



# The Squadron



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

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## Events

**P-51 Mustang Raffle** – raffle forms available on web site

**11 Nov:** General meeting and Veterans' Forum. Courtesy Aircraft, Rockford, Ill.

**16 Feb 2008: Annual Dinner**  
\$40 at the door, \$30 with reservations by 1 Feb – contact Dan Guenther

**10 May 2008: Day on the Western Front** at Tim Dunavin's

## From the C.O.s Desk

Autumn is here! Mark your calendar for the Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> Veterans' Meeting at Courtesy's hangar in Rockford.

This is Squadron 4's way to salute and thank Veterans for their service to our Country. How great would it be if everyone came with a Veteran? Let's make this year the biggest Veterans' event ever!

We are always treated to a surprise warbird in Courtesy's Hangar. What a great opportunity to once again be up close to warbirds.

You don't want to miss this! I expect to see everyone there.....

Tom Buck

## Buzzing the Airfield

By Tim Dunavin

Like I predicted, the meeting at Tim Bauer's and the B-17 event, were absolutely great – great food, great time and lots of aircraft! Met some new faces and made new friends – not to mention seeing my photo (as well as Harry Pick's) on the front page of the "Sunday Harold"!

Not to be forgotten – our trip out to see Captain Chuck Downey. We were joined there by the Rockford area WWII pilots

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group and had a great time swapping old sea stories – on a beautiful day in October! (See the coverage of these events right here in our newsletter.)

Our Veterans' Forum in Nov. is a must event too. This will again be held at the Rockford Airport at Courtesy Aircraft. (Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>)

### September Swan Song

By Art Sereque

The final warm weather Sq. 4 meeting was held Sunday, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> at Adj. Tim Bauer's aerodrome and horse ranch in bucolic Lindenwood, Il. (pop. approx 150). (Tim's wife rides horses in western style competition, hence her stable of 6 horses.) Tim's 2280 Ft. grass strip is nestled between cornfields and Interstate 39. This was the 6<sup>th</sup> year Tim held the event.

Among the dignitaries present were National Warbirds President Rick Siegfried and National Director Ed Finnegan. Rick, a UAL 747 pilot, arrived in his AT-6 Texan, whereas Ed came in a rival AA jet jockey. Longtime Sq. 4 member, hard working volunteer, friend and mentor Ted Kosten was present, along with his Canon T-90. Teddy was a WWII Recon Photographer and can give first hand accounts of what "tracers" look like up close.



Rick is about to take Ted up to do some aerial photography.

An Aeronca "Defender" was flown in by Elton Eisele. It came off the assembly line on Nov. 22, 1941, just days before the day

that will live in infamy – the Jap attack on Pearl Harbor. The "Defender" is flown solo from the back seat.

Sq. 4 member, Roger Patkert flew his Stearman N3n-3 in from the Stearman convention in Galesburg, Il. Total flying time was 1 Hr. and 25 Min.

Arriving in SNJ's were Vic Krause in a beautiful blue bird and Mike Gillan in a Marine version designated "Sore Butt Racing".

Howard Stahleber, a neighbor of Tim's brought 1929, 1930 and 1931 Model A Fords for display – all in beautiful condition.

Another neighbor, Joe Somers, with wife Dawn, brought a 1911 Austin – this antique has 6 cylinders and dual ignition. It also has mechanical brakes, which were standard for the period. The brakes were on the back wheels only; stopping distance like a Porsche? This Austin is one of only three surviving and was bought new by Joe's great grandfather. How many people can say the same car was in the family for 96 years? The Austin was one of two delivered to Lindenwood the same day by train.

Tim corralled family members into grilling pork chops, hamburgers, and brats. (To you outlanders, brats are pronounced braahts, not brats like your kids.) What a feast – plenty of great food for every one of the 60 attending the fly-in.

Following the great lunch, C.O. Tom Buck opened the business meeting. Due to the nature of the field, Tom left his Grumman Avenger in Joliet and arrived, along with Sq. 4 member George Barbeault, in his SNJ.

Sq. 4 is sponsoring the EAA B-17 "Aluminum Overcast" in Romeoville, IL and Q.M. Stacy Kolls is once again the chairperson of the event. She brought members up to date on the plans for the event.

Tim Bauer gave members a briefing on the Sq. 4 merchandise, which is for sale.

Sq. 4 member, Vlado Lench is once again offering a ride in his North American

P-51 Mustang. Sq. 4 Secretary David Maren is in charge of the raffle ticket sales for the ride and he briefed the Squadron in that regard.

Tim always invites the Lynn-Scott-Rock VFD to his annual event. Fortunately, they have never been needed – until this year, when a klutzy newsletter writer banged his knee and needed 8 stitches. (Ed Note: That'd be Art himself!)

It was announced that Sq. 4 member Capt. Chuck Downey, the youngest American pilot in WWII and a Navy Dive Bomber pilot, would hold his annual Sq. BBQ at his home at the Poplar Grove Airport on Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>

What a beautiful day filled with fun, friendships and food.



Ted at work – what a day!

## **MUSTANG SOLO**

By Will Martin

Part 2

When I made the offer for the entire prop fighter planes of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, I had not planned to do any of the flying myself but use local or US pilots. Not only did the Nicaraguans want to sell their planes, they wanted to buy some T-28s and B-26 Bombers.

They had received some B-26s after Kennedy backed out of the invasion of Cuba. The US had staged B-26s operated by CIA to depart from the east coast of Nicaragua. When the plan was dumped, the US wanted no part of being associated with a failure so they gave the planes to General Somoza. They liked them and wanted to get

more. They also wanted to get rid of the P-51s they had. They had a lot of trouble flying them and wanted to replace them with T-28s that were easy to fly and maintain.

While negotiating with the head of the air force to buy their planes and sell them T-28s and B-26s, I had a simple plan that would solve the transportation problem. I would send two pilots down each time I sent down a T-28 and four more when we delivered a B-26. The pilots then would fly back my newly acquired air force. The only thing simple about the plan was I. I had not reckoned with the South of the Border culture, work skills and work ethics. I also overestimated the quantity of pilots willing to fly over tough country in tired aircraft.

To bring this story up to speed, I was in Costa Rica getting ready to over fly several countries in a type airplane I had less than 2 hours flight time in. My interest in buying the plane in CR was primarily the spare parts that they had been given when the US donated their four planes. One of the interesting things I found included in the spare parts, were several huge gas heaters for cold weather starting - in a tropical country that never gets freezing weather.

When I discovered 75gallon drop tanks among the spares, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to fly non-stop to Mexico and possibly the US. I rechecked the numbers in the book, and a ton and a quarter of gas (415 gallons) I would be carrying, would take me 1800 statue miles or about 4.5 miles per gallon. In those days I did not consider a 6 plus hour flight a hardship.

I spent a lot of time getting my WAC charts folded and plainly sequenced because the cockpit of the Mustang is a little cramped for a post war sized pilot. Since there was no functioning radio gear and a non-dependable compass system, accurate map reading was of maximum importance.

The morning I was planning to leave I did a lot of squirming around trying to figure out how to carry my gun (a 38 automatic) without a holster and getting comfortable

with the chute. I finally figured that I would stuff the gun alongside the seat, and if I jumped I would grab it on the way out. It's hard to believe I was that naïve.

I said my goodbyes and started the engine. I wanted to check the fuel flow from all of the five tanks before I took off so I switched them one after the other. When I got to the drop tanks, one of the mechanics jumped on the wing and said gas was pouring all over. Since the tanks operated from the backside pressure of the vacuum pump, the lines going to the engine fuel selector valve were leaking like crazy. They couldn't stop the leaks so I abandoned the idea of a long non-stop flight and had then drain and remove the tanks.

I taxied out, got a green gun from the tower and made a now normal take off. I held the stick just slightly back of neutral and went to 60 inches. With the elevator in that position, the plane takes off slightly tail low and there is little tendency of the so-called torque that is often associated with Mustangs.

The Mustang is an aircraft that is flown with the left hand on the elevator trim for any action affecting the horizontal, leaving the stick pressure at almost zero pressure. I leveled off at 8,000 feet. I had been monitoring the gauges closely with a great emphasis on the coolant temperature. Everything was in the green.

I was on a northeast heading, going toward the east coast of Nicaragua. I flew over Managua's airport and headed toward the coast. I was pulling 36 inches of manifold and the rpm was at 2300, which was giving me an indicated airspeed of 250 mph and a true airspeed, since the winds were light, of about 300. I was settling down for a pleasant ride enjoying my third hour in the plane.

About six or seven minutes later (about 40 miles further) the engine started missing and after two or three minutes quit dead.

To be continued....

## **B-17 Event – Photo Essay**

Photos by Ted Kowalik

Text by Tim Dunavin

Squadron 4 hosted the EAA B-17 "Aluminum Overcast" the weekend of Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup>, in beautiful fall weather, that saw the Lewis University Airport filled with aircraft and people. Here are a few photos by Ted Kowalik – a picture is worth a thousand words - it says it all!



Tim Bauer was in charge of the merchandize mart. We sold a lot of neat things.



Old friends meet again



This was one busy place – all weekend!

We gave nearly 144 rides and there were a lot of people that took the tours in the afternoons. Merchandise sales were brisk as well. Thanks to a lot of volunteers, this event went very well.



Tom Buck brought his TBM-3 along and added to the great collection of vintage birds.



Even the ol Col. was in on this event and gave guided tours through the cockpit in the afternoons.

There were also some important visitors to the event – WWII Veterans and their family members. They got to see what their loved ones did and what they flew in. There were a lot of questions and stories told. In all, everyone had a great time.



Last minute details were worked out with the C.O. Tom Buck.



This year's volunteer group was a great bunch!!

Stacy Kolls and Gordan Millerin were this year's co-chairmen of the event. Great job!!

### **Capt. Downey's Cookout**

By Art Sereque

Capt. Charles "Chuck" Downey's home at the Poplar Grove (IL.) Airport on October 6 was the scene of his annual "Q" for Squadron 4 members. Among those at the gathering were acclaimed aviation artist Pat Patrick who displayed some of his works, Vintage Aircraft Association director emeritus, E.E. "Buck" Hilbert, and of course, Squadron 4's very own noted aviation photographer, Ted Koston. Two other guests who enjoyed themselves were Dexter, Squadron 4 member Roger Paykert's 2-year-old Jack Russell Terrier and Abby, Chuck Downey's next-door neighbor, a beautiful 7-year-old Vizsla. Vizslas were bred as hunting dogs (they are

pointers) for Royalty in Hungary about 2000 years ago. Dexter, on the other hand, had to drive overnight from the Texas area to get to the party.

Squadron 4 C.O. Tom Buck had impeccable timing, arriving in his TBM with a full complement of passengers, just as lunch was about to be served!!

As special guests, Chuck invited about a dozen WWII combat flyers (and wives) to the cookout. These gentlemen flew everything from P-47s and P-51s on escort missions with the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, to Consolidated B-24 Liberators flying bomb runs with the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force in Italy. On the other side of the world, guests flew TBMs and Dive Bombers over the Pacific. Capt. Downey himself was a dive-bomber pilot.

Just before lunch, on a somber note, Capt. Downey noted the passing of Paul Holland, a director of the Military Aviation Hall of Fame. On a positive note, Chuck was appointed to replace him as a director.

On another somber note, C.O. Buck announced the passing of Major Mike Titre, a long time dedicated and hardworking Squadron 4 and EAA member. Mike was especially helpful – big time – in the Young Eagles program. Earlier this year Mike was pictured in “Spirit Aviation” along with Tom Poberezny. Ted Koston displayed his album he created, with photos taken at Mike’s funeral, along with photos of Mike during WWII to the present.



WWII Combat Veterans under the wing of a TBM

Squadron 4 Quarter Master Stacy Kolls and Pat Clark, a long time friend of Chuck’s prepared lunch. Since there was a little food left over, apparently no one of the more than 50 guests went home hungry.

Hangar flying continued into the late hours of the afternoon when the crowd finally dissipated.

Thanks for the great time, Chuck!!



Capt. Chuck Downey

### **Squadron Officers**

(Partial listing – see web site 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. David Maren

(708) 352-6220

Q.M. Stacy Kolls

(815) 544-1223

### **MERCHANDISE**

We have the new Squadron 4 T- shirts available at a reduced price. They come in 2 colors – green with tan lettering, and tan with green lettering (“Squadron 4 was here” Kilroy-type). This reduced price is for a short time only. Next batch will be sold at the regular price.

**Keep'em Flyin**