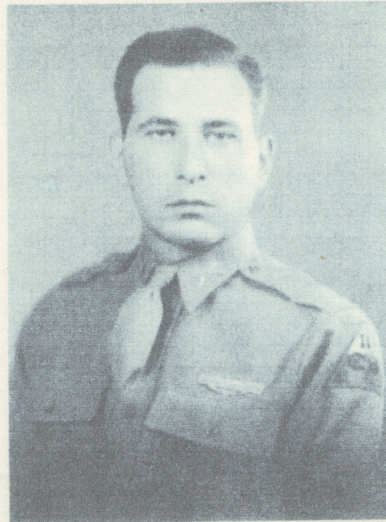




In Loving Memory Captain Lester D. Edelstein



Lester D. Edelstein, Captain in the 63rd Armored Infantry Battalion of the 11th Armored Division, died Feb. 11, 2009 in Delray Beach, FL, at 90 years of age. Born March 21, 1918, in Johnstown, PA, Lester graduated from the University of Michigan in 1939. In 1941, with the war coming, Lester knew he wanted to fight against the Nazis, so he enlisted, and graduated from Officer Candidate School in August 1942. His advancement in rank culminated in being promoted to Captain on the battlefield. As Wheeled Vehicle Maintenance Officer, and then Service Company Commander, he participated in the Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe campaigns. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, and Victory Medal, among others.

His most harrowing experience occurred on May 5, 1945, when he was with the reconnaissance squadron that opened the gates of the Mauthausen concentration camp. In a speech he gave some years later, he told how many prisoners were able to speak English and when they found out he was a Jewish officer-the only one there at the time-he was practically mobbed. The prisoners wanted to shake his hand and many begged for help, which the division provided. Discovering the horrors of Mauthausen was, by far, the most traumatic experience of his life. It inspired his lifelong dedication to Jewish and humanitarian causes, and his extensive volunteer service as a community leader.

After returning to Johnstown, Lester joined M. Glosser & Sons, retiring from the industrial supply and scrap metal company as vice president and comptroller after 37 years. He and his beloved wife, Carolyn retired to Boynton Beach, FL in the early 1980's and celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary shortly before Carolyn's death in May 2008. Loved by all, Lester will be remembered as a vibrant, intelligent man who loved people, his life, and his family. For the last ten years of his life, Lester struggled valiantly with the ravages Parkinson's disease, and later, dementia. However, he never lost his dignity or his sense of humor. He is sadly missed by his three children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren, among many other loving relatives and friends.

Our family has always been enormously proud of Lester's service with the great 11th Armored Division. We owe all its veterans our deepest gratitude.