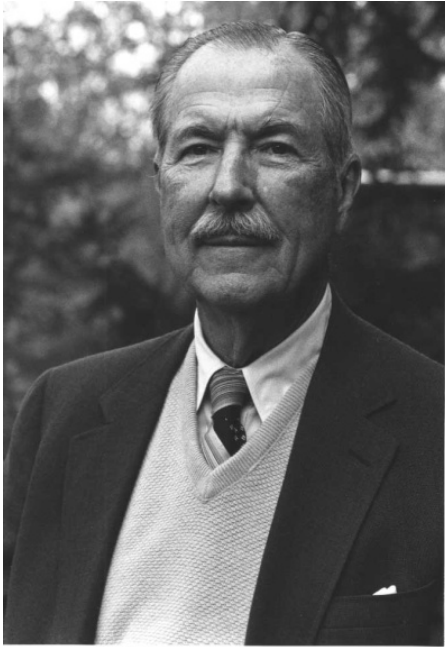


## **MAJOR JOHN R. BOKER, JR.** **US Army (Deceased)**



John Boker, Jr., a Yale graduate, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry in May 1941. He served as an Instructor at the Infantry School until October 1943, when he transferred to the Military Intelligence Training Center (MITC) at Camp Ritchie for the Interrogation Course. He remained at the MITC, teaching in the German section until June 1944. He was then assigned with the British Army Strategic Interrogation office near London. During the closing days of World War II in Europe, Boker formed an independent unit to handle the interrogation and debriefing of German Air Force intelligence personnel who had surrendered to the US Third Army.

As the Allies closed in on the Nazis, many high-ranking German officers and civilians fell into American hands. Anticipating the inevitable dissolution of the Alliance and the rising Soviet threat

to United States security, MAJ Boker was among the first to recognize the potential value of captured German intelligence in the post-war era. He worked tirelessly behind the scenes to gather useful intelligence on the Soviets from high-level prisoners and to recruit and protect key Germans for use in the coming Cold War.

Chief among the key personnel MAJ Boker handled was GEN Reinhold Gehlen, a central figure in German intelligence. Establishing a personal rapport with the General, MAJ Boker recognized Gehlen's potential value to the American intelligence effort. As it turned out, GEN Gehlen had a stockpile of files on the Soviets, as well as the nucleus of an intelligence network already in place that he was prepared to offer to the United States. In the Gehlen case, MAJ Boker worked secretly outside of normal channels (with the knowledge only of his immediate superior) to gather important German intelligence personnel from prisoner-of-war camps throughout Germany. The information these prisoners provided included Soviet military manuals, the complete Order of Battle of the Red Army, digests on Russian industrial and economic strength, and an existing espionage network in Eastern Europe. The Gehlen organization's files saved the American Intelligence Community years of work replicating their efforts by providing a ready-made base of intelligence from which to work in the early years of the Cold War.

MAJ Boker left the Army in 1946 but remained a member of the Reserves until 1953. His story is recounted in GEN Gehlen's memoirs, *The Service* (1972).

MAJ Boker was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1990. He passed away on 12 April 2003.