



## 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:**

Due to the recent panic over the Wuhan Coronavirus, which precipitated restrictions on public gatherings in Massachusetts, we were forced to suspend our monthly meetings starting in March. Hopefully this crisis will soon be past us. We'll send out an announcement to all of you via e-mail once we're able to start holding our monthly meetings again.

As you may know, the old NAS South Weymouth Bachelor Officer's Quarters or "BOQ" burned down in a two-alarm fire that began around 8:30 PM on Thursday March 26<sup>th</sup>. The BOQ was one of the last original WW2-vintage structures at the Union Point real estate development. The BOQ was totally destroyed and the remains were removed from the site within a few days. Arson is considered likely.

Although it is certainly sad to see any part of the old base disappear, the fact is that the BOQ had been allowed to deteriorate beyond economical repair and new master developer Brookwood Properties would have had to tear it down anyway. You might say that the fire saved Brookwood Properties a substantial amount of money and effort.

The BOQ had been vacant since the base was closed in 1997. Technically, it was a “semi-permanent” structure that was never supposed to have been used by the military for as long as it was. The BOQ was made of wood and it had not been heated or maintained for more than twenty years. When you stop heating a building, moisture in the air is absorbed into permeable components such as the wood framing members, plaster ceilings, gypsum board walls, cinder blocks, etc., and tends to remain there. The water promotes mildew, mold, and rot. When the temperature drops below freezing the absorbed water freezes and expands, causing further damage, especially to wood.

The net result of this is that a building that is neither maintained nor heated deteriorates at a surprisingly rapid rate. Nearly every former military building on the old base that has been vacant for more than a few years is beyond repair and will need to be torn down. This is unfortunate, but true.



The Quincy Patriot Ledger photo presented above shows the fire at its height as seen from the Shea Memorial Grove park. Although the Shea Naval Aviation Museum’s collection was never endangered by the fire, this photo illustrates one of the many reasons why we need to get the museum’s collection out of storage and into a properly secured and fire-protected building as soon as possible.



In more favorable news, Eversource Energy recently made a \$200 donation to the Shea Naval Aviation Museum. This donation came through the company's "Dollars for Doers" program, which provides payments to certain types of non-profit organizations for which its employees volunteer.

VP Association member Leo Murphy, who was a naval flight officer in Patrol Squadron 92 at NAS South Weymouth during the late 1970s and early 1980s, recently donated a VP-92 squadron award plaque to the Shea Naval Aviation Museum. Leo said that he's been spending some of his down time during the Wuhan Coronavirus lockdown productively in cleaning his house in Florida. His wife told him to throw the plaque away, but he very thoughtfully sent it to us to put in the museum instead. Its good to know that people are still thinking of us even though the museum has been closed for a few years now and the collection remains in storage. If you have anything like this lying around your house that you no longer want to keep, please consider giving it to the museum. Don't just throw such things away!



Member Mike Wendelin, who was in VR-62 during the brief time that squadron was at NAS South Weymouth, had a very nice article published in the Spring issue of the Association of Naval Aviation's "Wings of Gold" magazine. Mike's very nice article was about Airbus HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft that are based at Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod on what used to be Otis Air Force Base. As you should know, the Patriot Squadron is the Boston chapter of the Association of Naval Aviation. Although we do not require members of the Patriot Squadron to also be members of the national group, except in the case of certain directors, we certainly encourage all members to join if that is there interest. Membership in the national organization provides you with a subscription to their quarterly "Wings of Gold" magazine, which is a very nice publication with content covering current and historical naval aviation. For more information about the national group, go to [www.anahq.org](http://www.anahq.org).

Your newsletter editor had an article published in the "Nobody Asked Me But..." section of the April issue of the Naval Institute's "Proceedings" magazine. The article, entitled "Get Your Own Jacket", was in reaction to the Navy's recent decision to issue leather jackets similar to the traditional flyer's G-1 flight jacket to surface warfare officers. The Navy began to issue the SWO "flight jackets" in June. It is interesting to note that the new jackets are being issued to officers only. Unlike flight jackets, which are issued to anybody – officer or enlisted - who earns wings, the surface warfare jackets are not issued to surface warfare qualified enlisted people. The full text of the article follows:

*In November 1997, Proceedings published my Nobody Asked Me, But... entitled "Leave Our Flight Jackets Alone!" I wrote it in reaction to a change in the uniform regulations that prohibited flight jackets from being decorated with anything other than a nametag, a U.S. flag, and a single squadron insignia patch.*

*I received some criticism in response to my article back then, all of it from surface warfare officers who appeared to be offended by flight jackets. At some point in his or her career every pilot, naval flight officer, or aircrewman experiences some degree of hostility to flight jackets worn while on naval bases that are primarily home to ships and submarines. I certainly have. I've always suspected the root cause is envy, and it appears that I've finally been proved right.*

*I just heard the Navy is going to begin issuing leather jackets to surface warfare officers starting in June. The jackets are described in official Navy communications as being "similar to the aviation bomber jacket". They sure are, so much so that they would not look out of place if they turned up in the remake of Top Gun that, coincidentally, also is scheduled to be released in June. The only visual distinctions between the new surface warfare officer's jacket and the traditional Navy G-1 flight jacket is that it is black instead of brown and its collar is leather instead of imitation wool.*

*This really bothers me. My leather flight jacket means so much to me. It is one of my most cherished possessions. I retired from the Navy many years ago, but I am so proud of my service as a naval aircrewman that I still wear my old leather flight jacket on a regular basis. Strangers often approach me and say, "I love your jacket", and I always respond, "Thank you, I worked very hard to earn it".*

*Yes, I worked hard to earn that jacket and the gold naval aircrewman wings that it signifies, and that is the point of this diatribe. The leather jacket is, and always has been, closely associated with aviation. Part of the reason I decided to fly for the Navy rather than the Air Force is that, when I enlisted in 1979, the guys who flew for the Navy still wore traditional leather flight jackets while the Air Force guys did not. I'm sure that I am not the only one for whom this was part of the decision-making process.*

*Why can't the black shoes come up with their own distinctive jacket, something that won't cause them to be mistaken for aviation personnel? Until the 1960s, the Navy had something called a deck jacket or deck coat that was closely associated with ships. These are fashionable enough that they are still being made for the civilian market. What about the old pea coat? Why "culturally appropriate" the traditional jacket of aviation personnel --- and by so doing diminish its significance and obscure its meaning? It is bad enough that the current green camouflage working uniform makes everybody in the Navy look like they are in the Army. Now you want all surface warfare officers to look like they are pilots or naval flight officers?*

*What this comes down to, I think, is that aviation has always been perceived as "cool", and the surface warfare community wants to grab some of that coolness for itself. I'm OK with this in principal, except that in this case the "grab" comes at the expense of aviation.*

*Isn't trying to look like a flyer when you aren't one skirting dangerously close to the edges of "stolen valor"? My advice to the surface warfare community is, if you really want to look like a flyer, then do what I did and earn yourself wings.*

During the week of May 18<sup>th</sup> members Marc Frattasio, Bill Sargent, and Frank Ward performed some work at the Shea Memorial Grove so the park would be presentable for Memorial Day Weekend. Specifically, Bill and Frank replaced all the small American flags at the memorial plaques and sanded down the wooden signs at the entrance to the park and along Shea Memorial Drive. Marc then repainted the signs with blue and gold paint. The previous winter weather was not kind to these signs. Hopefully the recent repainting will last longer, but there is no guarantee of this. The problem is that the wooden structure of these signs is deteriorating and they really should be replaced.

## **COMING UP:**

Unfortunately, everything involving the Shea Naval Aviation Museum is on hold pending resolution of the Wuhan Coronavirus situation. This has not only stopped all organized Patriot Squadron activities, but has also brought Brookfield Properties to a stand-still as well. Once this problem is behind us, we'll get back on track regarding the museum as soon as we can. At this point we have a set of "talking points" to use in our initial discussion with Brookfield Properties. If you would like to be

involved with our discussions with Brookfield Properties, please approach any of the directors at one of our monthly meetings.

As many of you may know, the VP Association, which is composed of people who served with the Naval Air Reserve patrol squadrons that were based at NAS Squantum, NAS South Weymouth, and NAS Brunswick, normally holds an annual reunion in Weymouth on a Saturday in late September. Several Patriot Squadron members are also members of the VP Association and we normally have a museum sales table at this event. Due to the present uncertainty over the Wuhan Coronavirus, the VP Association will not hold an annual reunion this year. This is unfortunate for us because the VP Association annual reunion is normally a decent fund-raiser for the museum.

### **HELP WANTED:**

If any member would like to take a more active role in the ANA Patriot Squadron, please reach out to a director at one of our monthly meetings. There are many things that need to be done, and most of them are presently being done by the same small group of people. If you would like to help us, please talk to one of the directors at one of our monthly meetings and we will find something for you to do.

Please note that you don't necessarily have to live in the Weymouth area or even participate in our monthly meetings or show up anywhere to take an active role in the Patriot Squadron. For example, our by-laws require an official history of the Patriot Squadron to be maintained. This has been done by at least two different individuals with a few years' gap between the previous recorder of significant Patriot Squadron events and the current recorder. The earlier Patriot Squadron history, which is in booklet form, should be combined with the more recent squadron history, which is in Microsoft Word format. This task could be done by anybody anywhere with access to e-mail, some free time, and the ability to use MS Word.

We also presently have the following vacancies within our organization that we would like to fill:

- Membership Officer
- Operations Officer (Corporation Organizer)
- Chaplain (Religious Advisor)
- Flight Surgeon (Medical Advisor)

If anybody out there is interested in filling any of these slots, please contact one of the directors via e-mail ([inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org](mailto:inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org)) or in person at one of our monthly meetings. It is worth noting that the Membership Officer vacancy in the list above was caused by the recent death of member Russ Monaghan. Russ, who attended reserve recruit training at NAS South Weymouth and later served with VP-92, was an active participant in Patriot Squadron activities for several years. He was cheerful, a good friend, and his passing leaves a gap in the organization that will be difficult to fill.

Peter Jardim says that here is a fund-raising opportunity through the Scituate, MA transfer station where non-profit organizations are allowed to collect bottles and cans brought in by people dumping their trash to raise funds for their causes. Members of such organizations are usually there for a month (depending on the number of groups that have signed up to do this during the year). He says that some of the organizations that had done this have collected anywhere from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per month. Peter says that this is "real work" that would require volunteers on all the days that the transfer station is open for that month and that it can be messy and "interesting" dealing with the

public but “the money is real”. He says that they had only one organization there for the last three months because nobody else was willing to do the work during that period of time.

Things that would be needed in order to do this:

- Volunteers with a truck or van to make the two to four trips needed to the bottle/can redeemer in Cohasset on weekend days. Mondays and Tuesdays wouldn't need as many trips.
- Volunteers, the transfer station is open from 8 AM to 3:30 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Weekends tend to be the busiest days and are usually staffed with at least three people. Mondays and Tuesdays can get by with two volunteers and sometimes one in the earlier parts of the morning. On weekdays a later start (8:30 - 9 AM) shifts are also perfectly fine.

Note, boxes and plastic bags for the bottles and cans are supplied by the redemption center.

If this is something that you might be interested in getting involved with contact Peter directly at [zorak36@hotmail.com](mailto:zorak36@hotmail.com)

As mentioned previously, the blue and gold wooden signs at the entrance to the Shea Memorial Grove and along Shea Memorial Drive are deteriorating. We've repainted these signs twice in the past twelve months. Ideally they should probably be replaced, but its possible that the existing signs could be repaired and stabilized by somebody with the necessary woodworking skills and equipment. At a minimum, the wooden posts that hold up the sign along Shea Memorial Drive need to be replaced, all three signs should be sanded down to bare wood, with all compromised wooden components replaced and/or stabilized somehow, the signs should be completely primed, and then repainted. If somebody out there would like to take this project on reach out to one of the directors.

### DID YOU KNOW?:



Anybody out there remember these commemorative steins? Five hundred of them were ordered by the NAS South Weymouth PAO during the late spring of 1967 to help commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the base. The department heads associated with the various commands on the base were allowed to purchase the steins from the PAO for \$3.25 each. They were, in turn, resold for \$3.50 each, with the extra 25 cents intended for the command's coffee mess. The base PAO at that time, CDR Wencil Walbert, indicated that he “hoped” to sell all 500 steins to the stationkeepers and reservists, and then order more to sell to civilian visitors at the air show held on the base over the weekend of September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> that year. Not sure if he achieved that goal. Other commemorative souvenir efforts such as the yearbook type albums commissioned in 1958 and 1986 were a bust, which is why so few were attempted!



## SOME RECENT PHOTOS:



**Top Left:** Marc Frattasio repainting one of the signs at the Shea Memorial Grove. **Top Right:** Freshly painted "welcome aboard sign". **Middle Left:** Freshly painted "Shea Grove" sign. **Middle Right:** Freshly painted sign on Shea Memorial Drive. **Bottom Left:** The recently established memorial for Jared Monti with a new flag placed by Bill Sargent and Frank Ward. **Bottom Right:** An overview of the Shea Memorial Grove on Memorial Day Weekend 2020.



## A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



Here is the BOQ at NAS South Weymouth on October 10<sup>th</sup> 1945. WW2 had been over for about a month and the base downgraded from a naval air station to a naval air facility. ZP-11 and the ZJ-1 detachment had been disbanded and a detachment from ZP-12 at NAS Lakehurst was on the base with a couple of ZNP-K type blimps to escort returning troop ships and provide SAR services. By the end of the month the ZP-12 detachment would return with its blimps to NAS Lakehurst. For the next four years or so the base would be used mainly to store hundreds of surplus naval aircraft.

