

# National Archives & Records Administration

## War Department Files

### 1 LT Paul U. Avritt Class 55-43

Still In High School when he joined the National Guard. The Guard mobilized September 16, 1940 and he was assigned to the 158th Field Artillery Group, 45th Infantry Division and assigned To Panama. He returned To Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he attended Officer Candidate School (OCS) and commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army. From there he went to North Africa In 1944 and assigned to combat duty. Participated in the Anzio Beachhead. He was with the 160th Field Artillery for the Rome-Arno Invasion and participated in the Southern France Invasion. One Of nine pilots to fly off LST on the Southern France Invasion. He was awarded the Air Medal, Purple Heart, Silver Star, 2 European Theatre Medals with Numerous Battle Stars, American Defense Medal And The Distinguished Flying Cross. Three of these Medals were awarded posthumously to his parents at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, as he was killed in combat During WW II. He was a pilot serving with the Artillery as a Forward Observer, near Dijon, France and heading back to base when 2 Messerschmitts got on him. To avoid leading them to the base he flew in a different direction. They fired on his plane and got a direct hit. He was able to land the crippled plane but it was engulfed in flames. His Crewman was badly injured and unable to get himself out. He pulled him out and to safety, but incurred burns himself all over his body. This was on September 19, 1944. He died the next day, September 20, 1944. Just a few weeks before he had received National attention when he landed his plane behind German lines to rescue a grounded New Zealand pilot. He was brought home to Weatherford, Oklahoma and buried.

From Sharon Kay Andersen, Niece

**ID: O1178691**

**Branch of Service: U.S. Army**

**Hometown: Weatherford, OK**

**Status: DOW 20 Sep 44**

