



# THE SQUADRON

## EAA Warbird Squadron 4

A newsletter for Squadron members and friends of Warbird aircraft.

December, 2004

Web Site: <http://www.warbirdsqadron4.org/>

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### 2004 Annual Veteran's Forum Recap

The November 21st Squadron 4 meeting produced another very successful event with the annual Veteran's forum held at Pride Aircraft on the Rockford Airport. Since its inception, Squadron 4 has designated the November meeting to honor all Veteran's of armed forces. The Veteran's forum was meant as a venue to bring a number of Veterans together to be recognized and honored for their service, accomplishments and in some cases sacrifice to our great country. The event also brings the opportunity for our invited Veterans to share their experiences, stories and accounts of the history of military service in the armed forces. Although we will never discriminate among the branches of military service, our affections naturally lean toward those Veterans involved in aviation services. We have, in the past, been honored to have guests who served as pilots, crewmen, and ground support personnel, none of whose duties or accomplishments have served greater or lesser than any others. All of the Veterans who served in military service, regardless of their duties performed or accomplishments achieved, deserve our deepest respect and highest honor.

This year our Veteran's Forum consisted of eight honored guests. These veterans accepted our invitation to be recognized and honored, as well as, to share some brief moments of their part in military service. As our purpose is to honor Veterans of all branches of the service, we also recognize all times and eras of military history. I feel it

would be safe to say that we do have a deep affection, admiration, and interest in those veterans from WWII for several reasons. First, the time of WWII brought aviation some of the greatest innovations in aircraft seen in the twentieth century, considering technology, competition among warring nations and the time to production (from drawing board to production aircraft). Another, and more important, reason that WWII Veterans are so dear to us is the finite time we shall have with this generation to learn and hear their oral history. We are all aware that we are so rapidly losing this treasured resource to the ultimate outcome of mortal life here on earth.

This year's Veteran guests were a diverse group, to say the least. Squadron 4 members were privileged to recognize and honor Veterans from different branches of service, different eras in military service history and even different countries. The Veterans introduced themselves to the attending members and spoke briefly regarding their service history and duties. Those present were treated to a few interesting and inspiring stories from the past. The forum began with Clarence Staton, a P-47 pilot who flew ground support and bomber escort missions in Europe in 1943 and 44. Clarence flew the 'Jug' prior to the arrival of the P-51 Mustang and left Europe shortly before the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944). The next Veteran to introduce himself was a long time friend of the Squadron, Captain Chuck Downey. The Captain gave us a brief, but fascinating, account of a few of his valiant missions as the youngest commissioned Navy pilot, flying a Dauntless dive bomber in the Pacific theater during WWII. Our next guest Veteran was Gunter Arlt, who was born in Germany. He lived in Germany as a teenager during WWII and immigrated to America shortly after the war. He became an American citizen and served in the US Army, 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division in the mid 1950's. Gunter brought us what we thought was an interesting perspective of life during WWII, experiencing the Allied bombing of his German homeland firsthand on three separate occasions in three different cities. Our next guest was Bill Bartilotta, Uncle of

Squadron 4 member Frank Bartilotta. Bill served in the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force in 1943 as ordinance personnel, arming P-47s in England at Andover Air Field. Bill aspired to be a pilot, but the training program available to him was cancelled. Bill told of his experiences being stationed at the first airfield in France after D-Day, which was shared with the 8th Air Force's 352<sup>nd</sup> fighter squadron of which Captain William T. Whisner (flying Moonbeam McSwine), and George Preddy (flying Cripes a Mighty) were a part. Our next guest Veteran, Joe Heinlein, felt a little out of place at our gathering, and didn't think he should have been a part. Joe served in the German Army during WWII as an anti aircraft gunner, shooting at the American bombers as they attempted to destroy targets it was his duty to defend. I assured him that even though he fought for the other side, never the less, he served his country's military, survived the war, and has since become an American citizen. As a military Veteran Joe is deserving of our respect and honor. He told us of his duties and responsibility as a soldier in the German Army as part of a crew operating 88mm anti aircraft guns. His job was to track the bombers with a binocular sighting system and others in the crew aimed and fired the guns. Although some were mobile, the guns Joe crewed were stationary. Joe told the audience he could never understand (at the time) why the planes flew so straight and level, making them seemingly easy targets, but in fact he explained how extremely difficult it was to actually hit one of the many in the air. Joe later explained (during a Q&A session) the burst of the 88 shells created an 80-yard blast sphere in the air. Our next guest Veteran was Frank McCarter, a P-51 pilot who served in the CBI (China, Burma, India) theater in the 14<sup>th</sup> Air Force shortly after the AVG (American Volunteer Group) headed by General Clare Chennault. Frank told some riveting stories of his experiences flying 40 missions in P-40s followed by 20 missions in a P-51. He told of witnessing a "secret" meeting with the likes of Chennault, Hap Arnold and General George Stillwell, which resulted in Stillwell being relieved of his command. Frank's appearance in the forum was inspiring, informative and at

times emotional, but overall extremely interesting. Our next guest Veteran was our guest speaker from last June's meeting at Kenosha, 'Wild' Bill Scanlon. Bill told us again about his entry into WWII flying Spitfires in Northern Africa for the Royal Air Force, becoming a tail gunner on night bombing missions over Germany, eventually becoming part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force flying as a B-17 gunner and being shot down, captured by the Germans and rescued by the French Underground. Our last guest Veteran was Jack Majdrich, who served in the Navy aboard the USS Missouri after the Korean War. He also served as an Engineer on P-3s aboard a 'straight deck' carrier. Although he is not a pilot, he has a half dozen carrier take offs and landings as a crew member.

Overall, the meeting was very successful and I wish to thank our guest Veterans for participating in the forum and sharing some interesting and informative history with our members. We in Squadron 4 recognize, respect and honor these and all Veterans of military service. We thank and appreciate those who share their personal history with us and we treasure learning and hearing of the history that our Veterans have lived and participated in.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank our gracious host, John Morgan for allowing our group to use the hanger at Pride Aircraft for our meeting. The surrounding aircraft served as an excellent backdrop to the event.

### **The C.O.'s Desk**

As 2004 comes to a close, I look back at what I consider an extremely successful year. 2004 began with our Annual Dinner when, after our scheduled guest speaker was unfortunately unable to attend the event for personal reasons, Bill Miller and Mike Gillian stepped in at the last minute to give us a great presentation on racing T-6s at Reno. The event included some great raffles and door prize winners and enjoyed

by all who attended. Our spring meeting took us to our fellow member Rudy Frasca's facilities in Urbana where Rudy shared his impressive collection of warbird and civilian aircraft for all to enjoy up close and personal. Our June meeting featured 'Wild' Bill Scanlon and his amazing stories of adventure and survival during WWII. Squadron 4 had an impressive presence at AirVenture in Oshkosh this year with the introduction of some specialty Squadron logo t-shirts that turned out to be a very coveted item. Our Annual BBQ at Joliet Airport produced record attendance and with perfect weather for flying, several members and friends enjoyed rides in warbird aircraft. The September meeting at Lindenwood Field (Tim and Barb Bauer's residence) was yet another crowning success with the introduction of Member's Memorabilia, which turned Tim's hangar into a temporary mini museum. Perfect flying weather again produced another fantastic event for the special annual invitation from Captain Chuck Downey at his residence on the Poplar Grove Airport. A somewhat impromptu event at Bannockburn Field, hosted by the Heritage Air Corps, saw a great turnout of both airplanes and people, which has all the markings of becoming yet another annual tradition for Squadron 4. Finally as reported in this issue, the Annual Veteran's forum was a fitting tribute to cap off a great year.

We increased our membership, introduced some new ideas and had a lot of fun throughout the year. I look forward to an even bigger and better year filled with great events and exciting times in 2005.

### **2005 Annual Dinner**

Our 2005 Annual Dinner will be held on January 22 at the William Tell Holiday Inn in LaGrange, IL. There will be a newsletter published in early January with specific and detailed information for this event. All I will say at this time is, we have an exciting program planned with a great deal of information to pass along. Therefore, I will dedicate a separate newsletter to this event.

## Member News

### Support Our Troops

Stacy Kolls is continuing an effort to collect goods and donations to send care packages to our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Her efforts have produced over \$120.00 and four care packages which will bring some of our troops much needed items, which in some cases they are having trouble obtaining. A list of suggested items for the care packages is available by visiting the Operation Shoebox website at [www.operationshoebox.com](http://www.operationshoebox.com). Let's continue to support this effort. Questions and information requests should be directed to our Quartermaster, Stacy Kolls (815-218-9202).

### Squadron 4 Merchandise

Over this past year we have introduced a line of Squadron 4 merchandise, mainly consisting of patches, pins and clothing. Regular embroidered hats and shirts are available with prices ranging from \$10 - \$25. We also plan to expand our offering of logo merchandise in the near future. The items will be available at all Squadron 4 events or contact Mark Laatsch at 773-695-8122 for more information.

### Event by Committee

In an effort to involve more of our regular members in the operations of Squadron 4, the Board of Directors has entertained an idea to test the creation of committees, made up of a group of Squadron members, responsible for our regular meeting events (as listed in the following 2005 calendar of events). The concept would be to form multiple committees, each responsible for a single event. These responsibilities would include arranging for facility logistics (tables, chairs, speakers requirements) and working with our Quartermaster, Stacy Kolls. In some cases it may require coordinating with a guest speaker and obtaining information for event announcement in the newsletter. Anyone interested in assisting in this effort

can contact me by leaving a message at 773-695-8122 or an e-mail at [mLaatsch@csinet.net](mailto:mLaatsch@csinet.net), or by talking to any of the Squadron's officers.

### Annual Membership Dues Time

It's that time again to renew your membership to this fine organization. Hopefully, all who read this publication will again renew membership in Squadron 4 and help support our efforts for the preservation and continued operation of warbird aircraft. Help us also recognize and preserve the history of the machines, and more importantly, the people who have been and are associated with these machines, especially the Veterans who served this country, to preserve our rights of freedom and the ability to enjoy these machines today and in future years to come.

### Squadron 4 – Year 2005 Calendar of Events

**January 22, 2005** - Annual Dinner, William Tell Holiday Inn, Lagrange, IL

**April 24, 2005** - Regular Meeting, Bannockburn Field, Plano, IL

**June 26, 2005** - Regular Meeting, Kenosha, WI

**August 14, 2005** - Annual BBQ Fly-in/Drive-in, Joliet, IL

**September 11, 2005** - Regular Meeting, Lindenwood, IL

**November 13, 2005** - Annual Veteran's Forum - Rockford, IL



**Keep 'em Flying**