

### Personal info

Full name

**SANDERS, Robert Allen**

Date of birth

**6 March 1925**

Age

**20**

Place of birth

**Odessa, Lafayette County, Missouri**

Hometown

**Odessa, Lafayette County, Missouri**

### Military service

Service number

**37535218**

Rank

**Staff Sergeant**

Unit

**D Company,  
2nd Battalion,  
513th Parachute Infantry Regiment,  
17th Airborne Division**

Awards

**Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster**

### Death & Grave

Status

**Killed in Action**

Date of death

**28 March 1945**

Cemetery

**American War Cemetery Margraten**

Plot	Row	Grave
G	12	24

## Immediate family

### Members

**Walter L. Sanders (father)**

**Ellen G. Sanders (mother)**

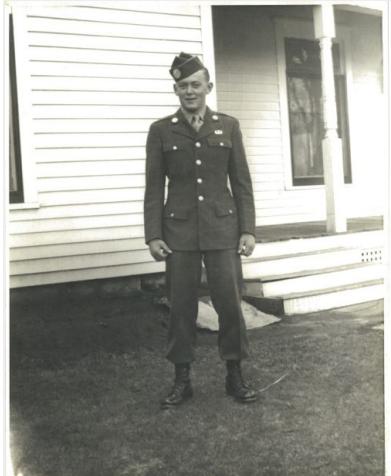
**Ernest L. Sanders (brother)**

**Lawrence E. Sanders (brother)**

## Biography

Wade Sanders, a cousin of Robert, shared this story: The photo of Robert in his army uniform was taken in front of his parents house on West Main Street in Odessa, Missouri. I recognize my grandparents house in the background. I played on that front porch as a boy. The home was replaced in the 1970s by a new house. The photo shows Robert's paratrooper's wings badge. Plus his pants are tucked in his boots. I remember the following details of my family during World War II. The three sons of Walter and Ellen Sanders all served in the US Army during World War II. The war was a life-changing event for the Sanders family. Walter and Ellen (my grandparents) both worked at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant east of Independence, Missouri during the war. Ernest, the oldest son, served in Europe and was in combat. I knew Ernest well. He almost never spoke of his war experiences. About thirty years after the war Ernest shared he had met the Russians on the Elba River in Germany at the end of the war. He described seeing a Russian woman who was a military police solider shoot a German civilian dead at a checkpoint between the American and Russian armies. I think Ernest liked being a soldier. He remained in the reserves after the war and volunteered for Korea. He came home safely from the Korean War but never spoke about it. Robert, the middle son, was obviously in combat and did not survive. I know nothing of his military record. My father always spoke fondly of Robert. My father knew Robert was a paratrooper. My father, Laurence, was the youngest son. He did not join the army until the fall of 1944. He was specially trained in camps in Texas for the invasion of Japan. He was on a troop transport in the Pacific when the Japanese surrendered. Laurence never was in combat. He spent a year on occupation duty in Japan. He hated his time in Japan. He did not like the army. e joined the army because his two older brothers were already in the army. When I was a boy in the 1950s all adults I knew, both family and friends, had stories about World War II. Everyone alive on 7 December 1941 had a story about where they were when they first heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. As a child I remember adults using the phrase "during the war" as they were telling a story. Sometimes they would also comment "that was before the war" or "that was after the war." All adults during my youth never said the Japanese when talking about World War II. They said "The Japs." Usually they said said: "Those damn Japs." My Sanders grandparents seldom spoke about World War II. They very seldom spoke of Robert. I knew they were very sad Robert had been killed in the war. They did not ask for his body to be brought home. The war was a sad time for the family. My father often told me how much he missed Robert. Several times my father shared he had not seen Robert in over two years prior to learning of his death. My father thought Robert died from artillery fire. My grandparents and uncle seldom shared comments about World War II. In 1995, fifty years after his brother died, my father visited Robert's grave in the Margraten cemetery. He spent time alone at Robert's grave. He finally had closure with his brother. My father came home from that visit a different man. I immediately noticed my father was more peaceful when he returned from visiting his brother's grave. I was surprised by his change, but happy for him. All of my life I have been proud of the World War II military service of my father and his two brothers.

## Photos



Source of information: Terry Hirsch, [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com) - WWII Draft Card, [http://www.ww2-airborne.us/units/513/513\\_honor\\_kz.html](http://www.ww2-airborne.us/units/513/513_honor_kz.html), [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) - Headstone and Interment Record / 1930 Census

Photo source: Tom Verheijden, Wade Sanders.