

## WWII Veterans continues with the “W” letter of the alphabet

By David Kusel

Last week we started a tribute to Ruel Whitcher by a fellow Veteran, Don Musfeldt. Don wrote down this information and sent it to the Monitor to publish. Don couldn’t give detailed information because it was during war-time but he provided some insight into Ruel’s service that we would never know about.

Every tidbit and every picture that we can find will tell us more about our history which is disappearing fast.

Having worked with several combat Veterans, it may be that no one asked Ruel about his service, so he never talked about it. **Now we continue with the Ruel’s story.**

You’ll never read of him in “Look” or “Life” or anything like that, but they say he saved Subs from going down a time or two and is known as one of the best in the entire Pacific Area. His character is excellent, very modest.

You’ll never hear much from him-he just isn’t that type.

Knowing what Ruel has done and is doing I think he is one of the most outstanding men in the service from Iowa. That’s not saying too much either. He was down to my house and we are getting together as often as we can. He turned down one commission a year ago, because he wanted to be one of the fellows, just like the other enlisted men on board.

I can’t tell you what he does, what ship he is on or the like, but that boy is and has done so much more than anyone I know of, you just can’t believe it.

Oh yes, he and the fellows he stays with have a drawer full of medals, top medals one could earn. They don’t say much about it. Ruel is just 32 years old and has only 4 more years to go before retirement.

He told me of numerous times they dove to miss being fired on, laying in Japanese waters for weeks on end.

### #572 Alvin J. Wiese (1 group picture, basic information from his obituary)

Alvin J. Wiese was born March 27, 1914, the son of Detlef and Alma (Kruetzfeldt) Wiese, formerly of the Manning area. Alvin was born on a farm in Hayes Township, and received his elementary education in a rural school near his home and the Vail High School.

After completing his education, Alvin was employed for various farmers in the area until entering the U.S. Army on March 12, 1941. While in the service, he served his country with the Seventh Infantry in Vedala-Casablanca, Sicilian, Naples-Foggia Rome-Arno, Southern France, and Germany. He was decorated with two Bronze Stars and one Silver Star for military campaigns during the war, a good conduct medal, and the Presidential Unit Citation.

After being honorably discharged from his military responsibilities on June 20, 1945, he returned to farming near Vail.

His siblings were: Adelaide, Vera, Viola Dozark, Ila Crampton, Leslie, George, Donald, Raymond, Elmer, Leonard, Emil, Wilmer and Clarence.



*Vail Commander, Elmer, Emil, Leonard, Donald, Wilmer, Clarence, Alvin, Vail Commander - taken in Vail Legion Hall*

### #573 Clarence Wiese (1 group picture, basic information from his obituary)

Clarence “Bush” Richard Wiese was born June 2, 1923, the son of Detlef and Alma (Kruetzfeldt) Wiese. He died Friday, January 19, 2007, at the Manilla Manor in Manila.

Clarence was born on a farm four miles north of Aspinwall, Iowa, and in 1926 moved with his family to the Vail area. He entered the United States Army on June 13, 1946, and served in Occupied Japan during World War II. He received his honorable discharge on October 2, 1947. During his service to his country, Bush received the World War II Victory Medal and the Army of Occupation Medal Japan.

After completing his military duties he returned to Iowa and worked in the southeast region, doing bridge work.

### #574 Elmer Wiese (1 group picture, no other information) Sergeant Wiese was stationed at Camp Beale, California

### #575 Emil Wiese (1 group picture, no other information) Fifth Tech Wiese was stationed at Camp Pickett, Virginia

### #576 Leonard Wiese (1 group picture, no other information) - Corporal Wiese was stationed in Hawaii

### #577 Milford Wiese (several pictures, very basic information)



*Milford Wiese (right) in the Marshall Islands*

Milford Wiese served in the Army in the 139th Anti-Aircraft Battalion. He entered the service January 25, 1943, and was sent overseas in May 1943, in Hawaii for five months. He then served 24 months in the Marshall Islands. He returned to the United States in October 1945, and was discharged December 6, 1945.

He received the following medals: Rifle Marksman in 1943, Good Conduct Medal, and Eastern Mandate Battle Medal with Silver Star.

He was the son of Louie and Elsa (Boyens) Wiese.

### #578 Rockley F. Wiese (no pictures or information, 5 Monitor articles)

Rockley, son of William and Ida (Grimm) Wiese, was born November 7, 1919, near Gray. He attended the rural schools in Audubon County and was united in marriage with Dorothy Ruhde on June 3, 1944. Shortly after their marriage Rockley entered the United States Army, serving in Germany and also was a prisoner of war. After his discharge he was employed by F.D. Ross & Company in Manning and later by Priebe & Sons, also of Manning.

Besides the information above from Rockley’s obituary, it is fortunate that his parents submitted snippets of information to the Monitor in 1945 or we would have very little information to use in the Manning Veterans’ history book.

#### Manning Monitor articles 1945

**Rockley Wiese Is Missing In Action:** Mrs. Rockley Wiese has been notified that her husband, Pvt., Rockley Wiese, has been missing in action in France since January 23. Pvt. Wiese left the States January 3 after spending the holidays here. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Wiese of Manning and was married to Dorothy Ruhde in June, 1944.

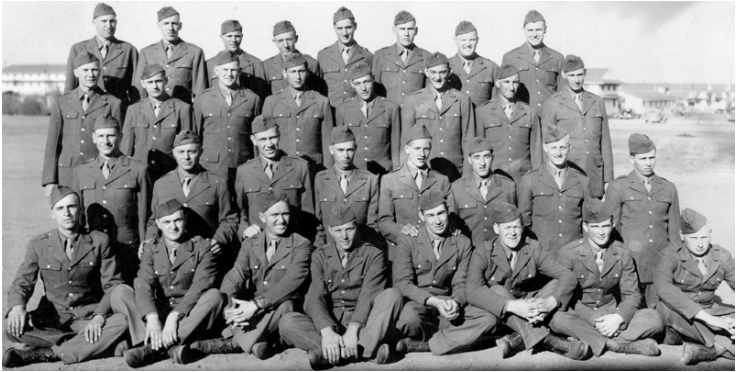
**Rockley Wiese War Prisoner In Germany:** Word has been received by relatives here that Rockley Wiese, who had been previously reported missing in action, is now a prisoner of war in Germany.

**Hear from Rockley Wiese:** Mr. and Mrs. William Wiese received a telegram that their son, Rockley Wiese, who had been recently captured by the Germans, was free. He states that he is well and not to worry. Rockley was captured soon after going overseas several months ago. His wife, who is working in Illinois, was notified by telephone of his release.

**Former POW Now Back in Manning:** Pvt. Rockley Wiese, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Wiese, who has been a prisoner of war in Germany, and released this week at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., has arrived at home and is visiting his wife and parents. Rockley had at one time been reported missing in action and later word disclosed him a prisoner, a status he kept for many months.

**ROCKLEY WIESE HAS ARMY DISCHARGE:** Pfc. Rockley F. Wiese, son of William W. Wiese, 417 Julia St., Manning, who entered service at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, July 19, 1944, was among those discharged at the Fort Sill separation Camp in Oklahoma last week. His military career included 11 months service in the states and five months in the European theatre of operations where he served with the 30th infantry division. He is entitled to wear the good conduct medal and European theatre ribbon with two combat start.

### #579 Sam Wiese (several pictures and a formal write-up, 1 Monitor article)



*Sam Wiese - front left*

**Interview by Dave Kusel shortly before Sam passed away.**

Sam was inducted into the Army in April of 1945 and discharged in 1946 as a Private. During his physical, Sam was asked to volunteer for the U.S. Army Mule Pack, the last mule pack the military would have. It took three weeks of recruiting around the United States to find enough soldiers to qualify for the Mule Pack. The men had to be at least six feet tall and be able to lift 175 pounds to shoulder height. They could not have any “red marks” such as flat feet or wear glasses. Sam trained at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Each soldier was assigned a mule. They had to groom and feed their mule each morning before they went to breakfast. They never rode their mule and always walked during training sessions. The men were given a ration and a half each day to help them keep up their energy for the rugged training. At one time there were eleven Mule Pack soldiers in the hospital from mule kicks or hand-to-hand combat training.

Sam became severely ill with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and was the only member of his outfit who did not go overseas. The Army Mule Pack fought in the Burma Campaign. Bill Wright, who was another member of the Mule Pack, met Sam years later and told him that sixty percent of the men were killed in action. Even though the U.S. soldiers were helping the Chinese during the war, many of them were attacked and killed by Chinese bandits, and the mules were taken and used for food.

### #580 Wilmer Wiese (1 group picture, very little information) Private Wiese served with the Army Medical Training battalion, is stationed at Camp Barkeley, Texas

Wilmer C. Wiese was born August 30, 1921, the son of Detlef and Alma (Kruetzfeldt) Wiese. He died Wednesday, August 11, 2004, at the Manilla Manor in Manilla.

Wilmer was born in Vail and received his education at the Vail Community School, graduating from the Vail High School with the class of 1939.

Wilmer helped on the family farm until entering the United States Army on November 5, 1942, at Camp Dodge. He served with the Army Air Corps, 809 Medical Evacuation Squadron from November 1942 to November 1945. He earned two combat stars during his service in the Central Pacific and four combat stars while in the Philippines. Wilmer was also awarded the Air Medal and six Bronze Stars before receiving his honorable discharge on November 2, 1945.

### #581 Russell William Wiley (no pictures or information)

There were several Wiley families that lived in Manning during the early years. Louisa Wiley is buried in the Manning Cemetery. Unfortunately I have no idea if/how Russell is related and I do not know where I got his name that lists him as a WWII Veteran.

So unless I can find further proof of his service, or a relative comes forward I’ll have to leave his name out of the Manning Veterans’ history book...and remove him from my military database.

### #582 Leo Louis Willenborg (1 picture and basic information or information) - Leo on right below



Leo entered the service (Army) in April of 1945, and had basic training at Camp Maxey, Texas. From there he went to St. Louis and then to the West Coast. Leo was on a ship when Japan surrendered, but continued on to Japan. He was stationed in Tokyo for about a year and was discharged in December of 1946, with the rank of Tec-4.

### #583 Dale Maynard Winters (no pictures or information)

This is another name I have no proof of service...So unless I can find further information for his service, or a relative comes forward I’ll have to leave his name out of the Manning Veterans’ history book...and remove him from my military database.

### #584 Gordon Winlock (no pictures, very little information)

Gordon was a school teacher at Manning and all I have is a reference to his military article service in a school article written by Willis Grimm.

#### Taken from the May 25, 1939 Monitor - THE SCOOP

Mr. Gordon Winlock is going to Fort Snelling, Minnesota, for active duty with the regular army from June 13 to July 1st. From then on he will go to different places. The students all hope he has an enjoyable vacation. By Willis Grimm.

#### GORDON WINLOCK

With the release of Mr. Rogers and the transfer of Mr. Hall, it was necessary to obtain another Junior High coach and instructor. Final arrangements were made on Tuesday whereby Gordon Winlock of Ames was named to this position.

Mr. Winlock comes highly recommended both as a class room instructor and athletic director. He is a graduate of North Carolina State. His father is on the faculty of Iowa State College at Ames. Mr. Winlock is highly spoken of by former high school and college associates as an excellent leader among students. He was rated one of the best football centers in the Chicago suburbs and played on two championship teams.

### #585 Woodrow W. Witt (no pictures, very little information) TEC5 US Army - buried in the Manning Cemetery

Again, it is so sad that I have no pictures or information about this Veteran’s service...other than what is inscribed on his tombstone.

Hopefully a relative will come forward and help out.

### #586 Florian Wittrock (no pictures or information)

This is another name I have no proof of service...So unless I can find further proof of his service, or a relative comes forward I’ll have to leave his name out of the Manning Veterans’ history book...and remove him from my military database.

### #587 LaVerne (Meyer) Wittrock (2 pictures, formal write-up)



LaVerne was a WAVE (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) in the U.S. Navy and trained in boot camp at the end of WWII (enlisted for the duration plus six months). She joined the U.S. Navy in Seattle, Washington, where she was working at the Boeing Aircraft factory. She took boot camp at Hunter College in New York City, New York, and continued her training at Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Illinois. She was later stationed at a hospital in Dublin, Georgia, and was honorably discharged in 1946.

LaVerne is the daughter of Herman and Laura (Wiebers) Meyer who lived west of Manning. She graduated from MHS in 1942 and was the class Salutatorian. LaVerne married Walter Wittrock (married 60 years February 11, 2007) and they have nine children. She worked at St. Anthony Hospital for 13 years.

### #588 Walter Wittrock (no pictures, 1 Monitor article)

#### Manning Monitor article 1944 Walter Wittrock Ends Furlough

Walter Wittrock, G.M. 1-c, of Halbur, left Sunday to report to Norfolk, Virginia, after a month’s furlough with relatives and friends in this vicinity. This is his first furlough since November 1942. He has spent 19 months on one continuous ocean trip.

He mentioned fighting on Tarawa, the many hardships and shortage of food and ammunition when cut off from the supply at times.

Four of his crew of 114 on their ship came home on a transport, spending 31 days on their trip from somewhere near the Philippines. He has been in two major battles and has two Jap planes to his credit, with only a few minor cuts caused by a gun mishap.

He gained twenty pounds on his furlough, saying that these chicken dinners at home really do something to a fellow. He has not had any Monitors lately but will receive them again when he gets assigned again after his furlough. Conditions in France.

### #589 Vernon L. Wolfe (no pictures, 2 Monitor articles)

Manning Monitor articles 1944 Vernon Wolfe Drives For Captain

Pfc. Vernon Wolfe, formerly of Manning, now stationed somewhere in the South Pacific, sends his thanks to the legion and Monitor for the home paper. He writes:”I’ve seen a lot of this world and find its not such a big one after all. I’ve seen a few boys from Manning, Billy Woods in the Navy, for one.

“I’ve also seen what the Japs did at Pearl Harbor and the other places around here. It makes a fellow want to get over there and give them the works.

“I get to see a lot of this place, as my job is to drive for the Captain. There sure is a lot of things of interest but give me the good old U.S.A.! My best regards, Pfc. Vernon Wolfe

**WWII continues next week.**