

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



Eugene Abell  
Source: Ancestry.com member  
Richh631

## Marblehead Biography Eugene Abell

Eugene was born on 24 FEB 1920 in Middletown, OH, 38 miles north of Cincinnati, to William Charles Abell (1880-1956), a [tobacco stemmer](#) and later a night watchman at a foundry, from Marion, KY, and Lottie W. Brown 1881–1965, a homemaker, from Meade County, KY. The 8<sup>th</sup>-born of ten children, Eugene grew up in the Louisville, KY area, 136 miles southwest of his birthplace. His siblings were: Thelma D 1902–1981, Naomi Francis 1905–?, Edith Marie 1910–1911, Forrest William 1912–1944, Pauline 1913–1980, Beatrice E 1916–1981, George Albert 1918–1994, Ralph Thomas 1922–1980 and Francis Lee 1925–2015.

Eugene enlisted in the Navy on 25 SEP 1940 at Louisville. He was first received aboard *USS Marblehead* (the “*Marby*” to her crew) as a [Fireman](#) 3<sup>rd</sup> Class (F3c) on 14 SEP 1941 from Asiatic Fleet veteran [USS Henderson AP-1](#), a transport ship. The transfer probably occurred at Cavite, Philippines as both ships were there around that time.

Eugene would serve aboard *Marby* for 2 ¾ years. The events of this period, including the bombing of the ship on 4 FEB 1942, its subsequent escape to New York, and its wartime exploits in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea are more fully described in [Marby’s own biography](#). Eugene would see much of that action.

Other than the trauma of seeing friends aboard the ship die or suffer badly from burns, Jack came through the action off Java uninjured, and he was aboard *Marby* when, on 15 OCT 1942, her five-and-a-half-month overhaul complete, she sailed out of New York to rejoin the war effort. She redeployed to the mid-Atlantic, operating mainly out of Recife, Brazil, hunting U-boats and blockade runners. She frequented such ports as [Georgetown, Ascension Island](#); [Montevideo, Uruguay](#); [St. Croix](#), [St. Thomas](#), [Trinidad](#), [Cuba](#), [Puerto Rico](#) and other Caribbean nations.



Julia V. Cannon  
Source: Ancestry.com member  
Gerard Eagleston

Eugene may have used the long port-stay in New York to visit his family in Louisville. That is unclear, but the long overhaul in Brooklyn also afforded sailors the opportunity to meet “big city” girls such as Julia V. Cannon, born in Brooklyn on 6 FEB 1922 to John Jeremiah Cannon 1889–1957, a plumber from New York, and Maria Katharina Waldinger 1888–1964, a homemaker, both from Kings County, NY, which is mainly comprised of Brooklyn. Eugene must have met Julia shortly after *Marby* arrived on 4 May, and a courtship developed rapidly. The Cannon home at 242 Warwick Street was only a 40-minute train ride from the front gate of the Navy Yard. On 25 SEP 1942, just twenty days before *Marby* would put to sea once more, Eugene and Julia married in Brooklyn. She was almost 21 and had been in the workforce about two years. The couple would live much of their post-WWII lives in Baldwin, Nassau County, NY, on the southwest coast of Long Island.

Eugene was promoted to [Water Tender](#) 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (WT2c) on 1 SEP 1943 while the ship was steaming from Recife to Miami, FL. Aboard *Marby*, he took part in several Atlantic crossings escorting convoys but on 24 JUL 1944, when she transited [Gibraltar](#) enroute to [Oran, Algeria](#) for duty with the 8th Fleet and then on to Palermo, Sicily ready for action in [Operation Dragon](#), Eugene was not aboard. He had been transferred on 1 JUL 1944 from *Marby* to Classification Center and the Receiving Station Philadelphia, PA. Muster roll entries for him after that have not be located, and it is possible that he had shore duty for the rest of WWII.

It is unclear what Eugene’s occupation was after WWII.

In addition to being a homemaker, Julia became President of the Ladies Auxiliary of Daniel J. Bradley Council, Knights of Columbus and an active member of St. Christopher’s Parish. Following Eugene’s death on 29 AUG 1983, Julia appears to have married remarried to an Anthony J. Triola who also preceded her



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in death. She passed away on 26 JUL 1998, and her obituary indicated that she was the cherished aunt of many nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews.

Eugene and Julia are buried side by side at Calverton National Cemetery, Calverton, NY. They do not appear to have had children.

Eugene is listed on page 234 of the book [Where Away – A Modern Odyssey](#).

## **Forrest William Abell**

**Brother of Eugene Abell & Private in the 30th Antiaircraft Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division**

*For more than 73 years, Dutch families in Margraten, Netherlands have come to a verdant 65-acre U.S. cemetery outside their small village a few miles from the German border to care for the graves of Americans killed defeating the Nazis, soldiers they never knew, but whose 8,300 headstones have been adopted as their own by a Dutch or, in some cases, a Belgian or German family, as well as by local schools, companies and military organizations. More than 100 people are on a waiting list to become caretakers, often passing the responsibility from one generation to the next.*

*To Arthur Chotin, who at age 70 had traveled from Annapolis, MD in 2015 to meet the couple caring for his father's grave, the Dutch devotion was a source of awe. "What would cause a nation recovering from losses and trauma of their own to adopt the sons and daughters of another nation?" asked Chotin, the only American descendant to speak at the 70<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the cemetery. "And what would keep that commitment alive for all of these years, when the memory of that war has begun to fade? It is a unique occurrence in the history of civilization."*

Paraphrased from article courtesy of [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) and the American Battle Monuments Commission

In this former fruit orchard lies Forrest William Abell, killed in action on 1 OCT 1944, who left behind wife Elizabeth Taylor Abell, son Forrest William Jr. (who would become an Army veteran and later, a Louisville police officer), and daughter Lottie Ann. Tragedy had struck Forrest's family seven years earlier in 1937 when his son, Albert Eugene, died of whooping cough at one and a half years old.

*Biography by Steve Wade, son of Frank V. Wade, BM2c, USS Marblehead 1939-1945, with contributions from Ancestry.com, Wikipedia.com, Newspapers.com, and other Internet records.*

*Corrections, additions and photos are welcomed by email to [spwade@gmail.com](mailto:spwade@gmail.com).*