



ANA PATRIOT SQUADRON - SHEA NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM QUARTERLY MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the latest edition of the ANA Patriot Squadron and Shea Naval Aviation Museum Quarterly Members' Newsletter. This newsletter is distributed via e-mail on or about the first day of March, June, September, and December. The purpose of the newsletter is to help familiarize members who can't attend our monthly meetings with what's happening within the squadron and at the museum and perhaps inspire everyone to take a more active role in this organization.

RECENT NEWS:

First off, we'd like to welcome new member John Bott to the Patriot Squadron. John is a retired Navy helicopter pilot who flew with HS-5 based at NAS Quonset Point during the 1960s. He recently relocated to Massachusetts from Virginia. He's been a member of the Association of Naval Aviation for some time, and when he moved here he decided to affiliate with the local ANA Squadron, which of course happens to be us. John showed up for his first Patriot Squadron meeting in April and went out to lunch with us at Warren's Place afterwards. Hopefully we'll see more of him going forward.

As all of you should know by now, LStar Ventures was dismissed from their role as the master developer at Union Point on Friday March 29th. Despite LStar's troubles in recent months, they were good to the Patriot Squadron and your newsletter editor is truly sorry to see them go. Their departure leaves us in a state of limbo, so to speak. It is our understanding that negotiations are ongoing with candidate master developers and may continue for some time. Once a selection has been announced, your board of directors will seek an audience as soon as possible to introduce the Patriot Squadron and obtain a commitment, in accordance with the provisions of the BRAC law, to get us back into a building so we can reopen the Shea Naval Aviation Museum. We encourage all members

to regularly check the Boston area newspapers for the latest information about Union Point. We suspect that it may be several months or more before a new master developer has been selected.

In early April Bill Sargent replaced the large American, US Navy, and POW/MIA flags at the Shea Memorial Grove park. These were all damaged during the winter months and had to be replaced.

On Thursday May 9th, your newsletter editor gave a presentation on the history of NAS South Weymouth at the Fairing Way function room on Union Point. The presentation was very well attended by Fairing Way residents, the general public, and Patriot Squadron members. In fact, people had to be turned away because the auditorium was filled to capacity. The event was recorded by the Weymouth public access cable TV channel. To view it on-line, go to <https://weymouth.tv/>. Click on "WETC-8 Recently Added" and then "Weymouth Naval Air Station History". We raised \$160 for our organization at this event through sale of t-shirts, ball caps, patches, and other memorabilia.

Please note that we have plenty of NAS South Weymouth t-shirts, ball caps, challenge coins, keychains, lapel pins, pint glasses, patches, etc., available. If you want something, contact us via the e-mail address on the web site or via Facebook or speak to a director at one of our meetings. If you live outside the local area we can mail things to you.

On Friday May 10th we received a very generous donation from Mary F. Ready of Conway, Michigan in honor of her late husband Jack. Mary read about the Patriot Squadron and the museum in the Association of Naval Aviation's "Wings of Gold" magazine. NAS Squantum was an important place to Jack Ready. The letter that Mary sent along with the check is not only interesting, but it is also very relevant to the mission of our organization. I have reproduced the noteworthy part of her letter below:

In 1948, a nine-year-old boy from North Quincy pedaled his bicycle every day to NAS Squantum, his basket filled with newspapers. Sometimes, he would make a quick delivery and pedal off to his other customers. Other times, one of the pilots would see the little blond boy, eyes wide with wonder, gazing at the aircraft and would lift him into the cockpit, explaining the instruments. It was thrilling. Occasionally, a crew member would treat him to a soda pop in the commissary, where he would listen with rapt attention to the pilot-speak. He soaked it all in.

Each week when he made his newspaper collections, sometimes even getting a five or ten cent tip, he would take his money and buy a balsa wood airplane model and carefully assemble it. His bedroom soon became filled with various plane models, brightly painted, sometimes with Navy insignia.

At North Quincy High School, he played hockey and gave more attention to girls than he did to his studies. At 16, he and his parents decided that he would be better suited to a career in the trades and were about to enroll him in a trade school to learn carpentry. An aunt stepped in, declaring that "Jackie is going to college!" After reconsidering, he completed high school in North Quincy with middling grades, but earned a single-engine pilot's license before graduation. His dreams of flying, introduced to him and fostered by pilots, crewmen, and ground crew at NAS Squantum, had become a reality.

Next came a bump in the road—his college application was rejected. He enrolled in prep school for a year to improve his academic record and reapplied to Boston University, where he was accepted "on probation". At Boston University, he played hockey and studied. He drove a cab at night to pay for tuition and books. He was determined. After four years, he graduated with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering.

Thoughts of the Navy pilots at Squantum and the thrill of flying they had instilled in him were never far from his thoughts. He joined the United States Navy, graduated from OCS, and began his Naval career at NAS Pensacola.

Thirty years later, Vice Admiral John K. “Jack” Ready retired from the U.S. Navy as Commander, Naval Air Forces Atlantic Fleet. He had an exceptional and distinguished career as both a fighter pilot and a leader of men. But all who knew him used the same word to describe him—“humble”. He never forgot that his roots were in a working-class community that allowed him to reach his dreams, and those dreams were given to him by those who had taken the time at NAS Squantum to show a little boy the dream of flight.

For the record, Jack Ready contacted me a few years ago to tell me how much he enjoyed the book I wrote about NAS Squantum (“NAS Squantum: The First Naval Air Reserve Base”). During the course of our correspondence, Jack told me about how he had delivered newspapers to the base in the late 1940s and that his experiences with the personnel there and watching the aircraft had inspired him to join the Navy. At no time did he ever mention that he was a retired Vice Admiral, or even that he had been a fighter pilot. Mary told me that her husband was humble. I’ll second that opinion. We’ve put Mary Ready on our roster as an honorary member of the Patriot Squadron. I wish that her husband had been a member of our group. He was clearly quite a guy.

Please note that until you hear otherwise, we will continue to meet from 11 AM to noon on the last Saturday of the month in the South Shore Tri-Town Development Corporation meeting room in what was formerly the NAS South Weymouth base housing office at Union Point. This is the small white building located next to the Shea Memorial Grove and is the last structure built by the Navy on the old base. If you live in the local area we strongly suggest that you attend our monthly meetings, especially while the museum is in this period of transition from where it was to where it is going to be.

COMING UP:

If you attend our monthly meetings you know that we have been talking about planting a tree and installing a memorial plaque at the Shea Memorial Grove to honor local US Army Medal of Honor Recipient SFC Jared Monti. We’ve been discussing this for several years and have made no progress. Basically, we’ve been waiting for the master developer and/or others at Union Point to take action. Considering recent events at Union Point, members at the April 30th meeting, which also happened to be our annual meeting, voted to take action ourselves. So, we’re going to survey the park for a suitable location, acquire and plant a tree, acquire and install a plaque, and do it ourselves. Peter Crone has kindly offered to pay up to \$1,000 to provide a memorial for SFC Monti. Alan Gilman knows somebody who will provide a stone base for the plaque (and possibly the plaque too) and Peter Crone may know where we can get a tree. We are going to try to have everything ready in time to conduct a dedication ceremony on Monday November 11th, which is Veteran’s Day. We intend to invite local politicians, local media, author Len Sandler (“See You on the High Ground”), the Monti family, and the general public. If you’d like to help out speak to any directors at our monthly meeting.

As in previous years, the Boston chapter of the Marine Corps Aviation Association and the VP Association will hold events during the late summer that we encourage all members to participate in, if so interested. The Marine Corps Aviation Association will hold their annual lobster bake at the Fourth Cliff Military Recreation Area in Marshfield on Saturday September 7th. This event is primarily a reunion for former Marine Air Reservists who were associated with NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth, but any member of the Patriot Squadron is welcome to attend. Your newsletter editor, who was in the Navy, has gone for many years and has always had a great time there. The food provided is great. The VP Association, which is composed primarily of veterans who served with the

Navy Reserve patrol squadrons based at NAS Squantum, NAS South Weymouth, and NAS Brunswick, will hold its annual reunion banquet in Weymouth on Saturday September 21st. As with the USMC event, all Patriot Squadron members are welcome to attend the VP Association reunion. More details about these events, including contact information and the cost of reservations, will be provided as the dates approach. Several Patriot Squadron members will be at these events so if you want to go, be assured that you'll know some people there.

HELP WANTED:

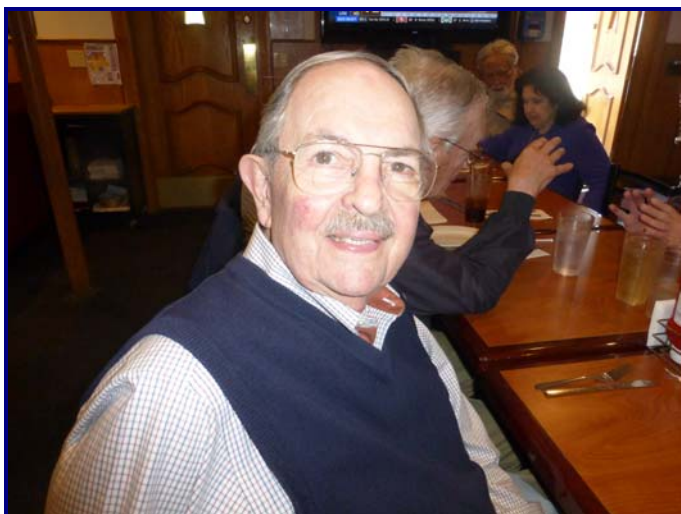
We have to perform some maintenance at the Shea Memorial Grove sometime soon when the weather gets warmer and dryer. The signage around the park is in need of spot-repairs and repainting. It has also been suggested that we replace the mulch around the trees and wherever else it is. If you would like to help, please approach any director at one of our monthly meetings. One thing that anybody who lives in the local area could do, and could do at any convenient time, is scrape the loose paint off the signs around the park. Once the loose paint has been scraped off the signs and we get a series of dry days we'll repaint them. This is something that we really need to get done before we dedicate the Jared Monti memorial.

DID YOU KNOW?:



This photo shows stationkeeper AT1 Richard Carlisle at NAS South Weymouth sometime in the late 1950s wearing a blue Sateen Cotton utility cap as he prepares to go up in an HUP Retriever helicopter. The ball cap type utility caps issued to US Navy enlisted personnel in the 1950s and 1960s had a distinctive style that was once quite common but is basically extinct today. Modern ball caps tend to be symmetrically hemispherical, while this type of cap sloped downwards from back to front. These caps had been unavailable for about 40 years, until a few months ago. Eastman Leather Clothing, an English manufacturer of high-end reproduction military flight jackets and related clothing, recently added an exact replica to their product line. They aren't cheap. One will cost you about \$100, depending upon the current dollar/pound conversion rate, plus shipping. However, you probably won't find one anywhere else for less. To order, go to www.eastmanleather.com. Original examples are scarce since the visors were stiffened internally with cardboard. Sailors tended to fold the visors up so the caps would fit in the back pockets of their bell-bottoms when they weren't wearing them. With repeated bending the cardboard tore, and because of this original examples found today are usually in badly damaged condition.

SOME RECENT PHOTOS:



Top Left: Our annual meeting on March 30th. **Top Right:** New Patriot Squadron member, retired Navy helicopter pilot John Bott. **Middle Left:** First nice spring day at the Shea Memorial Grove with our new flags flying in the breeze. **Middle Right:** Some of the Patriot Squadron members who came to the presentation at Fairing Way. **Bottom Left:** Faith Frattasio tending the Squadron's souvenir table at Fairing Way. **Bottom Right:** A full house, literally, at Fairing Way during the presentation.

A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



Here's a Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm TBF Avenger that was ground-looped and had one of its main landing gear collapse at NAS Squantum on January 11, 1944. Several complete FAA squadrons were sent to NAS Squantum and its auxiliary fields for advanced training in Avengers. One squadron was trained in SB2C Helldivers too.

