

## CCB Mosbacher

S/Sgt Stephen S. Mosbacher enlisted in Toledo, Ohio on 12 June 1943.

His parents were of German origin and left the country to escape persecution and unhappiness for America in 1938. Life in their homeland had become unbearable when persecution progressed to a point where Dr. Mosbacher was forced to discontinue his practice of medicine.

S/Sgt Mosbacher was awarded the Silver Star Medal posthumously for his actions on the day of his death. The citation reads: S/Sgt Mosbacher advanced to within ten yards of enemy infantry elements to effect the rescue of a comrade, pinned down by enemy fire. The rescue was accomplished in the face of direct fire of artillery, mortars and small arms. Mosbacher was fatally wounded a few minutes later while attempting the rescue of a wounded soldier, directly in the path of an enemy tank.

His parents received the following letter of John R. Elting, Major, FA: "On the night of 2 April we were advancing towards the Elbe River. However, an attempt by the German 116th Panzer Division to break out of the Ruhr pocket to the south caused a squadron of mechanized cavalry and a platoon of military police were supposed to be marching ahead of us. Naturally, due to the sudden change of orders in the middle of the night on strange roads, there was confusion. Dawn found my billeting party very much alone at the head of the division. The cavalry had gotten into a fight before the change in orders and had not been able to disengage. The military police had been delayed due to the crowded roads. For better or for worse, I decided to keep going, since we were the only advance detachment left in front of the main body of the division. We moved out carefully, your son questioning all the slave laborers we met along the road and all of the prisoners we gathered up. We took two towns - Delbrück and Sande - and captured two small outposts. At the third town, Neuhaus, we found a garrison of about eighty men. They didn't want to fight very badly. We were disarming them and taking the place over, when a SS outfit came into the town from the opposite direction. The resulting fight was rather rough, but we held them until they brought up their tanks. Then, since we had no weapon heavier than a machine gun, we had to go. Your son had been riding in another jeep, but he stayed behind with my driver - a recruit named Smith - and me, to help us cover the withdrawal of the rest of the billeting detachment. He did this, I must emphasize, of his own free will, because he was a good soldier and not afraid. For a minute it looked as if we had succeeded. Then I noticed that one of our men had been left behind. He was running frantically across the field with several black-jacket SS troopers at his heels. I shouted to Smith to stop, jumped out of the jeep and began to shoot at the SS men. Smith and your son, however, turned the jeep around and went right down into the advancing Germans to pick the man up, firing as they went. Sergeant Mosbacher was laughing as he went; I could hear his laughter above all of the shooting and shouting. Have a split-second memory of how the running soldier's face lit up with happiness as Stephen caught his hand and pulled him into the jeep. Don't understand exactly how I happened to see it - was very busy shooting at the time, and there were plenty of targets. Jumped onto the radiator of the jeep as it came back past me. We shot our way out. Thought again that we had gotten away with it. But, as we went back out of the town, saw one of our light trucks wrecked alongside the road. A shot from the German tank which was firing down the road had wrecked its front wheels. A wounded man was beside it. We pulled up to try to save him too. It was then that the tank hit us. Having your jeep hit by a high-velocity shell is something you can't describe. It was a glare of white light and a screaming crash. Then we were in the ditch. Smith and I were wounded, Stephen and the rescued soldier were dead. Stephen was still smiling and still had a firm grip on his submachine gun."

He received the nickname 'Moose' - partly because of the soldier habit of shortening names, partly because of his size. He was also reputed to have the biggest appetite in the headquarters company and to be always the first man in the mess line.

The Center for Jewish History has stored the correspondence between Stephen Mosbacher and his parents in their archives. This correspondence has been digitalized and can be read [online here](#).

The family Debie-Pinckers, who adopted his grave, provided us with the family pictures: #4: Stephen in 1930, #5: the family in 1937, #6: Stephen and his father in 1940, #7: Stephen with his sister in 1934, #8: Stephen with his parents in Nuremberg before they immigrated to the States.