



American
Campaign Medal



European-African-Middle
East Campaign Medal



Ordnance Corps
Insignia

Alton Oliver Wetzel Sr.
Technician 4 U.S. Army
13 July 1942 – 7 December 1945

Alton was born at home in Lower Macungie Township on 25 September 1921 in the area known as Spring Creek, located downstream from Brookdale, Pennsylvania, along the Little Lehigh Creek. He attended Schmoyer's School (grades 1–8) on Spring Creek Road and Emmaus High School for one year in 1936. Prior to entering the Army, Alton was living in Spring Creek and was working for Mack Trucks, Inc., in Allentown, Pennsylvania, as a Truck Loader. He was drafted into the Army in Allentown as a Private on 13 July 1942. After completing three months basic training at Camp Lee, Virginia, Alton was assigned to the 3458th Ordnance Maintenance Company in California where he worked as an Automotive Mechanic and a Truck Driver. He remained in the States until March 1944, at which time he was ordered to the European Theater of Operations. He arrived in Theater on 9 April 1944, where he served with the 3458th Company as an Automotive Mechanic and Truck Driver until 18 November 1945, when he left to return to the States. In Europe, Alton served in Italy in the Rome-Arno Campaign (22 Jan 44 – 9 Sep 44) and Po Valley Campaign (5 April – 8 May 1945). These campaigns were fought over some of Europe's most difficult terrain under some of the worst weather conditions found anywhere during World War II. The main significance of both campaigns was that they tied down a significant number of enemy divisions in Italy to allow successful operations against the Germans in Operation Overlord at Normandy, France, and Operation Anvil in Southern France, both of which ultimately led to the defeat of Germany. After World War II ended and demobilization took place, Alton arrived back in the States on 1 December 1945. For his service, Alton was awarded the American Campaign Medal and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (with 2 Bronze Stars). He was discharged as a Technician 4 at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, on 7 December 1945 and returned to Lower Macungie Township. After his return, Alton successively worked in the area as a Truck Driver for the Lehigh County Farm Bureau until 1965, Carl Bieber Company in Kutztown until 1966, Trexler-Haines, Inc., in Kuhnsville until 1967, and Lehigh Portland Cement Company in Fogelsville until the company closed in February 1971. Alton then became an Equipment Operator for Lower Macungie Township until March 1989, when he retired. Alton married **Leona Virginia Bortz** (born 23 August 1927) in Alburts in 1948 and they made their permanent home in Lower Macungie Township. Alton and Leona raised a son, **Alton Oliver Jr.**, who served in the Air Force from 1967 to 1971, and a daughter, **Susan Diane**. Alton died on 18 April 2001 in Lehigh Valley Hospital. He is buried at Lehigh Zion Church Cemetery in Lower Macungie Township. Alton's parents were **William Charles Wetzel Sr.** (3 June 1892 – 19 May 1968) and **Eva Merkle** (1 October 1894 – 6 September 1969). Alton's brother, **William Charles Jr.**, served in the Navy during World War II.