



William A. Sarver 32-42

Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army

Service # O1170962

**67th Field Artillery Battalion
3rd Armored Division**

Entered the Service from: Missouri

Died: 6-Apr-1945

Buried at: Plot K Row 8 Grave 17

Netherlands American Cemetery

Margraten, Netherlands

Awards: Silver Star, Purple Heart



Silver Star



(Citation Needed): William A. Sarver, United States Army, is reported to have been awarded the Silver Star under the below-listed General Orders for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving with the 3d Armored Division during World War II.

General Orders: Headquarters, 3d Armored Division, General Orders No. 58 (1945)

Bill Sarver - Baseball's Greatest Sacrifice

www.baseballsgreatest sacrifice.com/biographies/sarver_bill.html 1/2

Bill Sarver

Date and Place of Birth: January 31, 1920 Kansas City, MO

Date and Place of Death: April 6, 1945 near Halle, Germany

Baseball Experience: Minor League

Position: Outfield

Rank: Second Lieutenant

Military Unit: 67th Field Artillery Battalion, 3rd Armored Division US Army

Area Served: European Theater of Operations

Bill Sarver was a young outfielder drawing comparisons with the great Joe DiMaggio. But military service in Europe would see his life end just one month before the war against Germany ended.

William A. Sarver was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on January 31, 1920. He attended Central High School in Kansas City where he was recognized as an outstanding baseball player. At the age of 17, and making a name for himself playing third base for Lapetina of the Ban Johnson League, Sarver attended a New York Yankees tryout camp. There were 500 attendees at the camp; Sarver and future Yankees catcher Ralph Houk were among the seven who received a contract with the American League club.

Sarver was assigned to the Neosho Yankees of the Class D Arkansas-Missouri League for 1938. He got off to a slow start and by mid-June he was batting only .192 (15 for 78) and had a fielding percentage below .800. But as the summer progressed the youngster found his stride and finished the season batting .254 over 94 games, although he made 41 errors at third base.

In 1939, Sarver was back with Neosho, and manager Dennis Burns, who was with the Philadelphia Athletics in the mid-1920s, moved the fleet-footed 19-year-old to centerfield. He responded by hitting .284 in 123 games and led the league with 40 doubles and 48 stolen bases. Teammate Ralph Houk also had a good season batting .313 and playing solid defense behind the plate.

Sarver joined the Amsterdam Rugmakers of the Class C Canadian-American League in 1940, and enjoyed another strong offensive season with a .287 average, 10 home runs and 67 RBIs over 119 games. In 1941, he advanced to the Augusta Tigers of the Class B South Atlantic League. Sarver was only with the team for a little over a month but that time resulted in a reunion with Ralph Houk. The young catcher introduced Sarver to local girl Marian Smith, and they later married in Kansas City on December 8, 1942.

Sarver joined the Akron Yankees of the Class C Mid-Atlantic League in late May but failed to hit consistently - batting just .210 in 54 games - and found himself back with the Rugmakers for the latter part of the season where he batted .226 over 41 games. Sarver was 21 years old and had completed four seasons in the minors. But his career was now on hold as he entered military service with the Army on November 3, 1941. Sarver was selected for Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and was commissioned a second lieutenant in November 1942.

In January 1945, Sarver bid farewell to Marian and his young daughter, Kathleen (William, a son would be born in September 1945), and departed for Europe with the 67th Field Artillery Battalion, 3rd Armored "Spearhead" Division. The division broke through to the Rhine River and captured Cologne on March 7, 1945. Two weeks later it crossed the Rhine and moved north to capture Paderborn on April 1. The 3rd Armored then pushed on against disorganized resistance. On April 6, 1945, Second Lieutenant Sarver was serving as a forward observer when he was killed by small arms fire. He was buried at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten, Holland. Sarver was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, which was presented to his wife and children at Fort Gordon, Georgia.

