

CAPTAIN LEON D. CARSON
MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

Leon Delwin Carson was born in Grand Meadow, Minnesota, on July 18, 1896, son of Mrs. Osborne J. (Susan) Carson and the late Mr. Carson. He attended high schools in Long Prairie, Minnesota, and Osage, Iowa, and college at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis), and the University of Chicago. He studied medicine at Northwestern University Medical School, from which he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine in June 1924.

Having enrolled in the U. S. Naval Reserve Force on June 10, 1918, while he was in college during World War I, he was commissioned Assistant Surgeon with the rank of Lieutenant (jg) on June 10, 1924. He resigned his commission on August 1, 1925, and was re-commissioned Lieutenant (jg) in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Navy on June 9, 1926. Through subsequent promotions, he attained the rank of Captain, to date from May 15, 1943.

His first year of Naval Service was spent at the Naval Hospital, New York, where he completed his internship before resigning. Upon his reappointment a year later, he was assigned general duty at the Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois, where he served from September 14, 1926 to January 29, 1927. He studied Aviation Medicine at the Naval Medical School, Washington, D. C., where he was designated Flight Surgeon, and on May 4, 1927 joined the USS LANGLEY, converted aircraft carrier, in which he had sea duty for two years.

Duty as Assistant Medical Officer at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, preceded further sea duty, this time aboard the USS LEXINGTON from November 1931 until March 1934. This was followed by a tour of duty as Assistant Medical Officer of the Naval Air Station, San Diego. On October 18, 1936 he joined the USS SARATOGA, and detached from that carrier on December 15, 1938, he was ordered to Seattle, Washington, for duty as Senior Medical Officer of the Naval Air Station there.

Reporting on March 24, 1941, to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., he was assigned duty as Head of the Aviation Medicine Research Section in the Flight Division of the Bureau of Aeronautics, in which capacity he served until April 1944. He received a Letter of Commendation with Ribbon, from the Secretary of the Navy for outstanding service during that period.

He also received a Letter of Appreciation in 1942 from the Secretary of the Navy for his contribution to the "development of the Polaroid Adaptor (Carson Type) single aperture goggle (used extensively) for improving night vision and for other use by the armed forces(and which) resulted in a large saving to the Government....."

From May 1931 until September 15, 1944, he served as Medical Observer with Commander, Naval Forces Europe. As such he participated in early air evacuation efforts of both Royal Air Force and Ninth Troop Carrier Command, United States Armed Forces. Enjoying direct

contact with personnel of the National Research Council, Great Britain, and the Medical Services of the Royal Air Force and Royal Naval Medical Corps, he reported on the Progress in Medical research and Medical experiences of these services to the Director, Research Division, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

Upon his return from the European theater he was assigned to the development of medical plans for Air Evacuation in the Pacific Area. He had brief temporary duty with Commander Aircraft, Pacific, and was then ordered to the staff of Air Evacuation Wing One, which successfully carried out air evacuation of casualties during the Iwo Jima and Okinawa Campaigns. From June 11 to October 23, 1945, he served with Commander Aircraft, Seventh Fleet, as Staff Medical Officer. "For meritorious service (in that capacity), during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the campaign for the liberation of the Philippines....." he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The citation continues:

"Skillfully combating the deplorable sanitary conditions brought about by the retreating Japanese forces, Captain Carson aided materially in making living conditions for the Armed Forces ashore conducive to good health. In cooperation with local health authorities, he also improved the sanitation of Philippine boroughs adjacent to Naval Air Bases, thereby providing safe liberty areas for our personnel....."

He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded Air Transport Evacuation Squadron ONE. The citation follows in part:

"For outstanding heroism in support of military operations during the Okinawa Campaign from April 1 to June 21, 1945.....Air Transport Evacuation Squadron ONE continued its hazardous mission until all organized Japanese resistance had ceased and by the invaluable service thus rendered contributed immeasurably to the success of our forces in securing this strategically important base."

After brief duty with Commander Fleet Air West Coast, he reported to Commander Naval Air Bases, Norfolk, Virginia, for duty as Senior Medical Officer, attached to the Naval Air Station there. On November 21, 1949 he was ordered to Pensacola, Florida, where he served for more than three years. His assignment at this activity was Officer in Charge of the Naval School of Aviation Medicine and Research, and later, in June of 1951, when the school was redesignated as a separate command, he was assigned as the Commanding Officer. Since April 1952 he has been the Director of the Aviation Medical Acceleration Laboratory at the Naval Air Development Center, Johnsville, Pennsylvania.

In addition to the Bronze Star Medal, the Commendation Ribbon, and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Captain Carson has the World War I Victory Medal, the American Defense Service Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Philippine Defense Ribbon; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.

He is a member of the Masonic Lodge (32nd degree), (Golden Rule, Chicago); Scottish Rite Bodies, Pensacola, Florida. He is a Fellow of the Aero Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, and the Medical Association; an honorary Fellow of Puget Sound Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology; and a member of the Phi Chi Medical Fraternity, Kappa Rho Chapter, Northwestern University.