



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

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**NEW SQUADRON 4 WEBSITE**



That's the new Squadron 4 website home page right there. Check out [www.warbirdsquadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsquadron4.org) and let us know what you think.

Contribute, comment or add to any part of *The Avenger*. Please send in your stories/photos via email: [stevens15@mindspring.com](mailto:stevens15@mindspring.com).

**FROM THE CO'S DESK**



We're into fall and winter. Warbird Squadron 4 had a very busy summer. We had a large presence of members at the TBM Gathering/Salute to Veterans in Peru IL and the Cavalcade of Planes in Bolingbrook IL. A small group of members joined me in Davenport for the Quad City Airshow. Tom Buck's Open Hangar and The Joliet Airport Festival were great events and we gained some membership this summer. I want to personally thank all of you for volunteering at these events. A lot more people know what Squadron 4 does regarding military aviation history. We couldn't spread the word without all your help. Safe travels to all.  
I can be contacted by email at [nys9229@comcast.net](mailto:nys9229@comcast.net) or cell phone (630) 452-0845.



# BUZZING THE AIRFIELD

By Dave Stevens



Where did the 2019 go?! I hardly had time to complain about the heat and the grass turning brown and... Who am I kidding? One thing we do right here in the midwest is Autumn! We usually get pretty nice weather right up until Halloween... when it rains or snows.

Squadron 4 is not finished yet and we have already made plans for the annual dinner on February 1, 2020. The general meeting is Sunday, December 8th with Taras Lyssenko. Have you checked out the new Squadron 4 Website? Take a look at the new layout and see what changes have been made. I think it looks great. If you have any photos or stories from this years events, send them in. We can always use more content in The Avenger.



## TOM BUCK'S OPEN HANGAR

The Open Hangar event at Tom Bucks Hangar in Joliet is the first Squadron 4 event I ever attended. I had no idea that soon after that I would be pushing a B-17 prop through on a cool morning... and eventually flying on Aluminum Overcast. So I felt bad that I had to miss the 2019 event in August.

The weather was not very cooperative for this one but the crew got it all set up and as a squadron, we don't let a little rain and crud stop us, so they made it happen. There was the usual good food and hangar flying with friends and the rain finally stopped.

Aircraft filled the Joliet sky and the die-hards who made this event were rewarded with some fun.

Never let the weather stop you from coming out to a Squadron 4 event.

*continued on page 3*



## JOIN US ON THE FLIGHT DECK

**Sunday - December 8, 2019**

**Squadron 4 General Meeting  
Clow International Airport (1C5)  
Bolingbrook, IL 60490**

***Public Invited, Lunch Served 11:00 to 12:00***

Guest speaker will be author Taras C. Lyssenko He will discuss his book about WWII aircraft recovery, *The Great Navy Warbirds of Lake Michigan*.

11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Illinois Aviation Museum

130 S. Clow International Parkway  
Bolingbrook IL 60490

**Saturday - February 1 2020**

**Squadron 4 Annual Banquet  
William Tell Restaurant  
Countryside, IL 60525**

**Save \$10!**

**Purchase tickets on the Squadron 4 web site:  
[www.warbirdsquadron4.org](http://www.warbirdsquadron4.org)**

4:00 pm to 9:00 pm

William Tell Restaurant  
6201 Joliet Rd.  
Countryside, IL 60525

# TOM BUCK'S OPEN HANGAR

Dave Stevens

*continued from page 2*

Round motors and smoke trails will always get the local airplane fans to come out to see what is going on. This event was no exception.

Joliet is used to having warbirds overhead and the picnic, being an annual squadron event, is a big deal out at the airport no matter what the weather brings.

We can always use help setting this up so if you have some time next year, come on out and be a part of the fun. I know you will enjoy it.

Thanks to Butch Bejna for the photos.



*more Butch Bejna photos on page 4*

# TOM BUCK'S OPEN HANGAR



Butch Bejna photos

# MISSION THOUGHTS FROM JAY

By Jay Spitzer

Beginning now, and for our December pre-flight proper knowledge, to adequately enter into and understand the December mission by mission commander Taras C. Lyssenko, he wants us to have and read his case study book titled "The Great Navy Birds of Lake Michigan". The retail value is \$28.99 plus tax, but in best effort to make this mission a success, he has endeavored to endow Warbird Squadron 4 with his pre-flight information, and as such, our Squadron Commander Jerry is/was in possession of 50 mission manuals at the price of only \$23, no tax. They are not autographed, but you will have that honor at our December meeting at IAM 1C5, should you choose to fly this mission with us. If you choose to fly the December mission with us, whether you were Service or not, understand that a squadron operates as a team, and the weakest, or least prepared, or non-conformist jeopardizes the success of the mission. Step up, buy this book, and fly this formation with us.

My name is Jay. I am a member of Squadron 4. In my Service, 25 years, I was many things in the OPS operations team, other things EXECutive / administrative / training, but my MOS was Investigator, Investigative Photographer, and Profiler. Others, with MOS as Inspectors, preplanned the missions, always scrambles, no time for preflight mission briefings. My specialty, after the mission, was to determine if we got the target, how well we got the target, the cause and origin of the target, if enemy was accidental or intentional, if we have enemies out there, who, and if we can prosecute and hold them accountable. I am mission debriefing, interviews, interrogations, investigator, evidence technician, profiling, and case preparation, summary, and official report. Twice, during 25 years, I got PTSD while profiling. I have been out of service 23 years, but the qualification gets in the blood, and never leaves.

At our meeting Sunday Oct 13 at IAM 1C5, the speaker was the founder of an investigative group called Pacific Wrecks that were lost and MIA. I thought he could give us evidence technician and profiling insight into a famous wreck lost from 1944, and found by locals in 1982. Among the results, a case study was written, and a cute (or in my puns, an acute) phrase was created. I read the book, years ago, and have it cataloged in my massive storage, but I am not going to dig it out at this time.

I urge you to get this book, buy it first-hand or second-hand, or borrow it from a library, or google it for a cheat-sheet. I believe the proper title is "A Missing Plane" by Susan Sheehan. Our speaker at IAM was on a speaker remote from New York, and to me, the sound was distorted, so I'm not sure if this is the title and author he gave to my question, but it was not his investigation, and he had not researched it. Several years ago, this book was interviewed on television, but it was known and attracted more attention by the pun, subtitle phrase coined, and can be googled as "He found a Cloud with a Rock in it".

I am going to dangle a carrot for you. It, in no way, could be a substitute for reading the book. In fact, I have case study questions to ask of our members, things I do not know, and maybe some well-learned can educate us.

It was 1944, in Papua, New Guinea. The aircraft was B-24D 42-41081 nose art "Weezie" of the "Jolly Rogers" tail insignia white skull with crossed bombs. The mission was transport, from one base to another, thru the mountains. The souls were (3) 2ndLt flight crew: pilot, copilot, and navigator, all about age 21, and the load consist was 19 other souls, who were respectfully, presumed safely, going on R&R, to next duty station, or home. The consist was 14 Army Air Force, highest rank a captain; and 5 innocent non-com army non-fliers: a hospital corpsman, a member of signal corps, and 3 from various anti-aircraft batteries. No one would expect to go down on this mission, from enemy anti-aircraft fire, or friendly fire, but they did get taken down, KIA and MIA, by a combination of mother nature weather; and young, immortal, pushing the limits, risk taking people of unknown qualifications who were too ignorant or negligent to turn back, did not question each other, and may or probably didn't ask the passengers for their life-expectancy intentions.

## MISSION THOUGHT FROM JAY

The mission was to fly the cut between (2) 11,000' mountain peaks. I don't know the asl of the take off base, or the agl climb to that pass, or the distance to do so. They did not have forward observers, weather recon planes, or 18th weather squadron communications. The situation was a low ceiling, or at least a solid cloud or overcast in the vicinity of the peaks obliterating the base of the pass as a vantage point target. The B-24 crew was told to aim for the cut, simple. Maybe they did / didn't get preflighted the height of the 11,000' peaks, and had no reason to clear-air rise above 11,000' (like an 8AF England form-up on their base formation aircraft in local pattern, high enough to join others for trip across the channel). A B-24 crew was 10 souls, and could carry 8,000 lb bomb load, plus machine gun ammunition, and long mission fuel, so although 22 souls was more than double normal, they would have been under maximum weight. Also, they were flying without a radio operator or a top turret flight engineer, who could have been forward looking, or a bombardier, just 3 sets of young eyes, maybe inexperienced individually or as a team. Profiling, if I was that air force captain with 32nd Loui's, I'd be nosy, and ride checking navigator's work or in top turret as observer. I don't know where he rode.

I don't know what you would have done and some of the other air force were also lieutenants, I don't know if I'd sit idly by, and as soon as I could see we were in zero visibility, I would speak up.

I suspect, with 22, they had plank seating in bomb bay, no windows (B-24A an LB-30 was destined one of 20 for lend-lease in England, had a mechanical, never left, until 1992 as a member of CAF, lost an engine by Labrador / New Finland, put in at Greenland, waited a week for a C-141 ferrying a replacement engine, Diamond Lil should have been in England in May 1992, 50 years late celebration, but didn't get there 'til June, and I was already returning home, altho I did have supper there in 1994 and 1996 with David Hastings, who videod the trip. Lil, as a corporate passenger aircraft, had windows put for passengers to look out).

I don't know if these 3 flight crew were individually macho, together macho, how many of them were incompetent, if they were assigned as next-crew-up, or maybe they were the bottom of the heap assigned a simple task. Maybe the best crews were busy with battle missions, or maybe this mission was deemed unworthy of a good crew. Maybe this pilot was super dominant over the other two. On pre-flight, they should have had a heading, or at least segments and time in segment. If I was PIC, that would be duty of copilot, instrument IFR and e6b, to double check the navigator. They didn't!

The navigator had them many miles off compass heading, but PIC and 1st officer apparently were VFR and 100% trusting. And then they mounted that cloud and found a rock in it. It wasn't the 11000', but it wasn't a flat face either. It was a mid-peak or plateau. They were so far off, MIA, that search was sent out 5 days later, north and east, expected flight path, found nothing, because MIA was truly "missing", not there, not anywhere close. Went missing 1944, found by locals, bird watchers, in 1982, so obviously civilians from a local village could walk up there, in no special mountain climbing methods, just to bird watch, but, in some way, attracted to go where no one had been in 38 years!

I thought "Pacific Wrecks" would know, especially its founder, but he didn't and couldn't. The reason is, HE didn't. The 6 member 1982 crew were members of "American Central Identification Agency" to recover and identify MIA. They claim all died on impact, but what was the angle of impact with terrain? Did they skid along? Did some get out wounded and die in agony? Did some die of time and weather? The case study book gives information of what, who, was found where. Maybe our pilots can understand this better, or as expert testimony, explain it to us. There is no excuse waiting for an FAA report. They were never in this one!

## MISSION THOUGHTS FROM JAY

If this is published to all Squadron 4 personnel, then any and all of our expert analysis should likewise present their case study findings, also published for all to see.

Of course, the case study of aircraft lost in qualification from NAS Glenview, the "Topguns of '43 & '44" (a PBS documentary, and the documentary that followed) takes priority to Weezie. From Glenview, they qualified with 8 landings and takeoffs on the 2 side paddlewheel coal-fired lake steamers out of Chicago Navy Pier, the Wolverine (previously the Cee&Bee Lake Erie passenger steamer), and its partner, the Sable (previously the Greater Buffalo). George Bush qualified with his TBM (the original of Tom Buck's pride and joy, and Squadron 4) on the Sable in August 1944, and was thought to be youngest, until it was found that Chuck Downey was younger qualifying. He flew the SB2C. Chuck lived in Poplar Grove, a residential air community until he died a few years ago. Until Mayor Daley screwed Meigs Field, the Chicago Maritime Museum had an exhibit, with a model of the Sable about 6' long, on loan there, but then it proudly went to the Glenview Hangar One Foundation, who got a very nice museum in a storefront on the old flightline in front of the preserved Tower and hangar end-caps. In front of the tower, is the brick names memorial, with 3 full-size bronze figurines of Navy pilot and carrier crew. Also there is the base yardarm. Between the tower and south endcap is Dick's Sporting Goods. On the north side is Von Maur, proudly with an atrium hanging a beautiful N2S Stearman. On 2nd floor, plunk a quarter in the slot next to the mannikin, and listen to it tell war stories. Someone wanted that prime storefront. The developer promised a museum site somewhere. It is now in an industrial building on Lehigh east of the base perimeter.

Maritime took back its exhibit, which is now at their museum west of White Sox park, at 1200 W 35th St, river level, along Bubbly Creek, in Chicago at Bridgeport Art Center, 773-376-1982, open tues-sat 10-4, adults \$10, seniors free.

I have recommendation of 3 other case study books to read. One is "The Forgotten 500" US fliers down in Yugoslavia, and the mission of C-47s to rescue them. The 2nd is "Soul Survivor", about a Wildcat and Corsair pilot James Leininger, written by his parents about the escort carrier USS Natoma Bay CVE-62. The 3rd, is "Intrepid Aviators", I believe Warbird Squadron 4 had him speak at a Clow meeting. Author is son of a TBM pilot on 2nd cruise of the Intrepid CV-11, which sank the Musashi battleship twin of the Yamato at Leyte.

Learn and think, participate, Warbirds 4 is better when we all think together.

Jay

# JOLIET AIRPORT FESTIVAL

This time the weather, or the predicted weather, won.

It does seem like we fought for every event this year.

The Joliet Airport Festival was rescheduled from September 22nd to October 6th due to storms that were forecast and, in fact, came through and would have ruined the event.

The October 6th date was sunny and clear and the crowd was there early. Aircraft were moved into place and our PX table was stocked and ready. Pancakes, Aircraft and Hot Rods are pretty good reasons to stop by and people filled the place up.

There were many Squadron 4 members and I think we may have recruited a few new ones. As much as I love the aircraft, the cars and the activity, I also enjoy seeing all the members and families who come out to these events. It seemed like there were a lot of young kids out this year and that has to be good for generating future interest in aviation.

Thanks to all the pilots and other members who made this a great event. Hope to see you out at some of the 2020 gatherings.



# JOLIET AIRPORT FESTIVAL



# JOLIET AIRPORT FESTIVAL





*Warbird Squadron 4 is not done with 2019 yet! Check out the next General Meeting at the Illinois Aviation Museum. Don't forget to get your tickets for the Annual Banquet on February 1st, 2020.*

**Sunday - December 8 2019**  
**Squadron 4 General Meeting**  
**Clow International Airport (1C5)**  
**Bolingbrook, IL 60490**  
*Public Invited, Lunch Served 11:00 to 12:00*

Guest speaker will be author Taras C. Lyssenko  
 He will discuss his book about WWII aircraft recovery,  
*The Great Navy Warbirds of Lake Michigan.*  
 11:00 am to 2:00 pm  
 Illinois Aviation Museum  
 130 S. Clow International Parkway  
 Bolingbrook IL 60490



**Saturday - February 1 2020**  
**Squadron 4 Annual Banquet**  
**William Tell Restaurant**  
**Countryside, IL 60525**

**Save \$10! Purchase tickets on the Squadron 4 web site:**  
***www.warbirdsqadron4.org***  
 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm  
 William Tell Restaurant  
 6201 Joliet Rd.  
 Countryside, IL 60525



# WARBIRD CHALLENGE

by Mark Laatsch

The warbird challenge from the last newsletter was another 3 highly cropped photos, for which the obvious challenge is to identify the aircraft type. Simple. Right?

From the last newsletter, the first cropped photo (challenge #14) showed the nose and propeller of the . Only two XP-47Hs were produced. Two production P-47D-15-RAs (Razorback) were pulled from production specifically to test the new Chrysler XI-2220-16, 16-cylinder inverted-vee liquid cooled engine capable of 2500 hp. A major re-design on the basic fuselage and nose of the airplane was required. Delays in the Chrysler engine production delayed the XP-47H project, pushing back its first flight to July 1945, and even then, it was not equipped with the intended supercharger. The XP-47H was to have reached a maximum speed of 490 mph in level-flight, however, the maximum recorded speed during testing was 414 mph. With the end of the war in August 1945, the project was dropped by Republic despite the enormous investment already made.



CHALLENGE #14



*Republic XP-47H*

## **WARBIRD CHALLENGE** *continued*

The second photo (challenge #15) showed the tail on the Stearman XBT-17. Despite its similar shape to that of the North American AT-6, this tail belongs to the only XBT-17 built. The aircraft was designed to use as little aluminum as possible, due a shortage of aluminum in the early war production. The forward fuselage used a steel tube construction and the tail and wings had a wood framework with plywood skin. The aircraft was designed to use one of two engines, depending on the trainer type. A 225 hp Lycoming engine was used for the plane when configured as a Primary trainer, the X-90, and a 400 hp Pratt & Whitney R-985 engine was used when configured as a Basic trainer, the X-91. The US Army purchased the X-91 in January 1942 and designated it the XBT-17. During that same year the supply of aluminum improved and the need for the XBT-17 diminished, and it never reached production.



CHALLENGE #15



*Stearman XBT-17*

# THIS MONTH'S WARBIRD CHALLENGE PHOTOS

The third photo (challenge #16) showed a main landing gear of the Northrop BT-1. The BT-1 was a pre war dive-bomber used by the US Navy. The XBT-1 was designed in 1934 in response to the Navy's request for a dive-bomber. The prototype aircraft was powered by a 700 hp Pratt & Whitney R-1535-66 Twin Wasp Jr. engine, but later would be replaced with a 825 hp R-1535-94. With the later engine, the plane was capable of carrying a 1000 lb bomb with a top speed of 212 mph. The Navy ordered 54 BT-1s in 1938, which served aboard the USS Yorktown and the USS Enterprise. The aircraft suffered from poor handling characteristics, especially at low speeds, which was a fatal flaw for a carrier-based aircraft. A number of aircraft were lost in crashes. Northrop quickly began work on the XBT-2 which used a 1000 hp Pratt & Whitney XR-1820-32 Cyclone engine, combined with a redesigned control system. The XBT-2 was not a significant improvement on the BT-1. Northrop used the NACA full sized wind tunnel, and after six months of testing the aircraft was improved significantly and given a new designation of XSBD-1. The aircraft would go on to become the most successful American dive-bomber of the war.

Again, Butch Bejna was the only one to respond, correctly identified all three warbirds. Due to the lack of responses I've received, I am suspending Warbird Challenge in its present form. Stay tuned for future historical warbird mysteries, information, and trivia.



CHALLENGE #16



*Northrop BT-1*

# YOUNG EAGLES



## Butch Bejna reports:

Butch is at it again in 2019! 2018 saw our own Young Eagles pilot taking 74 young aviation enthusiasts up for first flights. Butch has been flying Young Eagles for 23 years and his total flights puts him NINTH most active Young Eagles pilot in The World! Nine rides recently in 2019 and at least 15 more since Oshkosh. If you know anyone between the ages of 8-18 that may be interested in a Young Eagles flight, call Butch @ 630-414-4921.

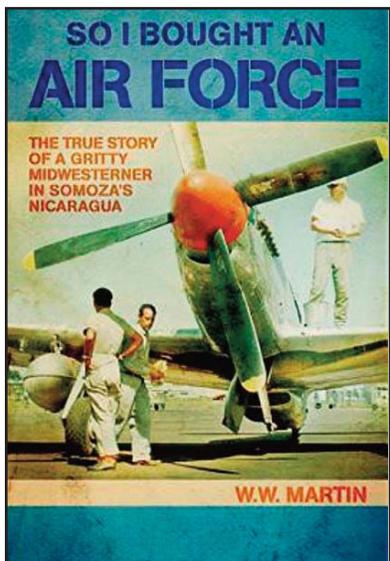
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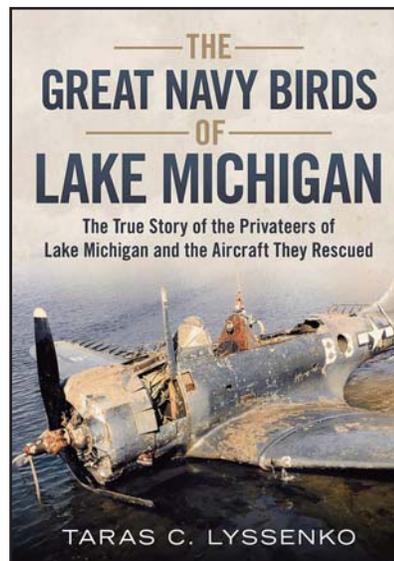
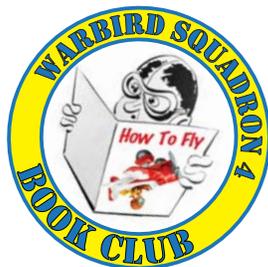
Butch's Cessna 150

## SQUADRON 4 PX

There's a lot of Squadron 4 merchandise to choose from in the PX on-line ([warbirdsqadron4.org](http://warbirdsqadron4.org)). Show your support for Squadron 4. We usually sell at the events we go to as well, so come on out and stop by the Squadron 4 tent. We can always use help at these events too, so volunteers are welcome!



*So I Bought An Air Force* -by Will Martin  
Will is a past CO of Warbird Squadron 4. If you know Will, you will not be surprised by his adventures flying old warbirds. **\$20.00**



*The Great Navy Birds of Lake Michigan* -by Taras C. Lyssenko. Lots of details about WWII aircraft on the bottom of Lake Michigan. Drain the Lake! **\$23.00**

## SQUADRON 4 KIDS

Wanna see pictures of my grand kids? Or kids? SURE!

If they're in a Warbird, or any aircraft! Here's your chance to include the Junior Warbird fans in the family. Send in a shot of kids or grand kids in or around warbirds or other aircraft.

We'll get 'em in. Please include where the shot was taken and who's in it. Include aircraft info if you have any.

**Lets see those future Squadron 4 members! This could be a HUGE section! Send 'em in!**

Email images and info to [stevens15@mindspring.com](mailto:stevens15@mindspring.com)



The editors grandsons, Clark and Simon, at the EAA Chapter 67 Fly-In, August 17 at Noblesville IN. Noblesville Airport-180. Nice grass strip with lots of Bi-Planes, Stearmans and a Tiger Moth!  
Photos © Colleen Stevens Thomas

# THE SQUADRON 4 HANGAR

Here are some of the Warbirds owned by Squadron 4 members.  
Please send yours in if we don't have it! Corrections Welcome!



**Tom Buck**  
TBM Avenger



**Vic Krause**  
SNJ



**Tom Buck**  
SNJ



**Ol' Bob Siegfried**  
N2S Stearman



**John O'Connor**  
F8F Bearcat



**Doug Mahall**  
L-5



**John O'Connor**  
F4U-7 Corsair



**Jim Turcich  
& Jim Klick**  
L-16A



**John O'Connor**  
SNJ



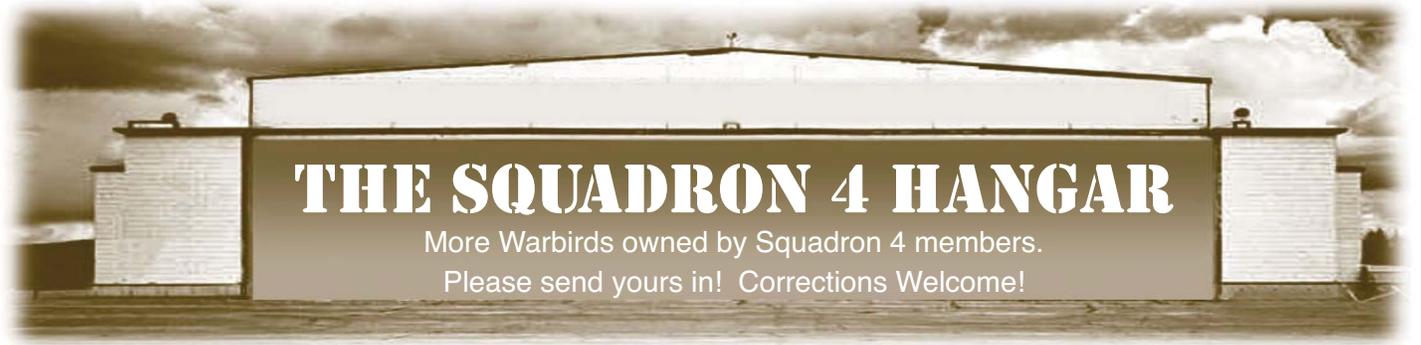
**Tim Gillian**  
SNJ



**Rick Siegfried**  
T-6



**Karl Vacek**  
PT-17 Stearman



**Scott Delawder  
Fairchild PT-19**



**Keith Birsa  
PT-17 Stearman**



**Bob Coon  
Fairchild Argus III**



**Stuart Glenn  
T-34A Mentor**



**Dwight Davies  
Supermarine  
Spitfire Mk 26B**

We know there are many other Squadron 4 Warbirds that we have not included here. We need your help in getting them into the Hangar! Please send a photo of yours to [stevens15@mindspring.com](mailto:stevens15@mindspring.com). Thanks! We will get it into the next Newsletter!

### **SQUADRON OFFICERS**

(Partial listing – see website for full list of board members)

C.O. Jerry Czupryn [nyrs9229@comcast.net](mailto:nyrs9229@comcast.net)  
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(630) 289-2785

TRE. Brian Churchill [brian.churchill@warbirdsquadron4.org](mailto:brian.churchill@warbirdsquadron4.org)  
(847) 356-9056



# **NEW SQUADRON MEMBERS**

**Welcome! New Squadron 4 Members:**



**James Chybicki**

**Jeffery Sickel**

**Michael Lench**

**Steve Jones**

**Doug Peterson (Board Memeber)**

*Great to have you on board!*



**We are always looking for new members to join the Squadron. For more information please contact Bruce Hawkins at (815) 274-1752 or [bruce.hawkins@warbirdsquadron4.org](mailto:bruce.hawkins@warbirdsquadron4.org)**

## **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-eaa.org/>  
**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/>  
**Cincinnati, OH Warbird Squadron 18 Link:** <http://www.cincinnatiwarbirds.org/>  
**Florida Warbird Squadron 24 Link:** <http://www.floridawarbirds.org/>

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