Professional baseball players who lost their lives in military service during World War II.
I’ve spent the last quarter of a century looking into baseball players who died in military service in World War II. I started with around 20 names. A list that had been available for some years and, until then, had been recognized as the complete record of players from Organized baseball who made the supreme sacrifice. But the numbers didn’t add up for me. With over 4,000 active minor leaguers seeing military service during the war along with countless others who had previously played, I felt pretty sure a lot more than 20 had died.

I wasn’t wrong. Trawling through newspaper archives I began to find more. The list was growing. By 2005, I had around 100 names and in 2009, McFarland published Baseball’s Dead of World War II: A Roster of Professional Players Who Died in Service, my biographical work on 127 players.

But the list continues to grow. Today, it stands at 172. Interestingly, this newsletter, while in production, was called 171. Then another name was added, one of the most intriguing of all. Harold “Butch” Ball had played two seasons for the Milford Giants before the war. Nothing exciting about that. But Harold’s father was African-American, which means the young catcher broke the color line ahead of Jackie Robinson!

I have no doubt I’ll continue to add more names to this list over the coming years. It’s a work in progress that will probably never see completion. But I’m honored to be able to preserve the memories of these men and to ensure their sacrifice is never forgotten.

Gary Bedingfield
Ayrshire, Scotland
June 2022

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Baseball in Wartime Newsletter No. 59 (June 2022)

The 172 professional baseball players who lost their lives in military service in World War II

Complete biographies for each player is available at https://www.baseballsgreatestsacrifice.com/world_war_ii.html

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Minor League</th>
<th>Service Branch</th>
<th>Cause of Death/Duty Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lee V. “L.V.” Allen</td>
<td>Shortstop</td>
<td>Minors (1938)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Shot down off the coast of France on Dec 31, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry M. Angelich</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (spring training 1935 and 1936)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Killed in action on December 7, 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold J. “Butch” Ball</td>
<td>Catcher</td>
<td>Minors (1939 to 1940)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in Germany on April 12, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman A. Bauer</td>
<td>Catcher</td>
<td>Minors (1939 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in France on July 12, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred W. Beal</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1941 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Died from bleeding ulcers on January 23, 1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantine G. “Gus” Bebas</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1939)</td>
<td>US Navy</td>
<td>Killed in plane crash off Hawaii on July 19, 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh P. Bedient, Jr.</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1938)</td>
<td>US Army Air Corps</td>
<td>Killed in plane crash in New York on June 17, 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard E. “Link” Berry</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1937 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action on December 24, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith F. Bissonnette</td>
<td>Infield/Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1940 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Shot down in Burma on March 28, 1945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In May 1943, the 1,400-ton destroyer escort USS Bebas (DE-10) was christened in honor of Gus Bebas. She served in the Pacific during World War II and received three battle stars.
Lefty Brewer was 25-11 with a 1.88 ERA for the St. Augustine Saints of the Florida State League in 1938. He threw a no-hitter against Orlando on June 6, and died on the same day six years later.
Eldred H. “Whitey” Burch  
**Infield**  
Minors (1939 to 1940)  
US Army Air Force  
**Killed in accident in N. Carolina on Nov 29, 1941**  
Burch played for Thomasville, Lexington and Kannapolis before military service. He was killed when the Army truck he was driving overturned near Albemarle, North Carolina.

George W. Chandler, Jr.  
**Shortstop/Catcher**  
Minors (1938 to 1940)  
US Army Air Force  
**Killed in a plane crash on September 20, 1942**  
Chandler batted .251 with 63 RBIs his rookie year with Refugio. He was a crew member of a B-26 Marauder that exploded and crashed near Plain Dealing, Louisiana.

Floyd E. Christiansen  
**Infield**  
Minors (1939 to 1942)  
US Marine Corps  
**Killed in a plane crash on May 1, 1945**  
Christiansen played 131 games with Springfield in 1942 and joined the Marine Corps the following January. He became a primary flight instructor and was killed during a training flight at Norman, OK.

Frank J. Ciaffone  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1942 – signed but did not play)  
US Marine Corps  
**Killed in action at Iwo Jima on March 3, 1945**  
Ciaffone, brother of major leaguer, Larry Ciaffone, was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1942, but chose to enlist with the Marines instead. He was 19 years old when he died in action at Iwo Jima.

Ordway H. “Hal” Cisgen  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1940 to 1942)  
US Army  
**Killed in action in France on July 11, 1944**  
Cisgen was signed by the Yankees in 1940. He entered military service with the Army after the 1942 season and attained the rank of first lieutenant. He was killed near Periers, France.

Clarence W. Clayton  
**Second Base**  
Minors (1944)  
US Army  
**Killed in action in Czechoslovakia on May 1, 1945**  
Clayton was signed by the Red Sox and played 101 games with Middletown in 1944, playing for the Ohio State League all-star team. He was killed just one week before the end of the war in Europe.

Lester O. Clotiaux  
**Catcher**  
Minors (spring training 1941)  
US Army Air Force  
**Killed in a plane crash in Texas on August 9, 1945**  
Clotiaux was with Port Arthur for spring training and played against the Dodgers. He played for the Foster Field in military service and was killed in a plane crash near Smiley, returning from a game.

Olan Dabbs  
**Outfield/Third Base**  
Minors (1939 to 1940)  
Army  
**Killed in action in Germany on April 6, 1945**  
Dabbs played for Tyler, Carthage and Topeka before entering service with the Army. He was killed during a counterattack at Neckartgartach. Posthumously awarded Silver Star.

Eugene L. Dellinger, Jr.  
**Outfield/First Base**  
Minors (1943 to 1944)  
Army  
**Died from injuries sustained in Belgium**  
Dellinger batted .304 for Newport News in 1944. He played baseball in the Army and was in the back of a truck with his team when it was hit by a train. He died in a hospital in January 1946.

Howard W. DeMartini  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1937 to 1942)  
Army  
**Killed in action on December 24, 1944**  
DeMartini won 17 games with Salisbury in 1941 and 16 the year before with Milford. He was killed when the SS Leopoldville was torpedoed and sunk in the English Channel.

Olan Dabbs was awarded the Silver Star “for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy...his gallant actions and selfless devotion to duty without regard for his own safety, were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harold B. “Hal” Dobson</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1939 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Killed in plane crash in California on May 23, 1943</td>
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<td>Dobson was signed by the Cardinals and won 14 games with Pocatello in 1940. He played baseball for Victorville Army Air Base and was killed on the way to a game when two planes collided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James J. Donovan, Jr.</td>
<td>Second Base</td>
<td>Minors (1938)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed during training in Georgia on June 23, 1943</td>
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<td>Donovan played briefly with Rome in 1938 and also played pro football. He attained the rank of second lieutenant was killed in a parachute training jump at Fort Benning, Georgia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman J. Duncan</td>
<td>Shortstop</td>
<td>Minors (1941)</td>
<td>US Navy</td>
<td>Killed in action on April 12, 1945 off Okinawa</td>
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<td>Duncan played baseball at Michigan State. He was signed by the Browns and played 66 games for St. Joseph. He was killed during a kamikaze attack on the USS Whitehurst.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin K. Edginton</td>
<td>First Base</td>
<td>Minors (1941)</td>
<td>US Navy</td>
<td>Killed in action on June 1, 1944 in the Pacific</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Edginton played for Federalsburg in 1941. He enlisted in the Navy the following year and was killed when the submarine USS Herring was sunk by enemy action off Matua Island.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis E. Elko</td>
<td>Shortstop/Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1942 – signed but did not play)</td>
<td>US Marine Corps</td>
<td>Died from ruptured appendix on April 2, 1944</td>
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<td>Elko was a star at Streator High School, Illinois, before signing with the Cubs in 1942. He played Marine Corps but was medically discharged after falling ill in November 1943.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles &quot;Chatty&quot; Etherton, Jr.</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1936 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Committed suicide on December 27, 1945</td>
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<td>Etherton made a career-high 22 appearances with Zanesville in 1941. He served in the Pacific and was on a train bound for discharge at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, when he took his own life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles H. &quot;Herb&quot; Fash</td>
<td>First Base</td>
<td>Minors (1936 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Navy</td>
<td>Killed in action in the Pacific on January 21, 1945</td>
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<td>Fash, who was signed by the Cardinals, batted .408 with 81 RBIs in 66 games for Olean in 1940. He was one of 52 sailors killed in an explosion on the aircraft carrier USS Hancock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Faudem</td>
<td>Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1941 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action at Leyte on January 12, 1945</td>
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<td>Faudem signed with the Tigers and batted .321 his rookie season with Fulton. He entered military service in January 1943 and was killed by a Japanese sniper while on patrol in Leyte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John H. Fessler</td>
<td>Shortstop</td>
<td>Minors (1938 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in France on June 10, 1944</td>
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<td>Fessler led the Coastal Plain League with 37 stolen bases in 1941. He entered military service the following year and was a paratrooper in Normandy on D-Day. Died in action four days later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest B. Ford, Jr.</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1942)</td>
<td>US Marine Corps</td>
<td>Killed in a plane crash in Texas on May 4, 1945</td>
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<td>Ford played for Holy Cross and signed with the Red Sox, pitching for Greensboro. He fought with the Marines in the Marshall Islands before training to be a pilot. He was killed at NAS Corpus Christi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Franklin Edginton is the only minor league player to lose his life in World War II serving on a submarine. The USS Herring was sunk by Japanese shore batteries off Matua Island with the loss of all on board.
Elmer Gedeon had been involved in a plane crash in at Raleigh Airport, North Carolina in August 1942. He was awarded the Soldiers’ Medal for pulling a crewmate from the wreckage despite himself suffering broken ribs and severe burns to his back, face, hands and legs, some of which needed skin grafts.
Robert J. “Bob” Gruss
Outfield
Minors (1943)
US Army Air Force
Killed in a plane crash in Nevada on August 19, 1944

Gruss signed with the Indians after graduating from high school in 1943 and batted .329 in 20 games with Batavia. He was aboard a B-24 Liberator that crashed in the Nevada wilderness.

Frank C. Haggerty
Shortstop
Minors (1940)
US Army Air Force
Killed in plane crash in N. Carolina on Sep 23, 1942

Haggerty graduated from St. John’s University and played 95 games with Selma. He trained as a fighter pilot and was killed when his P-40 Warhawk crashed into the Catawba River.

William F. “Bill” Hansen
Outfield
Minors (1941 to 1942)
US Army
Died from wounds in Belgium on Dec 17, 1944

Hansen batted .310 in 88 games with Green Bay before entering military service. He died of wounds received in combat in Belgium during the Battle of the Hurtgen Forest.

William J. “Billy” Hebert
Second Base
Minors (1939 to 1941)
US Navy
Died from wounds at Guadalcanal on Oct 21, 1942

Hebert batted .328 with 68 RBIs and 12 home runs with Merced in 1941. He served with the Navy and was wounded at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal around October 12/13.

Manuel P. “Nay” Hernandez
Outfield
Minors (1944)
US Army
Killed in action in Germany on March 24, 1945

Hernandez was an outstanding member of the San Diego High School team played 30 games for the Padres before being drafted for military service. He was killed in action at Ludwigshafen.

Robert K. “Bob” Hershey
First Base
Minors (1938 to 1941)
US Navy
Died from wounds in the Caribbean on July 31, 1943

Hershey batted over .300 in all four seasons in the minors. He was seriously wounded aboard a PBM Mariner flying boat that was damaged when attacking a Japanese submarine.

Roswell G. Higginbotham
Infield
Minors (1921 to 1922, 1928)
US Navy
Died after abdominal operation on May 23, 1943

Higginbotham played baseball and football at Texas A&M and batted .315 with Paris in 1922. He never recovered from surgery at Quonset Point Naval Air Station in Rhode Island.

Frank D. Hines
Outfield
Minors (1924 to 1928)
USAAF
Killed in a plane crash in Virginia on Sep 4, 1943

Hines batted .315 in 91 games and stole a league-leading 24 stolen bases his rookie year with Enid. He was killed when his BT-13 Valiant basic trainer crashed near Afton.

Ernest J. Holbrook
First Base
Minors (1935 to 1936)
US Army
Killed in action in Luxembourg on Dec 16, 1944

Holbrook played baseball and basketball at the University of Southern California, and batted .284 with Charlotte in 1935. He was killed during the opening salvos of the Battle of the Bulge.

Robert D. “Bob” Holmes
Pitcher
Minors (1942 to 1943)
US Marine Corps
Died from wounds at Iwo Jima on Feb 22, 1945

Holmes, who played baseball, football and basketball at Central Methodist College, won eight games for Joplin in 1942. He died while being evacuated from the beach at Iwo Jima.

Nay Hernandez was able to play for the Padres in 1944 because he hadn’t been drafted for military service due to a heart murmur. The local draft board decided if he could play baseball he could also carry a rifle. Within months he was dead.
Gordon E. Houston  
Outfield  
Minors (1937 to 1940)  
US Army Air Force  
Plane crash in Washington on Feb 10, 1942

Houston batted .384 with 70 RBIs and 18 homers with Texarkana in 1938 and made the East Texas League all-star team. He died when his P-43 Lancer fighter plane crashed on landing at McCord Field.

Ernest Hrovatic (born Ernest Hrovatich)  
Outfield  
Minors (1942 to 1943)  
US Army  
Killed in action in Belgium on January 14, 1945

Hrovatic was signed by the Cardinals and batted .336 with 96 RBIs for Jamestown in 1943, making the PONY League all-star team. He was killed in action near Otrre, Belgium.

Harry N. Imhoff, Jr.  
Catcher  
Minors (1944)  
US Marine Corps  
Killed in action at Okinawa in April 1945

Imhoff played just one game with Baltimore before enlisting in the Marine Corps. He died at Okinawa in the early days of the campaign, but his body was not recovered until June 3, 1945.

Frank D. Janik  
Catcher/Outfield  
Minors (1937 to 1940)  
US Army  
Killed in action at Okinawa on April 29, 1945

Janik batted a team-leading .313 in 110 games with 21 homers and 78 RBIs for Rome in 1938. He saw combat at Saipan and was awarded a Bronze Star before being killed in action at Okinawa.

Edward J. Jelen  
Second Base  
Minors (1933)  
US Navy  
Died from illness in Virginia on April 8, 1945

Jelen played football at Creighton University and played baseball with Omaha in 1933. He later served in the Nebraska Legislature. Jelen died of a kidney ailment at the Norfolk Naval Hospital.

Ardys B. “Art” Keller  
Catcher  
Minors (1936 to 1943)  
US Army  
Killed in action in France on September 29, 1944

A former House of David player, Keller spent three years with Springfield and two with Toledo. He was killed near Biffontaine, having been in the service less than a year.

Stanley P. Klores  
First Base/Outfield  
Minors (1935 to 1938)  
US Navy  
Killed in action at Ormoc Bay on December 3, 1944

Klores was signed by the Cubs and batted .283 with Peoria his rookie year. In the Navy he attained the rank of Lieutenant (JG) and was killed when the destroyer USS Cooper was torpedoed.

Carlyle J. “Curly” Kopp  
Outfield  
Minors (1940 to 1941)  
US Navy  
Plane crash in Minnesota on July 21, 1943

As a lead-off hitter, Kopp batted .263 in 85 games his rookie year with Worthington, stealing 17 bases. He was piloting a N2S Kaydet biplane that crashed after takeoff from USNAS Minneapolis.

Harry B. Ladner, Jr.  
Umpire  
Minors (1938 to 1941)  
US Army  
Killed in action at Ie Shima on April 18, 1945

Ladner, a former pro hockey player, began his umpiring career in the Arkansas-Missouri League in 1938 after graduating from the George Barr Umpire School. He was died near Okinawa.

Walter E. Lake  
Catcher  
Minors (1938 to 1940)  
US Army  
Died from wounds at Normandy on July 26, 1944

Lake was signed by the Indians and batted .313 with Oswego his rookie year. He entered military service in January 1941 and attained the rank of first lieutenant. He died near Les Haies, France.

Frank Janik was awarded a Bronze Star for meritorious service with the 27th Infantry Division at Saipan in 1944. In January 1945, after 33 months overseas, he was granted 30-day leave and returned home to Buffalo. The following month he was back in the Pacific and died in April.
Harlan D. Larsen  
Catcher  
Minors (1944 Signed but did not play)  
US Marine Corps  
Died at sea in Pacific Ocean on July 30, 1945

Larsen signed with Lockport in 1944, but enlisted with the Marines before he could play. He was aboard the cruiser USS Indianapolis when it was sunk by the Japanese in the Philippine Sea.

Felix A. Little  
Pitcher  
Minors (1939 to 1940)  
US Navy  
Killed in plane crash in Brazil on Dec 18, 1944

Little played baseball, basketball and football at Lenoir-Rhyne College before playing for Hickory and Newton-Conover in the minors. He died when a PV-1 Ventura twin-engine bomber crashed.

Walter G. “Whitey” Loos, Jr.  
Catcher  
Minors (1939 to 1941)  
US Army Air Force  
Plane crash in South America on Jan 16, 1944

Loos played baseball, football and basketball at Carnegie Institute of Technology and was signed by the Dodgers. He was the navigator on a B-24 Liberator that crashed in British Guyana.

Andrew J. “Jack” Lummus  
Outfield  
Minors (1941)  
US Marine Corps  
Died from wounds at Iwo Jima on March 9, 1945

Lummus played baseball and football at Baylor University and went on to play both professionally. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for attacking Japanese positions.

Dom P. Malchiodi  
Catcher  
Minors (1941 to 1942)  
US Army Air Force  
Died in plane crash in Holland on May 31, 1945

Malchiodi was signed by the Yankees and played for Leaksville-Draper-Spray and Trois-Rivieres. He was the bombardier on a B-26 Marauder that crashed three weeks after VE Day.

William A. “Bill” Marzalek (born Marszalek)  
Pitcher  
Minors (1941)  
US Army  
Killed in training accident in Arizona on Oct 6, 1942

Marzalek pitched for Duquesne University, was signed by the Pirates, and won seven games for Oil City. He served as a second lieutenant at Fort Huachuca, where he died in an accident.

Henry “Marty” Martinez  
Infield  
Minors (1937 to 1942)  
US Navy  
Died from wounds at sea on January 5, 1945

Martinez played for Oakland, Seattle and Portland in the Pacific Coast League. He was wounded during a kamikaze attack on the escort carrier USS Ommaney Bay and died the following day.

Arthur R. “Lefty” McKay  
Pitcher  
Minors (1927 to 1933)  
US Army  
Died from gunshot wound on June 5, 1943

McKay pitched a career-high 26 games for Wilmington in 1928 with an 8-13 record. The circumstances surrounding his death at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina are unknown.

John W. “Duck” McKee  
Outfield  
Minors (1932 to 1934)  
US Army  
Died from wounds in Belgium on March 6, 1945

McKee played baseball and football at Georgia Tech and signed with Atlanta. He batted over .300 in three seasons with the Crackers. Seriously wounded in Germany and died the next day.

Jack Lummus was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for “his outstanding valor, skilled tactics, and tenacious perseverance in the face of overwhelming odds.” The cargo ship USNS 1st Lt. Jack Lummus (T-AK-3011) is still on active duty.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Service Branch</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William M. &quot;Bill&quot; McNulty</td>
<td>Third Base</td>
<td>Minors (1937 to 1938)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>May 29, 1944</td>
<td>Killed by friendly fire New Guinea on May 29, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNulty played for Tacoma and Spokane. In the Army he played for the 41st Infantry Division in the NBC Semi-Pro World Series. Killed by friendly fire during a Japanese attack at Toem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul V.A. Mellblom</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1938 to 1939)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>January 14, 1945</td>
<td>Killed in action in Belgium on January 14, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mellblom was signed by the Athletics and played briefly for Federalburg and Milford. He died during the final phase of the fighting in the Ardennes at Houffalize.</td>
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<td>Meyer was signed by St. Paul and played 68 games with Grand Forks in 1942. He served as a paratrooper and was killed during a German mortar attack near Coulee.</td>
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<td>Miller was signed by the Browns and played two seasons at Paragould. He was co-pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress that was attacked by fighters. Miller was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.</td>
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<td>Joseph T. Moceri</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1941 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>June 30, 1944</td>
<td>Killed in action in Normandy on June 30, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moceri was signed by the Tigers and was 9-5 with Muskegon in 1941, then 5-13 with Winston-Salem in 1942. He hit Omaha Beach the day after D-Day and died near the town of Saint-Lô, France.</td>
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<td>Moller attended Columbia and was signed by the Dodgers. In 1941, he was 11-10 as a pitcher and batted .350 in 57 games in the outfield. He was piloting a B-24 Liberator that crashed.</td>
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<td>Navie played seven seasons in the minors and was 20-11 with Rayne in 1939, with a league-leading 223 strikeouts. Navie served at Guadalcanal. He shot himself in a hotel in El Paso.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jack A. Nealy</td>
<td>First Base</td>
<td>Minors (1943)</td>
<td>US Marine Corps</td>
<td>Mar 2, 1945</td>
<td>Killed in action at Iwo Jima on March 2, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nealy minor league career consisted of just one game with Birmingham in 1943, failing to get a hit in his only at-bat. The following year he was with the Marines and killed in action.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward S. Neusel</td>
<td>Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1920 to 1922)</td>
<td>US Navy</td>
<td>Jul 31, 1944</td>
<td>Died of heart disease in Missouri on July 31, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neusel batted .327 in 92 games with Coffeyville in 1921. He later became secretary of the Bartenders Union and died at his sister’s home in St. Louis while serving in the Navy.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert F. &quot;Bob&quot; Nieman</td>
<td>Shortstop</td>
<td>Minors (1941 signed but did not play)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Aug 23, 1944</td>
<td>Killed in plane crash in California on Aug 23, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nieman signed with Akron but entered military service before he could play. Served in England with the Medical Corps before training as a gunner on a B-24 Liberator that exploded in mid-air.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Lou Miller was posthumously awarded the Silver Star. “My proudest day,” recalled his widow, Florence, “was the day I went out to Bolling Field Army Air Base, Washington, D.C., to receive for him the Silver Star.”
William F. “Bill” Niemeyer  
*Pitcher*
*Minors (1940 to 1944)*
*US Army*
*Killed in action in Germany on March 4, 1945*

Despite his 7-17 record his rookie season with Erwin, Niemeyer led the team in wins. He was married with two daughters and died trying to capture the town of Erdorf in Germany.

Henry S. "Hank" Nowak  
*Pitcher*
*Minors (1937 to 1941)*
*US Army*
*Killed in action in Belgium on January 1, 1945*

Nowak was signed by the Cardinals and won 20 games with Albany in 1938. He pitched at Camp Lee, Virginia before going overseas and died on New Year’s Day 1945.

Harry M. O’Neill  
*Catcher*
*Majors (1939)*
*US Marine Corps*
*Killed in action at Iwo Jima on March 6, 1945*

O’Neill made just one appearance for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1939. He entered service with the Marines in 1942 and was killed by a Japanese sniper on Iwo Jima.

William L. “Bill” Padar  
*Second Base*
*Minors (1940)*
*US Army*
*Killed in action in Tunisia on December 2, 1942*

Padar was from Detroit, Michigan and played a handful of games for Mansfield in 1940. He died in a blazing tank in North Africa in action against German forces.

Louis A. Paganello  
*Second Base*
*Minors (1942)*
*US Army*
*Killed in action in Germany on March 5, 1945*

Paganello, who played high school baseball against Warren Spahn, played briefly for Bradford before injuring his knee. He served with the 3rd Armored Division and died near Sinnersdorf in Germany.

Joseph M. Palatas  
*Outfield*
*Minors (1942)*
*US Army Air Force*
*Died from wounds in Germany on April 11, 1944*

Palatas signed with the Cardinals and batted .278 his rookie year. He was a bombardier on a B-17 Flying Fortress that was shot down over Germany. Palatas died from his wounds in a prison camp.

Jack H. Patterson  
*Pitcher*
*Minors (1936 to 1941)*
*US Marine Corps*
*Killed in accident at Guadalcanal on Nov 2, 1944*

Patterson won 18 games with Huntington in 1939. While working on the construction of an athletic field on Guadalcanal he was accidentally killed by a bulldozer. The field was later named in his honor.

Metro Persoskie  
*Pitcher/Outfield*
*Minors (1940 to 1942)*
*US Army Air Force*
*Killed in plane crash in England on Feb 22, 1944*

Persoskie was signed by the Dodgers and won nine games with Valdosta in 1941. He was a gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress that collided with another bomber shortly after take-off.

Charles R. Pescod  
*Pitcher*
*Minors (1937 to 1942)*
*US Army*
*Killed in action in France on December 2, 1944*

Pescod was born in Ecuador and grew up in Panama. Persuaded to play in the USA by Paul Richards of the Crackers. Won 17 games with Hot Springs in 1941. He died near Eckartswiller.

Clarence Peters, Jr.  
*Infield*
*Minors (1938 to 1941)*
*US Army*
*Died from wounds in France on July 8, 1944*

Peters, aged 18, signed with Marshall in 1938. He went into combat in Normandy just 13 days after D-Day. Peters died from wounds sustained at La Haye du Puits the day before.

Harry O’Neill played just one game in the major leagues as a late-inning defensive replacement for Frankie Hayes as the Athletics were trounced by the Detroit Tigers, 16-3.
Joe Pinder was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for rescuing vital radio equipment on Omaha Beach. “The indomitable courage and personal bravery of T/5 Pinder,” claimed his citation, “was a magnificent inspiration to the men with whom he served.”
Rosey Rosenstein, who was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, wrote in his last letter home that he had just gotten out of sick bay and, "They wanted to send me home, but, I can't leave my buddies. We're so short-handed. Please forgive me. I volunteered to stay."
Carl H. "Kappy" Scott  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1934 to 1936)  
US Army  
*Killed in action in France on July 26, 1944*

Scott was from Transfer, western Pennsylvania, and played for Monessen and Canton in the minor leagues as well as for various semi-pro teams. He died near Marchesieux, Normandy, aged 32.

Marcello L. "Major" Serventi  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1935 to 1940)  
US Army  
*Died from injuries in California, July 5, 1941*

Serventi was signed by Oakland and played three seasons. In 1939, he was 17-13 with Spokane. Serventi suffered severe injuries in a car crash on July 4 and died the following day.

Donald R. Shelton  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1940)  
US Army  
*Killed in action in Italy on September 15, 1944*

Shelton of Webster City, Iowa, pitched briefly in the minors with St. Joseph and Hopkinsville. Shelton, who was awarded a Bronze Star, died near Terenza with the 34th Infantry Division.

Harold H. Sherman  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1940 to 1941)  
US Army Air Force  
*Killed in plane crash in China on July 7, 1945*

Sherman was 2-11 with last-placed Paragould in 1941. He served as a pilot of a B-24 Liberator ferrying fuel over “the Hump” from India to China. He died in a plane crash near Mowkung.

Jack C. Siens  
**Outfield**  
Minors (1939 to 1940)  
US Navy  
*Plane crash off English coast on Sep 10, 1943*

Siens played for Marshall College then batted .315 with 15 homers and 91 RBIs for Huntington his rookie season. He was co-pilot of a PB4Y Liberator that lost control during a simulated fighter attack.

Arthur H. "Art" Sinclair  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1938)  
US Army  
*Lost at sea on January 26, 1944*

Sinclair was signed by the Giants and was 8-4 with a 3.46 ERA for Fort Smith. He was aboard an LST landing ship that hit a mine and exploded off the coast of Anzio, Italy, killing 483 men.

John M. "Mason" Smith  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1942)  
US Army Air Force  
*Plane crash in France on November 4, 1944*

Smith was signed by the Cardinals and was 14-8 with a 3.05 ERA in 28 games with Albany. He flew photographic reconnaissance missions and died in an F-3 Havoc crash at Metzeresche.

Donald K. Smith  
**Pitcher**  
Minors (1936 to 1941)  
US Navy  
*Killed in action at sea on August 9, 1942*

Smith played baseball at Mercer University and signed with Macon in 1936. He was 14-10 with Americus his last year before military service. Died when the cruiser USS Quincy sank in the Pacific.

Marshall M. Sneed  
**Outfield**  
Minors (1939 to 1940)  
US Army Air Force  
*Shot down in Tunisia on February 22, 1943*

Sneed played baseball at the University of Missouri and signed with the Browns, playing at Topeka and Paragould. A P-40 Warhawk fighter pilot, Sneed eared a DFC before being shot down.

Daniel W. Snell  
**Infield**  
Minors (1936 to 1941)  
US Army  
*Died of wounds in Germany on March 11, 1945*

Snell attended Howard College and was signed by Troy, batting .295 in 93 games. He also played pro football with Buffalo. He was mortally wounded near Bad Neunahr.

Marshall Sneed, who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Star and Air Medal, shot down an enemy fighter plan on January 20, 1943.
Rodney L. Sooter  
**Pitcher**  
**Minors (1943)**  
**US Army Air Force**  
*Killed in plane crash in Germany on Feb 1, 1946*

Sooter was signed by Seattle but released at the start of the season. He died in an L-4 Grasshopper liaison plane crash nine months after the war in Europe had ended.

William H. “Billy” Southworth, Jr.  
**Outfield**  
**Minors (1936 to 1940)**  
**US Army Air Force**  
*Plane crash in New York on February 15, 1945*

The son of Cardinals manager, Billy Southworth, he batted .342 with Rome in 1939. Southworth flew bomber missions in Europe before losing his life in a B-29 Superfortress crash LaGuardia.

Earl V. “Lefty” Springer  
**Pitcher**  
**Minors (1940 to 1941)**  
**US Army**  
*Killed in action in Germany on January 25, 1945*

Springer attended the University of Maryland and signed with Baltimore. He was 1-2 in 18 appearances his rookie year. Springer died in an M3 armor-plated half-track vehicle at Nennig.

Gene Stack (born Eugene F. Stachowiak)  
**Pitcher**  
**Minors (1940)**  
**US Army**  
*Died of pneumonia in Indiana on June 26, 1942*

Stack was signed by the White Sox and was 19-11 with Lubbock. In the Army he pitched for Fort Custer. Stack collapsed and died near Michigan City on the way back from a ballgame.

Donald A. Stewart  
**Umpire**  
**Minors (1938 to 1940)**  
**Canadian Army**  
*Killed in air raid in Scotland on March 13, 1941*

After a brief trial as a player with Seattle in 1938, Stewart umpired in the Western International League. He was killed during a German air raid on Glasgow.

James E. Stewart  
**Pitcher**  
**Minors**  
**US Marine Corps**  
*Killed in action at Iwo Jima on March 22, 1945*

Stewart signed with Atlanta during the winter of 1943, but enlisted in the Marine Corps before playing. He was among 4,500 Marines killed at Iwo Jima.

Alvin "Bus" Stiewe  
**Shortstop**  
**Minors (1936 to 1938)**  
**US Army**  
*Killed in action in Italy on February 15, 1945*

Stiewe batted .303 in 97 games his rookie year with Sandusky and had the same batting average with Findlay in 1938. He died during a patrol in Mezzano.

Errol J. Stoner  
**Pitcher**  
**Minors (1933 to 1937)**  
**US Army**  
*Died of wounds in Philippines on Dec 12, 1941*

Stoner, who served with the Army in the Philippines in the late 1920s, was signed by Pittsburgh in 1933 and played for Tulsa. He died during a Japanese aerial attack on Clark Field.

Sylvester H. "Syl" Sturges  
**Outfield**  
**Minors (1939 to 1941)**  
**US Army Air Force**  
*Killed in plane crash in France on June 7, 1944*

Sturges was signed by the Dodgers and played for Americus, Shelby and Goldsboro. He was the co-pilot of a C-47 transport plane that crashed near Sebeville the day after D-Day.

Fredric W. Swift  
**Pitcher**  
**Minors (1940 to 1941)**  
**US Army Air Force**  
*Killed in plane crash in Texas on April 23, 1944*

Swift attended Ursinus College and signed with the Phillies. He played for Moultrie, Martinsville and Allenstown. He died when a twin-engined AT-7 Navigator crashed near Blanco.
Johnny P. Taylor  
*Third Base*
*Minors (1938 to 1941)*  
*US Marine Corps*  
*Killed in action at Guam on July 26, 1944*

Taylor signed with Lubbock and batted .312 his rookie year. He then batted .308 with 12 home runs and 114 RBIs in 1939. He died five days after landing on Guam with the Marines.

Steve L. Tonsick  
*First Base*
*Minors (1937)*  
*US Army*  
*Killed in action in Tunisia on March 28, 1943*

Tonsick signed with the Cardinals and played just one season with Monett, batting .232 in 106 games. He served with the Engineers and his brother, Rudolph, also died in WWII.

James Trimbble III  
*Pitcher*
*Minors*  
*US Marine Corps*  
*Killed in action at Iwo Jima on March 1, 1945*

Trimbble was signed out of high school by the Athletics and given a four-year scholarship to Duke University. He died during a Japanese suicide attack on his reconnaissance team.

George E. "Emmett" Tully  
*Pitcher/First Base*
*Minors (1927 to 1929)*  
*US Army*  
*Stabbed to death in Georgia on Jan 13, 1943*

Tully attended the University of Georgia and signed with Savannah upon graduation. He died on the way to hospital after being stabbed in a street fight in Savannah.

Edgar W. Tuttle  
*Pitcher/Outfield*
*Minors (1939 to 1940)*  
*US Navy*  
*Killed in plane crash in Florida on June 11, 1942*

Tuttle attended Lenoir-Rhyne College and signed with Hickory. He was a high school teacher before joining the Navy. Tuttle died when two planes collided near Jacksonville.

Wirt B. "Beecher" Twitchell, Jr.  
*Pitcher/First Base*
*Minors (1938 to 1940)*  
*US Army*  
*Killed in action at Saipan on July 7, 1944*

Twitchell attended the University of Southern California and signed with Detroit. He was 6-9 with Hobbs. He died during a Japanese suicidal attack two days before Saipan was secured.

Lou Vann (born Luigi G. Varanese)  
*Infield*
*Minors (1932 to 1938)*  
*US Marine Corps*  
*Killed in accident in California on May 21, 1943*

Vann signed with New Haven and batted .260 his rookie year. He played for many years with the House of David team. Vann possibly died in a knife fight at Camp Pendleton.

Joseph Vecchio  
*Outfield*
*Minors (1939)*  
*US Army*  
*Killed in action in France on November 16, 1944*

Vecchio signed with Opelousas and also played for Abbeville. He served as a medic and was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry. He died near town of Dieuze.

Armando J. “Pete” Viselli  
*Shortstop*
*Minors (1939)*  
*US Army Air Force*  
*Plane crash in Philippines on Dec 12, 1941*

Viselli was in the military in the late 30s before signing with Palestine. After one season he returned to the military. He was aboard a B-18 Bolo bomber that disappeared after take-off.

Arthur C. Vivian, Jr.  
*Pitcher*
*Minors (1942)*  
*US Marine Corps*  
*Killed in action at Guam on August 1, 1944*

Vivian attended Wake Forest College and signed with the Yankees. He was 3-1 in four appearances with Amsterdam. Vivian was killed when his jeep hit a Japanese mine.

Joe Vecchio was a medic and was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry. In a letter home, he wrote that at one time he was only 25 yards from a German machine-gunner, who warned the medic to advance no further.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Outfield</th>
<th>Minor League Years</th>
<th>Military Branch</th>
<th>Military Assignment/Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elmer J. Wachtler</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1942 to 1943)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in Luxembourg on Jan 5, 1945</td>
<td>Wachtler and his brother, Billy, signed with the Cardinals. He was 8-7 with Decatur his rookie year. Wachtler died during the breakout at Bastogne, near Lutrebois.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo M. H. Walker</td>
<td>Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1936)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Plane crash in California on November 2, 1941</td>
<td>Walker, younger brother of “Gee” and “Hub” Walker, signed with the Reds and played with Andalusia. Walker was piloting a B-17 Flying Fortress that crashed near Lake Tahoe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carson “Kit Carson” Walsky</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1939)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in Germany on Feb 26, 1945</td>
<td>Walsky, born in Czechoslovakia, attended Mount St. Mary’s College and signed with Hazelton. He was 4-6 in 12 games. He died near Ferschweiler in only his third day of combat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman E. &quot;Chipper&quot; Wantuck</td>
<td>Pitcher/Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1941 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in New Guinea on June 16, 1944</td>
<td>Wantuck was signed by Sheboygan and was 15-7 his rookie year. The following season he was 19-6 and batted .291. He served as a medic and was killed while helping a wounded soldier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack W. Weller</td>
<td>Shortstop</td>
<td>Minors (1939)</td>
<td>US Navy</td>
<td>Plane crash in Washington, DC on Mar 24, 1943</td>
<td>Weiler attended Milligan College and was signed by Johnson City. He joined the Navy in 1940 and died aboard a twin-engined R5C Commando that crashed on takeoff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millard M. “Mernie” White</td>
<td>Shortstop</td>
<td>Minors (1940)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Plane crash in New Mexico on July 3, 1945</td>
<td>White, the son of a minor leaguer, signed with Fremont and batted .228 in 85 games. He died while taxiing a P-47 Thunderbolt fighter plane that exploded near Montoya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James J. “Jim” Whitfield</td>
<td>Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action at Palau on September 22, 1944</td>
<td>Whitfield accepted a $5,000 bonus to sign with the Cardinals and batted .238 with Albany. He died during a Japanese mortar attack on the island of Angaur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard L. “Dick” Williams</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1940 and 1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in Philippines on Feb 21, 1945</td>
<td>Williams, born in Canada, was 14-11 with a 3.89 ERA with Sheboygan in 1941. He died near the Marikina River and was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert J. “Bob” Williams</td>
<td>First Base</td>
<td>Minors (1939 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Died from illness in Texas on January 14, 1943</td>
<td>Williams attended Texas A&amp;M and signed with the White Sox. He batted .337 with 19 homers for Elizabethton in 1940. He died from an unidentified illness at Fort Bliss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lester R. Wirkkala</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1935 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in France on September 7, 1944</td>
<td>Wirkkala was an Ohio State League all-star in 1939 after winning 14 games with Fremont and went on to pitch for Toledo in the Browns organization. He died near Gravelotte, France.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dick Williams was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for actions during the battle for Manila.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Service Branch</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanford G. Wolfson</td>
<td>Outfield/Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1941 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Murdered by German police on Nov 5, 1944</td>
<td>Wolfson signed with the Cardinals and batted .303 with Johnson City. He was co-pilot of a B-17 shot down over Germany and was murdered near Kaiserslautern because he was Jewish.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas J. Woodruff</td>
<td>Shortstop</td>
<td>Minors (1938 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Navy</td>
<td>Shot down over Luzon on November 14, 1944</td>
<td>Signed with the Browns and led the Texas Valley League in stolen bases his rookie year. An F6F Hellcat fighter pilot, he was awarded the DFC twice before being shot down.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Wray (born Alan Wray Lightner)</td>
<td>Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1939)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in Germany on January 12, 1945</td>
<td>Wray played semi-pro baseball in California, attended Modesto Junior College and was signed by Bellingham in 1939, playing 14 games. He died near Saarbrucken.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmere P. &quot;Elmer&quot; Wright</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1937 to 1940)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in France on June 6, 1944</td>
<td>Wright was signed by the Browns. He was 6-14 with Johnstown in 1938 with two victories coming on the same day. He died in the first wave of troops to hit Omaha Beach on D-Day.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>William H. &quot;Bill&quot; YarewicK</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1936 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Drowned off coast of Japan on May 23, 1945</td>
<td>YarewicK was signed by the Giants and won 16 games with Decatur in 1940. He was an engineer on a B-29 Superfortress and bailed out off the coast of Japan, but never seen again.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick J. Yeske</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1941 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in Italy on December 21, 1943</td>
<td>Yeske was signed by Hartford and was 9-8 with Goldsboro in 28 games his rookie year, then 7-5 with Welch in 1942. He died near San Pietro, attacking an enemy position.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion P. &quot;Spud&quot; Young</td>
<td>Infield</td>
<td>Minors (1941 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Marine Corps</td>
<td>Killed in kamikaze attack on December 13, 1944</td>
<td>Young batted .242 with Utica in 1942 and was on the Can-Am League all-star team. He was among 133 killed on the cruiser USS Nashville during a kamikaze attack off Negros Island.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veito R. Zande</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Minors (1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in France on August 10, 1944</td>
<td>Zande was one of three brothers to play in minors, he attended St. Lawrence College and played for Newport and Lansing. Zande died near Saint-Lô, Normandy.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter J. Zarrilla</td>
<td>Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1940 to 1942)</td>
<td>US Army Air Force</td>
<td>Killed in plane crash in Texas on August 9, 1945</td>
<td>Zarrilla batted .287 in 36 games in the Appalachian League in 1942. He was on the Foster Field baseball team and died in an twin-engined AT-7 returning from a ballgame.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamar A. &quot;Dutch&quot; Zimmerman</td>
<td>Outfield</td>
<td>Minors (1940 to 1941)</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Killed in action in Luxembourg on Jan 24, 1945</td>
<td>Zimmerman signed with Syracuse and batted .326 with 102 RBIs for Bristol in 1941. In service, he played with Cecil Travis on the Camp Wheeler team. He died near Wilwerwiltz.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tom Woodruff was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. “With complete disregard for his own personal safety,” the citation read, “and in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire he attacked and obtained a direct bomb hit on a light cruiser inflicting severe damage.”
John J. Zulberti  
Infield  
Minors (1937 to 1940)  
US Army  
*Killed in action in Italy on January 21, 1944*

Zulberti batted .320 with 14 home runs and 104 RBIs for Ogdensburg in 1938. He died while trying to establish a bridgehead across the Gari River, near Cassino.

George C. Zwilling  
Shortstop  
Minor (Signed but did not play)  
US Army  
*Killed in action in Tunisia on March 31, 1943*

Zwilling signed with Cincinnati in the fall of 1941, but entered military service before he had a chance to play. He died during the 34th Infantry Division’s first North African offensive.

Harold J. “Butch” Ball

Butch Ball was an outstanding young athlete, playing baseball and basketball with topflight teams around Brooklyn. He had attended New Utrecht High School and was signed by the Milford Giants in 1939. But the young catcher had a secret. One that he had to keep if he wanted to play Organized baseball.

In December 1896, Susan McConnell, a white woman from New Jersey, married Moses Ball, an African-American from Virginia. Moses worked as a dining car waiter and they lived in Manhattan before moving to Brooklyn in the 1900s. Butch, their seventh and youngest child, was born on March 16, 1917, and the family was identified in the census as “Mulatto,” an outdated term referring to people of mixed African and European ancestry. In 1929, when Butch was 11 years old, his father, Moses, died aged 61. In the 1930 census a year later, the family were listed as “White,” and again in the 1940 census when Butch and his older brothers Kenneth and Edmond were living with their mother, Susan.

When Butch joined the Milford Giants at their home in Delaware in July 1939, three years had been shaved off his age (he was listed as 19 but was actually 22). In his first game in the minors, Butch was behind the plate for Bill Syring’s four-hitter against Centreville. He got his first hit the following day against Salisbury, going 2-for-4 with two RBIs and even played four games at second base in early August before sitting out the rest of the month (possibly through injury). Butch was back in the lineup as a pinch hitter on August 31, then went 4-for-5 with two RBIs the following day against Easton. He finished the season catching a pitching gem, just as he had in his first game, handling Frank Faske’s five-inning rain-shortened no-hitter over Federalsburg. Butch finished the season with a .259 batting average (14-for-54) over 17 games.

Butch spent the early part of 1940 with Milford, but was soon back in Brooklyn playing for St. Rose in the Brooklyn Amateur League and the Rheingold Brewers of the Queens Alliance League. He was back with Rheingold in 1941 and entered military service in May 1942.

Having listed his race as white on his Draft Registration card, Butch served as a Technician Fifth Grade with the 489th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Armored Division. He was killed in action in Germany on April 12, 1945. Harold “Butch” Ball, who was awarded the Bronze Star, rests at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten.
One who didn’t make the list

Research uncovers fascinating stories related to baseball, but it can also uncover the darker side of things connected to the game. My friend, Gary Cieradkowski, recently discovered a story about a former minor league player who, like the 172, died in military service, but in very different circumstances. Ernest L. Clark of Clifton Forge, Virginia, had led the Huntington Aces with 12 wins in 1941. The following year he played for Huntington, Staunton and Ashland before entering military service. Stationed in England with the Army Air Force, Clark and another soldier raped and murdered a 15-year-old English girl on August 22, 1944. Both soldiers were hanged at Shepton Mallet Prison on January 8, 1945, and are buried - along with 94 other American soldiers who were executed for desertion, murder and rape - in unnamed graves at an American military cemetery in France.
Herm Rush
Glenn Sanford
Marshall Sneed
Billy Southworth, Jr.
Fred Swift
Jimmy Trimble
Elmer Wachtler
Mernie White
Dick Williams
Al Wray
Elmer Wright
Bill Yarewick
Aloha and Sayonara: Baseball and the battlefields of the Pacific

During the summer of 1940, in contrast to the downwardly spiraling political relationship between Japan and the United States, the Keio University baseball team traveled from Tokyo to the Hawaiian Islands. Aloha and Sayonara tells the story of the last Japanese baseball team to visit the Hawaiian Islands – a tradition that dated back to 1908 - before the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor. With game-by-game, and almost day-by-day coverage, this is a never-before-told insight into the lives of 15 young Japanese college students who came to play baseball, the game they loved, and were soon to be in deadly conflict with their new-found friends. Aloha and Sayonara explores their early years, their time in Hawaii and then follows the young players’ journey back to Japan. For some, the journey continues to post-war professional baseball. For others it ends on the battlefields of the Pacific islands.

Year Published: 2022
Format: softcover (6 x 9)
Pages: 47
Photos: 25

Amazon USA $6.00
Amazon Canada $7.00
Amazon Japan ¥935
Amazon UK £5.00
Baseball in Hawaii During World War II

Baseball in Hawaii During World War II is the first in-depth look at the wartime exploits of over 150 major leaguers and countless minor league players who found themselves stationed in the Hawaiian Islands between 1941 and 1945. With the inclusion of 150 biographies and over 80 photographs the book details every victory and every tragedy of wartime baseball in the paradise of the Pacific. Produced in a chronological order, the book first delves into the history of baseball in the Islands and how varied ethnicities shaped the structure and development of the game. Starting with 1941, the book then takes a year-by-year in-depth look at the war, Hawaii and baseball as played by civilians and servicemen.

Year Published: 2021
Format: softcover (7 x 10)
Pages: 343
Photos: 80

Amazon USA $19.99
Amazon Canada $25.00
Amazon UK £14.99
Baseball’s Dead of World War II: A Roster of Professional Players Who Died in Service

While most fans know that baseball stars Ted Williams, Hank Greenberg, and Bob Feller served in the military during World War II, few can name the two major leaguers who died in action. (They were catcher Harry O’Neill and outfielder Elmer Gedeon.) Far fewer still are aware that at least another 125 minor league players also lost their lives during the war. This book draws on extensive research and interviews to bring their personal lives, baseball careers, and wartime service to light.

Year Published: 2009
Format: softcover (7 x 10)
Pages: 272
Photos: 34

Amazon USA $39.95
Amazon UK £36.95

Chevrons and Diamonds
Spotlighting the U.S. Armed Forces’ Inseparable Bond with America’s Pastime

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