

THE AVENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF WARBIRDS OF AMERICA SQUADRON 4



www.warbirdsquadron4.org

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TBM Reunion Returns to Peru May 15–16, 2026

The TBM Avenger Reunion & Salute to Veterans is back at Illinois Valley Regional Airport this May, and as always, it's shaping up to be a can't-miss weekend for anyone who's made the trip before.

Centered around the TBM Avenger, the event continues to deliver what keeps us coming back: a strong turnout of Avengers on the ramp, tight formation flying, and that unmistakable sound of big radials coming to life—especially during the Friday night TBM Glow. This remains the only place you can see this many Avengers run and fly together in one weekend.

You can expect the usual mix of visiting warbirds, demos, and evening performances—with the Titan Aerobatic Team back again this year flying both day and night shows. New for 2026, a MiG-17 joins the lineup, bringing a little Cold War noise to the weekend and a nice contrast to the WWII iron we're all there for.

Beyond the flying, the Salute to Veterans elements continue to ground the weekend in what it's really about. The Walk of Honor and the Missing Man formation remain the moments that stick with you long after the engines shut down.

Squadron 4 will be on-site all weekend with a booth featuring new merchandise, so be sure to stop by, say hello, and check out what's new. It's a good chance to connect with other members, swap stories, and spend some time on the flight line.

May 15–16. Peru, Illinois. You already know the drill.

See you there.





FROM THE C.O.'S DESK

By Butch Bejna



Our Annual Banquet was very well received by all that attended. Former Blue Angels Commanding Officer and Flight Leader, Russ “Boss” Bartlett, entertained us as much as if he was leading a flight. Thank you to all that made the evening possible.

Three events are soon approaching and it would be nice to see members attend them. TBM Reunion & Salute to Veterans Airshow on May 15th-16th at Illinois Valley Regional Airport. Cavalcade of Planes on June 6 & 7 at Clow International Airport. EAA Chapter 15, 49th Annual Pancake Breakfast on June 13 at Lewis University Airport. Please check the website or facebook page for updates about other events. AirVenture will be here before you know it and our volunteers will be there as always. Hope to see you soon at some of the events.



ANNUAL BANQUET DEBRIEF

Warbird Squadron 4 members and guests gathered for an outstanding evening at Prairie Bluff Golf Club for this year’s Annual Banquet, held at a new venue that proved to be a perfect setting for the occasion. The event brought together aviation enthusiasts, members, and friends to celebrate another successful year while enjoying great food, conversation, and camaraderie.

The highlight of the evening was our keynote speaker, Russ Bartlett, retired U.S. Navy Captain and former Commanding Officer and Flight Leader of the Blue Angels. Russ captivated the audience with stories from his distinguished aviation career, which includes more than 4,400 total flight hours, over 3,200 in the F/A-18 Hornet, and 841 carrier arrested landings—333 of them at night. Sharing insights from his time flying the Blue Angels’ #1 jet during the 2003 and 2004 seasons, Russ offered a behind-the-scenes look at the precision, discipline, and teamwork required to lead one of the world’s premier flight demonstration teams. His remarks were both inspiring and engaging, resonating with a room full of pilots and aviation enthusiasts.



Adding to the excitement of the evening were a number of outstanding door prizes, generously provided by Plane Perfect and through donations from our squadron members. These contributions were greatly appreciated and helped make the night even more memorable for those in attendance.

All in all, the 2026 Annual Banquet was a tremendous success and a fitting kickoff to another exciting year ahead for the squadron.



Squadron 4 has more great events coming up that you will not want to miss. It will be getting warmer soon. Come out for some Warbird Fun!

June 6th&7th Calvalcade of Planes at Clow Airport

We're excited to share that our squadron will once again be represented at the Calvalcade of Planes this season. This event continues to be one of the premier gatherings for warbird enthusiasts and aviation fans alike, and we're proud to be part of it. Our booth will be a great place to connect with fellow members, meet new faces, and share our passion for historic aircraft.

Be sure to stop by to check out our new merchandise, learn more about what we have planned for the year, and support the squadron. In addition, attendees will have the opportunity to purchase ride experiences in iconic aircraft including the Boeing Stearman, North American T-6 Texan, and the legendary Ford Tri-Motor. Whether you're a longtime member or just discovering us for the first time, we're looking forward to seeing you there and representing our group in a big way.



June 13th EAA Chapter 15 Pancake Breakfast at Lewis Airport

We're proud to once again support the annual pancake breakfast hosted by EAA Chapter 15 at Lewis University Airport. Now in its 49th year, this well-loved fly-in/drive-in event continues to bring together the local aviation community and the public for a great morning of food, airplanes, and camaraderie.

Join us on Saturday, June 13 from 8:00 AM to noon for a fantastic breakfast and plenty to see on the field. Highlights include visiting aircraft, a planned appearance by Illinois National Guard Blackhawk helicopters (weather permitting), and a toy drive benefiting the community. Our squadron will be on hand to lend a hand and connect with attendees—so be sure to stop by, enjoy some pancakes, and spend some time talking aviation with us.

EAA CHAPTER 15 PRESENTS
49TH ANNUAL FLY-IN/DRIVE-IN
PANCAKE BREAKFAST
LEWIS UNIVERSITY AIRPORT
 Saturday JUNE 13, 2026
 8AM-NOON
 I GEORGE J MICHAS DR
 ROMEOVILLE

BLACKHAWK HELICOPTERS FROM:
 ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD
 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation
 Regiment
 Weather Permitting

Toy Drive
 BRING A BOXED TOY
 Receive 2 Raffle
 Tickets.

FREE ADMISSION
 BREAKFAST WRISTBANDS
 Adults \$12/Children \$6
 12 and under

Pancakes, Sausage
 Links, Hashbrowns,
 Juice, Coffee

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

ALL ARE WELCOME!
 More Info: EAA15.ORG
 facebook.com/eaachapter15
 630-410-9944




SQUADRON 4 PX

There's a lot of Squadron 4 merchandise to choose from in the PX on-line (warbirdsquadron4.org). Be sure to check it all out. We have a new T-Shirt for 2026 on the way. We usually sell it at the events we go to as well so come on out and stop by Squadron 4 tent. We can always use help at these events too, so volunteers are welcome!



WINTER WORKING



When it's too cold to fly...we fire up the heaters and wrench! Here is a little look at what we've been up to in the off season.

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



Mike Degonia
Jerry Degonia
Piper L-4



Tom Buck
SNJ



Rick Siegfried
N2S Stearman



John O'Conner
PBY-5A



Doug Mahall
L-3



John O'Conner
F4U-7 Corsair



Bill Buchar
Jamie Hagel
T-28B



John O'Conner
SNJ



Jeff Meyer
BT-13



Stuart Glenn
T-34A Mentor



Martin
Yokosawa
Vinka



THE SQUADRON 4 HANGAR

More Warbirds owned by Squadron 4 members.
Please send yours in! Corrections Welcome!



Scott Delawder
N2S



Keith Birsa PT-17 Stearman



Tim Gillian
SNJ



Keith Birsa
Aeronca L-3



Steven Jones
Kathy Tyler
Lockheed T-33



Kenneth
Yokosawa
Vinka



Steven Jones
Chipmunk



Steven Jones
Nanchang
CJ-6A



Steven Jones
Bucker
Jungmann



Bob Coon
Jim Chibicki
Fairchild
Argus III

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 cmillerin93@comcast.net. Thanks! We will get it into the next Newsletter!

SQUADRON OFFICERS

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



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TRE. Brian Churchill *warbirdsquadron4@gmail.com*

We are always looking for new members to join the Squadron. For more information please contact Bruce Hawkins at *bhawkins27@sbcglobal.net*

WARBIRD SQUADRONS

**You can find all of these links on our site under the "WOASquadron" 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/

