

THE AVENGER

The Official Publication of The EAA Warbirds of America Squadron 4



www.warbirdsquadron4.org

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ANNUAL BANQUET



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,

Two more events are coming up on the radar. TBM Avenger Reunion & Salute to Veterans on May 16th & 17th in Peru, IL. Hard to believe this is the 10th year of the event. I received a phone call from Mr. C.J. LaCross, our WW II Marine TBF Gunner that spoke to us in November and he had surgery and will not be able to attend. He is doing fine and I told him I will send him photos of all the TBMs in attendance. Next event will be the Cavalcade of Planes on June 7th & 8th in Bolingbrook, IL. More information on both of these events are on the flyers in the Newsletter. As always, we will have a booth at both of these events and members are encouraged to participate. If there is enough interest to see

Mike Kellner's B-17E "Dessert Rat" being restored let me know so we can plan a trip to Marengo. The Chicago Area Chapter 99s event was well attended and spoke to quite a few people there and looking forward to next year. Thank you to Rick Seigfried for a very interesting and informative presentation at our Banquet. Taking a DC-3 to Europe and back was hard enough when the planes were new. Imagine driving an 80 year old car from coast to coast. Butch

BUZZING THE AIRFIELD

By Dave Stevens



Spring has brought a bunch of changes. I have resigned my position as XO on the Squadron 4 board because I am moving to Michigan. As I write this, I'm surrounded by boxes of stuff I didn't know I had. I first joined the squadron after seeing Tom Bucks TBM while I was at a soccer game. He flew right over the field, landing at a small airport. I found him at Joliet and came to his Open Hangar event where I learned about an upcoming B-17 tour stop. I was hooked and Warbirds has become a part of my life. That was about 18 years ago. I will remain a member of the squadron and I hope to come to events when I can. I will miss the people in this group very much, and that will keep me coming back.

As I pack everything for the move, I find more and more aircraft parts. I don't own an aircraft. Just parts. Anybody need exhaust stacks for a Ford Tri-Motor?! I have a right and left. Non-serviceable, of course. Pistons for everything. Don't tell "the Boss" but I'm packing all of it.



JOIN US ON THE FLIGHT DECK

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

Cavalcade of Planes

Clow International Airport, Bolingbrook, IL
7-8 June, 2025

Saturday 10am - 4pm

Sunday 10am - 4pm

Admission \$5 each day. Kids under 5 FREE

web site: www.cavalcadeofplanes.org

No tickets sold on site. Must buy online



SQUADRON 4 ANNUAL BANQUET

D-DAY DC-3 FLIGHT

by Dave Stevens

February found us at the Countryside Holiday Inn, once again enjoying the annual gathering of Warbird Squadron 4 members and guests. I always enjoy these dinners because it gives us all a chance to talk with members and families and catch up with those we have not seen in a while.

This year we had the pleasure of hearing about the flight of DC-3s and C-47s that flew from the US to the UK and on to France for the D-Day anniversary. Our own Rick Siegfried, with new owner Tim Savage, flew the 1942 DC-3 N33644 #4123 which started on its journey in Missoula Montana in November of 2023.

Starting the main journey in Florida, they flew up the east coast of the US to Oxford CT and north to Goose Bay Canada. From there the flight of 3 flew to Greenland, then Iceland. Prestwick Scotland was next, then on to Duxford. Finally the flight made it to France for some D-Day festivities. All this with our heroes flying in a DC-3 with no heat.

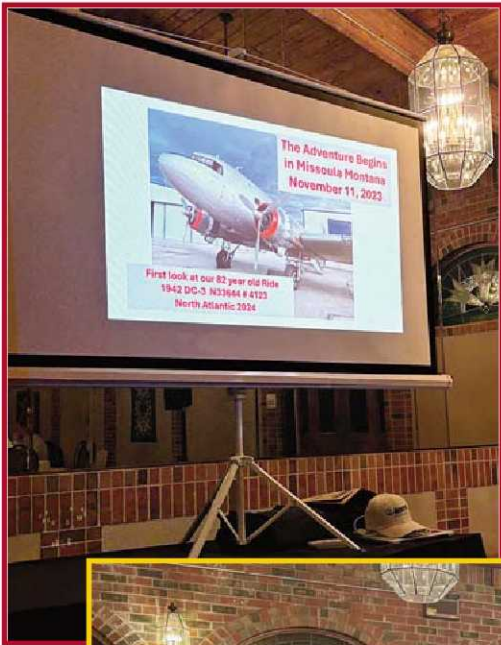
Rick told us about a few of the warbirds that started the journey but were stalled in Greenland and did not make the full trip. The flight of 3 DC-3s and C-47s with Rick and Tim and crew had made the trip with little problem. This was probably due to the extensive testing and maintenance of the aircraft before and during the flights. No major components failed except for an oil cooler that had to be changed on one aircraft.

I listened to the story thinking that many crews in WWII flew that route with aircraft not nearly as well prepared as these.

Thank you Rick.



SQUADRON 4 ANNUAL BANQUET



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! **Free Parking! Free Admission!**

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. More details at: tbmreunion.org



CAVALCADE OF PLANES - BOLINGBROOK



This is always a great event! The Cavalcade of Planes! Plenty of interesting planes and warbirds. Lots of Food, Fun and Flying. Get a ride in a helicopter! Check out the Illinois Aviation Museum! **Clow International Airport, Bolingbrook, IL, 7-8 June, 2025.**

Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday 10am - 4pm. Admission is \$5 each day.

Kids under 5 FREE. You must buy the tickets on line.

web site: www.cavalcadeofplanes.org

No tickets sold on site. Must buy online.



NEW HOMES FOR OUR OLD FIGHTER FRIENDS

by Dave Stevens

P-51 Moonbeam McSwine



Warbird Experiences Limited of Biggin Hill in Southern London announced that they have acquired the North American P-51D N51VL, Moonbeam McSwine.



Lee Hogan Photo

F8F-2 Bearcat



Look at the Bear! Look at the Bear!

Platinum Fighter Sales launched John OConnors Blue Angels Bearcat from Aurora, Illinois, to Galveston, Texas, marking the first leg of its journey to a new European home. The F8F-2 Bearcat was recently sold to a European-based flying collection (Flying Bulls)

YOUNG EAGLES

By Butch Bejna



Butch Bejna

Right now the plane is in Annual and will be ready for upcoming Young Eagle Flights. EAA reports that last year over 55,000 flights were flown for a grand total of 2,426,168 as of April 27, 2025. They added 1,305 new pilots that gave flights last year bringing the current total to 4,750 pilots that flew Young Eagles in 2024. This will be my 29th year of giving Young Eagles rides. First flight was out of Meigs Field.

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



Our COs 150 at Meigs

Seven Tuskegee Airmen at Meigs

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!



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.

<https://squareup.com/market/ea-warbird-squadron-4>

\$25.00

GET THE WORD OUT



EAA Warbird Squadron 4 has a mission for you.

It won't take up too much time and you will help us get Squadron 4 noticed.

Just paste or click this link: warbirdssquadron4.org

Look around the Squadron web site. If you are not a member, you can join by clicking on the Membership link. We would love to have you! Check out the Announcements for upcoming events. Come on out to one of them and see what we're up to.

Click the Facebook link at the bottom of the web page and go to the **EAA Warbirds Squadron 4** Facebook page. Leave a comment or post a photo of your favorite aircraft, or "Like" one. **Share a post** on Facebook.



That's it. Done. A couple of clicks, and you will have helped Warbird Squadron 4 improve the website, our social media presence and increase it's exposure to aviation fans and the world.

B-17 VETERAN FROM JOLIET



MAJ Robert G Kraker USAF (Ret.) of Joliet IL.
Active service 23 years. WWII, 487th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, England.
Pilot "Lead Crew". 8 missions in B-24. 22 missions in B-17.

Robert Kraker described the B-17 as a noisy bucket of bolts when he flew with us back in September of 2007. Growing up and educated in Joliet Public Schools, Bob joined the United States Army Air Forces in March of 1942. He received training in the B-24 (8 missions), B-17 (22 missions) and Crew Training (Lead Crew) with the 487th Bomb Group, 839 Squadron, receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross among his medals and awards. This was a pivotal time in his life as he faced dangers with unknown outcomes and met wonderful people from all over the United States with the same mission of serving their country. After the war, Bob continued his service with the United States Air Force, working for the Auditor General until he retired in December of 1964. After living in Europe and throughout the United States, Bob and Harriet decided to settle down in Joliet, IL. Here, Bob worked for the E J & E Railway in the accounting department until his retirement. Story, in part, from The Herald News 9-16-07 • provided by Mike Hudak

487th Bomb Group



Kraker's B-17, *Mutzie "B"*, #42-98019 of the 838th Squadron experienced an engine explosion and was forced to land in Belgium on 24-Dec-1944. German control there was virtually nonexistent.



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
Vought
F4U-7 Corsair



Doug Mahall
Aeronca
L-3



John O'Connor
North American
SNJ



Jim Turcich
Aeronca
L-16A

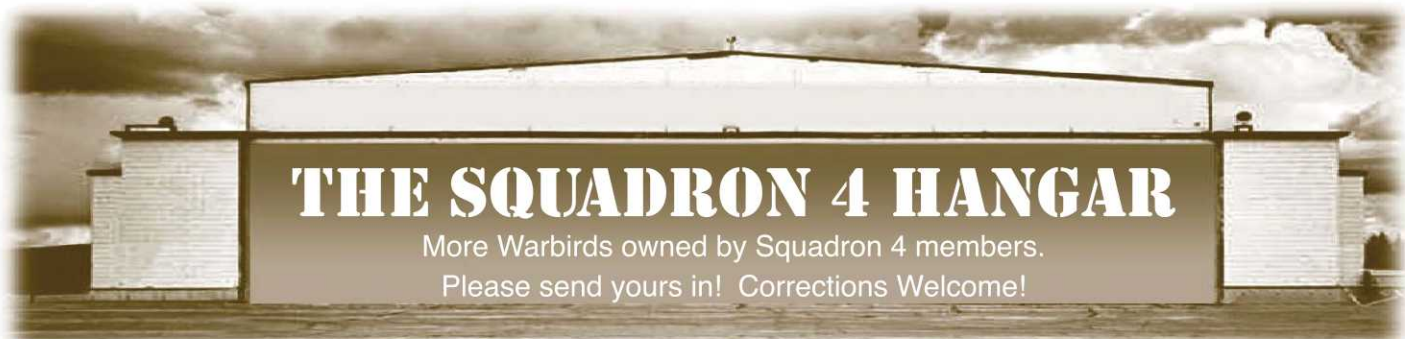


John O'Connor
Consolidated
PBY-5A



Tim Gillian
North American
SNJ

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 member!



Michael Kus



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
 David Stevens stevens15@mindspring.com
 (630) 624-6618
 TRE. Brian Churchill warbirdsquadron4@gmail.com
 (847) 846-5861

**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/>