

## WWII Veterans continued with the "V" letter of the alphabet

By David Kusel

This first Vollmer is another person who I have no information about. The only proof I have that he was a Veteran is from one of the Monitor articles about Paul that mentions James being his brother and where he was serving during WWII.

No one submitted a Vollmer family history in either the 1981 Manning Centennial book or the 2006 Manning Quasqui book, and I have no other sources to research this family. So hopefully someone who is related to the Vollmer family will read this article and come forward with information and pictures.

### #542 James Virgil Vollmer (no pictures or information)

The only information I have about James is from a newspaper article about his brother Paul Vollmer - dated August 15, 1945. In that article it mentions James being home on furlough from Perry, Florida. After a short visit at Manning, James returned to Perry.

### #543 Edward Vollmer (1 picture, very little military information)



This picture came from Edward's niece, Arlene (Kuhl) Pershing. Arlene reached out to me nine years ago and she graciously agreed to send me her scrapbooks and old pictures to scan. Then after I scanned them I returned them and I sent paper copies back to her of the pictures that were not identified and she was able to ID most of the people for me.

Getting IDs today is a major problem because people of Arlene's generation are, for the most part, deceased. The next younger generations who have these type of old pictures will generally have no clue as to who the people are or what their connections and history are.

SO - sadly, many of these younger generations will just throw those old pictures away - not realizing that I may be able to ID some of them or be able to show them to a few Manning people who are in their 90s and living in Manning.

So if you have old Manning and family connected pictures please DO NOT throw them away. PLEASE get them to me!!!

Even if I don't get them identified, I may still be able to determine if they are connected to Manning - at least those images will be preserved as part of Manning's history.

### From the History of St. Lawrence Parish, Carroll, Iowa.

Monsignor Edward Vollmer served as pastor from February 1959 until he died April 27, 1963. He devoted himself to expanding the parish school. In 1962 the first phase of a new addition (12 classrooms and new offices and restrooms) was completed. In 1964 the second phase (gymnasium, locker rooms, kitchen, cafeteria, classrooms, and a music room) was completed, and the old school-church building was demolished. 1963-64 enrollment was 602 pupils. Assistant-pastors who served with Monsignor Vollmer were Fathers Thomas Donahue, Jerome Degen, Henry Weimer, Richard Frank, and Peter Fransco.

### From the 1981 Manning Centennial book.

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward V. Vollmer, who served the diocese from May, 1941 until his untimely death at age 49 in 1963, is the only vocation to the priesthood from Manning, Iowa.

### Piecing together a Veteran's history.

As you can see by the bits and pieces of information I have for Edward, it is difficult to create any type of military biography.

I assume relatives of the Vollmer family have more information and pictures, but finding them and then convincing them to send me the information and pictures they have is a major challenge for me in trying to preserve our Manning history.

Without people like Arlene Pershing, who last lived in California before passing away in 2015, who had shared her old pictures with me I would basically have no pictures of the Vollmer family. Before I show more of Arlene's pictures, here is a letter that Edward's brother, Paul, had written to the family of Gene Strathman, who died while serving in WWII.

Paul's letter, along with a lot of other documents, military information, and Manning connected pictures was sent to me by Gene's niece from California. This is another example of when people share what they have with me then I can greatly expand the Manning historical database, and also provide pictures of Manning Veterans and information that I can use in the Manning Veterans History Book.

### Paul Vollmer's letter to the Strathman family

October 4, 1944 Camp Barkeley, Texas

Dear Friends,

My deepest heartfelt sympathy is all I can offer you in your time of deep grievance and sorrow.

May God's mercy be with you and help to lighten your sorrow in this, your hours of despair.

That he gave his life so nobly for his country and friends is an award to you, his parents, that only God can give.

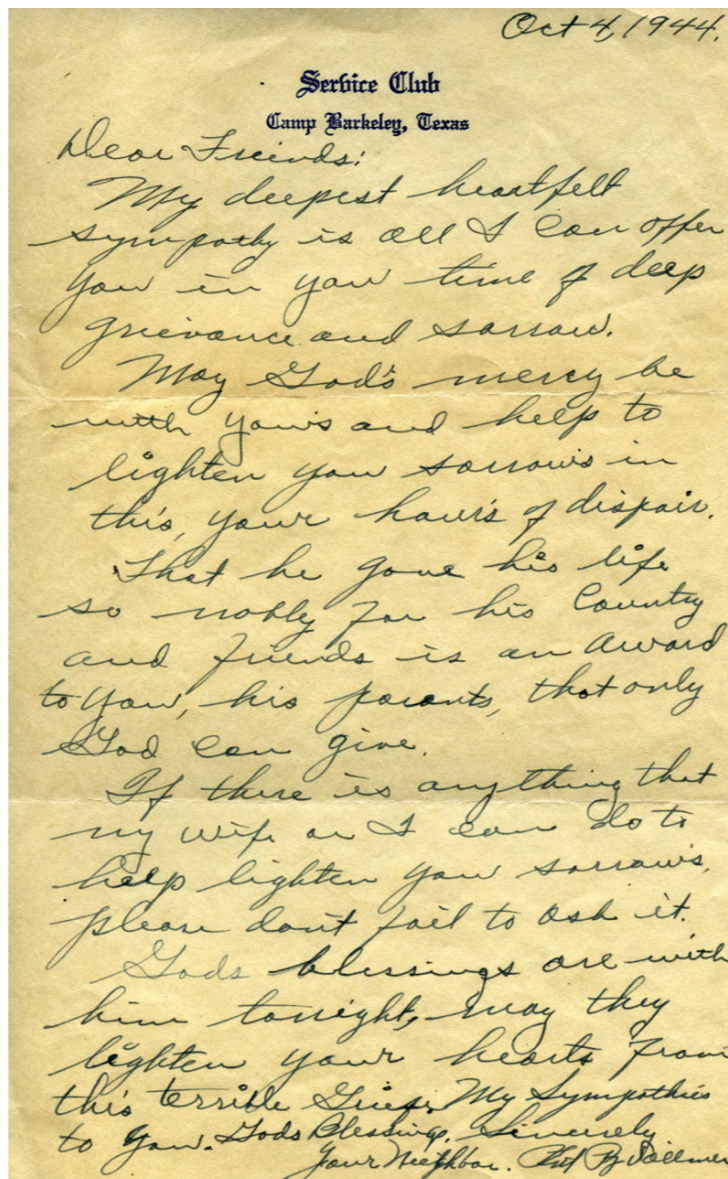
If there is anything my wife and I can do to help to lighten your sorrows, please don't fail to ask it.

God's blessings are with him tonight, may they lighten your heart from this terrible grief.

My sympathies to you. God's blessings.

Sincerely, your neighbor,

Private Paul J. Vollmer



Above is that letter Paul wrote to Gene Strathman's family. Now you may think a letter like this is kind of interesting and all of that but please stop to realize these facts...Most family descendants have not kept their old letters connected to the military service of the Veteran in their family.

The odds of a letter written by another Veteran who is not related and kept is rare.

Then consider that you can see the handwriting of this Veteran. Below you'll see a picture of Paul, but I think it is also important to see how they wrote and what they wrote. It gives you some insight into who they were.

If I were to just transcribe what Paul wrote and use only that text it wouldn't show you how he wrote and the little nuances in how he wrote it...Something that is lost in today's digital world of communication!

### #544 Paul J. Vollmer (1 picture, 5 Monitor articles, very little specific military information)



This picture of Paul came from the Manning VFW collection that was found in a box eleven years ago. I have no other military pictures of Paul, but I do have his official 1954 Manning Fireman's picture.

Like with many WWI & WWII Veterans...if it wasn't for their parents and/or spouses who submitted letters to the Manning Monitor that the Veteran wrote home, I would have very little if any information about a lot of them.

I have been able to find some brief information to write a very basic military history for Paul. Unfortunately I don't have his discharge or other military papers to confirm many of these facts.

### Paul Vollmer: Serial Number 37694527; Enlisted Camp Dodge, April 4, 1944

Paul was inducted into the U.S. Army on April 4, 1944, and trained at the 237th General Hospital, Camp Barkeley, Texas. He was a surgical technician and received the European African Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon for his service in the Rhineland. Pfc. Vollmer was honorably discharged in November of 1945.

Besides the letter Paul wrote to the Strathman family above, his parents also submitted some of his letters (partial or complete) to the Manning Monitor. It is fortunate that many families did this during WWI and WWII, because if they had not done so, most of those messages written home would be gone forever - as noted previously how descendants have thrown away the old original letters.

Fortunately the Monitor is archived so we can go back in time to find these Veterans' letters. Here is a poem Paul wrote.

Paul Vollmer poem he sent to the Manning Monitor - "I also want to tell you all that you can't write your boys in the service too often. They are all starved for news. A letter a day keeps the blues away."

### NO LETTER TODAY

Where are the friends we left behind,  
Who promised us they'd drop a line?  
It's nearly a year we've been away,  
It's still the same-no letter today!

Twice a day we stand in line;  
Some boys get as high as nine.  
We wait to hear 'em call our name,  
No luck today-it's still the same!

With teary eyes and heavy heart  
To our barracks we depart.  
We sit and write a letter or two,  
To friends who said, "I'll write to you."

So friends at home, don't be slight  
Don't forget you're in this fight.  
Take some time and write today  
To service men who are away.

You can make their burden lighter  
And make that man the world's best fighter.  
We'll win this war and do it fast  
For we will want this peace to last.

You may think the effort small  
To drop a letter to John or Paul;  
But, my friends the letters you write,  
Keep us going day and night!

Pvt. Paul Vollmer,  
237th General Hospital,  
Camp Barkeley, Texas.

To me this plea by Paul could be extended into the future to right now - about the Manning Veterans' history book project.

Why won't family members write to me or contact me and share what they have...information that was so important to the Veteran at the time.

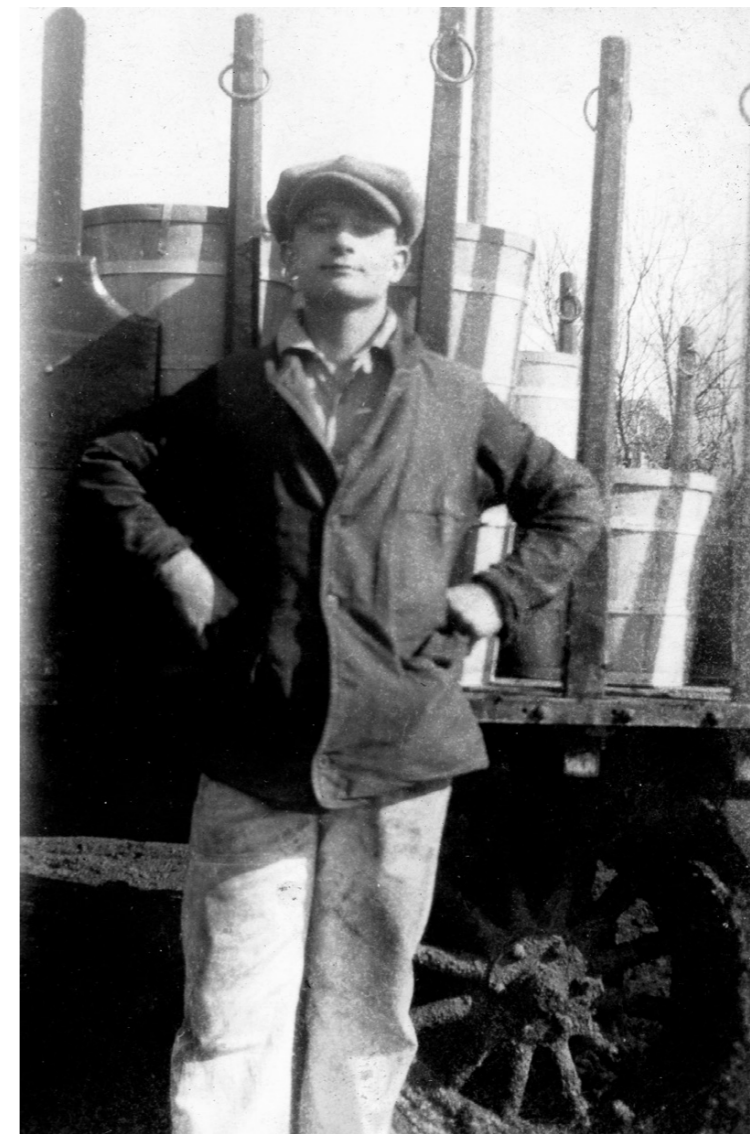
I'm not asking you to do this for me or anyone else - but maybe the Veteran in your family, who is no longer living, would want their story told now so it can be documented and preserved in the Manning Veterans' history book.

### Other Vollmer tidbits of information I have in my database.

**December 13, 1883:** Two fellows from no one knows where broke into the Vollmer country school house last Thursday night and burned up a lot of school books and other property and then left the neighborhood. They came to town the next morning, took their breakfast at the Anderson House and departed on the first train for the land of "Guess where I am."

**May 12, 1949:** Paul Vollmer, World War II veteran and manager of Thrifty Food Market, received the appointment as acting postmaster of Manning succeeding Mrs. Kathryn Eden, who has held the position since 1936.

Now I'll show you some of the wonderful Vollmer pictures that I scanned from the Arlene (Kuhl) Pershing collection.



Mike Vollmer - as best I can tell, this might be some sort of apple-picking wagon that was set up with a lifting system of rings. There are some sort of baskets but they are taller than the baskets I remember being used to carry fruit when I was a kid.



Edward Vollmer

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