

## Charles Frederick Gerstacker

Born: July 4, 1920  
Hometown: Cleveland, OH  
Class: 1944  
Service: Merchant Marine  
Position / Rank: Engine Cadet  
Date / Place of death: October 4, 1944 / U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Basic School, San Mateo, CA  
Date / Place of burial: October 1944 / Cleveland, Ohio  
Age: 24



Charles Gerstacker reported to the San Mateo Basic School on or around his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday. On the morning of October 4, 1944 he, along with 46 other Cadet-Midshipmen were involved in swimming training as part of his preparation for the at sea phase of his training. Cadet-Midshipman Gerstacker apparently became incapacitated while in the water, but his distress went unnoticed. His death was not discovered until the other 46 men of his section mustered on the pool deck upon completion of the class. He was removed from the pool and a doctor placed the time of death at 1130. After the investigation of his death his remains were returned to his family in Cleveland, Ohio, for burial.

Charles was the younger of Oliver John Gerstacker and Mary Nelson Gerstacker's two sons. William, Charles brother, was seven years older than Charles. The 1930 U.S. Census indicates that Oliver Gerstacker was a draftsman for an oil exploration company. Charles' mother, Mary, died in December 1936 when he was sixteen. In the 1940 U.S. Census Charles' occupation is identified as draftsman for a Cleveland manufacturing company while his father is identified as Chief Engineer for another firm.