



**Elias
Hernandez**
Army

Elias Hernandez

Apr 18, 1925 -

BIRTHPLACE: Ellsworth, KS

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Private 1st Class

**DIVISION: Army, Company L 7th Infantry, 3rd
Infantry Division**

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

SERVED: Aug 20, 1943 - Sep 21, 1945

BATTLE: Colmar Pocket (France)

**MILITARY HONORS: Purple Heart Bronze Star
French Medal of Honor**

HONORED BY: Daughter

BIOGRAPHY

Elias A. Hernandez was inducted into the Army on August 20, 1943 and entered active duty September 10, 1943. He went to Ft. Leavenworth, KS and shipped to Ft. Banning Georgia for basic training. Private Hernandez was issued the Purple Heart, Silver Star and Bronze Star medals for: Gallantry in action. On March 15, 1945 an enemy Mark VI tank 200 yards away wounded two men and forced his company to take cover near Utweiler Germany. Private First Class Hernandez, a radio operator seized a loaded bazooka and rushed 50 yards to the top of a barren knoll. Standing up in an exposed position, he fired the bazooka round which landed directly in front of the tank. The Mark VI shifted its machine gun fire to him, seriously wounding him in both legs and then moved off. The respite gained by Private First Class Hernandez's courageous action enabled his company to reorganize and crush a strong hostile force. On July 21, 2012, Private Hernandez was the recipient of the French Legion of Honor medal for actions taken during their fight to defeat the German Army in France During WWII. This medal was created by Napoleon and is the highest honor that France can bestow upon those who have achieved remarkable deeds for France. A memory Elias Hernandez is willing to share and tearfully recalls: He and his men were moving on to their next fight when he saw an old French woman with groceries, one of which was a loaf of bread. They were hungry. Hernandez jumped off the slow moving train, ran to the woman and took her bread. To this day, he is bothered by this action and now realizes that he may have taken food from her families mouths.