

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



Buck and Vic
"Inseparable"
Source: Angie Milligan

Marblehead Biography Roy and Victor Deatherage

Roy Lester Deatherage, service # 3821474, and Victor Alton Deatherage, service # 3821481, were brothers who served together aboard the *USS Marblehead*. In fact, they seemed to do everything together, at least until 1944.

Both were born in Oakland, Marion County, AR, just south of the border with Missouri, on 15 MAR 1917 and 16 APR 1919, respectively. Their parents were Roy Ernest 'Ern' (1895-1926), a baseball player¹/farmer, and homemaker Amy 'Rea' Marjorie Coburn (1895-1971). They had an older brother, Coyle 'Coy' E. (1914-1990), and two sisters, Shirley Yvonne (1920-1998) and Earline Avis (1923-2014).

Tragedy struck the family on 26 JUN 1926 when an altercation with a neighboring farmer and his wife led the wife to shoot and kill Roy Ernest leaving the Deatherages without a bread winner. Coy, Roy, Victor, Shirley and Earline were 12, 9, 7, 6 and 3, respectively. Somehow Amy and the kids managed through it, no doubt with the help of family and other neighbors.

Roy and Victor enlisted in the Navy together on 14 DEC 1939 at Los Angeles, CA. They were 23 and 20, respectively, single, and incumbent Apprentice Seamen. Their first ship appears to have been *USS Enterprise CV-6*², which they were apparently assigned to as part of their training. On the 29 FEB 1940, they were both transferred to Combat Patrol Wing Four, U.S. Naval Air Station, Seattle, WA for further assignment. The 9 APR 1940 US Census showed Roy and Victor at the Naval Air Station at Sand Point, Seattle, WA.

In OCT 1940, they both were aboard the *USS Williamson*, a Clemson Class Destroyer that had been re-classified³ a Seaplane Tender in AUG 1940. *Williamson* was no doubt just the first of several vessels to carry them on their "ride" across the Pacific. On 5 NOV 1940, in Manila, Philippines, both men were received aboard the *USS Marblehead CL-12* as Seamen 2nd Class from Patrol Squadron 41 via *USS Chaumont AP-5*, one of two veteran transport ships that kept the Asiatic Fleet supplied with crew (the other was *USS Henderson AP-1*).

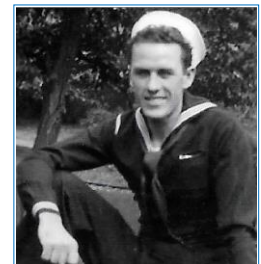
Affectionately known to her crew as *Marby*, the nearly 20-year old ship was obsolete in comparison to Japanese warships of its class. However, *Marby's* leadership and the training and discipline of her crew were superb as the Japanese would soon learn. Their efforts



Roy Lester 'Buck'
Deatherage
Source: Angie Milligan



Ern, Coy and Amy
in better times
Source: Angie Milligan



Victor Alton 'Vic'
Deatherage
Source: Angie Milligan

¹ As told by his son Roy Lester (Buck), Ern was passionate about baseball as most were in that era. He played on what we would call tournament teams today. He usually pitched in these games. His family boasted about his pitching abilities. In his family he was a legendary pitcher. He traveled mostly by horse to towns in Arkansas and Missouri for these "tournament games" He would win anywhere from \$15.00 to \$50.00 per game. He was approached at least once by coaches in the minor league for the Saint Louis Cardinals. Ern and Amy argued about his opportunity to play in the minor league. Amy would have really liked the \$60.00 a month salary however Ernest would say that he could be traded "like a piece of meat" at any time. They had a little over 12 acres on his father Jerome's homestead and he liked farming. His father was a farmer, and he was raised to farm and Ern liked the life it gave him. He pointed out that he made more than \$60.00 per week if he continued playing the tournament games.

Source: Angie Milligan

² *Enterprise* would later play a pivotal role in the 1942 Battle of Midway, a turning point in WWII in the Pacific.

³ *Williamson*, which would be reclassified multiple times during her career, received four battle stars during WWII.



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would bring the Allied forces much needed morale-lifting stories of heroism and ingenuity in the dark early days of WWII in the Pacific.

Victor and Roy would stay aboard *Marby* for 3.5 and 4.5 years, respectively, periods which included the ship's bombing off the north coast of Java; its improbable 20,589-mile, 90-day journey to New York; its overhaul in Brooklyn; its redeployment to the mid-Atlantic to hunt Nazi U-boats and blockade runners; and in Roy's case, *Marby's* support for the invasion of Southern France (see [Marby's own biography](#)).

The brothers finally separated on 10 MAY 1944, at New York, NY, when Victor transferred from *Marby* as an AMM2c to Headquarters, Squadron 92, Fleet Air Wing 9, Naval Air Station, Norfolk, VA. A year later, on 21 MAY 1945, at Norfolk, VA, Roy was transferred from *Marby* as an AMM1c to the headquarters of the Commander of the Fleet, Air Alameda, Naval Air Station, Alameda, CA for interchange with Commandant of the 12th Naval District. The muster roll noted this as a "rotational transfer".

Before heading to the West Coast, Roy went up to New York to marry Rose M. Cincotta on 27 MAY 1945 in Brooklyn. Rose appears to have been a 2nd generation Italian American. It is almost a certainty that the couple met when *Marby* was in drydock at the Brooklyn Navy Yard from 4 MAY through 15 OCT 1942. At the time of Roy's death, he and Rose had two children, John and Florence, 8 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Roy passed away in Carmel, Putnam County, NY, 16 miles west of Danbury, CT on 6 MAR 2004, eleven days' shy of his 87th birthday. He is buried at Rose Hill Memorial Park in nearby Putnam Valley. Rose, who was born on 27 NOV 1918 and died on 10 JAN 2007, is buried there too.

Victor married a June M. Slater of Salt Lake City, UT on 14 MAY 1960 in Clark County, NV. They eventually settled in Inyokern-China Lake area, about 90 miles east of Bakersfield, California. Victor died on 28 JUL 2016 and is buried at Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, Riverside County, CA. At this writing, we have nothing to suggest that June has passed away. She was born on 5 JUN 1935 and is sixteen years younger than Victor was.

Roy and Victor's older brother, Coy, a welder, married Arretta M. "Reta" Hendricks (1906-1999). They remained married 57 years and had seven children - Glen Dean (1929-2012; adopted), Barbara Coylene (1934-2008), Peggy Jean (1936-2019), James Robert Sr. (1939-2008), Judy Maxine (1940-2004), Larry 'Spud' Ray (1943-2013), and William 'Billy' Lynn (1945-2014). When they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1983, they had 15 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren. Coy died on 1 OCT 1990 and Arretta died on 1999. Both are buried at Pioneer Memorial Cemetery, Wagoner, OK.

Shirley Yvonne Deatherage married William M. Anglin. She is buried alongside her mother in Oakland Cemetery, eleven miles northwest of Oakland, AR. The second Deatherage sister, Earline Avis, married twice - first to Sherman G. Reid, a WWII Army veteran. and in 1941, to Patrick Luther (Luke) Milligan (1911-1984), a luxury cruise ship employee. Earline is buried in Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, OR.

The Deatherage brothers appear on page 238 of the 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 Angie Milligan and from Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and other Internet records.

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