

**Victor Bernell Rossing Letters Home From The War  
July 1917-February 1919**

*Compiled and edited by G. Rossing 2016*



## Introduction

*I discovered most of these letters in the summer of 2013. The letters had obviously been carefully preserved by Victor's mother, Helena Monson Rossing, and given to him for safekeeping. They were in a beautifully crafted leather trunk with Victor's name on a brass plate. The trunk, which was in Victor and Marie's bedroom, was full of many family photos and letters. When I was home over Christmas 2013, I asked David Rossing if I could borrow the letters to review. I transcribed all sixty-six letters and gave them back to David who returned them to the trunk in the upstairs south-facing bedroom. I compiled the letters and various Rossing family photos into a history, entitled Victor Bernell Rossing World War I Letters, which I sent to all of VBR's grandchildren in March 2014. Curiously, those letters only started in January of 1918 even though he had enlisted six months earlier.*

*I assumed he had written letters home during that time but they had been lost. Then last Christmas John and Ann Emery showed me a box full of old letters that had been kept by his mother Ruth Rossing Emery. I was delighted to find that one bundle in the box contained the missing letters from Paris Island! I have now transcribed those twenty-seven letters. I also discovered two more letters that were published in the Argyle Atlas. So all together this compilation consists of ninety-five letters and numerous photos from family albums, including the Kodak album VBR refers to in the letters.*

*Another bundle we discovered in the Emery letters was made up of letters he wrote to Marie during this time. I will put those twenty-two letters and postcards into a separate history.*

*VBR enlisted in the Marines in June 1917 just two months after the US declared war on Germany. He was 28 years old, a partner in the family store, appeared to have a well-established career and seemed to enjoy his life in Argyle. He won a seat on the village board when he was 22, loved to fish and hunt and was an active member of the local shooting club. So why did he enlist? That is one thing I hoped to learn from the letters.*

*There may be some clues in his first letter (7/16 letter). In it he states he was "disgusted with himself" and "wanted to get away from everybody." He refers to "small habits I had gotten into." He then talks about his experience in the Marines very positively. He is losing a little surplus weight, is tanned and "getting stronger and rugged." He also writes, "gambling and drinking is positively prohibited. I use very little tobacco. Paris Island is away from everything." If he was looking for a change, he certainly got it by joining up. It also appears that he is looking to make something of this opportunity to study and advance, something that would have been strongly encouraged by his mother. And you can tell from the very first letter and many others that there was a strong mother-son relationship between them.*

*He did his basic training on Paris Island in South Carolina. At the end of his basic training, his marksmanship skills allowed him to earn an Expert Rifleman Medal. He was quite proud of this as shown in his 8/23 letter in which he lists every target in the competition, one of which was "600 yd. slow fire at a 20 in. bulls eye." In the same letter he also mentions that he may be assigned to the Paris Island Marine Band. (He played the tuba in the Argyle High School and Augsburg College bands.) This did not happen and instead his Sergeant recommended that he join the Quartermaster department, as this would give him the best chance for rapid advancement. Indeed, after just one month he is promoted to Corporal. At first he was satisfied with his situation, writing in his 9/21 letter "I am fine and like my work. I have a tent all to myself with electric light and a good clean bed." And in his 9/26 letter, "I am feeling fine and like my work and think I will be comfortable." Just before Thanksgiving he writes, "I like my work and my tent and feel perfectly contented." However, this did not last and in January he suddenly puts in for a transfer.*

*While on Paris Island he is taking plenty of photos and sending the film back to Argyle to be developed. He instructs his brother Hjalmar to send him a small photo album and a copy of each of the photos from the films as he has "time to fix up a Kodak album now." He also asks him to send a few books, 4 to 6 cakes of Limburger, some good Swiss cheese, a few cans of sardines, a blanket, a tennis racket, two new tennis balls, his blue jersey sweater, a paper shade for his electric light, a ring of summer sausage, a few*

crackers and a jar of jam. He then demands, "Give it your immediate attention and hope it will not bother you too much" (9/13 letter). The family still has the Kodak album full of photos from Paris Island, many of which I have included in this compilation. He also asks that Viola make postcards from some of the photos, which he then sends out to customers of the L.A. Rossing Co. to promote the business.

Other photos from family albums show him ice-skating with Viola in his dress blue uniform on the Pecatonica River just behind the family home. These were taken when he was home for Christmas in 1917. The pictures show that he and his family were very proud of him being in the service and contributing to the war effort. Even though in previous letters he expressed his satisfaction with his job and living situation many times, for some reason, after his return to Paris Island, he became dissatisfied with his assignment and put in for a transfer. In his 1/20 letter he states "I think I did the wise thing you might not think so first thought, but am quite sure it will be better for me than to stick in that old storeroom with nothing to do. I felt like a slacker." Other letters hint that he wanted to get closer to the action. Many of his fellow recruits had been shipped off to France and had been in the thick of the fighting or had been assigned to ships as Marine guards.

There could be another reason for his sudden change of heart about his Quartermaster job. About the time he makes his decision, he is disciplined for "disorderly conduct that occurred in the city of Beaufort, S.C. on January 2". His sentence states that he is to be "reduced to Pvt. And to lose Pay amtg. To \$30.00." (USS Galveston muster roll 1/18). He never mentions this in any of his letters and we do not know if this influenced his decision to put in for a transfer. Many others were also disciplined for the same incident and it does not appear to affect his subsequent Marine service since it is not mentioned elsewhere in his military record. His transfer request was granted and he was assigned to a light cruiser that escorted convoys across the Atlantic.

In his 1/24 letter he writes that he lost his corporal ranking within the Quartermaster department when he was assigned to the USS Galveston as part of her Marine guard. He was confident that he would soon regain his rank of Corporal once he started his duties on the Galveston. He was eventually promoted to Sergeant in November 1918. The USS Galveston, which was commissioned in 1905 and armed with 10 5-inch guns, carried a crew of 340 including about 30 Marine guards. She escorted supply ship and troop carrier convoys, guarding them against German U-boats, which were effectively attacking Allied shipping throughout the Atlantic. He was on many trips that went across but he never landed in France or England. When the convoys were met by British escort cruisers, the Galveston would turn around and head back, usually to the Brooklyn Naval Yard.

During his first voyage in March 1918, the ship encountered severe winter storms when returning to the US. The Galveston engaged U-boats on several occasions. On September 30, 1918, U-152 managed to sink a cargo ship, the USS Ticonderoga, after shelling it for over two hours near the Azores Islands. In his 10/23 letter, he writes, "I fired until they gave the command cease firing. All the crew are real angry that we could not give them more help." VBR's job during sea battles was to act as a pointer for one of the large 5-inch guns, which could fire a 50-pound projectile over 9 miles.

Since the Galveston was a rather old ship, she had to be in for repairs at the Brooklyn Naval Yard for lengthy periods, during which time VBR had to remain with the ship. As a result, he was lucky to have much liberty to explore New York City where he often attended vaudeville shows, went to the "moving picture shows" and made many visits to Coney Island. The Galveston was also based at the Norfolk, Virginia Naval Yard in the spring of 1918.

The letters give us many glimpses into the loving relationship he had with his mother. For instance, he was sailing from Norfolk to Brooklyn during Mothers Day and quickly sent a letter when he arrived apologizing for no letter on that day. In his 5/15 letter he writes, "I am proud to be able to write and to have such a fine mother and I appreciate and love you more than words can tell. You are my best friend." And he makes the same statement in his very first letter from Paris Island (7/16 VBR letter). She was also very proud of him which is evident in her June 20, 1917 letter to a Marine recruiter in which she describes her son as "an amiable fine character who has success in any undertaking" adding a

postscript describing him as an accomplished marksman, outdoorsman and businessman. And adds that when he was 16 he saved a boy from drowning.

He was in New York when the end of the war was announced. In fact, it appears he was interrupted when writing his 11/7 letter by the whistle that signaled the cessation of fighting. The Armistice was signed a few days later on November 11<sup>th</sup>. He was in the city both days to help celebrate. In his 11/12 letter he writes, "the streets were packed and everyone had a good time. People, especially the girls, have a warm feeling for us Marines. When they would see us coming they would say, 'Here comes a Marine or Marines' and they would hug and kiss us like we were there [sic] brothers." His spelling and grammar skills were not on par with Viola's. I have tried to preserve the letters as written but did correct his frequent misspelling of "receive" a word he seemed to use in nearly every letter. I have also altered the paragraph structure and added punctuation to aid the reader.

As I mentioned earlier, VBR was constantly receiving letters and packages from home. Helena and Viola were continually sending him food, clothing, stamps and copies of the Atlas. And he frequently asked for items to be sent such as in his 9/20 letter: "You can send me a knit cap. Send me 1 pair 4-buckle all rubber overshoes (red) lightweight size 10. I have a sweater and gloves so think all I need now is the cap and 3 pair woolen socks." In his April 4 letter he even asks that Viola find his Spalding punching bag and demands that she send it to Spalding to be refitted and then sent to him with a small bicycle hand pump! Helena instructs Viola "to find the best punching bag she can get and send it at once" (4/9 HMR letter). The punching bag never arrives and he constantly reminds his mother and Viola of this throughout the spring and summer. He appears to have finally given up on it by September when he is ordering the pair of all rubber overshoes, lightweight size 10.

He also got Marie to send him things including his favorite brand of tobacco. The letters to Marie show that he did correspond with her throughout his service and that he got together with her during the 1917 Christmas furlough and again during his November 1918 furlough. She would have been 20 years old at the time and attending the University of Wisconsin residing at Barnard Hall. But when his mother and Viola write him about a chance to sell their home and move up on the hill, possibly building on their "church lots," he responds, "I haven't any future plans, so it doesn't make much difference to me where I live" (2/18 VBR letter). As it turns out, less than a year after he arrives home he married Marie and was building a large house on the "church lots" just below the Lutheran Church and parsonage.

After the Armistice, he clearly wants to get a discharge and go home. In December, he puts in a request for immediate discharge because he is a 1/3 owner of a large retail business, his mother is getting old and needs assistance and he signed up for the duration of the war, not the usual four years (12/4 VBR letter to his Commanding Officer). When Marine command tells him his papers show four years and not the duration, he becomes quite upset, asks his immediate superior officer to write a letter on his behalf and even asks his mother to get involved. At this point he uncharacteristically writes "as soon as Pease [sic] is signed I am going to get out of the service if I have to run away" (12/29 VBR letter). Maybe by that time he does have plans. Anyway, his "wish came true" after the New Year he received orders stating, "Sgt. Rossing transferred to nearest barracks with view of discharge" (1/3/19 VBR letter). He was furloughed in late February 1919 and received his official discharge on May 31.

I would like to thank David Rossing for giving me access to the many photos, letters and other items in the Victor and Marie Rossing collection and to John and Ann Emery for providing the Paris Island letters.

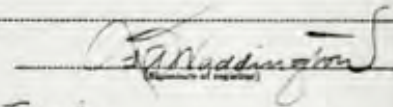
G. Rossing  
April 2016



*Victor Rossing enlisted into the USMC in June 1917 two months after the US declared war on Germany. He was sent to Paris Island for his basic training and stayed on serving in the Quartermaster department until January 1918. He was then assigned to the USS Galveston as one of her 30-man Marine Guard. The Galveston escorted troop and supply convoys across the Atlantic protecting them against German U-boats. He was discharged a few months after the war ended. The above photo shows him among the barracks on Paris Island.*

## VBR's Draft Registration

Form 1		REGISTRATION CARD		No. 43	
1	Name in full	Victor Bernell Rossing	Age in yrs.	28	
2	Home address	Argyle	State	Ill.	
3	Date of birth	March 13 1889			
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)?	Natural-born			
5	Where were you born?	Argyle	Ill.	U.S.A.	
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?				
7	What is your present trade, occupation, or office?	Merchant	626		
8	By whom employed?	Self			
9	Where employed?	Argyle Ill.			
10	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, wholly dependent on you for support (specify which)?	No			
11	Married or single (which)?	Single	Race (specify white)	Caucasian	
12	What military service have you had? Rank	No			
13	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?				
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.					
		697			
		Victor Bernell Rossing			

REGISTRAR'S REPORT		
1	Tall, medium, or short (specify which)?	Slender, medium, or stout (which)?
2	Color of eyes?	Color of hair?
3	Has person lost arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)?	
I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:		
<p style="text-align: right;">             (Signature of registrar)         </p>		
Precinct		
City or County		
State		
June 5 1917 (Date of registration)		

The draft was enacted on May 18, 1917 after the US declared war on Germany in April. All males age 21 to 31 were required to register on June 5<sup>th</sup>. VBR enlisted in the Marines in Chicago a few weeks later. The registrar is Frank Waddington. L.A. Rossing bought his store from F.A.'s father, James S. Waddington, in 1870. J.S. went on to become a local banker and County Judge. He died December 1917 when VBR was on leave from Paris Island. Frank carried on as a banker in Argyle and donated the Argyle Community Building to the village as a memorial for his father. It was built in the 1920s.

"During World War I there were three registrations. The first, on June 5, 1917, was for all men between the ages of 21 and 31. The second, on June 5, 1918, registered those who attained age 21 after June 5, 1917. (A supplemental registration was held on August 24, 1918, for those becoming 21 years old after June 5, 1918. This was included in the second registration.) The third registration was held on September 12, 1918, for men age 18 through 45."

"The information included on each registration differs somewhat but the general information shown includes order and serial numbers (assigned by the Selective Service System), full name, date and place of birth, race, citizenship, occupation, personal description, and signature."

"The registration cards consist of approximately 24,000,000 cards of men who registered for the draft, (about 23% of the population in 1918). It is important to note that not all of the men who registered for the draft actually served in the military and not all men who served in the military registered for the draft. Moreover these are not military service records. They end when an individual reports to the army training camp. They contain no information about an individual's military service."

World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, The National Archives and Records Administration, USA.gov. Web. 3 June 2016

<https://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww1/draft-registration/>



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
CENTRAL RECRUITING DIVISION  
HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF CHICAGO  
628 SOUTH STATE STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLS.

June 16, 1917.

Dear Madam:

Your name has been given as the next of kin, or the one to be addressed in any important matter, by the person named on the enclosed card, who has just been accepted for enlistment in the United States Marine Corps at this recruiting station and transferred to the Marine Barracks, PORT ROYAL, S. C., where he will probably remain under instruction for about three months and then be transferred for regular duty elsewhere.

Because of your interest in this young man, it is taken for granted that you will be glad to learn something about the Marine Corps and the conditions under which he will enter the service of the United States.

The Marine Corps tries to make MEN of those who enlist in its ranks, looks very carefully after their health and, so far as practicable, their habits; they are encouraged and given every opportunity to develop physically; the nature of their duties teaches them self-control and self-reliance, to act quickly and intelligently in emergencies; and if promoted they become leaders of men.

A young man who enters the Marine Corps can find good associates if he wants to, - intelligent, capable and often well-educated men. They come to us from farms, factories, trades, business offices, schools and universities, and even from special and scientific professions.

*improve  
this opportunity*  
Our men have time for study under ordinary conditions and frequently have opportunities for fitting themselves for positions in civil life, if they do not care to continue a military career. Many of our men now occupy comfortable positions for which they would not have been qualified had they not had service in the Marine Corps.

(2)

It is hoped that you will encourage this young man to do his best to gain promotion, to save his money and to seek good associates in the service. Frequent letters from home and friends will mean a great deal to him, will stimulate his ambition and may perhaps make the difference between ultimate success and failure in his life.

His desire for adventure, to expand the horizons of his life by visiting strange cities and foreign countries, to sail the oceans, to make his way among men, is most natural in the normal youth. His enlistment in the Marine Corps will be a patriotic and loyal act. If he has the right stuff in him he will leave the service at the end of his enlistment better qualified to succeed in the battles of life. We try to safe-guard him and give him every opportunity to become a strong, self-reliant man and good citizen.

This letter, with its enclosures, will show in some degree how the interests of men of the United States Marine Corps are looked after. And I most cordially hope that this young man will be a credit to himself, to his family and to his country.

In order that you may be communicated with in case of necessity, it is requested that you fill out the enclosed card with your name and the address at which mail will reach you, and mail in the enclosed envelope which requires no postage.

Respectfully,

Wm. Brackett.

U. S. Marine Corps.





*Victor B. Rossing, 28, and his mother Helena Rossing, 66, taken at their home. He enlisted in June 1917 and received his basic training on Paris Island, South Carolina. This photo was most likely taken when he was home on Christmas leave that year. Other photos show him ice-skating (in full uniform) at this time.*

**Argyle, Wisconsin**  
**June 20, 1917**

United States Marine Corps  
Wm. Brackett

Dear Sir,

I was pleased to receive the letter containing information regarding the Marine Corps and of efforts of the officers in charge to make men of those who enlist. I herewith recommend to you my son Victor B. Rossing as an amiable fine character who has success in any undertaking and I sincerely hope the best in him will be developed and that the war will speedily come to a close.

Thanking you for cooperation,

Yours truly,

Helena Rossing

P.S.

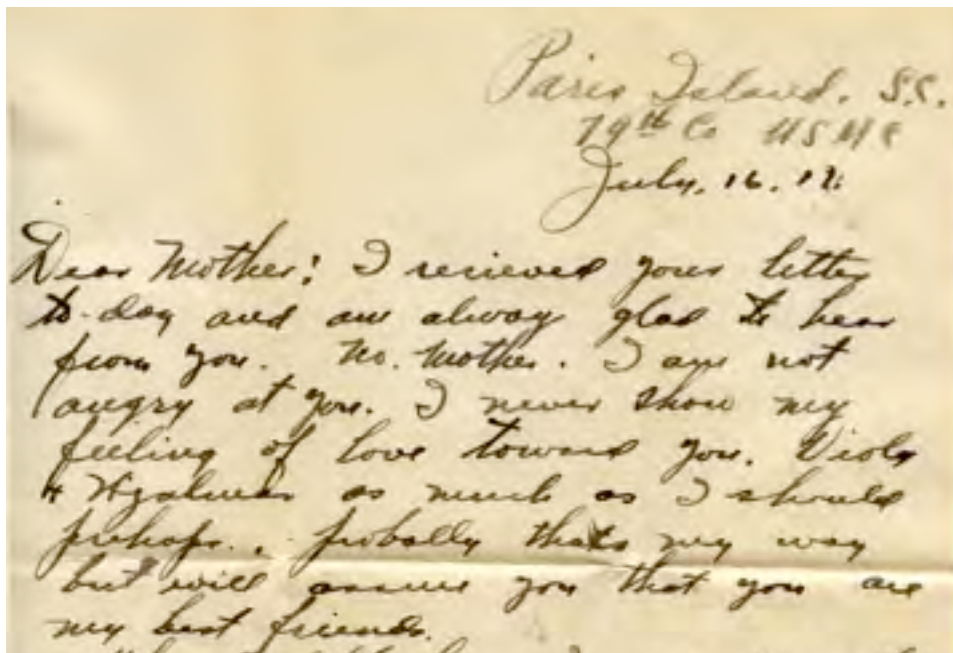
April 4, 1911 he was elected member on the city council and has served until this spring. As a marksman he has won highest prizes in contest. As a Deer hunter he is the best—always get the game. As a Fisherman he has no equal.

At the age of 16 he rescued a boy from drowning at Rockford Ill. Chautauqua. Victor and his Brother and Sister are conducting a large business successfully. God be with him.

H.R.



7/16/17, Monday, Paris Island, S.C.



Dear Mother:

I received your letter today and am always glad to hear from you. No Mother, I am not angry at you. I never show my feelings of love toward you Viola and Hjalmar as much as I should perhaps. Probably that's my way but will assure you that you are my best friend.

When I left home I was disgusted with myself and really ashamed to kiss and say good bye as I should for reason of small habits I had gotten into. I wanted to get away from everybody. When in Chicago I thought it all over to myself and am glad I joined the Marine Corps. I enjoy my work and am in the best of health and will try and take care of myself. I threw my belt away or sent it home and have not felt it since. I am losing a little surplus weight but I am getting stronger and rugged. I am all tanned up—my face, neck, back; arms are just black from the sun.

Gambling and drinking is positively prohibited. I use very little tobacco. Paris Island is away from everything.

I will be thru my training on the island in 6 weeks, but don't know where they will send me then. I understand they will give us a few days off when we get thru with our training. Will find out and probably can come home or meet you some place to say good-bye. I think we will go to France.

We have a very fine sergeant, he is far above average. We moved Sunday. We are now living in the barracks and have good beds to sleep on. We even have sheets. Our beds are little iron single beds. In the morning we make up our beds fold the sheets in our blanket so they look real nice.

We have good shower baths and they feel fine morning and night. We sit up at long tables to eat now with real drinks. For the past 2 weeks we lived in tents and when we was called we got our eats on your small plates, then had to sit on ground to eat.

I received the Atlas to-day. I would like a Chicago paper sent to me.

There has been no chance to study anything yet as they are rushing us \_\_\_\_\_.

The piles have not bothered me lately. If they want to operate on me would you let them? Probably you ask Hjalmar to ask Dr. Scott what to do. They do that without charges. They operate for rupture with out charge also.

I will close. Hoping everything goes well at home.

Loving Son and Brother

Victor

Have you received my traveling bag with clothing in it yet?

You might find a few bed bugs among that clothing for we had them the 1<sup>st</sup> week.

Hjalmar, among the shoes at store ask Sever to send my slippers with elastic sides.

I received the box containing candy and films. Thanks very much. Don't send as much next time.

**7/30/17, Monday, Paris Island**

*(empty envelope)*



**8/4/17, Saturday and 8/14/17, Tuesday, Paris Island**

*(empty envelopes addressed to Viola)*

**1917: Unknown date** *(probably sent in one of the above envelopes)*

Dear Mother and Viola

Am enclosing a few snaps. Have sent C. Perrigo some films to develop. You will please save one for me from all pictures I send home.

Am getting along fine

Son and Brother

Victor

**8/14/17, Tuesday, Paris Island, S.C.**

*(envelope is post marked the 15<sup>th</sup>)*

Dear Viola,

Please send Robert Walden

1 Vest pocket Kodak  
1 Leather case to carry on belt for Kodak  
½ doz. Films and charge to me.

Victor

Recd. the box you sent. The candy and peanuts taste fine. Thanks very much.

Victor

Robert Walden  
Ask for address

Everything as usual. We get up at 4 a.m. and get out to range at 6.

*Charles Perrigo was an employee of the L.A. Rossing Co. Robert Norman Walden was a first cousin of VBR. His mother was Eliza Rossing, a half-sister to L.A. Rossing. She married Ole Walden and lived at that time on a farm near Wiota. He was in an artillery unit in the US Army. Robert's younger brother Donald was also serving in the US Army at that time.*



*Ole Walden and Eliza Rossing about 1886 with their four oldest children: Charlie b1873, Emma b1875, Alice b1877 and Frank b1884. They married in Argyle on November 28, 1871 when she was 18. She was born in Norway and immigrated with the family in 1857 when she was about four years old.*



*The Ole and Eliza Walden family farm between Wiota and Argyle. Ole was a brother to Tonetha (Nettie) and Carrie Wqlden. They both worked in Warren around 1868 when LA Rossing worked there learning the storekeeping trade. In letters he wrote to Helena Monson Rossing at that time he referred to the Waldens as cousins.*



*Ole Walden and Eliza Rossing family. They farmed in Wiota until they moved to Texas between 1910 and 1920. Family members also farmed in Juneau County, perhaps on the farm owned by LA Rossing.*

*Charles (1873-1959) worked for the IRS and eventually became a rancher in Montana. Alice, who studied piano at the UW and in Leipzig Germany, taught piano at the university level. Frank stayed in Argyle most of his life and is buried in the Rossing plot in Woodlawn cemetery.*

*Robert and Donald served in the US Army in WW1 and are mentioned in the letters. Neither married and both died in their 50s. Donald enlisted in April 1917 when he was 19.*

*Nellie married Clarence Monson, the brother to Eva Monson and Emma Monson Nelson. Huldah taught piano in the Argyle area and eventually married when she was 52. Emma also married late and had no children.*

**8/17/17, Friday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

I received your letter and was glad to hear from you. Our company finished the Rifle range and we shot for record yesterday and to-day.

Nine of our company finished with high score--Expert Rifleman, and I was one of the nine. We received a medal, also \$5 per month increase in our wages.

Was talking with our sergeant and asked his advice on my going into the band. Am sure I can get into the band but I will not just now. He thinks I have a good chance for rapid advancement.

I think we will leave the barracks we are living in now. We move next week for the old barracks where I think we will be for a week. My address will be the same.

I am feeling fine. The weather has been real warm. During our stay on the rifle range we did not wear any underwear just a pair of trousers and a jacket. Our clothing would get very dirty laying down in the sand to shoot. Now we are off the range will have to be more particular about our clothes and wash every day.

We had beef-stake for breakfast today. The best meal have had for some time. I have not sat in a chair since I left Chicago. It sure will seem funny to get back into civilization. I think I can come home in September or October for ten days.

Two of our boys in our company were called home because of sickness in the family. Two more left today for other positions assigned to them. I suppose our company will split up pretty well in the next 2 or 3 weeks.

Must close with love to all

Son,

Victor



*WWI USMC Expert Rifleman medal*

**8/23/17, Thursday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Folks,

I received the box containing cake, cookies and peanuts and candy. Thanks very much it tasted fine.

Viola, I am sending you film to be developed. I have been sending them to C. Perrigo but have not heard from him. Will you see that the ones I have sent are developed and send me one or two of each kind. Also get the film from him and keep them. If he don't tend to them, have Carey do the work. The last two films I send to C.P. contains pictures of our guard group and one of the boys wanted 1 each of the group pictures in front of the tent.

Am getting along fine. We move over to old Barracks in a day or so which is only about 1 mile away. We have to do Police work about every other day. The sergeant is good to me. He tells me to stay in and take care of the bunk house, while the other fellows have to work hard.

I weighed the other day and have lost about 15#. Am not sure the scales were correct but know I have lost some weight.

Our company finished on *(the)* Rifle Range last week. There were 9 of our company finished with high score and are classed as Expert Riflemen. The next down are Sharpshooters, next Marksmen, next 1<sup>st</sup> Class Rifleman, next 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Rifleman. I finished with the nine Expert Riflemen we get \$5 added on our wages.

The targets we shoot at are as follows:

200 yd rapid fire (*at triangular target*)  
300 yd rapid fire       “  
500 yd rapid fire       “  
600 yd slow fire at 20 in. bulls eye  
500 yd slow fire at 20 in. bulls eye  
300 yd slow fire at 8 in. bulls eye.

Will decide in a few days if I join the band or not.

Must close, with love

Victor



*A Marine shooting a Springfield 30-06 rifle on the Paris Island rifle range.*





*VBR refers to a photo of his "guard group" in front of their tent in his 8/23 letter. He appeared to be on police guard duty after his basic training finished until he was assigned to the quartermaster department in September.*



*In his July 16 letter VBR writes, "We moved Sunday. We are now living in barracks and have good beds to sleep on. We even have sheets. Our beds are little iron single beds. In the morning we make up our beds fold the sheets in our blankets so they look real nice."*

9/4/17, Tuesday, Paris Island, S.C.

Dear Mother,

Your letter received yesterday and was glad to hear from you. So Viola is on an auto trip and you are home all alone. Hope you do not get lonesome. It certainly will be a fine trip for her and am sure she will enjoy it. Am sorry to hear Darlington had such a big fire.

I am still on Paris Island. Thirty of our company got transferred—20 to Norfolk Va. and 10 to New Orleans. They left this morning. It was hard to see them go as all of us became so well acquainted. My name was not called so am still here.

I wrote to Marshal Fields, RR Smith and Sons and a few others for business references and my sergeant is going to try and have me transferred into quartermaster department. Buying and taking care of clothing etc. He thinks I have a chance for rapid advancement and he will do all he can for me as we are on good terms.

The band leader has my name and probably will have to be in band, but my sergeant says he will try and get me out of band (if called) into Quarter Master dept.

I has been very warm down here but we do not work or drill when it is real warm.

That's about the news. I am feeling fine and enjoying the work. I don't think I will be here more than 5 or 6 days longer. So as soon as I know where, I will write you. Any mail directed to me here will get to me.

Loving Son

Victor

I received the box Hjalmar and Viola sent. The lefse was molded and could not use it. Was sorry. I also received the 1 doz. films and pictures. The pictures were fine.



*VBR was receiving the local paper while in the service but he must have heard about this from his mother since his letter predated the 9/7 edition of the Atlas.*



*VBR (back row third from left) played the tuba in the Argyle High School band. According to an Argyle Atlas article, this photo was taken on Memorial Day 1906 behind the old Argyle Cemetery. After basic training on Paris Island VBR was selected to play in the Marine Band but wrangled out of it to join the Quartermaster Department.*



*A photo of the 1905 Argyle High School band. VBR is back row center with the tuba. VBR graduated from AHS in 1906. He also played in the band at Augsburg College.*

**9/11/17, Saturday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

I have moved again. I am now at main Barracks and am working for Quartermaster in Headquarters department. 79<sup>th</sup> Co. have left the Island.

Seven of our company were chosen to go on big battleship and left for New York today. The rest of company have gone to Quantico Va. where they will get training to go to France.

I joined QD so you should not worry about me. If I had not gotten in I would have been chosen to go on one of the battleships as the man picked all big men and squad leaders.

I probably will stay on this island for some time probably 6 months or a year.

It will be a little lonesome but it's a lot safer and should save you some worry.

Will write later and tell you more of my work. I live in a tent and enjoy it. I work in the store room where they handle all the supplies, hardware, brooms, stationery, rubber boots, soap, etc. There are four of us working in stockrooms.

V.B. Rossing  
c/o Headquarters Department  
Paris Island, S.C.



*Marine tents on Paris Island.*

G. G. Vinger, who was confined to a wheel chair for a long time, is now able to get down town with the aid of crutches.

The high price of chicken feed is given as the reason for no poultry show in Freeport next winter. Some of the Freeport men who have made a specialty of high priced chickens are going out of the business.

Miss Viola Rossing spent several days in New York city looking over the latest styles and purchased some very attractive lines of millinery, coats, dresses and skirts, for Fall and Winter.

Misses Viola Rossing and Alice Walden returned Saturday from a two weeks auto trip to N. Y. They left Chicago on Sept. 1st, drove to Detroit, Mich., shipped their car and crossed Lake Erie to Buffalo. After spending a day at Niagara Falls the trip was continued by auto across New York state, through the beautiful Catskill mountains and down the Hudson to New York city.

Melvin Olson and Torsten Rossing paddled a canoe to Blanchardville on Monday. They say the distance by the river route is forty miles by actual count. This may seem like a joke, but they regard it as a serious affair.

9/21/17 Argyle Atlas articles about the auto trip mentioned in VBR's letter. Alice Walden, b1878, was a first cousin of Viola and Victor, the daughter of Eliza Rossing Walden. Her brother, Robert Walden, b1888, was in the Army at that time. Alice, who earned a music degree from the University of Wisconsin and then studied piano at the Leipzig Music Conservatory in Germany, was a college music instructor and concert pianist.

Torstein Rossing was the son of Capt. T.A. Rossing, L.A. Rossing's older brother. T.A. was a businessman and farmer in Bode, Iowa. The photo below was taken from Carey's bluff just west of Argyle. Alvin Larson became a local banker together with his brother Howard. Melvin Olson was the brother of Bertha Olson, Hjalmar Rossing's wife.

G.G. Vinger refers to Gulbrand Gilbert Vinger, Marie Nelson's maternal grandfather. Marie's parents were Matilda Vinger and Nim Nelson. She had two brothers, Vernus and Glenn and a sister, Hazel (see HBN's autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, for more information on the Nelson-Vinger families).



**9/13/17, Monday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Brother,

I am working in Q.M. Dept. but have not been officially transferred yet. The work is not very hard but must be on the job. Thought of a few things I would like to have. Send a small Kodak album and send 1 each of the pictures from films I sent home. I have a few Kodak pictures in my room you might send them also. Have time to fix up a Kodak album now.

Have Viola send me a few books to read. Send 4 or 6 cakes of limburger. If have any good Swiss cheese send some so I can give my sergeant some. Think it will help me get in.

A few cans of sardines would not go bad (but don't send any beans as we have them 3 times a day.)

I have lost 20# since I came here so you see it is not the same good old feed I used to get.

I am sleeping in a tent and expect it will be cold in a little while. Send your army blanket. I think I can make use of it in my tent. If not will send it back.

I have a tent all alone and can make use.

Send me my D. ring by Reg. mail.

Send tennis racket (not the best one) and two new balls.

Send my blue jersey sweater. Send a paper shade for an electric drop light for my tent.

Send a ring of summer sausage, a few crax., a few jars of jam.

Give it your immediate attention and hope it will not bother you too much.

Best regards

Victor

Tell Viola not to let the Haynes freeze up.

Send the package by mail or express.

*The Kodak album is stored in a leather bound trunk with VBR's name on a brass plate. This trunk, which is kept in Victor and Marie's former bedroom, includes the other letters he wrote to his family while he was in the service and many other family photos.*



*VBR with his dog, Buster, in what was probably the Haynes automobile he mentions in his letters. It appears that Helena and Viola were in the back and that they were visiting a local cemetery, maybe Woodlawn where LA was buried. Hjalmar may have taken the photo. The Haynes automobile advertisement was from about that time. Below is a photo taken just two months before LA passed away. They appear to be different automobiles.*



**9/21/17, Friday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines to let you know I am fine and like my work. I have a tent all to myself with electric light and a good clean bed. They give us one clean bed sheet every week and every 4 weeks we get a clean mattress cover.

We have hot and cold shower baths and I take a shower bath every day and I go to picture show every night. They show some wonderful war pictures.

The Bible you sent to me by Hjalmar I am using. I am reading a chapter every night and I enjoy it. I find it the best way to pass a little spare time before I go to bed.

It seems at home I had no time to read. The box of candy and nuts was received and I thank you. It tasted fine.

Well it's over 4 months I have been here and I have not left the island. I can get 1 or 2 days liberty to go to Savannah or other places but I shall not.

I don't know when I shall come home probably some time this fall or winter. Please take good care of yourself and I shall try to do the same. Don't send any more postals. I will tell you the kind I want you to send.

I am afraid if I send only the ones of myself the farmers won't like it. Better to choose pictures with a few more of the boys on it also.

Tell Hjalmar to send mailing list.

Must close

Loving son

Victor



*VBR ready for inspection in front of his tent. He lived in this while he was assigned to the Quartermaster department.*



**9/26/17, Wednesday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

The two boxes and your letter came today and I was very glad. One box contained the cheese, bologna and jam and the other the books, blanket, robe, etc. They both came in good condition and was very much appreciated. The USMC pillow is fine, and can make use of everything.

You mention a rug. Don't send any rug as it is not practicable. I made me a table and a shelf and two locker boxes and the little paper light shade for my electric light makes my tent more homelike.

I am feeling fine and like my work and think I will be comfortable. In some way or other they transferred me into band and I did not know it until today when I signed the pay roll. I saw my sergeant and he had me transferred into Headquarter where I have been for the past 3 weeks.

The jam you sent is fine. When I want some more I will write you. Don't send anything unless I order it as I can't have too many things. I think I shall be here all winter but I can't tell. They transfer men where they need them. If I get transferred I shall have to send things home instead of carrying them with me.

Another boy and myself thought of a way how to make some extra money after working hours you see from 4 PM until 10 PM. We thought we would get us a popcorn wagon, a small one like Muenich's. We could make \$25 each per month easy. It's just a thought. Perhaps they won't give us permission yet. We just thought of this tonight as we was sitting in my tent.

The weather is fine down here. We get the cool ocean breezes and the nights are fine to sleep.

I received the pictures. Tell Viola to have printed for me one each of each picture from the films I sent home and send to me so I can put them in my photo book.

I am sending to her two real sailor blouses I got from an old sailor. She will probably have to have them made over to fit her. I think she will like them.

I will close

Loving son

Victor

**9/30/17, Sunday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

We have to work on Sunday too but not very hard. Was in store room all morning and this PM. They have not opened the store room yet we are waiting for a boat load of supplies. We have the store room looking fine; shelves all clean and in good order.

We had a pretty good dinner to day. Had stewed chicken, bread, coffee, cake and one orange. They sure feed us plenty of beans twice a day anyhow. It's a good thing I like beans.

For breakfast this AM we had 2 hard-boiled eggs, bread and butter and coffee.

I have been going swimming every evening in the cool salt water and enjoy it and it makes me sleep well.

It is still warm down here and they say they go swimming way up to Xmas.

Will you send me by PP my wool bathing suit? I have a cotton one I will send home. If they issue us another blanket I will return the blanket you sent me. I haven't much to say. I am feeling fine and like my work.

Loving Son

Victor

**10/9/17, Tuesday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

Was so glad to get your letter and to hear every thing is going well at home.

I was made corporal and am now an un commissioned officer and get \$6.00 extra pay. This with my Expert Rifleman \$5.00 makes me \$40.80 per month.

I drew my blue uniform the other day and it looks fine.

Am planning on coming home for a few days--probably Nov. or Dec. I haven't asked for a furlow yet but will.

I sent Viola a pennant today by PP and hope she will like it. Suggest she hang it up in the store or home. I must close for this time and feeling fine and enjoy my work.

Loving Son

Victor



*VBR in his bathing suit. The boat is also mentioned in several letters. In his 9/30/17 letter from Paris Island he asked his mother to send his wool bathing suit to use when he went swimming in the sea on Paris Island. He also reminds Viola in several letters to make sure the boat is properly stored during the winter months. As young boys in the 1960s VBRs grandsons would still use this boat to row up the river with two sets of oars.*



*VBRs grandsons just before setting off on an excursion up the Pecatonica River in the boat. From left: Joe Rossing, John Emery, Garry, Greg and Wayne Rossing. This photo was taken at the VBR house during the summer of 1964 or 1965. John was the son of Bob and Ruth Emery and Joe, Garry, Greg and Wayne were the sons of William and Ardyth Rossing. The Emerys were living in New Jersey at that time and visited Argyle every summer.*

**10/9/17, Tuesday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

Rec'd your and Viola's letter yesterday and was glad to hear from you. I also rec'd the bathing suit and sweater. Thanks for sending them.

The sweater is a fine one and can make good use of it. There were a bunch of sweaters came into the store room and I got one of them so I have plenty of sweaters. Don't send me any scarfs or any mittens because I can not use them now. I also have 2 gov't blankets and the one you sent so I can keep warm.

Everything is the same down here and am feeling fine and enjoy my work.

Will close.

Loving Son

Victor

**10/9/17, Tuesday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Sister,

I was glad to get your letter. Am glad you like the sailor blouses I sent to you. I have been corresponding a little with A.T. but don't think that we are real good friends. You don't need to worry about us as I could only think of her as just a mere friend. I am not going to write to her any more and told her in my last letter.

Fact is I haven't any real girl friend. Been corresponding a little with Marie but as she is a cousin can only think of her as just a friend. I am going to send her two blouses like I sent you if I can get them.

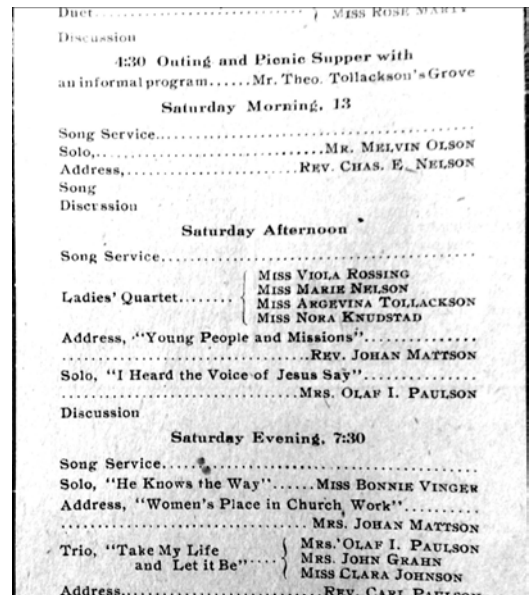
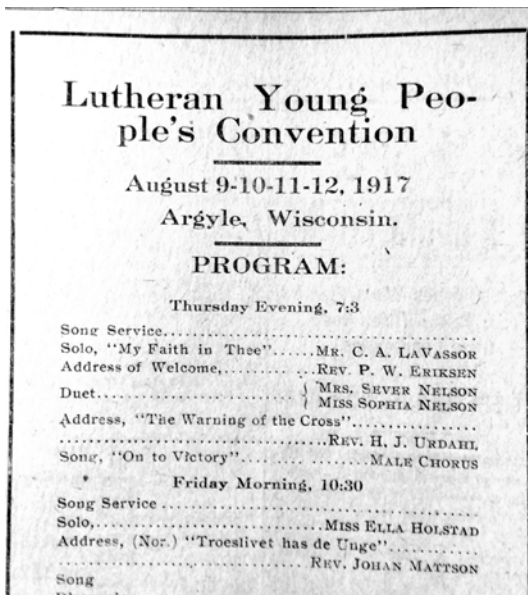
You won't have much use for boat so you better have someone pull the boat and pier up to the boat house. John would be a good man. Put the boat like I had it last winter.

You must see to it that water does not freeze in radiator of car.

Must close

Loving Brother

Victor

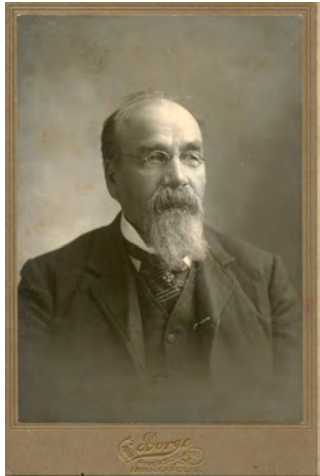


The program of the Lutheran Young People's Convention was published in the Argyle Atlas. It was held at the Argyle Lutheran church with a Friday afternoon picnic at a grove on the Theo. Tollackson farm. It also included many musical numbers and addresses or lectures by various Lutheran ministers, one of which was Olaf Paulson who was the Argyle Lutheran church minister from 1885 to 1905. Rev. Erickson served from 1908 to 1912.. Interestingly, P.W. Erickson graduated from Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis in 1908, the year VBR attended college there. H. J. Urdahl was the minister in 1917.

Other people in the program include Viola Rossing and Marie Nelson who performed in a ladies quartet with Angevina Tollackson and Nora Knustad. Angevina could have been "A.T.," the young woman with whom VBR was corresponding while in the service. See 10/9/17 letter to Viola in which he tells her not to worry as he could think of her only as a mere friend and then writes that he had also been corresponding with MMN, adding, "but as she is a cousin can only think of her as just a friend."

Sophia Nelson, who sang a duet with Mrs. Sever Nelson, was a cousin to MMN. Sever Nelson was probably the store employee referred to in the 10/14 letter.

Bonnie Vinger, another cousin of MMN, was the daughter of Oliver Vinger brother to Matilda Vinger Nelson, MMN's mother. She was quite active during the war supporting the local Red Cross.



Reverend Olaf Paulson



Interior of the Argyle Lutheran Church at that time. It remained like this until it was remodeled in the 1960s.

**10/14/17, Sunday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Sister,

Was glad to get your letter and to hear all the news.

Was afraid John and Sever would act that way. You can be glad John is gone as he is getting too old. Sever was good help but think you can find some other good boy. He was good on waiting on trade but the Irish hated him so that he really hurt the store.

I meet some dandy fellows down here and got my eyes on a very good young fellow named Larson from Chicago and am sure he can be had after the war.

Am glad to hear Ladies coats are going good. Watch it and all \_\_\_\_ numbers be sure to return.

I think young Jacobs will be good help. You should change your cost mark this fall sure am mailing 50 post cards to some of our best customers today and think they will be glad to hear from down here or even to get a post card. Shows I remember them anyway.

Today is Sunday and not much to do so am writing these post cards & you get the letter.

I don't know just when I can come home but will you send Hjalmar's leather suit case to me by Express or mail so when I see my best chance to get away I can come. Can apply for a furlow one day and be on my way the next day and think I can get it any time.

I am comfortable in my little tent. I drew another blanket the other day so I have 4 now and it's plenty.

We have had a few cold north winds and nights are getting cool so you must get a few cold days up there too.

Put 3 coat hangers in suit case when you send it. The canteen just put in stock some sardines, pea nut butter, crax & cookies so we can buy a few eats now. The jam you sent last time tasted fine.

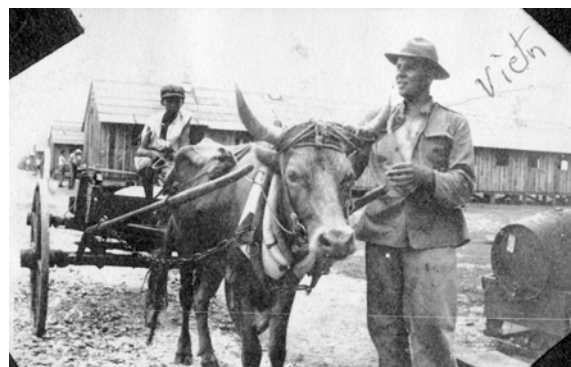
Just called for my mail and rec'd the letter from mother. She says Sever is back so that is not so bad.

Got a letter from Robert and he says Uncle Chris & Rev. Quill called on him. He has been transferred into artillery.

Well I don't know of any other thing to write about. Have had some good games of tennis lately.

I sent some films home to Hjalmar or Perrigo and will you please see to it I get 2 each anyway.

Please send to me 2 pictures of each from every film I have sent home. There is one picture of me standing beside on ox hitched to a wagon and a boy in wagon. Will you have Carey print me 25 or 50 of these on Post Cards and send to me so I can mail back to our customers.



I am putting pictures in Kodak book.

Must close with love

Victor

**10/21/17, Sunday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and enjoying my work. We were in store room working until 11 and in PM I played tennis today.

It's getting a little cooler down here and have an oil stove in my tent tonight and feel comfortable.

Loving Son

Victor

**10/25/17, Thursday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

I rec'd your letter also the suitcase today. The SC came in good order and everything in it was packed good. Want to thank you for the lovely cake, flat bröd and jam and pickles. I sampled the cake this evening and it surely tastes good. Will take a jar of jam with me to breakfast tomorrow and sure will enjoy jam, bread and coffee—better than beans.

All we had for supper was beans and bread & coffee. There are about 40 eat at one table and we made mess man refill two 8 qt. pans 3 times so you can see how we eat beans. Don't know when I can come home yet it won't be for 3 or 4 weeks anyhow.

Am getting along fine.

Loving Son

Victor

**10/26/17, Friday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Sister,

Please send me a good tennis racket. My racket named "Spalding all comers." Send 4 good balls also.

I sent you two packages of shells and books and bullets. Let me know at once if you received them. Please save them for me.

Brother

Victor

**10/29/17, Monday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Folks,

I did not write yesterday so will write you a few lines this evening. Everything is about as usual here.

Yesterday "the day of prayer" was observed by everyone on the island. All the HD men had to fall out at 8 AM and we marched over to the training camp where all the Marines on the island gathered in one group before the band stand and listened to prayers by two chaplains. The band played and it all was very pleasant and nice. They prayed for the victory of American army and also mourning for the Americans already killed in France and at sea.

I am beginning to realize how serious the war is. Perhaps you don't read of it in the papers or think of it but I know there are lots of the boys on their way to France now. I have heard of some boys I know were transferred and are now on their way and some from my old company.

I don't know where I will be transferred and you don't know 6 hrs before they tell you to pack up and go. They are sending men from here all along the coast giving them their final instructions before they go. They are sending men to West Indies Islands, Phillipine Islands, but most of them go to France.

You can be thankful I am in the Quartermaster Detachment. My sergeant I work under is on a furlow just now. He is from La Crosse, Wis. and went there for his furlow. We expect him back soon. Nov. and Dec. will perhaps be rather quiet months in our department and I am going to ask for a furlow for last part of Nov.

The Marines have increased their number and about the first of year there will be about 12,000 men to (go) through training here. Until then we won't be so very busy.

Yesterday afternoon 12 of us HD men got permission to leave the island so we took the boat at 12:15 and went to Port Royal. From there we walked to Beauford S.C. a



distance of 6 miles. It was a beautiful warm day and we enjoyed it. We walked the wagon road part of the way and the sea shore. The country was very pretty. Stopped and picked some cotton along the way, found a few hickory nut trees. The woods down here are very pretty. The trees all have Spanish moss hanging from the limbs and it makes everything look so old. Looks like some of the big trees are a thousand years old.

We stopped at several nigger shacks and took some pictures. At every house they have about a doz. little fellows and they are so spry and happy. When we would approach a house the little fellows would run and hide in the weeds and we would have quite a time getting them together for a picture.

I sent Viola two rolls of films today. Please have them developed and send me two of each picture. Be careful not to lose the film or any I send you.

We arrived at Beauford, looked around the town stayed at hotel for supper and came back on 10 o'clock boat. Beauford is a very old town about 1000 people. Big palm trees everywhere. Visited national cemetery there. People seem to be very congenial to the Marines and several of boys that are acquainted are asked to people's homes for Sunday dinner.

Well I must close,

Victor



*This photo was probably taken on the day they visited Beauford.*

11/11/17, Sunday, Paris Island, S.C.

Sunday Eve

Dear Mother,

I am full of chicken, potato chips and pickles. Just got through eating and I know I eat more than ½ of the lunch you sent. Thank you so much it tasted fine. I am feeling fine and enjoy my work. Had to stay in store rooms all morning. This afternoon, I played tennis and worked from 6 to 8:30 fitting 300 men out with overcoats and woolen gloves.

The weather is fine down here; today was a beautiful day. Many of the boys went to Beauford to spend the day. I did not go. Thought I would save my money to come home on. Don't know when I can come yet. Will ask when I think I can get away, probably be the last of Nov or 1<sup>st</sup> part of Dec.

I received a letter from YMCA headquarters Darlington asking me to express my opinion of YMCA work at the post. I sent a letter to Gaskill to put in Atlas.

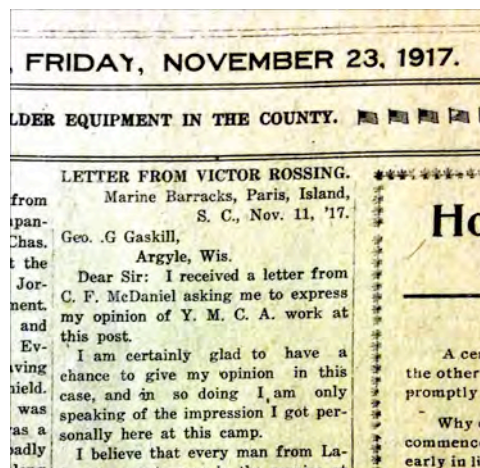
Don't give them too much but give them some. I think YMCA are doing good work in army camps.

Well it's about 9:30 and I must get ready for bed. Have to get up at 6 o'clock in morning, make my bed and scrub the floor of my tent which I do every Monday morning. I have two pieces of carpet (carpet examples) that I use on the floor to get out on in the morning.

Well I must close hoping you are all well

Loving Son

Victor



*Argyle Atlas article*

**11/25/17, Sunday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Folks,

Just got through mailing 100 post cards you sent me to mail to customers around Argyle.

I moved today am on the same street but my tent faced the North now I have one facing the South. I think it is warmer and more pleasant. Played tennis nearly all afternoon and had some real good games also had inspection. All the HD men were examined by Doctor today. I passed OK. I received the cheese Hjalmar sent. It tasted fine. I sent him 5# pecan nuts by PP. Hope he received them in good condition.

We are not as very busy in store room. They say they have lots of things bought but freight shipments are so very slow. If it's that way up in Wis. it must be hard to get merchandise.

Do you want me to come home next month? Am quite sure I can come. I feel contented to stay here and don't expect to go to Europe. It will cost me \$50 to \$75 to come home and if you don't mind I just as soon stay here and come home sometime next spring although I probably can be some help in the store before Xmas.

I now have plenty of money to come home on. Let me know how you feel about it.

Must close

Love to all

Victor



*Roseng  
tennis court*

*The tennis court was located just north of their home. This is a view looking northeast.*

**11/26/17, Monday Eve, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Folks,

Wrote a few lines yesterday and forgot to mail the letter so will write now and mail it so it will leave in the morning.

Am feeling fine and not working very hard as it is a military rule.

It's hard to give you any news from down here as there is nothing happening. Six hundred men left here this morning. The band always heads the parade and they march down to the dock.

I asked Sergeant about a furlow and he said "no furlow until after pay day." That's about Dec 3 to 5.

Am quite sure I can get away. Probably leave here Dec 10 to 15 or sooner. The most they give us is 20 days including traveling time.

Tell Viola to see that the water in Haynes don't freeze . There is danger of battery freezing also. It should be kept fully charged. Tell her to store the boat and canoe properly.

Am planning on having some moss and mistletoe sent up for decorating purposes for store.

Must close

Loving Son

Victor



*Troops leaving Paris Island 1917*

11/27/17, Tuesday Eve, Paris Island, S.C.

Dear Mother,

Rec'd your letter and Viola's today—the post card and the box containing cake, candy, nuts and horse radish. The box came in good order. I sent Hjalmar box of nuts tell me if he received it. Was glad to get the candy, cake and things from home and am sure will help out with my dinner Thanksgiving. Don't know what we will have yet but I understand we will have turkey.

The people of Beauford and Port Royal are making arrangements to give all HD men a Sunday Thanksgiving dinner.

There are only two of us working in the store room now and we kept busy nearly all the time. I like my work and my tent and feel perfectly contented.

I go to bed generally before “taps” at 10 o'clock and sleep good. I get up at 6:30, B'fest at 6:50 and work at 7:30. Our tents are inspected every day so we have to keep it clean and neat.

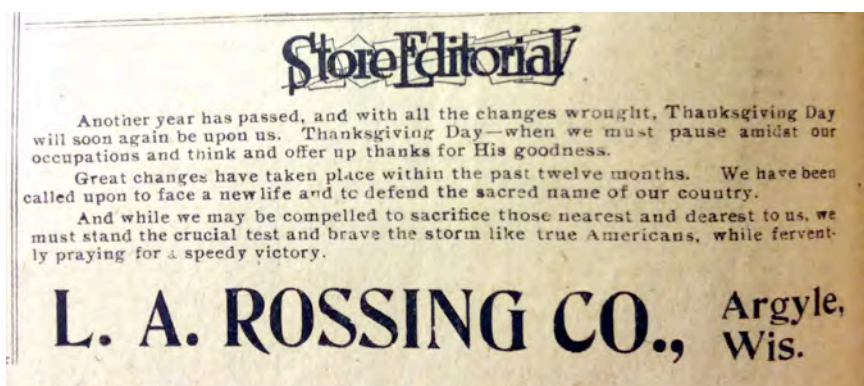
Glad to hear the boat, canoe, boathouse and auto are all well taken care of. Would suggest to Viola to make it her business every day to go to cellar of the store and make the boys keep the basement clean, especially around the furnace. They are very strict about keeping things clean here and think it wise.

I think I am lucky to be in the Marine Corps and to be where I am. The Marines are small compared to the Army. There are only 30,000 in the Marine Corps. The Army has about 800,000 men. They are sending the Army to France, but I hear they will not send any more Marines but to keep them here to do guard duty. They are going to increase the Marines 16,000 men but still the Marines will be small compared to the Army increase. About 12,000 Marines will be trained at this post soon.

I must close hoping you all are well and don't worry about me for I am fine.

Victor

Thanks for the candy, cake, etc.



*This was attached to an ad in the Atlas.  
The patriotic tone to it suggests it was written by HMR.*

**11/30/17, Friday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother,

Rec'd your letter today. I am well and happy. We signed the pay roll today and pay day is next week and if I am coming home it won't be long before I am on my way. Must see my sergeant and ask him again how many days and when he will let me go.

Must tell you of my Thanksgiving dinner and Thanksgiving Day. We had a dandy dinner, turkey, cranberry sauce, dressing, peas, mashed potatoes, pie, cake and coffee. You ought to see the boys eat. We certainly enjoyed it. For supper we had cold meat, cranberry sauce, fruit and nuts.

Will say Uncle Sam feed us pretty good. The cake, candy & nuts you sent I also eat and have some left yet which I feed on after chow.

It rained nearly all day and I spent most of my time alone in my tent reading and sleeping as we did not have to work.

Will close hoping you all are well

Loving Son

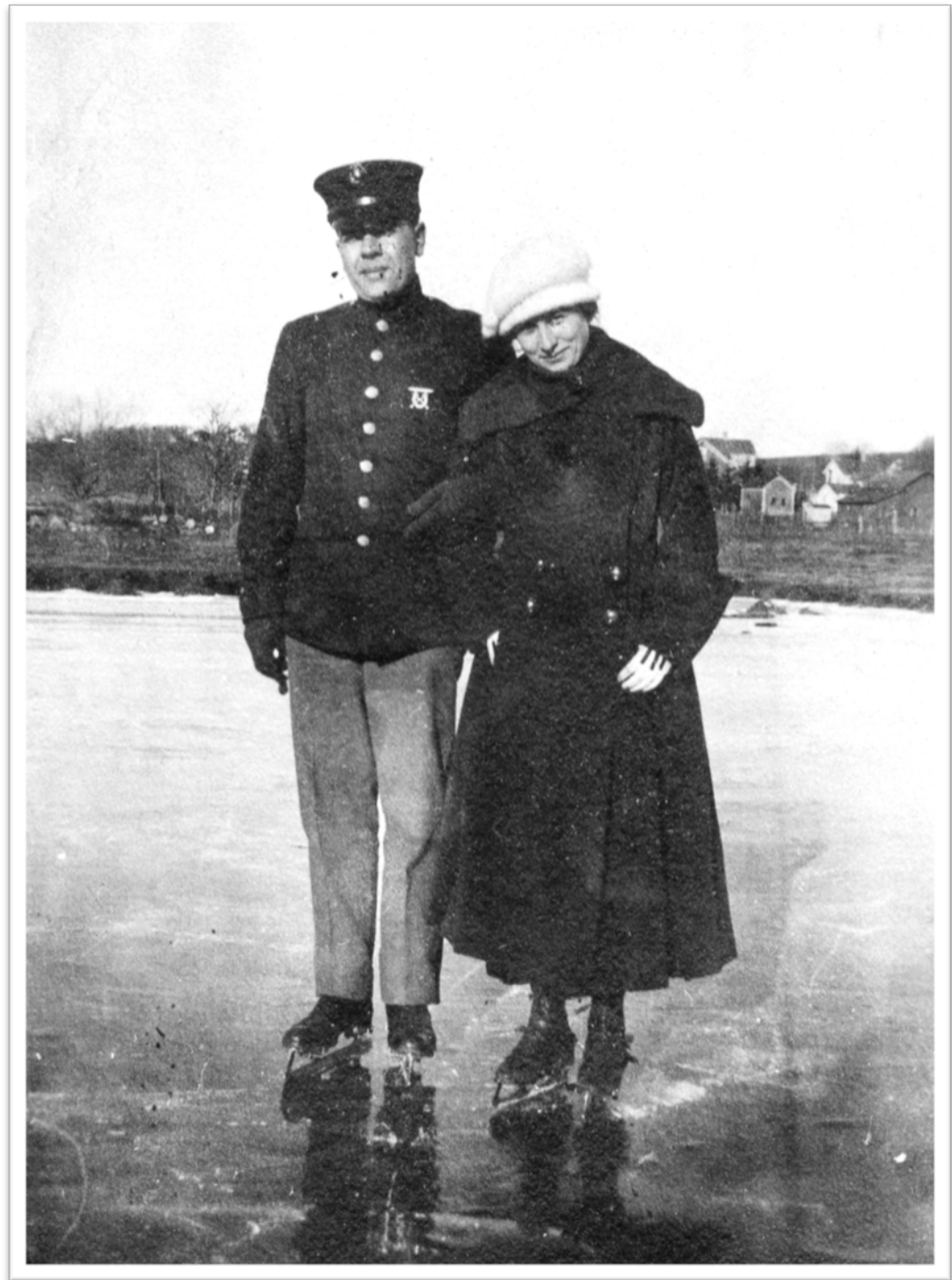
Victor

All the bank statements we have seen show greatly increased deposits but the depositors are not paying their subscriptions with it.

Corp. V. B. Rossing is home from Paris Island, S. C., on a twenty day furlough. It takes him six days to come and return and that will reduce his leave of absence very materially. Victor is looking well and seems to be feeling fine.

A letter just received from Joseph Stealy of Mentor, S. D., says that they are all well, the crops have been good this year, and they are enjoying the prevailing prices for farm produce. The weather has been fine there until within a few days.

*Argyle Atlas article, December 1917*



*Victor and Viola skating on the Pecatonica River just behind their house. He was probably on leave during Christmas 1917 after six months on Paris Island where he went through basic training and was then assigned to work there as a Quartermaster. It appears they had some very cold weather that froze the Pecatonica but little snow—ideal skating conditions.*

**1/3/18, Thursday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Folks,

Rec'd your letters and the pictures. Think the pictures are very good. Don't care for anymore just now. The pictures I had taken at Carey's the proofs I laid on the writing table in library. The two I like best I finished the corner edge off and will you give Mr. Carey an order for 4 sets of 2 pictures in a leather case. He will know what I mean and have him send them to me.

Will you have Mr. Dempsey come down to house to do some plumbing work? Have him disconnect and turn my fish tank over and disconnect water as it is leaking and will be better if disconnected. You can have him fix faucets some time.

It's been quite cold down here for last week and suppose up there it is very cold.

It's been pretty quiet in store room since I cam back and have not had much to do. Have enjoyed the cake and cakes you sent with me and still have over half of fruit cake left.

Had my measure taken for a new uniform today and will wear the blue uniform until I get the new.

Will you order me one Stetson Regulation Marine Field Hat size 7 ¼. I have a bunky now. He is a little fellow from Texas. It's not quite so lonesome, but expect to move into a tent alone in a week or so.

Must close

Victor







*VBR in overcoat with Corporal stripes. This photo was probably taken at the Carey Studio in Argyle when he was home on Christmas leave in 1917.*

## USS Galveston Muster Rolls Excerpts

			ARTSCM 24 to 27 ARTSCM.
252	Reet, Harlie T. Jr.	✓11 Jan 17	
253	Rosa, Jack	✓18 Oct 17	21 Jd fr Co F this post. 21 to 31 SD Painter.
254	Rossing, Victor B.	✓23 Jun 17	SD Clerk QM Dept. 7 to 8 PAL ARTSCM. 9 Tried by SGM for disorderly conduct in the city of Beaufort, S.C. on Jan. 2, 1918. Sentenced to be reduced to Pvt. and to lose pay amtg. to \$30.00 App by SOP Jan 10, 1918. Loss of Pay remitted Sub. to Art 4893 N.I. 1913. 9 ARTSCM 10 to 31 SD Clerk QM Dept.
255	Roth, Walter	✓20 Jul 17	SD Janitor.
256	Roush, Thomas H.	✓26 Apr 17	SD Baker.
257	Rosetta, John A.	✓20 Jun 17	1 to 31 Sick in U.S. Naval Hospital

The Galveston's muster roll dated January 1918 shows that VBR was apparently disciplined for disorderly conduct that occurred when in Beaufort, a local town he writes about visiting in October 1917. He was there near New Years after he returned from his Christmas furlough in Argyle. It appears he and a few other Marines must have been celebrating a bit too much. There were quite a few others in the muster roll with the same charge. This event did not seem to affect his subsequent promotions and military record. He never mentions this incident in any of his letters and appears to have kept it a secret from his mother. She surely would have been very disappointed if she new of this.

			Commanding Detachment.
	First Sergeant.		
1	Walker, Charles J.	✓25 May 17	21 to 25 on Furl.
	Sergeant.		
1	Rossing, Victor B.	✓23 Jun 17	1. Promoted to the rank of Sergeant (SW) per letter No. 32-14-18 C.O. "Galveston". 21 to 30 on Furl.
	Corporals.		
1	Gerth, Julius L.	✓27 Sep 17	20. Temporary for the duration of the war warrant as Cpl. delivered: to

This record documents VBR's promotion to Sergeant in November 1918. It also shows he was on furlough from the 21st to the 30th of that month. He does not specifically mention the furlough in any of the extant letters. It appears he used this furlough to visit his family and Marie. See 12/1/18 postcard. The rail connections from New York to Chicago would have been quite quick and he then could take the train straight to Argyle via Freeport.

(WRITE NOTHING ABOVE THIS LINE.)

### MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS

FROM January 1, 1919 . TO January 31, 1919, INCLUSIVE.

NO.	NAME	ENLISTED.	REMARKS.
			<b>TRANSFERRED.</b>
	Sergeants		
1	Gerth, Julius L.	✓27 Sep 17	Transferred to M.B., 3rd Naval District, New York, N.Y. 10/10/1918
2	Rossing, Victor B.	✓23 Jun 17	Transferred to M.B., 3rd Naval District, New York, N.Y. 1/7/19.
I certify that all changes occurring in the status of members of this organization are accounted for in the remarks thereon.			
<i>Asst. Quarters</i> 1st Lieutenant, U.S.M.C., Commanding Detachment			

Muster rolls were recorded every month. These included transfers, furloughs, changes in rank, disciplinary actions and the ship's location. The muster roll above shows VBR was transferred off the USS Galveston after the war ended and he was granted his request for discharge.

**1/14/18, Monday Eve, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Folks,

I see by paper you are having some cold weather and lots of snow. It has been quite cold here but am comfortable in my tent. Everything about the same here. Work has very easy since I came back but my hrs. have been the same. Feel lots of times I would ask for a transfer into something else so I would have more to do. They don't say anything so my work must be satisfactory.

I took out \$10,000 insurance and had policy sent home. It is very cheap, cost about \$7.00 per month and will be taken out of my pay every month. They have a dandy reading room here and spend my spare hrs at library or picture show.

I feel the war will be over some time this year. Don't you think so? It can't end any too soon to suit me.

The picture show was interesting last night. They showed pictures of US Marines on their way and in France.

Well will close hoping you all are well as I am.

Loving Son

Victor

The Band is playing concert in band stand.

**2/1/18, Friday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Folks,

Our detail is still here waiting for orders to go. We drill every day and are having some boat drills. We were out this PM in a big row boat; 12 men--one to each oar.

We don't know when we leave, but mail will be forwarded that comes for me here. Did you receive the package I sent home? I see by paper you are having some real winter. The weather is fine down here. Niggers have planted their cotton and Wis. black birds are trying to eat it up.

I have been feeling fine and like it better outside rather than inside that dusty store room.

Hoping you and everything is OK at home.

Loving son and brother

Victor

**1/20/18 Sunday, Paris Island, S.C.**

Dear Mother:

I received your letter today also the box you sent. I was very glad to hear from you and to receive the candy, towels, washcloth, etc. you sent. Thanks very much.

This will be a big surprise to you, but this is my last night on Paris Island. I have joined a detail of about 50 men and am going to New York to go aboard ship "Idaho." The Idaho is a brand new battle ship and they chose all big men.

We will probably be in Brooklyn navy yards for 3 or 4 weeks before we go aboard.

I think it is a rare opportunity. Many of the boys tried to get on this boat and failed and I think I am lucky to get the chance. It is a big fine equipped boat and everyone says I will like it.

I asked Captain Gregory to be relieved from my Quartermaster job and he told me "My work has been satisfactory but if I really wanted to go he would grant my request." I think I did the wise thing you might not think so first thought, but am quite sure it will be better for me than to stick in that old storeroom with nothing to do. I felt like a slacker.

I packed all my things in a sea bag also packed some things I did not need in the suitcase and handbag and had one of the boys send them, so you will perhaps receive them in a few days.

We had orders to be ready at 4:30 PM and go over to training camp and that's where I am now at Training Camp Y.C.M.A. One of the boys that was in my old Company 79 is a corporal and is training and I am going to sleep in his quarters tonight. We leave tomorrow morning for New York.

I will need a pr. medium heavy wool socks and the knit helmet and gloves and as soon as I get them I will let you know my address.

We will perhaps do guard duty for a while at navy yards.

You certainly have had lots of snow up there. We had heavy rainstorms about that time. I thought my tent would blow over one night.

I must close promising you I will be a good boy and a good soldier and will write as soon as I am stationed.

Loving

Victor



"WITH THE COLORS"



Paris Island  
P.C.

Jan. 20, '17.

Dear Mother! I received  
your letter to-day also the  
box you sent. I was very  
glad to hear from you and  
to receive the candy, towels  
wash cloth etc you sent.  
Thanks very much.

This will be a big surprise  
to you. But this is my  
last night on Paris Island.  
I have joined a detail of  
about 50 men and am  
going to New York to go  
aboard ship. "Idaho."

**1/24/18, Thursday, Paris Island. S.C.**

Dear Mother:

Our detail is still on Paris Island waiting for orders to go. We are at the training camp in one of the bunkhouses.

Today we drilled in AM and the PM had to wash clothes and take a bath. All the boys in our detail have two suits of blue uniforms like I wore home and when we get out on parade we certainly look fine. I was reduced to a private as my warrant was only good in Quartermasters department but I don't worry about that as I think I will get another promotion as soon as on board ship.

Two other boys that worked in storeroom with me have asked to be reduced and relieved so they can catch the next detail out. We don't know exactly when we will go and are all ready soon as orders come from Washington.

I received your letter and Viola today and am glad to hear from you.

If you could only see us crowded in this bunkhouse you would see a jolly crowd. We are all anxious to get started.

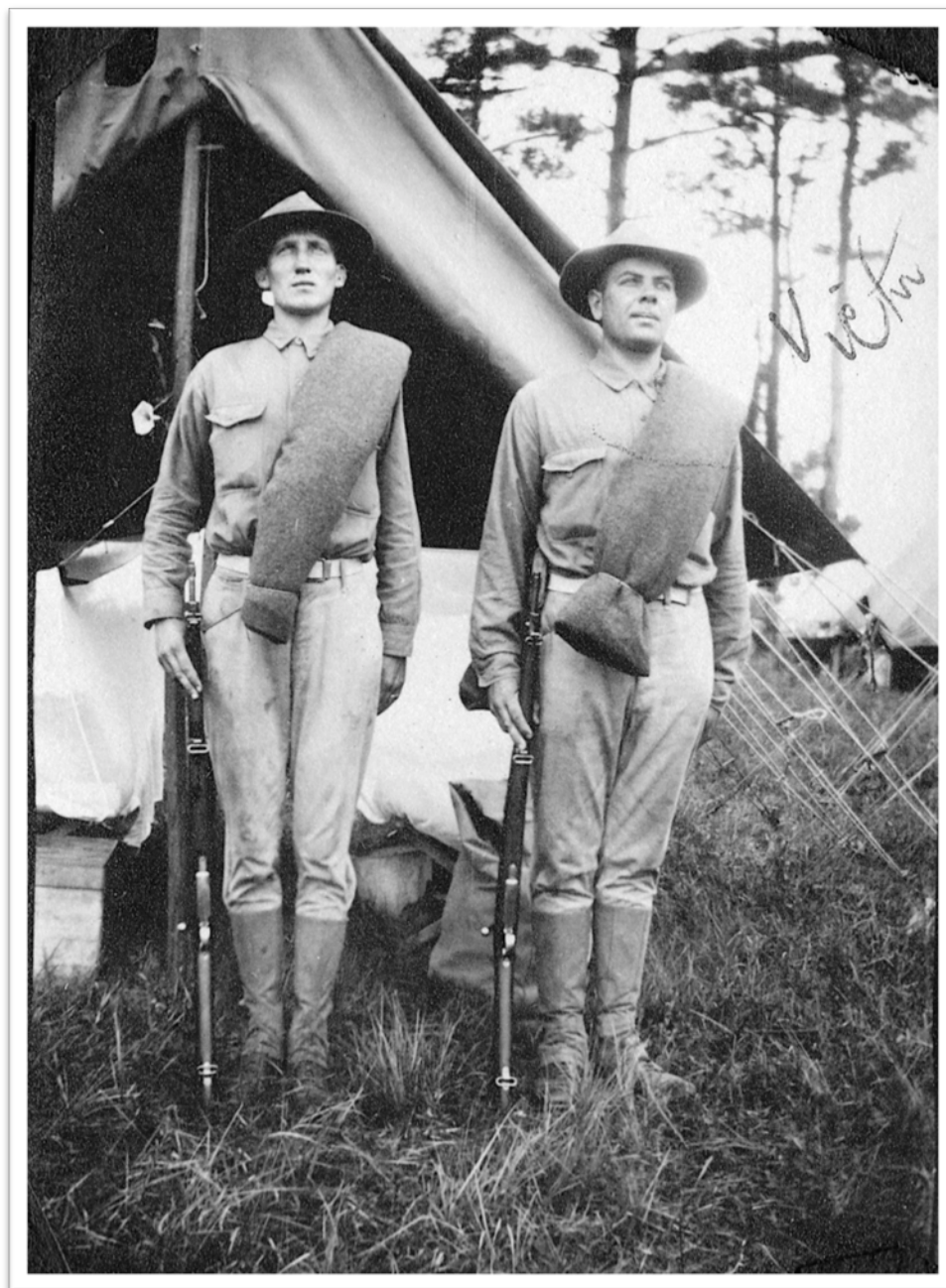
I received the Christian Herald and association items and enjoy them very much.

You can write me my same old address and my mail will be forwarded and just as soon as we get to NY will write.

Victor



*VBR on Paris Island. He became dissatisfied with his Quartermaster job there and put in for a transfer. He was first assigned to the USS Idaho, a brand new large cruiser, but before he went aboard was reassigned to the smaller and older light cruiser, the USS Galveston.*



*VBR enlisted in June of 1917 in Chicago and received his basic training on Paris Island, South Carolina. He remained there working as a Quartermaster until he was assigned to the USS Galveston in February 1918.*

**1/25/18, Friday, Paris Island, South Carolina**

Dear Folks:

Am still on Paris Island. Looks now like our detail will be here another week until after payday, but expect to go any day. We are having drills and drawing clothes. We have two uniforms like I wore home.

Yesterday we were out on parade drill with about 2000 others and they all say we look fine. In the PM we took a bath and washed clothes. I washed 2 suits underwear, 2 pr socks 1 shirt and two towels, 2 hdkfs.

Today 32 of our detail are on guard duty at Marine barracks. They gave me no special job so am down in Y.M.C.A.

This morning we scrubbed out our bunkhouse.

It's just like summer today, 70° in shade.

Will close

Victor

**2/12/18, Tuesday, Paris Island.**

Dear Folks:

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and still on Paris Island.

We are all ready waiting for orders, but haven't heard anything. Rec'd a letter from Robt. Walden today he is in camp just out of New York. Probably will get a chance to see some of the boys before they go across if our ship detail goes to Brooklyn soon.

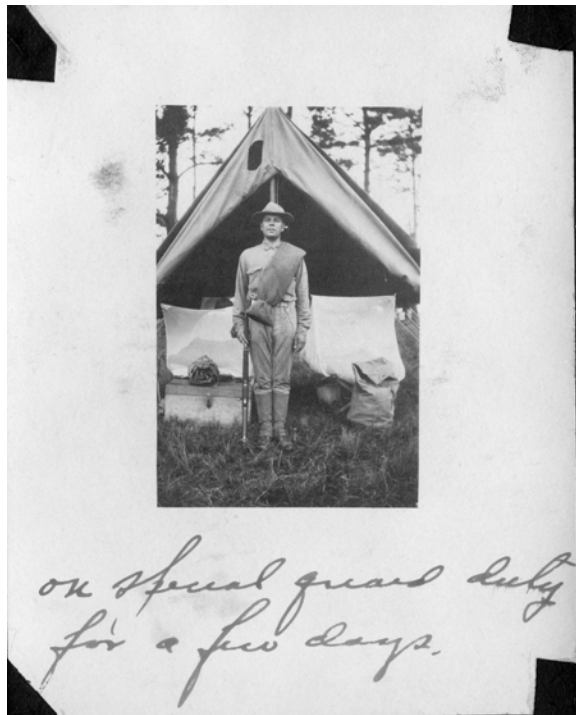
I don't believe there is much danger aboard ship. Even if a boat is torpedoed there is a good chance because most all boats now travel together or in close order, so they can give immediate relief.

Must close

Victor

Am sending a picture of camp at P.I. to Viola





Guard duty on Paris Island by the bunkhouses

**2/16/18, Saturday, Paris Island, SC**

Dear Brother:

Please send me a ck for \$25.00. I don't need it but I want to have and carry a little with me and won't cash it unless I have to.

I don't know when our ship detail will leave for New York. It sure is tiresome waiting and to know you are going and don't go. I took out \$10,000 insurance and had them send policy to mother. It will be probably 2 months before she gets the policy as gov't is very slow anyway my insurance has started.

Must close

Victor

"Idaho Detail" Paris Island, S.C.

**2/17/18, Sunday eve, Paris Island, SC**

Dear Mother:

Just got throu [sic] attending church services at YMCA so thought I would write you a few lines. The services only lasted about 30 minutes. A young man from YMCA spoke and I enjoyed it. There were not so many attended. I sat down to write a letter when services started. Many of boys kept on writing and reading but I could not do this.

Well everything is about the same. Was on guard duty last night and today. My hours were from 7 to 9 and 1 to 3 and my post was the dock where all the boats land at main barracks. I had 13 special orders besides my 12 general orders to carry out and carried an automatic pistol with instructions to use it if necessary. I am going out on rifle range again this week with a few of boys as we won't get a chance to shoot on range very often if we go on board ship and my extra pay as expert ends next August if I do not qualify again. I hope to qualify as expert or sharp shooter again.

Must close,

Loving Son.

Victor

Am sending by PP 9 Marine Emblem Pins. One for you, Hjalmar, Viola, Mrs. Rev. Erickson and tell Viola she can give the others away for me: Eda, Huldah, Hazel etc.\*

*\*Eda Anderson, Huldah Walden and Hazel Hendrickson, all store employees.*



*Cousins Marie Nelson and Viola Rossing February 1918 at the Rossing home.*



*The house VBR built in 1920 on the church lots. The trunk with the letters is in the upstairs room with all the window*

**2/18/18, Monday, Paris Island**

Dear Viola and Mother:

Your letters received today and was glad to hear from you.

So the Urens want to buy some lots. I think the church lots\* are valuable and can always or anytime be sold. Mother always said she wanted to live and have a house up there so I don't think they should be sold, just now.

I think if you get a good offer on place where we live you could sell.

I haven't any future plans, so it doesn't make much difference to me where I live. Any actions you take will be satisfactory to me. I believe you could get a good price for our home and lots where tennis court is. Sell them the whole thing; pasture, lots, barn, etc.

It must cost a good lot of money to build now as lumber and everything is so high so don't think it advisable to build just now.

If you sell the old home and Hjalmar will let you live with him for a while I think it will be a good idea. As long as we have the old home mother will work too hard, and I think she should not have too much to do and think about.

It's a hard question just to know what to do. A big deal like selling all our home, barn, pasture, tennis court and everything there. Have thought about it before. A chance to sell like this seldom comes the large buyers are scarce in Argyle and I am satisfied to sell if you all think so.

Hjalmar has lived both places on hill and down home and he should be better posted where is best place to live. Anything you do will be satisfactory to me.

I think we have too much property in Argyle and when you ask me what I want will say I have no plans and anything you do will be satisfactory.

Was out on Rifle range this morning. It rained in PM so stayed in bunkhouse. Expect to be out on range all week and shoot for record Monday and Tuesday next week.

Must close

Victor

*\*The "church lots" were probably the lots just west and downhill of the Lutheran church and parsonage. VBR built a large house there in 1920 just after he got married to Marie Nelson.*



*Victor, Helena, Viola and Hjalmar Rossing taken at their home when he was on leave during Christmas 1917. Viola, Victor's twin sister, and their older brother Hjalmar were partners in the L.A. Rossing store, started by their parents in 1870.*



*L.A. Rossing family home in 1893 when Victor and Viola were 4yrs old.*

**Argyle, Feb. 18, 1918**

Wm. Brackett  
US Marine Corps

Dear Sir

I am strongly impressed to write a testimony my son Victor B. Rossing who enlisted last June 16<sup>th</sup> 1918 and has been in training on Paris Island. He was admitted to the Quartermaster department last fall and January 19<sup>th</sup> 1918 he left this department to go on the Battleship "Idaho."

Now it is only this I wish to say. The victory of war does not depend on the large army as much as to have the right man in the right place. Victor is born with mental endowment and sound judgment to be a natural leader. If brot out would be competent to fill any important place of duty. He is careful and has the instinct to act on his own judgment to do the right thing at the right time.

In fires and emergencies he has proved himself to be a victor over all difficulty. Hope he will be given a place where he can render the most service to the Marine Corps.

Yours most faithfully,

Helena Rossing (Victor Burnell Rossings Mother)

Argyle, Wisconsin



*Helena and Viola at their home with Huldah Walden, a cousin who worked in the store.*

**2/19/18, Tuesday, Charleston (post card with rural scene)**

Am transferred to New York so am on my way to Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Victor

**2/22/18, Friday, President's Day, U.S.S. Galveston**

Dear Mother:

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and hope you all are the same. We are aboard our ship and think I am going to like it fine. Last night was the first time I slept in a hammock and I slept fine. These hammocks are swung up near the ceiling and are quite comfortable.

We are not allowed to write where we are or where the boat is or where we are going, in past us marines don't know. I will let you know from time to time or when opportunity comes that I am OK and you should not worry. If you do not hear from me for a few weeks please don't worry. Will let you hear from me at every opportunity.

I saw the package you sent to me, sox, helmet, etc. and had it forwarded by mail to me here but have not received it yet but probably will before the boat leaves.

It is quite an experience to be among and in the Navy.

Must close

Love

Victor

U.S.S. Galveston

C/o Postmaster

New York, NY



*USS Galveston*

**3/25/18, Monday, Norfolk, Virginia**

Dear Mother:

I received the sweater and socks today also your letter.

This is the first opportunity I have had to write since I left New York. Been out to sea was out 24 days without coming in to any port. It's against regulations to say where we have been or where we are but will tell you so you have some idea of my whereabouts.

Our battleship acted as guard to 12 merchant and transport ships and we crossed the Atlantic but did not land, other boats came out to meet the convoy and we turned around and came back. We struck some very heavy storms on our way. I was sick (sea) a few days but did better than I expected our ship rolled 57% so you know how we were tossed around. We landed in Halifax, N.S. and took on coal. Then we went to Portsmouth, N.H. and down here. Don't know how long we will be here.

They give a few of us 18 hrs. liberty so I am over town tonight. Have to report back to ship at 8 a.m. in morning. The duty on board ship is very simple and easy. To keep clean and look neat is about all we have to do. While in danger zone we had to do 1 hr. on and 2 off gun watches but that lasted 4 days.

In morning we get one pail of water and that has to last all day for washing etc. Have to wash our own clothes.

It was a very hard trip this last one as all the old sailors say and expect it more pleasant from now on.

Viola I missed you on our birthday. I spent the day at sea but thought of you many times that day and will wish you now another happy year in your 29 years.

Well its getting bedtime so will close. Hoping you are all well and everything going well at home.



*Ice on the deck of the Galveston from the March storms*



**3/27/18, Wednesday, Norfolk Naval Yard**

Dear Folks

Received some mail again today and received your letters which I was very glad to get and am glad to hear everything going nicely at home. I wrote you a few lines day before yesterday while on liberty. Our boat went into dry dock today for repairs and from what I hear we will be here for some time as they say it is in pretty bad shape.

Am on guard duty today and I go on at 4 PM to 8 PM and 4 AM to 8 AM tomorrow. It's pretty simple, but of course necessary. I am acting as corporal of guard. I received the sweater and socks, helmet and hdkf., 3 packages. It's so warm down here. I will send back home some or most of my knit goods. I will have liberty tomorrow again and will send it then if I can. Please send me a book I sent home called "Infantry Drill Regulation." Our ship marines drill every day and we go out on the green grass. It's just like spring down here. People are out with lawn mowers already and trees are all budding out. It is quite interesting to be in this big navy yard to see all the boats, ships, sub chasers, destroyers, big battle ships, submarines, etc. You can send me the telescope if you will and am sure can make good use of it. I can get 14 days furlow now if I ask while our boat is in repairs but am undecided to ask now or not. I may go to Philadelphia with one of boys to his home but I guess not.

I don't know if I told you in my last letter about our last trip. We were in a convoy. Our battle ship was the only war ship and we guarded 12 transports and merchant ships to safety to other side. It was interesting to see. We would often change our course and position and we all did very careful look out for submarines especially in war zone or danger zone. We did not see any and the 12 ships got over in safety. When we turned around, sub chasers and destroyers, airplanes etc. came out to meet the convoy. We turned around and came back and did not land. We struck some very hard storms and it was cold. I fed the fishes a few times but think I stood it fine compared to some of boys.

We had to land in Halifax for coal and we stayed there one day. Our boat anchored where that explosion took place. We were very close to Belgian Relief ship. The damage the explosion done was awful and can't begin to tell you in letter. There were no houses left on hillside where explosion took place. Some places where it blew roof and chimney off from big homes. A man up there said there are over 500 people that are blind and so far 5,000 have been buried but are finding more every day. Some they will never find as it blew them to dust. There were 150,000 # of explosive that went off. They have not found a single piece of the munitions ship that blew up. They say it was a good thing it occurred in upper part of harbor. Most of force went down and a curious thing a rock 7 tons was carried from bottom of harbor and sit on deck of a nearby steamer.

Am glad to hear from you any time and always sure to get your letters. You may sometime not get all letters I write as most of them are centured.

Must close

**3/30/18, Saturday, Norfolk, Virginia**

Dear Mother:

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and like my work pretty well. We are getting liberty every other day and generally go over to the city and get some eats and sometimes a room and good bath.

The Galveston has not got very good accommodations for washing etc. We have to get our water in a pail then heat it up with steam to wash ourselves and do our laundry. Just now there is no place to bathe on ship as she is in dry dock.

There is some chance of the marines being transferred off from the Galveston to some other boat but have not heard anything definite. I think the Galveston will be here for a few weeks and if we remain on her we will be here that long also. It's certainly a busy place around the navy yards these days as many boats as there are cars in a RR yard.

Tomorrow is Eater Sunday and you will perhaps wonder what I am doing. Tomorrow I will be on guard 4 on and eight off.

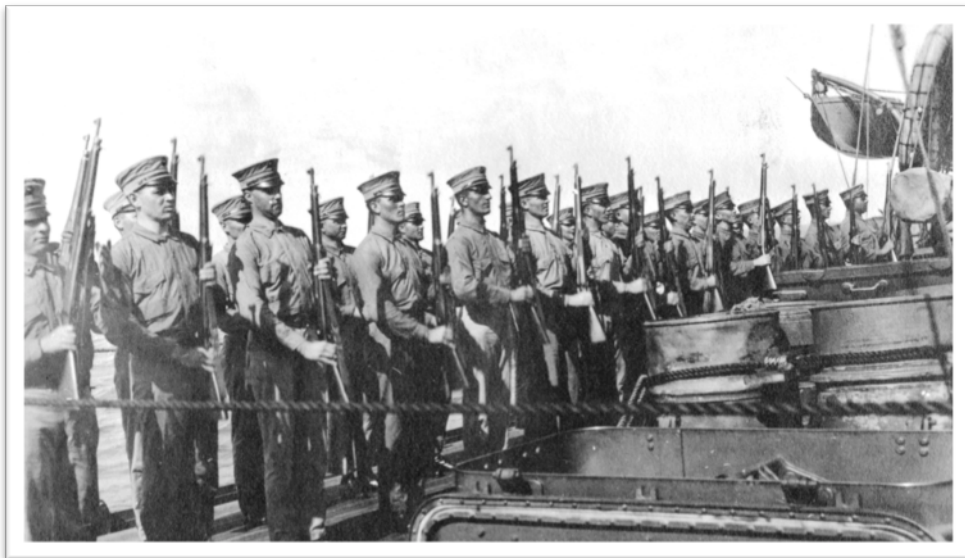
This weather is fine down here and the stores are busy selling Easter things today.

I haven't sent the knit gods yet but will get them off in few days. Tell Hjalmar to send me 5# of figs to eat. They are healthy and just what I need when out at sea.

Am enclosing a few pictures taken while out at sea.

I can get a few days furlow around the 10<sup>th</sup> of April but will not take it.

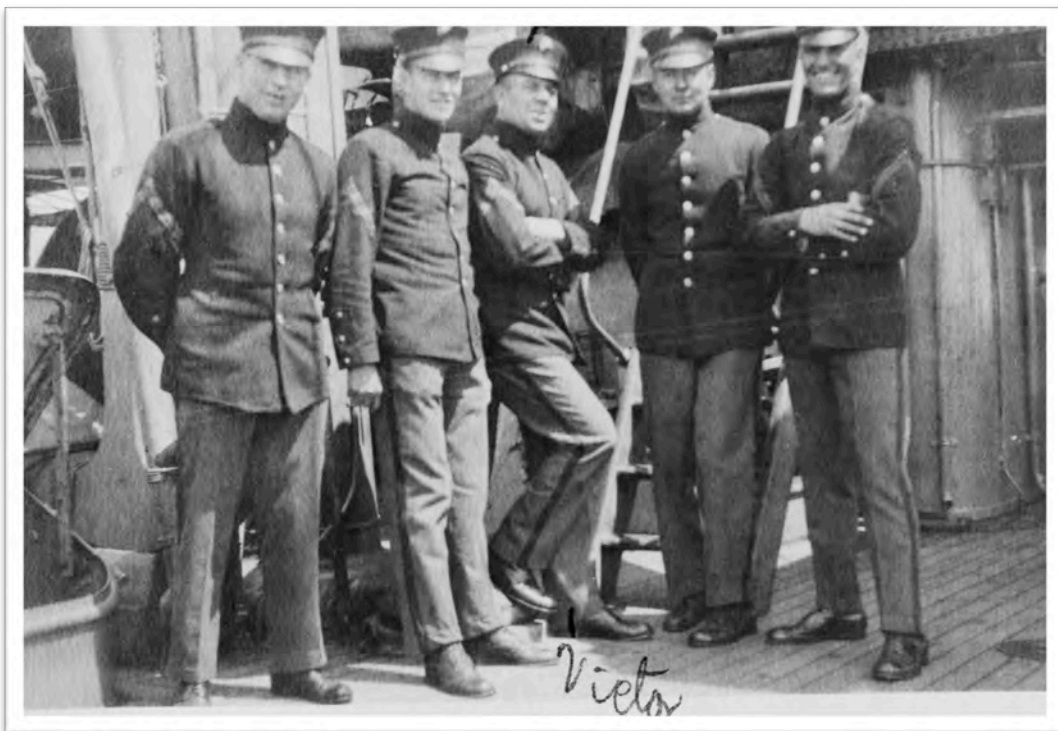
Don't know of anything else to write so will close and hoping you all are well. Please do not worry about me as I will be a good boy and a good Marine.



*The Marine guard aboard the USS Galveston*



*Victor with fellow Marines next to one of the large 5 inch guns on the USS Galveston. These guns were capable of firing a 50-pound projectile 9 miles. He was assigned to act as a pointer for one of these guns and mentions in his letters that he was involved in several skirmishes with U-boats while escorting convoys across the Atlantic.*



*Marine officers aboard the USS Galveston in their dress blue uniforms.*

**4/4/18, Thursday, Norfolk**

Dear Mother;

Received your letter of March 29 yesterday also received your other letters and the one containing \$1.00. I wrote to you last Saturday and as I have a few spare hours will write you again to day.

I did not have to go on guard last Sunday Easter day. Came back to ship and found I was not on guard duty list so another marine and I went on liberty again and went to [censored] to a Lutheran church. It was not a very large church but nice. They have a pipe organ and good music. We went in at 10:30 and Sunday school was still on. Services began at 11. The boy I went with is a Lutheran boy and we enjoyed the services very much. They had communion service and ministers invited all the enlisted men to communion 1<sup>st</sup>. There were 4 of us Marines and about 20 sailor boys went to communion. We left the church before services were out so did not get a chance to meet any folks, but we are going back again next Sunday if not on duty.

We eat our Easter dinner downtown in a restaurant. I had strawberries and cream (20c) for dinner. In afternoon we went to a park. It was a nice warm sunny day and we enjoyed to walk out on the green grass again. I think the season is 30 days in advance of Wis. Spring as trees are beginning to show there [sic] leaves and grass is real green. In evening we went to bed early and got up in morning 6AM to get back to ship in time to check in at 8 AM.

Every day Monday, Tuesday and today I am on guard duty and am off on liberty tomorrow. We have a prison or brig on the boat and my guard duty has been to guard one prisoner for the last two days.

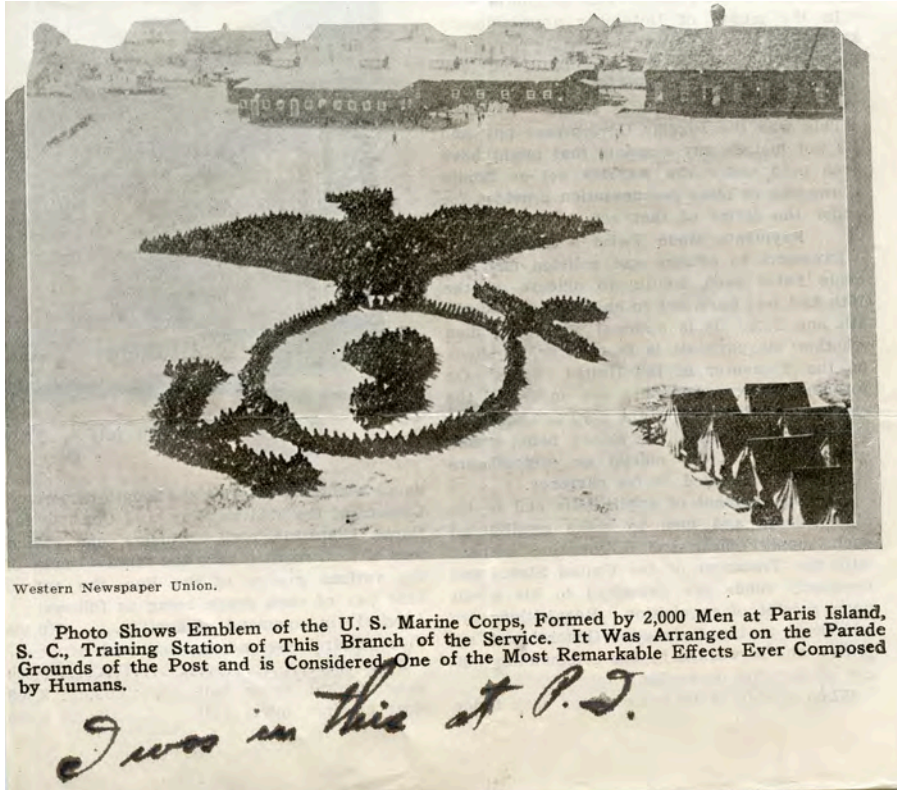
Tell Viola to find that old punching bag and send it to Spalding to be refitted to a new rubber blades and send to me. Have Spalding send a small bicycle pump (hand pump) with it. If you cannot find punching bag ask at Phillipson's garage. I might have left it there to be repaired but hardly think so.

There are about 20 Marines on boat that have been on boat for a year or more. They are looking forward to be transferred off at this port. If they do there will be some new ones come on as we all might be transferred off. I don't know where this boat will go after it leaves here. It might do [censored] duty. I think about the rowboat at home. I think it should be put in barn or some place in shade of the sun. Same about the canoe. Don't neglect them, if they need a coat of paint have it done. If you do not use them very much, they won't need paint for they were fixed up in good shape last spring.

Love to all

Loving son

Pvt. Victor Rossing  
USS Galveston  
c/o P.M. New York



*This is an example of mass photography, which was very popular at that time. Victor was part of this on Paris Island.*



*Another example of mass photography from that time*

**4/8/18, Monday, Norfolk**

Dear Mother;

Just a few lines to let you know I am well. I received the field glass and book you sent. I sent some knit goods home so please let me know if you received them. I received a sweater from Wilson and Co. am enclosing the letter.

I get liberty today again. Eight of the Marines are just coming back from a 10-day furlow granted them when we landed. I did not ask them and don't know if I should ask now. Am thinking of asking for 5 days liberty to go to Philadelphia.

I don't believe I want to come home now, but will wait for another opportunity. I received your two letters regarding liberty and furlow. I don't feel I should come home now as there is nothing important.

Now that's the way I feel about it and prefer to wait until later on in the summer.

Am going to try and get into the officers training school. They are increasing the Marine Corp to about 80,000 so they are in need of officers and what the Marine captain said to me the other day encourages me to try anyway.

I guess a person is as safe in one position as another.

You might see me home by time this letter arrives but don't think so. I am so undecided.

**4/15/18, Monday, Portsmouth, VA**

Saturday

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and getting along fine everything about the same. I wrote you a while ago saying we might be transferred but I hear now that we will stay. Am on liberty to day also yesterday and go on guard tomorrow again. Haven't received the Atlas for some time. Send me the news pages in a letter. Hope you are all well.

Loving Son and Brother

Victor

U.S.S. Galveston  
c/o P.M. New York

Always use this address never Norfolk.



Victor had these pictures  
of Marie when he was in  
the Marines

*As Marie noted, Victor had this and other photos of her when he was in the Marines. She is never mentioned in these letters; however they married in December 1919, just ten months after he returned home.*

**Argyle, April 9, 1918**

Dear Son Victor,

I hasten to write you a few lines in answer to your letter to Viola, which we received today. Victor I can not submit to you going to France. But will be glad if you can get in the Quartermaster Department again. Of coars the Officer Training School is really what I have looked for and am sure you would do the most good for the war if you could then serve on sea or in this country. But God's will be done. I must not stand in the way of your welfare in this time of Pearl to our country.

My Idea has not changed yet. We need loyal Men and Women to stay home in our country and fight the good fight and I am right with you to be a protector at our own doors. God help men to be faithful and not shirk. I will write a plea to the head department for your deliverance to go to France if you say that I may.

I told Viola to order the best punching bag she could get and send you at once. I know it will all go well with you put your trust in God and do your duty without fear. If God is with you all is well and the Victory is sure to come. We don't know how or why. But God does.

Will get this in today's mail.

God bless and Keep you,

Mother



*Helena Rossing*



**4/16/18, Thursday, Norfolk, VA**

Dear Folks.

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and everything about the same.

Twelve of our Marine guard were transferred off the ship and 18 new ones come on today. The new men are all from Paris Island and the old ones were short timers only 3 or 4 months to do (their 4 years expires then).

I was on liberty and went to Lutheran church in AM Sunday and in PM was out to the park.

I received the Atlas and letters here Sunday.

Time goes by quickly and it does not seem like April 16 yet. Am enclosing some pictures taken by one of sailors our ship will probably be here another month. One hears so many things. Heard we would probably sail down by South America.

Will try and let you hear from me at every opportunity anyway.

A telegram would reach me quickest if addressed to Navigation Washington D.C.  
Address all mail c/o Postmaster N.Y., USS Galveston

Victor

*(11 photos of USS Galveston enclosed)*

**4/20/18, Saturday, US Navy Yards, Norfolk VA**

Dear Folks;

I received the Atlas yesterday that mother sent.

Everything is the same with me. They take us out and drill us in the AM of each day. The weather is fine and enjoy the exercise.

The new boys that came on board seem to be all nice fellows and much better than the old bunch. One of the boys is from Lake Geneva Wis and knows the Larson girls. We get liberty over town about every other afternoon. Generally go to a movie show and eat supper at restaurant.

Will close

Hope you are all well everything going fine.

Victor Rossing

**4/25/18, Thursday, Norfolk, VA**

Dear Folks:

Rec'd the Atlas Viola sent and also mother's letters. I guess since I last wrote.

I am well and getting along fine. Our boat is still being repaired. We drill nearly every day in AM and when we are not on guard duty we get liberty at 4 PM.

They just found a one-man submarine at the bottom of some eastern harbor and it is in Navy Yard by our boat. It is a crude affair about 35 ft. long. Has an automobile engine in one end and torpedo tube in the other. They say they found a man dead in it. It is probably some German homemade affair that tried to sink a big battle ship and failed. We are not allowed to take any pictures in navy yard so cannot get a picture of it.

When we are on liberty I always get supper and go to a show and return to boat at 10 or 11 PM. If I stay one night until eight in morning it costs too much. Payday is twice a month on board ship. The 20th and 5<sup>th</sup>.

I might be able to get a furlow about 5<sup>th</sup> of May after payday and come home for a few days. It costs quite a bit but probably will be with the money. If I don't take one now my chances to get one later on will be better but think I can work it both times.

If I come I will telegraph I am coming. Don't be disappointed if I don't come for you know I am well and happy.

*(Enclosures: three newspaper clippings about the Marines)*



## MARINE CORPS OPENS RECRUITING STATION

The United States Marine Corps has opened a recruiting station at 227 E. Main street, Norfolk, Va., for the purpose of giving young men information and the opportunity to enlist in this splendid branch of our regular service.

The marines, the "soldiers of the sea," are an independent branch of the military service of the United States, serving under the direction of the secretary of the navy. They not only protect government property at home, but they furnish the first line of mobile defense of naval stations and naval bases beyond the limits of the United States.

All men of this two-in-one branch are volunteers, and their ages are from 18 to 36 years of age. The base pay of a marine is \$30 per month, with clothes, food, medical attention in addition. Advancement in the Marine Corps is very rapid, and any man with any amount of spunk and ambition in his body is the man to be made a non-commissioned officer and then the next step is a commission, as all the commissions in the Marine Corps are given to the enlisted men.

If a man passes the physical requirements of this branch of the service he is sent to Paris Island, S. C., better known as the "Camp of no Ills." He is under instruction from ten to twelve weeks and then he is a full-fledged marine, ready to do duty in any naval station in the United States, or at foreign naval stations, of which are the Phillipines, Honolulu, Guam, Cuba, Santo-Domingo, Haiti, Virgin Islands, China, Nicaragua, France.

The Marine Corps is a most attractive branch of the service because the men are trained on land and on the sea, on board ship they do guard duty and man the anti-air craft guns, also the five-inch guns.

If you are interested in this branch of the service Sergeant Samuel J. Michael, in charge of the local recruiting, will only be too glad to give you any desired information. The recruiting is located at 227 E. Main street, with entrance at 225 E. Main street.

Sergeant Michael says that he has orders from headquarters to take registered men, provided they can get a certificate from their local board to the effect that they are not needed to fill the current quota of the board and are granted permission to enlist in the Marine Corps.

## PROTECTION OF PROPERTY IN TRANSIT

## U. S. A. in Siberia

WHAT a familiar message that was that came from across the Pacific—"United States Marines have landed at Vladivostok."

Of course the Marines have landed in Russia. Whenever there is a delicate job to be performed the Marines go. They are the real trouble hounds of this nation.

Rebellion in Nicaragua, send for the Marines. Revolution in Haiti, summon the Marines. Boxer uprising in China, hurry up the Marines. A flag insulted at Vera Cruz, send ashore the Marines. A battleship sunk in Havana harbor, sound the bugle for the Marines. Insurrection at Manila, cable for the Marines.

Wheresoever and whensoever rioters are to be squelched and trouble snuffed out, you will find American Marines, our amphibious fighters, of whom a British army officer said just prior to this war—"the most efficient armed body in the world."

## Americans Nicknamed "Devil Dogs" by Huns

WASHINGTON, April 13. — That time-honored nickname borne by the United States Marine for generations—"leathernecks"—is no more. At least, the Germans have abandoned it, according to reports from France.

In its place the Teutons have handed the sea-soldiers one with far more meaning. They call the American scrappers "teufel hunden," which, in English, means "devil dogs."

"Gee, those guys rank us with the "Ladies from Hell," declared a grizzled old Marine sergeant, swelling with pride when he heard the new title.

**4/26/18, Friday, Portsmouth VA**

Dear Folks;

This is liberty day and there was a large parade downtown. All the workmen from N. Yard were in it. It rained this PM. I see all the autos decorated up.

I hear we are to parade next Monday downtown. They have a big YMCA here and it's a fine place to spend a few hrs. when I am on liberty. They have good shower baths a swimming pool, good reading and writing rooms and all is free except we pay 5c for towel and soap.

I am on guard duty tomorrow. Am spending a few spare hrs. studying and expect a promotion. Anyways captain says I have a good chance but it's hard to study on board ship as there is so much noise.

Last night I got a room at a Hotel for \$1.00 spent a few hrs. studying and had a good sleep in a real bed again. As I have said I don't mind the hammocks and I sleep fine in them only it's a better feeling when I wake up and find myself all stretched out in a big wide bed.

The war looks pretty serious now. I hope they can hold the Germans back. I got a letter from Anton\* and he says he thinks we are fighting an uphill battle and so we are. I think if the British and French and Am can hold them for 6 mo. we have them beat.

I received Viola and Mother's letters also the flour demonstration add from \_\_\_\_\_. We get bread mixed up with buckwheat, rye etc. all the time. It's not as good, but the boys all eat it. They are feeding us better on ship now for breakfast we generally get an apple and two fried eggs.

One of our Marines went home on furlow and never came back. Deserted. I would hate to be him if they caught him. He sent a telegram back to ship asking for a few days more as his wife was very sick. He was a boy about 20 years old and was married and lived at Buffalo, NY.

You ask if you can send anything. I suppose it is pretty busy times at home now. Would like to be there and help. I bet the eggs are coming in pretty fast at the store. That always makes busy times. The storage battery for Haynes is at P. Garage.

Did you say you sent me a punching bag? I never received it. If you have to buy a new one do not do so as they are expensive now and I can buy one here just as cheap.

I let Tom Smith Chicago take a steel fishing rod last summer and would you please write him to sent it to you, saying it belongs to Hjalmar and I guess it does. I should hate to lose it (just rod not reel or line). He will return it at once I am sure.

How is the fishing? I believe Hjalmar could catch a few pike. Not at the dam before season but at the mouth of Whiteside or mouth of creek that runs by John Jackson's old place. I had good luck at both places and am sure on a warm day after warm rain and water is right you could land some nice ones.

I can buy some Navy brass or black buttons. Ask Viola if she wants any for dress trimmings.

I sent my fountain pen back to factory and just got it back. It works fine. I guess that's why I am writing so much. It's a good place to write. A bunch of Navy boys and Marines are also writing beside me and the phonograph is playing. It's about supertime so I guess will have to hunt a place to eat.

Loving Son

Victor

There is something I want to say. You perhaps worry about me. There are plenty of chances to go out with girls and sport around, but I am glad to say I have not been out with any girls or women or do any sporting around at all, so don't worry. There is so much disease among people at these ports even among the boys in service. Am going to try and come out of this war with no traces of this kind.

While acting as corporal of guard on ship a few weeks ago I caught two sailor boys sleeping together and reporting their actions to officers of the deck. They were tried by general court martial and given a few years in brig.

*\*Probably his uncle Anton Rossing, a half-brother to his father L.A. Rossing*



*This is a post card sent when he was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia at the Naval Yards where the Galveston was undergoing repairs. He mentions they were in a parade at the end of April. This shows them dressed in their dress blue uniforms with white caps.*

**5/1/18, Wednesday, Norfolk, VA**

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and everything going nicely. Am on liberty again this PM and am planning to get back to boat at 10 PM. Eat supper at restaurant and went to a movie so am about ready to start back.

There are a bunch of Australian troops in town tonight and they look like good soldiers. Got a letter from F Walden and he tells me Robert and Don are in France. I hope the Allies can force the Germans to a quick decision. Rc'd the Atlas.

I was aboard the Agamemnon (formally the Kaiser William) a big transport. It just returned from France. It is a monster transport 735 ft. long and carries 4000 troops and crew of 2000 sailors. We got a new captain today not Marine captain, the captain of the boat. Us Marines wear white cuff covers, white gloves and belt while on duty (more to keep clean).

Am going to ask for furlow after payday. I don't know where our boat will go when ready and if I stay on don't know when I can be home again in other words when ship is ready for service it will be on go for some time and hard to get off. They have caught the Marine that deserted and will bring him back for trial.

Marine Capt. sent me over to St. Helene Island (Navy recruit camp) today with some papers for two prisoners had cuffed together walking them around for exercise. I ask them if they thought they would ship over. They all laughed and said no.

**Unknown date, Saturday, Norfolk, VA**

Dear Folks:

I am on liberty today and do not have to go back to ship until Monday AM. So two of us got a room at hotel and thought I would write a few lines to let you know I am well. I asked for a furlow and they said the ship will be leaving about May 8 or 11.

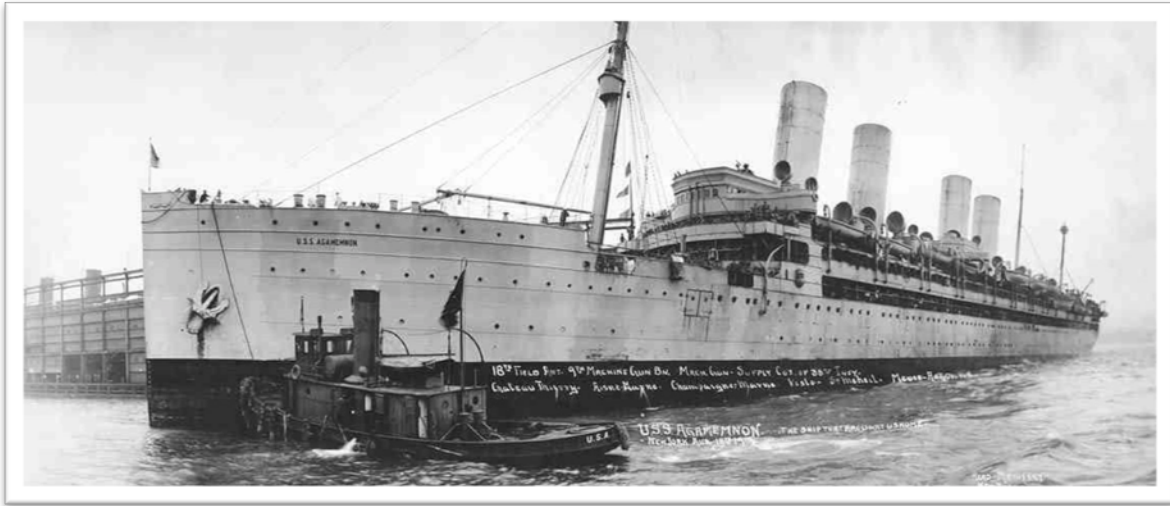
I think we go to NY and leave there about the 14<sup>th</sup>. I don't know where we go but think we are going to make another trip across. Some say we will be gone about 3 months and others say we go over and right back again.

So I am out of luck on a furlow just now but will ask for one as soon as we come back and think chance of getting one then will be fine. Am also looking forward to a promotion very soon. The chance of being sent to officer's training school will be good in a little while probably 1 or 2 months.

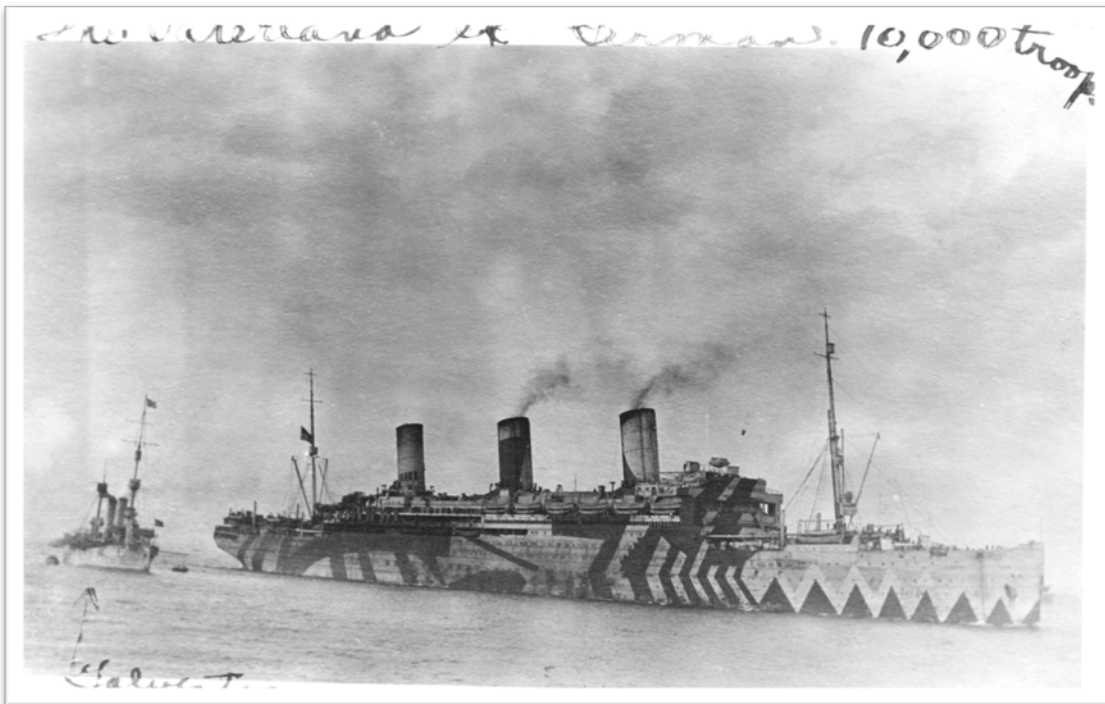
I don't care what they do with me am just as well satisfied one place or another.

Loving Son and Brother

Victor



The USS Agamemnon, formerly the Kaiser Wilhelm II a German luxury liner seized by the US Government when it declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. VBR went aboard this when it was in the Norfolk Naval Yards in April 1918. [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/SS\\_Kaiser\\_Wilhelm\\_II.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/SS_Kaiser_Wilhelm_II.jpg)



The Vaterland was a huge German ship commandeered by the US Navy during the war and renamed the USS Leviathan shown here with her dazzle camouflage applied during a March, 1918 trip to Liverpool. She was over 900 ft. long and could transport up to 14,000 troops. The much smaller Galveston is pictured next to her.

**5/10/18, Friday, Norfolk, VA**

Dear Folks:

I received your letters today am sorry I could not come home, but perhaps will have a chance when we come back from this trip just finished coaling and carrying stores and we leave here early tomorrow. We put on 100 tones of coal and lots of stores so if you do not hear from me for 4 to 8 weeks don't worry. I don't know where we go but think we go from here to NY and then across or we may go direct from here. I hear we are going to stay awhile this time but some say we are going to make another trip like the one before.

Will you please attend to paying premiums on my \$5,000 insurance policy that is due some time this month at Commercial Bank. I wrote two ck while here one for \$15 and \$10. Please charge. We got lots of liberty while here and eats cost. Would not have to write the cks, only some of the boys owe me some money but they are good when pay day comes. We may get liberty at NY if we go so will write if so. I got good and dirty today while coaling. Am glad to see Argyle 100% loyal. Did you get the fish pole from Tom Smith? I hope you all keep well and don't worry about me.

Must close

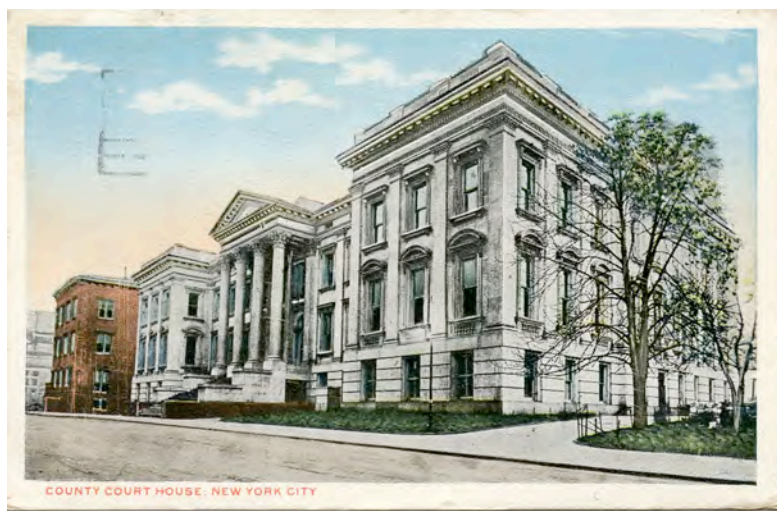
Loving Son and Brother

Victor

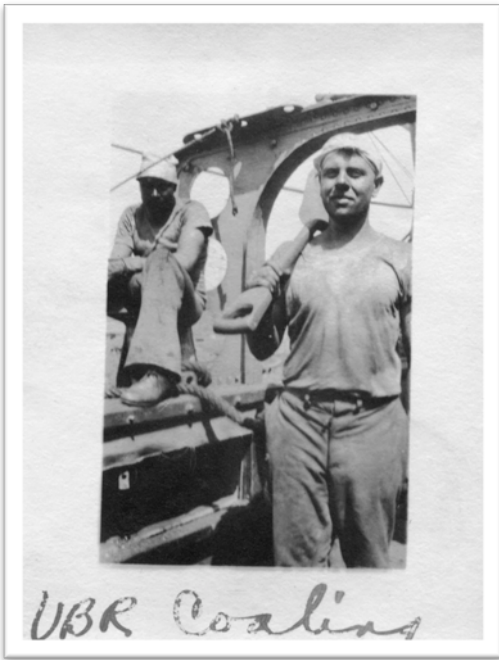
**5/14/18, Tuesday, New York (postcard of New York County Courthouse)**

We got in here yesterday and am on liberty today. Everything as usual. Had to help coal ship and got pretty black. Had a nice trip up here.

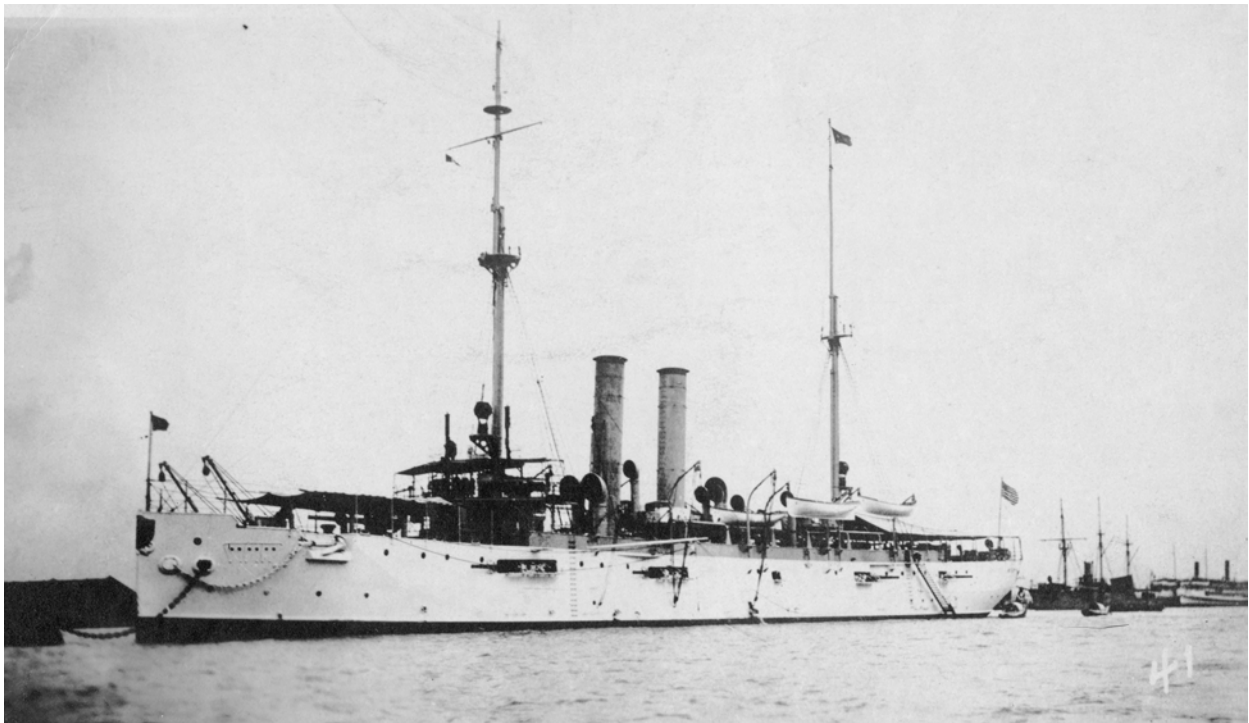
Victor







*In his letters, Victor often talks about coaling the ship and how dusty everything and everyone got. They would always take the next day to wash out the coal dust from their clothes. Most naval ships were powered by coal at that time. A few modern ships were using diesel but these were not allowed to sail across the Atlantic.*



*Galveston was assigned to Squadron 2 of the Atlantic Fleet Cruiser Force for convoy escort duties concurrent with the training of Armed Guard crews. After one convoy run through heavy weather from Tompkinsville to Halifax, Nova Scotia, she was largely employed in repeated convoy escort voyages between New York and Norfolk until 22 September 1918 when she departed Tompkinsville with a 19-ship convoy bound for Ponta Delgada, Azores. On the morning of 30 September a convoy straggler was attacked by German submarine U-152. Alerted by the flashing explosion to starboard, Galveston headed for the scene of attack and opened fire on the U-boat. Cargo ship Ticonderoga was shelled and sunk in the 2-hour battle with a loss of 213 lives and the submarine escaped but the remaining ships of the convoy were brought safely into Ponta Delgada 4 October 1918. Galveston returned to Norfolk on 20 October 1918 to resume her coastal convoy escort work until the Armistice. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_Galveston](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Galveston) (also see VBR letter of October 20).*

**5/15/18, Wednesday, New York, NY**

Dear Mother:

Started a letter to you yesterday but did not finish it so will start over again. Thought of you on Mother's Day but could not get a letter off to you without being censored so this will be Mothers Day letter to you.

I am proud to be able to write and to have such a fine mother and I appreciate and love you more than words can tell. You are my best friend.

Was on liberty yesterday and was over to NY City and mailed a few cards. We are anchored just about a mile south of Statue of Liberty and when on top deck can see it very plain. Tonight it is lighted up and looks very pretty. It seems to give us encouragement and reveal to us the cause for which we are working. Several of the boys live here and they have invited me to their home but probably will not get an opportunity for I think we will be leaving in a day or so.

Don't know where we go but think we go on another convoy trip across. It probably will be a large convoy this time 35 ships (I am just guessing). We coaled ship again today. I was on guard duty so did not help. Washed some clothes and pressed my suits today. We have an electric iron and have to keep our clothes neat.

Received your letter and card also the Atlas today.

I wish I knew where and when we are going so you would know. I hear so many rumors. Some say our ship will probably stay over across for awhile but I think we go over and come right back again. There are lots of ships come in and out of this harbor and we get to see them all. Large transport boats leave crowded with soldiers, some French, British and American.

I make good use of the field glass you sent me. Still have some figs left too. I never received the punching bag you sent. I hope it comes before we leave as it will give me exercise I need while on board.

We are not allowed to whistle on board ship an officer caught a sailor whistling tonight and sent him up on the highest mast to whistle for one hour as punishment.

The sailors are a careless free going bunch and some of them sure make me laugh. Some of them seem like just kids.

I will write again soon if we do not leave. If you do not hear from me for 4 to 8 weeks please don't worry.

Must close

Loving son

Victor



*A view of the USS Galveston from the high mast where the officer sent the whistler.*

**5/16/18, Thursday, New York**

Dear Mother:

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and happy. We are soon to go out to sea again and please don't worry if you do not hear from me for some time probably 4 or 5 weeks.

I have the glasses also some of figs you sent. Did not receive the p. bag yet am sorry I won't get it before we leave.

I received the Atlas also your card and letter containing stamps.

We were at sea on May 12\*, so did not get a letter off to you on Mother's Day. This will have to do. I thought of you on Mother's Day in fact I think of you every day. I am glad I have such a fine mother and love you more than words can tell: hope some time we will be happy again together.

I have so many things to write you but cannot do so now. We are having fine weather and expect a nice trip. Hope it will be better than last time and am sure it will. We will soon have gun drill and today we had fire drill, collision drill and abandon ship drill. I am assigned to new life raft when abandon ship call is given.

Must close

Loving Son

Victor

*\*On May 12 he was sailing from Norfolk up to the Brooklyn Naval Yard in New York where the USS Galveston was based for the duration of the war.*

**5/21/18, Tuesday, New York** (*Postcard of the McAlpin Hotel*)

On liberty in NY today. I think we leave on another trip Friday so probably you won't hear from me for a while. Will write more later.

Victor

*(The McAlpin Hotel was the largest hotel in the world at that time. This is also the hotel that Viola and Helena stayed in just before boarding the S.S. Republic to begin their cruise and tour of the Holy Land in 1926.)*



I thought of you on  
mothers day in fact I  
think of you every day  
I am glad I have such  
a fine mother and  
love you more than words  
can tell: hope some  
time we will be happy  
again together


Excerpt from his Mother's Day letter

377  
Century Post Card Co. N.Y.  
on liberty in  
day. I think  
we leave on another  
trip Friday as  
probably you won't  
hear from me for  
awhile. Will  
write more later  
Veto.

POST CARD  
WILL  
WIN THE WAR  
DON'T WASTE IT

NEW YORK  
MAY 30 7M  
1918  
PENN. TERM. ST. N.

Mrs L. A. Rossing  
Argyle  
N.Y.



5/21/18 Postcard of the McAlpin Hotel

**5/22/18, Wednesday, New York**

Dear Folks;

Heard we will be here for 60 to 80 days on repair work so that means a long time in NY. I don't think we will be transferred. I have not asked for a furlow yet. One has to have good reasons so if you want me to come home send me a telegram or a letter stating you need me home for a few days. Anything—business difficulties, sickness. Do this when you want me and I can be of some help in the store.

Love to all

Victor

I can probably get 10 to 15 days. Rec'd the suitcase.

**6/11/18, Tuesday, New York**

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines to let you know I am well. Am on liberty again to night.

We coaled ship yesterday PM in forenoon we had admiral inspection. We took on about 300 ton of coal in about 3 hr. and to through about 4 PM. I got liberty also last night. Today we had field day all day that is clean up day after coaling. I washed all my coaling clothes and khaki and everyone had to wash coal dust.

We leave Saturday and this is my last liberty before we go. Will be on duty tomorrow. Don't know where we go this time but will probably make another convoy trip as usual. I think we will have a convoy back also that means we will land in France, Eng. or Italy.

Have not received P. Bag yet but probably will before we leave.

Must close,

With lots of love

Victor

Will probably be gone 20 to 30 days



*L.A. Rossing store interior with Victor, Hjalmar, Viola and store clerks.*



*The large new store opened in September, 1911. After LA Rossing passed away in February 1913, Victor, Viola and Hjalmar each became 1/3 partners.*

**6/20/18, Thursday, New York**

Dear Folks;

Sent you a letter on June 9. We just came back from our convoy trip went to Hampton Roads just out side of Norfolk and spent one day coaling and loading a few stores. Then we pulled out again and spent 1 week in Chesapeake Bay at target practice. Went back to Hampton Roads took on more coal and came to NY and arrived here today. Think we will be here 8 to 10 days then over again on another convoy trip.

We expect to get liberty here; the first time since we left here over a month ago. As this is first day in and I am on liberty will write a few lines to let you know I am well and received the Atlas (4) and your letters, expect some more mail here today.

Haven't asked about a furlow yet and don't know if possible this time. Next time we come back our ship will no doubt have to go into navy yards for repairs. Then can probably get more time. Please don't plan on me coming home until you see me home for I can't tell when.

Must tell you about our last trip. The weather has been fine all the time and we had a very fine trip. It's been nice and cool and a pleasure to be on the ocean when the weather is so nice.

We left NY with 30 ships. Our gun watches started as soon as we got out of New York harbor and a careful watch each taking our turn was kept up day and night am getting so used to getting up any hr. of night now so don't mind it at all. They always demand we keep clean and wear clothes in good shape.

I have been promoted to a corporal again but when you write to me just put my plain name. When I write from the ship now we have to use just our plain name especially on envelopes.

I am on liberty today and am in writing room of a hotel writing on finishing this up. Oh I must start to tell you about our trip. I have been chosen as a gun pointer on one of the big guns and have practice drills at aiming also eight setting and at target practice I made good and my shooting was satisfactory.

On our way over and back we were called out to man our guns many times. When it happened at night was the worst as the ship was all dark and one had to jump out of our hammocks slap on a few clothes and run to our station (mine as pointer to one of guns). There were always a big rush when general quarters went. We were called out about a dozen times for action for what they thought was a submarine. Once when about 190 miles off the coast of France the morning of day we turned around to come back one of our ships in rear of convoy opened fire on what she said was a sub. Then another began to shoot all the ships immediately changed their course and we turned around and at full speed toward where the sub was, but we did not see it. Twenty eight shots were fired. Heard after that sub got one of our convoy ships after we left them.



A careful watch was kept all the way back also and when off Virginia coast about 150 miles we had another scare and were called to man our guns, then we opened fire at what we thought was a sub about 3000 yards away. We fired 84 shots hitting our mark. I fired 10 shots. Our shooting is regulated from bridge by buzzers also our range is given us so all we do is to hold on our target.

Well they could see was not quite sure what it was but was satisfied that it was hit and out of commission and did not go any closer. Heard afterward that a sub was disabled by an unknown cruiser and 7 of crew died and 5 alive. A destroyer picked it up next day.

They keep the news so we don't know what really happens. One of our convoy ships loaded with auto trucks was sunk at night in mid-ocean by collision. They sent up a rocket for help. It was so dark we could not see did not even stop or turn around but the ship that struck her rescued all on board and had to return in a damaged condition to USA.

We had to wear life preservers for 6 days day and night when off coast of England and France. You can't imagine how many ships are crossing until you see. Coming back we met 3 large convoys going over.

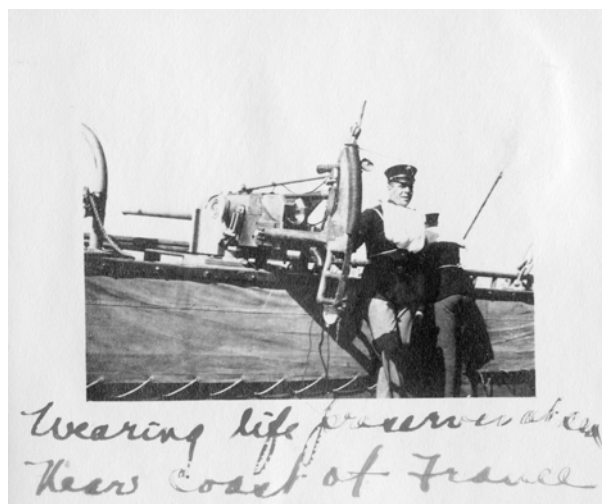
It makes us feel sad in a way to see so many troops on board ship going across. I took some pictures and will send you some in a few days of our life on board ship.

Have not received the punching bag yet nor have I received all our mail. Notice when coming home on furlow can ride on RR for 1/3 fare now. Hope I can make use of the reduction but hardly think so just now.

At sea I am always in my hammock at 8 or 9 o'clock and up at 5 in morning. Lately have been sleeping on top deck in the cool fresh air.

Must close for this time,

Loving Son and Brother



**6/25/18, Tuesday, New York**

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines to let you know I am still in New York. Don't know for sure how long we will be here. We get over-night liberty every other day. New York is sure a busy place and I like it very much. Saw some good shows and been busy looking around the town.

I haven't received the P. Bag yet and the pictures but expect them in mail tomorrow as I saw the mailman bring on some packages. I sent you by PP a package containing 2 sweaters and one white sailor suit which I think will make a dandy tennis suit. Have heard we leave NY about the 30<sup>th</sup> might stay until after July 4. If you want me to buy anything or get something while I am here it would be best to telegraph or night-letter c/o this hotel and I can get it nearly every day as most of boys (Marines) stop here.

There were 32 more sailors came on board our ship today. Think they will make one trip over with us. We might make a 1 week out for target practice soon as last target practice was not very satisfactory because of poor bunch of shell we got for some. Don't know of anything else to say only that I am well and happy.

Don't telegraph me c/o the ship at NY.

**6/28/18, Friday, NY**

On board ship in harbor

Dear Folks;

I was on liberty last night and was down to J Friedmans Co and Mr. Ben Friedman gave me a ride in his car and invited me for dinner tonight. Am on liberty today at 4 PM and I accepted his invitation so will go there this PM for dinner. He is a man some think like old Schonfield. He also invited me to a long ride Sunday and I am on liberty Sunday again in PM.

Will write and let you know how it all will be. Think our ship will be here until after July 4 and will spend the 4<sup>th</sup> in NY. Think we will have to parade that day.

I asked about a furlow. They would not grant any furlows unless sickness at home. Think next time there will be furlows after next trip. Have not received the P Bag yet. Write to them again.

Best wishes

V.

I scrubbed clothes today after quarters. We have quarters and gun drill every morning at 9:30 and 1:30 PM. We also had our hammock opened up airing our bedding the AM.

**6/30/18, Sunday, New York**

Dear Folks:

Rec'd Hjalmar's letter also Viola's card and mother's letter.

Friday eve was invited to J. Friedman's house for dinner. He took me up to his house in his car. He lives in top flat of large apartment house 1 block off Hudson River on 89<sup>th</sup>. Met his two sons and had a very fine dinner—baked clams, fish, chicken, cake.

I left his house about 9:30 and stayed at a hotel came back to boat at 8 next morning. Was on duty Saturday.

Today this AM went over to USS Pennsylvania to attend church. I looked over the ship. It certainly is a beauty. Was down in torpedo room where they let the torpedoes loose. Was also in their 14 in gun turrets where the sailor explained everything. Am enclosing program of church services.

This PM am on liberty again and took boat from Battery Park to Coney Island. Had a good time at Coney. Went in bathing. So darn many Jews out there I came home early. I think will take in a picture show and go to bed early. Am on liberty tomorrow and will look up Hjalmar's friends. Am also on liberty July 4.

Haven't heard when we leave port yet probably will be around July 8-10.

Ten large transports left NY today loaded with troops. The largest of the ships carry 8 to 10,000.

Must close

Loving son and Brother

Victor



*USS Pennsylvania in NY harbor during WWI*

**7/5/18, Friday, New York**

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines before I go to bed. Am on liberty this PM from 4 until 8 AM. Was also on liberty yesterday and celebrated in New York. There was a very large parade on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and it was very interesting. Many of boys went to Coney Island but I stayed in the city and had a nice time.

I received the Atlas also Viola and mother's letters and a letter from Hjalmar few days ago. Have already heard from Mr. Bennett but will have to write him if I want to see him because we don't get over town until about 5PM when on liberty and this is too late. He says he is going to hospital in about 3 wks. to work and he gives me his address there so if I do not see him here will see him in Norfolk sometime. Am on duty tomorrow and Sunday until about 12 o'clock. Don't know when we will leave here probably be week or more around the 20<sup>th</sup>. I am well and hope you all are at home. I would like to have you here to spend the 4<sup>th</sup> with me. It would have been fine and know you would have enjoyed the parade.

Must close

Victor

**7/6/18, Saturday, On board ship, Brooklyn Naval Yards**

Dear Folks;

I wrote you a few lines last night and as I have nothing to do this PM will write you a few more lines.

We had captain's inspection this morning at 10 AM. Had to look clean, etc. I have the 8 to 12 watch tonight also tomorrow. I like New York. Am just learning to know the city and places where it does not cost so much money. Found a place where they give bath and bed to enlisted men for 25c for night. Also a place to get theater tickets at ½ price. There are places in the city where women give dinner and lunches to enlisted men for about ½ restaurant price.

The ferryboats carry us free and a great many give us reduced rates. I think we will be here a few weeks more also hear when we go across this time will land. I see many ships leaving every day loaded with troops. Rec'd a letter from Mr. Bennett, Hjalmar's friend and will call him up Monday. I also rec'd the night letter you sent. Have not received the P. Bag yet. I made inquiry at PO NY. They promised to look it up for me. The weather has been cool and haven't had any warm weather yet. Don't realize what time of year it is as I do not see anything growing.

Loving

Victor

**7/12/18, Friday, New York, N.Y.**

*Sent from Times Square Post Office, 1 PM. July 13, 1918*

Dear Folks:

This is my last time I can get a letter to you for perhaps 20 or 30 days so will write.

I had the 12 to 4 watch to-day and as this is about 5 PM and I am waiting for chow. I have the 12 to 4 watch to-night but can sleep from 7.30 to 12 and 4 to 6.30.

It is quite warm here to-day but when up on deck there is always a fine breeze. Had an electric storm here last night and the boys on ship say a big observation balloon not far away struck by lightning and burned.

I am anxious to get started out to sea for I really like it out there.

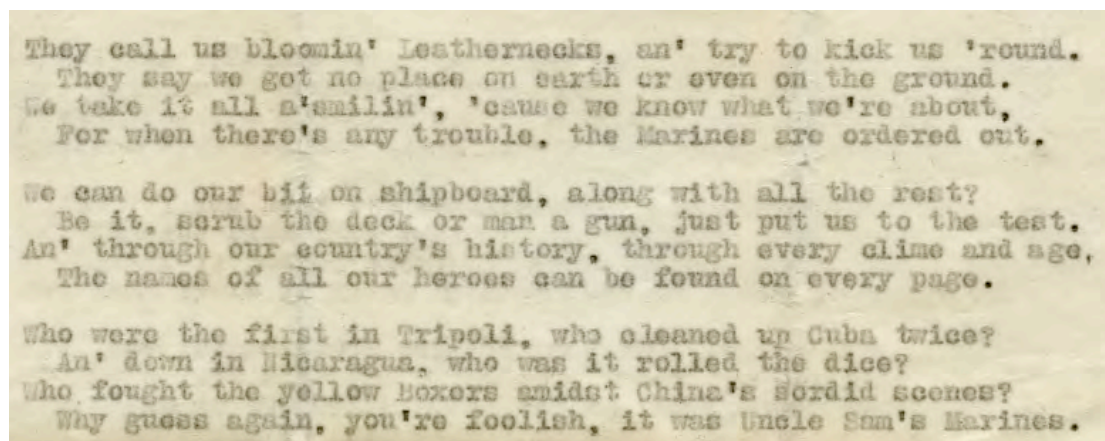
I think we leave about 10 o'clock to-morrow.

We are getting good things to eat while here in port and we all have good appetites. Good steaks, potatoes, pie, watermelons and even cantalope some times.

Must close

Victor

*Enclosures: Wilson letter, newspaper clipping and "Soldiers of the Sea" song*



*An excerpt from the Soldiers of the Sea*

*Enclosed letter:*

Thos. E. Wilson and Co.  
Manufacturers of Sporting and Athletic Supplies and Musical Merchandise  
Retail Store  
42 & 44 So. Wabash Ave.  
Tel. Randolph 5567  
Chicago

Feb. 23, 1918

Private Victor B. Rossing  
c/o Idaho Detail,  
Paris Island, S.C.

Dear Sir,

We have your letter dated Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> regarding the sweater promised by some official of our concern to the best physically developed recruit during certain weekly periods of last June. We have had several changes in the management of our local store, but upon inquiry I find that the manager at the above time had promised such prizes. We will therefore gladly furnish this prize and have now on hand such of the sweaters as were promised for these prizes.

If you will kindly send us your actual chest measurement so that we can pick your correct size, we will immediately send you the promised prize.

Yours very truly,

Thos. E. Wilson & Co.

A.H. Pressler

*This is quite a revealing letter for several reasons. It shows that he was at Paris Island the previous June when he won a prize for the "best physically developed recruit." This shows VBR must have been quite fit and in good shape when he enlisted even though he would have been older than most of the other recruits. It also shows he wasn't going to let it go and made a point of reminding the Wilson Company that they had not followed through with their promises. A.H. Pressler was the captain of the Chicago AAU basketball team a few years before. This would have been equivalent to national level college competition at that time.*



Manufacturers of Sporting  
& Athletic Supplies, and  
Musical Merchandise

RETAIL STORE 42 & 44 SO. WABASH AVE. TEL. RANDOLPH 5567

Chicago

Feb. 23, 1918.

Private Victor B. Rossing,  
c/o Idaho Detail,  
Paris Island, S. C.

*Ref # 75510*

Dear Sir:

We have your letter dated Feb. 12th regarding the sweater promised by some official of our concern to the best physically developed recruit during certain weekly periods of last June. We have had several changes in the management of our local store, but upon inquiry I find that the manager at the above time had promised such prizes. We therefore gladly furnish this prize and have now on hand such of the sweaters as were promised for those prizes.

If you will kindly send us your actual chest measurement so that we can pick your correct size, we will immediately send you the promised prize.

Yours very truly,

THOS. E. WILSON & CO.

*A. H. Gressler*

AHP'W

*"Everything to Help Your Game"*

**8/4/18, Sunday, NY (at the Navy Club, 509 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue)**

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines today. Am on liberty in New York today. Last night I went out to Coney Island and this afternoon was out to Bronx Park. I received the Atlas mother and Viola letters just before I went on liberty Saturday noon. I am well. Several of the boys got furlows and was anxious to go but did not have any special reason. We will be here until Aug. 25 any how as furlows were granted up until that time. Had lunch up at the club just a while ago.

Must close

Victor

**8/9/18, Friday, NY**

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and everything as usual. We had rowing this AM and it was good exercise. We rowed all around the ships in the bay. Was on liberty last night. It seemed good to get on shore again and took a good long walk. Am on duty 12 to 4 today and tonight and will get liberty Saturday PM and Sunday. It's been so warm in the city. They have changed our uniforms to khaki for liberty. In order to keep clean I get up nearly every morning at 5 and wash clothes.

The pictures were fine you sent. The officers thought the one of the big roll (like enclosed) was fine and they want me to get the film so they can have some printed and some enlargements made. Before you send it you better have Carey\* make one or two enlargements and a few common ones. I asked for a furlow but I guess I can't get one just now as they don't know how long they will be here. Am quite sure I can get one some time this fall. Am getting used to this life and feel quite contented. I think we will be here two weeks anyhow. During the hot weather I been sleeping on top deck and its really better than a hot room in a hotel so will perhaps spend most of my time aboard ship as there is always a good breeze and quite pleasant.

It would be nice to see some of you in New York but don't make any special trip for me because you all are busy and the expense is big and I feel contented but often wish the war would end so could come home. Think I will know how to appreciate a good home when I do come home and will be satisfied to stick around during my spare time. Well chow is about ready. Mess cooks have the tables set in my compartment.

Tell Hjalmar I think he should have store floor scrubbed more often and would suggest to do it some quiet PM of each week. The deck of our ship is scrubbed early morning. Don't know of anything else and must close

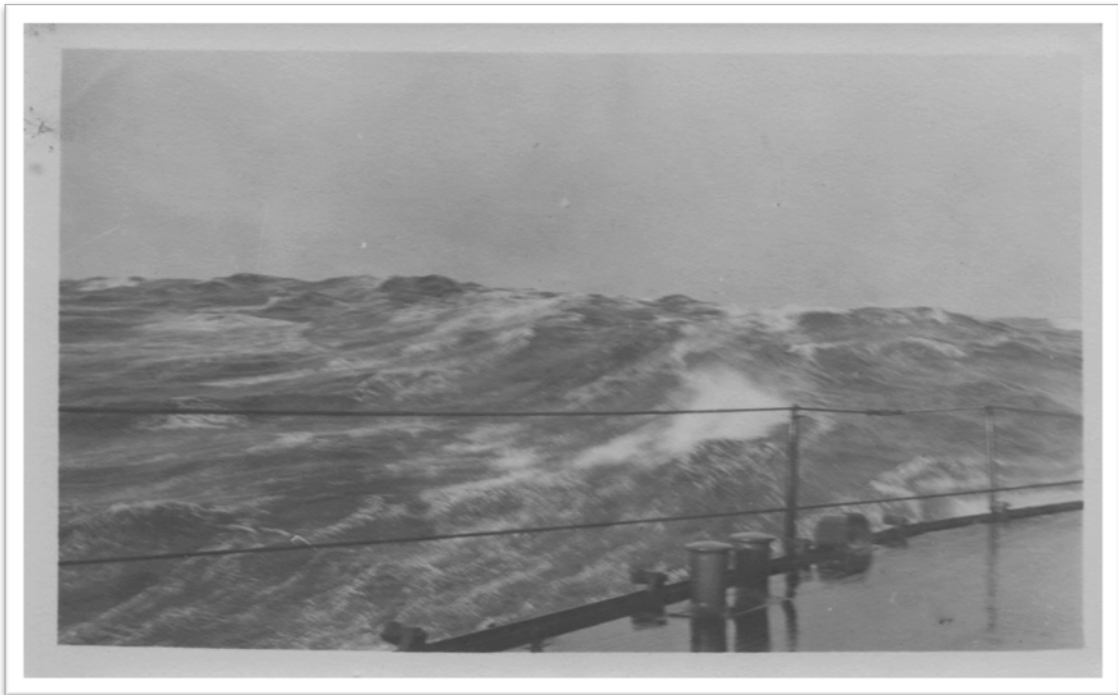
Victor

*\*Carey was a local photographer with a studio in Argyle*





*Photo of a "big roll" taken by Victor on his first trip across in March, 1918.*



*On the way back from Europe they encountered some very heavy weather.*

**8/12/18, Monday, NY**

Dear Folks;

I received the box containing the fruitcake and cookies also your letters and pictures. I enjoyed to hear from you all. The cookies were very good and gave several of my friends one. Am going to save the fruit cake and figs until out to sea. Am on liberty again to day at 4 PM until 8 AM. Last night I went to a free vaudeville show for enlisted men. Some of the very best stars in New York came to entertain and it was great. We get these tickets at YMCA. I got back to ship at 12:30 and slept until 7. Some of the boys are busy painting our compartment today. We had signal practice today after quarters. We all had to know semaphore and be able to send and receive 6 words a minute before we get liberty. I can send and receive about 10 and it's interesting to know because they use it so much in the Navy. I am sending the pictures back am also sending a Marine emblem for Viola. Thank mother for the big supply of stamps. I was just out. Don't know of anything else to write about so will close.

Best wishes

Victor

Am so glad to hear you all are well and everything going well at home. In case you want to reach me by telegram c/o Bureau of Navigation, USS Galveston, Washington DC

**8/13/18, Tuesday, NY (postcard of Municipal Building)**

I think we leave here about Aug 15 for about 5 or 6-day trip up or down the coast.

Victor



**8/15/18, Thursday, NY**

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and everything as usual. I thought we would pull anchor today but I guess we do not leave until Sunday and don't know for sure if we do this. Was on duty yesterday and am on liberty again today. The YMCA furnished us concert last night from 7:30 to 9:30 PM. Men and lady entertainers. We all enjoyed it very much. They gave the entertainment on top deck of our ship. Have been having some warm weather and when on liberty I found it better to come back to ship onboard boat and sleep on the deck as it's nice and cool. I see by paper the German U-boats are working along the Atlantic coast and have come close to New York. This makes it a little more dangerous. They may seldom attack a battle ship but get after transport and merchant ships. I think we are going to carry depth bombs on this next trip. We will have to go into Navy Yards for a few days to have them put on. I am writing this in PM and now must close to get ready to go ashore at 4 PM. One of the boys had to go home because of sickness and had no money so I went to J Friedman and cashed another ck for \$50.00. Will send it back in about 2 wks.

Victor

**8/17/18, Saturday, NY**

Dear Folks;

Just rec'd you letter at noon and am writing a few lines to get it off with boys going on liberty at 1 o'clock. Am on duty today and was on liberty yesterday and last night.

We had inspection this AM. Had boat drill last Friday. The New Mexico the ship I was detailed on at PI just came out of dry dock Friday for 1<sup>st</sup> trip. She is anchored close to us. She is the largest in our Navy. Am glad I am not on her as boys don't get much liberty and its more regulations.

I think we leave here tomorrow to convoy some ships up to Halifax. About 5 or 6-day trip. Never can tell for sure, just telling you what I heard. There has been lots of troop ships leaving and every day we see them. We are having nice weather. They are feeding us pretty good on ship now. Today we had soup, corn on cob, beans, bread and good ice tea.

Will send you a few more pictures soon. I sent Viola some music a day or so ago also sent her a package containing a few shells (put with rest) and two Marine emblems. She can have to use as pins or ornaments. I can get more so she can have them (shine with silver cream). Will try hard to get a furlow after we make another trip across. Think that will be in about 4-5 weeks. The subs on this coast might change the regular program of our ship.

Must close

Am well and hope everything OK at home.

**8/26/18, Monday, at sea**

*(With photo of VBR with fellow Marines on board ship pinned to letter)*

Dear Mother:

We expect to be in some Atlantic port tomorrow. Don't know where anyway I am writing a few lines. I let you know I am well and hope this finds you all well and everything OK at home.

We been out to sea 8 days and soon as we get in I suppose we coal ship take on stores and get ready for another trip.

Don't know when I can come home but hope I can come some time this fall.

The weather has been fine on this trip. Our ship is doing good work and it's always some satisfaction in finishing a trip to know we are helping protect our ships from the U boats. They keep us busy at the lookouts when out and when we get all night sleep we think we are lucky.

Hope I get some mail from home tomorrow for I am as anxious to hear from you all as you are from me.

Will write again soon

Victor

**8/27/18, Tuesday, NY**

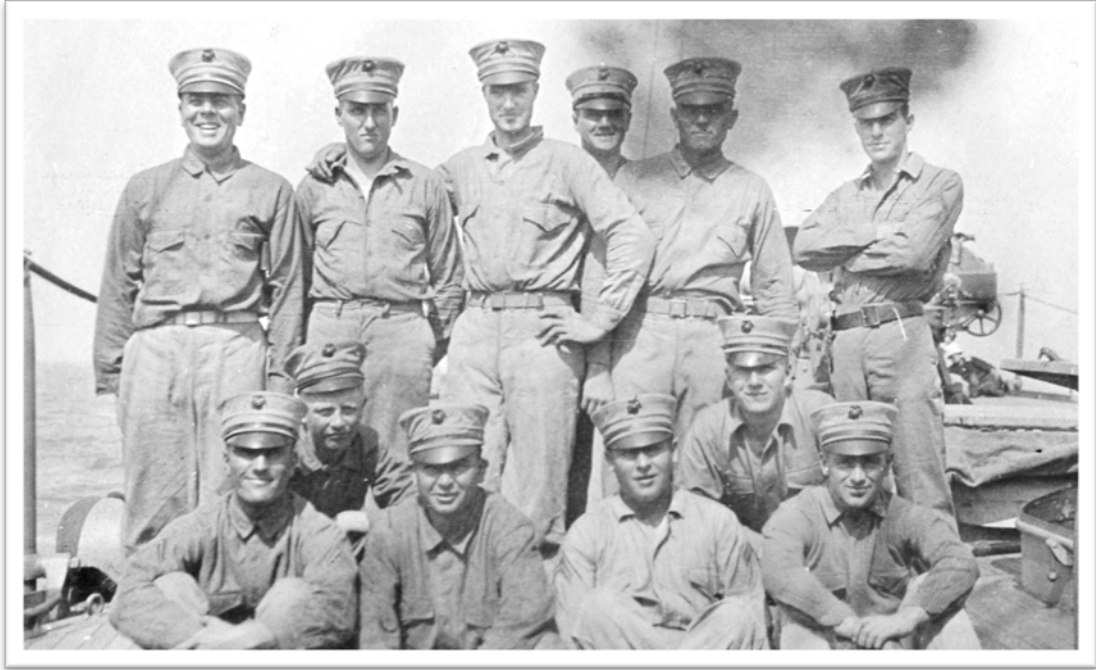
Dear Folks;

We just arrived in New York harbor and am on liberty list so probably will go on the beach at 4 or 6 o'clock. I told you in my last letter before we left we would probably go to Halifax with a convoy, but we went straight east a little north and had a convoy of 8 ships. Six of them were troop ships well filled with troops. Airplanes, sub chasers were with us 1 day out and a destroyer went all the way. When 5 days out we were met by British cruisers that took the convoy the rest of way over and we turned back.

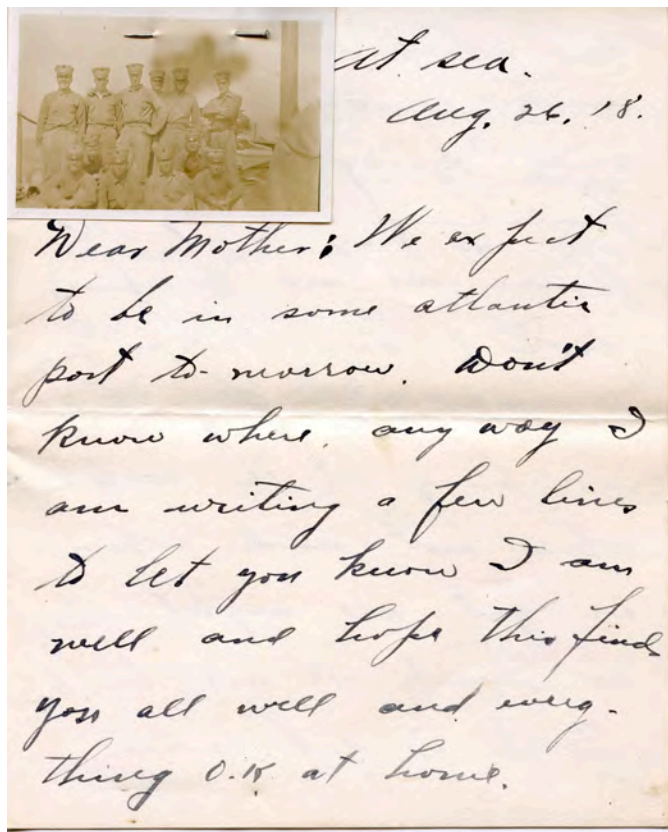
Don't know how long we will be in port but looks like we will stay ten days or two weeks.

The mail orderly just went ashore so will probably get some mail from you this PM.

Am enclosing some pictures.



*This was the photo pinned to the August 26 letter showing Marines aboard the Galveston dressed in their khaki uniforms. They escorted an eight-ship convoy half way across the Atlantic until they were met by British cruisers. He mentions they had fine weather on this trip.*



**9/2/18, Labor Day, on board ship**

Dear Folks;

I came back from liberty 12 o'clock last night instead of 8 AM. This morning. Sure have had plenty of liberty was off Friday at 4 PM, Thursday at 4 PM and Saturday at 1 PM until this morning. Saturday PM went out to Sheepshead bay to some doings the New York police force were giving. Heard H C Connick sing, saw De Paluva best his record time and many other things. There were 125,000 people out there. We went to Coney Island in the evening and had a good time. Yesterday, Sunday, I went to Camp Mills and saw many boys from home and around Argyle. Saw

Perry Ellefson from Woodford  
----- Monte from Woodford  
Morgan Johnson from Wiota  
Peter Gilbertson from Wiota  
Clarence Saalsaa from Argyle  
Geo. Watkins from Argyle

One from Darlington and three from Monroe I know. I stayed and had a good visit with them. It seemed good to see boys I knew again.

Sunday there were very few autos out since Dr. Lawfield suggested they save gasoline. Instead of the streets being filled with cars you could hardly see any. It was very noticeable.

Have heard we coal ship tomorrow and leave Wednesday. Don't know how true this is. Don't hardly think so.

Am going to try and come home sometime this fall.

We are having fine weather. This is a holiday. I am on duty today. Was up to the galley and see we are going to have fried chicken for dinner.

Must close

Victor



**9/5/18, Thursday, NY**

Dear Folks:

Just a few lines while I am waiting for dinner. I received the letter and am glad to know everything OK at home. I have been well all the time. Am enclosing a few things that probably will interest you.

They are treating us fine here and every time I go over town seems there are more soldiers and sailors on the streets. Saw several good shows lately.

Ask Viola or Hjalmar if they want anymore new music as I can get it easy. If they do probably would be best to send me a list of what I sent so will not send the same ones again or a list of what you want.

Looks like we will be here about a wk. longer. About our rowboat. Would suggest to leave it up on bank to dry then put tar pitch in cracks. Please don't leave boat in water to water soak. If you don't use it much best to take it up to house.

Must close

V

**9/15/18, Sunday PM, New York**

Dear Folks;

A few lines to let you know I am well and am enjoying myself on my Sunday liberty. I went to bed early on Saturday eve and got a good nights rest. Another corporal and I are together. We stayed at one of clubs 25c (St. Bartholomew's) for bed, shower, towel, locker and nightgown. We got up at 7 o'clock and for breakfast I had boiled mackerel a regular Sunday morning feast.

We went to Central Park and read the Sunday paper until 10:30. Then went to a Lutheran church and enjoyed the services. We eat dinner at an open air canteen in Central Park. Then went out to the Bronx Park and just got back. Think we will go to a show tonight as we have some tickets to see Al Jolson. We are due back to ship at 8 AM Monday.

Monday our Marine detachment is going out for another hike and drill.

Must close

Victor

**9/16/18, Monday PM, New York** (program enclosed with letter)

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines before I go on duty at 4 PM. We just got back from our hike. Had a dandy time and all the boys enjoyed it. Last night I went to theatre in Benefit of US Tanks. Am enclosing program. Rec'd the Atlas today also mother's letter.

Troop ships are leaving as fast as ever and to see them it makes me want to go over with them.

Must close

Victor

**9/20/18, Friday eve, New York**

Dear Folks:

Am over town tonight on liberty and its raining. We coaled ship today again and got throu about 4 PM. I washed up and came ashore at 5 PM. I got a room and bed at St. Bartholomew's club 25c and came over here to eat (*Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Club*). I had a dandy supper 45c and have been reading until now 9 o'clock.

I received mother's letters today and was glad to know you are all well. I think we soon are to leave but don't know when. Think in 2 to 4 days. Don't know where we are going but suppose we will make a regular trip.

You can send me a knit cap. Send me 1 pair 4 buckle all rubber overshoes (red) light weight size 10. I have a sweater and gloves so think all I need now is the cap and 3 pair woolen socks.

Victor

(no special hurry)



*USS Galveston*



THE PROGRAM—Continued

*Program Arranged Without Reference to Appearance*

CARUSO

AL JOLSON

In the Bagdad number from "SINBAD"  
with Kitty Doner and Mabel Withee

GEO. M. COHAN

DOOLEY BROTHERS

MOSS & FRY

RATH BROTHERS

ACT from YIP, YIP, YAPHANK

SERGTS. BOWAN & SHEA

DOROTHY FOLLIS

JOE JACKSON

WM. EBS

SOPHIE TUCKER

SAILOR REILLY

LEO BEERS

WINTER GARDEN CHORUS

FRISCO

EMMA CARUS

DOOLEY & RUGEL

TED LEWIS

With Earl Fuller's Rector's Jazz  
Band

KILTIE BAND

(Ladies from Hell)

POLICE BAND

FRANK FAY

BEE PALMER

SHEEN & REGAY

**9/21/18, Saturday eve, New York**

Dear Folks:

Just a few lines. Am over town on liberty to night. Have to report back to ship at 7 AM in morning instead of 8 AM. We are leaving tomorrow and expect to be gone about 24 days. Am well. Received Hjalmar and Mother's letters today. I don't care for a larger Kodak just now. The streets are crowded with enlisted men tonight.

With love to all

Victor

I see in New York paper merchandise is going to be very high in the future. It is hard for me to just know what the future will be so keep your eyes open and if you think selling out different lines or departments that don't pay, sell, especially clothing. I think I can come home for a few days after this trip and we can talk it over.

**10/5/18, Saturday, US Naval Force Europe**

Dear Mother;

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and haven't been sick a day. Expect to be back to states soon.

Loving son

Victor

U.S. Naval Force  
Europe  
Oct. 5, 18.

Dear Mother:  
just a few lines  
to let you know I am  
well and haven't  
been sick a day.  
Expect to be back to  
states soon  
Loving son  
Victor

V. R. Rossing  
7 1/2 P.M. N.Y.  
U.S.S. Galveston

U. S.  
OCT 5 1918  
A.M.  
NAVY  
PASSED BY CENSOR



Mrs. L. A. Rossing  
Argyle  
Wis.

**10/20/18, Sunday, Hampton Road, Virginia**

*(in November 1918 the Argyle Atlas published two of VBR's letters with the following headlines)*

## **CHASING THE SUBMARINES**

---

Victor Rossing Writes of Life

On the Rolling Deep

Land Looks Good

---

## **VISITS THE AZORES ISLANDS**

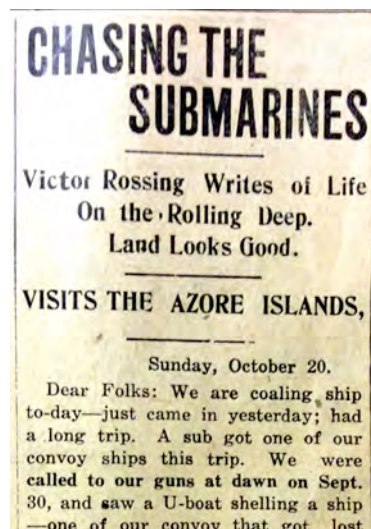
Dear Folks:

We are coaling ship to-day---just came in yesterday; had a long trip. A sub got one of our convoy ships this trip. We were called to our guns at dawn on Sept. 30 and saw a U-boat shelling a ship--one of our convoy that got lost during a storm at night. We opened firing, but the ship was too badly damaged to continue with convoy, so it was lost.

Spanish influenza broke out on the ship going over and we had about 100 cases and two deaths. All the sick were transferred ashore at Azores Island.

I have been well all the time. Hope you are all well and everything O.K. at home.

Victor



*Argyle Atlas article November, 1918*

**10/22/18, Tuesday, New York City** *(part of the Atlas article)*

Dear Folks,

I mailed you two letters from Hampton Road via Northfolk. We arrived in there Saturday afternoon, and coaled ship all day Sunday, (950 tons) and left there Monday morning and got to New York this morning, so I am on liberty to-night. It seems good to be back on the beach again and to walk around on solid ground.

I think we leave Friday Oct. 25 for another trip, but don't know for sure. Can't tell if it is a long or short trip yet.

I think I told you something in my last letter about the trip and the sickness we had aboard. It was awful; going over we had over 100 cases. They were lying all over the ship on cots, in hammocks and on the deck. Our marine compartment was filled with sick. I was up several nights waiting on them, and tried to make them comfortable the best I could. Some had fevers as high as 104. We have one doctor and three hospital apprentices aboard and they certainly were kept busy.

We landed on Azore Island and transferred all the sick ashore to the hospital as we have a naval base there. Four marines were transferred.

We stayed there three days, took on some coal and stores and came back. I was ashore there and it is a very peculiar place. Wine is the chief product of the island, and the town is full of wine shops. We bought grapes, pineapples and watermelons and the pines were the best I ever ate.

I am a Sergeant now.

I must close

Love to all

Victor Rossing



*Portuguese currency VBR kept as a souvenir from this trip.*



Portuguese currency VBR saved as a souvenir from his 1918 visit to the Azores. The USS Galveston left from New York September 22 and returned to Hampton Road Naval Station in Virginia on October 20. It was a very eventful trip. A German U-boat, which sank one of the merchant ships, attacked the convoy and over 100 crewmembers came down with the Spanish flu. VBR remained healthy but the Galveston had to stop in the Azores to transfer ashore all the sick, including four Marines. Top left is an historic photo of Ponta Delgada showing the same church as in the VBR photo below.



VBR took the above photo of Ponta Delgada in the Azores islands when the USS Galveston made a visit there in 1918 during the great flu pandemic. He writes about the trip in his 10/20 and 10/22 letters to his family (which were published in the Argyle Atlas) and his 10/23 letter to Marie. He describes how he and many other personnel snuck ashore to visit the town. Below is a postcard from the Azores with was dated 1912. I found the image on eBay.



## The Worst Flu Pandemic on Record: The Spanish Flu of 1918-19

In the years after the Spanish Flu struck, children skipped rope to this rhyme:

I had a little bird  
Its name was Enza  
I opened the window  
And in-flu-enza

In 1918-19, the world saw the most catastrophic pandemic in modern history. More people died from the H1N1 strain that circulated at the time—Spanish Flu as it became known—than from fighting in World War I.

In the annals of modern medicine, the Spanish Flu of 1918-1919 is the standard of virulence against which all other infectious diseases are measured. Historians have long agreed that at least 20 to 40 million people died in a pandemic that reached from the ice floes of Alaska to the jungle villages of Gambia. But because of spotty record keeping and no definitive diagnostic test at that time, this estimate may be too low. Epidemiologists today look back at a far larger toll—at least fifty million deaths and perhaps up to 100 million.

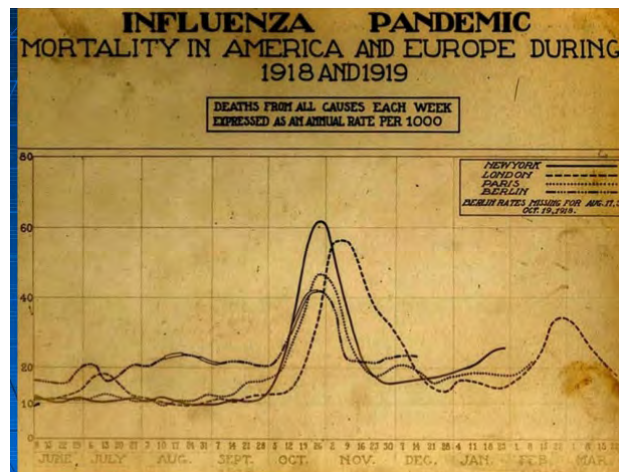
The influenza struck with frightening speed. Some people woke up in the morning feeling well, became sick in the early afternoon, and died at night. Those who fought off the disease's initial attack frequently faced a secondary onslaught of bacterial pneumonia lasting a few days. For many it was a matter of dying sooner or later.<sup>1</sup>

One-fifth of the world's population (about two billion at the time) came down with the disease. In the United States, the infection rate was higher—28 percent—resulting in 675,000 deaths, which depressed the average life expectancy by 10 years.

The world had known influenza before, but never of this ferocity. The Spanish Flu claimed its victims at a rate of 2.5 percent, compared to a typical epidemic death rate of 0.1 percent. It struck disproportionately hard at young adults from age 20 to 40, who made up about half of all deaths. The Spanish Flu attacked sparsely populated villages and crowded cities with equal intensity.

Source:

"The Worst Flu Pandemic On Record", The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, 2014, Web, January 30, 2015



*As the graph shows, most deaths occurred in October and November of 1918 when VBR relates his story of the flu aboard the USS Galveston. They had to stop in the Azores Islands to drop off the sick and dying.*

**10/23/18, Wednesday, New York** (*enclosures with letter*)

Dear Folks;

I received the Atlas and all your letters and just got through reading them. It sure is fine to hear from you all. I am on liberty again today. Got off at 1 PM to 8 AM today.

Am enclosing clipping about the ship that was sunk in our last convoy. It makes me angry every time I think of it that we had to leave that ship at mercy of the German U boat. They say it even shelled the lifeboats. Well I fired until they gave the command cease firing. All the crew are real angry that we could not give them more help. I think we are leaving in a few days anyway will write a few lines everyday to let you know I am well.

Am coming home at first opportunity. Think I can come before Xmas.

Love to all

Victor

**11/3/18, Sunday, New York**

Dear Folk;

Am back in NY again just put in this PM and am on liberty tonight so just a few lines to let you know I am well as ever. We left with convoy and took them up to Sydney, Nova Scotia and came back alone. The convoy left (*from*) there; British cruisers took them over. Had a very nice trip up and back weather was fine going up a little rough coming back.

We are to leave here in a day or so probably tomorrow and think we go south probably to Norfolk or Charleston and go to Navy Yards for repairs. If we go into yards for repairs I can get a short furrow so will come home.

I expect some mail when I get back to ship and hope to hear you all are well.

Must close

With love to all

Victor

Am going to a show tonight for enlisted men



*VBR's gun crew on the Galveston; note the 5 in. diameter projectile in front.*



**11/7/18, Thursday, New York** *(end of the war announced)*

Dear Folks;

Just a few lines to let you know I am well as ever and everything as usual.

Our ship is now along side of a dock being repaired and waiting soon to go into a dry dock so I guess we will be here some time. We are at 27<sup>th</sup> St and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. Brooklyn but don't know where the dry dock will be. Our Marine Captain . . .

Noon Friday

I did not get to finish my letter yesterday for it was at 1 o'clock that the whistle started to blow that the war was over. There was some excitement all the crew and workmen around the yard. Really everyone was too happy to express himself all they could do was to yell.

We got liberty at 4 PM until 8 AM. I went to New York and I can say it was the wildest crowd I ever saw.

I am on liberty every day now and I found a good place to sleep Central YMCA Brooklyn 30c per night. Have slept there the last 2 nights.

I sent you a telegram last night. "Send suit case" I might be able to get a furlow so far they have not given these out. Our new captain is away and probably will be back about Saturday or Sunday. He might give out some furlows.

Haven't rec'd the package yet.

We get liberty today at 1 PM until 8 AM.

Love to all

V----



*Armistice celebrations in New York*

**11/12/18, Tuesday, NY**

Dear Folks:

Received Viola and mother's letters today. Have not rec'd the package yet but think its over in HG and our mail orderly don't want to carry it over to ship. Heard him say "there was a bag of mail coming in a trunk this PM" so probably will receive it now.

Our captain Scott has been transferred and has already left and we have 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant to take his place. Capt. Scott was a very fine man and the boys did not like to see him go. I think this new command will do very well as he seems to be capable.

Last night and all day yesterday were exciting times in New York. I was on liberty in PM and last night and helped celebrate. It was even bigger and more exciting than last Thursday. The streets were packed and everyone had a good time. People, especially the girls, have a warm feeling for us Marines. When they would see us coming they would say, "Here comes a Marine or Marines" and they would hug and kiss us like we were there brothers.

The streets were filled with soldiers, sailors and Marines, will say the Marines are favorites. They say these peace celebrations are the biggest NY have ever had. I am sure getting plenty of liberty here. I get liberty every day sometimes at 1 PM and at 4 PM until 8 AM.

I have not had opportunity to ask for a furlow yet but will soon. All the boys have been turned down so far so it's doubtful. Don't think I will be sent home for 4 months yet even if war is over but hope it will be soon.

Tell Hjalmar I called up Tafels over phone. Harry is at war has asked me to come over. We are having fine weather and I have been well all the time.

Must close

With love

V



*Girls celebrating the Armistice*

# SCORES SLAIN BY HUN U-BOAT

U. S. Ship Ticonderoga Torpedoed 1,700 Miles Off Atlantic Coast.

SUBMARINE SHELLED  
DEAD AND DYING

20 Survivors Out of 250  
Men Aboard Reach  
Atlantic Port.

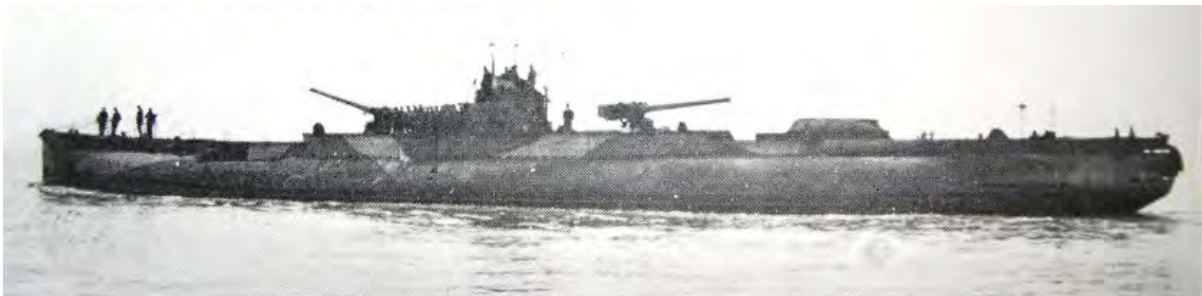
An Atlantic Port, Oct. 10.— Scores of American sailors and soldiers were killed or wounded by shrapnel fired by a German submarine after it had torpedoed the steamship Ticonderoga 1,700 miles off the Atlantic coast, according to the story told by 20 survivors, who arrived here today aboard a British freighter.

#### 230 BELIEVED LOST.

There were 250 men aboard the Ticonderoga, an American steamship of 5,150 tons, and all but the 20 who arrived here today are believed to have perished. The survivors got away in the only boat which was not demolished by the shell-fire from the submarine, they said. Seventeen of the men who reached port were members of a detachment of soldiers detailed to care for horses which were being transported.

The Ticonderoga was attacked, and

*Sinking of the USS Ticonderoga*



*The U-boat that torpedoed and shelled the USS Ticonderoga*

**11/15/18, Friday, New York**

Dear Folks

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and everything as usual. I am on liberty every day at 4 PM. I bought a gym suit and am taking some gym work at central YMCA Brooklyn so every day when I get off I go down there until about 6 o'clock then come to NY to eat at one of the canteens. Take in a show and go back to YMCA to sleep getting back to ship at about 7:30 AM.

They have ice-skating (real ice) here in NY and last Wednesday night I skated from 8 PM until 11 PM. I enjoyed it very much and wished Viola could have been here with me to skate. It's like they have in Sherman Hotel only larger, 50c admission.

We were out to drill today from 9 AM until 11:30 AM. Went over to Prospect Park to drill. The weather was just right and we all enjoyed it. I received the package with knit goods and boots. I may return some of it but I guess it all will come in handy this winter. Am anxious to come home for a few days and hope I can before Xmas.

Love to all

Victor

Heard our ship will be here in repairs for 75 days.

**12/4/18, Wednesday, New York** (*discharge request letter enclosed*)

Dear Folks:

I started a letter but forgot to bring it along so will write a few lines while on liberty to let you know I am well. The boys on ship been busy unloading coal since I came back but got throu today and we had a field day all day (cleaning up our compartments).

I been on liberty every night, saw two good shows in NY. I put in my request for discharge today am sending you a copy. The whistles blew again today when Pres. Wilson left for overseas. Was down here and spent from 4:30 to 5:30 in \_\_\_\_ last night but did not get off from the ship until 5:30 tonight.

Must close

Victor

The package candy, nuts etc. you sent came but I did not see it. They say it was all broken up.

**12/11/18, Wednesday Noon, New York**

Dear Folks;

Am waiting a few minutes for chow so thought I would start a few lines. I received mother's letter and stamps. I suppose it's pretty busy times just now at home. Wish I could be home and help out during busy times. Our ship is on dry dock now. Heard we will be ready about Dec 23, but don't think our ship will leave NY until after Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. Just finished dinner. Had kraut, stewed onions, sausages and pie. The last letter I wrote you was on Sunday noon. Sunday PM I went to that Vaudeville show free for Soldiers and Sailors. It was very good. Been on liberty every evening but have been coming back to ship to sleep.

I am going to tell you what I want for Xmas. I don't want anything. You may send me a special box of candy. Don't send me anything else. When winter sets in and bad roads come would suggest you take battery out of car, drain the water out and jack the wheels up and put it away for winter. The boat and canoe should be in out of the weather.

Must close

Victor

**12/15/18, Sunday, New York**

Dear Folks:

Was on liberty yesterday PM. In evening I went to a good moving pictures show "Under Four Flags." War picture, it was very good.

I met Theodore Thompson just back from England on Broadway about 11 PM. Had a good visit with him then I returned to ship.

Came ashore at 10 AM and just finished my dinner at this canteen.

I received mother's letters this morning. Glad you are all well. It was quite cold here for a few days but is warmer today. There are lots of uniforms in NY now, lots that just came back.

Haven't any news to tell only to let you know I am well and am having good times.

Love to all

Victor



U. S. S. " GALVESTON "

Cruiser Force,

4 December, 1918.

From : Sergeant Victor B. Rossing, U. S. Marine Corps.  
To : Commanding Officer.

SUBJECT : Request for discharge from the U. S. Marine Corps.

1. I request that I be discharged from the U. S. Marine Corps as soon as my services can be spared.

2. My reasons for the above request are as follows :

(a) I am 1/3 owner in a large retail business in Argyle, Wis. My attention to the business is very necessary for the success of the same.

(b) My mother with whom I am living is growing old and needs my help to look after her and attend to her business interests.

(c) I enlisted in June, 1917 for the Duration of the War.

V. B. ROSSING.

-----

*Request for discharge*

**12/15/18, Sunday eve, New York**

Dear Folks;

I stopped in here (*Hotel Longacre, 47<sup>th</sup> and Broadway*) to write a few lines to let you know am well as usual. Heard we leave NY sometime about Dec. 23. The talk is we are going to South America. This is not official as I don't think any one knows yet. Anyway if we leave we will go south for the winter.

As I understand the Navy Reserve and Marine Reserve are to be transferred before we leave. More than ½ of our detachment belong to Reserves and they will be 1<sup>st</sup> to be mustered out. As I am a regular and expect to get out within 3 to 6 mo. anyway.

I saw Royal Walden yesterday. Had a good visit with him. Our ship is still in dry dock. Hear we leave Navy yards this week. The weather has been very mild the past few days. Have had rain nearly every day.

Must close

Love to all

Victor

**12/20/18, Friday, New York** (*no envelope*)

Dear Sister:

Just received your card this morning and you don't know how glad I am you are well again. I was real worried for a few days but now I am happy again.

Our ship is still being repaired but we are out of dry dock again. I can't tell when we are leaving. We were due to leave Dec 23 but probably we will be here until after New Years. The boys are busy loading stores this AM and probably will finish up early this PM. Hear we coal ship in a few days. The sailors are busy painting the ship. They usually coal ship after getting throu painting, etc.

We have a new Marines officer 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, our 2<sup>nd</sup> L. got transferred today. The new man will make us wear white gloves, belts and cap covers, which we don't like. I suppose we will be in the big fleet review which is coming off soon.

The ship's crew gave a big dance last night. We put in so many dollars and everything was fine. The hull was decorated with ships flags. The officers helped to make it a success. Had good lunch and smokes and all the boys had a good time.

Don't know where I will spend New Years yet. But suppose it will be somewhere in New York. Will write again before Xmas but am going to wish you all a Merry Xmas now.

Love from Victor

**The**  
**Farewell Ball**  
of the  
**U. S. S. Galveston**  
**Thursday evening, December Nineteen**  
**Nineteen-eighteen**  
at  
**Prospect Hall**  
**Prospect Avenue, near Fifth Avenue**  
**Brooklyn, N. Y.**

*Program from a farewell ball given by the crew of the Galveston.  
VBR mentions it in his 12/20 letter.*



12/22/18, Sunday, NY

Dear Folks;

I am on liberty today so when I go back to ship in morning I suppose I will be busy packing up my things and be transferred in PM. I do not know where I am going but think I am going to Marine Barracks at 168<sup>th</sup> St. and Broadway, NY.

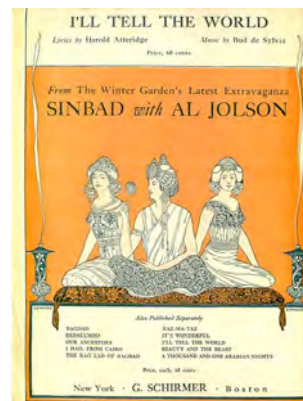
The other boys that were transferred like it fine up there was talking to a few of them today. It is quite cold here now and suppose you are having cold weather back home.

Was to the usual vaudeville show given to enlisted men this PM. They are always good.

We get paid tomorrow. If we had been paid Saturday I would have been transferred then.

Am well, will write tomorrow

Victor



Entertainers VBR saw in New York. Tenor Caruso and singer George M. Cohan

Singer and actor Al Jolson posters

**12/26/18, Thursday eve, NY**

Dear Folks;

I received your letters today, one from each of you and was glad to hear from you all. I am still in New York and hear today we will be here for about 2 wks. longer. We are going to coal ship tomorrow. The weather is getting cooler: Xmas eve it rained. It did seem a bit lonesome to be away from home Xmas but I had a very pleasant time.

I meet some friends downtown Xmas Eve. We went to restaurant for supper then went to a theatre. On Xmas day I stayed on board ship for Xmas dinner at 12 o'clock. I sent you the menu as you see we had plenty.

Three of us Marines were invited out for 4:30 PM dinner and we had a dandy time and dandy dinner: A man name of B.A. Kendig, 725 W. 172 St. Apt. 44, and his wife invited us one day last week and we accepted. They had no family just the two of them in a small but fine apartment. They entertained us royally and we enjoyed it very much.

Would suggest that Viola send Mrs. and Mr. Kendig a card thanking them.

In every one of these canteens they have a Christmas tree and nearly all day Xmas they had special music. There were 12 of our big battle ships came in today and the men from these ships paraded on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.

I did not leave the ship until 6 o'clock tonight and have to be back at 7 in morning.

There are 28 of the boys being transferred all that belong to Reserves. Think they will be transferred and paid off in a few days.

Have not heard anything from my request for discharge yet. Was talking to Marine officer and explained it to him on my service record how they have me down for 4 years, but I am sure I only enlisted for the duration of war.

I may be transferred before our ship goes south but I hardly think so.

Must close

Victor

**12/29/18, Sunday eve, New York**

Dear Folks:

Mother I received the package yesterday and opened it today. Thanks so much. Yesterday we coaled ship and everything including myself was covered with coal dust so I did not open it until tonight for supper. We eat the cakes but the candy I put in my locker and that big piece of fine cake. I know it will be good. Tonight is first night of liberty I have had for 3 days so have been busy coaling and cleaning up after coaling.

Thirty two of the Marines were transferred yesterday and the same number of new men came on so practically all the Marines all new men. They seem to be fine fellows and am sure will get along OK althow I can't be very friendly. I must remain a little distant to the privates\*. I hope I can get transferred before the ship leave for the south. If I do I know I will be out of the service quicker.

All the men that were transferred were Reserves and they will be out of service soon.

I think we will be here for a week yet. We are still in repair yards but we are soon to anchor over in the harbor.

We were not in the fleet review as planed. It was not as big as planed for none of the cruisers were along just 12 big battle ships that came from overseas.

I explained my enlistment to our Marine officer and he said we would write in for me. You see I enlisted for the duration of war and on my service record book they have me down for 4 years. I will not stay 4 years. As soon as Pease is signed I am going to get out of service if I have to run away.

I am sure I can get it fixed up so they will let me out soon for my enlistment is for period of war and not 4 years. It would not hurt if you wrote in again and I will try from this end.

Must close

Love to all

Victor

*\*According to his military record, VBR was promoted to Sergeant November 1, 1918 and then reduced back to Private on January 7, 1919 after he received his discharge orders. The record also shows he was awarded the Expert Rifleman badge on August 17, 1917 during his basic training on Paris Island. Contrary to what he asserted, his discharge letter states he enlisted for four years, not the duration, but that he was honorably discharged "for the convenience of the government." His record shows he received the following ratings:*

*Character: Excellent  
Military efficiency: Good  
Obedience: Excellent  
Sobriety: Excellent*

**1/2/19, Thursday, New York**

Dear Folks;

They gave most of us liberty from 4 PM Dec 31 to this morning--48 hrs. So was in New York New Years Eve. Seems like everyone was on Broadway having a good time. Yesterday Jan 1, I was invited out to a private home for dinner. They were Russian people. Had a very fine dinner and entertained three of us boys in fine shape. Had my other meals at canteens.

We are busy painting and cleaning up our compartment. Painting everything white. The sailors are busy cleaning and painting so in a few days our ship will be in good shape again. The weather has been very mild and have had lots of rainy days. Today it is raining again.

Have been well all the time

Victor

**1/3/19, Friday, New York**

Dear Folks:

My wish came true. Lieut. Cam in today and told he had orders to transfer me so am leaving the Galveston for some barracks in NY city tomorrow or the next day.

The request I sent in and the one you sent has gone thru and Headquarters at Washington gave the orders and they were received here today. The orders read like this, "Sgt. Rossing transferred to nearest barracks with view of discharge." So folks think I will be out of service in 4 to 8 weeks.

I am very glad although trip to S.A. would be interesting but would a lot rather be home.

This ship will be around Peru and Chile all this year for there will be a war down there\*.

You may write me c/o Eagle Hut YMCA, NY City until I can give you my address.

Love to all

Victor

*\* Actually, the Galveston was assigned to duties in Europe and was based in Constantinople throughout 1919 and 1920.*

**1/7/19, Tuesday, New York**

Dear Folks;

I was transferred today. Left the ship at about 9:30 AM with my sea bag and reported at Barracks at 168 and Broadway. It's the old 72 Engineers Armory—a big place. About 400 Marines up there, many of them just over from France some wounded and others waiting for there discharge. We have bunks to sleep on with sheets and pillowcases. All the old bunch that left the ship about a wk. ago are up there so I don't feel as a stranger.

The Marines seems like one big family much dif. from Army or Navy. The duty they say is very easy up there. Liberty every day at 1:30 if you are not on guard. My sea bag is not up there yet so probally we'll sleep downtown tonight as my blankets are in my sea bag.

Will write a little later and will tell you more about my new place. Will be sending a few things home.

My address is Marine Barracks, 168 St and Bway, NY City

Love to all

Victor

I probally can get a 30 day furlow if you need me home.

**1/7/19, Tuesday eve, New York**

Dear Folks;

Will write a few lines to let you know I am well and got settled in my new home. My sea bag came and I unpacked this AM and did some washing this afternoon.

There is nothing to do only wait for our discharge. It's a big armory, the chow is good only we don't get any butter or any pie or cake like we been used to on the ship.

I packed up a few things that I don't think I will need and tomorrow am going to send them home.

I turned in my rifle and bayonet when I left the ship so the sooner they let me go the happier I will be. We have roll call at 6:30 then Bfast. Police call at 8:30, Drill call at 9:30. We drill inside. That's the program. Liberty every day at 1:30.

This is about 9 o'clock and I am going back and go to bed.

Love to all

Victor

**2/22/19, Saturday, Philadelphia (Washington's Birthday)**

Dear Folks;

I wrote you a letter Thursday and today I found it in my pocket so you won't hear from me until you receive this letter.

I was on duty yesterday and last night and am on liberty this PM. I am on duty again tomorrow (Sunday) (guard duty in Navy Yards). The top sergeant told me this morning that I could get my furlow Monday if I come around early at his office so probably I will be home the last part of next wk.

This is extended furlow until discharge so will turn all my equipment in Monday and probably start for home Tuesday. I sure won't lose any time coming home for I am anxious to get out of the service and come home where I hope I can be of some use. This is a big day in Philadelphia. The streets are very crowded and it's hard to get around. Nearly all the stores and factories are closed.

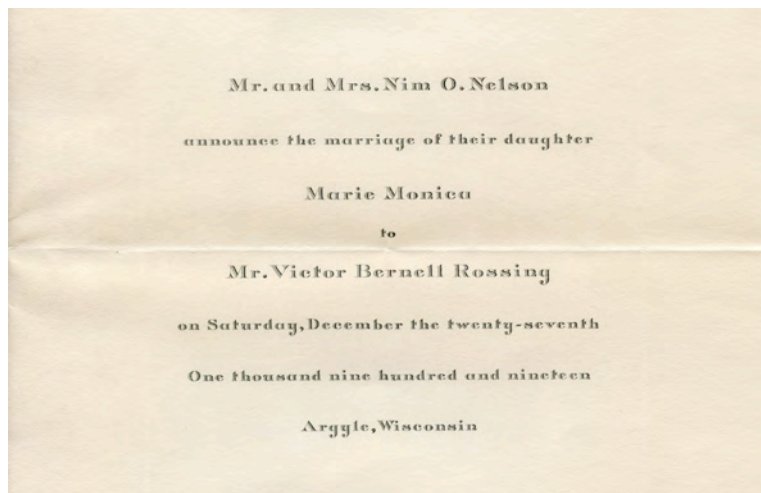
Will close hoping to see you all soon

Victor

*Epilogue*

*In the above letter, VBR writes "I sure won't lose time coming home for I am anxious to get out of the service and come home where I can be of some use." Once the war was over, he clearly believed he could be most useful at home and not in the Marines. A year earlier he had similar feelings about his Quartermaster job. He seemed to enjoy his duties and adventures onboard the Galveston and his ample liberty in New York City; however, it is also evident he is constantly thinking about things at home and angling for a furlough. He states in his 8/9 letter, "Think I will know how to appreciate a good home when I do come home and will be satisfied to stick around during my spare time."*

*We know that he wastes no time getting on with his life. We have many photos of a motor trip he and Marie took to Wisconsin Dells that summer with two other friends. They had the usual flat tire, went fishing, boating, flying, swimming and VBR jumped across to the famous Stand Rock formation. And a diamond ring appeared! They were married on December 27 and went on their honeymoon to the Panama Canal Zone.*



# United States Marine Corps

A true copy has been retained for reference in settlement of claim for additional travel pay and furlough rations.

C. S. Schmidt  
Capt. APM., U. S. M. C.



RECEIVED  
SERVICE REGISTRATION BOARD  
INSPECTED  
BONUS PAYMENT ALLOWED  
233.<sup>00</sup>

To all whom it may Concern:

KNOW YE, That Victor Bernell Rossing  
a private of the U. S. Marine Corps who was  
enlisted the 23 day of June, 1917, at M. B.  
Paris Island, S. C. to serve for the duration of the war, is hereby

## HONORABLY DISCHARGED

by special order of the Major General Commandant.

"For the convenience of the Government  
Said Victor Bernell Rossing was born March 13, 1889  
at Argyle, Wis, and when enlisted was 70 inches high,  
with blue eyes, brown hair, ruddy complexion;  
occupation, merchant; citizenship, U. S.

Accepted for enlistment at Chicago, Ill

GIVEN under my hand and delivered at M. B. Nya Phila Pa  
this 31 day of May, 1919.

Paid in full \$ 141.<sup>52</sup>

Character: Excellent

John J. Dobbstein  
Marine Gunner U. S. M. C.,  
Commanding Marines

(OVER) 1st Casual Detachment

146108

REGISTERED OFFICE  
La Fayette County, Miss.

Received of Record  
3:45  
September 27th  
F. B. [unclear]  
[unclear]  
[unclear]

# MILITARY RECORD.

Previous service None

Promotions and reductions Appntd Cpl (T.N.) - Oct 9, 1917. Appntd Cpl (S.W.) - May 16, 1918. Appntd Sgt (S.W.) - Nov 1, 1918. Red to Pvt. Jan. 7, 1919.

Marksmanship qualifications Expert Rifleman, Aug 17, 1917

Sea service U.S.S. Galveston Hon. Feb 21, 1917 to January 7, 1919

Foreign service None

Wounds received in service None

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions None

Military efficiency Good Obedience Excellent Sobriety Excellent

Remarks: Gratuity \$60.00 paid on discharge. No mileage, on extended furlough.

*John J. Robertson*  
Major General, U. S. M. C.,  
Commanding Marines,  
1st Casual Detachment



## Home From the War

### Victor Rossing Returns.

Victor Rossing arrived home the last of the week, having a furlough supposed to last until he receives his discharge. He was transferred from the battleship the first of the year, and spent January in New York and February in Philadelphia.

He enlisted last June and made six trips across the ocean on board a convoy. He is looking well and has enjoyed good health all the time during his service.

He is busy at work in the store.

*Argyle Atlas article from March 7, 1919. VBR was furloughed at that time until his enlistment ended at the end of May. The article mistakenly states he enlisted in June 1918. He actually enlisted in June 1917, which means that he was in the service for two years. His enlistment was supposed to be four years but he was released early based on his request after the war ended in November 1918.*

*He was happy to return and get on with his life working at the store in Argyle. He and Marie became engaged that summer while on a trip to Wisconsin Dells and they were married at her parents' home on December 27<sup>th</sup>. They honeymooned in Panama. Perhaps VBR got the idea when serving on the USS Galveston. She had made trips to Panama before VBR was assigned to her in February 1918.*

Mr. and Mrs. Nim O. Nelson

announce the marriage of their daughter

Marie Monica

to

Mr. Victor Bernell Rossing

on Saturday, December the twenty-seventh

One thousand nine hundred and nineteen

Argyle, Wisconsin



*Victor Bernell Rossing and Marie Monica Nelson were wed at her home on Saturday, December 27, 1919.*

*Nim Nelson (father of bride) is sitting on porch. Marie's Grandfathers Ole Nelson and Gulbrand Vinger are sitting behind Nim. Both had emigrated from Norway as young men. Ole married Mary Monson and farmed south of Wiota until he retired to Argyle in 1907. Gulbrand and wife Martha Carlson raised ten children while farming in York Township. Both were widowers. Nim was the owner of the Nelson Mercantile Co. running it together with his son, Vernus.*

*Standing from left, Victor Rossing, Viola Rossing (twin sister of the groom) Vernus Nelson (older brother of the bride) Marie Nelson, Reverend Wilhelmson, Matilda Vinger Nelson (mother of the bride). Hidden behind her is Hjalmar Rossing's wife, Bertha Olson Rossing, holding eleven month old Hjordis, their first child.*

*Mrs. Lewis Vinger, a cousin, is standing next to Bertha. Helena Monson Rossing (mother of the groom) is standing next to Glenn Nelson, the younger brother of Marie. Behind them are Helena Nelson (aunt of the bride) and a cousin, Norma Nelson Legler. Victor's brother Hjalmar took the photo and played the piano during the wedding service. Victor's father, L.A. Rossing, passed away in 1913.*

*Victor, Viola and Hjalmar were equal partners in the L.A. Rossing store that was started by L.A. and Helena in 1870. After Marie graduated from Argyle High School in 1915, she studied at Milwaukee Downer for one year and then transferred to the University of Wisconsin, studying to become a teacher. She finished her studies in the spring of 1918. Her older sister Hazel (who was not at the wedding) also studied at Milwaukee Downer and went on to become a dietician at various hospitals throughout the U.S. finishing her career in Los Angeles. She never married.*



*VBR in his dress blue uniform with Expert Rifleman badge.  
On his cap is the Marine Emblem.*