

Russell Lee Bonacker

Russell Lee Bonacker died April 9th at Legacy Circle of Life Hospice at the age of 93. He was born in Sioux Falls, SD, on August 28, 1923, to William and Sarah (Gustafson) Bonacker. After graduation he was drafted into the Army during WWII and served as a combat medic for three years. He was a survivor of the Battle of the Bulge serving under General Patton. He was awarded two Bronze Star Medals. Russ served proudly because he believed he was sent to fight a necessary war for the future of our nation.

After being honorably discharged, Russ worked as funeral director. He later became a pharmaceutical salesman for Dow Chemical Company where he worked for 30 years, twice earning Salesman of the Year.

In 1979 he moved his family to NWA. He never regretted taking early retirement and discovered there were many opportunities for community involvement, with endeavors of the church always taking precedence. He especially liked the opportunity to tell others how Jesus Christ had changed his life.

His priorities in life were God, country, and family. He enjoyed making people laugh and was always ready with a joke or story. He never met a stranger or failed to clean his plate... or yours.

His favorite news commentator was Paul Harvey whose quotation "to leave the woodpile a little higher than I found it" motivated him to help others. He would help move, paint homes, provide transportation, share food or financial aid. His favorite activities were: flying his plane, hunting, fishing, fly tying, gardening, hot air balloons, archeological digs, spelunking, stained glass work, baking bread, grilling and RV travel. He and his wife visited several countries through the years to work on Christian schools and churches. He enjoyed volunteering at: SOWERS, Recycling Center, Village House, Salvation Army (establishing the kettle program in Bella Vista), Crime Watch, Horses for Healing, 25 years in the Phillips Classic/Cancer Challenge golf tournament, local speaking engagements about WWII experiences, volunteer deputy for the Benton County Sheriff's Office, volunteer firefighter for the Bella Vista Fire Department, Republican County Committee, NRA, VFW, the DAV and the American Legion. For many years he served on the Honor Guard for countless funerals of other veterans. In 2015 he was invited to be Grand Marshal in the Bella Vista Patriots' July Fourth Parade.

Russ was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers, Earl Bonacker and Glenn Bonacker; and his daughter Wendy Louise Bonacker.

Survivors are his wife Louise; son Kirk (wife Paula); granddaughter Wendy Bonacker; sister Viola Rice; two nephews; and two nieces.

A private committal for the immediate family was held at Benton County Memorial Cemetery. A service to celebrate Russ' life will be held at 11:00 A.M. on Saturday, April 22nd at Bella Vista Baptist Church with Pastor Mike McCauley presiding. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the BV Baptist Church, Circle of Life Hospice or any veteran's organization. Arrangements by Benton County Funeral Home, 306 N. 4th, Rogers. Online condolences to www.bentoncountyfuneralhome.com