



The Squadron



An EAA Warbirds of America publication of Squadron 4 Oct 2012 Vol. 7 No.5
www.warbirdsquadron4.org

Events

November 11, 2012 11:00A.M.
Veterans' Forum at Courtesy
Aircraft in Rockford, IL

Coming events for 2013 – more
details later:

- Feb. - Annual dinner
- Apr. - Work day at Kelner's
- May - Day on the Western Front
- July – Oshkosh
- Aug. – BBQ at Joliet
- Nov. – Veterans' Forum

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

With Nov. 11th approaching, we think of all the Veterans who have given so much to ensure our freedoms. Our Rockford meeting happens to coincide with that day to honor Veterans. Be sure to attend and bring a Veteran with you!! Courtesy Aircraft's hangar is a perfect backdrop for our Veterans' meeting. There is always a Warbird or two to be up close to. Weather permitting, I'll be there with the TBM. We are finalizing plans for our speaker who was a radar navigator in a B 17 flying out of England. You do not want to miss this presentation!!!

Go to our Squadron 4 website and see all the changes and you will be amazed! A big thanks goes out to Craig Welch and Brian Churchill.

Tom Buck C.O.

Keep'em Flyin

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Buzzing the Airfield

By Tim Dunavin

We have a good number of contributors this month! Our star reporter Art Sereque is up to his fine work, along with Butch Benja and Mike Hudak, not to mention the fine photos by Ted Kowalik. You too can be a contributor – let us know what you've been up to. Got a veteran friend? Find out what he did and send us an article about him – I'll put it the Veteran's Corner section. Got a favorite War Bird? How about a museum you have visited, special folks you have talked to?, well.....you get the idea!

We have a meeting coming up in November, to honor our Veterans. It's good food and a great place to meet friends and good hangar talk. This year it will be on Veteran's Day as well.

The model for the annual dinner that I am working on will be the Doolittle Raider B-25 taking off the deck of the Hornet. I plan to have it in the take-off mode – front wheel just off the deck – flaps down. It is a tribute to the Raiders and Gen. Jimmy Doolittle.

With the next newsletter coming out in January, I would like to take this time to wish you all a great Holiday season, and Gob Bless the U.S.A.!

Warbird Squadron 4 and “Aluminum Overcast”

By Art Sereque

Thursday August 30th to Sunday September 2nd saw a big silver bird flying over Lewis University Airport in Romeoville, IL. Hosted by Warbird Squadron 4, the event started on Thursday – media day. Reporters and former airmen enjoyed rides in “Aluminum Overcast”. As a result, there were a number of complimentary articles in local newspapers.

Sgt. Bill Thorns, top turret gunner/flight engineer in “Fertile Myrtle 3rd”, was on the “Double Strike” to Regensburg and Schweinfurt in August 1943, with none other than Curtis LeMay on board. Of his 25 missions, his 19th mission was on his 20th

birthday. Bill will be featured speaker at the Squadron 4 banquet in February.

Capt. Clancy Hess, who flew just about everything, including a P-38 that he paid \$1200 for – and is currently on display in Oshkosh, said he stopped counting his flying hours at 50,000!!

Lt. Morris Reinke, B-17 pilot with the 15th Air Force, 97th Bomb Group, bombed the coke to gas plant at Blackhammer, Germany, always appreciates the escorting “Redtails” – The Tuskegee Airman.

Howard Ludwig, with the 401st Bomb Group of the Mighty Eighth, flew 19 missions over Germany. His first mission was 6000' over Lugwigtutz. Eleven missions were without a navigator.

Three of the 88 year old B-17 ball turret gunner Joe Belman's missions were over the most highly defended city in the world – Berlin - 35 missions in all.



Ninety-one year old Ted Micci, 305th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, flew 25 missions, 4 over Berlin. On one mission, the valves on the “Tokyo Tanks” froze – it was only minus 70 degrees below zero. They had to fly at 30' to thaw out the valves.

Ted's brother, Harry, flew with the 31st Fighter Group, 109th Fighter Squadron on the Eighth Air Force (Ed. Note – The 31st F.G. started out with the 8th, but early in the war was transferred to the Mediterranean – they flew Spitfires until 1944, when they got P-51s).

Ninety-one year old, Lt. Charlie Muller, a guest of “Adolf” at Stalage Luft III, recalled how 60 years after the war he found out his last mission was not on “Tangerine” but on the B-17 “Mon Tete Rouge.”

George Kaiser flew 28 missions as a B-17 Navigator with the 452nd Bomb Group, 8th Air Force – 2 over Berlin.

Ninety-three year old Bob Barlus, an M-4 gunner, on D-day +7 went from Southern France through Brest, the Battle of the Bulge, and Herten, Germany, and personally saw the horrors of the Nazi Death Camps.



New member Chip Buerger and Tim Dunavin
Tour guides on “Aluminum Overcast”

Despite a rainy Saturday, the B-17 event was nearly successful. Sgt. Louis C. Seno, Sr., was presented with the prestigious FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for 50 years of accident free flying.

WOA National director and Squadron 4 member Bill Miller fed the troops from his “Olde Tyme Snackery”.

National EAA V.P. George Daubner and Mike Hasrings took turns flying the B-17. Glen Hill of Squadron 4 and Texan Meredith Whillock, both with A&P, IA ratings, made sure the plane was safe to fly.



John O’Connor in his Bearcat

Squadron 4 member Rick Baker III, the owner of Rod Baker Ford (his father flew combat in Corsairs) once again was kind enough to provide a “courtesy car” for the B-17 crew.

Squadron 4 member and Director Rick Siegfried (Texan), Squadron 4 members John O’Connor (Bearcat), Keith Bersa (L-3 Grasshopper), and Squadron 4 C.O. Tom Buck (Avenger) all displayed and gave rides in their planes.

And of course, for the 7th consecutive year, Stacy Kolls chaired the B-17 event.

FAA Wright Brothers’ Master Pilot Award

By Art Sereque



A dreary, rainy September 1st was brightened due to Louis C. Seno, Sr. (EAA 1472) receiving the prestigious FAA Wright Brothers’ Master Pilot Award for 50 years of accident free flying, during Warbird Squadron 4’s B-17 tour at Lewis University Airport in Romeoville, Il.

His education was interrupted when he received a letter from his Uncle (Sam) after which he spent time with the 14th Air Force in India (CBI) as a ground crew chief repairing Liberators and other planes. Arriving home following the war, he planned on continuing his education. However, without a weekend’s rest, his Father told him he was now working in the family business “Seno Formalwear”.

A man of integrity, when a customer came in to pick up his tux (due to a mistake it wasn't there), Lou drove to his Brookeridge (Downers Grove, Il.) airport community home, hopped in his plane, flew to downstate Springfield, Il., picked up a correct tuxedo and had it back in time for his customer's wedding.

EAA Chapter 15 and Warbird Squadron 4 member Jim Klick, himself a former Wright Brothers Award winner, was master of ceremonies. Sam Helter and program manager for the EAA Safety Team, ably assisted Jim with a great slide show of Lou's flying career.

Well over 100 members of Chapter 15, Squadron 4, family and friends attended the ceremony. Lou's son, Lou, Jr., introduced a large group of family and relatives. Lou, Sr. has constantly remarked how his family, especially his wife, Ida, have supported his flying career.

Although some people believe home-builts are unsafe, the fact that Lou built four and never had an accident, proves otherwise.

Congratulations to a great pilot and an even greater person.

Wing Nutz

by Mike Hudak

Here it is mid October and I'm a little sad to see most of our activities are drawing to a close for the year. The arrival of the B-17 is always a highlight of the season for a lot of us including myself.

This year was a special thrill for me as I was one of the lucky ones chosen to fly to Cincinnati in Aluminum Overcast, along with squadron 4 members: Mike Kellner and his friend Mike who is a co-ordinator on the Desert Rat (sorry his last name escapes me), Ron Liebman, Dean Stanley and Smilin' Jack Medjdrich, and Mr. Reliable Glenn Hill flew as a crew member.

We all arrived bright and early at Lewis to find Aluminum Overcast gleaming in the morning sunshine. A few of the fellows started to get a little

nervous in the service when there was no sign of a crew. After several frantic phone calls we discovered that our flight was being delayed because "Sunken Lunkin" was fogged in.

After a while the crew arrived and as our pilot was backing up the Rod Baker Ford Courtesy Vehicle up to the plane he accidentally ran over one of those orange cones. Smilin' Jack was quick to call this to his attention and wanted to know if he was flying the plane today. He assured us he was but Jack seemed a little apprehensive, so he stayed behind to assist the crew with the preflight check as the rest of us thought it was a good time to go across the street for breakfast.

After about an hour of hangar flying over breakfast, we were ready to take off as Jack said all systems were go. Chris Millerin snuck out of class to watch us take off and wish us well, and I know he would have loved to stow away with us. Take off was smooth and exhilarating, and we were up in no time. After we were up, we all unstrapped and wandered around the plane. It sure felt great to be flying in Aluminum Overcast again. We all took turns going up to the radio room, the cockpit, and of course the nose. It's hard to describe the experience of sitting in the bombardier's seat, just fantastic!

Then something terrific happened, we all got to sit in the left seat and fly the B-17! I mean really fly that bird for about 15 minutes.

I was very excited and a little nervous when my turn came. The co pilot asked me if I was a pilot. I said I'd had some stick time on an SNJ. He said "Ok, it's yours."

Oh boy, just as I set my hands on the yoke, we were flying right into a large cloud bank, and it seemed very fast to me. All of a sudden the nose starts to rise and I'm thinking, "Do you think the co-pilot knows I only have about 10 minutes on Tom's SNJ? Should I push or pull?" Fortunately I pushed her back down, man that was a relief!

I look over at the co-pilot and he was reading the map and he says, "Hey, make a left over the Wabash River." Here I am doing my best to keep her straight and level and now this guy wants me to turn a huge 4 engine 67 year old warbird. So I figure I must be doing ok or this guy is more confident in my ability than I am so if he's not worried then I'm not either.

So I look down and I see the river and I hook a left and he says, "OK, straighten her out," and I did...no worries.

You know a funny thing, I was concentrating so much on looking ahead and staying level I never once glanced at the instruments; they didn't even cross my mind.

What a blast! Even though I was a little nervous, I loved it and after my time was up, I felt as though I was getting a real feel for the B-17. In fact one of the fellas in the radio room said that I gave everyone in the back quite a ride....still not sure how he meant that.

As we landed at "Sunken Lunkin," it was another honor to be met by Mr. Herb Heilenbran in his uniform. Herb was a B-17 pilot in WWII and wrote a book called *Black and White Pilots*. It's a great story of a Tuskegee Airman friend of his.

We had a terrific flight that lasted for 1 hour and 35 minutes, but it was over all too soon for me. Needless to say the trip home took a little longer.

I drove the minivan we rented and Dean doubled as my navigator and co-pilot. Right off Dean found a great radio station that played '40's music, only I didn't get a chance to hear much of it as it didn't take long for the hangar flying to start from the back.

Jack and Ron regaled us with their aviation stories and exploits which are too numerous to list. As we went along, the stories got wilder and wilder as one guy tried to top the other. The one-

upmanship went on and on, and I think about the time we passed through Indy, everyone was finally exhausted because all of a sudden all I could hear was snoring...a lot of snoring, all five of them. They were really sawing them off, brother, and I'm talking chainsaws, man. Made it tough to hear that Glenn Miller on the radio.

But they all came to about the time we hit Crown Point and the stories started all over again....good times!

When we got back to Lewis we all shook hands and said what a great day it was. As we all went our separate ways, I think we all had the same thought, "Man, I can't wait for next year!"

Capt. Downey's Annual Party

By Art Sereque

Chuck Downey, the youngest U.S. Naval pilot in WWII threw his annual get together for Warbird Squadron 4 members and other veterans of WWII. Many of the Vets wore caps saying, "World War II Veteran – Combat Flyer". Included were an 8th AF B-17 pilot, 15th AF B-24 navigator, and a B-24 gunner. Eighth A.F. targets were Berlin – 15th A.F. targets included Munich and Vienna. Also present was Capt. Grant Young (Avenger), who put the final torpedo in the world's biggest battleship, the Yamato, at Okinawa in 1945.



Capt. Chuck Downey, Tim Dunavin, Capt. Grant Young

C.O. Tom Buck and Brad Deckert arrived in Avengers. John "Ripper" Rippinger

arrived in a bright yellow “Lima Lima Flight team” Beech Mentor. “Old Bob” Siegfried and wife Thelma arrived in his “V” tail Beech. “Butch Bejna arrived in his Cessna A15, complete with U.S. Army Markings.



Bill and Jerry Brown with Capt. Downey

There were no speeches, no talks, only hangar flying. Seventy guests enjoyed pizza, dessert, snacks and other refreshments. Another great day at the Captain’s!!

Warbird Squadron 4 at the Illinois Aviation Museum

By Art Sereque

October 7th was a chilly, but sunny Sunday, at the IL Aviation Museum at Clow Airport, with C.O. Tom Buck flying in with his Avenger and doing a neat “turn around” by the hangar and then folding the big bird's wings. Also flying in were Keith Birsa in his L-3 Grasshopper (too cold for his PT-17), John O’Connor in his SNJ, and Vlado Lench in his T-6 Texan.



Gordon Millerin, who has handled tickets for our warbird ride drawings, handed over the reins to new Squadron member Jerry Czupryn.

Vlado (P-51), John (SNJ), Rick and “Old Bob” Siegfried (T-6 and Boeing-Jones Model 75), and Keith Birsa (PT-17), all have agreed to give rides again next year. It’s people like these that make us such a great squadron.

After C.O. Tom Buck conducted a brief business meeting, the hungry hordes devoured Quartermaster Stacy Kolls delicious chili and sandwiches.

Following lunch, Sgt. Orville (Popcorn) Elza gave an interesting and humorous talk on his adventures (and misadventures) during his 18 years in the Air Force, and many others as he traveled the world on taxpayers’ dime!

Hangar flying followed a question and answer session. A special guest was Charlie Muller, who vacationed in Stalag Luft III for 14 months.

Squadron 4 wishes to thank the Illinois Aviation Museum for the use of their facility.

Folded Wings

From George Barbeault

John Furlit, 90, passed away Oct. 11, 2012. A retired Chicago school teacher for 35 yrs and a 27 year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, John flew 31 bombing missions over enemy territory in a B-17. He was awarded the Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters and the European Theater with 3 Battle Stars.

Squadron 4 was fortunate to have been with him at Lewis Airport for a B-17 event. John told stories about piloting a B-17. His ride in the Aluminum Overcast that day was a highlight he talked about for years. John was also a guest speaker at a Clow Sq 4 meeting, and with his co-pilot Bill, entertained the group with their missions together. A very entertaining pair!

John was a wonderful man, I truly enjoyed the times I visited him. He led a very interesting life. I will miss him.

Tom Buck and I flew the SNJ over John's funeral ceremony.

Elton Eisele Appointed Head of Northwest Flyers Flight School

From Chapter 790

After retiring this year as Director of Bands at Niles North High School for 30 years, our very own Elton Eisele returns to Northwest Flyers at Schaumburg Airport as the Director of Flight Instruction. Elton initially spoke to Northwest Flyers to teach flight instruction, and after a series of conversations about approaches to instruction, curriculum, and other things, the FBO presented Elton with a bigger proposal - take over as the head of flight instruction.

For those of the chapter who may not know, Elton's sorted past that well. Here's a brief summary of his experience in the general aviation world.

Elton received his Private Pilots License in 1981 and his CFI-ME in 1984, and although he was not a full time flight instructor during his *nationally award-winning* band time, he stayed current in the aviation world. While at Niles North, he sponsored and Aviation Club that produced several pilots after graduation. Elton is our current president here at EAA Chapter 790 in Barrington. He is currently Chairman of Departure Briefings at AirVenture where he has volunteered for 24 years. He also developed and is director of the EAA AirVenture Concert Band, which has brought hundreds of players together at AirVenture. He owns a C172, Aeronca Defender 65-TAC and is currently undertaking a Pitts S-1-C project.

We asked Elton what he looked forward to the most in the new position, and this is what he told us.

I'm excited to take my education background and experience and incorporate it in to the aviation

field. I'm looking forward to teaching new pilots in the most efficient, safe and practical way for them to reach their goal in aviation. Not only that, I'm looking forward to working with pilots who wish just to continue their flight education to be better pilots but with those who want to add ratings.

We also asked Elton when he would be starting at Northwest Flyers, and he replied with the following.

I'll be full time at Northwest Flyers upon my full retirement from High School District 219 where I have worked for the past 30 years. I do miss all my band students and making music but as I look to the sky, the possibility of making it a safer place to be holds a lot of excitement for me.

Please contact Elton if you have questions and let's give Elton a pat on the back and kudos for all of his efforts towards furthering general aviation, both outside and within our chapter. Thank you, Elton!

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

John "Ripper" Rippinger

Chip Buerger

Squadron Officers

(Partial listing – see website for full board)

C.O. Tom Buck

(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-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/>

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	Rudy Frasca
T6	John O'Connor
SNJ	Tom Buck
Yak	Bob Fitzpatrick
OW Meyers	Chuck Downey
T34	Rudy Frasca
Wildcat	Rudy Frasca
PQ-14B	Harry Pick
T34	John Rippinger

Keep'em Flyin