

**WWII Veterans continues with the "W" letter of the alphabet**

By David Kusel

This week we begin with the West family. Fortunately their parents submitted letters that were written home during the war and posted them in the Monitor...in those articles it lists the family connections, otherwise I would have difficulty figuring out if/how they were related.

I have several obituaries that show several West families that lived in Manning and it appears that the Harry West family is not connected to the West Veterans.

I have a number of West pictures but sadly, none for the West Veterans. Hopefully someone in the West family will see this article and come forward.

Here are partial obituaries that breakdown the various West families.

**Phyllis**

Phyllis West was born September 18, 1922, in Manning, the daughter of Lester "Jack" and Pearl (Franzwa) West. She attended school in Manning until the family moved to Kingsley, Iowa, in 1938. She graduated from Kingsley High School in June 1940.

**Elzie George "Pete"**

Elzie George "Pete" West, son of George E. and Mary (Johnson) West. His siblings were Jack, of Kingsley and a sister, Mrs. Greta Reinhold, of El Cajon, California, Genevieve West, and Mrs. Harry (Merle) Claussen.

**Harry**

Harry, son of Lewis Edwin and Millie Edna (Sallman) West, was born January 4, 1905, at Corydon, Iowa.

Harry was united in marriage with Louise Emmick of Carroll, Iowa. They retired in Manning in 1972.

He had a sister, Mary Alice, and brother, Ed West and his wife, Mary. He had one son, Bill West and his wife, Sarah, of Littleton, Colorado.

**West pictures I have in my database and their sources.**

If you are related to the other West family and can help out with more information and pictures please contact Dave Kusel.

crawls into camp. Such as the big lizard that just went scooting across the tent.

We inspect our beds each nite before retiring for anything that may have gotten into them in the daytime.

Our tent is a small four cornered affair. Five cots --- Polly, Rita, (Boston), Lovey (Michigan), Helen (Chicago) and me. We've made it quite livable now that we've all, our junk arranged. The chow is wonderfully more than we expected and everyone is so nice and accommodating. We are not with the officers and enlisted men --- we were separated and we've no idea where they went. We will not be here long we hope, and will go on to our final destination.

You'll never know how big this army is until you've made a troop transport trip like we have and realize what immense preparations must go on. You can tell everyone for me that they have no idea what New Guinea is like, nor any conception of war.

Everyone has a peculiar yellow color about their faces because of the drug we take to control malaria. Guess you know we use Australian money.

Ever hear of rain? - You haven't seen anything yet!

We are not working yet---nor do we know when we will. We do our own detail work (K.P.) and can swing a pick and shovel as well as any G.I.

Every now & then around the area we find a brilliant colored flower which is very striking. Uniforms are a thing of the past. We wear field shoth and fatigues, pants and shirts, dirty, most of the time.

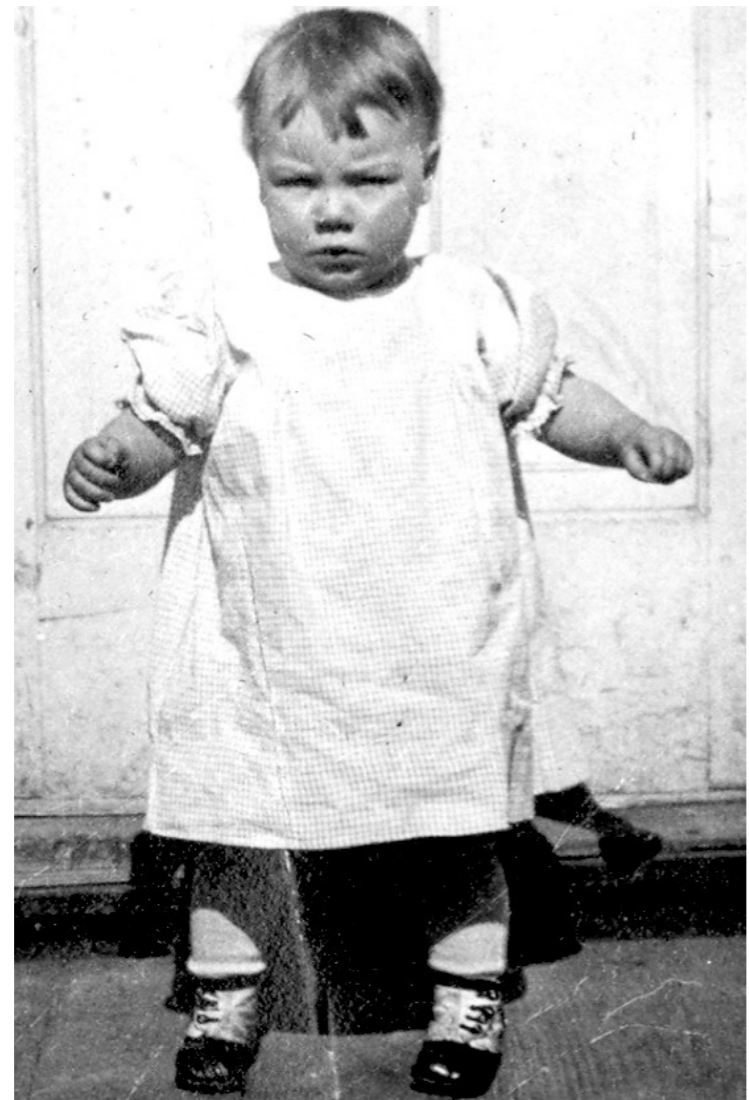
We are not allowed out of our area alone. We must have an escort always. We never walk, always a jeep. Mud up to our ankles. Makeup is a memory and my good Marshall Field shirt is now just another G.I. shirt of the past.

Movies entertain us three times a week - mass every nite at 6:30. The sides of our tent are always up and when it rains we get wet, and everything we possess. But such is life. Everything mildews, our shoes are a sight.

I don't know when I can write to everyone so please let them read this. I am well---as happy as a goofy lark but still know that the good old U.S. can't be beat!



David West, son of Merle - from the Mil Horbach collection



Phyllis West - from the Sandy Garmire collection.



Pearl West - 1930 American Legion Auxiliary President  
Mother of Jack, LaMorne, and Merle

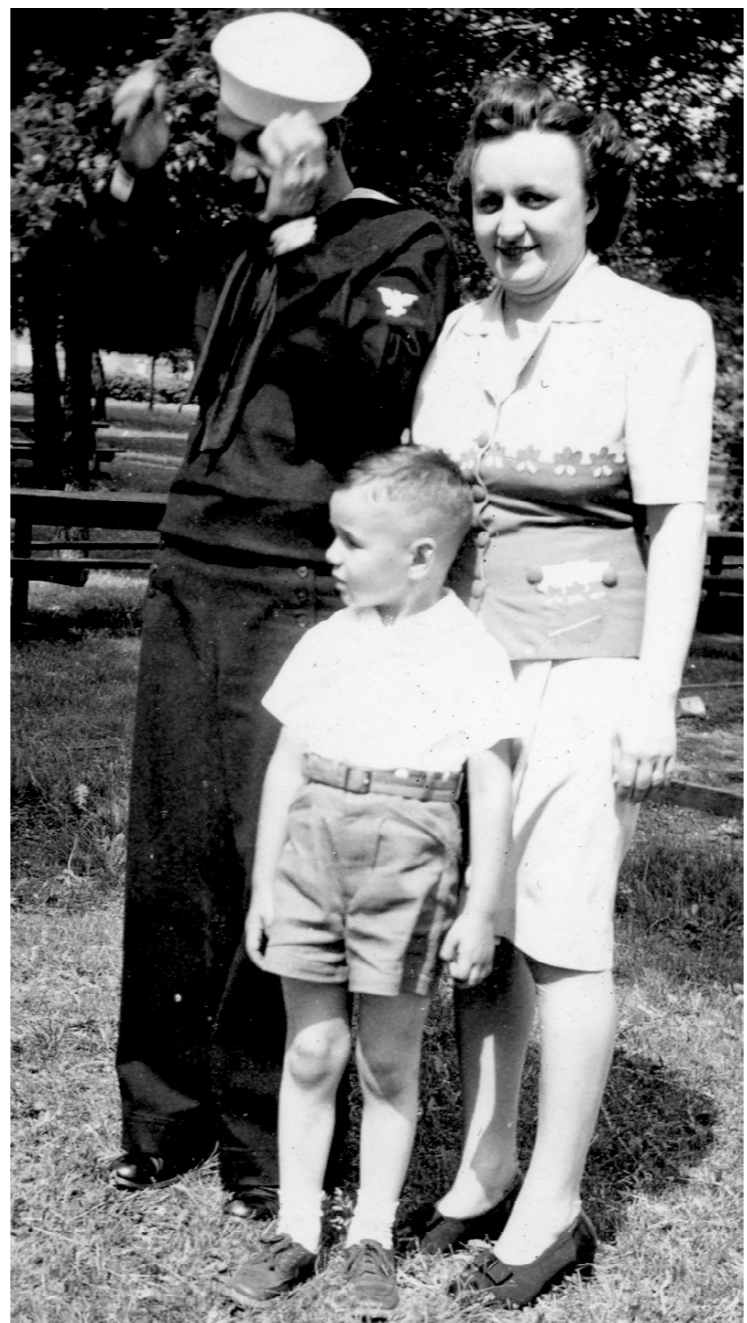


Helen with Jean in 1948 - from the Mil Horbach collection

#570 Merle G. West (no military pictures or information, 1 Monitor article)



Janis West - from the Jerry Callender collection.



Merle, Helen and David West 1944

This picture came from the Mil Horbach collection. Before Mil passed away, she let me go through her collection and scan a lot of her pictures. Fortunately I was able to do this because after she passed away, most of her pictures were thrown away.

**Manning Monitor article 1945**

Merle West, Baker 2-c, after ten months in Alaska, has arrived home for a 30-day furlough.

At present he is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jack West at Kingsley. His wife and son David went to Sioux City to meet him. Later they will visit in Manning, their home.

**I have three more West photos to show.** Three of them came from the Mil Horbach collection and the final one from the Donald Stangl collection. The picture from Don is of neighbors, Gene Rohe and Carol West, who grew up outside of Manning. It is doubtful that Carol has any connections to the Manning West families.

This is why it is imperative that relatives or anyone, who knows these families, contact me to help me figure out the connections and to hopefully provide me with pictures and other military information to use in the Manning Veterans' book.



Jack West, Joe Stein, Joe Horbach, Miles Dau  
from the Mil Horbach collection

#571 Ruel R. Whitcher (no military pictures or information, 5 Monitor articles)

Ruel is another Veteran who apparently did not want to disclose much information about his military service...based on his obituary.

It states that he was the son of Effie and William Whitcher, born in Manilla, February 12, 1911. He moved to Manning with his parents in 1915 and attended Manning School until he entered the Navy in his senior year.

He was united in marriage to Doris Wilcox of Seattle, Washington, on June 18, 1937. One son, Ruel, Jr., was born to this union. He had a brother, Judson, and as sister, Fergus Klein.

He was a career Navy man serving in the submarine service for 30 years. He retired as a Lt. Commander.

It is sad that so many of our Veterans go to their graves, having never told their stories, so their history could be preserved long into the future.

Fortunately one of Ruel's friends wrote back to the Monitor about Ruel and his service. He couldn't divulge much for details since this was during the war but at least we know that Ruel was thought of as a hero and received medals for helping save the sub from sinking...here is one of the Monitor articles about Ruel, as told by Donald Struve.

**Manning Monitor article 1944 A Submarine Hero**

Lt. Don Musfeldt, located in the South Pacific writes a story home about a Manning boy from who you would never hear deeds of heroism directly. Don received his information from mates of this man and passes the following information to home folks.

His letter reads in part: A couple of days ago on pass I was going to see if I could find Ruel Whitcher and I did. I just want to say a few words about him. He is now an Ensign, the same as a 2nd Lt. in the Army. He has 15 years on Submarines, an expert on them in fact. I was with him from 4 in the afternoon till midnight and really had a time. Some of his friends told me of him.

Don's story about Ruel, continues next week.

WWII continues next week.