



REMEMBERING DAD

WORLD WAR II VETERAN'S MEMORY LIVES ON THROUGH HIS SON

*Writer / Kara Kavensky
Photography Provided*

Veteran's Day, or Armistice Day as it was originally named, was declared to honor the 11th hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, the end of World War I. Veteran's Day is a day of gratitude and remembrance of those who have served our country. This Veteran's Day and every day for that matter, Fishers resident David M. Delafield honors his father, David D. Delafield, who served during World War II.

David D. Delafield was born in 1920 and grew up in East Aurora, New York just outside of Buffalo. While away studying

art at Miami of Ohio, his father plunged the family car into a lake. This suicidal episode was mainly due to the impact the Great Depression had upon his jewelry business. He not only drowned himself but his younger daughter and granddaughter. Delafield's mother and older sister survived. Delafield's older brother, Will, like himself, was away at the time. Delafield left college to help his family get through this rough time before he transferred to Ohio State University to earn his Bachelors of Fine Art.

In 1939, a professor of Delafield's at Ohio State, Hoyt Sherman, creatively engaged in the war effort by helping the U.S. Navy identify enemy ships and planes through

drawing classes. Unbeknownst to Delafield, his classes at OSU with Sherman prepared him to be a bombardier on a B-24 Liberator. In January of 1942, Delafield enlisted in the US Army Air Corps. In August of 1943, he was a member of the 727th Squadron of the 451st Bomb Group. The 727th was stationed in Tunisia.

Delafield's new B24H Bomber had a nickname borrowed from Snuffy Smith, the "Bodacious Critter." Delafield was a crew member of the Bodacious Critter II, as the original Bodacious Critter was shot down by the Germans in late June 1944. Delafield designed and painted the nose art on the plane. The job of the bombardier



Self-Portrait of David D. Delafield

is to accurately target the aerial bombs to their destination. The visual techniques that Delafield learned at OSU enabled him to be one of the most successful at his craft. The Bodacious Critter completed 51 missions over Germany, France, Italy, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. The 52nd mission was thwarted by a crash immediately after take-off.

After serving in the war, Delafield returned stateside to complete his degree. His war experiences impacted his priorities and created artwork to reflect the awareness of poverty that he had encountered in Europe. Delafield not only earned his BFA at OSU but also an MA and a PhD. He taught at Washington State University for three years, then he spent most of his career at the University of Northern Iowa.

It was in Cedar Falls, Iowa where he met and fell in love with a student named Marianna. Marianna had returned to school at UNI to earn her teaching certificate. A single mom with three young children, Delafield not only married Marianne but adopted her three children. The youngest is David M. Delafield.

“It was this act of love and generosity that endeared me to my dad,” David M says. “My dad already had four kids of his own and it was amazing how well the seven of us kids blended.”

David M. and his adopted father bonded





over many things, not the least of which was baseball. They were both Cincinnati Reds fans and David M played baseball through high school, and today is an athletic clothing rep for baseball apparel.

Delafield would pass in December of 2003 after battling a decade of Alzheimer's-related illnesses. While his life was cut short, Delafield leaves behind a body of work that continues to be celebrated. However, the most enduring legacy of Delafield's is the love that he had for his family. Delafield was many things: a son, an artist, a husband, a father, a grandfather and a hero to all.

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