

# CARRUTHERS Arthur Raymond

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**Name:** Arthur Raymond Carruthers

**Born:** 9 November 1918

**Rank:** Gunner

**Service Number:** 5109154

**Unit/Regiment:** Royal Artillery

**Died:** 9 October 2001



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## Pre-War:

Arthur was born on 9 November 1918 in Nechells, Birmingham. The family, which consisted of Arthur, his 3 sisters and a brother moved to Perry Common. He left school at the age of 14 and went to work in a sawmill. On 16 September 1935, he enlisted in The Royal Warwickshire Regiment Territorial Army as a private and was posted to 8 battalion. On 6 February 1937 he was transferred to the Royal Artillery, as a Gunner, and posted to 204 Medium Battery. On 1 October 1937 the unit was redesignated 204 Anti-aircraft Battery and was discharged on 25 October 1937 as he enlisted as a 'regular' in the Royal Artillery as a gunner, on 26 October 1937.

## Wartime experience:

Following his basic training, in 1938, Arthur was sent to Singapore via Egypt. He was captured at the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942. Arthur was wounded and taken to hospital having received shrapnel in his back. From there he was taken to Changi jail, then on to River Valley Road POW camp and from there he went to work on the Thai/Burma railway. He contracted quinsy and when the army doctor told the Japanese Officer that Arthur was too ill to go, the doctor was beaten up and was taken instead. Arthur was taken from there on one of the hell ships via Formosa (now Taiwan) to Japan, a journey of about 3 weeks. The prisoners were kept in the hold and only allowed out on deck to go to the toilet, which they did over the side - so conditions in the hold were very bad, very hot and dirty and they were given very little food and water. His time as a POW in Japan was spent in Tokyo 13b Omi camp, which was a cement quarry. They were fed very poorly, many of the men who were ill through malnutrition were still expected to work long hours and many of them died. Arthur and the rest of the survivors marched out of Omi camp 13b on 5 September 1945 three weeks after the Japanese surrendered.



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Arthur and his fellow prisoners came home via the USA where, apparently the Americans tried to feed them up, trying to put some weight on them. Unfortunately, it quite often made them ill, as their stomachs were not used to the quantity and richness of the food. Some of them were quite literally 'killed with kindness'. On 4 October, Arthur crossed the International Dateline on the way to America on board the USS Joseph Dickman then travelled across America to come back to England on the Queen Mary.

### **Civilian life after return:**

After he returned from the Far East, Arthur met Alice, they married and had two children Robert and June. Arthur went to work at the GEC in Witton, where he trained to be a maintenance electrician. He was able to put a deposit down on a house in Boldmere, with his army back pay. The family moved to another house in Sutton Coldfield where sadly Arthur lost his wife.

Arthur moved to Barton-under-Needwood to be near his daughter, June.

Sadly, Arthur died on 9 October 2001 at the age of 82, just 1 month short of his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday.



*The above information and wording has been provided by June Gilbert (daughter)*



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