

THE AVENGER

The Official Publication of The EAA Warbirds of America Squadron 4



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SQUADRON 4 VETERANS FORUM



Contribute, comment or add to any part of *The Avenger*. Please send in your stories, photos, ideas or suggestions via email: stevens15@mindspring.com.

THE CO'S DESK



Hello Squadron 4 members,

Welcome to 2025! Two events are coming up right away. The first is the Chicago Aviation Expo hosted by the Chicago Area Chapter 99s. If you are a pilot or ever thought of becoming one, this is an event for you. Please check out the flyer. Next up is our annual Banquet on February 1st. Friends, food and a great speaker! The current issue of the Warbirds Magazine has a nice article on Mike Kellner's B-17E "Dessert Rat". We had a chance to see two Valmet L-70 Vinkas at Naper Aero in October. Our Veterans Forum in Kenosha was a very huge success. Three current owners of TBMs were in attendance with one on display and Mr. C.J. LaCross who was a TBF gunner who was stationed on Bougainville was our speaker. Sadly we have lost one of our members, Jim Klick. Jim was involved in many aviation areas from aerobatics to warbirds to the Comm Center during AirVenture and a member of the Illinois Aviation Hall of Fame.

Butch

BUZZING THE AIRFIELD

By Dave Stevens



Fall was too short. It seemed to go from 80° to 8° in a week. We enjoyed the November Veterans forum in Kenosha. It was well attended and we got to meet C. J. LaCross, who flew as a gunner on TBF Avengers in the Pacific. He was just short of 100 years old at that meeting. Brad Deckert brought his TBM and it made a fitting backdrop for the presentation. Of course, C. J. signed the door. I would like to thank all the squadron members who sent articles detailing their volunteer work at Airventure. It made the last issue of The Avenger very interesting. Please feel free to send me a write up on any of your warbird or aviation adventures. Send a photo or two as well. I'm graphics focused, and I type with my elbows, which is obvious, so pictures are always great to have. Take a minute to jump on the Squadron 4 website and purchase your tickets for the February 1st Annual Banquet at the Countryside Holiday Inn.

I very much enjoy seeing the members and guests there.



JOIN US ON THE FLIGHT DECK

Squadron 4 Annual Banquet

February 1, 2025

\$45 per ticket

Purchase tickets ONLY on the Squadron 4 web site: www.warbirdsquadron4.org

4:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Holiday Inn Countryside

6201 Joliet Rd.

Countryside, IL 60525

TBM Avenger Reunion and Salute to Veterans

Illinois Valley Regional Airport, Peru, IL
16 - 17 May, 2025

Free Admission - Free Parking

Friday 11am to 10pm

Saturday 9am to 4pm

web site: tbmreunion.org



KENOSHA VETERANS FORUM

NOVEMBER 2024

by Dave Stevens



Our Veterans

The November Veterans Forum in Kenosha is always worth the trip. I was surprised to see Brad Deckerts TBM sitting in the hangar when I got there this year. There are always interesting aircraft in the hangar and outside.

We were fed well by Stacy Kolls and had a chance to catch up with everyone who was there. You always find someone new and interesting to learn from. Mr. C. J. LaCross gave a great presentation on his experience as a TBF Avenger gunner in the pacific theater. He was in the same squadron as Clancy Hess and flew with him on many missions. I always try to imagine what it is



like to remember the details of things that happened 80 years ago. Traumatic things. Especially when I can't remember why I just went into the basement.

But there was C.J., recalling missions of facing backwards, on his stomach, at the ventral gun of a TBF.

We are a lucky few to be able to hear the stories about the lives of the "Greatest Generation". You may take that term as a bit grandiose, until you hear the words and stories from the people who did those things. You always hear someone say, Weren't you scared? The answer is usually something like, "Hell Yes, most of the time, Yes. But if I didn't do it, someone else would have to, and I wasn't there to sit and worry about myself."

Thank you, Mr. LaCross. For everything.



TBF Ventral Gun, -facing backwards



continued on page 4

KENOSHA VETERANS FORUM



Eating Lunch with Aircraft



C.J. as a young Marine - TBM in the background



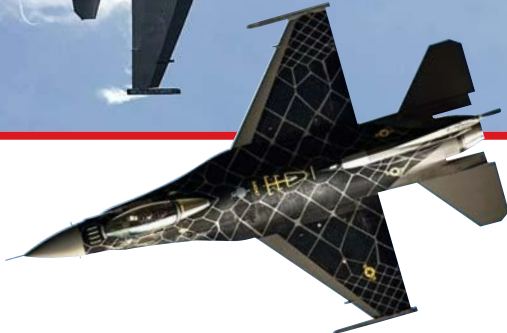
C. J. LaCross

TBM REUNION • KVYS, PERU IL • MAY 16-17

The 2025 TBM Reunion and Salute to Veterans will be on May 16th & 17th at Illinois Valley Regional Airport (KVYS) in Peru, Illinois

Featured performers will be The United States Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon VIPER Demo Team, Friday & Saturday!

Also the return of the TITAN Aerobatic Team (formerly AeroShell Aerobatic Team). They'll perform their 4-ship aerobatic routine in their T-6/SNJ Texans. They will be performing their Night Airshow on Friday Night and also their Day Show on Saturday.



SQUADRON 4 ANNUAL BANQUET



2025 SQUADRON 4 ANNUAL BANQUET

Saturday, February 1, 2025, at 4 P.M.
Holiday Inn Countryside
6201 Joliet Rd, Countryside, IL 60525-3958
Cost \$45 a plate. Reservation required.
For more information C.O. Butch Bejna
630-414-4921 or rcbejna@gmail.com



Guest Speaker
Rick Seigfried will
talk about his trip to
Europe in a DC-3 as
part of the D-DAY
SQUADRON

Visit our website to make your
reservations: <https://squareup.com/market/ea-warbird-squadron-4>
Or mail payment to:
Brian Churchill
EAA Warbird Squadron 4
2657 N Cherry Cove Ln
Round Lake Beach, IL 60073
no later than January 27, 2025.

PS- Also remember it is time to pay
your 2025 Squadron Dues. \$25.00



A PAIR OF VINKAS

by Butch Bejna



Hey Butch, how would you like to see two Vinkas?

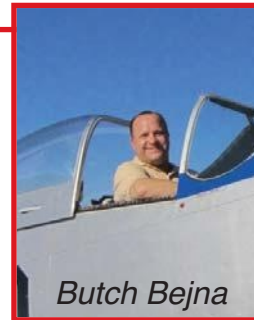
As Someone who enjoys the MYSTERY WARBIRD in every issue of the Warbirds Magazine, this phone call left me puzzled.

Two what did you say? Ken and Martin Yokosawa each own a Valmet L-70 Vinka Finnish Air Force trainer. Only 30 planes were built and served from 1980-2022. Four planes have made it to the US and these two are based at Naper Aero. At first glance, they look like a larger version of the Pazmany PL-2 without the tip tanks. A Lycoming AEIO-360-A1B6 4-cylinder engine developing 200 hp gives it a cruise speed of 138 mph. A normal crew of 2 is standard but 3 seats are available. Thanks to John Nowicki for connecting us together. Looking forward to seeing number 21 & 7 at some fly-ins in 2025.



YOUNG EAGLES

By Butch Bejna



Even with a few weather cancellations during 2024, it was not a bad year for flying Young Eagles. Most of the flights were given at Schaumburg Regional, Chicago Executive, Racine and Joliet Airports. A big supporter of the program out of Schaumburg Airport passed away just before AirVenture. Maryann was responsible for at least 150 kids that took flights. She will be missed by many that knew her. Some flights have been scheduled for 2025 and just waiting for nice warmer weather for those flights.

I can be contacted at: rcbejna@gmail.com or 630-414-4921 to schedule a flight.



SQUADRON 4 STORE

There's a lot of Squadron 4 merchandise to choose from in our on-line store

Click the STORE button on the web site. (<https://squareup.com/market/ea-warbird-squadron-4>).

Show your support for Squadron 4. We usually sell gear 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. Volunteers are welcome!



front



back

2023 Challenge Coin

Our own two inch diameter challenge coin. It features the C-150 of our Squadron C.O. on one side, and the traditional logo on the other.

\$10.00 ea



Annual Membership

If you need to pay your Warbird Squadron 4 membership dues, here's an easy way to do it.

*****squareup.com/market/ea-warbird-squadron-4

\$25.00

JIM KLICK



We lost our friend Jim Klick in October.

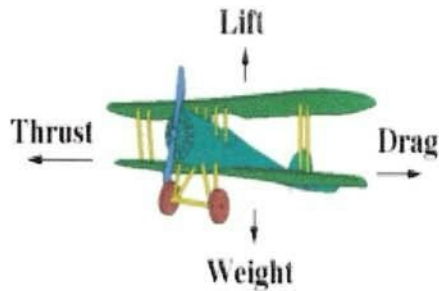
He was more active in aviation than many of us knew. When he was inducted into the Illinois Aviation Hall of Fame, I wanted to know what he had done.

His long serving dedication to aviation of all types was amazing.



You would never have known that by just talking to him. I remember thinking, This guys knows a lot, when he was explaining his airplanes. I had an up-close tour of the Aronca L16-A that he flew to Warbird Outings. At left, he is in front of a bunch of Squadron 4 guys, just one of the gang. We'll miss you Jim.

AVIATION EXPO



The Chicago Area Chapter 99s

CHICAGO AVIATION EXPO

IFR/VFR Safety Seminar

Flying Companion Course

Aviation Vendors

Saturday, January 25, 2025 8a to 4p

Renaissance Suites Chicago-Glenview Hotel

1400 Milwaukee Ave, Glenview, IL

IFR CLASSROOM

Weather Wisdom Aircraft Icing
IFR Review Practices Procedures
"y tho" Common ATC Practices
All Things Aviation Medicine

Jerry Seckler
Michael Baraz CFII
Eddie Trujillo
Gregory Ostrom, MD

VFR CLASSROOM

Weather Wisdom Aircraft Icing
How to Make Exquisite Landings EVERY Time
Now What PPL Accomplished, What's Next
Aircraft Systems & Problem Solving Malfunctions
Here Be Dragons!

Jerry Seckler (with IFR group)
Mordecai Levin
Marc Epner
Joe Standley
Eddie Trujillo

FLYING COMPANION CLASSROOM

Knowledge to Improve Your Comfort in the Cockpit

Program presented by Chicago Area Chapter 99s

Aerodynamics—What Makes it Fly??
Communication Basics
Navigation Process
Stay Calm and Carry On!

Classes presented by 99s Jen Markovska & Jamie Swanson

EXPO AREA VENDORS

Vendors available all day—Before and after, between classes, during lunch and breaks.

Rentals, training, art, books, jewelry, airports, education, supplies, simulator, weather equipment, and more.

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
Grumman
TBM Avenger



Vic Krause
North American
SNJ



Tom Buck
North American
SNJ



Siegfried Family
Boeing/Stearman
N2S



John O'Connor
Grumman
F8F Bearcat



Doug Mahall
Aeronca
L-3



John O'Connor
Vought
F4U-7 Corsair



Jim Turcich
Aeronca
L-16A



John O'Connor
North American
SNJ



Tim Gillian
North American
SNJ



John O'Connor
Consolidated
PB5-5A

more Warbirds, next page

THE SQUADRON 4 HANGAR

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



Scott Delawder
Boeing/Stearman
N2S



Dwight Davies
Supermarine
Spitfire Mk 26B



Bob Coon
Fairchild
Argus III



Kathy Tyler
Lockheed
T-33



Keith Birsa
Stearman
PT-17



Stephen Jones
NAF
N3N



Stuart Glenn
Beechcraft
T-34A Mentor



Stephen Jones
Nanchang
CJ-6a

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. Thanks! We will get it into the next Newsletter!



NEW SQUADRON MEMBERS



*New Members help us build
a Better Squadron!*

Welcome our new members!



*Jeffrey Meyer
Steven Scherrer*



Check out the Website and Our Facebook Page!

SQUADRON OFFICERS

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

C.O. Butch Bejna rcbejna@gmail.com

(630) 414-4921

X.O. David Stevens stevens15@mindspring.com

(630) 624-6618

TRE. Brian Churchill warbirdsquadron4@gmail.com

(847) 356-9056

We are always looking for new members to join the Squadron.

We have some great experiences and opportunities for you.

For more information please contact

Bruce Hawkins at (815) 274-1752 or bhawkins27@sbcglobal.net

WARBIRD SQUADRONS

All EAA Warbird Squadron links are available by clicking the WOA logo in our web site header.

Then scroll down to Squadrons.

- Warbirds of America Link:** <https://www.warbirds-aea.org/>
- Seattle, WA Cascade Warbird Squadron 2 Link:** <https://www.cascadewarbirds.org/>
- Eugene, OR Warbird Squadron 13 Link:** <https://www.squadron13.org/warbirds/>
- Chino, CA Warbird Squadron 16 Link:** <https://www.warbirdsusa.org/>
- Cincinnati, OH Warbird Squadron 18 Link:** <https://www.cincinnatiwarbirds.org/>
- Florida Warbird Squadron 24 Link:** <https://www.floridawarbirds.org/>
- Oshkosh, WI Warbird Squadron 32 Link:** <https://www.facebook.com/OshkoshSquad/>