

Personal info

Full name

SHIRE, Donald Oliver

Date of birth

14 December 1920

Age

24

Place of birth

Tamaqua, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania

Hometown

California

Military service

Service number

O-769571

Rank

Second Lieutenant

Unit

**48th Squadron,
313th Troop Carrier Group**

Awards

**Purple Heart,
Air Medal**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

24 March 1945

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Margraten

Plot	Row	Grave
F	13	5

Immediate family

Members

Oliver M. Shire (father)

Blandena M. (Miller) Shire (mother)

Derwood L. Shire (twin brother)

Plane data

Serial number

44-77637

Data

Type: C-46D

Destination: Drop zone "X", north of Wesel, Germany

Mission: Paratrooper Drop

MACR: 13424

More information

Donald O. Shire graduated from Tamaqua High School in 1938 and attended Aero Industries Technical Institute in Los Angeles.

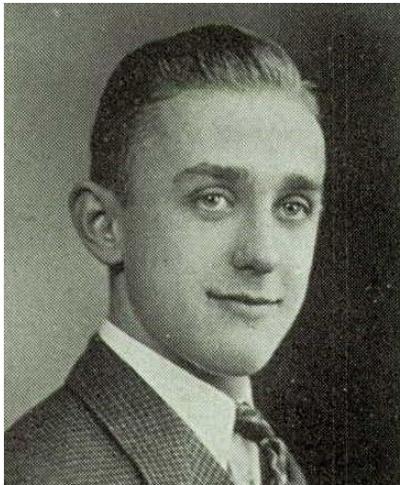
He joined the Air Corps of the U.S. Army Reserve at March Field, California, on 13 October 1942 and was commissioned in March 1944. He was sent overseas in September of the same year.

The aircraft carried four crew members and 22 passengers, all members of the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

According to a witness statement of Capt Leroy L. Bryant, the pilot of another C-46 in the same group, this airplane dropped his paratroopers over the drop zone. As the group crossed the Rhine, back to allied occupied territory, he saw that the left wing behind the gas tank was on fire. As he was catching up with the aircraft to call the pilot over the VHF, it started to go down in a slow glide, as if preparing to crash-land. Instead of putting the aircraft down straight ahead, the pilot started a low turn at what seemed to be a slow airspeed. When the aircraft went into the turn, the fire spread to the extreme end of the left wing, burning the aileron off almost immediately. Unable to straighten out the aircraft, the left wing struck the ground, followed by the nose and then the right wing. The aircraft then exploded, and the tail section was thrown clear of the wreckage.

Three crew members were killed. One man, T/Sgt Rhoads, crash-landed in the burning aircraft and suffered only minor injuries. He was taken to an aid station by British forces.

Photos



Source of information: André Koch, Raf Dyckmans, www.abmc.gov, www.wwiimemorial.com, www.archives.gov - WWII Enlistment Record, www.fold3.com - MACR, www.ancestry.com - Headstone and Interment Record / Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, - www.newspapers.com - The Morning Call

Photo source: www.findagrave.com - Des Philippet, www.ancestry.com - Tamaqua High School Yearbook 1938