



**Elias
Eliasof**
Army

Elias Eliasof

Dec 9, 1920 - Mar 6, 2022

BIRTHPLACE: New York

SOLDIER DETAILS

DIVISION: Army, 8th Infantry Division called Black Lion

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

SERVED: Dec 5, 1943 - Jul 6, 1945

BATTLE: Hurtgen Forest

MILITARY HONORS: 2 Bronze stars

HONORED BY: The Eisenhower Foundation

BIOGRAPHY

During World War II, he spent 300 days of 1944 and 1945 on the front lines in Normandy, northern France, the Rhineland, and Central Europe. Eliasof points out the route of his regiment in the European Theater of Operations from 1943-1945. He left the U.S. Dec. 5, 1943 and returned July 6, 1945. Eliasof told a story of his Division found German soldiers hiding in a barn. Eliasof grabbed a white handkerchief, stuffed it into his rifle, and called for someone who could speak English. A German soldier came out, and Elaisof “told him behind me are 200 to 300 soldiers” and in the other direction, the Russians were advancing. He painted a very bleak picture of what could happen to the Germans, he said. With the war almost over, Elaisof convinced the Germans their best option was to surrender to him, rather than be killed or taken prisoner by the Russians. A short time later, 40 Germans walked out of the barn with their hands up, and surrendered to him. Elaisof, who grew up in New York City, also recalled entering a German labor camp as the war drew to a close. He had heard of these camps, but until that moment, had thought they were work camps only. Reality set in when he saw the skeletal bodies of Russian and Polish soldiers that had been thrown into a huge hole for burial. “They were starved to death,” or died of disease, he said, before declaring with emphasis that he never mistreated any soldier he took prisoner, even offering them cigarettes and water. Eliasof is one of five brothers and two sisters. All five brothers served their country, he said proudly. Four were in the infantry, and one was a navigation bomber. After the war, Eliasof married, had two daughters, and worked in the garment industry, starting out by purchasing five sewing machines and setting up in a store in the Bronx. Within a dozen years, he had 125 employees, he said of the business he had established – Elias Brothers – which made children’s sportswear. “We lived the American dream,” Eliasof said.