

Howard E. Brooks

Obituaries | Posted: Friday, April 22, 2016 11:00 am

Died: April 12, 2016

Howard E. Brooks, 96, passed away peacefully April 12 at his home in Mount Laurel, N.J., surrounded by his loving family.

He and his four brothers proudly served their country during World War II.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years: Silvia Wasem Brooks; two sons: Eugene (wife Lori) and Jonathan Brooks; and three granddaughters: Alexis, Shelby and Zoe Brooks, all of Mount Laurel; and by one sister: Betty Brooks Britton of Tusculum.

He was preceded in death by his parents: W.C. and Bessie Gray Brooks; four brothers: Carter, Jack, Buel and Don; two sisters: Hazel Murr and Evelyn Miller; and two brothers and one sister, who died in infancy.

Upon graduation from Greeneville High School in 1938, he joined the U.S. Navy and was aboard the USS Houston (CA-30) during WW II. He was an EM3 (Electrician's Mate 3rd Class) aboard the ship when she sank during the Battle of Sunda Strait on March 1, 1942. Howard was then captured on Java by Imperial Japanese forces and became a prisoner of war for three years. He was held in various POW camps, including the work camps of "Branch 5" in Burma along the Burma-Thailand Railway. In April 1944, the Japanese transported him to a POW work camp in Saigon, French Indo-China, where he was eventually liberated in September 1945. His rank when he left the Navy was Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CH4).

After the war he moved to Rhode Island where he completed four years of college for electrical engineering and was employed as an electrical engineer with Pirelli Cable Corp. in New York and Union, N.J., where he retired from the company.

A celebration of Howard's life was held Tuesday at Mount Laurel Funeral home.

Interment will be at Brigadier Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery with full military honors.