



# The Squadron



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[www.warbirdsqadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsqadron4.org)

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## Events

**Sunday, Aug 17** starting at 11:00 -  
Sq4 BBQ - Tom Buck's Hangar at  
the Joliet Regional Airport (KJOT)

**Sunday, Sept 7** starting at 11:00 -  
Fly-in/Drive-in - Tim Bauer's Place  
- 17050 E Lindenwood Road,  
Lindenwood, IL 61049

**September 12-14** : B-17 Tour  
Stop DuPage Airport, West  
Chicago, IL

**Sunday, Nov 9** starting at 11:00 -  
The Veterans' Forum - 5233 Falcon  
Road, Rockford, IL 61109

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

[www.warbirdsqadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsqadron4.org)

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## From the C.O.'s Desk

It's July and time for Oshkosh! July 28 to Aug.3 .... This is the premier airplane gathering, and one you do not want to miss. All things connected to, and about flying will be represented at Oshkosh. The wide variety of Warbirds is amazing! Go look at, take pictures of, and admire them in static displays and as they fly in the daily airshow. Many of our Squadron 4 members volunteer at various positions, so be sure to say "hi" and "thanks" when you see them there.

There are so many things to get involved with, so don't let the summer pass you by. August 17<sup>th</sup> is approaching fast, and the Joliet picnic is a big gathering for Squadron 4. Last year we had around 20 airplanes fly in for the event. Come see Warbirds up close and talk to the pilots—a true Warbird experience. We expect to see you there.

Remember that Sept. 11 to 14 is the B-17 Tour Stop at DuPage Airport, a very historical Warbird event! This is our biggest fundraiser! Be sure to sign up to help and encourage your friends to experience this great WW2 Bomber.

So get involved and "keep em flying".

Tom Buck

## Buzzing the Airfield

By Tim Dunavin

When you read this, AirVenture 2008 will already be history. There will be many

stories to tell and new memories to relish, as it is every year – a huge family reunion! Many photos will be taken and reviewed, but the one thing that will stand out is the lasting effect on us and our efforts. The successful effort of remembering Mike Titre, now leaves a lasting memorial on Compass Hill, of a great friend and WWII pilot. Thanks a lot to all those who took the time to both support our effort and attend the dedication of the brick that bears his name.

This month our “Veteran’s Corner” features Col. John J. Geuss, USMC Ret. He has written a very nice article about his flying experiences, that will cover 3 issues of the newsletter. I hope you enjoy this series, as we salute our Veterans!

Coming up soon is our BBQ at the Joliet Airport in Aug. and our annual outing to Lindenwood at Tim Bauer’s hangar in September; great events and meetings of our Squadron. Hope to see you all there.

Also covered in this issue is our trip to Harry Pick’s to celebrate his PQ-14 project and while we were there, we got to meet Bob Shore and Bill Coons too! Art Sereque has written about our time there – see next article.

Frank Bartilotta, our X.O., handed me and essay written by a graduating high school Sr., Erik Michael Schmiat. I have presented it here for your enjoyment. Erik did very well on it, and we wish him well in the future.

### **EAA Chapter 95 – Warbird Squadron 4 Fly-In – Open House – Cook out**

By Art Sereque WB548852

On a beautiful Saturday in May, the Morris (IL) Airport was the venue for a joint Chapter 95 – Squadron 4 get-together. Squadron 4 was invited to the home base of Chapter 95 with the hopes of working together on future endeavors.

The public was invited to see the planes flown in and to learn more about the various club activities.

Warbird President and Squadron 4 member, Rick Siegfried arrived via his SST – “Simply Stock Texan”. National Director and Chapter 95 member, Tom Wise came via a beautiful blue 1972 Oldsmobile Cutlass convertible. Another National Director present was Ed Finnegan. A later arrival was Squadron 4 C.O. Tom Buck in his Navy SNJ.

Among several very nice homebuilts was a lovely amphibian. Among the several dozen planes on display were a Czeck built jet trainer, Yak 52, and an aerobatic Piper Decathlon, and a Pitts.

Another late arrival was a 1930’s era Stinson Cabin plane in early American Airlines colors, a very beautiful plane that had been flown at one time by Charles “Lucky” Lindbergh.

In mid-afternoon, with the open house winding down, Chapter 95 treated Squadron 4 to a great, late lunch – burgers, brats, dogs, chicken, salads, desserts – what a feast. Thanks Chapter 95!!

During the day, Ed Finnegan (an MD-80 pilot) was explaining to a visitor about density altitude and weight and balance. Next time you see Ed, ask him to tell you about weight and balance on the Fokker with 90 wrestlers on board!!

### **A Day with a Culver Cadet**

By Art Sereque

June 22, 2008, started out with rain and thunder, but by 9:00 A.M. turned into a hot, lovely day. This enabled Squadron 4 members to arrive by plane, as well as car and a chartered coach to Harry Pick’s place in downstate Chenoa, Illinois. National Warbirds President Rick Siegfried, along with National Director Tom Wise came in Rick’s T-6 Texan (the major airline for which Rick flies, for some reason, would not

let him take the 747-400 he usually captains). Tom Buck, Squadron 4 C.O., came “slumming” in his Navy SNJ, as his TBM Avenger is still waiting for carburetor parts.

The reason for the event: to celebrate Harry’s beautiful restoration of his 1944 Culver Cadet PQ-14B, like the one he last flew 63 years ago.

Among the large group attending were Clancy Hess, a P-38 Lightning Recon Photographer and pilot, and Capt. Frank McCarter, a 14<sup>th</sup> Air Force Veteran (Flying Tigers) who flew the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk (the E, B, and longer fuselage N models) and the North American P-51B and P-51D Mustang on 60 combat missions in the CBI Theater. Also in attendance was Bill Coons, a noted photojournalist and artist who received his combat air crewman wings in the back seat of a Navy SBD (slow but deadly) dive bomber. Bill was in a radio controlled target aircraft squadron (VU7-A) which provided pilotless drones for gunnery practice by triple A units. Bill is the author of the book, Shoot Only at the Red Airplane, a History of the Radio-controlled Culver Cadet Drones.



**Bill coons, Bob Short, and Harry Pick – over 240 years of aviation experience!**

This brings us to Harry Pick. Harry was in the 6<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 23<sup>rd</sup> Tow Target Group, 314<sup>th</sup> Target Wing. The tow target group used “Sacks”, which were used for gunnery practice. Harry flew the Cadet, radioing speed and altitude to the ground crews, as he

was in an experimental group involved with tracking devices.

Harry bought NL75380 (“L” is for limited, as apposed to experimental) in 1969 as an honest basket case. It lay dormant for more than 10 years. After 28 years and more than 8000 hours of work, SN427 once again took to the air. Harry was again flying a Cadet for the first time in nearly 50 years.

While Squadron 4 members and a large group of friends hobnobbed and admired Harry’s beautiful restoration, his wife Marife put on an absolutely fantastic lunch buffet. Especially great were her rib-tip appetizers and her homemade potato salad and fried chicken.

What a perfect day for aviation enthusiasts and friends to get together!!



**Squadron 4 members and the PQ-14 Culver Cadet**

## **Veteran’s Corner**

### **My Combat Service during WWII and Korea**

By Col. John J. Geuss USMC Ret.

#### **Part I**

The following is a brief capsule of my military service. The non-combat and family events during these years are another story.

#### **Early years**

My first exposure to the military was at age ten. My uncle was a retired World War I Marine who figured I should know the

manual of arms and how to field strip a 03 Springfield rifle.

Seven months after Pearl Harbor at age eighteen and straight out of high school, I joined the Navy Aviation Cadet program July 24<sup>th</sup> 1942. My first duty officially began September 11, 1942, when along with nineteen other cadets I was assigned to the Naval Civilian Pilot Training ("C.P.T.") program at the University of Chicago. There we attended ground school in the morning and flew in the afternoon at the Ford Lansing Airport, Lansing, Illinois. The planes were 1941 Taylorcrafts. I soloed after eight hours of flight time. I had an excellent instructor but was a little perturbed at times with all the emergency engine cut drills he pulled on me. I had good reason to thank him later. On my third solo flight the unexpected happened. I was climbing out of the pattern turning 2300 r.p.m. and at five hundred feet the engine threw a rod. A loud bang and I was looking at the prop split from tip to hub. I nosed over and landed straight ahead in a wheat field. The mechanic figured the engine stopped in  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a turn. The owner of the Air Service bought me a coke. I finished up the program November 8, 1942, with a total of 47.75 hours dual and solo flying time.

The University of Chicago football stadium was named Stagg Field. Every day we had two hours of physical training (PT) and close order drill. Unbeknownst to us, Enrico Fermi and his group were working on the atomic bomb under the stand in the old squash court. We marched up and down within a few hundred feet of that building for over a month. The first chain reaction took place December 2, 1942. This was the start of the Manhattan project.

November 11, 1942 we reported for pre-flight training at the University of Iowa. This was the boot camp of Naval Air. I went in a one hundred thirty-one pound weakling and came out three months later

one hundred and fifty-one pounds. All muscle but with a broken arm obtained in the last twenty minutes of the sport program. I received orders to report to Station Glenview for primary training in N3N3s, same as the Stearmans. The date was March 22, 1943. The primary bases were called "E" bases meaning elimination bases and believe me, they did a lot of that. I finished up at Glenview with 97.5 hours. The date was May 22, 1943. The next duty was U.S. Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas. I started instrument training there May 31, 1943 flying SNV-1s. Time flown in this bird was 42.5 hours. Advanced final squadron was flown at Rodd Field in SNJs. Last flight was August 22, 1943 for cadet time 233.8 hours. I graduated as a Second Lieutenant USMCR August 28, 1943 and reported aboard the NAS Miami, September 4, 1943 for preoperational fighter training. I flew SNJs, Brewster Buffalos, and SB3s Helldivers. I left Miami in late fall for a seven day leave and got married to my high school sweetheart.

On November 21, 1943, I reported to MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina, VMF 314 3<sup>rd</sup> MAW. I checked out in the Corsair on January 8, 1944. What a handful that was for the first ten hours! I finally got word on landing the beast. After touch down and throttle off and it started to veer off, just raise the flaps. Up to that point you had no rudder control. The flaps blocked off air across the rudder.

What really made it hard to handle in those early models was the low tail wheel; the low seat and bird cage canopy didn't help. All those factors were corrected, but that mile long nose was still out there. You can't see much in a three point attitude. It was easier to transport it in, but that didn't work coming into a short field or the carrier. VMF 511 was commissioned in February 1944. Forty pilots and twenty four F4U-1s flew out of Mitchell Field outside New

Bern, North Carolina. The main runway was 3,400 feet. On landing you had to put it on the numbers or burn out the brakes trying to stop or worse still, run off the end of the runway. We got the word really fast. We continued training hops for the next four months. There was much scuttlebutt about our overseas assignment. Marine Corps Air Group 51 ("MAG 51") consisted of four fighter squadrons and we were assigned to the code name "Danny". We were going to Europe to knock out the submarine pens at Brest. Our planes didn't have wing pylons for 5 High Velocity Air Rockets ("HVAR") plus we needed training shooting these rockets. They gave us F6F Hellcats for live practice. We also shot "Tiny Tims", twelve foot air to ground rockets. Meanwhile our planes were being loaded aboard carriers for the trip to Europe. A week before sailing they cancelled the operation. General Marshall said he didn't want any Marines in Europe. We had a memorable luncheon just before we left for California. Charles Lindburg spoke for about a half hour, and we all got to shake his hand. He flew combat missions with the Air Force and missions with VMF 223 off Green Island, in the Solomon Islands.

Situation normal as the new order came down from Command. MAG 51 was to be the first carrier squadron of the first carrier division (Jeep Carriers). We headed for MCAS Mojave, California. We took off September 5, 1944, and arrived in California on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

We did our field carrier landing practice as a 3,600 foot strip in the desert near El Centro. Eight satisfactory landings were required to go aboard ship. I was on my seventh pass downwind when the engine surged for about three seconds and then ran fine. I pulled the shoulder straps tighter and tried to decide whether to take the cut and abort and go around for the eighth landing. I poured the coal to it and went around. At

the same spot on the down wind, the engine started missing, turned into final, picking up the Landing Signal Officer ("LSO"). He gave me a low and come on; the last I saw he was beating the paddles on the deck. I had the throttle bent over the stop but no power. At that point everything went blank. The next thing I knew I was sitting on the wing root with my head in my hands dazed but unhurt except for a cut on the back of my right hand. They checked the cockpit, all switches off, radio off. I had no memory of that or retracting the gear. They said just before I hit, the gear came up. We were briefed on the danger of gear down in sand. Just a few weeks before one of our pilots taxied off the side of the runway and flipped over on his back. I was cocked up in standard, turned in to the final, and hit the left wing root. I was going about ninety-five knots, just above the stall speed. They measured the point of impact to where the plane stopped at forty feet. I was black and blue from the shoulder harness and had a rough time getting out of bed the next day but made the flight schedule the day after that.

Our entire squadron qualified for carrier landings. Two days later we went aboard the USS Ranger (CV4). We also had landing aboard three different CVEs. On our very first approach to the carrier, the thought going through my head was, "How am I going to get aboard that postage stamp?" We were a flight of four and broke up wind and starboard to the ship. We took our interval downwind, wheels, flaps and hook down. I turned short base and then into final approach. I picked up the LSO and at that point all I could see was the LSO on his platform and ten thousand miles of ocean ahead of me. I was about twelve seconds away from the cut. I got a "Roger" then a come on. You chop the throttle, ease the stick forward and then stick right back. BAM! Hit it right and caught the #2 wire.

In my mind, carrier work was the ultimate in precision flying. It gave you the same satisfaction as shooting a quarter mile three hundred foot ground control approach (“GCA”).

The first catapult shots were an experience in and of itself. One second you’re sitting there and two seconds later you’re flying at 120 knots. What a feeling!

We started a new flight syllabus. Our squadron was the first carrier squadron of the 1<sup>st</sup> Carrier Air Group and all CVE based. The Brass decided to put six night fighters aboard our ship. In order to make room for the night fighters they cut ten pilots and aircraft from our squadron, which included our Executive Officer, Major Mike Yunck. We received seven days leave. Two days after we left the squadron, the Captain of the ship launched the air group on a training flight into a large weather system that covered most of southern California. I lost two of my best friends, Clint Harris and Joe Hare. A total of seven planes were gone: four Corsairs, two F6Fs and one TBF. The Captain of the ship should have been held accountable but the Board of inquiry gave him a pass.

## To Be Continued

### **Voice of a Veteran**

By Erik Michael Schmidt

Class of 2008 St. Patrick High School, Chicago, Ill.

There is a certain elderly, timeworn man who lives in an equally weathered home. The man is slow and tired in movement, but his voice remains loud and strong. He stands in his backyard like a picturesque statue, bellowing out salutations to all those who pass by. At first, his boisterous tone can be quite intimidating, but once you get acquainted to his rowdy personality, you realize there is much more to him than meets the eye. Underneath his grizzled appearance is a courageous heart that has endured the worst this world has to offer. His pale,

failing eyes have witnessed some of the most horrific events in this nation’s history. Most importantly, that thunderous voice holds the secrets of the greatest breed of American there is.

His voice is that of a veteran.

When my family and I moved into our house about 8 years ago, I met this physical embodiment of the American spirit. His name is Salvatore Franzese, and I am honored to say that he is my neighbor. Initially, our relationship consisted of nothing more than him blaring out his “hellos” in that ear-splitting tone of his. But overtime the shouting turned into thoughtful conversation. It was then that I realized how exceptional Sal really was.

He confided in me all the experiences of his epic life. Suddenly, I was thrust back into World War II, dive-bombing with Sal in the Marine Corp. I experienced the exhilaration of his successful missions, and the heartache of losing a dear friend. I felt unwavering courage and profound sorrow, neither of which I have felt first hand. All the glories, all the struggles, for a few minutes they were so real that I could hear the bullets and battle cries ringing through my head. For the first time in my life, I understood what it was all like.

As I listened intently to Sal’s story, I noticed the pride swelling inside of him. He was honored to have played such an important role in preserving the freedom of his country. Feeling inspired by the word of Sal, I began to ask myself some questions. Am I doing all I can for my country? How do I use my freedom that this country’s veterans have given me? What is my role in preserving our nation’s freedom? And lastly: What is my role in honoring veterans like Salvatore Franzese?

This question stunned me at first, as I realized my role was shamefully small, if I even had one. Veterans of war have been congratulated by the President and decorated

with prestigious awards like the Purple Heart and the Medal of Honor. How is a high school student possibly going to compete with the President of the United States? My mind went back to an image of Sal, appearing very ordinary in his tattered baseball cap and knee socks; it was then the answer became clear.

These veterans, the brave souls who fought, bled, and died for the very ground we walk on, have become a forgotten people. In their heyday, they were praised for unparalleled courage and valor, but have since been lost in the pages of time. My role is to find them. Fearless individuals who call themselves veterans can be seen all around us. They are your brothers, your sisters, your parents, and your spouse. I am called, we all are called, to seek them out, hear their heroic stories, and keep in mind that what they did was not for themselves, but for us.

My role in honoring the veterans is simply this: to respect, listen, and remember. There are people like Sal spread across this entire country, all with remarkable tales to tell. As foolish, inexperienced teenagers, my peers and I need to absorb all they have to say, so we can understand the true meaning of bravery and sacrifice. Veterans not only have immense knowledge to bestow upon younger generations, but also the power to inspire us with their words.

My personal experience with one, singular veteran has changed my entire outlook on life. By taking just a few moments to talk to a seemingly average neighbor, I have come to realize what my role as an American is, and what my role in honoring warriors of this nation's past is. I have also identified who Sal truly is. He is a vibrant man with a personality many years younger than his visage. He is a caring, selfless friend who would give anything to help his fellow man. He is a proud American who wears his Marine uniform on

Veteran's Day and has a towering flagpole with a waving American flag in his back yard. Most importantly, and most obvious to me: He is a veteran of the United States of America.

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

**Updated Briefing 16 May 2008**

**We have received official confirmation from EAA headquarters.**

**WHAT: B-17 Tour Stop**  
**WHERE: DuPage Airport**  
**[www.dupageairport.com](http://www.dupageairport.com) West Chicago, IL**  
**WHEN: 12-14 September 2008**

As previously announced, Warbird Squadron 4 has secured a stop on EAA's 2008 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 08 August 2008. Remember, the names of all volunteers will go into a drawing for a ride to Oshkosh 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](mailto:stacy.kolls@warbirdsquadron4.org)

Phone: 815-218-9202

NOTE: You must have your Squadron dues paid up, and be a full member to be able to volunteer for duty. Our insurance will not cover those not paid up.

We will need the following information:

Name

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

Dates and Times You Are Available

### Squadron Officers

(Partial listing – see website 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

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-aea.org/>

### Tennessee Warbird Squadron 1 Link:

<http://www.geocities.com/Nashville/7348/twb.html>

### 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/>

### Kennesaw, GA Warbird Squadron 17

Link: <http://www.warbird17.com/>

### Cincinnati, OH Warbird Squadron 18

Link:

<http://www.cincinnatiwarbirds.org/>

## WARBIRDS OF SQUADRON 4

Spit Fire

P51 Mustang

P51 Mustang

TBM Avenger

T6

SNJ

T6

T6

T6

SNJ

Yak

OW Meyers

Stearman

Stearman

L3

L5

T34

T34

Rudy Frasca

Vlado Lench

John O'Connor

Tom Buck

Rick Siegfried

Vic Krause

Clyde Zellers

Rudy Frasca

John O'Connor

Tom Buck

Bob Fitzpatrick

Chuck Downey

Roger Paykert

Keith Birsa

Keith Birsa

Larry Tinker

Will Martin

Rudy Frasca

Wildcat  
B25  
CJ-6  
PQ-14B

Rudy Frasca  
Ray Hillson  
Craig Payne  
Harry Pick

### **Air Shows for 2008\***

Aug 16 - Aug 17 City of Chicago Air & Water Show Chicago IL.  
Aug 30 - Aug 31 Morris SkyFest Morris IL.  
Sept 1 – Sept 7 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Stearman Fly-in Galesburg, IL.  
Sept 6 - Sept 6 Waukegan Regional Air Show Waukegan IL.  
Sept 20 - Sept 21 Scott Air Show 2008 Scott AFB IL.

This is a partial listing of events in our area.

There are several more fairly close by (like the Quad City Air Show in late June) that are not listed here. There are also local EAA Chapter fly-in breakfasts that we also could attend, check your local Chapter for info.

**Please send in updates**

### **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!

### **Next Issue**

**Veteran's Corner** – Col. John Geuss  
USMC Ret.

**Oshkosh AirVenture** – Recap  
And much more

**Keep'em Flyin**