

Clinton man shares memories of family, service, friends and life

By Katherine R. Dougan

"I can't talk to you about the service without talking about my brothers," said 84-year-old William "Bill" Barnett. The reason, explains Barnett, a naval aviator, is because he was stationed with and served with his twin brother, Robert Glenn "Bob" Barnett, and his older brother, James Arden "Barney" Barnett. All three were pilots and served together after Bill and Bob joined the Navy Reserves, even though it is unusual for family to be stationed together, according to Bill.

Barney flew a Grumman F6F plane, or Hellcat, in WWII, and was part of an elite night fighter squad. The Hellcat was designed to go up against the Japanese Zeros and was equipped with primitive AI, or Air Interception radar, and carried six 50-caliber guns. The AI radar was only accurate from five to six miles, Bill said.

"Landing at night is scary, I can tell you that. You can't see anything," Bill speaks from experience; he had to land a few times at night. Barney was a night fighter, flying all the time at night from the carrier *USS Independence*. Night fighter pilots landed in utter, complete ink-black darkness, with only red light from the instruments visible inside the cockpit.

Bill and Bob followed in the footsteps of their brother, Barney, joining the Navy Reserves. Bob and Bill both flew FJ-4 Fury aircrafts, a swept-wing carrier fighter-bomber used by the U.S. Navy and the Marine Corps.

Service for Bill began after two years in college, in 1954 at age 20, and he flew twenty years in the Navy Reserves. He achieved the rank of

Commander by the end of his service. Bob retired from the Navy Reserves as a Captain, and Barney was a Commander.



Photo by Robert Jenkins
Retired naval aviator
William "Bill" Barnett

"I loved to fly. We had to fly at fifty feet to get under the radar. I learned to fly low and fast." Bill confesses he also did some buzzing, or low flying in his time, and engaged in a bit of "flat-hattin'," a term used to describe flying low enough to "flatten" the hats on the heads of people on the ground. He recalls flying down the path of a river and waving, or waggling his wings, at tugboats. Once he recalls a woman out in the yard, waving a broom.



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Bill Barnett climbing into an FJ-4

"I thought she wanted me to wave," he said, adding he later learned she was shooing off the low-flying plane.

Bob and Bill were fortunate that by the time they were in the Reserves, they weren't called to action. Bill did

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Unique gifts at Holiday Market

looking for something unique, and, a lot of times, handcrafted." The pull of shopping traffic to Olde Towne benefits downtown merchants, too.

Even with a steady string of regular vendors who often make it to at least three of Clinton's four seasonal markets, "we're always looking for new vendors, to keep breathing new life into the market."

Pottery, handmade jewelry, hand-milled soaps and scrubs, metal work, woodworking, knitting and fall and holiday decor are staples of the Holiday Market, as well as ornaments that can be personalized and packaged foods, plus mixes that can help make entertaining and gift-giving a breeze.

And, "If you get that little crisp in the air, it's fabulous," Lytal said. That really kicks in the shopping spirit.

Market vendors will include such hardworking creative types as Josh Hardin, an athletic trainer, whose The Pipe Dream sideline business in home furnishings started with his own abode. "I like character and old stuff," he said, and he parlayed that love into the type of reclaimed wood furnishings and decor that shows such as *Fixer Upper* have made fashionable.

It started organically, when the expense of kitchen and dining room tables drove him to build his own, and friends' love of them pushed him to create more. Now, old flooring, fencing, deck boards and bleachers get new life with industrial black iron pipes for legs. Wood scraps are recycled into guitar-shaped wall art.

"People like it. It gives me an excuse to keep doing it," Hardin said.

His wife, Megan, a physical therapist, has joined the fun, too. She noticed that an old fence board, when split, resembled a branch. She drew two birds on one, Hardin cut out the

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silhouettes, and her craft progressed from there. She'll have some Christmas-themed creations too, with cardinals and an ornament.

"The Holiday Market is always great for us," Hardin said, and, even if folks don't have room for another piece of furniture, "we get a lot of good feedback" about that rustic, farmhouse style. "I strive for that kind of look. ... It's in that sweet spot now. That's what people are looking for."

Amy Kelly's Jus' Mudd Pottery will also be at the Holiday Market, plying the hand-sculpted and functional pottery that's made her booth a go-to for bird feeders, flower frogs, garden bell chimes and more.

"It's my second-biggest market, and it's a very good one. Good turnout, the people are great, everything," Kelly said, praising, too, the extension of hours to 3 p.m. for more shopping time for the masses.

Chip-and-dip plates, trinket trays and salad bowls (all food-, dishwasher-, oven- and microwave safe), are part of inventory, too. "But, what I sell out of mostly are business card and cell phone holders. I can't keep those in around Christmas."

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