



# The Squadron



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

## Events

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

**9 Sept:** General meeting – Tim Bauer’s Fly-in/Drive-in.  
Lindenwood, IL

**14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Sept: B-17 Tour Visit**  
Lewis University Airport (KLOT)  
Romeoville, IL

**6 Oct: Capt. Downey’s annual**  
SQ 4 and Air Combat veterans of  
Rockford, cookout, Poplar Grove,  
IL.

**11 Nov:** General meeting and  
Veterans’ Forum. Courtesy  
Aircraft, Rockford, IL.

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

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## From the C.O.s Desk

From the CO’s Desk  
August 19, 2007

The Squadron 4 picnic at Joliet was a great success! Thanks to all the workers who helped keep it safe for pilots and spectators. Thanks also to those who served over 100 people a delicious lunch. A special thanks to Harry Pick for bringing the chicken and potato salad.

It was good to see so many members in Joliet. This is a great example of aviation enthusiasts enjoying Warbirds and a warm summer day. This is what EAA Warbirds is all about.

Be sure to come and bring a friend or WW2 veteran, to see the B17 at Lewis-Romeoville Airport, Setp. 14,15,16. Do not miss out on this upcoming Warbird experience!!

Tom Buck

## Buzzing the Airfield

By Tim Dunavin

So far this has been a very eventful year – to say the least! Oshkosh was great and the BBQ likewise. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September we will be having our general meeting at Tim Bauer’s airfield, and this too is always a great time to get together! Displays are always welcome and, of course, there will be plenty to eat and lots of aviation shop talk.

Then to finish off a great week, we head directly into the B-17 tour weekend at Lewis University Airport (KLOT) Romeoville, Il. (Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>)

Volunteers are always needed and we have a great time serving the public and Veterans alike.

Our good friend, Capt. Chuck Downey, has again invited Squadron 4 and the Air Combat veterans of Rockford to come to his place near the Poplar Grove Airport, for cookout and fun time. Hope to see you there – it is a fun and informative time talking to WWII Air combat Veterans – not to mention the great food.

Our Veterans' Forum in Nov. is a must event too. This will again be held at the Rockford Airport at Courtesy Aircraft.

### **AirVenture, of course**

By Art Sereque, Jr.

The big attraction is the sight and sound of beautiful warbirds. However, equally important is the renewing friendships and making new ones. People are just as important as the birds.

My first stop was at the Warbirds store and office. The first face I saw was that of Diane "Smiley face" Churchill, selling warbird goodies.

At Training Command, I renewed friendship with Bob Siegfried, Rick's brother, who flew in his Beech S-35 Bonanza.

Next I met Carol and Larry Olson of St. Petersburg, Fl. who arrived in their twin Beech Baron – Larry flew for United for 20 years and at one time flew right seat with Rick.

Then I bumped into Ron Ridenhour, a 27 year veteran with "United", now flying 767's. Ron flew his and Rick's "SST" to the air show. Ron was one of my first glider instructors at Clow International Airport.

While sitting at Training Command I met Charles from Concord, MA, who was

an Electronics Officer in WWII. He flew from the States to England via the Azores.

At lunch at the volunteers' café, I was visited from behind by Willi Gohs; who with his son were camping in their "pop-up" trailer.

Back at Training Command, I met Bill Howard of Concord, N.C. Bill was a WWII multi-engine instructor in everything from an AT-10 to a B-24 Liberator.

Another Training Command volunteer was Nathan Davis of Tipton, IN. He came in his 1944 Mustang P-51D, while a friend brought his yellow T-6. Nathan also has a P-51TF, a two seat trainer with a 10 inch longer cockpit – and has dual controls. It is being restored in Chino, Ca. while his T-6 is being worked on by Tim Sauage in Huntington, In. Due to a fuel consumption, Nathan said a ride in the TF would cost \$1600 –



Tim Dunavin receiving training in the P-47 Thunderbolt (Photo by Terry Kitchen)

Bill Hirzell of Walbridge, Ohio was also at Training Command. He brought his 1940 Navy N3N-3, along with floats and skis!! Bill was wearing a hat that said, "dei Frattell" (The Brothers). It turns out that Bill is one of 4 brothers operating the canning company that produces tomato products of all kinds under that brand name. I've bought them at my local grocery store.

At lunch with Bill and me were two Texans, Bill Farmer and Skot Ingraham. Farmer came in his N3N, while Skot flew up in his Stearman bi-plane. During a conversation, Bill Farmer asked me if I knew another Texan, Roger Freeman. I said

no, but I had friends that knew him quite well. I also said I knew he had quite a collection of WWI planes and replicas. Bill said he built the fuselage for a DR-1 for Roger – the famous Fokker Dretdecker was the plane that brought fame to the Red Baron.

At the most recent Squadron 4 board meeting, it was mentioned that no one had seen or heard from Harry Pick. While waiting for a tram, who came bouncing across the street to say hello, none other than Harry. Yes, he's alive and kicking, working on his plane, and said he'll be at Tom's on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

Another big Texan who I met with an even bigger mustache was David Duncan who arrived in his Cessna 140.

QM Stacy and I were like two ships in the night. Every time I stopped by the volunteer café, she was gone. Finally I bumped into her working the flight line – “Double Duty Stacy”.

Another Training Command volunteer was Steve Osmon with his two boys. Steve is in the computer business in Annapolis, Md. I asked the boys if they had a “D” at the end of their name. They said no. I then mentioned Donnie and Marie Osmond. They didn't have a clue – too young! They flew up in their single engine Beech, leaving their Beech Super 18 at home.



P-38 “Ruff Stuff” waiting for its pilot  
(Photo by Tim Dunavin)

On Friday I came with my friend Pierre. We used to come to Oshkosh together and then he stopped. Do you think getting married and having a kid had

anything to do with that? This year, he apparently received special dispensation.

As it always is, AirVenture is great to meet old friends and new.

## MUSTANG SOLO

By Will Martin

When the US replaced Nicaraguan Air Force piston-driven planes with jets in the 1960s, Nicaragua put all of their old prop planes, primarily P-51 Mustangs, up for sale. I contracted with General Somoza to buy their old air force and sell them T-28s and B-26s that would be used for training. The plan was that I would hire pilots to bring down my planes and fly the Nicaraguan planes back.

While I was waiting for planes from the states, I went to Costa Rica and bought their entire air force – both of them. The US had originally given them four Mustangs. Since CR didn't have any experienced pilots, they quickly washed out two planes, killing the pilots. Their government then wisely decided to store the remaining two 51s.

The CR planes were in excellent condition. I optimistically authorized a local aircraft service facility to prepare them for ferry to the U.S. Of all of the Central American countries, I liked CR best. Their mechanics were honest, hard working and diligent. Unfortunately as I was soon to learn, they had little experience with Mustangs.

The CR guys could get the Mustangs firing with the starter but could not keep them running. They would over prime and two feet of flame would whoosh out of the 12 stacks. The day I saw that, I took the maintenance books back to my hotel room and started my homework.

The next morning, I said, “Take a plug wire and test it with the vibrator coil disconnected.” No spark. They opened up

the mags and found that the points had been deliberately broken, apparently to keep them grounded. When new points were installed, the engines popped off immediately.

Ferry pilots had become a real problem. It was tough to find men who were both competent and reliable. (that's a whole chapter in the book) When the pilot who had agreed to pick up the CR planes cabled that he was delayed, I was mad but not surprised.

Most of my time was in Navions and an Apache. But by this time, I had been around enough 51s to have a good understanding how things worked and what the engines sounded like. The days and weeks dragged on. I was frustrated. The planes weren't going to do me any good in CR. After an agonizing internal tug of war, I decided to do a test flight myself.

Several days later I took a deep breath and taxied the plane out to the main runway. I had talked to the tower earlier to explain that I didn't have a radio. At the run-up area I was going over the cockpit procedures for the second time when suddenly the whole front of the airplane erupted in a cloud of steam. I said, "Oh Mercy me", or some such phrase, pulled the mixture, untangled myself from the shoulder harness and parachute and dived overboard. One-hundred- degrees centigrade water at 50 pounds pressure is quite a geyser. You could see the cloud of steam from across the airport and 20 minutes later, the mechanics showed up with a tug to drag it back to the hanger.

"Only a minor problem," they assured me. The header tank filler plug had either a bad or loose seal. After a couple of hours, they announced, "OK now!" I had had enough thrill for one day and headed for the hotel bar.

The next morning everything looked good. I lined up with the center line and started adding throttle. For months, I had been given enough advice on Mustangs to fill a library, most of it wrong. I desperately tried to filter out the wheat from the chaff. I have always been impressed with the clear, concise language in the military pilot manuals. Now my dog-eared Mustang manual had become my Bible. From intensive study, I knew that the most dangerous thing in the airplane was the throttle and that lack of airspeed was the real killer. I gently eased the throttle forward and held the stick just aft of neutral so that the tail wheel was engaged.

The plane tracked nicely and I was focusing on the manifold pressure gauge when all of a sudden, we were flying! I was only at about three-quarters throttle. It just took off tail low and when I felt comfortable, I reached down and pulled up the gear. By this time the plane was really moving and the stick felt good and firm. I came back on the throttle to 36", 2300 rpm and eased off the six-degree rudder trim. For the first time I felt that I was in charge. By now, I was even used to the deafening roar of the engine.

Twenty minutes later I headed back and got a green light from the tower. It took a long time to slow up and I was a little higher than I normally flew on final. I just set up the airspeed at a hundred miles an hour and in a slight nose up attitude. The stick was very sloppy and the airplane felt on the verge of a stall. It seemed to me that the plane was flying slower than the airspeed gauge indicated. I thought to myself that it must be wrong but I resisted the impulse to jam the throttle forward. Luck was with me. After hundreds of hours in Mustangs I am now convinced that sudden application of power at slow airspeeds with gear and flaps down could easily be fatal. You could quickly find yourself in a steep left uncontrollable turn. I

held my slight nose-up attitude and descended, making a very firm landing.

Back at the Coca-Cola machine, I overheard one of the mechanics say, “It looked like someone throwing a piano out of a second story building.” No matter! I didn’t hurt the airplane and I survived.

The shop checked my airspeed indicator and assured me that it was working correctly. I made two more flights and discovered that the speed envelope was so wide that at slow speeds, the controls were very sloppy. At high speeds, it took a lot of force to move them.

I was beginning to feel comfortable, almost a little cocky, flying the 51. On one morning I flew over an active volcano and looked straight down into it. Somehow, it seemed a premonition.

My promised pilot finally cabled that he was not going to make the trip now or ever. “Add the drop tanks,” I told the guys in the shop. “I’m going to fly non-stop to the U.S.”

TO BE CONTINUED.

### **Tom Buck’s and Warbird Squadron 4 Big BBQ Bash and Fly-In**

By Art Sereque Jr.

Three AM, Sunday August 12<sup>th</sup>, a violent thunderstorm swept through Joliet, Il., threatening Tom’s big bash. By 9AM, the skies were clear and it was hot-hot-hot.

Honoring us with their presence was National Warbirds president Rick Siegfried who arrived in his “SST” – Simply Stock Texan. Also flying in was National Director Jud Nagle, arriving in his Beech T-34 Mentor. Arriving via horseless carriage were National directors Tom Wise and Ed Finnegan. Another guest was renowned Aerial and WWII Recon Photographer and

contributor to “Sport Aviation”, “Vintage Aircraft” and “Warbirds” magazines (see back cover June ‘07 issue) Ted Koston.

Like other BBQ/Fly-ins, this event was about planes, people, and food – and not necessarily in that order.

The planes:

C.O. Tom Buck displayed his north American SNJ, but the star of the show was his rare Grumman Avenger TBM. For those in the dark, TBM stood for Torpedo Bomber, assembled by General Motors. An Avenger TBF was the same, except assembled by Grumman.

Squadron 4 founding member Will Martin displayed both his T-34 and his beautiful 1964 Buick convertible.

Squadron 4 member Keith Birsa displayed both his Stearman PT-17 and a sweet little Aeronca L-3.

Jim Read, owner of the Indiana Aviation Museum arrived in a very nice DeHaviland Chipmunk.

Taking the long distance award were John Lohman, Les Heikual, and Eric and Tina Downing, all of Creve Coure, Mo., arriving in their SNJ, T-6, and South African T-6, respectively.

Flying in from Kenosha, Wi. were Jeff Clark, and Jim Rohlf in pristine North American T-28 Trojans. Two other long distance flyers were Charlie and Shirley Cartlege in their Ohio based Harvard.

Bob and Nancy Fitzpatrick arrived in their 1993 Yak-52.

Flying by were Vlado Lenocho in his North American P-51 Mustang and unknown pilots in an L-39 and Pitts bi-plane.

Among the civilian aircraft arriving was Brian Lemke in his 1948 Tempco built Swift GC-1B. Brian considers his Swift the “ultimate” dogfighter. It will out-dive a T-6, but when it comes to climb, he said, “You can’t beat cubic inches”.

A beautiful V-tail Beech was flown in by Bill Miller, and Bob Edwards and family

flew in from Madison in a 1981 Piper Archer. In all, there were 17 military and 7 civilian planes on display.

(Editors note: Mark Adamic had a fine display of WWII memorabilia and photos, and Tim Dunavin had a model of a Douglas A-26 on display too.)

The People:



Matt and Ted (photo by Tim)

Capt. Morris Reinke, a B-17 pilot flying combat in Italy said that only **one** of his missions was under gross!

Capt. Frank McCarter mentioned his exploits flying both P-40s and P-51s in CBI (China-Burma-India).

Col. J.J. Guess, a Chance-Vought Corsair pilot recounted that the Japs would only drive their vehicles at night and would hide them in abandoned huts. He and his squadron were on a mission and decided to blowup the huts. They did and immediately saw a bright flash and heard a big explosion. They had knocked out a hidden ammo depot!

Ray Karsten, Ord, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class was a gunner on an Avenger, flying 14 combat missions off the carrier U.S.S. Hancock – his first mission was Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945 – Easter Sunday. On his last mission, his pilot received a message to drop his bombs in the ocean, was it co-incidence it was August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945?

Obergefreite (PFC) Joe Heinlein, saw WWII action in Germany – with the Wehrmacht! Yes – he was shooting at us! Actually, Joe operated the “binocular”, which was really a telescope about 12’ long.

It had a range finder and was so powerful he could see the pilot’s face. It was connected electronically to a battery of 36 – 88mm guns arranged in a semi-circle about a ½ mile around. One time two fighters came in very low. Joe aimed the binocular and the 88s fired. Unfortunately, the attacking fighters were flying so low, the guns overshot them and destroyed a German village!



Nancy, Bob, and Matt (photo by Tim)

Sadly, Major Mike Titre, a “Jug” (P-47 Thunderbolt) pilot who flew 58 strafing missions in Europe, was unable to attend. Mike is a long time EAA, Young Eagles and Warbirds friend and is confined to his home with brain cancer.

The Food:

Squadron 4 Q.M. Stacy Kolls, ably assisted by Kathy Buck and Squadron 6’s Katy Hinkle, served up a delicious lunch featuring Italian Beef, Fried Chicken (provided by Harry Pick), salads, fruits, and desserts. Nobody left hungry!

Planes and people:

C.O. Tom Buck took several WWII vets for rides in his Avenger as well as several lucky civilians.

What a great day! (Especially with over 100 members, pilots, and friends of Squadron 4 enjoying themselves).

PS: Brian Churchill wore a rare and magical t-shirt, that read, “Kilroy was here; where’s Mark Lattsch?” Lo and behold, not

only did Mark appear at the fly-in, but at the board meeting two days later, as well!!

**Folded Wings**  
**Major Michael A. Titre**  
**October 23, 1923 – August 27, 2007**

Born of Italian immigrant parents in Clinton, Indiana on October 23, 1923, Michael was raised in Lockport, Illinois graduating with honors from Lockport Twp HS in 1941. He enlisted in the U. S. Air Force graduating from flight training as a P-47 Thunderbolt pilot and during WWII was assigned to the 9th Air Force 405th Fighter Group. His military career as a fighter pilot included 58 combat missions over Germany. His decorations include the ETO ribbon with 4 battle stars, the Medal for Humane Action with three ribbons, the Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters, and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

During the Berlin Airlift he was assigned to Templehof AFB in Berlin as the Chief Weather Forecaster responsible for all air lift operations in and out of Berlin. He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster for that service.

During the Korean War, he was assigned as the Commander of the Weather Detachment Osan AFB Korea and served as Instrument Flight Instructor for the Korean Air Force. For his service to the Republic of Korea, Michael was awarded with a set of Korean Air Force pilot wings recognizing him as pilot in the Royal Korean Air Force, being the highest ranking of the only four Americans to be so honored.

His first hand experience with the P-47 Thunderbolt and vast knowledge of the Berlin Air Lift led to several speaking engagements in recent years to many professional and military organizations. The Experimental Aircraft Association honored him, along with his friend, astronaut Bud Borman, who in the past had flown together as flight instructors.

As a P47 Thunderbolt Pilot:

- 58 Combat Missions during WWII
- Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross during the "Battle of the Bulge"
- Awarded ETO Ribbon w/4 Battle Stars
- Awarded Air Medal w/ 4 Oak Leaf Clusters
- Awarded Medal for Humane Action w/theatre ribbons As the Chief Weather Forecaster - Berlin Air Lift
- Awarded Army Commendation Medal w/1 Oak Leaf Cluster As Weather Detachment Commander and Chief Flight Instructor Royal Korean Air Force Instrument Flight School
- Awarded Korean Air Force Pilot Wings As an Educator

**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 available!**

**ATTENTION!!!!!!!! All squadron 4 members.**

New Merchandise: The new jackets are going fast. They are \$80.00 plus the cost of any patches you want on them. I only have a few left, so if you want one get them now. If I have to reorder them, I may not be able to get them for the same price. We still have some T-shirts from last year's series, so get them before they are all gone. When they are all gone, I will not reorder them. Also we have some new camo hats in 4 colors. These are also selling fast, with a bunch sold at the March meeting at Poplar Grove. These are \$10.00 like all the other hats. You should think about getting one of each color for every occasion. Finally, if any member wants anything special in clothing, I can usually find it for you.

**Help support the Squadron and pickup something from the Squadron Store**

**Tim**

**Keep'em Flyin**