



We Remember, with His Family, Orak Noble Edward M. Kroer, Sr.



On this Fourth of July weekend, let me introduce a family whose service to America has spanned two World Wars, and much more.

Edward M. Kroer, Sr., (left, in 1918) served in the Medical Corps, U.S. Army, in WWI.

Born in Chicago in 1897, after the war, he worked for Betz Medical Company and Pullman Standard before starting his own business, Home & Industrial Sheet Metal and Heating Company, in Hammond, IN. He was a 50-year member of Orak Shrine--a member of the Divan--before and after the war. He died in 1967.

His son Edward M. Kroer, Jr. (right, in 1942) served as a member of the 82nd Airborne in WWII, from 1942 through 1945.

On June 7, 1944, D-Day, he landed as part of the Normandy invasion force, in a German command Post, aboard a six-man glider out of England--they



had run out of powered aircraft for history's grandest military assault, you may remember.

He then fought in Holland and was 150 miles from Berlin when the European war ended. "They sent us back to France, where they talked of deploying us to Japan," he recalls. "No one could believe it!" he says with ironic laughter.

Edward Jr.'s sister, Betty Jane, was born in 1922. After graduation from Hammond High School, she worked for Indiana Harbor Railroad. Married to Howard Johnson, she and her husband enjoyed gardening and world travel throughout their lives. She died in 2015.



With the passing of Betty Jane (photo left, in 1984, with Edward Jr.), funds from her estate, as well as a major gift given earlier by Edward Jr., serve as a memorial to their father here at SHC - Chicago. We are deeply honored to be the commemorative institution for this memorial. It is with great pleasure that we celebrate this American family, for their service to country, their kindness toward children, and their generosity toward our hospital. Edward Jr., now 96 years old, remembers well his father's devotion to Orak Shrine, his love of children, and his commitment to our hospital.

We thank the late Betty Jane, her husband Howard, and Edward Jr. for their thoughtful, noble tribute to Edward Sr. and his legacy of patriotism and heroism, in war and peace. The spirit of their generous friendship lies at the heart of what the Fourth of July is all about.

