



CHARLES JOHN ESHINSKY



Ethel and Charles Eshinsky

Born the son of a coal miner to a German-Welsh mother and a Polish father in the anthracite coal region near Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, Mr. Eshinsky quit school at the age of 11 in the sixth grade after his mother died in 1926. Basically on his own, he “bootlegged” coal and sold it, worked as a self-taught sign painter and also worked in a bakery.

In 1939, with the draft coming, he enlisted in the Army. He survived the attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 where his company, in route to the Philippines, was temporarily quarantined. At Hickam Field, he was hit by fragments from a barracks building which had been blown apart by a Japanese dive bomber. After his recovery, he was trained as an Army Ranger and saw action in the Gilberts, at Iwo Jima, The Marshalls and Easter and Christmas Islands. He was discharged on August 22, 1945.

Upon returning home, he convinced Ethel Beynon, whom he had met in 1933, to marry him. At the time he was working in a bakery and used to pay a boy 10 cents to go three blocks up the street and run back to tell him when Ethel was coming so he could be outside the shop to greet her. They married in 1948.

In 1950 he came to Edgewood to work as a guard at Edgewood Army Chemical Center in demolitions and finally as a self-taught master machinist. Chaso (as he was known by family members) and Ethel adopted a baby girl, Janet, and together they enjoyed life as a family in Crestwood Acres near Willoughby Beach, Edgewood. “Skee” retired in 1979 and became very active in the American Legion Post 39 Bel Air and was service officer for Edgewood American Legion Post 17.

He faithfully and frequently visited VA hospitals in Perry Point, Fort Howard and Loch Raven. He had a repertoire of stories, magic tricks and an ever present grin that invited people of all ages to join him in a moment of joy. He was especially gifted in visiting children in hospitals. Quick humor and sleight of hand imagery he learned from watching Vaudeville acts delighted young and old.

Mr. Eshinsky passed on January 20, 2004. He was a Life Member of the Chapter 1 Pearl Harbor Survivors Maryland Chapter. He received the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal which was awarded at the U.S. Naval Academy on November 17, 1991 in memory of the Pearl Harbor attack. Ethel R. Eshinsky passed on June 21, 2015 at the age of 100. She and Chaso spent 55 years together as man and wife.

The Charles John Eshinsky Memorial was established on March 2, 2015, which would have been his 100th birthday. It was initiated by his daughter, Janet Anderson, to honor her father who was a man who lived life generously with his time and his talents and with the gifts he was given. This gift reflects his enduring example.