



The Squadron



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www.warbirdsquadron4.org

Events

Saturday 09:00, April 23th, 2011 -
Kellner Restoration Group - B-17E
Flying Fortress

Dunavin's Fly/Drive-in Saturday
11:00, May 14th, 2011 - Day on the
Western Front

Sunday 11:00, June 26th, 2011 -
Joint meeting with EAA Chapter
790 at the Lake in the Hills Airport
(3CK) Lake in the Hills, IL

Sunday 11:00, August 14th, 2011 -
Annual BBQ @ Joliet Regional

Sunday 11:00, October 9th, 2011 -
Illinois Aviation Museum @ Clow
Airport, Bolingbrook, IL

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

www.warbirdsquadron4.org

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From the C.O.'s Desk

The annual dinner at the William Tell Holiday inn was a great success. Thanks to all the volunteers who made the dinner a fun time for all to attend. The speaker, Tony Faikus, kept us spellbound with his stories and accounts of flying in the South pacific with the Aircobra, P-47 and P-51. His recounting of Missions was amazing and he spoke from the heart. We were honored to have him as our speaker.

Our auction of the PBY model, by Tim Dunavin, and the flight jacket was certainly spirited! Thanks to all who bid, and good luck next year.

The P-51 ride ticket sales also had a few special raffle items: a unique aircraft piston lamp, a P-40 and ME-262 model. The P-51 raffle tickets will be on sale until August. Remember there are 2 rides – the P-51 and Stearman.

Be sure to check the website to keep informed and to find yourself in a picture from one of the events. The B-17 is coming again this year on Labor Day weekend. Act now to sign up and volunteer!

“Keep em flying” and come join us!

Tom Buck

Buzzing the Airfield

By Tim Dunavin

The model auction at the dinner was great! It makes me feel good to know that my efforts were worth the time I put into it! I hope that Ted enjoys his model for years to come! And better luck to the other bidders next year – will keep you posted on what the subject will be for 2012 – I for one am looking forward to it.



There will be a lot of activities ahead, so check the website often – as I write this we are planning to go to The Air Classics Museum on Sunday, then Kellner’s in April – then Finger lickin, mouth watering chicken lips will be on the grill again in May! Come on Out!

I hope to have a special guest here in May, at the cook out. A Philippine Air Force Col. (ret). – he has some stories to tell too.

Again am looking forward to Oshkosh! Squadron 4 always seems to have a great turn out of volunteers and this year AirVenture is shaping up to be a great event. There will be a set-up weekend shortly before too, so keep an eye on the event list.

Progress is being made on the MK XIII torpedo for Tom Buck’s TBM – stay tuned.

Tom Buck, our C.O., and George Barbeauld attended the The National Warbird Operator Conference was held in Pensacola, FL in February, and we have George’s account here. It is always great to

have new contributors to our newsletter and we extend a big “Welcome and Thanks” to George!

The National Warbird Operator Conference

By George Barbeauld

The National Warbird Operator Conference was held in Pensacola, FL over the Feb.18-20 weekend. Tom and I were fortunate to attend. We enjoyed this forum for the opportunity to see other warbird owners and pilots again. We got to see a lot of our EAA board member friends too. It’s always interesting to cover subject matter like engine maintenance, safety, and risk management. This year we had quite a few TBM operators, and had the opportunity to all get together and discuss the Avenger.

But the highlight of the trip was the tour of the National Naval Aviation Museum. We got to see behind the scenes – the areas that they restore the old Navy aircraft. We were able to see warbirds that have been recovered from Lake Michigan. There was a Hellcat that was well into the restoration. You should have seen the rare ‘birdcage’ Corsair that was the pulled out of the lake. Some parts still looked like new, other parts eaten up by the elements. There was a Dauntless being restored too. These ‘Ghosts’ from the lake were very interesting projects to see.

In the museum, the Navy aircraft on display aren’t roped off, they’re very accessible. That makes it even more interesting to get up close and take it all in. There were various aircraft from WWI and all the way up to today’s warbirds. Grumman was well represented – Wildcats, a Hellcat, a Tigercat, a Bearcat, a couple early bi-plane fighters, a Duck, even a TBM (always a favorite). There were beautiful engine cutouts of radials and turbines. Trainers, fighters, amphibians, jets, props,

, when they were jumped by German fighters at 22,000 feet. The Messerschmitt Me-109s pressed their attack so closely that Capt. Rojohn could see the faces of the German pilots. He and other pilots fought to remain in formation so they could use each other's guns to defend the group.

Rojohn saw a B-17 ahead of him burst into flames and slide sickeningly toward the earth. He gunned his ship forward to fill in the gap. He felt a huge impact. The big bomber shuddered, felt suddenly very heavy and began losing altitude. Rojohn grasped almost immediately that he had collided with another plane. A B-17 below him, piloted by Lt. William G. McNab, had slammed the top of its fuselage into the bottom of Rojohn's. The top turret gun of McNab's plane was now locked in the belly of Rojohn's plane and the ball turret in the belly of Rojohn's had smashed through the top of McNab's. The two bombers were almost perfectly aligned -- the tail of the lower plane was slightly to the left of Rojohn's tail section. They were stuck together, as a crewman later recalled, 'like mating dragon flies.'



Three of the engines on the bottom plane were still running, as were all four of Rojohn's. The fourth engine

on the lower bomber was on fire and the flames were spreading to the rest of the aircraft. The two were losing altitude quickly. Rojohn tried several times to gun his engines and break free of the other plane. The two were inextricably locked together. Fearing a fire, Rojohn cut his engines and rang the bailout bell. For his crew to have any chance of parachuting, he had to keep the plane under control somehow...

The ball turret, hanging below the belly of the B-17, was considered by many to be a death trap -- the worst station on the bomber. In this case, both ball turrets figured in a swift and terrible drama of life and death. Staff Sgt. Edward L. Woodall, Jr., in the ball turret of the lower bomber had felt the impact of the collision above him and saw shards of metal drop past him. Worse, he realized both electrical and hydraulic power was gone.

Remembering escape drills, he grabbed the handcrank, released the clutch and cranked the turret and its guns until they were straight down, then turned and climbed out the back of the turret up into the fuselage. Once inside the plane's belly Woodall saw a chilling sight, the ball turret of the other bomber protruding through the top of the fuselage. In that turret, hopelessly trapped, was Staff Sgt. Joseph Russo. Several crew members of Rojohn's plane tried frantically to crank Russo's turret around so he could escape, but, jammed into the fuselage of the lower plane, it refused to budge. Perhaps unaware that his voice was going out over the intercom of his

plane, Sgt. Russo began reciting his Hail Marys.

Up in the cockpit, Capt. Rojohn and his co-pilot, 2nd Lt. William G. Leek, Jr., had propped their feet against the instrument panel so they could pull back on their controls with all their strength, trying to prevent their plane from going into a spinning dive that would prevent the crew from jumping out. Capt. Rojohn motioned left and the two managed to wheel the huge, collision-born hybrid of a plane back toward the German coast. Leek felt like he was intruding on Sgt. Russo as his prayers crackled over the radio, so he pulled off his flying helmet with its earphones.

Rojohn, immediately grasping that the crew could not exit from the bottom of his plane, ordered his top turret gunner and his radio operator, Tech Sgts. Orville Elkin and Edward G. Neuhaus, to make their way to the back of the fuselage and out the waist door on the left behind the wing. Then he got his navigator, 2nd Lt. Robert Washington, and his bombardier, Sgt. James Shirley, to follow them. As Rojohn and Leek somehow held the plane steady, these four men, as well as waist gunner, Sgt. Roy Little, and tail gunner, Staff Sgt. Francis Chase, were able to bail out.

Now the plane locked below them was aflame. Fire poured over Rojohn's left wing. He could feel the heat from the plane below and hear the sound of 50 cal. machine gun ammunition 'cooking off' in the

flames. Capt. Rojohn ordered Lt. Leek to bail out. Leek knew that without him helping keep the controls back, the plane would drop in a flaming spiral and the centrifugal force would prevent Rojohn from bailing. He refused the order.

Meanwhile, German soldiers and civilians on the ground that afternoon looked up in wonder. Some of them thought they were seeing a new Allied secret weapon -- a strange eight-engined double bomber. But anti-aircraft gunners on the North Sea coastal island of Wangerooge had seen the collision. A German battery captain wrote in his logbook at 12:47 p.m.: 'Two fortresses collided in a formation in the NE. The planes flew hooked together and flew 20 miles south. The two planes were unable to fight anymore. The crash could be awaited so I stopped the firing at these two planes.'

Suspended in his parachute in the cold December sky, Bob Washington watched with deadly fascination as the mated bombers, trailing black smoke, fell to earth about three miles away, their downward trip ending in an ugly boiling blossom of fire.

In the cockpit Rojohn and Leek held grimly to the controls trying to ride a falling rock. Leek tersely recalled, 'The ground came up faster and faster. Praying was allowed. We gave it one last effort and slammed into the ground.' The McNab plane on the bottom exploded, vaulting the other B-17 upward and forward. It slammed back to the ground, sliding

along until its left wing slammed through a wooden building and the smoldering mess came to a stop. Rojohn and Leek were still seated in their cockpit. The nose of the plane was relatively intact, but everything from the B-17 massive wings back was destroyed. They looked at each other incredulously. Neither was badly injured.

Movies have nothing on reality. Still perhaps in shock, Leek crawled out through a huge hole behind the cockpit, felt for the familiar pack in his uniform pocket pulled out a cigarette. He placed it in his mouth and was about to light it. Then he noticed a young German soldier pointing a rifle at him. The soldier looked scared and annoyed. He grabbed the cigarette out of Leek's mouth and pointed down to the gasoline pouring out over the wing from a ruptured fuel tank.

Two of the six men who parachuted from Rojohn's plane did not survive the jump. But the other four and, amazingly, four men from the other bomber, including ball turret gunner Woodall, survived. All were taken prisoner. Several of them were interrogated at length by the Germans until they were satisfied that what had crashed was not a new American secret weapon.

Rojohn, typically, didn't talk much about his Distinguished Flying Cross.. Of Leek, he said, 'in all fairness to my co-pilot, he's the reason I'm alive today.'

Like so many veterans, Rojohn got unsentimentally back to life after the

war, marrying and raising a son and daughter. For many years, though, he tried to link back up with Leek, going through government records to try to track him down. It took him 40 years, but in 1986, he found the number of Leek's mother, in Washington State. Yes, her son Bill was visiting from California. Would Rojohn like to speak with him? Some things are better left unsaid. One can imagine that first conversation between the two men who had shared that wild ride in the cockpit of a B-17. A year later, the two were re-united at a reunion of the 100th Bomb Group in Long Beach, Calif. Bill Leek died the following year..



Glenn Rojohn was the last survivor of the remarkable piggyback flight. He was like thousands upon thousands of men, soda jerks and lumberjacks, teachers and dentists, students and lawyers and service station attendants and store clerks and farm boys, who in the prime of their lives went to war.

He died last Saturday after a long siege of sickness. But he apparently faced that final battle with the same grim aplomb he displayed on that

remarkable day over Germany so long ago.

Let us be thankful for such men.

Good times at the Banquet

By Art sereque

The date: Lincoln's birthday

The place: William Tell Holliday Inn, Countryside, Ill.

The event: The Squadron 4 annual dinner

Squadron 4 members arrived at 3:00 PM to set up tables for various items, such as raffle tickets and door prizes.

At 4:00Pm, members and guests arrived for registration and socializing – C.O. Tom Buck welcomed the group, followed by Tim Dunavin's invocation and fine family style dining. During this time, Tom and David Fairbrother held drawings for door prizes.

Another Squadron 4 master model builder, Bob Emmet, brought models of an ME-262 and a P-40 Warhawk. Harry pick, probably the most spry octogenarian around, had the lucky door prize ticket and went home with the 262.



Since nobody complained about being hungry, Tom made some opening remarks and introduced the hardworking members of the Squadron 4 board. He then introduced National WOA president Rick Siegfried who gave updates on warbird activities. Tom also introduced National warbird directors Ed Finnegan, Bill Miller, Mary Weed, and past director Tom Wise.

C.O. Tom Buck then introduced an honored guest, WOA Executive Director, Bill Fischer, who also gave Warbird updates. All of the above are Squadron 4 members. Bill Fischer is also a Squadron 6 member, as well.

Mel Shaver gave an update on his Grandson, Tyler Shaver, a Squadron 4 honorary member, a Naval Academy graduate. Tyler, who prior to his Navy service, was both a glider and power pilot. He started flight training in Florida, went to more advanced training in Texas, and when we next hear about him should be flying F-18's off of carriers.

Gordon Millerin's grandson, Chris (our youngest member) and Tiffany, did a yeoman job selling 40 P-51 raffle tickets. The P-51 ride is courtesy of Squadron 4 member Vlodo Lenock.

Ron Liebman looked like a Barret-Jackson Auctioneer, as he auctioned off laster model builder Tim Dunavin's PBY, won by Ted Kowalik, and the "TBM" flight jacket won by Mel Shaver.



Squadron 4 founder Will Martin introduced the speaker, WWII combat pilot Anthony Faikus. He spoke of his training in the states, flying to Australia in a B-24 Liberator and then flying missions in the P-39 Aircobra, P-40 Warhawk (only 1 hour flight time – he didn't like it) and his favorite, the Jug, a P-47 Thunderbolt – Mike Titre must be smiling!

Closing remarks were made by Tom, followed by more socializing and hangar flying. Over 80 membera and guests enjoyed the festivities.



40th Fighter Squadron pilot Anthony Faikus meets 16th Fighter Squadron pilot Frank McCarter

Attention! Attention!
All Squadron 4 Personnel
And Other Interested Parties

Urgent Briefing 14 February 2011

We have received official confirmation from EAA headquarters.

WHAT: B-17 Tour Stop
WHERE: Lewis Airport (KLOT, www.flylot.com), Lockport, IL
WHEN: 02-04 September 2011

Warbird Squadron 4 has secured a stop on EAA's 2011 Tour of the B-17 Aluminum Overcast. We are currently looking to get our volunteer team organized. We will be scheduling for 3 shifts each day, so we can work you in even if you can only work a part day. We need volunteers to help with merchandise sales, ground tours, crowd control, and greeting the public. If you are interested in helping out, please let us know by 16 July 2011. Remember, the names of all volunteers will go into a drawing for a ride to the next tour stop on the B-17!

If you know of a Veteran who would like to come out, please let us know! Ground tours are free for all Veterans.

If you are interested in bringing your Warbird aircraft to display, please let us know as soon as possible so we can schedule volunteers for crowd control to help keep your aircraft safe while allowing the public to get a better look.

Remember, this fundraiser directly supports Warbird Squadron 4.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact:

Stacy Kolls, Warbird Squadron 4 Tour Stop Chairman

Email: stacy.kolls@warbirdsquadron4.org

Phone: 815-218-9202

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 every 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.warbirdswuardron4.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)
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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-eaa.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 Lenocho
F8F Bearcat	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
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