

**MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES**



*Loyal Legion Vignettes*



**REAR ADMIRAL DAVID M. KINDLEBERGER, USN  
(1834 Ohio – 1921 New York)**

**By  
Keith G. Harrison, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief,  
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, and  
Cary Randall Stone-Greenstein, Great Granddaughter of David M. Kindleberger  
(November 2006)**



**Rear Admiral David M. Kindleberger**  
(Left, Circa 1864 as Surgeon) (Right, Circa 1890)  
(Photographs courtesy of Cary Randall Stone-Greenstein)

**David M. Kindleberger was born September 2, 1834 to Dr. Tobias J. (abt 1806- ?) and Catherine K**

(Newcomer) (abt 1812 - ?) Kindleberger in Smithville, Wayne County, Ohio. He was educated at Wittenberg College, Class of 1855, and Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia 1858. As a medical doctor he was described as an "Allopath."

He joined U.S. Navy as an Assistant Surgeon on May 20, 1859 because a roommate in medical school had talked it up. His first cruise was a three-year tour aboard the *USS San Jacinto* of the west coast of Africa to stop the slave trade. After his return in 1861, he was detailed for a few months to the Philadelphia Naval Yard. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he was assigned for duty aboard the *USS Miami* with the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and participated in a number of the naval engagements off the southern coast, including the battle of Mobile Bay where he served as a surgeon aboard the *USS Monongahela*. On August 14, 1862, he was promoted to Surgeon.

Rear Admiral Kindleberger's Civil War career is best summarized from a newspaper article that he prepared when he was almost 84 years old in an effort to help elicit patriotic support for the United States' participation in World War I. The January 20, 1918 article that was published in the *New York Times* is presented below.

*Patriotic Appeal of 84-Year-Old Admiral  
Retired Naval Officer Who Was with Farragut at Mobile Bay,  
Tells About His Experiences as a Stimulus for Self-Sacrifice by the Young Men of Today*

*By Rear Admiral D. Kindleberger, Ex-Medical Director, U.S. Navy*

*I think it is the duty of every American, male and female, young or old, to do everything possible to aid in the prosecution of this greatest of all wars to a victorious end. I considered that I, though nearly 84 years old, might be able to arouse in the minds of some people now indifferent to the outcome of the war a patriotic desire to their "bit" by giving some fact of my experience in the war between the North and South.*

*In writing these facts of my experience as I remember them I do it without any of the feeling of resentment that prevailed as that time, but simply to show how bravely all, both Northern and Southern officers and men, stood up before the dangers of battle to defend and maintain their patriotic duties to their country. I hope that their patriotic example may stimulate all of our citizens of today to a deep sense of a personal duty to do all in each one's power in defense of our glorious country, and conquer a lasting peace for us and the whole world.*

*In 1859, I was commissioned an Assistant Surgeon in the United States Navy and was ordered to the United States ship *San Jacinto*, which was sent the same year to the West Coast of Africa to prevent the slave trade. We remained there until 1861, when the war broke out, and then we returned to the United States, and I was soon ordered to the United States steamer *Miami*, which sent to the Gulf of Mexico to join the squadron of the brave old Admiral Farragut. We were not long reaching the mouth of the Mississippi River, where his large fleet was assembled.*

*In a few weeks, we all steamed up the river and anchored below Forts Philip and Jackson, where we lay for several weeks waiting for the results of the firing on the forts by the mortar boats. During the time we waiting the firing of the mortar boats, the enemy had stretched chains across the river and sent down numerous fire rafts to burn us in the night. Our ship had a narrow escape from one of them, which floated towards us and got fast in our wheelhouse where it hung some little time before it could be got loose. In the mean time, it was throwing hundreds of burning embers on top of a large oilcloth tarpaulin, under which were stored one hundred barrels of gunpowder for use by the mortar boats next day. Our brave officers and men jumped upon the cinders and put them out before they could burn hole through to the powder. It was a miraculous escape.*

*At length the Admiral concluded that the time had come to run past the forts in the night with his*

*fleet. Our ship, with others, was to remain below and deliver a furious fire on the forts as the fleet passed up the river. All his ships went past safely except one. A day or two afterwards the fleet sailed up the river to New Orleans, which was surrendered without firing a gun. General Butler and a regiment of troops on board was the first one to land or, rather, to make fast to the wharves.*

*After repairing our damages and waiting several weeks for necessary stores and preparations, the Admiral determined to take his fleet up the Mississippi River and clear away the enemy from the shores, so that our river boats could go up and down without being fired on. During this waiting, I was transferred to a new ship called the Monongahela that was added to the fleet.*

*The river banks were soon cleared of sharpshooters, snipers and other obstructions, and then the fleet went up past Baton Rouge to a place called Port Hudson. Here the east bank of the river rose to high bluffs, on which were placed many big guns backed by a large lot of troops. Here the fleet had to stop. The Admiral then determined to run past them in the night as he had done at Forts Philip and Jackson. So one dark night, the fleet started and soon a tremendous firing began from the enemy and our guns responded. The only ship that got past was the Admiral's ship, the Hartford.*

*All the other ships fell back down the river except our ship, the Monongahela, which got fast in the mud, right under the enemy's guns on the other side of the river. To make it worse for us, some enemy troops on our shore lighted fires so that we were silhouetted, and a fine mark for their guns. We expected every moment, for over four hours, to be blown up by shots in our boilers or magazines. Our brave Captain McKinstry had the bridge shot out from under him, breaking both of his ankles. He was carried to his cabin and asked if the ship should surrender. He answered most emphatically, "No, never! I'll be blown up first!"*

*As good fortune came to us, our ship swung around with head down the river about an hour before daylight and we soon were out of the range of the guns. We were struck over 100 times with grape, canister, and cannon shots. About one-sixth on board were killed or wounded. My room was torn to pieces. We lay for some days below the forts until we got a new Captain, Abner Reid.*

*Some days after this, early one morning after a dark night, a small boat came alongside of us; and who should come on board of us but Admiral Farragut. It was so if he had fallen from the sky. It turned out that he had floated past the bluff batteries on a boat concealed by bushes.*

*He made our ship, the Monongahela, his temporary flagship for some weeks until Port Hudson was taken by General Banks' army in the rear, when his flagship, the Hartford, came down the river from Vicksburg and he returned to her. While with us, he had several slight attacks of sickness which I looked after. Then the mosquitoes were so bad, and to protect him from them I gave him my mosquito bar. He was a most kind and loveable-natured man. The humblest sailor could talk with him without any great formality. He was very kind to me.*

*Our ship, the Monongahela, was build in the beginning of the war and was of unusual speed, and on that account was almost constantly running backward and forward between Port Hudson and Baton Rouge, and New Orleans, on business for the fleet, carrying stores, passengers, sick, wounded, etc. On several occasions, we had Admiral Farragut or members of his staff as passengers. In going down the river we often made sixteen to seventeen miles per hour, much to the delight of the Admiral, whom I frequently heard exclaiming: "See her run, she's going like a scared dog, like a railway train," etc. It was at that time an anomalous speed for a man-of-war.*

*Because of our frequent passage up and down and our constant firing at everything that looked suspicious, the enemy determined to sink us if possible. So, at several points we were fired on by field pieces. Among those places was one consisting of several twelve-pounder guns at a point several miles below Baton Rouge, on the west bank of the river. Holes were cut through the levee, which very high and thick, so that eight-inch guns could not fire through them and when fired*

*over them the fuses did not explode the shell until they were long past the enemy; consequently our firing at them did no damage.*

*On one occasion, we were sent to New Orleans with orders to proceed with all possible dispatch, and when we came to this point, we were met with severe fire from several guns which greatly excited the anger of our new Captain, Abner Reid. He gave them several shots from our eight-inch guns and field pieces without stopping the ship. Her shouted to them, "I cannot stop now, but just you wait until I come back and I will then blow you to smithereens," or word to that effect.*

*After attending to the business at New Orleans, we started back up the river with Captain Jenkins, Admiral Farragut's fleet Captain, on board. We had several little encounters with the enemy on the way, but when we got to where the several guns were we were met by a grand fusillade. Captain Reid kept his promise to the them. He anchored the ship in front of the battery and all our guns were brought into action, but without the least damage to the enemy, because, as I said before, our shells could not penetrate the broad, thick levee, and when they went over, they exploded far beyond the enemy. We were struck frequently and men were killed and wounded by their twelve-pounder guns.*

*Finally a shell struck us near where Captain Reid stood and as it burst he was hit by two of the fragments, one going through his right knee joint and the other tore out a piece from his abdomen as large as a man's hand, exposing the entrails. A piece of the same shell broke a cutlass into fragments, a part of which struck Captain Jenkins on the right leg above the knee, making a severe wound. As it was considered useless to continue the action, since our firing had no effect in silencing their gun, orders were given to slip the cable and proceed to Baton Rouge.*

*After arrival, I was order to take Captain Reid ashore and remain with him as long as necessary. His wounds were considered mortal, but as he was a large man with a powerful physique, and before his wounds, in the best of health, it was four days before he died. He was conscious the whole time, but I kept him comparatively free from pain by the use of opiates. He talked with me concerning his wound, and insisted on knowing whether it was mortal.*

*I felt it my duty to tell him that it was. He then in the most cool manner gave me instructions as to the disposal of his things, and, giving his wife's address, requested me to write to her an account of his injuries with final messages. Such bravery and such coolness, looking death in the face, was characteristic of the man who, before he came to our ship, was commanding an active little gunboat that ran from Lake Pontchartrain to the fleet off Mobile Bay, much to the terror of the enemy.*

*In the evening, I went to see him and found him very weak, but apparently conscious. Suddenly he opened his eyes and said: "Doctor, I suppose I must die." "Yes Captain, I am afraid so." Then again shutting his eyes, he lay for some minutes quietly, and, suddenly looking at me, he said, "Well, I think I will shove off." and died without another word, at that instant using the usual remark of a boat leaving ship for shore.*

*In the course of two or three month the enemy were captured along the whole length of our part of the river, so we had a rest for a few months. Then the Admiral determined to capture another of the enemy's strongholds at a place called Mobile Bay. To do this several month of preparation were necessary.*

*At last, everything was ready for the attack, and the great Farragut, though he knew for wooden ships to attempt to pass under the guns of so strongly a fortified place as Forts Morgan and Gains was a very uncertain problem, determined to make the attack.*

*It was a magnificent sight. Large American flags were at all mastheads and peaks of every ship, fluttering in the gentle morning breeze. I stayed on deck admiring the grand display until the front*

*ships opened fire on the forts, which they soon returned. I then went down to my station and it was not long before our ship was under fire, and soon they began to bring down the wounded. Among them was our First Lieutenant with both legs crushed, one so badly it was necessary to cut it off above the knee; the other was put in splints. Many others came down with wounds of all sorts. Soon the order came to our ship to ram the enemy's ironclad at the full speed of fourteen knots. The noise of the cannon, the shouting of the men and the groans of the wounded were indescribable. A moment later, we rammed the big ironclad Tennessee with such force that all of us were sent almost head-over-heels with the sudden shock. Our big iron ram was broken to pieces and our solid wooden bow was ground to splinters for over twenty feet, fortunately above the water line. Just as we struck her, two of her shells entered our bow and burst on the berth deck, wounding many, among whom was one of my assistants.*

*The front ship stopped, saying that there were torpedoes ahead. Then the Admiral, whose ship was next, cried out, "Damn the torpedoes" and shouting to his own Captain, "Hard a port, full speed ahead." Many torpedo fuses were exploded by the vessels, but only one torpedo exploded sinking the monitor Tecumseh, drowning and killing all on board except about fifteen, who had time to get out before she sunk. It was also in this battle that the Admiral was lashed to the rigging for fear of falling overboard in case he was wounded or killed. In two hours after we got inside, all the enemy's gunboats were captured, and in a day or two the big ironclad also, and the efforts were cut off from supplies hence at our mercy. This was the crushing of the last naval stronghold, giving New Orleans, Mobile, and the whole Gulf coast into the hands of the North.*

On January 1, 1865, he was assigned as Surgeon aboard the *USS Itasca*, which was part of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron. He served on this ship until the end of the war. Following the war, he served from 1869 to 1871 aboard the *USS Independence* at Mare Island near San Francisco. From 1877 - 1880, he served as the Fleet Surgeon of the Asiatic Station. On February 26, 1880, he was ordered to duty on the Naval Retiring Board. He also served as a Navy Medical Inspector, being detached from the Retiring Board and assigned to the flagship, the *USS Hartford* on December 2, 1883. In 1886, Dr. Kindleberger became Fleet Surgeon of the Pacific Coast Naval Station. On January 30, 1887, he became the Medical Director in charge of the naval hospital at Washington, DC. He served for a number of years as a member of the Medical Examining Board of the Navy. In 1888, he was placed in charge of the naval hospital at Philadelphia; a post he held until his retirement. Admiral Kindleberger retired from active service on September 2, 1896, having reached the age limit of 62 (at this time, he maintained the distinction of being the oldest officer then serving in the U.S. Navy). Following retirement from the Navy, Dr. Kindleberger traveled extensively throughout the world, and resided in France, Italy, and Norway and finally back in the United States in Washington DC and New York. In 1921, he was listed in *Who's Who*.



*USS Miami*



*USS Monongahela*

*USS Independence**USS Hartford*

In addition to having a highly successful Navy career, Admiral Kindleberger became proficient as a painter. He started painting on long cruises at sea, bored with inactivity as a doctor with nothing to do. He became quite expert and eventually obtained very good prices for his best work. He painted passionately, and if he ran out of canvas would paint on anything, boards or even cloth. He did many pastoral scenes. While serving in California and continuing on into his retirement, he achieved considerable success with paintings of landscapes, some of which are now in museums. He was a member of the Washington, DC Artist Club and the Society of Washington Artists. He exhibited at the National Academy of Design (1877) and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art (1880s - 1890s). His work is in the collection of the California Historical Society and a painting of his hangs in the Washington County Museum in Hagar Maryland. One of his pictures, *Figures on a Shore*, realized \$19,975 in a sale in March 2006.



Matterhorn



Figures on a Shore

Rear Admiral David M. Kindleberger was married three times. His first marriage was to Garlinda Schuster (abt 1841 - ?) on June 1, 1858. Three children were born to this marriage:

1. ? Kindleberger (? - ?),
2. Garlinda Kindleberger (Abt 1859 - ?), and
3. David M. Kindleberger Jr. (abt 1863 - 1958).

His second marriage was on October 8, 1868 to Mattie Lindsay Poor (October 1, 1847 - April 3, 1898) in Norfolk, Virginia. She was the daughter of Mattie Lindsay Stark (abt 1813 - ?) and [Rear Admiral Charles Henry Poor](#) (June 11, 1808 - November 5, 1882) Poor. Two children were born to this marriage:

1. Rear Admiral Charles Kindleberger (1870 - 1957) and
2. Evertson Crosby Kindleberger (1875 - 1950).

His final marriage was in 1906 to Olivia Marie (1867 - ?). No children were born to this marriage. He did, though, adopt his wife's son, Philip George Conlie Bishop Kindleberger (1896 - ?), by a previous

**marriage.**

**Rear Admiral David Kindleberger, Medical Corps, U.S. Navy, died on March 25, 1921 at his home in New York City. The funeral was held at Washington DC with interment taking place at Oakhill Cemetery.**

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**Descendants of Rear Admiral David M. Kindleberger are eligible for hereditary membership in the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS - founded by Civil War officers on April 15, 1865) and the Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States (founded in 1899 as the auxiliary to the MOLLUS). For more information on either or both organizations, please visit each organization's national website:**

**[Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)**

**[Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)**

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