

CAPTAIN WALTER P. CARUTHERS
DENTAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

Walter Perry Caruthers was born in Downey, California, on June 16, 1903, son of John P. and Bessie L. (McMillan) Caruthers. He was graduated from Whittier (California) High School in 1922, and from the College of Dentistry, University of Southern California in 1926, receiving the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery. For eighteen months he practiced dentistry in Whittier and on March 7, 1928, was commissioned Lieutenant (jg) in the Dental Corps of the U. S. Navy. Through subsequent promotions he attained the rank of Captain to date from March 10, 1945.

His naval service began in March 1928 when he reported to the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois. He served as Assistant Dental Officer there until August 1928, and for four months thereafter was a Dental Student at the Naval Medical School, Washington, D. C., graduating in December 1928. He then had two months temporary duty as Assistant Dental Officer at the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, and during the period February 1929 to November 1930 served in a similar capacity at the Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was next ordered to the Philippine Islands, where for two years he served as Prosthetic Dental Officer in the U. S. Naval Hospital at Canacao.

Returning to the United States in November 1932, he was assigned duty as Assistant Dental Officer at the Naval Air Station, San Diego, California, and when detached in February 1935 he joined the USS PORTLAND for two years' duty afloat as Dental Officer of that cruiser. He remained at sea for a third year, serving during this time as Prosthetic Officer of the USS RELIEF, hospital ship. From February to June 1938 he was a student (postgraduate course in Prosthetics) at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, San Francisco, California.

Duty from June 1938 to April 1940 as Prosthetic Officer at the Dispensary, Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Washington, was followed by his assignment to the USS MEDUSA, as Dental Officer. He was aboard that Battle Force repair ship during the Japanese raid on the Fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He was ordered to the West Coast early in 1942, and served as Assistant Dental Officer at the Marine Base, San Diego, California, from April until August of that year.

During the period August 1942 until April 1944, he was Prosthetic Dental Officer at the Naval Hospital, San Diego, California, and for the next two years had duty as Dental Officer at Camp Elliott, California, first attached to the Marine Barracks, later to the Navy's Training and Distribution Center there. In May 1946 he reported as Dental Officer at the Naval Station, San Diego, and in April 1947 was transferred to Headquarters, Ninth Naval District, Great Lakes, Illinois, to serve until September 1950 as District Dental Officer on the staff of the Commandant, Ninth Naval District.

Under orders of June 21, 1950 he served from September of that year until June 1953, as Dental Officer of the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Mare Island, Vallejo, California. He was then assigned as District Dental Officer, Headquarters, Eleventh Naval District, San Diego, California. On April 8, 1954 he was ordered detached and to duty as Commanding Officer, Naval Dental Clinic, Guam, Marianas, reporting for this duty on July 12, 1954. He is also Force Dental Officer on the staff of Commander Naval Forces, Marianas, and Dental Officer on the staff of Commander Naval Base, Marianas.

Captain Caruthers has the American Defense Service Medal with one star; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one star; the American Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; and the National Defense Service Medal.

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