



# The Squadron



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[www.warbirdsquadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsquadron4.org)

## Events

**April 28th, 2012** Saturday  
09:00AM, Kellner Restoration  
Group - B-17E Flying Fortress

**May 12th, 2012** Saturday 11:00, -  
Day on the Western Front

**June 24th, 2012** Sunday 11:00, -  
Joint meeting with EAA Chapter 95  
Morris, IL

**July 7th & 14th, 2012** Squadron  
Work Days at Oshkosh - contact:  
Jim Delaney (630)438-7338  
[jim.delaney@warbirdsquadron4.org](mailto:jim.delaney@warbirdsquadron4.org)

**July 23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> 2012** AirVenture  
at Oshkosh

**August 12, 2012** 11:00AM  
Buck's Open Hanger at Joliet

**November 11, 2012** 11:00AM  
Veterans' Forum at Courtesy  
Aircraft in Rockford, IL

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

[www.warbirdsquadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsquadron4.org)

## In this issue:

**From the C.O.'s Desk** – Tom Buck– pg. 1  
**Buzzing the Airfield** – Tim Dunavin – pg. 2  
**Annual dinner**– Art Sereque - pg. 2  
**Veteran's Corner** – pg. 3  
**Spitfires** – Mike Decroix - pg. 4  
**Vacation time** – Art Sereque – pg. 6  
**Squadron Officers** – pg. 6  
**Warbird Squadrons** – pg. 6

**Warbirds of Squadron 4** – pg. 7  
**Merchandise** – pg 7

## From the C.O.'s Desk March 2012

The Annual Banquet at William Tell Restaurant was a rousing success. Thanks to Brian Churchill and Craig Welch for designing our new online ordering system, 90 reservations were made, making for quick check-in at the banquet. A full house enjoyed John Rippenger's presentation about Papua New Guinea and searching for MIA's. The challenges and hardships faced by this group were incredible. Their service gives closure to many families. The spirited auction netted funds for Squadron 4 and sought-after prizes for the winners. Several of EAA's Warbird's board of directors were present at the Banquet. They are Squadron 4 members also, and we appreciate all their hard work—a great evening with great people.

We invite you to participate in more activities with Squadron 4 this year. The Kellners' B 17 in Marengo is our next work meeting. Mike Kellner says much progress has been made, and you can be a part of it. Come join us. Be sure to visit the website and keep up to date with all our activities. Join us and bring a friend!!

CO. Tom Buck

Photos and videos of our activities are available on our website.

Keep 'em Flyin'

## Buzzing the Airfield

By Tim Dunavin

The Squadron 4 annual dinner really went very well, and we all had a great time! The speaker was great, and it was great to see so many of our friends out! The auctions and raffles were fun to participate in – especially watching the SB2C Helldiver go to Karen Welch.

Art Sereque covers the dinner in more detail, and there is also a story of his “vacation” – great reading – as usual from Art.

This newsletter’s “Veteran’s Corner” has been changed a bit – the story of the 31<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group. They had a very interesting tour of duty during WWII, and there are several books on them. The P-51s they flew from mid 1944 to war’s end have a very interesting set of markings.

We won’t have to wait long and our next events will come quickly... Work Day at Kellner’s on the B-17 “Desert Rat” on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, then Day on the Western Front on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May. New menu item this year will be “Hot Lips”!

These will be followed by a meeting at Morris on June 24<sup>th</sup> – a joint meeting with EAA Chapter 95.

Try to make it out; even with high fuel prices, it’s time well spent.

We are looking for a new name for the news letter – if you have a suggestion, contact a member of the board.

A fellow WWII re-enactor, Mike Decroix has submitted an article he found and I thought it was worth your interest – enjoy.

We also find Art Sereque on “Vacation”, but by the photo they gave me for the newsletter.... I’ll let you decide. (photo not included by order of the C.O.)

## 2012 Annual Squadron 4 Dinner

By Art Sereque

Saturday February 25<sup>th</sup>, Squadron 4 held its annual banquet at the William Tell Holiday Inn in Countryside, IL.

Festivities started at 4:00PM, with Tim Dunavin and Art Sereque doing “meet and greet” and Brian and Diane Churchill handling registration. Raffle ticket sales, a cash bar, and considerable socializing followed.

At 5:00PM, C.O. Tom Buck welcomed the throng of over 80 members and friends. The Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem where followed by an invocation by Tim Dunavin. This was followed by fine family style dining – no one going away hungry! During dinner, drawings were held for door prizes.



Tom, Charlie, and Rick

C.O. Tom Buck opened the business meeting, welcoming WOA National Director Bill Fischer and National WOA President Rick Siegfried, who brought the group up to date on national events. Also introduced were National Secretary Bill Miller and National Director Ed Finnegan, as well as immediate past National Director Tom Wise. All of the above are Squadron 4 members.



Painting by David Gray

Squadron 4 members Bob Emmet and Butch Bejna donated models of airplanes, including a model built by Tim Dunavin, of an SB2C Helldiver (similar to the one Squadron 4 member Capt. Chuck Downey flew in WWII) for auction. A beautiful framed print of a B-17 (reminiscent of “12 O’ Clock High”) painted by David Gray, and other memorabilia were auctioned off too.



Art .....

This writer gave an unexpectedly long talk, thanking the Squadron 4 members who supported him due to his recent major knee surgery, as well as all the pilots, model makers, and volunteers who donated their time and energy to make WOA’s greatest squadron.

Butch Bejna introduced the speaker, John Rippinger who gave an extremely interesting talk on “MIA Hunters”. This included details on planning, interactions with the natives, and myriad other details.

After a question and answer period, C.O. Tom Buck closed another great Squadron 4 banquet.



Dave, Tom, and Steve



Our speaker



You should really buy these raffle tickets

## Veteran’s Corner

### 31<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group U.S.A.A.F.

From internet and printed sources

The 31st Pursuit Group (Interceptor) was formed on 22 Dec 1939, and activated on 1 Feb 1940. They trained with P-39's and participated in maneuvers. They were renamed the 31st Fighter Group in May 1942 with the 3 Squadrons: 307<sup>th</sup>, 308<sup>th</sup> and 309<sup>th</sup>. In June of

1942 they were shipped to England and assigned to the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force and given MK5 Spitfires. In August of 1942, they were sufficiently trained to enter combat and supported a raid made by Canadian, British, American, and French forces at Dieppe on 19 Aug. They then spent the rest of their stay in England escorting bombers and flew patrol and diversionary missions.

In November of 1942, the 31<sup>st</sup> was assigned to Twelfth AF for the invasion of North Africa. The group flew their Spitfires from Gibraltar to Algeria on 8 Nov 1942 and the ground echelon landing at Arzeu beach the same day. Later they supported the landings on Sicily in July, and in September of 1943, covered the landings at Salerno and at Anzio in Jan 1944. They also operated in close support of Allied ground forces in Italy and flew patrol and escort missions.

In April of 1944, they were assigned to Fifteenth AF and traded in their MK9 Spitfires for P-51s and took the primarily work of escorting bombers.

Years later at a reunion, their C.O. told them something he did but kept secret for all those years. After they had traded in the Spitfires, he had taken an armor plate from one of their MK9s and fired a machine gun at it – and it failed!



MX\*A 307<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron

31<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group

**Hi, Squadron 4 members.**  
**We're looking for a new name for the newsletter- a fresh look for the New Year. Please connect Tim Dunavin. [tdunavin@frontier.com](mailto:tdunavin@frontier.com)**

### A unique use for Spitfires

Somebody had to do  
it



In the lighter moments of WWII, the Spitfire was used in an unorthodox role: bringing beer kegs to the men in Normandy.

During the war, the Heneger and Constable Brewery donated free beer to the troops. After D-Day, supplying the invasion troops in Normandy with vital supplies was already a challenge. Obviously, there was no room in the logistics chain for such luxuries as beer or other types of refreshments. Some men, often called sourcers, were able to get wine or other niceties from the land or rather from the locals. RAF Spitfire pilots came up with an even better idea.

The Spitfire Mk IX was an evolved version of the Spitfire, with pylons under the wings for bombs or tanks. It was discovered that the bomb pylons could also be modified to carry beer kegs. According to pictures that can be

found, various sizes of kegs were used. Whether the kegs could be jettisoned in case of emergency is unknown. If the Spitfire flew high enough, the cold air at altitude would even refresh the beer, making it ready for consumption upon arrival.

A variation was a long range fuel tank modified to carry beer instead of fuel. The modification even received the official designation Mod. XXX. Propaganda services were quick to pick up on this, which probably explains the official designation.



A staged shot of the Mod. XXX tank being filled.

As a result, Spitfires equipped with Mod XXX or keg-carrying pylons were often sent back to Great Britain for maintenance or liaison duties. They would then return to Normandy with full beer kegs fitted under the wings.

The Spitfire had very little ground clearance with the larger beer kegs.

Typically, the British Revenue of Ministry and Excise stepped in, notifying the brewery that they were in violation of the law by exporting beer without paying the relevant taxes. It seems that Mod. XXX was terminated then, but various squadrons found different ways to refurbish their stocks, most often done with the unofficial approval of higher echelons.

In his book, *Dancing in the Skies*, Tony Jonsson, the only Icelancer pilot in the RAF, recalled beer runs while he was flying with 65 Squadron. Every week a pilot was sent back to the UK to fill some cleaned-up drop tanks with beer and return to the squadron. Jonsson hated the beer runs as every man on the squadron would be watching you upon arrival. Anyone who made a rough landing and dropped the tanks would be the most hated man on the squadron for an entire week.



## Vacation Time By Art Sereque

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, Gordon and Charlotte Millerin picked me up to go on vacation. My destination: Lutheran General Hospital. Two hours later, my left knee was under the knife. To make sure the surgeon operated on the correct knee, I taped a note on the left knee that said, "Right knee"! I also had an exam for the surgeon. Simple questions:

- 1) Do you have a family history of epilepsy, palsy, or St. Vita's Dance?
- 2) Are you subject to fits of coughing, sneezing, or hiccups?
- 3) During any surgical procedure, have you ever said "oops"?

Waking up, I had pain in my throat. A tube had been jammed down my throat – oooww!

Our early rising newsletter publisher would love the hospital. Staff came in the wee hours of the morning to jab me with all kinds of needles. Sleep and rest are not permitted at hospitals.

Four days later I was in a rehab facility. No sleep or rest here, either due to physical and occupational therapy twice a day. Three square meals a day were provided, with seconds and thirds - ok.

When my knee was opened up, it was found that I also had a ruptured patella tendon. Knee replacement and tendon meant a long recovery. Because my knee was in a splint, my therapy was partially stymied. It was 7 weeks before the splint came off. Now, 12 weeks later, a

therapist is coming to my apartment to, as she says, torture me. She'll be pushing my knee to the limits. Starting out, I could only bend my knee 50 degrees. Now I'm at 130 degrees. To be fully functional, the knee must bend 120 degrees.

While at rehab, I gave lectures on birth control to the nurses!! One of my fellow rehabbers was a seaman on a huge Navy tanker during WWII. He said the crew was a bunch of "nervous nillies" whenever there was a Jap sub or kamikaze attack. Their cargo – hundreds of thousands of gallons of high octane AV gas!!

I want to thank the many Squadron 4 friends who went out of their way to help – I couldn't have done it without you.

### Squadron Officers

(Partial listing – see website for full board)

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(815) 726-5059

ADJ. Tim Bauer  
(815) 501-1468

Com. O./Treasurer Brian Churchill  
(847) 356-9056

SEC. Ted Kowalik  
(603) 289-2785

Q.M. Stacy Kolls  
(815) 544-1223

### 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-aaa.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/>

**Florida Warbird Squadron 24**  
<http://www.floridawarbirds.org/>

## **WARBIRDS OF SQUADRON 4**

Spit Fire	Rudy Frasca
P51 Mustang	Vlado Lench
F8F Bearcat	John O'Connor
TBM Avenger	Tom Buck
T6	Rick Siegfried
SNJ	Vic Krause
T6	Rudy Frasca
T6	John O'Connor
SNJ	Tom Buck
OW Meyers	Chuck Downey
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 our web site for all the details.

**Keep'em Flyin'**