



# The Squadron



---

An EAA Warbirds of America publication of Squadron 4 Jan 2010 Vol. 5 No.1

[www.warbirdsqadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsqadron4.org)

---

## Events

The Annual Dinner has been scheduled for Saturday 16:00, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

Dinner cost: Per person - \$40.00 at the door or \$30.00 with called-in reservations by Feb. 15th. Please contact Jim Delaney:

[jim.delaney@warbirdsqadron4.org](mailto:jim.delaney@warbirdsqadron4.org)

As always please check our web site for the most up to date information:

[www.warbirdsqadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsqadron4.org)

## In this issue:

**From the C.O.'s Desk** – Tom Buck– pg. 1

**Buzzing the Airfield** – Tim Dunavin – pg. 2

**Clow Recap** – Steve Pagels - pg. 2

**Why I Volunteered** – Dave Stevens - pg.4

**Veterans' Corner** – Paul Linden - pg.5

**Veterans' Forum** – Art Sereque - pg.6

**A B-17 story** – sent by G. Millerin – pg.7

**Help our Troops** – Stacy Kolls pg.11

**Squadron Officers** – pg. 12

**Warbird Squadrons** – pg. 12

**Warbirds of Squadron 4** – pg. 12

**Merchandise** – pg. 12

## From the C.O.'s Desk

A belated Merry Christmas to all! I hope everyone had a bright holiday season!

We can all remember the great Warbird moments of 2009. As the new year begins, let us each commit to make the most of each opportunity to enjoy being part of EAA's Warbird Squadron 4!!!!

The first step is to call in your reservation to our Annual Banquet on Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to bring another warbird enthusiast to join in our fun. We have another beautiful model to be auctioned off, a tribute to Ted Kosten, built by our Master Modeler Tim Dunivan. You will also be able to purchase a chance to ride in 2 different P 51's. Wow! What a raffle!!!!

With your help, this will be the best year ever!!

Tom Buck

## Buzzing the Airfield

By Tim Dunavin

This month we have a new reporter on duty – Steve Pagels gives us a report on the Squadron 4 meeting held at the Illinois Aviation Museum at Clow International Airport, along with a photo story by Ted Kowalik. Thanks, guys, for a job well done!

Good progress has been made on the TBM model that will be auctioned off at the annual dinner; however some work yet remains to be done.



The model is of a TBM from VC-97, U.S.S. Makassar Strait (CVE-91) March 1945. A Ted Kosten photo appeared in the October 2009 issue of “Warbirds” (p3) of the aircraft, so it was an easy model to select for the project. I modified a photographer to look like Ted on the deck of the carrier taking a photo of the pilot getting ready to

leave on a mission. His aircraft is also being readied with plenty of TNT for the encounter with any Jap ship! VC-97 was also involved with anti-submarine warfare off Iwo Jima and Okinawa during that period.

At the annual dinner, we will be awarding the “Volunteer of the Year” award. We had a lot of great volunteers nominated. The Squadron 4 board has made its selection, and the winner will be announced then. This has been very exciting for me to be involved in, and I look forward to giving the award to its winner. The board did set some rules up when the subject of the award was taken up. We decided that no board member was to receive the award, as it is pretty much expected that we will be carrying a big load. I did get some board members nominated, and a pat on the back and a big thanks goes to the board members for the support and all they do. If it were not for the general membership stepping up, however, we could not do what we do as a squadron! A big, no huge thanks to all who have helped make our Squadron the very best it can be!!!

As usual Art Sereque has made an excellent report on Squadron activities – Veterans' Forum, and our Veterans' Corner in this issue comes from our featured speaker, Paul Linden.

## Clow International Recap

By Steve Pagels

All photos by Ted Kowalik

It was the 17<sup>th</sup> of October; Squadron 4 was to have its first meeting and forum at the Illinois Aviation Museum at Clow International Airport. The meeting was set at 11 hundred hours; I arrived early to look the place over. The Museum hanger is a good walk from Charlie’s Restaurant where the members could break for lunch. Walking with other Squadron 4 members to the museum, it was all set. Chairs, speaker's table, displays, biplanes hanging from the

ceiling, but where was our C/O Tom Buck and our forum speakers? Tom was to fly them up from Joliet in the TBM Avenger. Not knowing what the problem was, we waited.



Col. Bill Headliner

It was the best sound of the day, the Avenger in the pattern, wheels down, and we're waving him down to the Museum. Bill Headliner was in the second seat and departed the plane going to the hanger, while Col. John Firlit arrived by car about the same time. Both were in dress blue uniform. What a sight!



Col. John Firlit

Inside the museum one of their members gave us a short history. They do Young Eagle flights, have a C.A.P. Wing and have restored aircraft for display. It's also the new home for the Link Trainer that was Squadron 4's. It was after 12 hundred hours, so it was time to break for lunch. Charlie's Restaurant was good for food and social time for the group. With our new guests in uniform, there was interest on what was

going on and it didn't take long before we picked up a few more people for the presentation. Bill & Bev Frier came back to the museum. While talking to them, I found out Bill was a WWII vet and that Wednesday he was going on Honor Flight to see the memorial in Washington D.C. This was going to be a break for both of them. It was an hour or so later, Tom gave a short briefing then it was on to the presentation. The presentation was on the B 17 by Col. John Firlit & his copilot Bill Headliner who had 31 & 27 missions in the B-17, respectively. Bill talked about his memories of England, the missions, the formations, and tragic events they saw while flying but also surprised us with his humor. John was targeted for those stories. John got up and turned the table by adding his comments to the stories. This was an outstanding event and to quote George [Tom's crew chief], "We can hope that they will want to come back and visit with Squadron 4 again."



Telling it like it was: Col. John Firlit (rt) and Col. Bill Headliner



Morris Reinke, Bill Headliner, and John Firlit exchange war stories

## Why I Volunteered

By Dave Stevens, EAA 834748, Warbirds  
553607

I think I found EAA Warbirds Squadron 4 (Aurora, Illinois) the same way many people do. I just looked up. I was photographing my youngest daughter playing soccer, sitting back in my folding chair. I was waiting for some action on the field when I heard a fantastic, non-civilian engine sound overhead.

I looked up and saw a big, blue and white TBM Avenger flying low and slow. I swung the camera up and held the shutter button down, firing off about 20 shots. That sound! That big, thumping round motor sound! I forgot all about soccer.

It didn't take me long to find a number on the plane and track down Tom Buck, commanding officer of EAA Warbirds Squadron 4, and the Squadron 4 website. I sent Tom one of the photos, and he invited me to the annual Squadron 4 picnic. There were warbirds everywhere, and people were walking around casually among them like they have a Stearman in their living room or something, L-Birds, Texans, T-28s, T-34s, Stearman PT-17s, TBM Avengers, and near the hangars were World War II jeeps and other armored vehicles and World War II motorcycles! Everyone was friendly, and I met so many people that I couldn't remember them all. I immediately volunteered to help out at the *Aluminum Overcast* tour stop. I was hooked.

That was three years ago. Now I am sitting behind Rick Siegfried in his North American T-6, at about 1,800 feet. On our right wing sits Tom's massive TBM Avenger, and just off his right wing is the blue-nosed P-51 of Vlado Lenocho. I

originally thought that we would be around 40 feet apart flying with just the TBM. Negative. We are so close I can count the rivets on the Avenger. I was glad I switched to the shorter lens. Then as we passed over the runway, the B-17 taxiing below us, we saw Vlado take off and go vertical. As we turned away together, the P-51 started to come around. I looked out our six and saw Vlado coming around, standing on his right wingtip in a beautiful arc. So this is what an ME-109 pilot saw just before his life became very complicated. I'll tell you, it is scary. Now three of us are in tight formation and making low passes down on the deck for the crowd that is waiting to ride on *Aluminum Overcast*. We climb out again and make long, gentle turns. I try to make the most of this opportunity and take some good shots, but I have never done any "air-to-air" photography before. Heck, this is my second warbird ride—EVER! I have come to know that these are three very good pilots and also some very active warbird guys.

Since Thursday I have experienced a six-ship formation fly overhead, mostly P-51s and one T-Bolt, I think. It was a continuous fly-by featuring all sorts of warbirds. Most landed and spent time on the ramp with us, to the delight of the bomber fans waiting to ride on *Aluminum Overcast*. Vlado's *Moonbeam McSwine* and John O'Connors' *American Beauty* Mustangs were on the ramp or doing formation fly-bys all weekend. Rick's Texan was on the ramp every day. Tom's TBM was busy with fly-bys, and he took some of us up for formation rides. I thought Vlado got close! John stuck to us like glue for a couple of circuits. I realized that in order to take a decent photo in that situation, I had to suppress the 8-year-old boy in me and try to be cool, and maybe take a breath once in a while. It didn't work, but I think the shots came out pretty well anyway—for my first attempt.

From the beginning with Squadron 4, I offered to help with graphics and signs for various activities. I knew I could contribute with my advertising and graphics background, and I made banners, signs, and graphics for the B-17 tour stops. I have been the promotions chairman for our *Aluminum Overcast* tour stop for two years, and I discovered that it takes the help of an active squadron, with a bunch of hardworking volunteers, to make the B-17 tour stop successful. The reward for me was hearing the World War II B-17 veterans talk about their experiences. Families that bring an 85-year-old vet out to fly on the bomber can't believe how he opens up and talks about his experiences after a flight. They say, "He never talks about this stuff."

There was a man standing to the side with his arms wrapped around a tri-folded commemorative flag in a case, and Stacy Kolls, our squadron quartermaster said, "Okay, there must be a story here." He said his dad worked on B-17s in England and never flew on one—always wanted to. He said, "Today, he's going to fly on one." It was a very emotional moment.

The rest of the riders showed up to fly on the bomber. Many of them have a similar connection to history. When their B-17 ride is over, they climb out and some try to look like it was no big deal. They're holding back, but they can't hide the smile. We know that they want to jump around and shout because they just flew on a World War II bomber! It's okay—we'll keep the secret.

I join them all [Squadron 4] in knowing that we have done just a little to help ensure that *Aluminum Overcast* will be flying next year, and another group of warbird fans will fly the Fortress for reasons too numerous and varied to count. Maybe this is your year to volunteer at your local tour stop, or

maybe it's your year to fly formation with some generous, hardworking pilots.

Maybe you'll make some kid's day by just walking through the B-17 or watching it take off with him, but be careful. You could get hooked. I'll see you out there.

## Veterans' Corner

By Paul Linden

The Squadron 4 Group held their annual Veterans' Day program on Sunday, Nov. 8, 2009, at Courtesy Aircraft Hangar at the Rockford Airport.



I, Paul J. Linden, was asked to be their featured speaker, which I happily accepted. I am a WW2 veteran having been born and raised in the Aurora area.

I served in the Pacific Theater of operations on the Island of Saipan in the Marianas Island chain. All of the 3 islands were B-29 Superfortress bases. I served as radar operator on a crew, but also as secondary radio operator and alternate gunner if needed.

Our first mission against Japan was Nov. 24, 1944, Thanksgiving Day, to the Mitsubishi aircraft engine works just outside Tokyo – a very hot spot. I was a member of the 73rd Bomb Wing, 497<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 871<sup>st</sup> Squadron. This mission was only the first of 38 more to follow. The B-29 airplane, being a new plane, had a number of

problems, which we as crewmen had to contend with. Each mission was approximately 2800 miles, a round trip over the ocean – 13 to 14 hours each. It was not until we took Iwo Jima that we had a landing spot about halfway, which turned out to be a Godsend. For the month of July, 1945, alone on one mission 864 B-29s landed on Iwo for one reason or another, and I might add, on the 38 missions we were lucky, however on the 39<sup>th</sup> not so. It was our last mission, and due to engine problems, we had to shut down 2, so were very happy we controlled Iwo. After 2 days they had a B-29 repaired for us to fly back to Saipan.

We flew both daylight strategic bombing missions as well as night fire bombing raids to burn down Japanese cities, the latter being one of General Curtis Lemay's endeavors. I personally flew on 11 of these fire missions, first burning the larger cities and then the smaller ones most at an altitude of approx. 5000 ft.



I would like to say our entire crew rotated back to the states in reasonably good condition – accumulating 4 Purple Hearts, Distinguished Flying Crosses, and other lesser medals, as well as 3 battle stars.

Congratulations to our ground crew who always saw to it that our plane was in excellent flying condition.

And to the Army, Navy and Marines who took the island of Iwo Jima from the Japanese, at a huge price. May they rest in peace – Amen

Thank you for having me,

Sincerely,  
(signed) Paul J. Linden

## Veterans' Forum

By Art Sereque

On a beautiful summer day – oops – when it's about 70 degrees out in November – it sure feels like summer – Warbirds Squadron 4 held their annual forum honoring veterans. Once again, the forum was held at the Courtesy Aircraft Sales hangar at the Rockford, IL Airport, and once again we must thank Squadron 4 member Mark Clark for the use of his beautiful facility.



Ted Kowalik

During an extended period prior to the meeting, about 60 members and friends socialized and viewed some of the aircraft, including the C.O. Tom Buck's Avenger and EAA Warbird President Rick Siegfried's T-6 Texan.

Tom called the meeting to order, at lunch time Tim Dunavin delivered the invocation, specifically honoring our veterans. The group then had a lunch break, featuring sandwiches and Quartermaster Stacy Kolls' delicious homemade soup – not 1 but 2 kinds of soup!

Following lunch, Tom Buck introduced Rick Siegfried who brought the group up to date on happenings at the national level, as

well as Warbird improvements for AirVenture.



Bill, Jerry, and George enjoy lunch

Following some announcements, this writer introduced friend and guest Mel Shaver of Sterling, IL, his son Mike, and two grandsons. In looking at the October list of new Warbird members, I noticed a Tyler Shaver of Sterling, IL. I called Mel to find out if Tyler was a relative. It turns out; he was a grandson (Mike's son) and had just graduated from the Naval Academy. On top of that, he was going to start flight training in Florida. We then made Tyler an honorary member of the Squadron. This way he can make training reports on our website, and we can compare them to training methods that Capt. Chuck Downey and Capt. Grant Young received during WWII.

This writer then introduced another friend, Staff Sgt. Paul Linden as the featured speaker. Paul was the radar operator on B-29 Superforts operating out of Saipan. He flew 39 combat missions over Japan, both high and low level, including numerous incendiary bombings. He was very appreciative of the many soldiers, sailors and Marines who took Iwo Jima (Sulfur Island), as his B-29 had to land there on one occasion. Paul was awarded many medals, including the Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross. See his letter

elsewhere in this issue, giving more details of his combat experiences.

## **Army Air Corps.....WOW!! B-17 Flying Fortress coming home!**

A great story about the crew of a fortress with the 'Mighty Eighth' during Oct. '44- IT WAS A FORTRESS COMING HOME. They Could Hear It Before They Could See it. *By Allen Ostrom*



It was not all that unusual in those days, as the personnel at Station 131 gathered around the tower and scattered hardstands to await the return of the B-17's sent out earlier that morning.

First came the far off rumble and drone of the Cyclones. Then there was a spec on the East Anglia horizon. Soon came a small cluster indicating the lead squadron. Finally, the group arrived. Then came the counting. 1-2-3-4-5... But that would have been normal. Today was different! It was too early for the group to return.

"They're 20 minutes early. It can't be the 398th."

They could hear it before they could see it! Something was coming home, but what? All eyes turned toward the northeast, aligning with the main runway, each ground guy and stood-down airman straining to make out this "wail of a Banshee," as one called it. It was not like a single B-17 with its characteristic deep roar of the engines blended with four thrashing propellers. This

was a howl, like a powerful wind blowing into a huge whistle!

**Then it came into view. It WAS a B-17!**



Low and pointing her nose at the 6,000 foot runway, it appeared for the entire world to be crawling toward the earth, screaming in protest. No need for the red flares. All who saw this Fort knew there was death aboard.

"Look at that nose!" they said, as all eyes stared in amazement as this single, shattered remnant of a once beautiful airplane glided in for an unrealistic "hot" landing. She took the entire runway as the "Banshee" noise finally abated, and came to an inglorious stop in the mud just beyond the concrete runway.

Men and machines raced to the now silent and lonely aircraft. The ambulance and medical staff were there first. The fire truck....ground and air personnel... jeeps, truck, bikes.....

Out came one of the crew members from the waist door, then another. It was strangely quiet. The scene was almost weird. Men stood by as if in shock, not knowing whether to sing or cry. Either would have been acceptable.

The medics quietly made their way to the nose by way of the waist door as the remainder of the crew began exiting, and to answer the obvious question, "What happened?"

"What happened?" was easy to see. The nose was a scene of utter destruction. It was as though some giant aerial can opener had peeled the nose like an orange, relocating shreds of metal, Plexiglas, wires, and tubes on the cockpit windshield and even up to the top turret. The left cheek gun hung limp, like a broken arm.

One man pointed to the creased-in chin turret. No mistaking that mark! A German 88 anti-aircraft shell had exploded in the lap of the toggler. This would be George Abbott of Mt. Lebanon, PA. He had been a waist gunner before training to take over the bombardier's role.

Still in the cockpit, physically and emotionally exhausted, were pilot Larry deLancey and co-pilot Phil Stahlman. Navigator Ray LeDoux finally tapped deLancey on the shoulder and suggested they get out. Engineer turret gunner Ben Ruckel who had already had made his way to the waist was exiting along with radio operator Wendell Reed, ball turret gunner Al Albro, waist gunner Russell Lachman, and tail gunner Herbert Guild.

Stahlman was flying his last scheduled mission as a replacement for regular co-pilot, Grady Cumbie. The latter had been hospitalized the day before with an ear problem. Lachman was also a "sub," filling in for Abbott in the waist.

DeLancey made it as far as the end of the runway, where he sat down with knees drawn up, arms crossed and head down. The ordeal was over, and now the drama was beginning a mental re-play.

Then a strange scene took place. Group CO Col. Frank P. Hunter had arrived after viewing the landing from the tower and was about to approach deLancey. He was

physically restrained by flight surgeon Dr. Robert Sweet.

"Colonel, that young man doesn't want to talk now. When he is ready you can talk to him, but for now leave him alone." Sweet handed pills out to each crew member and told them to go to their huts and sleep.

No dramatics, no cameras, no interviews, the crew would depart the next day for "flak leave" to shake off the stress and then be expected back early in November. (Just in time to resume "normal" activities on a mission to Merseburg!)

Mission No. 98 from Nuthampstead had begun at 0400 that morning of October 15, 1944. It would be Cologne (again), led by CA pilots Robert Templeman of the 602nd, Frank Schofield of the 601<sup>st</sup>, and Charles Khourie of the 603rd. Tragedy and death appeared quickly and early that day. Templeman and pilot Bill Scott got the 602nd off at the scheduled 0630 hour, but at approximately 0645 Khouri and pilot Bill Meyran and their entire crew crashed on takeoff in the town of Anstey. All were killed. Schofield and Harold Stallcup followed successfully with the 601st, with deLancey flying on their left wing in the lead element.

The ride to the target was routine, until the flak started becoming "unroutinely" accurate.

"We were going through heavy flak on the bomb run," remembered deLancey.

"I felt the plane begin to lift as the bombs were dropped; then all of a sudden we were rocked by a violent explosion. My first thought - 'a bomb exploded in the bomb bay' - was immediately discarded as the top of the nose section peeled back over the cockpit blocking the forward view."

"It seemed like the whole world exploded in front of us," added Stahlman. "The instrument panel all but disintegrated and layers of quilted batting exploded in a

million pieces. It was like a momentary snowstorm in the cockpit."

It had been a direct hit in the nose. Killed instantly was the toggler, Abbott. Navigator LeDoux, only three feet behind Abbott, was knocked unconscious for a moment, but was miraculously alive.

Although stunned and bleeding, LeDoux made his way to the cockpit to find the two pilots struggling to maintain control of an airplane that by all rights should have been in its death plunge. LeDoux said there was nothing anyone could do for Abbott, while Ruckel opened the door to the bomb bay and signaled to the four crewman in the radio room that all was OK - for the time being.

The blast had torn away the top and much of the sides of the nose, depositing enough of the metal on the windshield to make it difficult for either of the pilots to see.

"The instrument panel was torn loose, and all the flight instruments were inoperative with the exception of the magnetic compass mounted in the panel above the windshield, and its accuracy was questionable. The radio and intercom were gone, the oxygen lines broken, and there was a ruptured hydraulic line under my rudder pedals," said DeLancey.

All this was complicated by the sub-zero temperature at 27,000 feet blasting into the cockpit.

"It was apparent that the damage was severe enough that we could not continue to fly in formation or at high altitude. My first concern was to avoid the other aircraft in the formation and to get clear of the other planes in case we had to bail out. We eased out of formation and at the same time removed our oxygen masks, as they were collapsing on our faces as the tanks were empty."

At this point the formation continued on its prescribed course for home - a long, slow turn southeast of Cologne and finally westward.

DeLancey and Stahlman turned left, descending rapidly and hoping they were heading west. (and also not into the gun sights of German fighters.) Without maps and navigation aids, they had difficulty getting a fix. By this time they were down to 2,000 feet.

"We finally agreed that we were over Belgium and were flying in a southwesterly direction," said the pilot.

"About this time a pair of P-51's showed up and flew a loose formation on us across Belgium ... I often wondered what they thought as they looked at the mess up front.."

"We hit the coast right along the Belgium-Holland border, a bit farther north than we had estimated. Ray said we were just south of Walcheren Island."

Still in an area of ground fighting, the plane received some small arms fire. This gesture was returned in kind by Albro, shooting from one of the waist guns.

"We might have tried for one of the airfields in France, but having no maps, this also was questionable. Besides, the controls and engines seemed to be OK, so I made the decision to try for home."

"Once over England, LeDoux soon picked up landmarks and gave me course corrections taking us directly to Nuthampstead. It was just a great bit of navigation. Ray just stood there on the flight deck and gave us the headings from memory."

Nearing the field, Stahlman let the landing gear down. That was an assurance, but a check of the hydraulic pump sent another spray of oil to the cockpit floor. Probably no brakes! Nevertheless, a flare from Ruckel's pistol had to announce the "ready or not" landing. No "downwind leg" and "final approach" this time. Straight in!

"The landing was strictly by guess and feel," said DeLancey. "Without instruments, I suspect I came in a little hot. Also, I had to

lean to the left to see straight ahead. The landing was satisfactory, and I had sufficient braking to slow the plane down some. However, as I neared the taxiway, I could feel the brakes getting 'soft'. I felt that losing control and blocking the taxiway would cause more problems than leaving the plane at the end of the runway."

That consideration was for the rest of the group. Soon three squadrons of B-17's would be returning, and they didn't need a derelict airplane blocking the way to their respective hardstands.

Stahlman, supremely thankful that his career with the 398th had come to an end, soon returned home and in due course became a captain with Eastern Airlines. Retired in 1984, Stahlman said his final Eastern flight "was a bit more routine" than the one 40 years before.

DeLancey and LeDoux received decorations on December 11, 1944, for their parts in the October 15 drama. DeLancey was awarded the Silver Star for his "miraculous feat of flying skill and ability" on behalf of General Doolittle, CO of the Eighth Air Force. LeDoux for his "extraordinary navigation skill" received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The following DeLancey 1944 article was transcribed from the 398th BG Historical Microfilm. Note: due to wartime security, Nuthampstead is not mentioned, and the route deLancey flew home is referred to in general terms.

## **TO: STARS AND STRIPES FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE BOMBER STATION, ENGLAND** - After literally losing the nose of his B-17 Flying Fortress as the result of a direct hit by flak over Cologne , Germany on October 15, 1944, 1st Lt. Lawrence M. DeLancey, 25, of Corvallis, Oregon returned to England and

landed the crew safely at his home base. Each man walked away from the plane except the toggler, Staff Sergeant George E. Abbott, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania, who was killed instantly when the flak struck.

It was only the combined skill and teamwork of Lt. DeLancey and 2nd Lt. Raymond J. LeDoux, of Mt. Angel, Oregon, navigator, that enabled the plane and crew to return safely.

"Just after we dropped our bombs and started to turn away from the target," Lt. DeLancey explained, "a flak burst hit directly in the nose and blew practically the entire nose section to threads. Part of the nose peeled back and obstructed my vision and that of my co-pilot, 1st Lt. Phillip H. Stahlman of Shippenville, Pennsylvania. What little there was left in front of me looked like a scrap heap. The wind was rushing through. Our feet were exposed to the open air. At nearly 30,000 feet above the ground the temperature was unbearable.

"There we were in a heavily defended flak area with no nose and practically no instruments. The instrument panel was bent toward me as the result of the impact. My altimeter and magnetic compass were about the only instruments still operating, and I couldn't depend on their accuracy too well. Naturally I headed for home immediately. The hit which had killed S/Sgt. Abbott also knocked Lt. LeDoux back in the catwalk (just below where I was sitting). Our oxygen system also was out so I descended to a safe altitude.

"Lt. LeDoux, who had lost all his instruments and maps in the nose, did a superb piece of navigating to even find England."

During the route home, flak again was encountered, but due to evasive action Lt. DeLancey was able to return to friendly territory. Lt. LeDoux navigated the ship directly to his home field.

Although the plane was off balance without any nose section, without any brakes (there was no hydraulic pressure left), and with obstructed vision, Lt. DeLancey made a beautiful landing to the complete amazement of all personnel at this field who still are wondering how the feat was accomplished.

The other members of the crew included:

1. Technical Sergeant Benjamin H. Ruckel, Roscoe, California, engineer top turret gunner;
2. Technical Sergeant Wendell A. Reed, Shelby, Michigan, radio operator gunner;
3. Technical Sergeant Russell A. Lachman, Rockport, Mass., waist gunner;
4. Staff Sergeant Albert Albro, Antioch, California, ball turret gunner and
5. Staff Sergeant Herbert D. Guild, Bronx, New York, tail gunner.

### **Help Squadron 4 Support Our Troops!**

We are still collecting donations to send care packages to our troops overseas. Started in September of 2004, our care package drive has collected items for an average of 4 care packages each year, including special Christmas packages. Donations can be brought to any Squadron meeting. A list of approved items for care packages is posted on the Squadron website ([www.warbirdsquadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsquadron4.org)). Monetary donations help to fill out the packages with needed items that have not been donated. It's easy to remember our servicemen and women on Memorial Day and Veterans' Day. We need to let them know they are always in our thoughts and prayers.

If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Kolls, Squadron 4 Quartermaster, at 815-218-9202. Please help us support our troops!

### **Squadron Officers**

(Partial listing – see website for full board)

C.O. Tom Buck  
(815) 726-5059  
EX.O. Frank Bartilotta  
(773) 763-4659  
ADJ. Tim Bauer  
(815) 393-3932  
Com. O. Brian Churchill  
(847) 356-9056  
SEC. Ted Kowalik  
(630) 289-2785  
Q.M. Stacy Kolls  
(815) 544-1223  
Treasurer Jim Delaney  
(847) 713-0808

### **Warbird Squadrons**

You can find all of these links on our site under the "WOA Squadron" button.

Listed below is the text for the links.

#### **Warbirds of America Link:**

<http://www.warbirds-aea.org/>

#### **Seattle, WA Cascade Warbird Squadron**

**2 Link:** <http://www.cascadewarbirds.org/>

#### **Eugene, OR Warbird Squadron**

**13 Link:** <http://www.squadron13.org/warbirds/>

#### **Chino, CA Warbird Squadron 16 Link:**

<http://www.warbirdsusa.org/>

#### **Cincinnati, OH Warbird Squadron 18**

**Link:**

<http://www.cincinnatiwarbirds.org/>

#### **Indiana Warbird Squadron 3**

<http://www.warbirdsquadron3.org/>

#### **Florida Warbird Squadron 24**

<http://www.floridawarbirds.org/>

### **WARBIRDS OF SQUADRON 4**

Spit Fire	Rudy Frasca
P51 Mustang	Vlado Lench
P51 Mustang	John O'Connor
TBM Avenger	Tom Buck
T6	Rick Siegfried
SNJ	Vic Krause
T6	Clyde Zellers
T6	Rudy Frasca
T6	John O'Connor
SNJ	Tom Buck
Yak	Bob Fitzpatrick
OW Meyers	Chuck Downey
Stearman	Roger Paykert
L5	Larry Tinker
T34	Will Martin
T34	Rudy Frasca
Wildcat	Rudy Frasca
PQ-14B	Harry Pick

### **MERCHANDISE**

We have the new Squadron 4 hats – 7 styles to choose from! Lots of new items coming soon!

You can help the Squadron and look great too! See Tim Bauer for details!

Photos and videos of our activities are available from our web site.

Keep'em Flyin