

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



Arthur 'Art' Joseph Beliveau

Marblehead Biography Arthur Joseph Beliveau

Arthur "Art" Joseph Beliveau was the 9th-born of fourteen children of Louis Francois "Frank" Béliveau Beliveau (1883-1961) and Aldina Marie Plante (1890-1962), both of whom were of French-Canadian heritage. Art's father Frank was born in Drummondville, Drummond, Quebec and immigrated to North Dakota in 1896 to farm. Art's mother, Aldina, was born in Olga, Cavalier, North Dakota. Her parents having immigrated from Quebec, Canada in 1889. Aldina's father was a machinist in the rawhide processing industry.

Art was born 20 Feb 1921 in rural Alma Township, Cavalier County, North Dakota, about 40 miles southwest as the crow flies from where present-day interstate highway 29 intersects the Canadian border. Awaiting Art were a multitude of siblings, mostly sisters. All told, his siblings would include Addie Marie (1907–1991), Lena Mary (1908–1983), Ida Mary (1910–1981), Louise Mary (1912–1977), Amanda Mary (1914–1951), Amelia Mary (1914–1993), Henry Joseph (1915–1946), Alma Mary (1917–1986), Helen Marie (1919–2000), Geraldine Mary (1923–2000), Raymond Joseph (1925–1990), Paul Joseph (1927–1991), and Adelard Joseph (1929–1996).

At the time of Art's birth, Alma township consisted mainly of scattered farms. Today, its only significant town appears to be Osnabrook which was founded in 1882 and became an incorporated village in 1903. It peaked in population at 310 the year before Art's birth. It had declined to 105 by the 2020 census. It has a distinctly Oz-like flavor today – its five avenues are numbered, but its six streets carry names such as Yellow Brick Road, Wizard, Cyclone, Emerald, Rainbow, and Broadway, all likely named or renamed after the premier of *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939.

The economic uncertainty of the Great Depression, which was still lingering at the time, as well as a sense of adventure likely prompted Art to enlist in the Navy on 19 Dec 1940 in Minneapolis, MN. He was assigned service S#3288188. At the time, he had eight years of schooling under his belt, probably at Osnabrook School (one or more of his siblings may be in the photo of the school at the right).



Osnabrook School, Students & Staff 1918

Courtesy of Fred Hultstrand
History in Pictures, NDIRS-
NDSU, Fargo/National Archives

Art trained at Great Lakes Naval Training Station (NTS) just north of Chicago, and following graduation he was sent to the U.S. West Coast to join the heavy cruiser *USS Salt Lake City (CA-25)*. He was received aboard the ship for duty as an Apprentice Seaman (AS) on 17 Feb 1941. For most of 1941, *Salt Lake City* cruised the Pacific. On 30 Apr 1941, while the ship was at Pearl Harbor, TH, Art was promoted to Seaman Second Class (S2c).



USS Salt Lake City (CA-25)

Source: www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar

In August 1941, *Salt Lake City*, with Art aboard, visited Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, on Australia's East Coast. Art did not know it at the time, but this would not be his only visit to Brisbane.

On 6 Oct 41, on the *Salt Lake City's* sailing from Pearl Harbor, TH to San Pedro, CA, Art was promoted to Seaman effective 1 Oct.



Art probably at Great Lakes
NTS in the winter of 1940-41

Courtesy Dan Beliveau

On 20 Nov 41, while *Salt Lake City* was in the Hawaiian Operating Area, Art was transferred to *USS Chaumont (AP-5)*, one of two veteran transport ships that kept the Asiatic Fleet supplied with sailors - the other primary transport was the *USS Henderson (AP-1)*. Art's new assignment was to the Asiatic Station,



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which meant a ship of the Asiatic Fleet or a shore assignment in either Manila, Philippines or Shanghai, China. At the time, *Chaumont* was bound for Manila.

The Asiatic Fleet, Nov 1942

"On November 25 the MARBLEHEAD sailed out of Manila Bay for Dutch North Borneo. Only two days before Admiral Hart called a conference of his senior officers. There weren't too many as the 'Asiatic Fleet' actually applied only to the MARBLEHEAD and HOUSTON, thirteen overaged destroyers of World War I vintage, and their tender BLACK HAWK, twenty-nine submarines with their tenders, the CANOPUS, HOLLAND and OTIS, the tanker PECOS, a few minesweepers plus some antiquated gun boats and the five Yangtze River gun boats. The air arm consisted of 30 PBVs of PATWING 10 tendered by the LANGLEY. The BOISE joined later... 'Gentlemen,' Hart began, 'the negotiations going on in Washington have reached a critical stage and I have come to the conclusion that the time has come to put the initial phase of our basic plan into effect at once, that is the deployment of our surface craft to the southward so they will not be trapped in Manila Bay if hostilities actually begin. Robinson, I want you to take command of a detachment consisting of the Marblehead and the Black Hawk and the destroyers, then proceed to Dutch North Borneo and await developments. I have secretly informed the Dutch Admiral of this move but no one else so you should make your visit appear as much as possible to be of a routine nature. ... If everything goes well in Washington, I will call you back in a couple of weeks. Otherwise, . goodbye, good luck and God bless you!"

Excerpts from the Diary of Admiral A.G. Robinson, then Captain, and Marby's skipper. Robinson willed his diary to John P. Bracken, then a Lt.Jg. and his Aide. Source: Bracken's 1993 book *The Call of the Siren*.

Unbeknownst to Art, on 25 Nov 41, in anticipation of hostilities, U.S. Admiral Thomas Hart dispersed the Asiatic Fleet from Manila and into the Netherlands East Indies (NEI; today's Indonesia). See textbox at the left.

On 7 Dec 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Contrary to one non-US Navy internet report, *Salt Lake City* was not at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked. She was with the *Enterprise* task group 200 nautical miles west of Pearl Harbor, returning from Wake Island, when word was received of the attack. Ten hours later, Japan began its attack on the Philippines.

These events rendered Art's orders to report to Manila impossible to comply with. On hearing of the disaster in Hawaii, *Chaumont* changed course for Brisbane, Australia as did other Allied ships, such as heavy cruiser *USS Pensacola (CA-24)*. On 14 Dec 41, Art transferred from *Chaumont* to *Pensacola*. [Wikipedia](#)

Pensacola Diverts

Pensacola had "departed Pearl Harbor on 29 Nov 1941, with the so-called 'Pensacola Convoy', bound for Manila, Philippines. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the convoy was diverted to Australia, entering Brisbane harbor on 22 December. *Pensacola* returned to Pearl Harbor on 19 Jan 1942." [Wikipedia](#)

In the days leading up to Christmas, 1941, as Japan's conquest of Southeast Asia continued to roll southward and westward across the soon-to-be-former American, British, Dutch, and French colonies, a portion of the puny US Asiatic Fleet was regrouping at Surabaya, Java (NEI). Two days after Christmas, a convoy left Surabaya. Among the ships in the convoy was the former French mail ship [MS Marechal Joffre](#). Its capture in Manila Bay on 14 Dec 41 by swashbuckling American naval airmen in need of a ride out of the Philippines ahead of the Japanese onslaught, is one of the great tales of WWII chutzpah. Escorting the convoy was an obsolete light cruiser, [USS Marblehead \(CL-12\)](#). The convoy was bound for Port Darwin, Australia.



USS Pensacola (CA-24)

Source: U.S Naval History and Heritage Command

The *Marblehead* arrived in Darwin on 2 Jan 42 and temporarily assumed the role of Radio Darwin. For roughly a week, as higher-level plans were being laid to slow Japanese expansion, *Marblehead* managed the radio traffic coordinating the regrouping of Allied vessels. Meanwhile, *Chaumont* arrived from Brisbane with a boatload of sailors, including Art. Darwin, on Australia's north coast, is roughly 1800 miles as the crow flies from Brisbane and much farther by sea. There, on 7 Jan 42, Art and eighty-one other sailors transferred from *Chaumont* to the *Marblehead*.

On 15 Jan 42, the American-British-Dutch-Australian (ABDA) Command was activated. It included the remnants of the Asiatic Fleet. Its main objective was controlling the "Malay Barrier", a notional line running down the Malay Peninsula through Singapore and the southernmost islands of the NEI. ABDA was all that stood in the way of the Japanese. British Field Marshall Archibald Wavell was given overall command of ABDA, and initially, Asiatic Fleet commander Admiral Thomas Hart led its naval forces.

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'Marby' to Her Men

"A warship is only a piece of machinery, yet almost invariably, in the minds of the men who serve on it, it becomes a kind of governing personality. To begin with, it becomes 'she,' which automatically infers that her men's relationship with her shall exist principally on an emotional basis. However, psychologists say that ever personality, either male or female, has certain tendencies, comprises to some degree, the characteristics of the opposite sex. So perhaps it's well to point out that as the *Marblehead* was creatively mirrored in the minds of her men, she was not entirely female, for she was somehow touched with, and became part of, the feelings of comradeship and respect that each man for certain of his shipmates ..."

Where Away – A Modern Odyssey

Art would serve two years and eleven months aboard *Marblehead*, which was known affectionately to her crew simply as *Marby* (see textbox at left). Art and his new shipmates departed Darwin the day after they joined the ship. While they had been spared the bombings at Pearl Harbor, the war would soon become very real aboard *Marby*. Within the month, this would include *Marby's* coverage of the retirement of the four destroyers comprising DesDiv 59 in their successful 24 Jan raid on Japanese invading forces at the south Borneo oil port of Balikpapan.

Eleven days later, on 4 FEB 1942, at the lower end of the Makassar Strait, *Marby* dodged two bomb runs before the Japanese devastated her on their third attempt landing two direct bomb hits and a crippling near-miss. Eleven shipmates were killed immediately, and four others would die of their wounds in the coming days.

The strike on *Marby's* stern jammed her rudder causing her to steam more slowly and in a predictable circle that made her a sitting duck for the next wave of bombers. The bomb strike amidship knocked out *Marby's* communications, electricity, and gyroscope. The near miss

blew a 27-square-foot hole in the bow's port side which, together with the jammed rudder, caused *Marby* to take on water rapidly and slow down. Fires burned from stem to stern. Such was the extent of the damage, that the attackers apparently concluded that the Java Sea would finish what they had begun, and they reported *Marby* as sunk and went after bigger prey, the *USS Houston (CA-30)*.

Indeed, in the moment, the idea of *Marby* escaping a watery grave, much less undertaking a 90-day, 20,589-mile escape to New York City, seemed preposterous, but the Japanese knew nothing of the leadership, ingenuity, dedication, and heroism that was kicking in on that blazing hulk below them. The escape, more fully described in [Marby's own biography](#), would provide a much-needed morale boost to the Allies who, until then, had had little to cheer about.

Art was aboard *Marby* for the whole trip but since the escape was kept secret, his loved ones and those of all the sailors on *Marby* on that perilous voyage thought the were dead or in enemy captivity until phone calls and newspapers began spreading the good news after the ship's arrival in New York. In one of his fireside chats, President Roosevelt praised the crew's courage and determination in saving their ship.

Though no record was found documenting it, Art probably took leave to see his family in North Dakota at some point during *Marby's* six-month overhaul in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He remained with the ship when she redeployed on 15 Oct 1942 to rejoin the war effort, this time in the Atlantic Ocean homeported at Recife, Brazil from which it hunted Nazi subs and blockade runners, and occasionally rescued downed Allied flyers and enemy sailors in lifeboats after their ship had been sunk.

During this time, *Marby* also escorted convoys to England and Ireland. In Aug 44, she made several stops along the Mediterranean Sea coasts supporting the invasions of Sicily and mainland Italy. On 15-17 Aug 44, along with cruiser *Brooklyn* and *Omaha*, from a position off Saint Raphael, France, *Marby* pumped 157 rounds into Nazi shore defenses during Operation Dragoon, otherwise known as the Invasion of Southern France. One of the most successful Allied operations of WWII in Europe, Dragoon liberated most of southern France in four weeks, inflicting heavy German casualties and taking 131,250 prisoners. A key benefit was the capture of port facilities at Marseille and Toulon. In Oct 44 alone, 524,894 tons of supplies would be unloaded there, more than a third of the Allied cargo shipped to the Western front. [Wikipedia](#)

By 18 Dec 44, *Marby* was back in Recife, Brazil, and Art was transferred off the ship as part of a "Rotation Duty Program." He would not return.

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USS YOG-42, a sister ship of YOG-56
Source: Wikipedia

On 8 Apr 45, the date of the ship's sailing from San Pedro, CA, Art was received aboard the *USS YOG 56*, a 174-foot self-propelled gasoline barge. He had been transferred from the Naval Receiving Station in Philadelphia. It is unclear how long he served aboard *YOG 56*.

About a year later, on 18 May 46, Art was received aboard the *USS Comstock LSD-19*. He remained with *Comstock* at least until 20 Sep 46, after which no



USS Comstock (LSD-19) underway off Korea -1951
Source: U.S Naval History and Heritage Command

additional records could be located.



Rose and Art on their wedding day.

Courtesy: Dan Beliveau

Art was discharged on 17 Feb 47.

Following WWII, Art returned to North Dakota where he married Rose Delima Dumas. Rose was born on 1 Feb 1923 in Argyle, Marshall, Minnesota. Her parents were Romeo Joseph Dumas (1891–1959), a French-Canadian farmer born in Quebec on 15 Apr 1891. Romeo immigrated to the US in 1894. He married another Dumas, Dorilla Blanche nee Dumas (1899–1982). Art and Rose had four children: Shirley, Linda, Dale Arthur, Dennis Keith (1953–2002), and Daniel Thomas.

After his second discharge, taking advantage of experience gained in the Navy, Art went into business for himself opening a dry-cleaning shop in Walhalla, North Dakota.

On 19 Mar 1955, Art and Rose were on their way to Grafton, Walsh County, North Dakota to open a new dry cleaner store. There was snow on the road and, approaching an intersection, a truck driver hit his brakes and slid into their car, killing Art instantly. He was thirty-four. He is buried in Saint Boniface Cemetery, Walhalla, Pembina County, North Dakota.

After his death, Rose ordered a government-provided headstone for his grave. Notations on the headstone application after it was processed indicate that Art was discharged on 17 Feb 1947, and when the Korean war erupted, he reenlisted in Dec 1950 and was discharged on 11 June 51.



Art Beliveau, US Navy
Courtesy: Dan Beliveau

Rose died at 76 on 7 Feb 1999 in Everett, Snohomish County, Washington.



Rose with sons L-to-R Dan, Dale, and Gene
Courtesy: Dan Beliveau

Arthur Joseph Beliveau is listed on page 235 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 contributions from Ancestry.com, Wikipedia, other Internet records, and Art's son, Daniel Thomas.

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