

U.S.S. Marblehead (CL-12)



Please send a photo of Lyle to spwade@gmail.com

Marblehead Biography Lyle Lavine Allen

Lyle Lavine Allen was born on 1 FEB 1922 to David Hayes Allen (1877-1956) from Arkansas and Lyla A. Lavine (1893-1984) from Wisconsin. Lyle's parents married in Tacoma, Pierce County, WA on 7 AUG 1913, but resided at the time in the nearby farming community of Milton. Milton, (originally "Mill Town"), was seven miles east of Tacoma and Lyle's dad was an operator at an electrical substation, perhaps one related to the Interurban Railway which ran through Milton between Seattle and Tacoma. Milton had a population of about 500 at the time of Lyle's birth; today it is roughly 8500.

Waiting for the Interurban in Milton



www.cityofmilton.net

Fox Island, WA in 1930

Fox Island is just over six square miles in area (roughly 5 miles long by 1.5 miles wide). In his eighth year, 1930, Lyle's was one of 78 families on the island totaling 219 residents spread across 41 farms. In addition to farm laborers, the island had a musician, two electricians, two merchants, two repairmen, a reporter, a fisherman, a steamboat deckhand, a mechanical engineer, a postwoman, 43 school-age children, two teachers and a swank school bus driver who referred to himself as a chauffeur. So presumably there was also a school.

It was the Lincoln School, built around 1908 with one room for all eight grades. Behind it stood a large shed for children to play in on rainy days., and two outhouses. Water was supplied from springs via underground pipes to an outdoor faucet.

The games played in the woods were *Hide and Seek*, the games played on the school grounds were baseball, *Prisoner's Base*, and *Last-Couple-Out*. Kids lined up according to size and marched into school accompanied by the school organ (see photo at the right). In 1916, a second classroom, a library, and a manual-training room were added. Lyle's family arrived on Fox Island between 1925 and 1930 so he attended Lincoln School when it had two classrooms.

Fox Island School, built by President Roosevelt's Depression-era Civil Works Administration (CWA), opened in 1934 twenty years before a bridge linked the island to Gig Harbor. Lyle likely did 5th and 6th grades in the new school. Today, it is known as the Nichols Center, a focal point of myriad community activities.

Sources: *1930 U.S. Census*; *Wikipedia.com*; and Fox Island Historical Society

Lining Up at Lincoln School



Source: Fox Island Historical Society

Lyle left school after the 8th grade in JUN 1936. He then began working fulltime on the family farm. He was still there for the APR 1940 census.

Because on its isolation (no bridge linked FI to the mainland until 1954), school plays provided community entertainment. (see textbox at the lower right).

On 3 DEC 1940, Lyle caught the Interurban (1st photo above)

to Seattle and enlisted in the Navy. He was assigned Service #3859365. Lyle underwent basic training at the Naval Training Station in San Diego, CA, and on 21 FEB 1941, as an Apprentice Seaman (AS), he joined his first ship, *USS Richmond (CL 9)*, an Omaha-class light cruiser named for the city of Richmond, VA. *Richmond* was at the time shifting its homeport to Pearl Harbor. On 3 APR 1941, Lyle was promoted to Seaman 2nd Class (S2c) and on 23 MAY 1941 he was promoted again, this time to Fireman 3rd Class (F3c).

By 1930, the family had bought a farm and were operating it on Fox Island in Puget Sound (see textbox at the left). Then a farming community, Fox Island is now a wealthy suburb west of Tacoma.

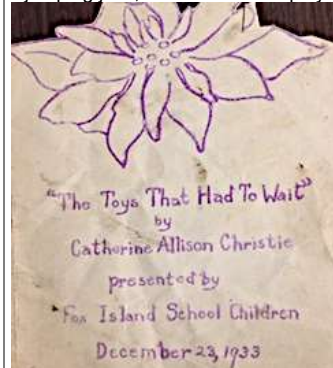
Lyle was the 3rd-born of four sons. His brothers were Jack Bernard (1914-1976), Louis David (1919-2005), and Samuel Edward (1923-1967). All were in school in 1930.

Lyle, back row, 2nd to the right of teacher Jean Goodnough, 1934



Source: Fox Island Historical Society

Lyle, tin soldier, and his brother Sam, jumping jack, in 23 DEC 1933 play



Source: Fox Island Historical Society

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On 21 AUG 1941, Lyle transferred to *USS Henderson (AP 1)* for further forwarding to the Asiatic Station, meaning the Asiatic Fleet. *Henderson* was one of two veteran transport ships that supplied the Asiatic Fleet with crew - *USS Chaumont (AP-5)* was the other. *Henderson* sailed from Hawaii via Guam and on 14 SEP 1941, in Tu Tu Bay off Jolo Island, southern Philippines, Lyle was first received aboard the light cruiser *USS Marblehead*, referred to affectionately by her crew as *Marby*.

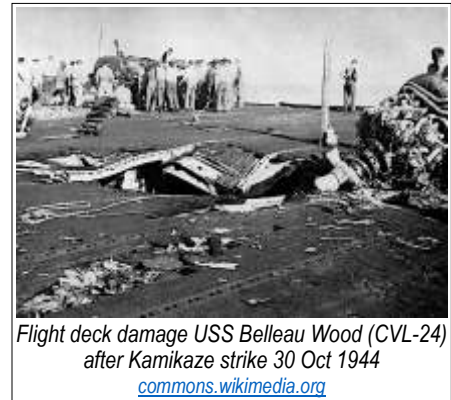
Marby would be his home for the next 17 months. She left the Philippines on 25 NOV 1941 in anticipation of hostilities, and by 2 JAN 1942, she was in Darwin, Australia. There on 17 JAN, Lyle was promoted to F2c effective

New Year's Day. On 4 FEB 1942, *Marby* was badly bombed in the Battle of Makassar Strait and left as sunk by the Japanese, but a valiant effort by the crew saved her and enabled her subsequent 20,589-mile, 90-day escape to New York which are more fully described in [Marby's own biography](#) and in the 1944 book [Where Away – A Modern Odyssey](#). Enroute, on 31 MAR 1942 at Royal Naval Base, Simonstown, South Africa, Lyle was admitted to the Royal Naval Hospital, perhaps for ailments related to the bombing, however he was back aboard ship when she resumed her journey home on 15 APR 1942.

The Japanese had reported *Marby* sunk several times following the Battle of Makassar Strait, so Lyle's family thought he was dead or in enemy hands until he called home with the good news on 5 May 1942, the day after the ship made New York. He probably visited them shortly thereafter but was soon back in Brooklyn and engaged in *Marby*'s overhaul in the Navy Yard there.

Marby's repairs would take five and a half months to complete. During that period, Lyle spent 21 days in the Naval Hospital there. He was back aboard *Marby* on 15 OCT 1942 when she steamed out of New York to rejoin the war effort this time home-ported in Recife, Brazil, patrolling for Nazi submarines and blockade runners, rescuing downed Allied airmen and enemy crewmen from sunken vessels, and occasionally escorting convoys across the North Atlantic.

On 8 FEB 1943, Lyle transferred from *Marby* to the USNOB, Bahia, Brazil for further transfer to the *USS Belleau Wood CVL-24*, an Independence-class light aircraft carrier being prepared for commissioning in Camden, NJ. He was aboard on 31 MAR 43, the day she was commissioned. In APR 1943, she sailed via the Panama Canal to join the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on 29 JUL 43. She would become one of WWII's most decorated ships (twelve battle stars). Lyle was aboard for many of the battles in the western Pacific, including the Battle of the Philippine Sea.



Lyle was promoted to F1c on 5 JAN 1944 and on 15 MAR 1944 he transferred from *Belleau Wood* to the nearest RS Station on West Coast. (The transfer spared him the trauma of a kamikaze strike on the ship in the Philippines on 30 OCT 44 which cost the lives of 92 men killed or missing.)



On 8 Sep 1944 Lyle was received aboard LST 123 and on 20 OCT 1944 he participated in the Allied landings on Leyte Island, Philippines. In early JAN 1945, while still with LST 123, Lyle also participated in the landings on Luzon. Those landings accounted for two of the three battle stars earned by the ship during WWII. The third was related to the retaking of Guam.

Lyle was promoted to F1c on 15 NOV 1944.

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On 16 FEB 1945, Lyle transferred to COMSERFORLANT (Commander Service Force, Atlantic Fleet), based in Norfolk, VA, for assignment to amphibious bases as directed, eventually also serving on LST 488.

Lyle was honorably discharged on 29 JUN 1945 after a very eventful WWII. What he did for a living after WWII remains unclear as does when and where he met Donna May Osborn, who he appears to have married at some point in the 1950s. Donna was born on 16 APR 1933 in Yakima, WA, the second daughter of Missouri-born May Osborn and Oregon-born restaurant chef, William York. Donna and her older sister Patricia had a younger brother, William Jr. Each of these children were born in Washington.

Lyle died on 10 APR 1983. He was buried in New Tacoma Cemetery, University Place, Pierce County, WA. The couple had three daughters, Linda, Dee, and Ellen, and at the time of Donna's death, they had four grandchildren, six great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. Donna died at age 83 on 25 Nov 2016 and is buried in Mountain View Cemetery, Lakewood, WA.



WWII "Boys in the Service" Plaque at the Fox Island Historical Society Museum honoring America Service men from Fox Island. Louis, Lyle, and Sam Allen head the list of forty-four.

[Fox Island Historical Society](http://www.foxislandhistoricalsociety.com)

Lyle Lavine Allen appears on page 234 of the 1944 book [Where Away – A Modern Odyssey](#).

Don't forget to read [Marby's own biography](#).

Biography by Steve Wade, son of Frank V. Wade, BM2c, USS Marblehead 1939-1945, with great contributions from volunteer researcher Ms. Virdie Gollither with the support of President Ms. Gail Jones of the Fox Island Historical Society, and from Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and other Internet sources.

Corrections, additions, and photos are welcomed by email to spwade@gmail.com.