

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN OSCAR L. CARLSON
CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS, U. S. NAVY

Oscar Ludwig Carlson was born in Montclair, New Jersey, on November 1, 1894, son of the late Ludwig and Augusta (Lovengren) Carlson. He graduated in 1912 from the Montclair High School and in 1916 received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. From July 1916 to June 1917 he was employed by the Niagara Wall Paper and Defiance Paper Company, Niagara Falls, New York, as a Chemical Engineer. In July 1917 he enlisted as an Apprentice Seaman, in the U. S. Naval Reserve. He was assigned to the Hospital Corps, and served at the Naval Hospital, Newport, Rhode Island. Later he was transferred to the Naval Proving Ground, Indian Head, Maryland, where he was engaged in chemical and analytical work at the Powder Plant as Machinist Mate Second Class, and Chief Gunner's Mate successively.

In 1918 he took the competitive examination for entrance in the Officer Material School, Norfolk, Virginia, and in December 1918 was graduated, second in his class, and commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Naval Reserve. He was enrolled in the Civil Engineer Corps of the U. S. Naval Reserve on June 3, 1936, in the rank of Lieutenant Commander, and subsequently advanced in rank, attaining that of Captain, to date from May 15, 1943. On October 22, 1947 he was transferred to the U. S. Navy.

Upon receiving his commission in 1918, he reported as Executive Officer aboard the USS SC-188, and subsequently commanded the USS SC-18 based at Norfolk, Virginia, and later operating with the Atlantic Fleet out of New York, New York. Relieved of active duty in July 1919, he was honorably discharged from the USNR on July 4, 1921.

During 1919 and 1920 he was a Chemical Engineer with the Central Dystuff and Chemical Company, Newark, New Jersey. In January 1920 he joined the Carlson Company which he reorganized, serving as Vice President and General Manager, and from 1925 as President. That company was responsible for the erection of many of the larger buildings in northern New Jersey, including churches, schools, banks, hospitals, clubs, industrial and commercial buildings. He also was connected with the following in Montclair, New Jersey. The Bellegrove Company (Vice President), Carlson-Babcock Company (Vice President), Home Comfort Sales Corporation (President), and was Director of the Montclair Savings Bank, the First Federal Loan and Savings Institution, First National Bank and Trust Company, and the Watching Mortgage and Title Guarantee Company.

In 1926 he was appointed to the Town of Montclair Planning Board, serving until 1932, when he was elected Mayor of the Town of Montclair, for a term of four years (1932-1936).

Ordered to active Naval service in September 1940, he had instruction (Naval Officers Class), at the Chemical Warfare School, Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. The next month he was assigned to the War Plans Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department,

Washington, D. C., and in 1941 became Head of the Priorities and Allocations Division upon the establishment of that division. He also served as liaison between the Bureau of Yards and Docks and the War Production Board, as Bureau Representative in Allocation Committee, the Power Committee, the Relay Rail and other War Production Board Committees, and was Navy Lumber Coordinator under the Centralized Lumber Procurement Plan.

In October 1943 he reported as Executive Officer of the Base Construction Section, Service Squadron, South Pacific, Noumea, New Caledonia. He transferred in March 1944 to the staff of Commander Naval Bases, Forward Area, South Pacific, with headquarters at Guadalcanal, to serve as Public Works Officer until August of that year. (Bases in that area included Guadalcanal, Tulagi, Vella La Vella, Segi, Ondonga, Russels, Munda Treasury and Bougainville in the Solomons).

"For meritorious achievement as Public Works Officer and Officer in Charge of Construction (SeaBee Activities) on the staff of Commander Naval Bases, Forward Area from March to August 1944..." he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The citation continues in part: "...The shore facilities constructed and maintained on the bases in the South Pacific Area by the SeaBees provided a staging area for combat, Amphibious, SeaBees and other units moving forward. Demonstrating sound judgment, skilled leadership and outstanding administrative and organizational ability, (he) contributed materially to the success of the operations supported the SeaBees and the shore facilities in the bases in the forward area of the South Pacific..."

In August and September 1944 he served on the staff of Commander Service Forces, SEVENTH Fleet, assigned to the Base Construction Office, his duty in connection with the construction planning and requisitioning of materials for the Philippine Invasion at Leyte. For three months thereafter, attached to Naval Advanced Base Unit #4, he continued planning for the Leyte Invasion, embarking for Hollandia on October 16, 1944 and arriving at Tacloban on October 22. There he was assigned to the staff of Base Unit #4 as Base Construction Officer (for Leyte and Samar).

After temporary duty in December 1944-January 1945 with Director Pacific Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks, San Francisco, he reported to the Bureau of Yards, and Docks, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and during the next thirty days had temporary duty in the Advanced Base Division of the Bureau in Chicago; Pacific Division, San Francisco, and the Advanced Depot, Port Hueneme, California. He reported to the Commander, Service Force, Pacific Fleet, in March 1945, and during the last months of the war, until September 15, 1945 served as Island PWO for the Island of Guam, with additional duty as a member of the Area Assignment Board and Officer in Charge of the 35th N. C. Regiment.

He continued duty with Service Force, Pacific, until October 1945, and after three months' leave reported on January 4, 1946 as Assistant District Public Works Officer, Third Naval District, with Headquarters in New York, New York. He remained there until January 11, 1946, when he became Deputy Director of the Atlantic Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks, Headquarters at New York City. From July 1946 to February 1947 he had temporary duty as Officer in Charge of the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Area, Naval Coal Mines Administration. He returned to duty as Assistant Public Works Officer, Third Naval District, in February 1947, and continued to serve in that capacity until January 1948, when he was assigned to the Industrial Survey Division, Office of the Inspector General, Navy Department.

From October 1950 to May 1952 he served as District Public Works Officer and District Civil Engineer for the Fifteenth Naval District, Balboa, Canal Zone. This was followed by duty as District Civil Engineer, Fourth Naval District, with Headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, his present assignment.

In addition to the Bronze Star Medal, Captain Carlson has the Victory Medal (World War I); the American Defense Service Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with star; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with two stars. He also has the Naval Reserve Medal.

He is a member of the following: Beta Lambda Chapter (Lehigh University) of the Delta Tau Delta Fraternity; Montclair (New Jersey) Lodge #144, F and AM; National Sojourners, Washington, D. C. He is a former member (before being called to active duty in 1940) of the following: American Legion, Montclair Post #34; Newark Athletic Club, Newark, N. J.; Touchdown Club, Washington, D. C.; Rotary Club, Montclair; Knoll Golf Club, Boonton, N. J.; and the Upper Montclair Golf Club, Upper Montclair, N. J.

He is also a member of the Union Congregational Church of Upper Montclair, New Jersey.