

ROLL CALL

April 2023 Newsletter

RSVP By Tuesday, April 18th—www.roll-call.org

LUNCHEON—Friday, April 28th

APRIL LUNCHEON SPEAKER—Bill Parker



Bill Parker was born in 1924 in Torrance, California but spent most of his time growing up in Oklahoma. He grew up being a cowboy and never stopped. Growing up during the Great Depression, money was scarce and hard work was a daily occurrence. One day while riding back from checking on some cattle he came across a girl at a mailbox and, in time, started dating Colleen. When he got out of high school in June 1943, he was shipped off to the army and wrote to Colleen for the next two years.

Bill was assigned to the 116th Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division. He landed on Omaha Beach in the first wave, on the first day, on D-Day. He believes he was the first soldier to touch sand. He was one of only six on his landing craft to make it ashore. Bill and his men blew a hole in the wire with a Bangalore torpedo and ended up fighting their way across France and Germany. Bill earned a bronze star and two Purple Hearts. He credits his Choctaw blood and woodsmen skills with helping him make it through combat.



Bill arrived home in October 1945 and married on December 12, 1945. Bill and Colleen were



married for 73 years until her passing in 2018. Bill did not talk about his experiences in the war, nor did his brother or anyone else he knew who had served. Not with family, not with friends, no one. It wasn't until 2016 that he started to share his story. And share it he did! In an interview with Tulsa People on Sep 15, 2021, Bill said, "I think about it every night. There's no way getting away from it. I spent 70 some odd years trying to forget all this. I guess it needs to be brought out in the open. I'd like to let the younger generation know that there is nothing free and that we paid a big price for being free."

Bill is well known around Tulsa and regularly shares his experiences with veterans' groups anywhere invited.

UPCOMING LUNCHEON

May 26—Jim Sharp, Korea

June 23—Dr. Eugene Richardson Jr, WWII Tuskegee Airman

July—NO LUNCHEON

As a reminder: Only service animals may be brought into the luncheon.



American Airlines



This month's speaker is brought us courtesy of our new sponsorship with American Airlines. We are thrilled to partner with this great organization that continually supports the men and women who serve and have served!

The April luncheon will be held on NAS JRB Fort Worth (formerly known as Carswell) and is a joint effort with the Fort Worth Civic Leaders!

Everyone **MUST** RSVP in order to access the base and attend the luncheon. No **EXCEPTIONS**. Even those with ID cards and access need to be on the list.

RSVPs will close on Tuesday, 18 April. If you have already RSVP'd, no need to do it again. If you have not, please go to www.roll-call.org. Look below the main picture/mission statement, click the blue "RSVP" button. Takes about 5 seconds!

For those receiving the newsletter via the U.S. mail system, please call or text 817-507-5879 to RSVP. Leave a message.

We will be in the VR-59 Hangar again this year, building 1048.

Please do NOT arrive prior to 0930. Parking will be on the ramp again and that gate will not be open before that. If you arrive too early, please do not park in the main hangar parking. Those that work there need that lot.

When you arrive at the main gate (use 1510 Chenault Ave in GPS to get to the gate), if you do **NOT** have base access—stay in the far right lane. If you have base access, you can use any lane. Have your government issued ID out.

Once you arrive at the hangar (see map), if you are dropping people off, please pull up to the red carpet area at the entrance (large hangar door—not the side doors) and drop your passengers off. You can then go and park.

Everyone needs to check in with the volunteers at the tables at the entrance to the hangar. Please do **NOT** use the side doors. Those will be used by the volunteers and the stairs can be difficult to navigate.

Bottled water will be provided. If you wish to drink something other than bottled water, please bring it.

If you run into trouble, get lost, etc., please call 817-507-5879 and someone will try to guide you. Know it may be difficult to hear or the phone may be busy. Be patient as volunteers try to assist you.

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