



**Joseph
Eskenazi**

Army

Joseph Eskenazi

Jan 30, 1918 - Sep 9, 2023

BIRTHPLACE: New York, NY

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Private First Class

DIVISION: Army

THEATER OF OPERATION: American

SERVED: Jul 16, 1941 -

BATTLE: Pearl Harbor

HONORED BY: The Eisenhower Foundation

BIOGRAPHY

Eskenazi was born in New York and his Sephardic Jewish family moved to Puebla, Mexico, when he was 7. He was living back in the states later and was working at Sam Zeitz Vienna Baking Co. when he enlisted. Eskenazi enlisted in the U.S. Army several months before Pearl Harbor was attacked. He didn't know what he wanted to do with his life, but knew that he wanted to travel. "I wanted to live a life of adventure," said Eskenazi, Pfc. Eskenazi was 22 years old when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred. His memories include being awakened when a bomb fell. As he ran outside, he watched a low-flying Japanese airplane drop a bomb about 150 feet away. It did not detonate, but another Japanese plane strafed the barracks and killed his friend as the friend ran from a mess hall. Schofield Barracks, reverberating explosions as the battleship USS Arizona was sunk by Japanese bombs, and machine gun fire from enemy planes kicking up dust around him after he volunteered to drive a bulldozer across a field so it could be used to clear runways. A commanding officer had arrived on a motorcycle and asked for volunteers. He needed someone to drive a bulldozer and clear bombed-out railroad tracks so soldiers could move heavy equipment and repair the airfield. "My hand went up right away," Eskenazi said. "I don't know why I raised my hand." But while he was in the vehicle, one last plane strafed him and machine gun fire erupted around him. He was not hit. "This was an act of God, because I came so close to getting wiped out," he said. His Daughter shared, her father did not speak of the war and when the family visited Hawaii, Joseph did not want to visit the Arizona. Later, a trip to the WW II Museum sparked something inside and Joseph began to talk about his experiences. A video of his story is stored at the WW II Museum in New Orleans, Courtesy of militarytimes.com