

NEWS RELEASE



Touchmark at Coffee Creek

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Book release a fitting tribute for Veterans Day

EDMOND, Okla. — Air Force Col. C.D. Blanks (Ret.) admits he was surprised when his oldest son David decided to make the Air Force his career.

“I couldn’t get him interested — even in ROTC — when he was younger, and then suddenly, while he was working in Oklahoma City, he let me know that he was seeking his commission,” Blanks said.

Blanks, a resident of Touchmark at Coffee Creek, spent 31 years in the Air Force, retiring from the Judge Advocate General’s Department 22 years ago.

Today, active-duty Col. David Blanks is serving a one-year tour at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan as commander in charge of all aircraft maintenance. Bagram is the only U.S. Air Force installation situated in a hostile environment in that region.

The elder Blanks says, as a father, he does worry about his son.

“But, as a retired military officer, I know that he loves what he is doing, and he feels very privileged to be serving his country,” he said. “I was and continue to be very proud of him. During my career, I was far removed from an environment like that, and I never served in a combat zone.”

Generational stories like these are what motivated Touchmark residents Judith and Leaman Harris to compile a second collection of stories about life during World War II.

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TouchmarkEdmond.com

Released in concert with Veterans Day (observed Nov. 11), *As We Lived It — Volume II* comes on the heels of the successful first volume, which featured stories of the “Greatest Generation” as told by residents of Touchmark.

Volume II consists of 18 stories, generated from the monthly Saturday storytelling sessions, much like the first.

Nine stories relate experiences by the veterans themselves. Their wives, family members and other members of the “Greatest Generation” complete the story package, describing the home front during the war. These stories shed light on topics such as working for the Ration Board, farming and rural life during that period. Two residents share memories of their mothers.

“Everybody has a story,” said Judith Harris. “The stories are from all kinds of people, not just veterans, who contributed during war times in many different ways.”

Here’s a sample of the individuals and their stories:

- Charles Weber was the epitome of the young American soldier, creative in the heart of the battle, marching across Italy from Anzio with little food, commandeering a cow so the men could eat.
- Alice Snyder, wife of now-deceased civic leader Fred Snyder, who kept all well at home raising their three young boys during World War II into the Korean War.
- Mary Powers’ family kept four blue stars in the window to designate the four of her five older brothers in battle. Only three returned. Later in life, she would locate the fourth’s grave overseas, still tended by the citizens he fought for, as is the European tradition.
- Mary Catherine Shea Buck handed out ration stamps and was the butt of much anger, as only a certain number of stamps could be distributed.

Book to be unveiled Nov. 8

The book’s release will be highlighted Saturday, Nov. 8 in a special pre-Veterans Day celebration from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at Touchmark, 2801 Shortgrass Road, Edmond. A local Boy Scout troop will honor veterans with a flag ceremony, patriotic music will fill the air and two Touchmark residents, who are World War II veterans, will share their stories. One served in

Europe, and the other served in the Southwest Pacific.

The new book will be available for purchase (\$29) and can be ordered by stopping by Touchmark, phoning (405) 340-1975 or visiting TouchmarkEdmond.com. Proceeds will benefit the Touchmark Foundation, a public charity devoted to finding ways to help seniors receive help and support, such as providing scholarships for nursing students.

Touchmark, located in Edmond at 2801 Shortgrass Road, is part of the Coffee Creek 638-acre planned residential development, which includes a golf course, recreational centers and walking and biking trails for Coffee Creek homeowners. Touchmark at Coffee Creek offers a wide range of homes and lifestyle options. For more information, contact Touchmark at (405) 340-1975 or visit TouchmarkEdmond.com.

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Captions:

C.D. Blanks spent 31 years in the service, retiring from the Judge Advocate General's Corps. He was privileged to administer the oath to his son David when the younger Blanks received his commission as a 2nd lieutenant, again when he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and last year to colonel.

With a son serving in Afghanistan, Air Force Col. C.D. Blanks (Ret.) and wife Kathryn often reflect on their years in the service. The Touchmark at Coffee Creek residents make up a community of World War II veterans and those on the home front during the '40s. Their stories are compiled in a newly released *As They Lived It— Volume II*.