

**Victor Bernell Rossing World War I Letters to Marie
July 1917-December 1918**

Compiled and edited by G. Rossing 2016



Victor Bernell Rossing
1889-1971



Marie Monica Nelson
1897-1997

Introduction

After discovering a bundle of letters VBR wrote to his family while serving in the Marines, I put them together with photos from various family albums into a history entitled Victor Bernell Rossing WWI Letters. I sent this out to all of his grandchildren in the spring of 2014. Curiously, the letters started in January 1918, six months after he enlisted. I assumed he had also written letters home during his basic training on Paris Island. So where were the letters from June through December 1917? Furthermore, there were no letters written to Marie during this time. This seemed odd since they were married in December 1919 just nine months after he returned home.

Then when I was back in Argyle for Christmas 2015, I was invited out to John and Ann Emery's for dinner on Tuesday, December 21st. As I was about to leave, Ann went into a back storeroom and came out with a cardboard box full of old letters. There were hundreds of letters that had belonged to John's parents, Bob and Ruth Emery. I could see that some of them had been handed down to Ruth from her parents, Victor and Marie. Indeed, from the handwriting I recognized three bundles of Victor's letters.

You can imagine how delighted I was to see that in one of the bundles were the missing Paris Island letters. They began in July 1917 and continued through to January 1918. I transcribed those letters and have now combined them with the previous set into a history with the title Victor Bernell Rossing Letters Home from the War, July 1917—February 1919. I was even more delighted to find that one of the other bundles was made up the letters he wrote to Marie.

This history is based on those twenty-two letters and postcards. He sent the first letter to Marie on July 13, 1917, just a few weeks after he enlisted. The last letter is a Christmas card sent in December 1918. While he was in the service, he visited Argyle two times--once during Christmas 1917 and again in late November 1918. It is clear from the letters that he saw Marie on both occasions. Indeed, the December 13, 1917 letter, sent from Argyle, was written on L.A. Rossing Company stationery and addressed to Barnard Hall in Madison where she was attending the University. It is clear from the letter that he must have seen her very soon after arriving home. And it appears he was not able to see her again before his return to Paris Island. He had a twenty-day furlough and it took 2-3 days one way for him to make the trip, so he probably left Paris Island on Friday, December 7 and would have arrived in Argyle around the 10th. This means he must have seen Marie very quickly after his arrival, probably in Madison.

It is evident from the letters that after this visit he sees her as more than just a friend. Indeed, in the Dec. 13 letter he wonders why they cannot be "real friends" and writes, "I cannot express the great feeling (it must be love) that I have when I am with you and when I think of you." However, the letters certainly do not contain the strong expressions of love and affection that his father, L.A., made in his letters to Helena. (see Letters to My Good Little Friend, Lars Andrew Rossing to Helena Monson 1867-1870, G. Rossing 2014)

While returning from his second visit he sends Marie a postcard describing a visit to his Gullixon cousins in Chicago. Reverend George Gullixon, VBR's first cousin, was a prominent Lutheran minister. Helena and Viola also stayed with them on their way to New York to start their Holy Land tour. (see Viola and Helena Rossing Holy Land Tour 1926, G. Rossing 2013)

I have also included photos from their summer trip to the Dells (when Marie received her diamond), their wedding at her home in Argyle and their honeymoon trip to Panama.

Finally, the third bundle of letters. These were letters he wrote to his family when attending the Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis during the 1907-08 school year. I can now start on that project.

I would like to thank John and Ann Emery for lending me these letters and David Rossing for providing me access to the Rossing family albums.

G. Rossing
June 2016

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

7/13/17: Friday, Paris Island S.C.

Dear Marie,

Your letter received today and I was real glad to hear from you. Did not expect to hear from you in a hospital but am glad you are well again.

It sure is a change for me to be down here. We are on an island on the coast. The island is full of palm trees and nigers. We don't get a chance to look around any as they sure keep us busy.

We live in small tents and sleep on cots in our tents. We are real comfortably settled now but hear they will change us soon. We go to bed at 10 sharp and up in the morning at 5. If you don't get up at once you get a pail of water threw at you.

Our drill work is on the ocean beach. There is always a breeze althou it gets very warm in day time.

The nights are cool. Am enjoying the ocean bathing, which we get nearly every day. Every evening we have boxing bouts. We have a boy in our company that is the best of area so far. To night they were to show us moving pictures for the first time but could not get it to go.

Am writing this letter by candle light while sitting in my tent and it will soon be 10 so I must close--will write more later.

Saturday Morning:

Just got in from drill and have about 10 min to finish up your letter.

As ever

Cousin

Victor

79 Co. G USMC

Henry Magnus was down from Blanchardville Wednesday afternoon.

Wm. Wanzer, of Chicago, was looking after his ercamery interests here this week.

Miss Marie Nelson has returned from Milwaukee where she went for a treatment for throat trouble. She was accompanied by her sister Hazel.

Argyle Atlas article from July 1917

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

8/22/17, Wednesday, Paris Island S.C.

Dear Marie,

I have a stand in with our sergeant I guess for he told me to stay in today and take care of bunk house. The other fellows are out working hard so will answer your letter.

Our company finished the rifle range last week. The rifle range is where the boys are taught how to shoot. The last day of instruction the company shoot for record and each man shoots 60 shots for record.

10 at 200 yd. distance, rapid fire
10 at 300 yd. distance, rapid fire
10 at 500 yd. distance, rapid fire
10 at 600 yd. distance, slow fire
10 at 500 yd. distance, slow fire

300 points are the most you can get. All scores above 253 are classed as Expert Rifleman. All scores above 238—253 are Sharpshooters. Below 238 are classed as Marksman and Rifleman.

I finished with a high score and am classed as Expert. 9 of our company are classed as same. Our sergeant says all Expert men have a good chance for advancement.

Say you are not the only one that has lost weight. I think I have lost 15#. You are just like me. I don't want to gain weight any more.

I sure would like to see you drive that Hudson. I would love to have a Kodak picture of you in the car. You know I haven't any picture of you so please send one.

I am thinking of joining the Band down here, probably will decide in a few days. You see I am looking for the soft jobs. It sure gets warm down here on the extreme warm days we drill in mornings and evenings. Sit around and wash clothes in heat of day.

Am getting to be an expert at washing. Mother won't need to use her washing machine when I come home.

We have inspection about every other day and if our clothes, rifles and shoes are not clean your out of luck. Our bunks have to be made up neat also.

Your last letter was delayed. You did not have my company number on so when you write again put 79th Co G on envelope.

Must close

Cousin

Victor

USMC, Paris Island S.C., 79th Co. G



Marines on the Paris Island rifle range shooting at targets hundreds of yards away.



VBR wearing his Expert Rifleman medal. This photo was most likely taken while he was on leave in December 1917. In the letters he mentions having his photo taken by Mr. Carey, a local photographer. He earned the medal, which came with a \$5.00 per month pay increase, in August of that year. With his corporal pay we was making \$40 per month, equivalent to about \$800 in 2015.



In his 8/22/17 letter to Marie, VBR writes, "I sure would like to see you drive that Hudson." Above is a 1917 Hudson touring sedan. The Hudson motor company was started in Detroit in 1909 and continued making cars until the 1950s when it merged first with the Nash and Rambler auto companies. It is not clear whether MMN had driven a family car or the car of an acquaintance. Her father, Nim Nelson, bought a Ford Model T in 1913 shown in the lower photo. The women sitting in the back seat appear to be his sisters, Helena and Mabelle and his wife Matilda.



Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

9/23/17, Sunday, Paris Island S.C.

(Addressed to, Argyle, Wis. but was forwarded to Barnard Hall in Madison)

Dear Marie,

I received the fine box of cake, candy and tobacco. I want to thank you so much. It came in good condition and it sure is appreciated. The little cakes are simply delicious so is the candy. Will assure you the cigarettes and chewing were not wasted. Thank you for choosing my favorite brands.

I have been transferred into Headquarters Detachment and like it fine. All my company have left the island. Some went to New York to go on big battle ships, others to Norfolk Va. to go do guard duty at Navy Yards and others to New Orleans and most of them went to Quantico Va. to fill regiments to go to France.

I like it here at Main Barracks for I have a little tent to live in all alone. Like my work. I get up at 6, B-fast at 7; work at 7:30 to 11 and 1 to 4. No more inspections or drill--don't even have to wash my own clothes any more.

My tent has a good floor and good bed and electric light. We have a good picture show every night with orchestra, Band concerts, good bathing, fishing, bowling, lawn tennis and every thing free. So you see my time is pretty well taken up. I see by paper I was drafted and I received notice to appear at Darlington today for examination. I surely would had to go and I am glad I joined the Marines now.

I received a sweater the other day from Wilson & Co. Chicago for passing the best physical exam on the day I enlisted.

Just came back from picture show. Met several of boys & they just left my tent and will try to finish my letter now. One of boys tells me our sergeant of 79 Co. went to New York with a few boys that were to do boat duty. He say that sergeant felt so bad to leave the boys he did not enjoy the trip.

That's the way. You get to know the boys so well it is awful hard to say good-bye. I know it was awful hard for me.

Are you going back to the University? If you are I suppose you will soon be going.

I must close and want to thank you once again for the nice box you sent.

Sincerely

Victor



UNITED STATES MARINES

Parris Island

S.C.
Sept. 19, 17.

Dear Marie; I received
the fine box of cake,
candy and tobacco.
I want to thank you
so much. It came
in good condition and
it sure is appreciated.
The little cakes are



Miss Marie Nelson,
Madison,
Wis
Barnard Hall
~~Argyle,~~
~~Wis.~~

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

12/13/17, Thursday Argyle, Wisconsin

(Addressed to 230 Barnard Hall, Madison and written on L.A. Rossing Company stationery.)

Dear Marie,

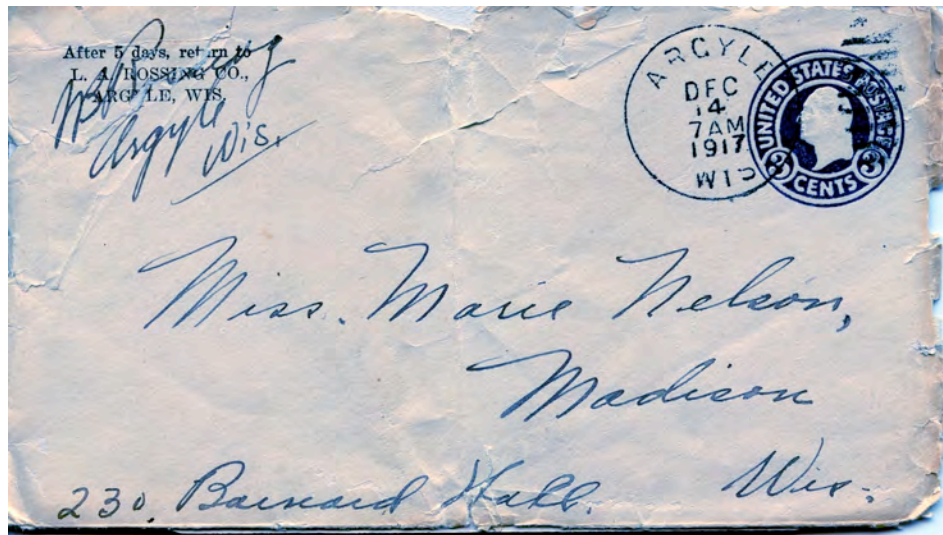
If I do not get my extension of 5 days I won't see you again but am thankful I saw you. It sure was a pleasure to be with you for the short time. I know you are busy especially now as you say in your letter.

I cannot express the great feeling (it must be love) that I have when I am with you and when I think of you.

There must be some mistake that we cannot be real friends. You seem more to me than any girl can be. I know your folks don't approve of me--so I cannot. If I cannot have you as a real friend I want you as a best friend.

Sincerely,

Victor



L.A. Rossing Company

General Merchandise

Argyle, Wis.

Branch Stores at
Fayette, Wis.
Lamont, Wis.

Distributors of
Energy Gasoline
Sunlight Kerosene

Dear Marie: If I do not get my extensions
of 5 days I wont see you again, but am
thankful I saw you. It sure was a pleasure
to be with you for the short time. I know
you are busy especially now as you say
in your letter
I can not express the great feeling (it would
be love) that I have when I am with you
and when I think of you.

L.A. Rossing Company

General Merchandise

Argyle, Wis.

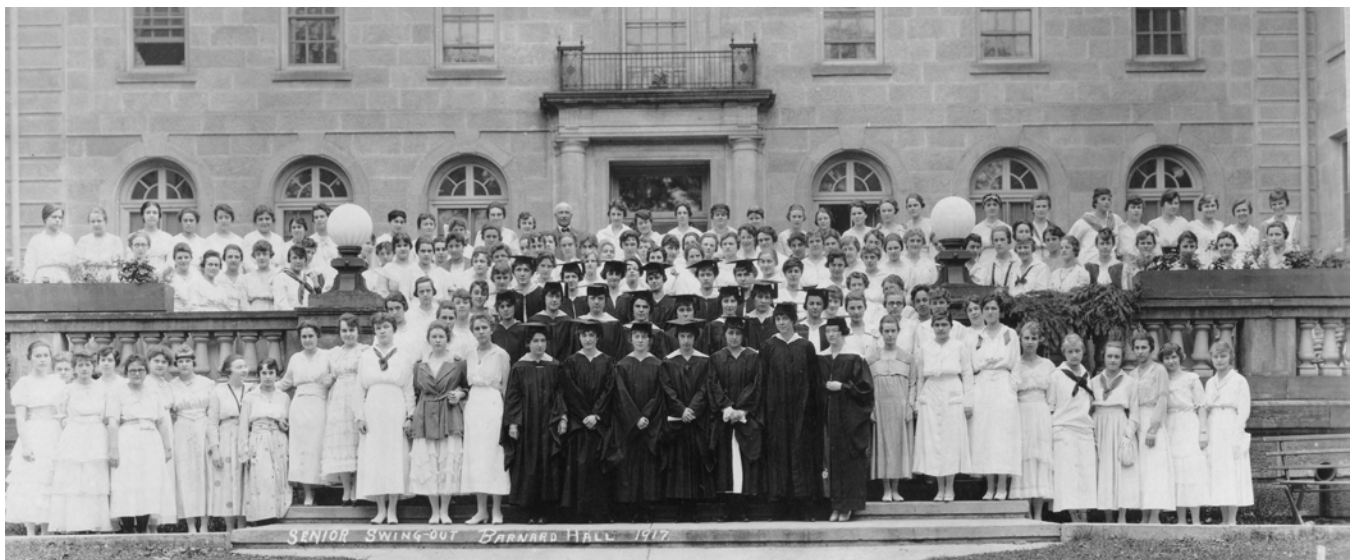
Branch Stores at
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Energy Gasoline
Sunlight Kerosene

There must be some mistake, that we can-
not be real friends. You seem sweeter to me
than any girl can be. I know you folks
dont approve of me so I can not.
If I can not have you as a real friend
I want you as a best friend.
Sincerely
Victor.



Marie Monica Nelson in front of Barnard Hall at the University of Wisconsin. She graduated from Argyle High School in 1915 and studied for one year at Milwaukee Downer College where her older sister, Hazel, was studying. It appears she then transferred to the UW for the next two years.



Barnard Hall was located on University Avenue next to Chadbourne Hall. The residents in robes are seniors. MMN is front row left. The original Chadbourne Hall was razed in 1957 and a new high-rise dorm was built on its site. The old Chadbourne Hall was the oldest women's dormitory in the US. In 1995 it became co-ed.

<<http://www.housing.wisc.edu/residencehalls-halls-chadbourne-history.htm>>

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

12/27/17: Thursday 6:30 PM, Washington D.C.

(Post card of Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. addressed to Argyle)

Arrived here and out again today.

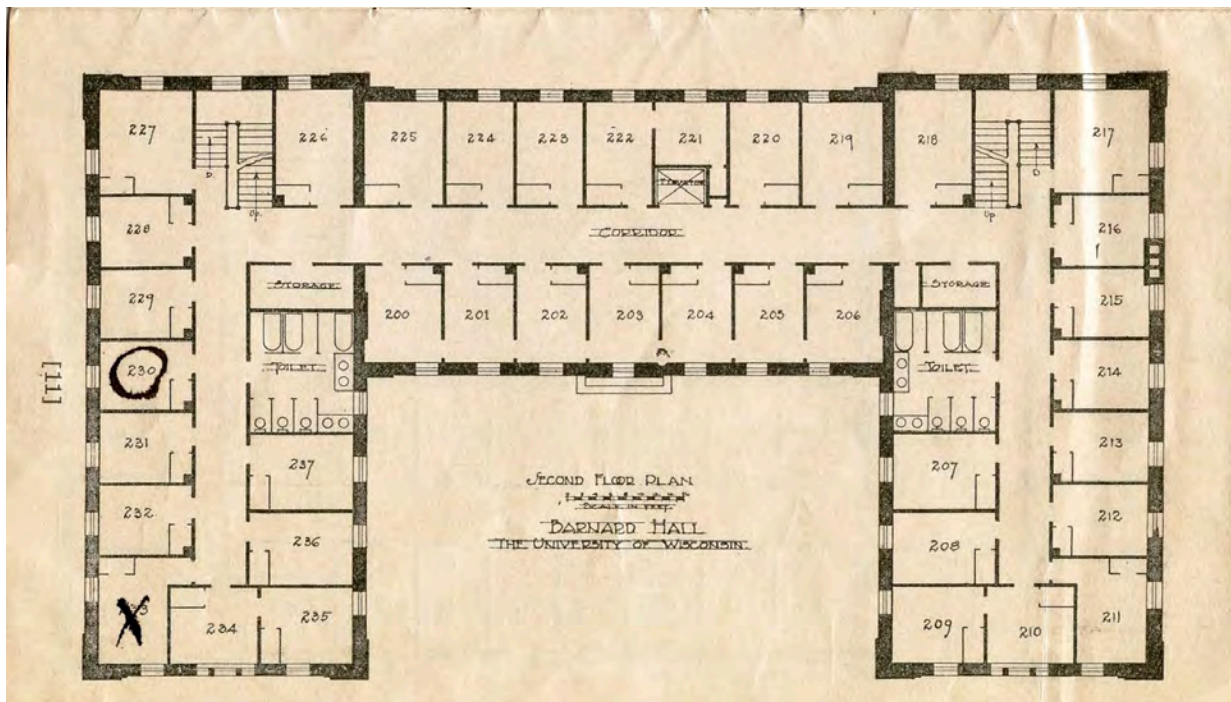
VR



Postcard sent when VBR was on his way back to Paris Island from his Christmas furlough in Argyle.

<p>Victor Rossing has returned to Paris Island, North Carolina, his furlough having expired.</p> <p>Mrs. Batten and Miss Christene Fenne, of Chicago, and Miss Hannah Fenne, of Rockford, are visiting here.</p> <p>Sever Hanson, Palmer Bredeson and Miss Mina Olson were called to Darlington by the illness of Chris Hanson.</p> <p>J. G. Monahan and wife, of Darlington, were among the relatives from a distance to attend the funeral of Judge Waddington.</p> <p>Miss Edith Pinney, of Minneapolis, and Miss Florence Pinney, of Sturgeon Bay, Wis., are visiting their brother Principal Geo. G. Pinney, of the Argyle High School.</p>	<p>A large number of friends from neighboring towns were here Sunday to attend the funeral of Judge Waddington.</p> <p>Melvin Olson is home from Minneapolis.</p> <p>Harry Carey was rejected from the marine for physical reasons.</p> <p>At your service. Good quality, comfortable and stylish men's, women's and children's shoes, and good substantial rubber footwear. Prices are right. M. J. RUDE. w2</p> <p>Lost, on Thursday, Dec. 20th, between J. M. Anderson's and Argyle, a hand bag containing purse with money and memorandum with owner's name. Finder please leave at the Printing office or Rossing's store.</p>
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Atlas article from December 1917, which also mentions the funeral of Judge Waddington a prominent Argyle businessman. L.A. Rossing bought his store from Waddington, who then became a banker and eventually the County Judge. His son donated money to build the Waddington Memorial, commonly known as the Argyle Community Building.



Barnard Hall floor plan showing room 230 circled. This was MMN's room during the 1917-18 school year. "Barnard Hall opened in the fall of 1913 and was the second women's residence hall on campus, after the original Chadbourne Hall. Today it is the University's oldest continuously operating residence hall, and still features the wide hallways, elaborate parlor and cozy buffet room that have always drawn students to live there."
 <<http://www.housing.wisc.edu/residencehalls-halls-barnard-history.htm>>



MMN with fellow residents of Barnard Hall at the University of Wisconsin. The date on the left says 1918.

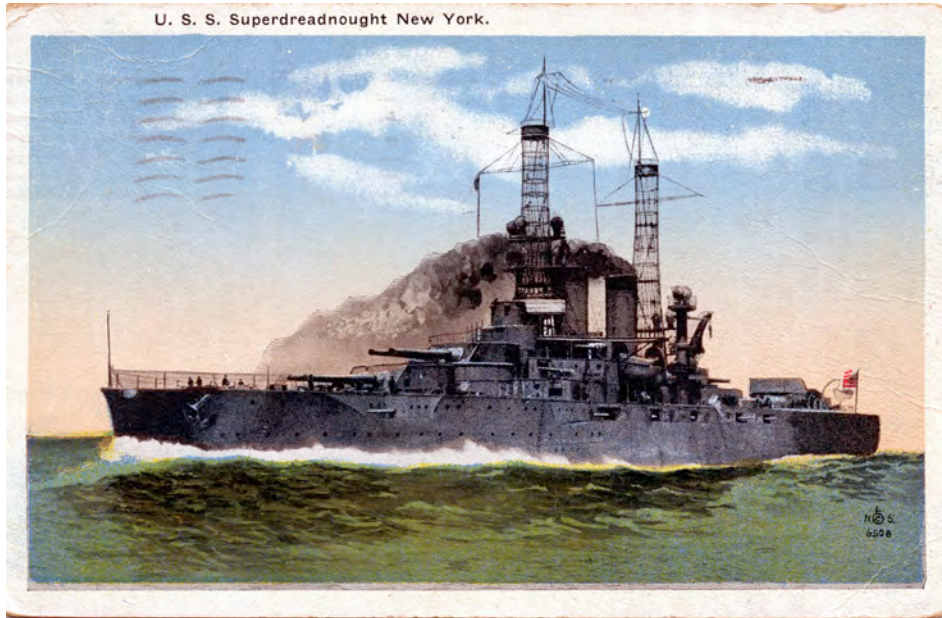
Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

3/26/18, Tuesday, Norfolk, Virginia

(Post card of the USS Dreadnought addressed to 230 Barnard Hall, Madison)

Was out to sea for 24 days over there! Back to U.S.A.

VBR



Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

Unknown date (probably May/June 1918) New York

Dear Marie,

Received your letter at noon and am writing a few lines to get it out with boys on 1 o'clock liberty.

I think we are leaving tomorrow. Heard we are to convoy a few ships up to Halifax—about a 5 to 6 day trip come back to NY coal ship and go across again. The U-boats might change regular program of our ship as they are operating on our coast.

The New Mexico, the new ship I was detailed on at PI just came out of dry dock here yesterday. She is anchored close to our ship. It is her first trip.

While out at rowing our boat drill yesterday we rowed around her. I know most of the Marines aboard her. She is the largest and best we have. Am glad I am not on her, as boys don't get much liberty and its a lot more regulation.

Will say liberty is sweet in New York and can't begin to tell you all my experiences but have had some dandy times and saw some good shows. Coney Island is a dandy place to go.

Must close so as to get this short letter off with liberty party. Am sure now we leave tomorrow as captain just said to have liberty party back 8 am tomorrow.

Victor

Am going to write you a few sea going terms next letter. I hear these every day.

“aft,”

“liberty party,”

“sweepers start your brooms”

“up all hammocks”



The USS New Mexico was commissioned in May 1918. VBR writes that she was docked close to the Galveston and that they rowed around her one day. “She is the largest and best we have,” he wrote in the above letter. She never saw action in WW1 but did see extensive action in WW2 in the Pacific Theater. In earlier letters VBR and HMR referred to her as the “Idaho.” That was the third ship built in this class of cruisers.

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

6/23/18, Sunday, New York

Dear Marie,

We arrived here last Thursday; that is when I received your letter. You don't know how glad I was. It's been so long since I received one from you. This is about the first opportunity I have had to write you. I could have written you while at sea, but it would have to be censored and could not tell you anything interesting--as it is will mail this when on liberty in New York. Am also waiting for a few pictures to enclose in this letter. Will probably get them tomorrow. Hope they are good. I received the picture you enclosed. It's fine of you two girls.

We started from N.Y. May 17 with 30 ships. Our gun watches started as soon as we got out of N.Y. harbor and we stood watch at our guns 1 hr. on and 3 off the entire trip. I did not have to stand any gun watches but acted corporal of guard and my duty is to wake the men up, post them at their proper gun. Will enclose one of our guard rosters. Everything went well until one night on our way over about 1 AM one of our ships sent up a rocket. It was so dark we could not see but found out it had been rammed by another ship and sank in 20 min. It was loaded with auto trucks. All the crew was saved and the ship that rammed it was also damaged and had to return to USA. All our convoy ships travel with no lights at night. Even on our ship all the decks are dark and very difficult to get around the ship at night. That's part of my duty when I am on watch. Make a complete round of ship every hr. and report to officer of the deck.

We were called out many times this trip day and night for general quarters, that is go to our guns and be ready for action. When the bells ring at night everyone jumps out of their hammock put on a few clothes and runs to their stations. Everyone has a station and must get there as soon as you can. We have three diff. alarms, fire, collision and general and abandon ship and each must know where to go.

I have been chosen as a gun pointer on one of the big guns and must tell you of some action we had. The morning we turned round about 190 miles off coast of France at 5 am were called to general quarters. One of convoy ships was already shooting, then another one started. They were way in rear and we were in lead. Our ship immediately turned and went toward the submarine and where the shots were hitting the water. We were going at full speed and so was our convoy but they were going in opposite direction changing their course many times for fear of a torpedo. The two ships in rear fired 20 shots at a periscope then it disappeared. We left the convoy that afternoon and did not see a sub; but coming back when about 150 miles off Virginia coast we fired 84 shots at a submarine hitting our mark. A destroyer picked it up next morning in a damaged condition.

We were shooting at a range of 3000 yards. I fired 10 shots. Would have shot more but the range and when to shoot is all given us from the bridge over a telephone and buzzer. All the way over and back they give us gun practice, pointing and setting ranges, etc. We came to Hampton roads June 9 took on 500 ton coal pulled out next morning and went out for a week of target practice in Chesapeake Bay. Target practice with the big guns is very interesting and we made some dandy hits. It's darn hard on our ears--had to keep cotton in them. There are men to each gun, loaders,

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

pointers, shell men and sight setters. The captain said "my shooting was satisfactory in time also hits" so I am glad and am sure if they give me proper range I can hit a German sub.

Oh; must tell you we get an hr. swimming each day and when swimming call sounds the boys jump and dive in like turtles. It's great sport. We are also allowed to fish from ship and you can be sure I have a line in my locker.

We are not allowed to whistle on board and it's great sport to see the officers get after crew for whistling. It's hard to catch the right one and when they do they send them up in crows nest for 2 hrs. to whistle and get it out of there system.

We have a few colored boys that do mess duty and one of those boys got caught one day and officer told him to go up on crows nest but boy said "you can't get me up that narrow pole," so the officer let him go on top radio shack for two hr. to whistle.

We have had very fine weather and a dandy trip. It was certainly great to be out to sea in such fine weather. Some times the ocean would calm; not a wrinkle, as one of the boys expressed it. I slept on top deck many times under the open skies. The boys play many games when out to sea especially after pay day; when out of money they play nosie poker--so many slaps on the nose for every point. The more point they loose the greater number of cards are used in hitting them with using a few cards to cover one eye. Some come out of the game with end of nose all skinned for they do hit hard.

There are a great many ships going over, a large convoy left here today. It makes me sad in a way to see those big transports loaded with troops. I see a great number of English, French, Norwegian and Danish ships.

I don't know how long we will be here—a week or more I think. If possible am going to try for a few days furlow. You know RR fare is 1/3 less for enlisted men now.

Was out on liberty Thursday & Friday until Sat. morning at 8 am. Had a dandy time, saw some good shows and had some good feeds and spent most of my money. Am on duty Saturday and today and think am due for another liberty Monday. We had church on board today. 2 YMCA nuns and 4 pretty girls to sing. Services were in our Marine compartment as our compartment is cleanest place on board (except captain's cabin). We also had 4 visitors today. 4 pretty girls from N.Y. friends of one of our crew.

Will you please let me know if R. Vinger is at Camp Merritt? I received a letter from R Walden & Jack Lunde both from France.

Well must close hoping to hear from you again before we leave on another trip. Am sending this to Argyle as I think your school year is over.

Please destroy when you have read it as I am not allowed to say so much.

As Ever

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

7/7/18: Sunday, on board USS Galveston, New York

Dear Marie,

This is Sunday and a beautiful day. It's very quiet on board today as most of crew is on liberty. I am on duty today--was on watch from 8 to 12 last night and am on again today from 4 to 8 this afternoon--so I have nothing to do but read and write. We have no quarters or inspections on Sunday. As I sit here my thoughts are back at old Wisconsin and wonder what you all are doing. I get a bit lonesome sometimes and wish I was back home. There are so many of us Marines and sailors and officers and am getting so well acquainted with all that this ship seems like a home to me yet when alone I think of you all. I miss the green grass, birds, trees and the country that I am used to.

New York is a wonderful city and am beginning to know the city quite well. The people are all very good to the enlisted men here and especially the Marines. A Marine is ace high in New York so am glad I am a Marine. They have done some good work in France. Have notices in paper that several of my friends that I have gotten acquainted with since I have been in service have been killed in France.

The people in city have furnished empty school blds with beds and shower baths and we can get a good night in for 25 cents. We don't get a room to ourselves, but there are 75 to 200 beds in one room but they are clean and neat. I am getting used to a crowd by this time and can sleep if there is lots of noise.

The women serve us lunch and dinners at canteens along the street and you don't have to tip them either for they are from best homes in city. We get theatre tickets at ½ price and all ferry boats a free ride. All this is sure appreciated by us. I was on liberty July 4th and had a dandy time. They had a very big parade that lasted for 8 hrs. on 5th Avenue. I wished many times you could have been with me. It was a wonderful parade. We are anchored among a bunch of war ships about 1 mile off from Statue of Liberty. At night it is light up and when on guard on top deck at night I often think what it means and realize it's for that cause we are here on this battleship.

When do you think this war will be over? Have heard we leave on our next trip about the 20th and they say we will land over there this trip. I hope so. I wish I were over there and sometimes think I could be of more use over there but am willing to go where they send me. When I see the many troop ships go by loaded with soldiers I wish I were among them.

We Marines get plenty of liberty while in port. One day on duty and two off. We get liberty at 4 pm until 8 am. It always takes about an hour to get up town as we have to cross the harbor in a ferry boat, then take the subway. Have been over to Coney Island several times. There are so many Jews over there. It spoils most all the fun. Us boys get into a bathing suit. That's the only way we can buy any drinks. Another way the boys and girls rent a carnival suit. It's sure a good place to have a good time.

Must close

Friend, Victor

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

7/11/18, Thursday, New York

Dear Marie,

I am a happy boy today for I received the picture you sent. Marie you don't know how I appreciate it and am proud to own it and to have it with me. It is beautiful. I thank you very much Marie.

We coaled ship yesterday PM, putting on about 300 tons and finished up about 4 o'clock. Some were granted liberty and I went at 5:30 came back at 8 am this morning. This is field day all day. Sounds good, but field day in Navy means to clean up. Sailors are busy washing deck and all paint work. Marines clean there compartment all mess tables and benches. I got busy this morning scrubbed my coaling clothes and several suits of khaki, so have all my clothes clean. We have two electric irons and us Marines have to iron and press our uniforms.

I am on liberty again this afternoon and it will be my last trip ashore for some time. We leave New York Saturday and don't know for sure where we go but think we go on another convoy trip. Hear we are going to convoy a bunch of ships back also so that means we land in France, Italy or England, where ever we go. Submarines are reported again off American coast so no doubt our gun watches will start as soon as we get out of harbor.

We had admiral inspection yesterday morning. He inspected the ship and crew. The crew is divided up into divisions and as he passed by he took a good look at every one. We had to look our best. One sailor when asked where his identification tag was said, "it was in his pocket." Admiral said "that will do you lots of good if you lose your pants." Every one has to have one around his neck.

I have had a wonderful good time in New York and have been all over the city. One day I met an old traveling man friend from Milwaukee. He lives in Boston now. It sure seemed good to see some one I knew.

We have been here about 3 weeks and are ready to leave. Just wondering what kind of a trip we will have this time. Have already been informed that all guns will be loaded all the time.

They sure are sending troops over now by the thousands. Monster transports go by us on there way every day. I wish every time I was among them but perhaps will see some active service before the war is over.

Our first sergeant was transferred and a new one took his place yesterday. He looks like a fine fellow. One of our Marines deserted some time ago. They caught him and got 20 years in p.

Had to stop for dinner and now it is 3 o'clock so must get ready for liberty and will mail this when ashore.

As ever, your friend Victor



Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

8/7/18, Wednesday, New York

Dear Marie,

We arrived in New York this morning. Our first stop when we came back was at Hampton Roads just outside of Norfolk. We arrived there Sunday morning and coaled ship all day Sunday up until 12 o'clock midnight. We took on 900 tones and it was a hard dirty job. We took on coal from both sides from two large barges. I had charge of all the men on port side and my job was to see that the coal was handled as fast as it came aboard.

We slept in our coaling clothes on the dirty deck until 5 am. The Marines all washed up then but sailors had to wash the deck and store away the coaling gear. Our ship left at 7 am for target practice--out about 4 hr. run. We got out there and fired Monday and was called in to convoy a ship up to New York. An American submarine was with us all the way up here. All transport and merchant men are convoyed these days even along American coast.

It sure seems good to be back in New York again (a favorite place with all the crew). I don't know how long we will be here but probably for several weeks. It is quite warm here. Most all the crew sleep on top deck this warm weather. They spread there hammocks on the deck and it's some job to walk around and awake the men that go on watch in the dark. Had a time last night. I had to awake 9 men every hr from 12 to 4 am. It sure is dark and I get the right man about every other time. I was stealing a pail of water from the galley and coming throu on the gun deck I stumbled over a man asleep. I spilled the pail of water and he got wet. He sure did swear but never knew who I was as I beat it.

Must tell you of our trip. We started out and ended up with 24 ships. We had fine weather most all the time--a few rainy days and a few stormy days. Nothing exciting happened. Two sick men were transferred from ship at sea to our ship as we have good doctors. One of them died so they made an air tight steel casket and took him back to states. They thought for awhile they would have to bury him at sea.

During one of rain storms at sea we saw a water spout. Just as we were leaving New York we saw big oil ship explode and burn.

There are many things that happen I forgot about. All put together make interesting letter so you will have to wait until we are together sometime to get the small details. Am sending you a few pictures that will help explain the way we live.

(no signature because the unfinished letter accidentally sealed while he was carrying it in his pocket)

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

8/8/18, Thursday, New York

Dear Marie,

Am mailing you a letter while carrying it ashore it sealed in my pocket and did not finish it so am writing you a few lines to tell you I am in the city on liberty.

It is such a big city and so many things to go to.

Will write you later in a few days.

I received your letter today the one you wrote on Aug. 5 and was more than glad to get it.

I wish you were here with me tonight. Am just wondering if you could come but impossible I suppose.

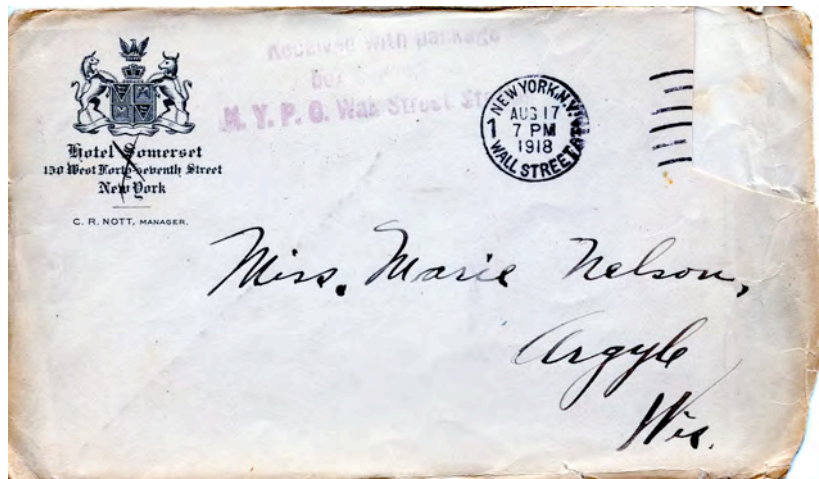
Must close

Your friend

Victor

8/17/18, Saturday, New York

(envelope with no letter)



Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

8/27/18, Tuesday, at sea on board USS Galveston

Dear Marie,

In a few hours we will be in some Atlantic port. Been out 9 days. The weather has been fine.

It's some satisfaction to come in after a successful trip and to know we are helping win the war by protecting our ships from the U-boats.

Don't know how long we will be in port. Suppose the first thing when we get in will be to coal ship and load stores.

It will probably be some time before I get a chance to come home.

While making the rounds as "Corporal of the Guard" I found a sailor drawing pictures to pass the time away while on watch in the steering engine room, so he gave me the drawing which I am enclosing. Will have to explain. There are about 35 armed guard come on this ship every trip. They are boots and come on here to get there training and then transferred to merchant ships.

The regular sailors heave lots of fun with them for they are new at the game.

Chow is ready so will close. Hoping to receive a letter from you when we get in. Will write more later.

Friend

Victor

U.S.S. Galveston
C/o PM New York

Be sure to use above address.



Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

9/9/18, Monday, New York

Dear Marie,

Am over town on liberty tonight and am stopping at this club house. There are many of these clubs and places for soldiers and sailors in New York. We get a good bed for 25 and 50 cents.

I was on duty over Saturday and Sunday and today the boys went out for a hike. They left the ship about 9 o'clock and came back at 3 pm. They said people came out and gave them coffee and good things to eat when they were eating their lunch. Tomorrow we are going out and have a ball game and drill some too. I think our ship has been here longer than I expected. We coaled ship about a week ago and everyone thought we would leave next day, but we still are here but I think we leave next Saturday and suppose make a regular trip.

Am going to ask for a furlow when we get back from this trip.

I won't start to tell you about all the good times am having in New York because it would be too long a letter. They sure give us plenty of liberty and all the boys think New York is a dandy.

I was over to Camp Hills about a week ago and saw ten fellows from Argyle, Darlington and Monroe that I knew. They are the first fellows I have seen since I been in the service I knew. One of boys came back and visited our ship with me.

I suppose you are busy teaching school by this time as you said in your last letter. Am sure you will make good and admire your taste to be with the real young girls and boys.

Well I must close hoping to have a letter from you waiting when I get back again in about 3 or 4 weeks.

Your friend

Victor



Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

10/23/18, Wednesday, New York

Dear Marie,

I received your letter yesterday and was glad to hear from you again. We came to N.Y. Monday--just 30 days since we left. We had quite a successful trip--had some bad luck too.

A German U-boat sank one of our convoy. Sept 30 just at day break we were called to our guns. Out of our hammocks we jumped, put on a few clothes and run. The ship had a distress signal out by setting fire to a barrel of tar. We saw many shots exchanged before we got in range. We stood at our guns ready and could hardly wait until the command "commence fire" was given. We opened fire and all we had for target was the flare of the U-boat's guns. As it was not light enough to see it very plain (*sic*). After we started to fire the U-boat quit firing and submerged. Officers say she fired several shots at us but did not hit. The admiral of convoy then ordered us to continue with convoy instead of going over to the shelled ship. After we left the U-boat sank it and we could hear the shelling after we were a long distance away. All the crew never hated anything worse than to leave that ship to the mercy of the U-boat.

It seemed we gave it a good chance to join the convoy again but it must have been damaged so it could not. It got lost of our convoy during the night as night was dark and stormy and no ship could show any lights.

We had over 100 sick with "flu" when all this excitement happened and our "____ commander" who was very sick died an hr. after. He was a very fine officer—one of the best I ever saw and all the crew were sure very sad to see him go. The captain got orders to go to Azores Islands and we went there to transfer all the sick. The sick were lying all over the ship and everything looked bad and thought everyone would get it. It kept all the well busy taking care of the sick and our duty just doubled until we got in port. Four of our Marines were transferred and were in bad shape with pneumonia. I was well all the time for which I was very thankful.

Say—my hammock ripped one night and I hit the deck. All the boys were asleep so they could not laugh. One sure goes fast and hard.

The Azores Islands belong to Portugal but we have a naval base there—airopplanes, submarines, sub chasers and 1 battle ship protect the harbor. The chief product of the island is wine. They would not give us liberty there, but most of us went anyway. The natives would come out and get us in small boats when it got dark and over the side of the ship we would go on ropes, ladders and come back with all we could carry—wine, 57 cents per quart. Several of our boys got caught. I was lucky.

We leave NY in a few days again. We coaled ship at Norfolk last Sunday so we are all ready for another convoy.

Well must close—am enclosing a few pictures.

Your friend Victor

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.

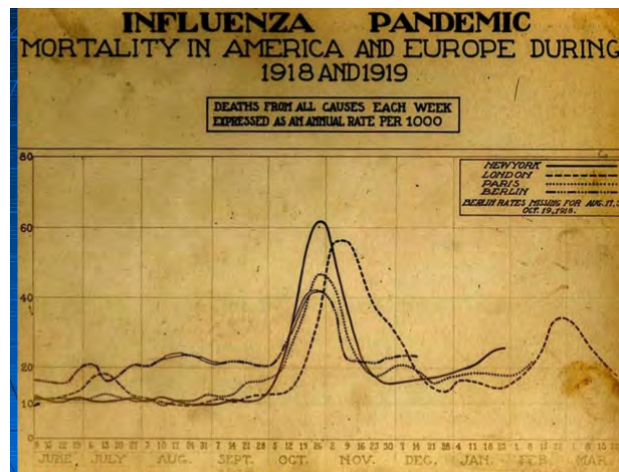
The influenza struck with frightening speed. Some people woke up in the morning feeling well, became sick in the early afternoon, and died at night. Those who fought off the disease's initial attack frequently faced a secondary onslaught of bacterial pneumonia lasting a few days. For many it was a matter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

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.

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

10/30/18, Wednesday, Sydney, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

(post card of George Street, Sydney, C.B.)

Best regards.

Just for a day.

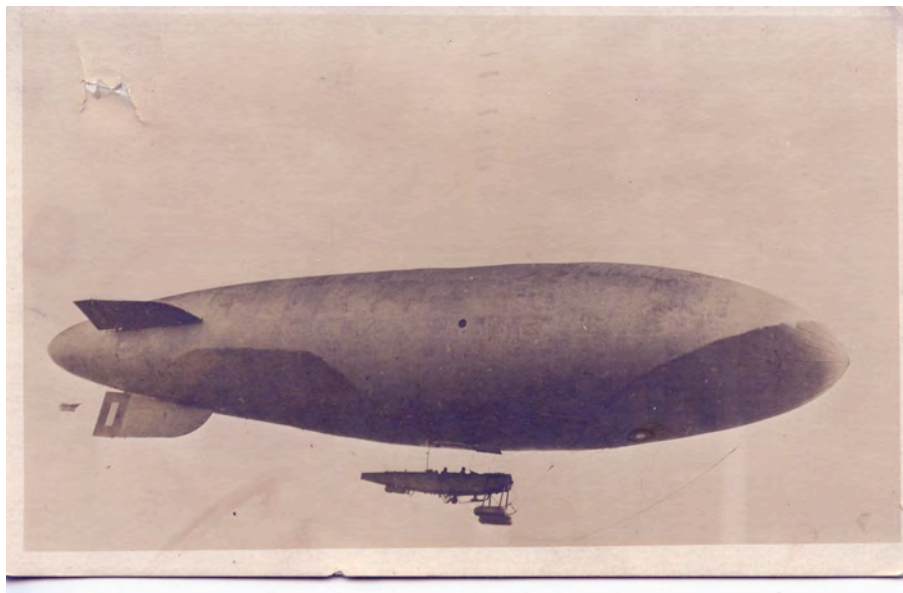
Victor



11/5/18, Tuesday, New York *(post card of a dirigible)*

Taken from quarter deck of our ship. They follow the convoy out for about a day.

V.



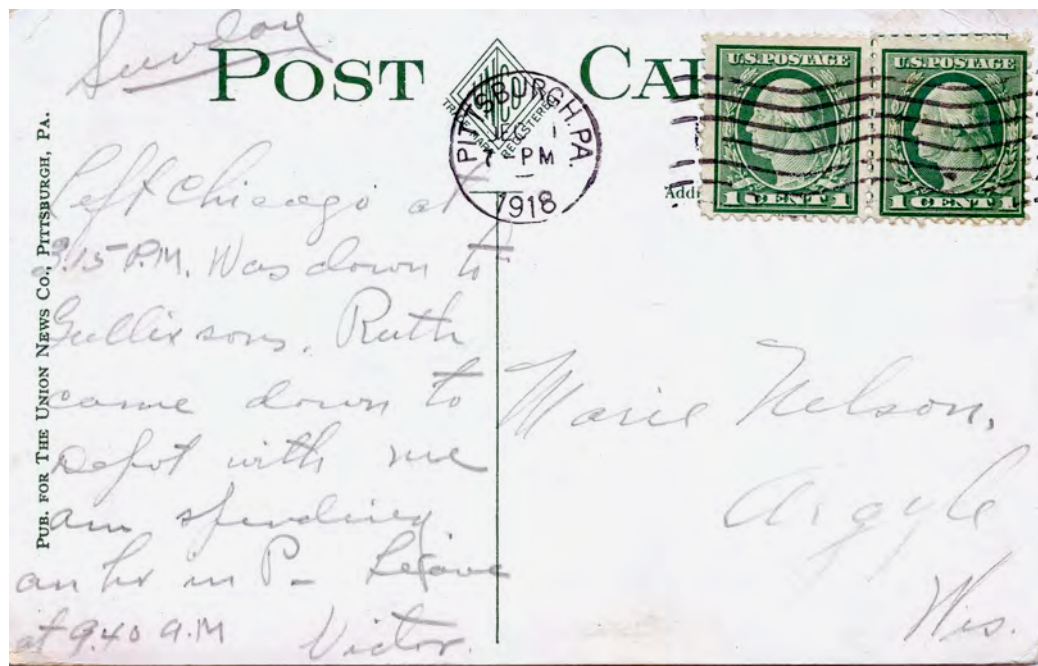
Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

12/1/18: Sunday, Pittsburgh, PA (post card of coke ovens near Uniontown PA.)

Sunday

Left Chicago at 3:15 pm. Was down to Gullixsons. Ruth came down to Depot with me. Am spending an hr in P. Leave at 9:40 am.

Victor



At first, this card was a mystery. It is dated Dec 1918 but VBR was not in Chicago then. Or at least that is what was evident in the letters he sent to his family and Marie. There was no direct reference to a furlough to visit Argyle.

Then when I was reviewing the muster rolls for the USS Galveston, I noticed he was granted a furlough from November 21 through to the end of the month. He was stationed in New York City at that time and it appears he made a visit to Argyle. On his way back he visited his Gullixson cousins in Chicago, which seems to be news to Marie.

Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

12/4/18, Wednesday, New York

Dear Marie,

Just a few lines for this old pen is on the bum so it will be short.

I received your letter today and I was glad.

Well am getting used to this life again. It seemed wise to get back to NY. Was at two shows already in NY.

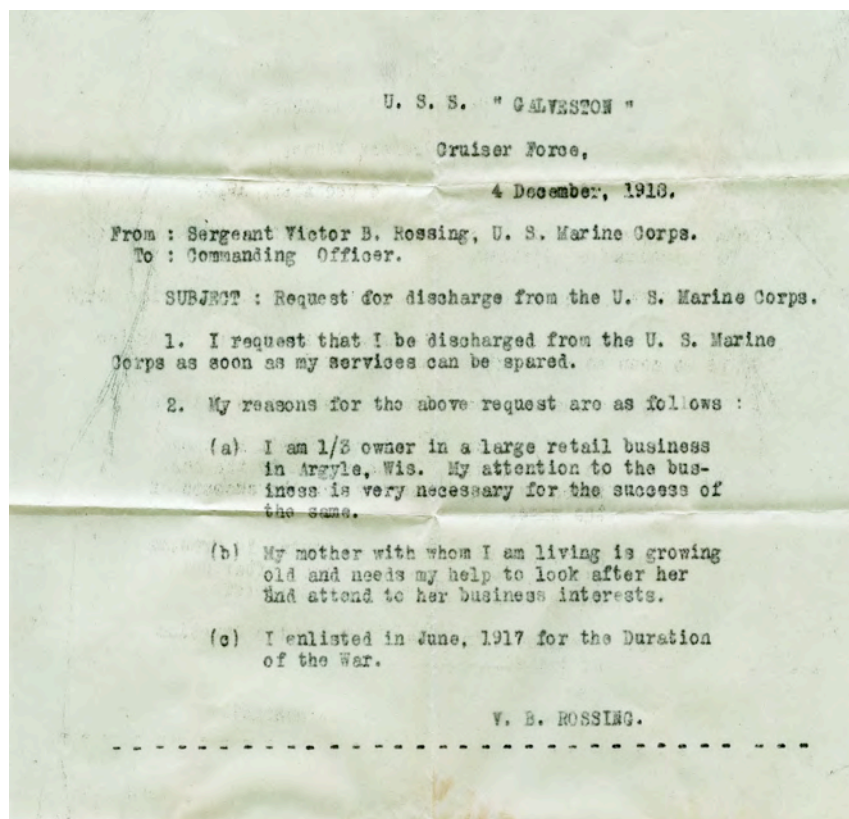
Haven't decided what to do tonight just got ashore. I usually get away about 4 pm but to night it was 5:30. The boys have been helping unload some coal since I came back and they got throu today and we had field day (cleaning up our Marine compartment). I had the boys ____ all PM and we got it nice and clean again.

Friend

Victor

VBR must be referring to his furlough when he states "The boys have been helping unload some coal since I came back. . ." He also states, "am getting used to this life again . . ." He would have returned on Sunday, December 1st and had already attended two shows. The muster rolls show that the Galveston was in dry dock for most of November and it appears they were getting it back into shape. His letters to his family about this time also allude to a home visit at the end of November.

On December 4, he submitted a request for discharge to his commander. His visit to Argyle must have convinced him to leave the service and return home as soon as possible.



Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

12/8/18, Sunday noon, New York

Dear Marie,

I told you I would write soon and now it's two days since I promised you a letter.

The time does fly here and not much to write about. If I were a girl or you were a boy probably my letters would be more interesting.

About all I say or have to day when I write is "Well I am on liberty again, saw a show or eat lunch at one of those canteens."

I was to a movie last night. War picture "Under Four Flags." They were very good only wish you could have been with me and I would enjoy it much more.

One of the boys was with me. After the show we were walking down Broadway and I met Theo. Thompson just back from England. We had a good visit went to a cabaret show and to an automat to eat as he had not been to either before.

New York is full of uniformed men especially Saturday night and I could not get a room anywhere as had to go back to ship to sleep.

I left the ship at 10 am and this is as far as I got. Expect to go to a show given for uniform men this pm. They are usually very good.

Nothing very exciting happens. Perhaps I am getting too old to care for those merry times. One can have them here but Marie I am a pretty good boy.

I enjoyed your last letter. Please write again soon.

Must close

Friend

Victor



Victor Bernell Rossing WW1 Letters to Marie

12/19/18, Thursday, New York (a small Christmas card)

With very best Wishes for Christmas

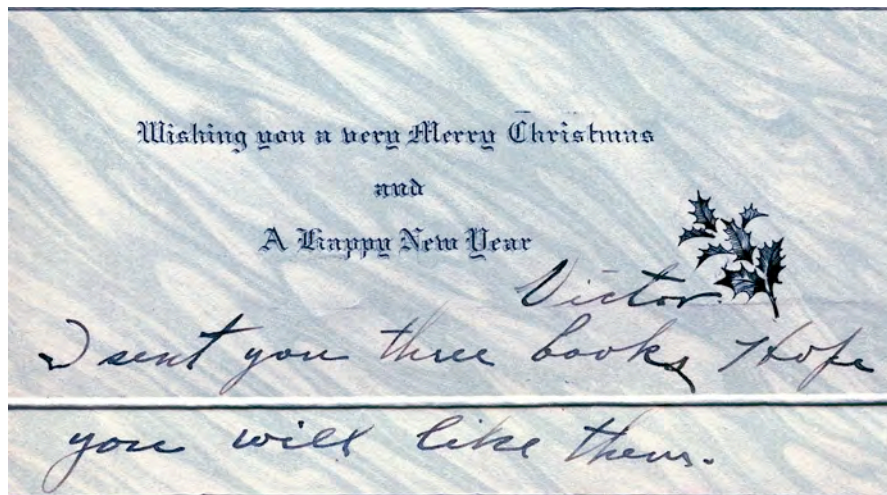
Wishing you a very Merry Christmas

And

A Happy New Year

I sent you three books. Hope you will like them.

Victor



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 27th. 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

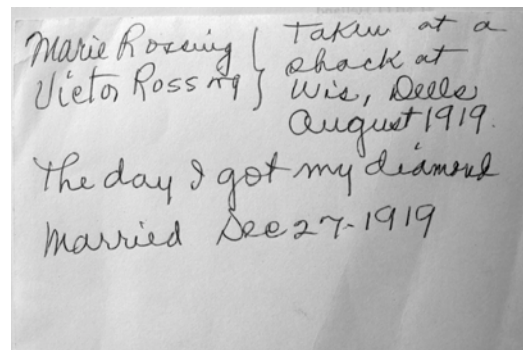
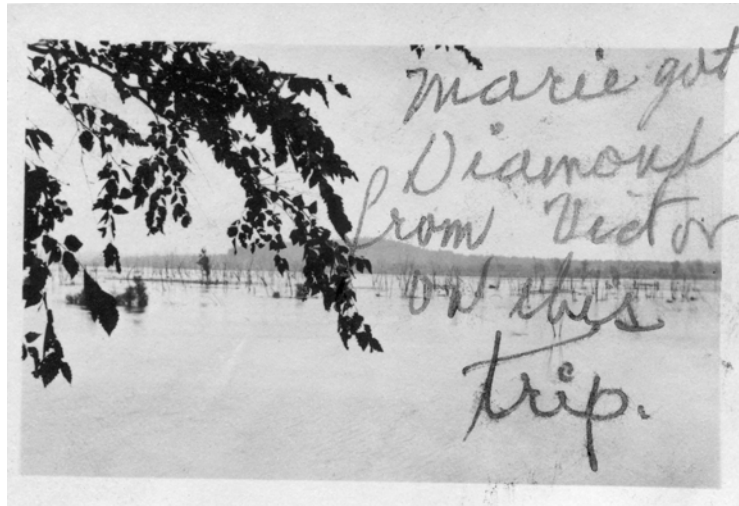
to

Mr. Victor Bernell Rossing

on Saturday, December the twenty-seventh

One thousand nine hundred and nineteen

Argyle, Wisconsin



In August 1919 Victor and Marie along with friends Mary Marti and Klemm went on a motor trip to the Wisconsin Dells area. 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!



Alumni ✓
Victor
on Stand Rock



Victor on Stand Rock

Victor really
jumped over to
Stand Rock. 1919



Victor jumping from
Stand Rock 1919



Victor on
Stand
Rock



ORIGINAL

STATE OF WISCONSIN
 Department of Health - Bureau of Vital Statistics

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE

License Number 98

PLACE OF MARRIAGE

County of Stoughton
 Township of Stoughton
 Village of Stoughton
 City of Stoughton

I, Wm. H. Woodruff hereby certify that on the 27 day of Dec A. D. 1919 at Stoughton of the State of Wis. and Marie M. Nelson of Stoughton State of Wis. were by me united in marriage as authorized by a Marriage License issued for that purpose by the County Clerk of Stoughton County and State of Wisconsin, numbered 98 and dated the 25 day of Dec A. D. 1919.

We, the undersigned, were present at the Marriage of Marie M. Nelson and Victor B. Rossing that they took each other for husband and wife. [TWO WITNESSES]

Victor B. Rossing Signed Victor B. Rossing
 GROOM

Marie M. Nelson Signed Marie M. Nelson
 BRIDE

Name <u>Victor B. Rossing</u> Residence <u>Argyle, Wisconsin</u> Age <u>30</u> Color <u>white</u> <small>Single Married Divorced</small> } No. of Marriages <u>First</u> Birthplace <u>Argyle, Wis.</u> <small>Nationality</small> <u>American</u> Relationship <u>None</u> <u>Second cousin</u> Occupation <u>Merchant</u> Name of Father, Guardian or Curator <u>L.A. Rossing</u> Maiden name of Mother <u>Helena Munson</u>	Name <u>Marie M. Nelson</u> Residence <u>Argyle, Wisconsin</u> Age <u>22</u> Color <u>white</u> <small>Single Married Divorced</small> } No. of Marriages <u>First</u> Birthplace <u>Argyle, Wis.</u> <small>Nationality</small> <u>American</u> Relationship <u>None</u> <u>Second cousin</u> Occupation <u>School teacher</u> Name of Father, Guardian or Curator <u>Nim O. Nelson</u> Maiden name of Mother <u>Matilda Vinger</u>
If previously Married Date of Marriage To whom Married Date of Death Date of Divorce Where Divorced By what Court Divorced To whom Divorce granted	If previously Married Date of Marriage To whom Married Date of Death Date of Divorce Where Divorced By what Court Divorced To whom Divorce granted
Was a special dispensation issued? Date of Issue <u>December 22, 1919.</u>	Maiden name of Bride If previously Married

Wm. H. Woodruff County Clerk.

The Marriage Certificate marked Original and Duplicate duly signed shall be given by the officiating person to the persons married by him, and the certificate marked Triplicate legibly and completely filled out with unfading ink shall be returned by such officiating person, or in the case of a Marriage Ceremony performed without an officiating person, then by the parties to the Marriage Contract or either of them to the local registrar of vital statistics of the City, unincorporated Village or Town in which said Marriage was performed within three days after the date of said Marriage.



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 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 and Marie honeymooned in Panama. He may have gotten the idea when he was serving aboard the USS Galveston since she had been voyaged through the canal just before VBR joined her Marine Guard. The Chicago couple in the photo may have been the same ones listed on the USS Heredia log. G. D. was Glenn Nelson Marie's younger brother who must have been studying in Madison at that time. The Panama Canal opened in 1914 and was probably a popular tourist destination for intrepid Americans. The Canal Zone was a U.S. Territory at that time.



Victor and Marie were married on December 27th 1919.