

On Veteran's Day...

To me, this flag is an everyday reminder of freedom, service and a great man (my dad), John Otway Barnett.

My dad served in WWII as one of the first participants in the CPTP (Civilian Pilot Training Program). As an instructor, he served for two years training Navy pilots and continued serving for two more years as a Navy Flight Engineer and Mechanic. While in the Navy, he flew PBMs (Patrol Bombers by Martin) and flew many surveillance missions over Central America and Southern Florida. I can remember him telling me about changing 36 spark plugs in each of the 18-cylinder radial engines.

After the war, he married my mom and settled in Hastings, Michigan. They spent 60 years together. Dad was a banker and mom was a teacher. As the youngest of four, and the only boy, I enjoyed a special relationship with my dad. We all did.

Looking back, I'm thankful for his support and for teaching me about business. Although he was a '9 to 5 guy', he would always introduce me to his entrepreneurial friends and customers. Even as I left a perfectly good job in 1997 to start my own business, Barnett Design Works, he had unwavering support for my goals and aspirations. Years later, Don Mulder and I partnered up and have, thankfully, grown our business ever since.

My dad passed away about a year and half ago at 100 years old. At his funeral, the Honor Guard presented me with a beautiful large American Flag. The ceremony was touching, and I was honored to have a memory of his service to take with me. The flag now hangs in the south end of our plant and serves as a constant reminder of my dad and his service to our country.

I've shared the background of this flag with our employees and make a point to say thanks to many of the Veterans we currently employ. We are proud to employ Veterans, and are thankful for their service, and the service of so many other great Veterans in the community and across the country.

To all those who have served, Thank You!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Barnett'.

Dave Barnett
Founding Partner, Choice Machinery Group

