



Harley John Wenninger
Gunner's Mate 3/C U.S. Navy
4 October 1943 – 29 April 1946

Harley was born on 26 November 1925 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He attended grades 1 to 6 at Kratzer School in Allentown (1931 to 1937), and grades 7 to 12 at South Whitehall (later Parkland) Middle and High School in South Whitehall, Pennsylvania (1937 to 1943). After high school, Harley worked for Komfo Mattress Factory in Allentown until he went into the Navy. He enlisted in the Navy in Allentown on 4 October 1943 as a Seaman Recruit, and was sent to U.S. Naval Training Station, Sampson, New York, for recruit training. After training at Sampson, in November 1943 he was ordered to Light Cruiser *USS San Diego (CL-53)*, flagship of Commander, Cruiser Division 11. After Harley reported aboard *USS San Diego*, he performed gunnery duties and saw action in the Western Pacific in the Gilbert Islands, the Kwajalein Atoll, the Wotje Atoll, and the Marshall Islands prior to returning to Mare Island Shipyard in San Francisco California on 15 December 1943, where the ship went into drydock for repairs. On 4 January she got underway once again for the Western Pacific where she participated in the attack on Truk Island where the Japanese had a major port, Jaluit Atoll in the Marshall Islands, and Majuro Atoll. She then returned again to Mare Island for overhaul on 9 March 1944. Two months later she was back again in Western Pacific waters where she participated in numerous battles which included, among others, Truk, Iwo Jima, Saipan, the Battle of the Philippine Sea, Southern Palau, Philippine Islands, Okinawa, and Northern Luzon. She then patrolled waters off Formosa and China, and escorted Battleship *USS Missouri (BB-63)* into Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender and signing of the peace treaty ending World War II on 2 September 1945. *USS San Diego* then left for San Diego, California, arriving in port on 19 September 1945. After *USS San Diego* returned to the States, Harley was transferred to Attack Transport *USS Calvert (APA-32)*, which sailed for the Philippines to lift troops to Hiro Wan, Japan, for the occupation of Japan and to return U.S. troops home to the west coast from November 1945 to May 1946. During his time aboard ship, Harley rose to Gunner's Mate 3/C and was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Medal (w/8 stars) American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and Philippine Liberation Medal (w/2 stars). He was discharged at Bainbridge, Maryland, on 29 April 1946, and returned to Allentown to live and work as a Roofer for L.A. Acker Company until 1951. He then went to work as a Serviceman for UGI Corporation in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a supplier of natural gas and electricity, and ultimately rose to the position of Customer Service Supervisor. He worked for UGI until his retirement in 1988. Harley married **Olive Irene Best** (born 19 December 1929) on 23 June 1951 in Asbury Methodist Church in Allentown; they lived in Allentown until 1974, when they moved to Lower Macungie Township in Wescosville, Pennsylvania. They raised two daughters, **Anne Marie Wenninger** and **Jane Audrey Wenninger**. Harley's parents were **William Wenninger** (19 May 1897 – 11 June 1979), who served in the Army during World War I, and **Maude Matilda Elizabeth Frantz** (25 March 1903 – 20 October 1991). Harley's brother, **Donald William Wenninger**, also served in the Army from 1946 to 1948.



USS San Diego (CL-53)



USS Calvert (APA-32)