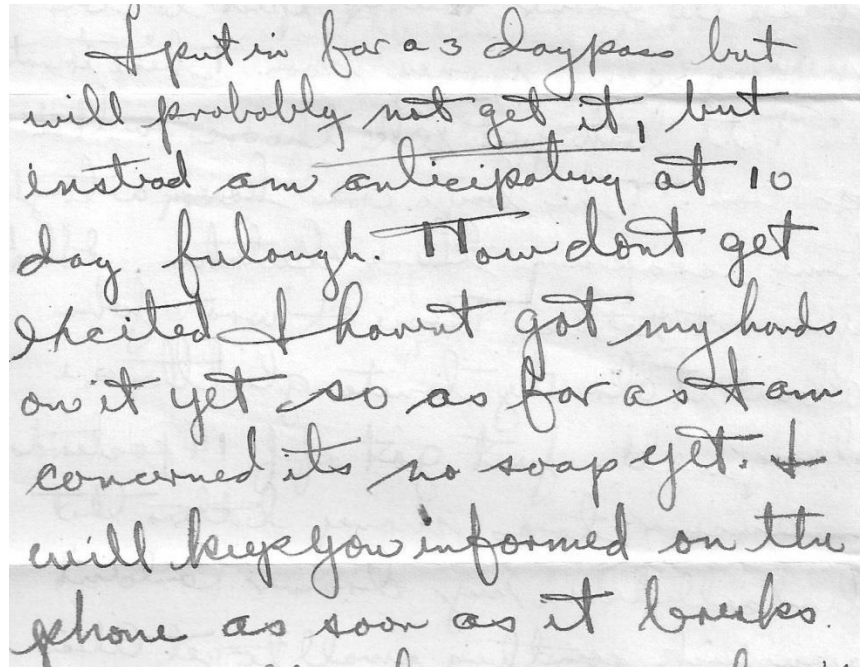
I could be a good chemist if I ^{had} studied
at this college + with all this time.

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 our own

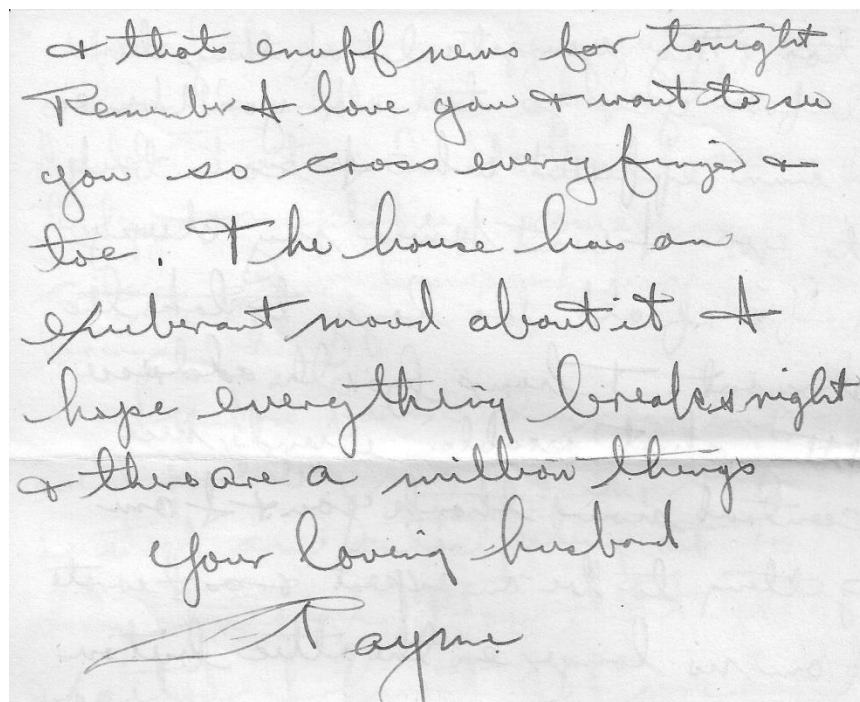
problems which are not easy. When the weekend comes it feels good to sit down & read the book slowly instead of tearing thru looking for a reaction. Then too since there are no military classes on Sat. aft. for a while I can work in the lab for four hours straight & get something done in one piece.

Despite his lab work Raymond did work on a visit to see Else as shown in his letter of 8/11/43.

A black and white photograph of a handwritten letter snippet. The text is written in cursive and appears to be a continuation from a previous page. The ink is dark on a light-colored paper.

I put in for a 3 day pass but
will probably not get it, but
instead am anticipating at 10
day furlough. Now don't get
excited I haven't got my hands
on it yet so as far as I am
concerned it's no soap yet. I
will keep you informed on the
phone as soon as it breaks.

He finished that letter with the following words.

A black and white photograph of a handwritten letter snippet, likely the end of the letter. The text is written in cursive and is signed 'Raymond'. The ink is dark on a light-colored paper.

& that's enough news for tonight
Remember I love you & want to see
you so cross every finger &
toe. The house has an
exuberant mood about it I
hope everything breaks right
& there are a million things
your loving husband
Raymond

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.

August 25 1943
8:40 A.M.

My dear Else,

Got in safely, after what seemed a month of Sundays in a cot chamber, an hour or fifteen minutes late just managed to get on the end of the chow line to stew & ice cream. I was absolutely the last man.

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.

& Dear Else my pet,
 Well yesterday I started my physics
 chem course & it appears to be
 quite a thing. We have a helluva
 assignment as yet. aft. instead
 of me ironing like I should
 have & finished my Monday work
 three of us met in my room
 & began constructing the
 big reaction chart which is
 required of us. We got most
 of it done & have about an
 hour work to do yet.

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.

of 1899 not a penny more or less
 damned tax from one always
 knows more after the other
 people have not their in
 made their mistakes. These
 no money. Seems a waste of
 money. Buying feeds toys that
 are so cheap. But you have
 to get something for her don't
 you. Sister, I sleep now
 despite the no headache. Went
 to church. Going to another Con-
 gregation tonight. What a
 they have raising there I hope
 fits better than at Kenneywood.
 You + your coupons I'll murder you.
 Just got your so short of Thurs 6:50
 A.M. I hope by now you are over your
 aches + pains. Got a letter from Aunt
 Howard Leffert + a big box of Fruit
 drops from Tante Sissie + Uncle
 Huss

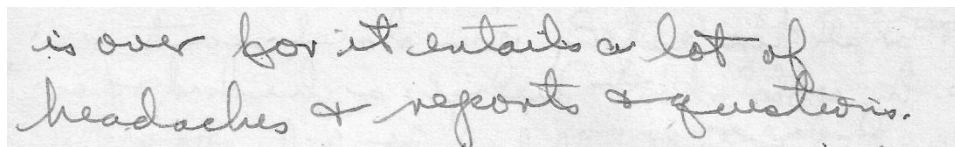
Ray's letters do describe some of his extra assignments during his time at Carnegie Tech as shown in the letter of 9/18/43.

Saturday 18 Sept 1943
Cold to death morning
warm & sunny
now.

My dear sweet everloving wife,

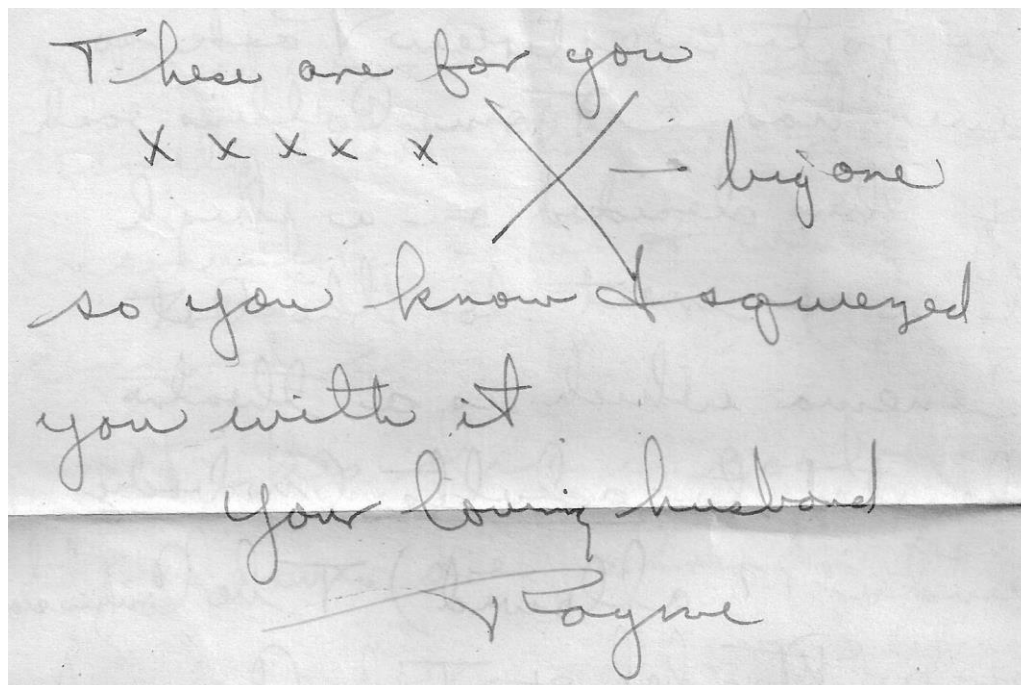
Today I have to answer two letters from you. One from last night & one from today at twelve o'clock.

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 & some compliments from the men. For the formations were thankful that we, the sergeants & I didn't mess up the cadence & change step too often. Of course Lt Pickrel didn't say anything which may be good & couldn't be bad, at least he hasn't peeped a word to the marching company as he used to do so then down under other commanders. I am glad the job



is over for it entails a lot of
headaches & reports & questions.

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.



These are for you
X X X X X bygone
so you know I squeezed
you with it
your loving husband
V Payne

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.

It is good that you are able to get down to rock bottom despite your feelings + that you don't let your longings creep up on you the way mine sometimes do. I guess we both must keep our nose closer to the grindstone so we can't see the harvest coming because of sharpening the sickle + soon these things shall pass. My mind keeps returning to that trip we were talking about + I wonder if you too go off dreaming about it + whether we shall ever make it a reality. So we need something like this to dream about to make this business bearable, shouldn't we be happy enough to be together again + not mind if it's in the dullest surroundings instead of a cruise around the world?

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.

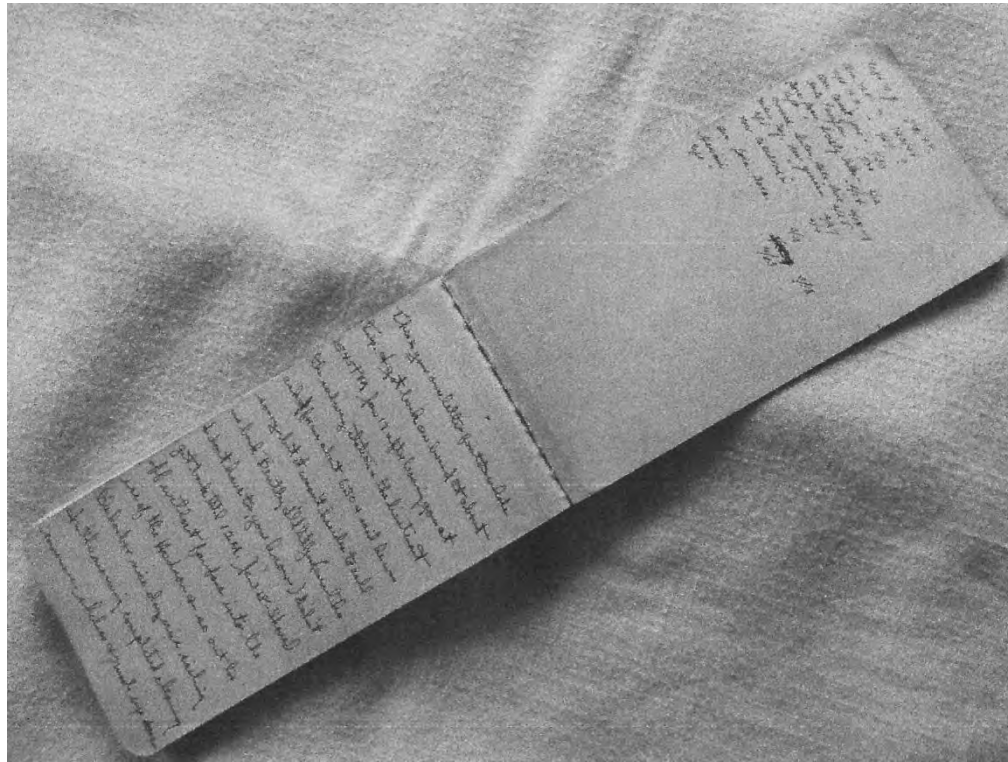


The ship was built as a ferry in 1927 by the William Cramp and Sons Ship and Engine Building Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Evangeline was 365 feet long and displaced 5,002 tons. It saw service with her sister ship Yarmouth between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and Boston, Massachusetts in the summer 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-Shoved 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.

Sunday January 23
10:45 A.M.

My dear Elie

I've gotten so used to this cubby hole I work in that I even write you from there. We hit the delta last night & have our feet in the muddy waters of the 'father of rivers' now. Francis anticipates calling his pop & he will call you, I hope, & it is my misfortune to be C. Q. tonight, sooo.

During the trip we painted our cabin white and almost all the rest of our belongings look very well in white spots too. Coming down as we did we had quite a bit of free time & despite the small size we just managed today to finish the job. Looks nice & clean.

The pill rolling goes well as well as the bug chasing. I anticipate being a lot busier after we leave here. The scuttlebutt says we are headed for the banana republics about the canal. Letters from there will take a long time going up to you so don't expect too many, will get one off whenever I get the opportunity to mail one.

The trip down was very smooth & of course the water is just the same color as when you & I came down to Nassau. The food continues excellent & abundant & I am once again on my way to being a Falstaff, Sic semper all gluttons

Wish I had kept up on my French so I could get about the "quarto" here & had some of sister's Spanish so I could haggle a straw hat for you. Bought another knife - Sheath type, \$1.45 equivalent to the \$6.00 ones I've always wanted good for skinning deer. Also managed some Chesterfields & chocolate at the T K but no lighters on sale for B ob.

We saw several movies on the way down one of which was the old one "Sun Valley" with "Sungahine", the ski scenes made me eat my heart out. Boy would I love to plow along with you again on some good snow. As it is I'm getting a slow sunburn in January. The sun glasses are very useful 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 thru the week well after Monday's disappointment. My thoughts are often with you & I have followed your route this morning with my watch.

That's all from. for now from
Way down yonder in N ———
Au 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 Carondelet 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 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 Decateur st & saw old French market thence to original Ursuline 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.

Belt 4.50	Vase 4.00	2 Pics 1.75
Postage 0.85	3 Beers 0.60	1 USO lunch 0.30
1 Gluck Dinner 1.60	Tintype 0.35	1 box Plarine 1.20.
Cards 0.10	Paper 0.05	Trolley ride 0.21
Shave <u>0.35</u>		
Total \$15.86		

	Paid
Rasulo owes	3.85
Leinhas	<u>0.50</u>
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 – Porkchops etc. - Up to the room finished painting the floor & cleaned up sink & mirror & now you look out on a sight you deserve delux 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 cant 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 developes 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 getting 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 bosom 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 revile 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.

Print the complete address in plain block letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. _____

From
Pfc. R. L. Rohner
(Sender's name)

To
Mrs. R. L. Rohner
83-21 Viator Ave
Elmhurst L. I.
N. Y. C. N. Y. U. S. A. 3 P. M. N. Y. C. N. Y.
(Date) 1944

32826048 USAT.
(Sender's address)

"Evangeline" APO 4200-B

PASSED BY
U 13182 S
ARMY EXAMINER
(CENSOR'S STAMP)

Dear Else, Here we are out in the middle (Somewhere in Pacific) of nowhere basking under a summer sun + gradually turning the coveted sepia skin tone while Eva posts the gentle Pacific. By now we are quite a way on our trip + are wondering where we shall end up on our way back + how soon. The usual succession of colds + foot troubles wend their way daily thru sick call + the cough-mixtures well from the pharmacy in an unbroken flood. The sunbath shirts are slowly running out + while they've all been washed + have not yet had the stamina to heat up the oven we sleep in with a night's ironing. You'll never have to plead for a washing machine when I'm thru with the army. Going from the top half to the bottom half of the world was celebrated as quite an occasion + I was delicately (?) initiated into the fraternity of Neptune's Rex + on once again reading "Mutiny on the Bounty" + expect to see the ancestors of the rebellious crew, especially the grass skirt variety. I sure could use a splash in this inviting sea but still am unwilling to gamble the Australian crawl against a shark's speed. Frank continues well even as I am live my love to mom + our families + my congrats to

V...-MAIL

Love Raymond

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT PERMIT NO. 20

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 gonorrhea 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 Raliegths 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 repititious 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 tomrrow. Been playing my flute with Rasulo & in the hospital tonite 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 whats doing lets 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. monogrammed 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 imperceptible. 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.

Print the complete address in plain block letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. _____

From _____

To MRS. R.L. ROHNER
8321 VICTOR AVE
ELMHURST, L.I.
NEW YORK CITY
NEW YORK

PFC. R. ROHNER 32826048
(Sender's name)

USAT. EVANGELINE APO4200-B
(Sender's address)

C/O P.M. N.Y. N.Y.

MARCH 1 1944
SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC

PASSED BY
U 18162
KHG
ARMY EXAMINE

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

My dear Elsie, It is now some five days since I last wrote you & since we anticipate a stop shortly, we will come back to the good old states I hope this beats my arrival there. While I receive no mail in this boat service, I can appreciate how fortunate I am after viewing the encampments we've seen. It would take many letters to balance even a short stay down in these parts. I saw nothing so far of Paul's outfit & wonder what you hear from him. Please remember me to Karl & the Bosches & presume their children will have grown quite a bit by the time I see them again. Everyone in the Detach. has borrowed "The Pale" & quite agree with me that it is a very good book, at the Chaplin's suggestion I am reading "Ben Hur" & I almost feel I could find my way from Joppa to Bethlehem in a Liverpool blackout by now. The soap is coming along, much to the disgust of the entire crew, I'll be down with the rats in the hold soon with it! The doc; who approves of your photograph, by the way, is brushing up on his french in order to be ready to speak with the natives at our next stop & despite my antipathy for the "language of romance" it's fun to let it roll off one's tongue again. We have had quite a bit of freedom these last few days inasmuch as we've dumped our troops so we've recovered some sleep and caught up with our wash (cont. 2nd letter)

V...-MAIL

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1943 10-28182-6

Print the complete address in plain black letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. _____

From _____
 PFC R. ROHNER 32826046
 (Sender's name)
 USAT EXCHANGE APO4300-3
 (Sender's address)
 C/O PM NEW YORK N Y

To MRS R.L. ROHNER
 8321 VICTOR AVE. ELIZABURST L.I.
 NEW YORK CITY
 NEW YORK

March 1, 1944

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

Part II

There is not much chance that we will arrive at our home port so I shall telephone you from where I land so don't hesitate to better yourself if you hear the phone ring at 2 A.M. + if you can have a room or two of letters written to send airmail to the address I shall tell you. If it is impossible to get home perhaps I can run up + see Bill + Rita for a day or so + take care of a long standing drinking engagement as well as getting Karen a proper upbringing. We all have quite a bit of time to think on board + I have made quite a few resolutions I hope I can keep when the damned war is over and of course almost all of them concern our life together but they will have to wait, my sweet, till this is over. The Doc is most anxious to see me off to C.A.S. + truly, being a private holds little glamour but I wonder if every grade hasn't its degree above + trouble beneath it and all the variance is in degree. But I shall talk to you about that.

(cont.)

V-MAIL

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1943 16-50142-0

Print the complete address in plain block letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No.	From
<p>PASSED BY U 13162 S ARMY EXAMINER</p>	<p>PTCH. ROINER 32626043 (Sender's name) USAT EVANGELINE APO4200-B (Sender's address) C/O P.M. N.Y. N.Y. MARCH 1 1944 SOMWHERE IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC</p>
<p>To MRS. R.I. ROINER 8321 VICTOR AVE. KILMURST L.I. NEW YORK CITY NEW YORK</p>	

[CENSOR'S STAMP]

Frank & I continue well physically & financially & we did manage to get a few trinkets at our various stops which we will send home; the natives showing handicrafts similar to those in Nassau. My insurance must soon be due as will the new taxes; for the latter in the contributions column, put one husband & arrive at a final total in which the govt owes you! I wonder if mother is in Penn. yet & whether Viola 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 you & the 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 troubles & illness but I fervently hope that all is well with you. Give my regards to all the family & remember I'll always love you.

V...-MAIL Raymond.

12 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1943 16-50143-4

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 “Victoripia 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

dance 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 tatoo 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 Joeseeph too. Thanks for digest of & Seitzs letter. Glad snapshoots 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 fatility 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

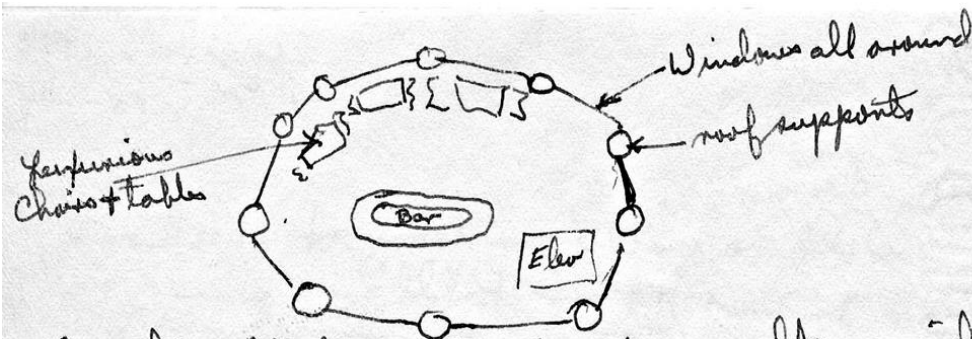
*\$20 fare
To Seattle from
here*

April 26, 1944
1 P.M. Raining

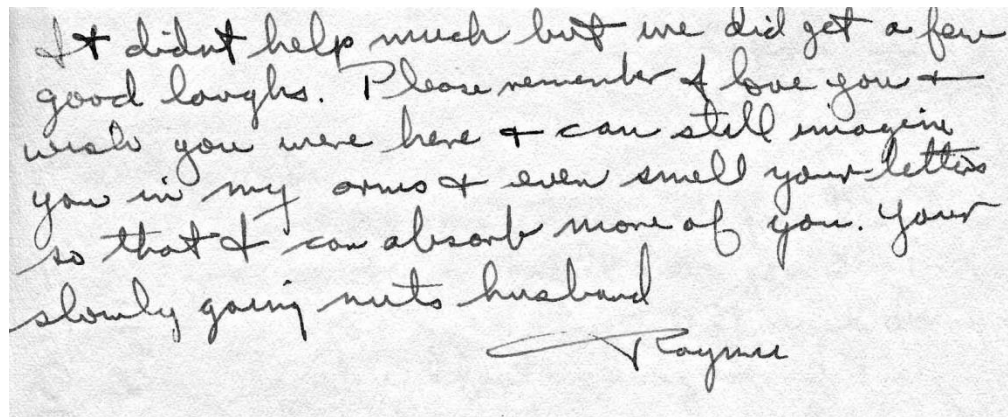
My dear wife,

Well, no mail again today & questioned the guy who went over & I'll give you 20-1 the ~~guy~~ never went over there. Not much doing today up for breakfast & hung around. The Doc. is going up to Fort Mason to find out what he saw this afternoon & hope it's something! The East Coast is still a possibility for this ship but not a probability. Worked out the answers to the O.C.S. questionnaires today and of course they want to know everything. C.Q. tomorrow so will try & fill some of them in. Of course there are innumerable copies & stuff & could use your agile fingers & your patience with forms. I'm getting jumpy & impatient with waiting around. Jobs around as longshoremen at \$1.80 an hour for soldiers so if I get no furlough maybe I can make some money. Tired of sitting around.

Had ourselves a time last night & I enclose some souvenirs. We took the cable car which resembles a trolley and then went into the Mark Hopkins Hotel lobby which is all done in Pickled Pine as ~~the~~ the Church Pews & took the elevator to the 19 floor & the combination of the bill plus the floors really got you up high. The viewing arrangement is like this



The entire effect is astounding to even this cynical New Yorker + the view stupendous. Like being in a lighthouse with all the comforts of home. So eve (Collins Bentley + I) bought a drink gaped + left for the Francis Drake Hotel cocktail lounge. Pink glass moulded indirectly lighted ceiling black leather upholstery to ceiling bought another drink then to the Persian Room in another hotel very dark indirect light joint circular stone + tomatoes with 4 stores in their eyes. Finally to the Palace bar where they have as true W. A. Field Parish to use - His Red Piper painting + then back to the ship. at 11:45 Bentley very funny + gay + Tolson cold sober (along with Collins). Thinking how much fun being here with you could be. Maybe that's why so many people frequent the water front slop bars, they bring back no memories of before the war whereas the hotels keep reminding one of happier times. Being swimming for free at the Y now hope of some back to some good news. Hope you don't mind my spending a couple of bucks last night but I sure was getting down in the mouth.



I * didn't * help much but we did get a few good laughs. Please remember I love you & wish you were here & can still imagine you in my arms & even smell your letters so that I can absorb more of you. Your slowly going nuts husband
Raymond

Other events come along as we see in this letter of June 1, 1944.

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.

June 21, 1944
 7:30 PM
 10:30 PM by you
 Friday night
 again already. Hardly
 seems its over a week
 since I left you.

UNITED STATES ARMY

Dear Elsie,

Got two letters + a card from you by going
 up to Fort Meade as well as a ton of stuff from
 the P.M. for the crew of the ship. Commander Jackson
 Quinn had told them to hold it all for someone to
 call. They failed to give it to the guys for some
 reason. It will all go to the fleet P.O. now
 where the Co P.M. S.F. Cal goes automatically now.

My dear you're shipping you have to
 right to Anton yet + paying your debts at
 the office ate a big whole in your salary
 Tch Tch please don't whisper that I can't spell!!

Hope of Bob to take you to station
 Thank for writing so promptly and for sending
 Anton's letter along too. I thought of you Sunday
 at church but I'm afraid I swore at the train at
 the same time.

Ray's attempts to conserve space often results in letters that are difficult to read but Elsie 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 stowed now in fair shape & looks all around. No suitable weather yet for taking pictures. Fair & Drizzle.

Bought two books "10,000 jokes Toasts & Stories" which is a sort of can "you top this" & Living Biographies of Religious Leaders which treats of 12 of them & so I should know who John Huss Calvin & Fox were when Doug preaches on them next!

Gonna get some paper today as I find answering all my letters has exhausted my supply.

Went to a show yesterday sort of like the Paramount & saw Ladies in Wash. (?) & a medicine stage show.

Alfred bought the "Life & Times

of Rembrandt by Van Loon + Herbie "Physic made easy".

Boy I know just what you're doing up to Oct 4 now which takes care of the summer now how about the winter? Haha.

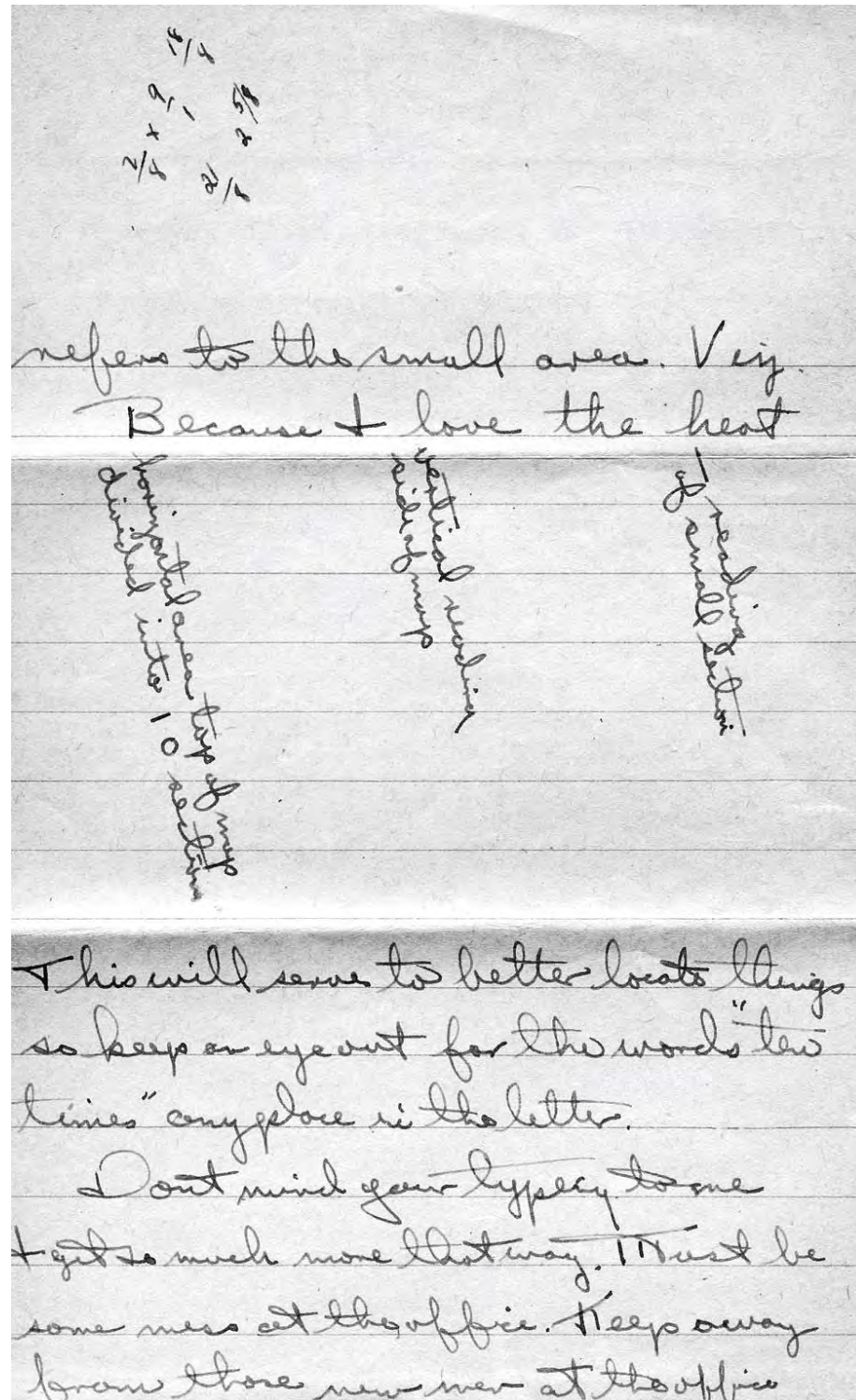
Had steak aboard yesterday at last

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 viz Because however which will correspond to an area from left to right on the map & split it up (the area) into 10 equal parts.

Then ^{we} label these ten parts into a b c d e f g h i j. The ^{fifth} ~~seventh~~ word in the code sentence now

Here Ray describes his "code" to tell Else where he is.



They may be nicer than this one.
I was afraid you would be starving to
death by now for lack of funds being
asked to you out of house & home.

Hee don't you go on a diet I like
you nice & soft the way you are now
how about making it 150 now delicious.

Will send you comfort & film &
bombs together.

Whed days mean winter soon I write
every day. TTYg C/O ^{U.S.A.T. Eva} Postmaster S.F.
address some the letters being handled
& delayed at Fort Ticonderoga & should
expedite my getting them.

Get catalogue on those motor
scoters that I thought would be good
for me. Their strongest will only
climb a 9% grade (up 1 ft in 9 ft)
& so I will toss it out as the
Lockwood grade is a hell of a lot
steeper. Also get dope from

two companies on waterproofing
cellar. Both recommend "pointing
up" the interstices with good
cement & then applying their
waterproof coating. Will send to morrow.

Large air mail envelopes with
your single page letters still arriving
in very poor condition.

Will bid hope to see Bill &
Rita & what's the name of the kid(?)
soon. We may go about the
20th & Seattle may be our home
port who knows. Life raft coming
aboard but the first stop will
be Oakland for bottom work so
it will be awhile. George must
stay lovely & luxurious & remember
what fun we had on our foray
Yours - Rayne

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. Truckn 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 than 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 that's 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 dont 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 cant 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



UNITED STATES ARMY

3:50 or 7 o'clock by
you. But you
finished eating +
all. + holiday

Dear Stupid,

Well worked again last night with
Simehouse, Carrey only lasted one night,
+ had $3\frac{1}{4}$ hour overtime. Went + got
paid today + after taxes + all were out had
\$13.87 which will lighten my conscience
about all the dough that's petered away on
me here in Fresno. I tho't had plenty left I
don't feel right spending it if it's not
"extra" + working + earning a little makes
"extra money".

Got my blouse back from the cleaners -
it looks very nice (50¢) + have also purchased a
look on model boat building at \$2.56 (That's where
my money goes)

+ thanks for the Bible helps - now I'll
have plenty of ways to find things I want. Haven't
read the ten Commandments in so long since I was
a kid + guess when I knew them by heart

It must have been a tough day Saturday wonder
you got in all home again. My mail got to you
so fast but the army has a finger in mine + that
sure slows it up. I never got Cablegram. I enjoy sending
you money, got your Sat + Sun. letters today. Got Bill
address + tel # all lined up if I go to Seattle. I know
enough to write a thank you note - hahaha - do they
"Hah Hah" no more ribbons. Please no more real

estate jokes. And Brutus room is locked till now.
 Glad its cooler by you so it is here
 The Callie story sounds like you ran into
 a bunch of nuts or at least some silly dog lovers.
 Glad you had enough sense to get some sleep
 Sunday, after such a tough week.
 The guy telling me about the ring cake
 I think I'll call you the Pissy girl from
 now on - who who, I don't see how Parsons
 can continue in a scandalous Club from foisy
 Schnitz is some name for a mixer he should
 be with Ketchum the undertaker. ^{can} Deficiency
 Some homecooked meal - ^{can} ^{beef} ^{franks}
^{can} ^{tomatoes} - milk. You'll have to do better when
 this war is over.
 Hey didn't read the way outside myself
 just the little did it say you made home
 unbearable - I know it out - it ain't
 true
 Gonna eat supper now & then Alfred
 Jim & I are going roller skating - ah
 poor Alfred I'll be pecking splinters
 out of his
 He flows thru the air with the greatest
 of ease
 He missed the luggage & fell on his
 knees
 Fooled ya. I along sweet stupid with
 I could schmoozy with you
 Love you
 Payne

On Sunday, June 11, the ship goes into drydock at Alameda. Ray describes his impressions.

Sunday June 11
5:15 P.M.



UNITED STATES ARMY

Dear Ellie,

Today we moved to Drydock & have just finished getting the water pumped out. The bottom is pretty well crusted with coral but the point job looks good underneath. The screw involved with the cable at Borabora looks intact so we shouldn't be too long in here. Of course the steering engine is to be fixed here this.

No mail from you today so I will attempt to call you tonight or at least some nite before you get this if not tonight.

Went to the Methodist Episcopal church today and have never heard such a poor uncoordinated ranting & raving sermon in a long time. Even the kid Limehouse thought we would have done better to stay home. Besides we missed dinner.

The Captain says they spent \$800,000 dollars on reconditioning the ship. I wonder!

Saw the Only Hardy pitch last night & found it good as well as the other features shown in White.

Will get off now & mail this & walk about Alameda & see what it's like.

Sue missed you in church this Sunday but as my new theme song for this trip says

"I'll be Seeing You in all the old familiar places — soon."

Rayne

If ya see the above # set a juke box insert a nickel & listen to the words cause it's all I sing now.

"I'll be looking at the moon but I'll be seeing you."

On June 20 comes word of the next adventure of Raymond and the "Eva".

Yrs of June 13 to hand
now I'm waiting for
June 12

June 20, 1944
After supper 5:10

UNITED STATES ARMY

Dear Elsie,

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 came out Carpy called up so by now you must know we are still about. So far tomorrow we get supplies aboard at 2 P.M. — Then we go for a run

around the boat that night we get
fumigated and will tie up at a wharf
for a couple of days before we
go to Seattle & Seattle it very definitely
seems to be. The doc. is flat broke
& in a hole so things are beginning
to shape up on board here. He told
me I would be in charge of anything
that has to do with medication as well
as having the lab work which is
quite a chunk of stuff. Kyle the
other moronic West Va. Sargeant will
have charge of line work (chump &

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!

TTY dear Sweetheart,
 I love you. just got in about four
 hours ago + found the room in a
 horrible mess + orders to vacate
 down to B deck but not to my
 envisioned single room. (Lt Tipton
 has it now) but to one I will
 occupy with Frankie. At least
 it has a bathroom but no shower,
 we are pretty hard up for shelves
 too as our one big closet has
 no partitions. All our stuff is piled
 on a bench + it makes a mighty
 pile.

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
I forgot the other day.*

*Wed July 5, 1944
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.

PASSED BY U 07326 S ARMY EXAMINER	TO: <u>Mrs. R. L. Rohner</u> <u>83-21 Victor Ave</u> <u>Elmhurst L.I.</u> <u>N.Y.C. N.Y.</u>	FROM <u>Sgt. R. Rohner U.S.A.</u> <u>Evangeline & Fort Guy</u> <u>Fort Monmouth N.J.</u> <u>Commander in the 5th Div.</u>
(CENSOR'S STAMP)	Pt. 1 SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2	(Sender's complete address above)

My dear Elsie, Seems like you're due ten letters in-
 stead of one, but times are tough all over. Due
 to our unique flexibility we've gone on
 on with no chance of mailing anything off
 to you. When we crossed the line we had quite
 a celebration, Alfred & I enjoyed being among
 the medical shellbacks + taking the Pollywogs
 thru their paces. So far our models are making
 slow but satisfactory progress. Striping on the
 raging main require a lot of sympathetic vibration
 of the hand. The doc. has initiated some evening
 classes to get the detachment more in the groove.
 It has been so warm that many of us have
 taken advantage of the extra Luft available
 in the hospital area to sleep there. Frank
 + I continue well but we don't get the same
 lift from this trip as the others since we
 are stopping at ports with which we are
 already familiar. I'm up for shots again but they
 are just boosters 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. Love Raymond.

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?	REPLY BY V...-MAIL	HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?
--	------------------------------	--

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1942 12-38147-6

PASSED BY U 07376 ARMY EXAMINER (CENSOR'S STAMP) PT. 2	TO: Mrs R. L. Palmer 83-21 Victor Ave Elmhurst L.I. N.Y.C. N.Y.	FROM: Cpt R. Palmer U.S.A. Evangeline Co Post Surgeon Fort Meade Cal 7/2/44 Somewhere in the S.W. Pacific (Sender's complete address above)
	SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2	

So far I've started The Idiot; read Kings Row, which I think you would enjoy, and am half way thru a glamorous history of chemistry called The Chemical Age. The last speaks as if I. I. Tarkenton didn't exist in America at the beginning of this war. By now you must have the Kodacolor Prints back I hope you are sending them along. So far I have seen little worth filling an album with. Thoughts of vacation must be running thru your head by now. Would it break the Tele. Co. back if you squeezed out another week? If I remember July & August are very trying in N.Y. and it would be nice if you could get away and soak up some sun! The longer I stay on this boat the further that world cruise slides away from us. Some may get to love the sea as for me the ports seem a more interesting deal. Almost nine months on board this tub has made me into a more confirmed homebody. Shine the Knabe for the news from Germany has been good for awhile. Till it's over remember I love you.
 Raymond.

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP? V M A I L HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE

In his letter of September 1, 1944 and Ray remarks on Army discipline and a number of other subjects.

September 1 (already)
Somewhere in the S.W.
Pacific 10 A.M.

My dear Elsie,

The intense sun in these parts hurts my eyes every time I glance out the window. Conceding my normal aversions I will have the usual happy tropical time today. It is hard to reconcile the overture to *Ta Tanga Del Destino*, which is blaring over the loud speaker, with this environment; it would be more appropriate if they played *Boots Boots* --- & there is no discharge from the war. In fact between water houses some of us are beginning to look for Gunga himself.

To add to our discomfort we are now forced to wear shirts when eating in the hold which removes the last advantage to eating down there and adds one 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 intemperate faults of humanity are always magnified with power, viz. *supra dictators*.

Once again we are off one of those S.W. Pac gems (from out here) which the travelogues would label a South Sea Paradise Island. Combined with an oily blue sea white clouds & sunshine

I can see how misled the uninitiated could be. Actually of course it is a dank steamy malarious infested swamp with jungle covering scaly natives in breechcloths. I saw my first woman in a long time yesterday - the sight was uninspiring, her hair was not done by Pierre but was strictly au naturel, a halo of snowed bushies; even her unclothed bosom left no cold her breast resembling two deflated sausage balloons. Her simian resemblance was increased so much when she began to scratch that I thought I was back in the House of Primates in the Bronx Zoo. As at most places the natives come out in bum boats but these have very little to trade except some homemade bows arrows & beads all of the crudest sort. Nevertheless trade was brisk yesterday, the new boys being especially reckless trading T-shirts for inconsequential.

The heat makes concentration on anything more involved than a fairy tale almost impossible so the old Cosmopolitan Frank found makes good reading even if the stories are mostly plots which are impossible of logical solution. I've left The Idiot so often now for this light stuff that I'm afraid he will show the improvement of time & finally get to reading him.

The detachment is its usual phlegmatic self as one listless day follows another so that we are roused only on Friday when clean sheets are issued and remain in the sack on Sunday.

when there is no "Revelry". We did get an appendectomy from another ship the patient lived despite some pus in the peritoneum but we all thought the surgeons would have to get saline solution intravenously after all the perspiration they lost! The doc has done a few minor ops and the surgical team runs quite well now. Doc has promised to cut down the nails on my big toes and solve once & for all time my ingrown nail problems as soon as things are quieter.

Frank & I remain well and the hair on both our heads is slowly growing so that our resemblance to K. and adut. is slowly fading. Herbert has written to the Army Institute for info on the correspondence courses which they offer in connexion with quite a few colleges. If we ever receive it, homework & school will not be so far away for the youngsters in the detachment.

We hear the good news from ^{France} Germany but I find it hard to evaluate it. Whether Germany can withstand another winter of bombings & battling on the flanks 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 thousands of Nazis have been killed & captured as the dispatches say it is hard to picture what their resistance is made of & the lines must be getting thinner tho the net about them encompasses a smaller area each day!

Of course the Pacific communiques are a

more interesting kettle of fish for us. With the maps we've acquired we follow the bomb droppings as we would Dick Tracy but with considerably more avidity. Sometimes we wonder why we don't smell the acid stench of cordite. So far we've neither heard "the rumble of the guns" nor ^{seen} "the rockets red glare." Once you've seen these places you can appreciate the difficulties inherent in removing the infestation of Japs from the islands. We've still got a long way to go and I can't help but field feel that invading their homeland & subduing it, leaving the Japcocks to perish of starvation (when met the American grunts back) would be easier.

Cospy has gotten off several letters more than I because she had another bout with the chlorinators & my well known habit of procrastination. Since I am sure you people are still in close contact I assuage 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 haven't written to lately my mind quails. I feel particularly guilty about Roselyn and Paul. The group on board is quite old and have been in the field before & so enormous numbers of them drop to sick call every morning and someday the lab is busy.

No mail from you since we left our base and very little prospect till we return. I can imagine you getting out the corn husks and what and rejuvenating what winter clothes you've left

Of all the incongruities - A group of native children are clonged, and have been all morning, bawling in jabbawocky which is strictly unintelligible. A few minutes ago they all joined together and sang. It was a startling surprise, when we expected some mumbo-jumbo chant of the jungle, to hear the strains of Stand up Stand up for Jesus come floating up in their smooth voice. The words were their own dialect but the music was unmistakable. Since this is ~~one of the~~ ^{Concor Ruben} one of the fields for missionaries I wonder if some of the money we, back home, have put in the half envelope marked foreign missions has virtually gotten half way around the world with a message.

I trust you are well & not resigned to the separation which is enforced upon us. Maybe you can draw some consolation from Lincoln's story of the Sultan & the Wise Men - for these things too shall pass and we shall begin anew - perhaps not where we left the old life. Once again I've been thinking about old threads and new places, whether the living is worth the earning, or the WPA worth the release from struggle. Paper chemist in a Canadian woods, research in N.Y., Dupont slave in Wilmington, cog in Kodak's Rochester, more study or what. When the heat is on & sleep comes slowly - magic vistas appear so easily but morning reminds one of the fetters that must be broken yet and the give & take which a world in the release from war always ~~shows~~ ^{shows} shows. Love darling waits after Raymond

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

Sept. 21, 1944
Somewhere in
The SW Pacific

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 grumbel 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, sulfa, 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.)

Sooo, 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 schuffling 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.

Oct. 22, 1944
Somewhere in the
S.W. Pacific.

My dear Else,

It invariably happens - that I get six thousand letters & ten more just when I'm in a port where there are so many things to see and do that time is at a premium. Dare I tell you, feeling just jolly, and that's all I can tell too, that's the fact that once again I am sitting still & aches again quite regularly. If I were to see with some of time I'd have no letters & would have to beat my head against the bulkhead to think of something to write.

How is the picture over your bed serving you? Still using the two way sketch, I trust, even as I do? Hope I can remember all the things I saw to tell you about. Boy, do I wish you could be with me down here - amongst all the things I'm staring for, I'd like to have you next to me to laugh at the shows, dance with & go riding with, eat the different food with their sauces that always contain ginger, & surprise you, to pound pavements with, to ride the scenic rail incline that drops 1300 ft in one minute, climb in the mines, shoot the waterfalls, sit in the dress circle (all spit & polish & I believe have a likelier cocktail with it). As it is I do all these things with Alfred who with short hair & no moustache is a poor substitute for

you! But we sure do get around. Went to the races yesterday but the plugs I picked were only in front till the end. Bent had better luck & so bought us supper.

Everyone has written & I've got a whole box of mail to be answered including the second part of a V-mail letter from Stone describing a very technical bit of work he is doing - if I had the first part maybe I could follow it. All the back letters of yours with the exception of one or two have caught up with me ~~including~~ including the one in which Talbo becomes Stan - which I don't go for at all. Too bad he missed that Cal. appointment. I love you too much, I'm afraid.

I can't hope to answer all those letters from you right now so I'll shoot 'em off to you when I'm to sea in the next short run. You speak of pens & pencils for Christmas - I am well equipped along those lines - Please don't invest too much on a gift for me it might very well never reach me and we both would be very disappointed. I am saving mine for when we get back & hope to deluge you with a real Santa Clause sack of them even if you do get them next summer! Goodbye sweetheart - the next epistle will be a ripenorter so hang on a few days. Double hug + more from out here
Love Raymond

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 McGraw 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 indiscriminantly 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 doesnt 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 Trocadaro 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 cocaphony 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 strait 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 interminally 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. Pilenoidal 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!

Merry Christmas Raymond

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 theres 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 wont 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 sounenirs & 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.

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	<h1>WESTERN UNION</h1> <p>A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT</p>	1201 (29)	SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
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The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

N 137 6 TOUR=WUX OMAHA NEBR 7 355P

MRS R L ROHNER= 1945 JAN 7 PM 6 32

DLR 83-21 VIETOR AVE ELMHURST LI NY=

GROUNDING EXPECT TO ARRIVE MONDAY EVENING=

RAYMOND.

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.

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	<h1>WESTERN UNION</h1> <p>A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT</p>	1201	SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
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The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

7 CHICAGO ILL 9 JAN 8/45 9:04P 9:27AM

MRS A.L. ROHNER
83 21 VIETOR AVE

ARRIVING ON INTERSTATE EXPRESS 7:20AM.
TUESDAY GRAND CENTRAL

ROY
12 29

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.

CLASS OF SERVICE	WESTERN UNION	SYMBOLS
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT	DL - Day Letter NL - Night Letter LC - Deferred Cable NLT - Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

2 9 N.L. P.

SAN FRANCISCO CALIF FEB 1/45

MRS R.L. ROHNER

83 21 VEITOR AV

ARRIVED SAFELY. REPAIRS INDICATE
DEPARTURE APRIL MAJOR DIFFICULTY IF
YOU COME OUT FINDING QUARTERS. WILL
INVESTIGATE FURTHER AND PHONE DECISION
SOME NIGHT. ADDRESS FRANCISCAN HOTEL

RAYMOND
909

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

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.

Franciscan Hotel

350 GEARY STREET
SAN FRANCISCO
ZONE 2

Feb 1 1945

The other one was at
4:30 P.M. This one
is at 7 P.M. after supper
with a telegram inter-
vening.
Temp about 65°F

III & dear sweet Elsie who ^{my} miss so much despite all
the news I've gathered today.

Darling what a trip we had - After our happy
goodbye I could scarcely hold back the tears & after
plunking our stuff down in a seat I dashed out
to the gate for one last glimpse of you but couldn't
see you so then back & found we all were on a
coach which got kicked off at Albany dressed again
we raced for the three coaches & found them full
of civilians so we stood in the vestibule since the
car was full too - pretty cold out & the lunch
took a beating with me sitting on it. About 3 AM
much of the train emptied out - weekends in N.Y.
from Schenectady - G.E. plant and we all got some
sleep in a seat. After our rugged Sat. nite &
all the exercise I was one tired bunny. Arriving
in Chicago we went to the USO & scrubbed
shaved afraid because of the awful colds of
to take a shower. Had a gimbal's dinner
in a restaurant & Herb & I took a walk
for 3/4 hour to pound some blood back in
our feet.

A short clatch around & our past experience
led us to gate 14 at the C.N. & W. station
all the the Challenger comes in on track 4
Servicemen load from track 14. From 7 pm
to 8:30 P.M. we stood at that gate as the soldiers
piled up behind us. At 8:30 the race started

I'd me say that Robur once again came in first in the platform run huddling two suitcases & assorted impedimenta dropped by the soldiers not in our outfit - 700 entrants in the race minus gets seats in the 2 reclining chair coaches. We all managed 4 seats apiece & then consolidated.

The days & nights wore on & on one occasion we walked thru the rest of the coaches to the end of the train where the diner was. What cattle & cars fesse fones coaches & gaslight broughams - the groans were very audible in them. We were very lucky - our cars made the whole trip from Chicago.

Arriving at Oakland we felt - via topi - our way to the boat & found it unchanged & very few workmen aboard. A quick buy around & visit to see John Daly who led me to believe the boat will be in for considerable time. John's wife Fannie is here - She & he have a furnished bedroom with no cooking privileges at \$4.00 a month. He has all of Fort Ticonderoga looking for a farm apt. him none at all seem available.

Tomorrow I shall visit the emergency housing authority call or visit Sister Adele & call Louis Hesser the guy whose pic is on the one X was cord I sent you - all with regard to some sort of room flat or cell in which to live. Even if 11 or 17 was the sailing date it seems to me worthwhile for you to come out.

I realize the following disadvantages
Tough ride for you by train
Easy ride by air but bumping off at stops a possibility

3 - Cost - 2 rents, 1 here, 1 elsewhere

4 - giving up your job - possible you might find something good out here - neither suggest nor recommend this the bank would keep us for quite awhile.

5 You cant schlep all your clothes out with you (45 lbs by air + 150 lbs baggage free by rail) you may have to have some sent to you after you have an address here

6. You would have to get considerable dough out of bank + carry it with you as traveler checks.

against all this we would have a month or more together.

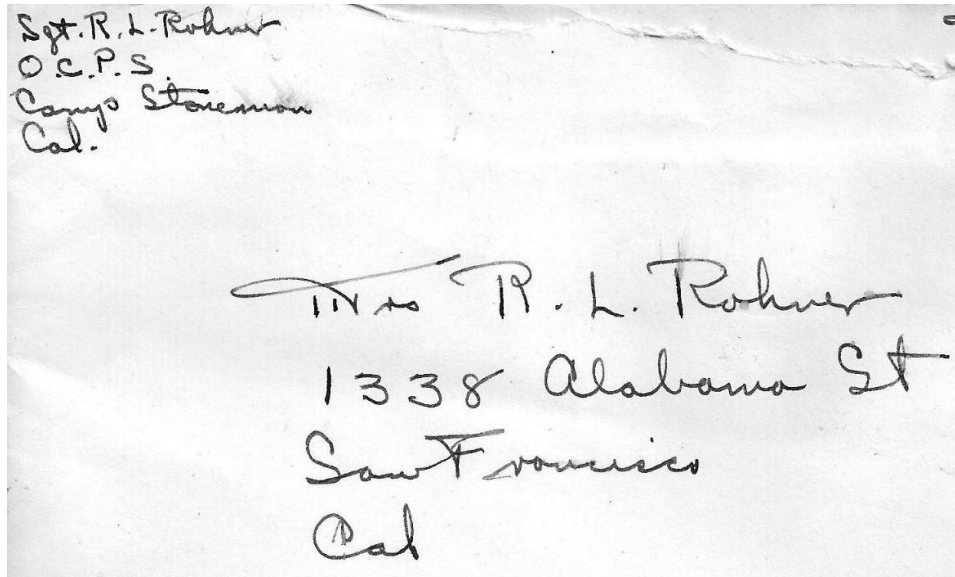
When I sailed you could go to L.A. + manage a flop with Willie or Basch or someone if you wanted to hang around.

II at too many people you know out here in S.F. either

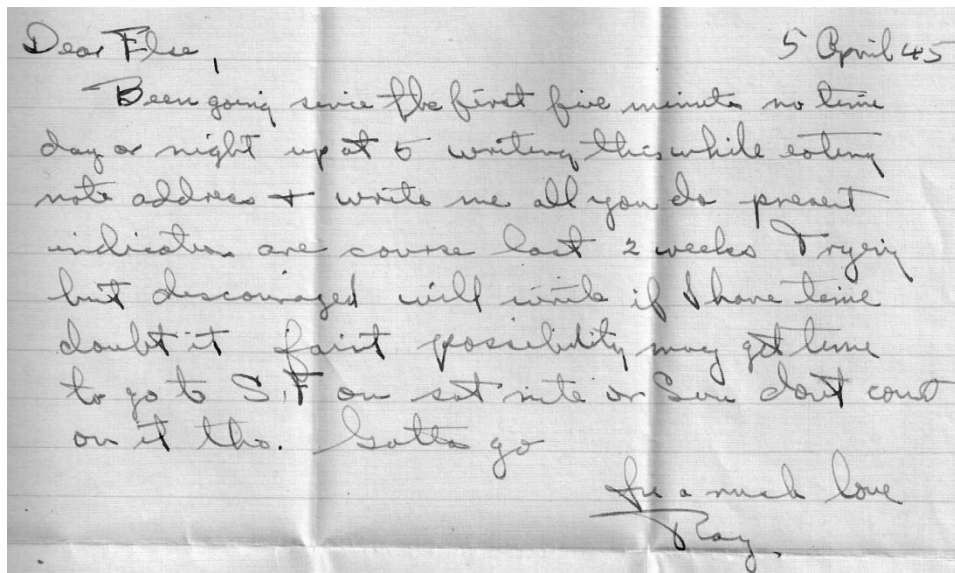
that the story is - you have the money to do the trip to make the job too quiet.

If you come we shall find somewhere to live if I have to shovel out a sewer. Whether you shall be happy or not I do not know, will continue looking + trying
Love + Sympathy

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.



6 April 1945
5:55 3/4 P.M.

Dear Elsie,

Dont mind my handwriting the hands are not so steady after all the work today. bed last night at 11 P.M. & up at 5 this morning what a day bawled out for everything I did threw the rifle around cut grass out of ditches and gave a 10 min talk on organization of the army tomorrow got one 15 min on current events - gotta study 2 hrs tonight scrub down the barracks & should prepare for inspection tomorrow Very tired & my moral is pretty low. If I get scrub down tomorrow I will not get off & will have to stand another week of this hell without relaxation I still love you but wish I'd have stayed on Tex.

Write please

T Raymond

April 9, 1945
9:20 P.M.

Dear Elsie,

Drew squad leader for tomorrow till five o'clock tomorrow which includes getting a lot of work done in the latrines. Drew & geys today too which is fair since some had six or more. Also had my explanation of part of manual of arms which was a 15 min. assignment & I did it in 11 for which I got hell - ah me. Tomorrow calisthenics demonstration on four exercises in 10 minutes, hope they come out O.K.

Hope your job is continuing peaceful & dont go blind it isn't worth it. Gotta shed my shoes & shave & go to bed.

Love

Raymond

Hoarse from yelling

18 April 45

Dear Elsie,

Today I have no voice - yesterday for 5 mins. I drilled a platoon at once at opposite ends of the drill field + got my larynx well worn down after which I had 4 exercises to give in 10 mins + got them off poorly + got my fanny chewed off by the Lt. so then they ran us thru calisthenics till we were passed out. Today got hell again for not keeping my rifle butt down. Got only 4 gigs today - hurrae.

Wonder how I shall talk tomorrow for 10 minutes hope my voice comes back. Subject - Combat patrols a hell of a lot I know about that! Ah me balsh is my fate thank the Lord. Reviewing, yr. letters and am very thankful. I love you
Raymond

April 17, 1945
6:30 P.M.

Dear Elsie,

Well we are almost at the end of another day + of course another tough one. Yesterday afternoon it was very hot + humid so one jerk with current events went + pull down the shades + chiding what little breeze there was + then went off into a monotonous sing song on news that was two days old. Soooo - Rahur fell asleep + got caught so he cleaned windows last night from 5:45 to 6:30 which is the only free time we have - finished them tonite. At least I had company. They strike you as funny but not me. They are still running the pants off us and picking up guys for wiggling a finger at attention. Got your Sunday 2 o'clock letter yesterday but none today. Still no mail from the boat. Have no assignment for tomorrow so I'm writing this in the two hours we have for study hall at nite. Pretty tired but the body is shaping up + some of the fat is coming off. Bye now write soon. Class will go to the middle of next week.

Love
Raymond.

April 18, 1945

My dear Wife,

Here I am with no assignment tomorrow again. Wonder if they have put me on the scrub team for the officer material to practice on? Did give one exercise in the field today but nothing extraordinary about it. With all my window washing done ahead & no lesson to prepare for tomorrow I was able to get a shower between chow & study hall tonight - boy did it feel good. Two hours of drill with a 10 minute break between & a third hour just before noon today wore us all pretty well down this A.M. A qt of milk at the PX for lunch & closed some of the water & lost but the smell stayed with me till this evening. I am also thankful I brought that powder with me since it relieves chafing so well.

Have just finished reading your Monday April 16 letter & enjoyed it. I love to hear M. is well & that you are keeping busy & not pining too much for me. Got a cliff out of Bill's suggestion about your crocheting shorts for me. Trust the two case will do - I bet what is simulated oilcloth? Don't know how you can go to L.A. with a job unless you manage to get a pass. That's where our money goes to find out about a secy in SF they telephone from Wash to N.Y. Haha hell here today but managed to stay awake thru the class.

Did I tell you I gave a 15 minute lecture on the disassembling
 + assembling of the Carbine - those which I had never
 seen prior to the night before! You should hear
 me talking about bolt ^{slide} comming recesses +
 operating ^{spring} guides. Got a satisfactory or it
 missed very sat. because of public speaking
 errors.

Only three gigs today - not even walking
 on air. Doubt sincerely that I shall make it
 but I will have learned a lot about how the
 army works + something of the weapons.

Goodbye for now + stay well. Love goes
 with this letter for you at least know that even
 if the harass the - off me I still manage
 to think of you

Rayne

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.

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.

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

Sat Aug 11, 1945

8:35 P.M.

Unconfirmed Dispatch Reuters
indicates fighting has stopped.

Dear Jughead,

I thought I might call you tonight
& tell you all was well but decided
to hoard my dough and write you
instead. Since we can still sleep
aboard the ration money amounts
to only \$2.20 a day and I believe
I am keeping within that. Let's see

Bkfst - 62

Milk + pie - 21

Fare to L.B. - 25

Newspaper Th - 30

Scenic RR. - 25

Supper - 65

Arrival stop - 10

\$2.38

Whee - profit today

32¢ - must buy me a
beer.

Now you have one
flatfooted husband since

I have walk that long

Bitch silly. Hop + don

back + foot. It is quite a town & much
more interesting & less commercial than

L.A. It is not just another Atlantic
City but a substantial city. Pity the
oil smell whips thru the streets every
once in a while. Not much fun
going window shopping alone but

ARMY AND NAVY Y. M. C. A.

921 South Beacon Street

SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA

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

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 chest, sex, & books. I will not need any of that stuff so let it go. Better send it to Alice & let Amer Exp toss it in his cellar. We can let it lie there till I come home. Keep him in touch with Bill on this.

Willie let me read a letter from Alice in which she ~~threw~~ the hell out of him for not thanking ^{her} Grandma for her last present. She seemed to be in a particularly blunt & sarcastic mood & Bill was very irritated with it. So would I be.

Well bed the feet hurt a little by now so I shall have a glass of milk and work my way back to the ship shower & go to bed.

J. 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 P.M. so that definiteness should free your evenings after that. No letters from you yet mail situation snafu. I shall continue to write you constantly.

Love
Rayme

Aug 13, 1945
San Pedro Cal.

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

My dear Else,

This must be the shakiest letter I've written you & I suppose you must think me quite a washwoman but with paper free and a pen that isn't continuously dry the going is easy.

We are restricted to the ship today and I got off to eat for lunch and am grabbing this opportunity to write a last line. Take this for what its worth:— The Transport Commander says its going to be a roundtrip — should be back by Thanksgiving. I hope so but am taking a salt tablet along with the news.

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 needled them into trying another station & slowly the tension mounted till at 4 oclock 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.

Free night at 7:45 Aug 28
I certainly have been remiss in my
scribbling. Not because I was
too busy but mostly because
I 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
& was actually cold. No rain
hurrah. Sun hits me had a 100
cases of food poisoning. As we are
not equipped well enough the cause
will ever remain a mystery. But
if you ever heard a hundred guys
retching at once you won't soon
forget it. I mixed paregoric &
bismuth solution till I was
worn out.

One guy went into shock + had
to be boosted with adrenalin
but all are better now. G C +
Syph continue to keep our
hospital going as well as some
Vincent's disease which I trust
will not spread any further.
The days go on with me spending
most of my time on deck in
shorts only. Read two books
Freedom Road which I shall
save for Walter for his nigger-
consciousness + Lie Down in
Parkness a psycho novel.
Not doing much typing but
not in the hold + I can't lug
the machine on deck. Washing
every other day so the volume
doesn't get too big. Made me

a pair of shorts out of fatigues
 pants today, ~~and~~ can wash the
 sunstans. Cleaned the goo off my
 watch & lacquered it. Hoping
 so hard for mail at Fenchwick!
 Doc a poor specimen didn't even
 come down Sun nets during
 the rush. Devotes himself to
 sac work & keeping track of
 narcotics. Gaby used to count
 what we had left & write Rx
 for the dif. This guy worries
 each tablet to death. We ride
 at 8 knots & seem to creep.
 Everyone hopes to get discharged
 at the end of this trip for
 laughing - love honey & can feel
 you in my arms tonight.

The SS Lykes sails into September and Raymond shares with Else that he's anxious for discharge.

6 Sept 1945
Leaving Eniwetok
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 bookepers 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 Uliyihi 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.


17 Sept 1945
 Manila, Outer Harbor

My dear Ted,

Just time I began to write you again even tho I tossed off
 & mailed one of my short letters to you today. We arrived
 here on Sat & hung about outside the breakwater till Sunday
 & Sun nite they took some troops off via barge & Monday
 morning we went in - Well will I remember that " " .
 We got shore leave about 10 o'clock & Rohrer & 14 others
 who had not been to Manila before took off despite the
 fact that we knew "the job" was pulling away from the
 pier at 2 o'clock. Our passes were good till 6 o'clock & we
 were hoping to catch a boat out to the anchorage. We,
 all 15 of us boarded a truck and landed in hell anyone
 at a beer(?) joint. Most everyone either dies or goes blind
 from the liquor they sell here so I & two others satisfied
 ourselves with looking at the people & their funny customs.
 They have midget horses hooked to two wheeled carts.
 The people inside as well as the carriages are three times
 as big as the horse. When the policeman gives them the
 go signal it looks like a miniature chariot race with
 all the drivers beating the hell out of the nags. The harnesses
 are often ornate & completely cover the horse. Since we had
 no idea where we were we ^{four of us} grabbed the truck back to the

doctors gaping all the while + chalking the round trip up to experience + leaving the matter here to their questionable whiskey. All of the Philippines are clothed in G.I. clothes, except some of the old ladies who have worn old dresses on. The sleeves are of the puffed shoulder type + made of a stiff netting cloth + are highly embroidered viz.  the material itself being stiff. I saw some for sale later but no dough left.

The money exchange rate is as follows 2 pesos for \$1 + 50 centavos to the peso. Hard money is tough to find + all transactions are in paper money.

To get back to the story - From the docks we began to walk to the nearest shopping center tho the Igles was still at the pier + I was for getting aboard. Yet I had no answer for my suitcase + there my wife began. We struggled out to the ^{over the Pasig R.} Jones bridge via the thru to the nearest group of stores. Saw some nice slippers or sandals looked like this  with 10 peso prices. 5 bucks are hard come by in this outfit + I had made a mistake before on slippers. The heels were carved all the way thru + had houses + palm trees in. Couple was here having a hard time getting the large ones + they had 6 1/2 ft. so when I remembered yr 8 + quit. We wandered up the street - dirty pitches, junk, fans, bananas, mangoes, with ants; no sidewalk, mud, tin shops; they really had nothing to sell but at exorbitant prices. Turned a corner saw a woman urinating by bending over in a lot passed a few hookshops. Turned + answered my c. I tried to buy a paper, 20 centavos; no charge for a book. Finally hit a G.I. converted shop run by the army where I got you something - mahmah most likely. Turned another corner to make a circle and since we were getting hungry decided to eat. That's where

my money went. To front restaurant with slightly sullied white tablecloths. Every thing on the menu stated with 2 pesos. I had a bowl of fried rice Canton Style. About a cup of rice with infinitesimal bit of pork + egg chopped in. - 2 pesos. Some ordered a hamburger 2 pesos. - Glass of synthetic orange drink 2 pesos. (1) One donut = 60 centavos = 30¢. Since all my dough was gone + most of the others had invested in shoppes handkerchiefs + fans we walked back to the docks passing thru the black market in watches where everyone seemed to be checking the time on his wristwatch - object to sell it. We're all about hoping to catch them at it. Arrived at the dock at 3. They say Manila was once beautiful + don't it. The Manila Hotel with its Arthurian Pantheon atop, some typical modernistic govt bldgs + tourist hotels are all that seem tenable to a white man. All the side streets are + were unpaved + junky. The stench is pretty awful + the roads have been bombed to dust. All the bldgs are pockmarked + bombed. Some of the walls were 6 + 7 ft thick brick but the bombs went thru nevertheless. Much of the rubble remains and is slowly being cleaned away. The town is overrun with C.I.s + much of the business being done is with women - 6 pesos or 30 pesos overnight with women pinning

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 Hdquarters

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.