

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



Louis Eldon Koogler  
The Dayton Herald

## Marblehead Biography Louis Eldon Koogler

Louis was born on 23 APR 1915 in Fairborn, Bath Township, one of twelve townships comprising Greene County, Ohio. His mother, Ruth Baldwin (1891-1962), was from Union Township, Madison County, Ohio, east of Louis' birthplace. At the time of Louis' birth, his dad, Jacob Anderson Koogler (1891-1964), was a farm laborer, but Jacob later became a storekeeper at a government depot and eventually retired as Inspector, Base Supply, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, which is adjacent to Fairborn.



Louis' parents and sisters  
Ancestry.com

Louis was the 1st-born of three children. His sisters were Carol Isabelle (1918-1974) and Phyllis Jean (1924-2013). He graduated from Bath High School.

Louis enlisted in the Navy for six years on 6 Jun 1934 in Cincinnati, OH. It is likely that he underwent basic training at Great Lakes Naval Training Station just north of Chicago. A complete list of his duty stations during that first enlistment period could not be determined. The earliest muster roll on the Internet which included Louis was from the *USS Louisville (CA 28)*, a heavy cruiser which he boarded on 11 May 1940 to get from Pearl Harbor, TH to San Pedro, CA for further forwarding to San Diego where he was honorably discharged on 15 JUN 1940. While the *Louisville* had merely been a means of transport to California, Louis had transferred to her from the *USS Colorado (BB 45)*. His time aboard Colorado may have spanned much of the 1937-1941 period in which she operated mostly between the U.S. West Coast and Hawaii.

After a three-month break, Louis re-enlisted on 12 SEP 1940, again in Cincinnati, and he was back in San Francisco five days later. On 1 OCT 1940 he was transferred to the Asiatic Station, meaning the Asiatic Fleet, via the *USS Chaumont (AP-6)*, one of two veteran transport ships<sup>1</sup> that supplied that fleet with sailors. Later, on 17 APR 1941, via minesweeper tender *USS Canopus (AP-6)*, Louis joined the *USS Marblehead (CL-12)* which at the time was in the Miraveles, Philippines drydock at the southern end of Bataan Peninsula at the mouth of Manila Bay.

Louis would spend three years aboard *Marblehead*, or *Marby* as she was affectionately referred to by her crew. His time aboard would include the bombing of the ship on 4 FEB 1942 and her subsequent 20,589-mile, 90-day escape to New York which are more fully described in [Marby's own biography](#).

Since the Japanese had reported *Marby* sunk on multiple occasions following the Battle of Makassar Strait, Louis's family thought he was dead or in enemy captivity until he called home with the good news on 5 May 1942, the day after the ship made New York. He indicated to his mother that he would soon be home on a two-week furlough, which probably occurred in late May 1942.

On his return to New York, *Marby* was in the midst of an extensive six-month overhaul in Brooklyn Navy Yard. There, on 1 AUG 1942, Louis was promoted to MM1c. He remained attached to the ship on 15 OCT 1942 when she left Brooklyn to rejoin the war effort, this time in the. From Recife, Brazil, *Marby* patrolled the mid-Atlantic in search of Nazi U-boats and blockade runners. Occasionally she rescued Allied airmen and enemy seamen from sunken vessels. On 4 FEB 1944, two years on from *Marby's* bombing in Makassar Strait, Louis was promoted to Chief Machinist Mate in an acting capacity - CMM(AA).

Late in Louis' time aboard, *Marby* convoyed troops and war material from the U.S. East Coast to England and Ireland. She was in Belfast, Ireland when D-Day occurred. But Louis transferred from *Marby* to the receiving barracks at Lido Beach, Long Island, NY on the ship's return to the U.S. and thus he missed participating in *Operation Dragoon*. From 15 AUG to 17 AUG 1944 *Marby* and other U.S. warships

<sup>1</sup> *USS Henderson (AP-1)* was the other veteran Asiatic Fleet transport.

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softened up German positions along the beaches at the western end of the French Riviera. Allied troops then invaded southern France in one of WWII's most successful missions. *Dragoon* led to the capture of more than 100,000 enemy troops and Germany's evacuation of southern France. It also liberated the French ports of Marseilles and Toulon, which by that October had offloaded 524,894 tons of supplies, more than a third of the Allied cargo shipped to the Western front.

On 9 OCT 1944, Louis was standing on the deck of *USS Estes*<sup>2</sup> (AGC 12) for her commissioning. A Mount McKinley-class amphibious force flag ship built in Wilmington, NC and named after a "peak and national park in Colorado", *Estes* was a floating command post with advanced communications equipment and extensive combat information spaces to be used large-scale operations. Louis remained aboard *Estes* through the end of WWII.

On 20 NOV 1944, *Estes* arrived at Pearl Harbor from Norfolk, VA and sailed from Pearl Harbor on 10 JAN 1945 for rehearsal landings in the Marianas Islands, arriving on 16 FEB off Iwo Jima. As flagship for TF 52, *Estes* served as control center for the pre-invasion bombardment and the work of underwater demolition teams preparing the beaches for the assault and subsequent landings of 19 FEB, receiving wounded, and supplying and repairing small craft. The ship arrived at Ulithi on 11 MAR for final preparations for the Okinawa assault. On 24 MAR, she again landed an underwater demolition group, then sailed with the bombardment group, directing the pre-invasion pounding of the beaches and Japanese strong points. Using information gained from its contacts with the radar picket destroyers, its controlled aircraft carrier planes protecting the vast concentration of shipping assembled for the assault on 1 April. After an overhaul and new equipment installation in San Francisco, *Estes* embarked on occupation duty first in the Philippines in AUG 1945, then in Japan and finally in Tsingtao, China.<sup>3</sup>

However, by 1 JUN 1946, Louis, now a Chief Machinist Mate with permanent status, had transferred to the headquarters of the Western Sea Frontier in San Francisco. There he began a new phase of his career focusing on ship overhaul, ship decommissioning and recommissioning, and occasionally mothballing or scrapping. He appears to have acted in this capacity on several of the following ships after WWII:



*Horace A Bass (APD 124)*  
Wikipedia.com

*USS Lexington (CV 16)* - A WWII Essex-class aircraft carrier named for *USS Lexington (CV-2)*, lost in the Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942. Today she is a museum ship in Corpus Christi, TX.

*USS Horace A Bass (APD 124)* - A high-speed transport named for an Ensign aviator and Navy Cross winner for his actions in the Battle of Midway (JUN 1942) in which he shot down an attacking Japanese dive bomber and a fighter although his own plane was damaged. Six months later he was killed during the Battle of the

Eastern Solomons.

*USS Rolette (AKA-99)* - An Andromeda-class attack cargo ship named after a North Dakota county.

*USS Renshaw (DD 499)* - A Fletcher-class destroyer name in honor of Commander William B. Renshaw, she earned 19 battle stars (eight in WWII, five in the Korean War; and six in Vietnam.

*USS Scania (AKA-40)* - An Artemis-class attack cargo ship named after the minor planet 460 Scania, which in turn was named for the southernmost historical province of Sweden

*USS Hoist (ARS 40)* - A Bolster-class rescue and salvage ship.



*USS Renshaw (DD 499)*  
Wikipedia.com

<sup>2</sup> *Estes* would earn two battle stars in WWII, two more in Korea and six campaign stars in Vietnam.

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia.

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*USS New Jersey (BB 62)* - Recommissioned multiple times, this battleship was struck from the record in 1999 after 56 years of service. She remains the most decorated battleship in the US Navy's history with 19 Battle Stars (nine in WWII, four in the Korean War, two in Vietnam, and four in Lebanon and the Persian Gulf. Today she is a museum ship in Camden, NJ.<sup>4</sup>



USS New Jersey (BB 62)  
Ancestry.com

Louis married Rhoda Evalena “Evelyn” Leach (1912–1995) in 1947. It is unclear how they met, but Evelyn was born in West Liberty, Morgan County, Kentucky, then a town of less than 1000 people 130 miles southeast of the transport hub of Cincinnati, OH, through which Louis traveled when he visited his family in Fairborn, 67 miles northeast of that city. Perhaps they met in “Cincy”.



Evelyn, front row left, with her eight sisters in Morgan County, KY  
Ancestry.com

Evelyn was the daughter of John Clark Leach (1867–1947), a farmer, and Rhoda Victoria Elam (1876–1942). She was the 10<sup>th</sup>-born of thirteen children. Her siblings were: Raney Porter (1893–1940), John Richard (1895–1962), Mary Josephine "Mollie" (1896–1948), Margaret Alice (1899–1951), William Glover (1900–1966), Lillie E (1902–1981), Dollie (1904–1978), Nora Mae (1908–2001), Eula Venus (1910–1954), Clora Ellen (1915–1989), Ida Lee (1917–2005), and Martin Luther (1919–1957). Louis and Evelyn appear to have had no children.

Louis appears to have been honorably discharged for the final time on 8 SEP 1949 though in the absence of his full military record, it is not possible to say with certainty. It is also unclear which occupations he pursued after the Navy, but at least two residential directories listed him as an attendant at Joe Hansen Service Station in San Diego suburb of La Mesa, CA in 1963 and 1964.

Louis died on in 31 DEC 1991 in San Diego County, California. Evelyn died on in 1 OCT 1995 in Dayton, Ohio. They are buried side by side in Arlington Cemetery, Brookville, Montgomery County, Ohio.

Louis Eldon Koogler is listed on page 242 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, Newspapers.com, and other Internet records.*

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

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia.