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**Finding Aid for the Alice Nelson Korean War correspondence collection  
2015.035.w.r**

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Center for American War Letters Archives

11/11/2016

Leatherby Libraries

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URL: <http://www1.chapman.edu/library/archives/>

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**Language of Material:** English

**Contributing Institution:** Center for American War Letters Archives

**Title:** Alice Nelson Korean War correspondence

**creator:** Spangler, Thomas G.

**creator:** Nelson, Herbert

**source:** Olson, Alice F.

**Identifier/Call Number:** 2015.035.w.r

**Physical Description:** 0.025 Linear Feet(1 folder)

**Date (inclusive):** 1953-08-11-1955-01-30

**Abstract:** This collection contains correspondence written to Alice Nelson during the Korean War. The letters were written by two soldiers: her brother, Herb Nelson, US Army, and a man she never met, Thomas Spangler.

Leatherby Libraries, Special Collections, CAWL Archives

**Storage Unit:** Korea 1

**Storage Unit:** 9

### **Content Description**

This collection contains correspondence to Alice Nelson during the Korean War. Alice went by the nickname "Allie." PFC Thomas G. Spangler was a pen pal that Alice never met. He was a truck driver in a motor transport unit in the 5th Marines. He was from Knoxville, Tennessee. He writes that he finds her letters very interesting and enjoys her sense of humor. He signs his letters "Gerry."

The other letters were written by Alice's brother, Cpl. Herbert Nelson. He was a supervisor for an automotive school. He was promoted to Cpl. in December of 1954. In his letters it is clear he is homesick and anxious to get home: "It sure is different 8500 miles from home amongst people that you can't stand the sight of. (Letter dated July 10, 1954).

Around the holidays, he seems to have even lower spirits. In his letter dated December 27, 1954, he laments the lack of Christmas spirit in camp and his desire to get home: "It is hard to hard to try and get a spirit that is inspired by friends and loved ones when the loved ones are missing. If I'd had at least one person here that meant anything to me I would have felt better...We had a Christmas dinner but that only filled the stomach. But I have that one thing that no one can take away from me and that is the consolation that in exactly 47 more days my time will be up and they will have to ship me home." He also writes of his opinions of the Korean people, which aren't very good. He believes the Japanese are much more modern and similar to Americans. He uses the term "moose" frequently to describe Korean women - it is unclear if they are prostitutes or not.

In his final letter dated January 30, 1955, he says he is depressed and is drinking a lot. He is growing a moustache just so he has something to do. When Alice Nelson donated these letters, she stated that her brother ended up killing himself at age 42. Although he doesn't mention it in his letters, she says he was on the front lines and believes part of the reason he may have killed himself later was from PTSD - a concept that wasn't heard of during the time.

### **Conditions Governing Access**

This collection is open for research.

### **Conditions Governing Use**

There are no restrictions on the use of this material except where previously copyrighted material is concerned. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain all permissions. For further copyright information, please contact the archivist.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Gift of Alice Olson (née Nelson).

### **Preferred Citation**

[Item title, Box number, Folder number], Alice Nelson Korean War correspondence (2015.035.w.r), Center for American War Letters Archives, Chapman University, CA.

### **Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Korean War, 1950-1953.

Correspondence -- Korean War -- 1950-1953

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Nelson, Alice

Olson, Alice F.