



Torpedoman's Mate Rating



**Robert William Peterson**  
**Torpedoman's Mate 3/C U.S. Navy**  
**14 March 1944 – 11 March 1946**

Robert was born on 19 December 1925 in Warren, Pennsylvania, where he attended grade school at South Street School from 1931 to 1939. He graduated from Warren High School 1943. Prior to entering the Navy, Robert worked for Struthers-Wells Company in Warren as a Boilermaker Helper. He was drafted into the Navy on 14 March 1944 as a Seaman Recruit and was ordered to Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland, for recruit training. He was then transferred to Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, for advanced training as a Torpedoman's Mate. Upon completion of advanced training, Robert was assigned to New Orleans, Louisiana, Recruiting Station before he was reassigned to the Naval Station at Coco Solo in the Panama Canal Zone. Coco Solo served as a Naval Air Station and Submarine Base during World War II. Robert served in Panama until his discharge on 11 March 1946 at Bainbridge. Four years later he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey, and began his journalism career at the Ramapo Independent, a weekly newspaper based in Suffern, New York. In 1952 he moved on to a daily paper, the Titusville Herald in Titusville, Pennsylvania, as a reporter and City Editor. While in Titusville, he met his future wife, Marguerite F. "Peggy" Laley of neighboring Meadville. They were married on 18 December 1954 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Jamestown, New York. Shortly afterwards they moved to Elyria, Ohio, where Robert became State Editor of the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram and, in 1957, became the Managing Editor. The family – by then including a son Thomas and a daughter Margaret – moved east in 1962 when Robert joined the staff of the New York World-Telegram and Sun. They resided first in Suffern and then in 1963 they moved to Ramsey, New Jersey, which was their home for the next 40 years. The demise of the World-Telegram and Sun in 1966 prompted Robert to turn to free-lance writing and from then until his death he contributed regularly to Boy's Life and Scouting Magazine, and in 1984 was the author of the history, *The Boy Scouts – an American Adventure*. But professionally he was best known for the ground-breaking book, *Only the Ball was White*, which chronicled Negro League baseball in the decades before baseball was racially integrated in 1947. He also wrote two other sports histories, *Cages to Jumpshots: Pro Basketball's Early Years*, and *Pigskin: The Early Years of Pro Football*. Robert's years in Ramsey included membership on the Board of Education and the Ramsey Free Public Library Board, and service as a Cub Scout leader and Little League coach. Robert, known familiarly as Bob, and Peggy moved to the Fairways at Brookside in Lower Macungie Township in December 2003. Robert died of lung cancer at Lehigh Valley Hospital (Cedar Crest) on 11 February 2006, and burial was at Union Cemetery in Ramsey. Robert's parents were **Oscar H. Peterson** (c. 1890 – c. 1932), who served in World War I, and **Allie C. Anderson** (6 February 1892 – April 1992).



Coco Solo Station – 1938