



Chester Wallace Spencer

January 7, 2021

Chester Wallace Spencer passed away quietly on Thursday, January 7, 2021 from natural causes at his home in Blacksburg, Virginia. Chester was 96 years of age at the time of his death. Chester was born in 1924 to his parents, Frank and Hazel Spencer, in Greeley, Kansas. Chester continued to live in Greeley until his high school graduation. He then went on to serve in the European Theater of World War II from 1943 to 1945 in the 42nd Infantry Division. Chester was awarded the Bronze Star and other medals for his valor in service. He was among the first American soldiers to liberate the death camp at Dachau. After the war, Chester completed a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in engineering from the University of Kansas. He then earned his PhD in Material Science from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Chester continued his research by taking a position as faculty member in the Chemical and Metallurgical Engineering Department at Cornell University. After leaving Cornell, Chester went to AVCO, where he managed the development of the heat shield for the Apollo re-entry vehicle for NASA. Chester then took a business management position as Vice President of Research for Kennecott Copper Corporation. He later served as Executive Director of the National Materials Advisory Board in Washington, D.C. This position was a part of the National Academy of Sciences. By 1976, Chester returned to a more traditional academic life by accepting a position as Department Head of Materials Science and Engineering at VPI&SU (now Virginia Tech). Chester lived in the Blacksburg area for the balance of his life. He enjoyed travelling the world by hunting large game and birds. He took his daughters and grandchildren on some of these memorable hunting trips. Chester also enjoyed working on vintage British cars. Chester is preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Elizabeth House Spencer, and by his oldest daughter, Elizabeth Spencer Allen (Charles).

Chester is survived by three daughters, namely, Margaret (Daniel), Catherine (Harry), and Hazel (John). Eight loving grandchildren also survive Chester.

Because of the pandemic, no visitation is set at this time. Instead, the family will be scheduling a memorial service sometime in the spring or summer of 2021 in the Blacksburg area.

In lieu of flowers, the family is suggesting that donations may be made in memory of Chester to the Veterans of Foreign Wars at heros.vfw.org. Arrangements by McCoy

Funeral Home, Blacksburg.