Jan. 17, 1918.

Dear Helen:

Thanks very much for the little luxuries; I recognize the hand in the address, and have felt grateful ever since... We are under quarantine for two weeks - because a gentleman in the Texas section in our battalion took a fancy to the measles. I can think of no worse luck for re-infection of any kind as fleeting. We are technically forbidden the Y and the amusement building, but since that prohibition is made a farce by letting us into the mess hall, we do not think it worth while to obey orders to the letter. We should be cut off entirely or the whole camp should be quarantined. I had planned a trip to New York, I had an invitation to an Allentown dinner, and I had, with John Grimes, rented a room ten minutes from the camp - where we had spent
more than one pleasant evening chatting and browsing in books by the dim light of a real library lamp; so I am decidedly pleased. In fact I have blown up two times at least in as many days. I intend to break bounds soon, if the quarantine is not lifted... Speaking of books— I just finished Dreiser's Jennie Gerhardt, a novel whose somewhat conventional plot is handled with a general restraint and occasional poetic strain and feeling of humanity that give it— at least just now— a good deal of power. In spare spare moments I skim L'ebe, the first volume of Jean Christophe. I haven't skimmed much... The administration here puts us to shovelling coal and digging ditches and exercising in the snow— but we're plenty of energy left and we want to go outside— and we want what we want when we want it... 

Exams for commissions come soon, but after careful thought— I've decided not to try. My reasons for wanting decommission are decidedly nones of vanity, jealousy, and more commendable— money. I hate to be less— but I believe I'm freer after all as a private. I've thought of an interpreter's job— but it sounds less exciting if more relieved by opportunity, change of scene, etc. If we go to Italy and have to learn Italian— I may try out— but I wouldn't care to act as mere section interpreter.

— Boston looks very remote to me— I'll visit it when I am old and gray and a millionaire. I am sorry to have missed the wedding of the holidays in Chicago— I was having the time of my life. Two of my friends here got married during the vacation— I feel middle-aged already, but the feeling's passing off... Oh horrors— a Chicago man just got the measles—

Ralph.
Dear Helen:

This has been an exciting week, up till today, which marks a sort of reaction. The battalion broke up four or five days ago; the rest of the week was filled with transfer talk - uncertain and excited. For relief I went to New York for two days and a night - during which time I continued to sleep as little as possible; consequently I am groggy - or have been groggy rather, for now I am regaining my usual carefree attitude. The next few days, however, promise some quieting that I would rather not have taken place; I always was proud of the Chicago unit - I am using this old stationery partly for sentimental reasons. And everybody is bored out - and too bored to entertain me. So am I writing letters... Before I forget it - greetings to you from Mrs. Storm. I believe I have the name right - from University Farm - he had been at your father's home a night or so before - he brought me greetings from my cousin Gena - at the farm... Through a last effort of Captain Clark - he has been really working since the break of - one Chicago Section is to go with the overseas contingent to Italy in three or so weeks; some
of us transferred into this section 555. A large number of men went into the tents. — John Brown among them — because they were sick of hanging around in a non-contact service. I thought for a while of doing likewise — on account of the excitement involved — but the prospect of two or three months of simple infantry drill and several more months of mechanical training, and my impossible eyes, for one can't wear glasses, changed my mind... The quarantine is still on — four weeks already — no hope in sight — we are beginning to feel emphatically... In New York I called on friends of Eleanor — the femmes — a rather interesting and decidedly agreeable family — naturally, as friends of Eleanor. I also went to a French restaurant once or twice — chatted with folks "in mission" and "en mission" (two is?) — improved my French... I'll have to start Italian now... Read a play by Henri Bernheim — "L'Elevation" — from Eleanor, of course — shall send it — as soon as I can collect jeszcze enough for the de charge de porter... It's easy reading — even for you.

Ralph
Dear Helen:

I am going to try my level best to see you in New York, Helen, either this week end or the next. I should like the phone number, as it will probably not be in the Directory. Something may come in between, to keep me from going, but I'm looking forward to seeing you, even if it's only for an hour or so.

Today is the most perfect day in all the world, but I have the spring fever, and my only form of enjoyment is sleep. [There's three different subjects for you, in one short sentence!] And Sunday is the only day one can sleep in the army. All Allentown is visiting the fair grounds (also Camp Crane) today—and many's the soldier that getting himself invited out to Sunday supper (I'm not sure whether supper's the right word for Sunday).

I don't know whether we will go to Italy or not. I am helpless—we are helpless in the hands of the Surgeon General; we know nothing, we have no standing whatever; we are merely abstract units. There is a strong demand for casualties for base hospital orders—and stretcher bearers; they will go over soon. Mess call's blowing. Ralph (ed.)
Monday afternoon.

It's lucky I didn't send this yesterday—
for I'm saying goodbye to the ambulance service tomorrow morning. A good order just came thru transferring me & fifty or so other officers to the army school at Washington to study bacteriology. Passing an exam will result in a commission. I have banded in my qualifications slight as they were—in the troubled days when the battalion broke up and we were catching at every hour; then after the Italian expedition became more an established matter, I never thought about the affair very seriously, because I thought it improbable that the headquarters would consider transfers out of an overseas section. But I'm rather glad after all—tho' I'll miss some of the fellows very much. I don't like Washington overly much either. But I'm sure of when I am—and I might get a commission. If I ever decide that our contingent would leave in a month—and drive ambulance—
I would try to get my transfer cancelled—impossible as it may seem. But the more I think of the opening, the opportunity to learn something, the more I believe I'll study bacteriology. None of my best friends are going.

Send me 'phone number anything please.
Dear Helen:

I received your letter, strangely enough, in the hospital. I'm not here for revenge; in fact, I haven't got measles at all. I woke up yesterday with a headache and sore throat. I meditated for a whole minute after the bugle blew, as to whether or not I should report for sick call. I reflected that it was oatmeal morning and decided to stick the day out. But the lecture made my eyes spin, and the two hour hike through the snow soaked my feet, and I have one pair of shoes only, the other being at the D.M.S., and the barracks, which is usually warm, became positively chilly. So when I came over to the hospital this morning, expecting to be confined to quarters, they took revenge by putting me in the camp hospital or infirmary, where they amuse themselves by dropping jello down my throat, or sliding my bed from one corner to another while they sweep up. There are about thirty
The text on this page is not legible due to the handwriting style and the quality of the image. It appears to be a handwritten letter or note, but the content cannot be accurately transcribed.
beds in the room. I started out by vowing I'd be out in a
day, but the feeling that I really am sick and the
awful rumor that the whole camp is to be quarantined
tonight have given me a touch of resignation. The
Battalion quarantine lasted six days—it was really a force
anyway—but a camp quarantine's a different matter. No
man can get out at any gate; if the guards don't get him,
the Provos will. The Provos are the military police down
town. And Battalion 144 goes on guard Friday for two weeks—think of
the 24-hour passes wasted inside the gates. I might be in our
room... I just saw in a TV Sunday show that your uncle had gotten
some medal—I think it was a medal from some scientific society—
my memory's not very vivid—but I suppose he's always getting
them anyway... Your Wellesley landscapes will have to go
some to beat some of the snow pictures we see on our hikes... I
don't believe I'll ever feel old, Helen, no matter how
many of my friends may, though none of them ever do. Some-
times I think about how little I've done—how I'm not fit for
anything in special; I've never specialized, you know—or about the
"adventures" I haven't had—a childhood delusion—then I
see fret and fume because I'm not four years younger,
but I guess it's too late for me to have any adventures—
Army life is not an adventure; it's a science; one got to squeeze
in the adventure in uncertain and always fragmentary glimpses—
as the bed of Philadelphia, New York, etc. And if I thought of life
in terms of a career—I would curse the time wasted in the army.
I guess this is pretty far from what I started. I believe I should be positively angry if any of my friends marry... The quarantine rumor is true - I can imagine the gloom in the barracks...

Thanks for the box, though I haven't seen it yet... I just happened to think - I don't know whether this letter will ever get to you or not. I haven't a cent to my name, so I recently committed one of the greatest sins a soldier can commit - namely, lost twenty dollars. Now visiting hours are 2 P.M. to 3 P.M. - an inane hour for nobody can come to see one - so where will borrow postage, I don't know. But will be out in a day or so.

Ralph.
Dear Helen:

Well, I guess the only way I can see you is by looking at your reflection in the sun. My lab work lasts till Saturday—four in the afternoon and I have class Monday at ten in the morning—not much chance for a visit to New York, when the trip takes six hours by itself—is there? I might get an excuse from lab—but I don’t know as much chemistry as in 1911, or whenever I took it—and there are plenty of fellows who know it well. My bacteriology lab commences in three weeks or so—there may be a gap between—but I have a sort of feeling that I won’t see New York for over a month yet.

I believe, however, that I’ll get to see you before I get across, though I shall ask to be put on the overseas list as soon as I am eligible. I wish you had some friends in Washington to visit—and an extra vacation to do it in. There’s Mrs. Wilson, of course, but I am not very well acquainted with her yet. Her husband I know better—I saluted him on his way to church—which is getting pretty intimate, for a private and his commander-in-chief... Give my regards to anybody I didn’t get a chance to meet. It might have been.

Ralph
1137 Fifteenth St N.W., Washington

April 1, 1918

Dear Helen:

Just got through a long chat with Eleanor by mail. She forgives you for not writing, Frank doesn’t.

Your question: Yes. I am applying myself trying to take chem. and bacteriology at the same time: 9-11 A.M., 1-4 P.M., 5-8 P.M. My applying is entirely unsatisfactory to myself; a man should have done learning before he came here; hence he is rushed too fast to learn. The officer’s class has already become a memory and the commission an army promise. The thought of the alternative future is as yet very far from bright. But we are not individuals in the army—an army could hardly get along with individuals. The Army Medical School, while located in a rather dingy narrow six-story building, is an institution worthy of a good deal of respect. It has quite a past—I don’t know how long—its research work—like the research work carried on in large government hospitals like Walter Reed—is recognized as of considerable value. Just now I move in an atmosphere of medical traditions—feel connected up more with my family. I have some of my youthful longings to be a scientist... I live right here in a
room with an Allentown chum. I am beginning to like Washington very much. I shall be very glad to meet Fred Tryon; I only hope that I can stay in Washington long enough to get acquainted with people I know and want to know. My fear involves among other things—removal from Washington to camp—. I don't want any more camp life in this country for a while. Across... I remember when I used to analyze fourteen flowers in botany when I was a kid.

I haven't much that. Our old ambulance company is far and wide away. Some of my chums are in France already. Mitchell Dawson is in the Intelligence Dept. somewhere in New York. John Green, the melancholy man and in some ways the meek (I hate the word, but just now I can't find any better one) man in the bunch, is spending his ninth week at the hospital in Allentown; he had some kind of infection in his legs. Eleanor sent me a week's pocket autograph— I may enclose a copy of one of these. She also filled me full of news from the Midway. I supplemented it with the U. S. C. magazine, April issue.

I shall say a lot about my roommate; we have gay times and talks. I am afraid I'll be separated from everybody before I'm through, though. Look for a mournful letter in a couple of weeks.

Ralph J. Sonnen

Give Percy my best wishes with you and Frank and S... and him. Deploring, the collection ought to interesting as well as valuable. I wonder if it'll ever do any

work of that kind again. I feel just like a deer on a stream.

Parade Liberty soon today. For a wonder we don't have to march.

Percy C. Woodruff

Australian literature
Dear Helen:

Your last letter came to the Army medical School and lay around in misery for days before some kind friend remarked that I had my name in the unclaimed mail column. The A.M.S. is on 5th and Di; we are on 5th and M, or very near it... We have moved next door - a very short move - but it is as far ahead of our old room in comfort as our old room was ahead of the camp. We are really in luxury - large, long brass bed, real fireplace with mantel and mirror, knick-knacks, Edison Vocation phonograph, long bay window, washstand, dresser, big easy chair, and two tables, one round with a marble top, and a slanted long almost bachelor apartment.

I suppose you heard of Raymond Anderson's death - one month after his
marriage. Of course you know that he had a commission. He didn't answer my last letters, and I missed him at Christmas, so it all came as a bit of a shock. I guess I knew him about as well as I knew anybody.

Sam writes that he has enlisted in the British army. I hope he has better luck than I've had. Eleanor wrote that when he came to give her the last handshake, he was so excited that he scarcely knew what he was saying. I should like very much to see Sam somewhere again.

I suppose you are back in the promised land again for a spell. Give my warmest greetings to your mother and to your uncle, and to your father too, even though I didn't get a chance to see him.

Ralph.
message. Of course you know that he got a command to the Indian country by last letter, and if unless we had as that is to get of command as he of which I came. I have been about as well as I know any body.

Someone that he has twenty
The best of any I hope he has better.

I ought to be able to answer you or. I have not the time. Can't you give me a word from your own, I don't know whom to...
1139 Fifteenth St. N.W.,
Washington, July 1918.

Dear Helen:

I am writing this in the park opposite the A.M.S., where the thirty-seven of us that graduated from the officer’s class patiently wait every day from nine to four, for some kind of orders that never seem to come. We have been recommended for commissions, and it is consequently possible that we may get them some time. The fellows that did not get through, many of whom are better fit for commissions than some of us who were selected, are being fitted into overseas units as fast as possible. Among them are two or three of my best friends here: Holland Roberts (married Xmas) Meade Burke, and Leonard Kelley (all from the U. of C.) (and members of Old Battalion 8.) We have had lots of good time parties here with the Roberts’, and I hate to see
the little circle break up. But everything does soon or later; it won't be long before I have to leave my third chum—my roommate—Stanley Bobb, a bright little Swedesk boy, used to be Slaughs' tailor at the Woodtown Trust and Savings. There was a strong possibility that a number of us would be sent to Rockefeller Institute in New York for further finishing touches—but the latest seems to be that we shall stay here until final preparation is made of us. After a while I shall try to get a short fess to the Windy City, of course. Rumors are beginning to fly almost as thickly as at Leland—town, but of course they are not as frequent. My old section is in Italy now; I could have been with them... But I do like Washington; I have met more interesting people here than anywhere except on the Midway... By the way, there are quite a number of U of C people here, most of whom I have seen at least once: Capt. Macly, Miss Richst, Miriam Coulter-Taylor, Miss One (the little red-headed girl who used to hand books out W 81), Miss One (I knew her in Spanish, but haven't seen her yet), Mildred Smith (I knew her in Miss Richst's class; she is working for Mary now) Tommy Kruse and David Stevens (I haven't seen either yet), Donald Bradford (formerly of the Hall), Stanley Roth (I haven't seen him either), and of course the Chie man in the U. S. I was introduced to Prof. Mann, formerly in Physics at the U. of C; he is now in charge of military vocational training. His housekeeper is an old friend of mine, a perfectly dear girl—she always makes me after midnight kaffee (afternoon coffee) and "midnight kaffee" (midnight coffee) and I never drink less than three cups!"

Thanks for the Chicago gossip. Give my regards to the immortals: Helen, Sad, Frank, and Eff, also to Mary Ann and some hi and to your uncle. What is Eleanor's address? I neglected to write until school was out, and am not sure where she is staying. I am very sorry that she is run-down and think she ought to take a bit more rest. I admire Helen Hughes tremendously for her success in getting satisfaction out of life. I should enjoy very much an afternoon with Felicia Mary Ann. Helen of course would have to go along as chaperone... Maryly, by the way, told me that she hadn't read a book since she came to Washington. I
know, however, that he has written one—Miss Rickett collaborating... Did I know John Huling? Faith and I did—he was in Hitchcock + 89 A + B, etc.... I envy Frank the Dunes. The word Dunes is to me the most magic word in the language—just now. Close seconds are France, Italy, peace.

They are beginning physical exams for commissions; the first man just passed out. I am worried again—eyes and underweight (for late hours and summer weather have reduced me to about normal again). I am not as hard as I was in camp.

Your news about Sam was the first to reach me. He wrote me a few days ago. The incident was pretty unpleasant for him at the time. I suppose, but he ought to manage to forget it easily.

Ralph
1139 Fifth St. N.W.

Washington, Aug. 31, 1918.

Dear Helen:

At present it looks very much as if— in case I get a commission and in case I am sent to Yale— I will be there after the 15th of September. And then we will see each other, for I never saw any work yet that could keep me entirely busy, except the last four weeks of the spring quarter of 1916 at the U. of C. The delay in the commissions is partly irritating— as twenty-five of us went through so nicely and the wheel had to stop just as it got to the last ten. I have a good deal of faith that the commissioning will begin again, but how soon I do not know, perhaps not until the new draft is under way. Meanwhile I am having a very pleasant time here, for the weather has turned a trifle cooler, and I have a pleasant detail at last, and finally, my roommates' work is over and we can go out together as
we used to.

my detail now is at American University, which has been turned into an experimental station for gas work. We do the bacteriological part of the work, with our time and plenty of equipment at our disposal, leaving us free to go at things more or less as we please.

I am not sure about the French aviation picture exhibition; I do not remember any advertisement of them here, but if they were under the auspices of any French official mission, it seems very probable that they would be shown in Washington. Anyway, I didn't see them.

Did Paul Heilman give any special news? I've heard no word at all from the bunch, tho' I saw the officers' reports in the Surgeon General's Office.... Paul Heilman, I remember now, always did have a soft spot in his heart for you. I don't believe it's so very unusual.... Eleanor has not sent any pictures at all. She hasn't even deigned to write.... Greetings to your father and mother.

Ralph.
January 22, 1919.

Dear Helen:

I've been wondering the last few days if I really have a mind of my own. Perhaps I do, but it's a terribly torn up place right now. Yesterday I got a long distance from Washington asking if I wanted to go to Siberia. As an answer was demanded at once, I said no. It was the strongest temptation the army has offered me to stay in. For it would mean two or three years; after which I might quit as well stay in, for in two or three years I would be good enough for the regulars (and probably not good enough for anything else).... My chum wrote me yesterday morning that he was signed up to go to Armenia; he was so full of excitement that I could scarcely keep cool myself. I don't know whether it's too late to sign up now or not. I have half a mind to mail my application today. I had decided against it, because it would postpone my medical course a year, but I am unsettled again now. The work is social service work—expenses only. I just finished mess and, what's more to the point, had a talk with a captain on the expedition to Armenia; he declared that it would be too late to get passports now. So it looks as though I'll be at Chicago after all... We just gave the colonel two large flags,
real beauties. We broke down in his speech of thanks, just as a former C.O. of mine did once before, in Chicago. Col. Snyder is a square man, however; and the other man wasn't.

I haven't heard from Eleanor yet. I'm glad you had such a pleasant Xmas, and wish I could be in two places at once, so that I could have been in on it.

Yours,

Ralph.

66. I am wishing and waiting for orders as usual, but nothing has turned up yet. I don't believe the S. G. O. knows that there is such a place as Camp Crane.

69. Taking medicine is an awful sacrifice for me. I have no money, haven't half your energy, and, talking of age, you are much younger than I am. I don't see where you get this age stuff, unless it's because you're continually mixing with the kindergarten that infest a girl's school.
some location. She lived here in the street of that
gate in a forest. She of course has some enemies
Chicago and friends in a certain way, however,
and the other man around.

I sighed, where from Orleans was the
place you had and of pleasant eating and so
it could be in the flowers of one, as that it must
have been in or at.

The

She is looking for waters so much
for nothing. The times of yet I found
the mill of the farmers that they introduce
there is every home.

08. Taking flame is as with everything.
I have no money, don't hold great
money, only talking of pay, you are more
my poor town. I am sure, as what you
get these staff when it between you
continuously many with the recognition that
expect a girl school.
Dear Helen:

Thank you for your words of encouragement. I need them, for the nearer I reach the end of my army career, the more I wonder whether I've chosen wisely. Six mighty good years of my life—besides renouncing completely several old interests which somehow seem part of me—that's what unsettles me. My army chum is on the way to Armenia—probably in Constantinople by this time—he wrote me from the Sinaiaahn, Brest, and Marseilles. Sam K. is on the verge of a successful play; Mrs. Pike is considering accepting his latest...I want to do something, but I'm not sure what I can do. I'm going to try medicine a year—it can't hurt me. Yes, it can too, for if I decide not to go on with it, I won't have the same courage the next venture. I believe there is still a chance to go to Armenia. I am beginning to consider it again. I'll be doing good over there. But I'm going to quit talking about myself. I may be able to see you in Washington—but leaves aren't easy picking at See. Write when you come, and try...From Crane I went to Beauregard, ...
Beanagars up here, I've only been here a week.

Talking of the L of N., I suppose you heard about the Lowell debate at Boston. I should like to have been there, though I never have been able to see the anti-side—as presented by any senator of any party. If the president had been a bit more tactful with the Republican senators the opposition to the Covenant wouldn't have been so—petulant as much of it is... And I do think that Article 1 is a little rigid... But if the League keeps peace for the next twenty years it will be worth its existence, and if it lasts that long it will last longer. I wouldn't care to prophesy what would happen if it didn't go through.

Had a letter from Eleanor while I was at Beanagars. I thought I would be out of the army by now, but I'm still in the army.

Ralph
Dear Helen:

Yes, I was unlucky, too. I must have reached Washington shortly after you left it, for I arrived April 9. I stayed two short days, then I went up to New York or rather Summit, N.J., one hour's ride from Hoboken on the D.L. W. Here I waited a whole week exactly. I looked in every place for the news of the Duca d'Abruzzi coming to dock, carrying all the Italian ambulance sections. It was to come on the 18th - Good Friday. I believe, but it didn't arrive until about a week later. Also I telegraphed Sam for the hour of his arrival, for I expected to see New York with him. But he didn't leave Chicago for over two weeks; I am not sure that he has left yet. Also I called at the headquarters of the American Commission for Relief in the Near East - chiefly to get information to allay my frequent restless impulses to chuck civilization for awhile. I got it - the last transport was to sail the day after Easter, that is, the last transport planned for a long time... Maybe Eleanor has told you of my visit to Chicago. It was as pleasant as it could be, even if I didn't see many friends... The first thing I did when I got home was to look for my mail. There it was - your letter, a letter from my older brother, a packet of three of Eleanor's most migratory letters, and my discharge. You see, I cleared out of Lee before getting my discharge. I was in a hurry.

So you liked Washington. You saw it in its prettiest season - it is simply glorious in spring. It isn't nearly as military now as it used to be, though; I could feel a tremendous let-
Dear Mr. [Name],

I am writing to express my concern regarding the recent events that have occurred in our town. As a member of the community, I feel compelled to address the issue at hand.

What has happened has been a wake-up call for all of us. It is imperative that we come together as a community to find solutions and work towards a better future. We must strive to understand each other's perspectives and work towards mutual respect.

I believe that education is key in addressing these issues. It is important that we invest in our schools and provide quality education to all students. This will help to ensure that our young people have the tools they need to navigate through life.

In conclusion, I urge all of us to remain vigilant and to work towards a better future. Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
Down everywhere. I know the Northwest as well as my home-town, but somehow my whole stay there has become a dream. The whole east is becoming that way. You see the east was my province. My Paris was a strange jumble of Washington, New Orleans, Allentown, Bethlehem, New Haven, and New York. And as Paris has become dreamlike for many returned soldiers, so the east has for me. My adventures, my chums, were there... She's seen Mr. Vernon several times; unfortunately, I never made the boat trip. I hope you got time to visit Arlington Cemetery, too.

I am resting. I chew one third of the time with the nineteen-year-old, one half with my father and one sick with myself. I am dabbling in digging, demolishing, mowing lawns, demobilizing, storm windows, golf with my father, a little botany on the side, and calls on various people in town. Now I'm invited for supper, now it's a picnic (my hands all blistered from raving)...

Everybody's grown up. The little girls I used to caress when I was fourteen and fifteen are dangerous little eighteen-year-olds now. And my kid brother, whose cricket I once rocked, now attempts to supplant my new civilian education... My father, though he's not in as good health as he used to be, is improving all the time. He used to spend his recreation time in reading the Post; now he plays golf.

I expect to return to Chicago before June, but I haven't decided on the place yet. I shall probably be there the next six weeks. By the way, I saw your uncle in Chicago... on the occasion of a notable performance of Hamlet by Walter Hampden.

Greetings from my father, myself.

Ralph.

Sons of the Living:
Medicine at S. Dakota
...