



# The Squadron



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

## Events

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

**MID FEB.** Annual Squadron  
dinner – check web site for more  
details later.

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

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

## In this issue:

- From the C.O.'s Desk** – Tom Buck– pg. 1
- Buzzing the Airfield** – Tim Dunavin – pg. 1
- AirVenture 2008** – Art Sereque – pg. 2
- BBQ Bash** – Art Sereque – pg. 3
- Veteran's Corner** – Col. John Geuss – pg 3
- Folded Wings** – Chicago news – pg. 5
- Bauer's Fly-in** – Photo essay by TD – pg. 5
- Squadron Officers** – pg. 5
- Warbird Squadrons** – pg. 5
- Warbirds of Squadron 4** – pg. 5
- Merchandise** – pg. 6

## From the C.O.'s Desk

CO's Desk September 2008

A big thanks goes out to Stacy Kolls for all of her hard work organizing the B-17 event once again. The rain dampened the event but not the volunteers' enthusiasm for this great warbird. Since the flights were cancelled due to the weather, the EAA has tried hard to accommodate us and has rescheduled flights for our Squadron on the afternoon of October 3 at DuPage Airport. Flights can still be purchased so let your friends know about this great opportunity. Each of us knows at least one Veteran who has served our country and helped preserve our freedom. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, Squadron 4 is proud to host a Veterans' Forum to honor these brave men. Let's show our appreciation for our Veterans by each bringing someone to be recognized. Courtesy Aircraft provides a great backdrop for this event at their hangar in Rockford. Come honor these heroes and enjoy a great day around warbirds.

Tom Buck

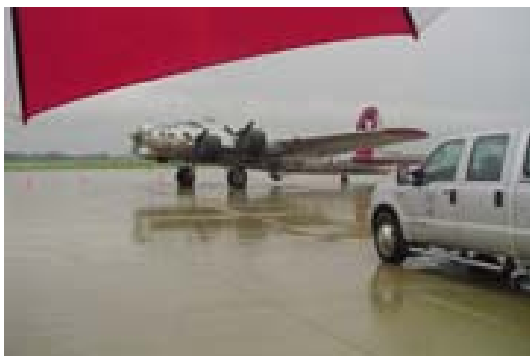
## Buzzing the Airfield

By Tim Dunavin

What a flurry of events August and September have given us! The BBQ picnic was great – and well attended. The Squadron meeting at Tim Bauer's was filled with aircraft and good food, as well, but I guess not all things will work out as planned – as we found out when "Ike" decided to

attend our B-17 tour weekend! Despite the rain-out, we have rescheduled B-17 flights for the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October (no ground tours) for those folks who didn't get to go up.

As for the original event, this photo says it all!



Rain – more rain – and yes folks – more rain

As it turned out, the foul weather also played a nasty roll in the cross country re-enactment of the U.S. Air mail, by 3 Boeing/Stearman bi-planes. They were forced into landing at Rochelle, Illinois, and were there for 4 days! Tim Bauer and I were privileged to spend some time with the pilots and got some really neat photos, not to mention the time out for dinner with them.

Art Sereque has – as usual – done a fine job of writing about the picnic and AirVenture.

### **AirVenture 2008**

By Art Sereque

AirVenture is so boring; nothing but planes, planes, planes. I'm sure our friends will shed a tear for our sad plight! Isn't life Great!! Of course, the planes are the big reason we come to AirVenture. What a thrill to watch "legends" flights! This I was fortunate enough to watch from the special grandstand area, where free ice cream and beverages were a plus.

People, old friends and new, are also reasons why many of us come, like the two Texans, Bill Farmer and Skot Ingraham. Last year they came in Bill's Naval Air

Factory N3N-3. This year they arrived in Skot's award winning Stearman PT-17. Then there was Dave Becker who flew commercial 10,000 miles from South Africa, as well as the gentleman from Australia. I hope they got frequent flyer miles! Then there were others from New Orleans, Nevada, and San Francisco, as well as the P-51 crew from Oklahoma who joined another new found friend, Steve Pagel of Des Plaines, IL and me for a lengthy conversation.

From Rhinelander, WI came Mike Weinfuter who arrived in his Cessna L-19 Birddog; then there were Brian Nesko and Pete Waddington who flew from Vancouver, B.C. in their nice 1989 Nanchang CJ-6. From Ohio, came two "Bills" and a "Dan".

Of course there were over 80 Squadron 4 members at Oshkosh, who volunteered in parking, flight line operations, food, merchandise, Training Command, and the re-enactment area.

On Wednesday, 7-30-08, Tim Dunavin and this writer represented the Squadron at Compass Hill for the memorial brick ceremony honoring deceased member Maj. Mike Titre. On Sunday, 8-3-08, we also represented the Squadron at a memorial wall ceremony, which also honored Mike.



Tim Dunavin and Art Sereque with Mike's plaque.

The banquet was also a big hit. One waitress probably wore out a pair of shoes, as an anonymous Cessna owner sent her back for more and more food.

The highlight of my week came when a gentleman approached me and asked if I were “Art Sereque” – when I said “Yes.” He said “Jack Cox”. I nearly jumped out of my shoes. Many EAA’ers will remember Jack as the long time editor of *Sport Aviation*; he was with a lovely lady named “Golda”, his wife who was the office manager for EAA.

The reason I was so excited is that Jack and I were fraternity brothers at High Point College (now University) in North Carolina. We had not seen each other in over 50 years.

What a great climax to AirVenture!!

### **Squadron 4’s Big BBQ Bash**

By Art Sereque

How many Squadrons can lay claim to having the National President, a National Director, not one, but two Grumman Avengers, and over 100 guests at their summer fly-in?

Well, on a beautiful August day, Squadron 4 had their annual fly-in and picnic at Squadron 4 C.O. Tom Buck’s hangar at the Joliet (IL) Park District Airport and did just that!

Thirteen Warbirds, from Avengers to Texans/SNJ’s to L-Birds, were present as were six “civilian” planes, from an RV-8A, four Aileron Pitts S-1, to a beautiful “V” tail Bonanza.

Upon learning that member Harry Pick was coming, one sneaky member called Harry’s wife, “Marife Pick”. He inquired as to whether or not he should eat breakfast the morning of the event. When she asked, “Why?” he said that if she was going to send along her delicious fried chicken and rib tips, he was going to skip breakfast. It turned out, he skipped breakfast. With food like that, Marife should be made an honorary squadron member!

Matt Huffness and his son Chris spent time in the sun parking arriving planes. Kathy Buck and Quartermaster Stacy Kolls

were in charge of food, while David Maren and Tim Bauer sold Raffle tickets and merchandise, respectively. Vlado Lench donates a ride in his P-51 every year. The money from the raffle tickets helps defray the cost of the annual dinner.

After lunch, a brief business meeting was held, at which time National President Rick Siegfried said a few words.

Following the “Memorial Brick” service for Maj. Mike Titre at AirVenture, this writer was presented with a plaque detailing Mike’s brick. Mike’s brother, Pete and family were invited to the picnic and in turn were presented with the plaque, along with photos from the AirVenture ceremony.



After the meeting, Rick Siegfried (Texan) and Tom Buck (Avenger) gave thrilled guests rides in their planes.

What a great day to be with great friends!

## **Veteran’s Corner**

### **My combat service during WWII and Korea**

By Col. John J. Geuss USMC Ret.

#### **Part II**

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

#### **Overseas At Last**

After our leave we reported to MCAS Miramar and were sent to Okinawa as replacements. When we arrived at Okinawa, Mike Yunck was our squadron C.O. (Mike was a Marine Ace having shot down four

planes at Guadalcanal and getting his fifth kill while Commanding Officer of VMF 311 at Okinawa.) He was one of the finest officers I served under. At that time I had 750.5 hours flight time and had just about given up hope of seeing combat. We joined VMF 311 Hell's Belles squadron and flew our first mission on Okinawa June 15, 1945. Most missions were combat air patrols over picket ships i.e., destroyers and destroyer escorts. They had twelve picket stations around the island. If we were covering Ruby 3, the action was at Ruby 8. There weren't as many Kamikazes coming down the last three months of the campaign due to a shortage of fuel. It was a big disappointment not shooting down any planes. I did get a lot of satisfaction though in the close air support missions. Our guys loved to see us overhead.

We operated out of Yontan Airfield, and then in July moved to a fighter strip called Chimu. Chimu was more comfortable once the snipers were cleared out. Supplies were scarce. Initially we were limited to one helmet-full of water per day, and we ate K rations for a couple of weeks. We had two 6.2 hour fighter sweeps up to Kysishu and one 6.3 hour cover of minesweepers along the China coast. Also we did a number of shoot'em up strikes on the three island chains on the way to Japan. I lost a good friend, Gene Reid, coming back from a mission. He was hit and had to ditch the plane. Gene was able to get out of his plane. We saw him getting into his life raft and then he disappeared. The only explanation was the sharks got him.

We did use napalm on the Close Air Support ("CAS") missions but had a lot of problems on take-off. If you tightened the sway shackles too tight on the tank, it wouldn't release. If the shackle was loose, the tank would drop off on take-off. We had one pilot lose the tank, and it bloe up behind him. The next week that same pilot dropped

another tank, and because he wasn't going fast enough, when it came off, both plane and tank blew up.

I flew my last and 43<sup>rd</sup> mission on Aug. 22, 1945. The F4Us we had previous to Okinawa were armed with six .50 caliber machine guns. On Okinawa we had F4U1Cs with four 20 millimeter guns.

### **The Occupation**

When the war ended, our squadron was sent to Japan as part of the occupation forces. At that time I had logged a total of 918 hours. The 4<sup>th</sup> Marine regiment secured the naval base at Yokosuka, and we landed there on September 11, 1945. Our primary mission was to search for P.O.W. camps, troop concentrations, and to check the airfield. This was legal flat-hatting. The only time we got above five hundred feet was in take-off and landing.

Many of the Japanese airfields we counted had hundreds of new planes lined up wingtip to wingtip. Our troops ended up bulldozing all the planes to the center of the field and burning them. We flew two planes of every type the Japanese had to Yokosuka. The aircraft were then loaded aboard carriers for shipment back to the continental United States. My last flight in Japan was flown on January 20, 1946. I took the long way home on a Navy oiler. The quarters were comfortable and the food was tasty. The Golden Gate and Bay bridges were quite a sight to see. I was released from active duty April 9, 1946.

### **Peace Time**

I reported to the Naval Air Station (NAS) Glenview in March of 1946. At that time, the Marine Corps activated the VMF 121. There was a mix of F6Fs, F4Us, and SNJs, however. I ended up flying Corsairs and F8F Bearcats. I flew one weekend a month and was required to serve two weeks active duty, usually in the summer months. Duty

was usually at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina. Less than five years later on March 1, 1951, the squadron was called to active duty for the Korean War. Duty Station was MCAS El Toro, California. We checked out in the AD-2 but ended up in VMF 235 going through another fighter syllabus. We also did Carrier Qualifications aboard the USS Rendova.

To Be Continued



### **Folded Wings**

Rose Costopoulos, nee Sotirakopoulos, 77, passed away August 25, 2008 after a long battle with cancer. Much loved and admired by all who knew her, she is survived by her husband Ted (a.k.a. Koston), son John, daughter Kristine.

Our hearts go out to Ted and his family. With the long battle over she now rests from all her labors.



### **Bauer's Fly-in**

Photo essay by Tim Dunavin

We had a great time and lots of fun – the photos say it all!



### **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	Rudy Frasca
P51 Mustang	Vlado Lench
P51 Mustang	John O'Connor
TBM Avenger	Tom Buck
T6	Rick Siegfried

SNJ	Vic Krause
T6	Clyde Zellers
T6	Rudy Frasca
T6	John O'Connor
SNJ	Tom Buck
Yak	Bob Fitzpatrick
OW Meyers	Chuck Downey
Stearman	Roger Paykert
Stearman	Keith Birs
L3	Keith Birs
L5	Larry Tinker
T34	Will Martin
T34	Rudy Frasca
Wildcat	Rudy Frasca
B25	Ray Hillson
CJ-6	Craig Payne
PQ-14B	Harry Pick

### 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.

### Keep'em Flyin