



**Walter
Ehlers**
Army

Walter Ehlers

May 7, 1921 - Feb 20, 2014

BIRTHPLACE: Junction City, KS

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: S/Sgt.

DIVISION: Army, 18th Infantry 1st Infantry Division

THEATER OF OPERATION: European

BATTLE: D-Day

MILITARY HONORS: Medal of Honor

HONORED BY: The Eisenhower Foundation

BIOGRAPHY

Walter Ehlers was born on a farm in Junction City, KS and enlisted in the Army October of 1940, along with his older brother Roland. Both were assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division 30th Infantry Regiment.

Walter was trained as a Mortarman and Roland was a scout. In November of 1942 they shipped out for North Africa where they saw President Roosevelt up close when he reviewed the troops at Casablanca. Soon the brothers were transferred to K Company, 18th Regime and front at El Guettar then in Sicily before shipping back to England. The Ehlers brothers were told casualties would be as high as 50 percent in the upcoming battles and were separated. Walter was promoted to sergeant and made a squad leader of L Company. Walters orders on D Day were to land on Omaha Beach and lead a 12-man reconnaissance team to the town of Trevieres about 5 miles inland. Walters landing craft let him and his squad off in water nearly over their heads and they had to wade to the beach under heavy enemy fire. Under Walter Ehlers' leadership, the entire squad made it off the beach and up into the bluffs, where they captured a German pill box. In the days following, Ehlers and his squad were engaged in a number of firefights in the Norman Hedgerows. June 9 were near the town of Goville, 8 miles (13 km) inland. Walter led his unit's attack against German forces and single-handedly defeated several enemy machine gun nests. The next day the platoon came under heavy fire. Ehlers was wounded, but managed to cover the platoon's withdrawal; this included carrying a wounded automatic rifleman to safety and running back through enemy fire to retrieve his Browning Automatic Rifle. After treatment of his wounds, Ehlers refused to be evacuated and continued to lead his squad. For his actions he was awarded the Medal of Honor. See the whole citation in the attached document. Courtesy of pbs.com - Ken Burn- the war and Wikipedia and World War II Museum.