



Carl U. Peterson
Lieutenant Commander
Class of 1930



**The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting
the Legion of Merit and the Purple Heart to
Lieutenant Commander Carl U. Peterson
United States Coast Guard**

For service as set forth in the following Summary:

Lieutenant Commander Peterson, Commanding Officer of USCGC ESCANABA, was posthumously awarded for his valiant efforts in rescuing the crew of the DORCHESTER on the night of 3 February 1943. The ESCANABA was en route from Newfoundland to Greenland, serving as the escort to the U.S. Army transport DORCHESTER. Around 0100 on 3 February 1943, a torpedo struck the DORCHESTER which had a total of 904 people on board. The ship sank in twenty minutes, exposing the soldiers and crew to 36 degrees Fahrenheit air temperature and 34 degrees Fahrenheit water temperature. The ESCANABA initially went in search of the submarine only to find no trace of it. Prior to the tragedy of the DORCHESTER, ESCANABA intensely studied its crew's search and rescue techniques, trying to become more proficient in their efforts. As a result, ESCANABA was training its crew using unique and original ideas for that time, such as using the aviator's rubber exposure suits and employing rescue swimmers. As a result, the crew of ESCANABA was able to rescue 133 survivors on that frigid and dark night. Lieutenant Commander Peterson and his crew selflessly sought out the members of the DORCHESTER for over eight exhausting hours.

Lieutenant Commander Peterson died on June 10th, 1943 along with the rest of the crew of the EXCANABA, save for two survivors. Dense smoke was seen rising from the ship while it was on convoy duty en route from Greenland to Newfoundland. The cause of the sinking of the ESCANABA is not known.