

**Lieutenant Robert W. Oker**  
**Class of 1939**  
**Enshrined 2024**



Robert Oker was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1918. He attended Elder High School and then Xavier University. While at XU he entered the ROTC program and was a member of the Pistol Team. Lt. Oker graduated in 1939 and attended Field Artillery Officers Basic in Ft. Knox, KY. He was commissioned a 2LT on 29 July 1939.

Nothing is known about Lt. Oker's life between commissioning and being stationed in England in June 1944. He was assigned to the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne, and while in England at some point he saw Winston Churchill and Gen. Montgomery in person. Lt. Oker parachuted into France on D-Day and was captured the same day. Lt. Oker later commented that he was captured, escaped and captured again. He was a POW from 6 June 1944 to May 1945 and moved between both Oflag 64, (Poland) and Oflag 13-B (Germany) where Russian tanks liberated his camp.

At some point after his liberation, he was with a group of Soldiers visited by Gen. George Patton. After this, he was sent to England and then back to Ft. Knox, where he was being readied to be sent to the Pacific area. He contracted appendicitis and was released.

In the late 1940's Oker was hired by the Williamson Company, in the refrigeration department. In 1960, Oker and another employee left and founded the Progress Supply Company, also in the refrigeration business, from where he retired in 1979.

Oker married late in life, stating that he would not get married as long as he needed to care for his mother. She died in 1963 and he married Mary Krebs that same year. Marrying later in life they had no children.

Oker developed a skill in woodworking, and produced many fine pieces of furniture, which are now in the hands of his remaining relatives. He contracted esophageal cancer and passed away in 1982 at 64 years of age.

Oker was a devout Catholic and is buried in St. Joseph New Cemetery. His wife Mary passed away in 2004.