



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

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**Issue #32**

**A 501c3 Non-Profit Educational Organization**

**JUN 2021**

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:**

As of this writing we remain unable to resume in-person monthly meetings. We checked with the Southfield Redevelopment Authority, whose meeting room we had been using for this purpose, soon after the Commonwealth of Massachusetts announced that the mask mandate and many other COVID-19 related restrictions would be lifted effective May 29<sup>th</sup>. Our friends at the SRA told us that they were not yet prepared to allow us to start using their meeting room, which is located in the small white building adjacent to the Shea Memorial Grove park. They told us that they would contact us when things change.

So, until further notice, our monthly meetings will continue to be conducted using the "Zoom" Internet-based virtual meeting service. These will be held between 11 AM and noon on the last Saturday of the month. Each virtual meeting held year-to-date has included a slide presentation on some aspect of NAS South Weymouth or NAS Squantum history. If anyone out there has a topic of interest relevant to the Patriot Squadron that they are willing to present at a meeting, please contact your newsletter editor at [inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org](mailto:inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org).



Members Faith and Marc Frattasio recently donated new American, US Navy, and POW/MIA flags for the flagpole at the Shea Memorial Grove. Members Wally Massenburg and Frank Ward also recently donated 36 small Medal of Honor flags that will be placed at each memorial plaque at the park on special occasions. We had a large number of these things at one time but they appear to have gone missing when the Shea Naval Aviation Museum's collection was put into storage in 2017. Frank made his donation in honor of his father, Frank Ward Sr., who was in the Army during WW2. Frank's father was in L Company of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. He saw action in the Pacific Theater of Operations at Saipan and in the Philippines. After VJ Day he was part of the occupation force in Japan.



**ABOVE:** Bill Sargent, Paul Duffy, and Frank Ward at the Shea Memorial Grove.

On Friday May 28<sup>th</sup> members Bill Sargent and Frank Ward, along with Paul Duffy, placed a small Medal of Honor flag at each memorial plaque at the Shea Memorial Grove. The flags were left at the park through the end of Memorial Day weekend, and then taken back down again and put away for another special day. If Paul Duffy looks familiar to some of you, it was probably because he was the Clubs Manager at NAS South Weymouth during the base's final years. He knew Jared Monti, one of the local Medal of Honor recipients honored at the park.



On Tuesday May 11<sup>th</sup> members Frank Ward and Bill Sargent organized the donation of a large quantity of new cooking equipment to Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society at the Newport Naval Station in Newport, RI. This is an organization that helps new or young Navy and Marine Corps families. The donation was a joint effort by the Patriot Squadron and the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans.



**ABOVE:** Members Frank Ward and Bill Sargent posing with some of the cooking equipment recently donated to the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society in cooperation with the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans.

As many of you know, we intended to have a “work party” at the Shea Memorial Grove on Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> to clean the park up in time for the Memorial Day weekend. Interest in this was high, and we had many members lined up to help at the park that day. However, as the date approached, we discovered through contacts at the Southfield Redevelopment Authority that one of the Union Point landowners, Washington Capital, had already contracted with a local landscaper to do everything that we had intended to do. So, we cancelled the park cleanup effort.

However, we did indeed have a “work party” on the old base that day, just not at the park! Patriot Squadron members Donald Canaday, Charlie Collins, Peter Crone, Gerti Gillen, Al Gilman, Rita Cavonius, Steve Cohn, Charlie Collins, Al Firnrohr, Marc Frattasio, Peter Jardim, Joe Muise, Leo Salmeri, Bill Sargent, and Frank Ward assembled at Building 140 at 10 AM to help straighten out the museum’s storage area. Members repacked the contents of boxes that were collapsing into plastic tubs and performed a general clean-up of the storage area and the general area around Building 140. “No trespassing” signs were also posted on the building.

Although they were not physically present on May 15<sup>th</sup>, members Joe McCann and Bob Muise were there in spirit. Joe McCann went to the Shea Memorial Grove a few days previously and polished the memorial plaques and swept up around the memorial bricks. Bob Muise generously provided a large number of plastic storage tubs, as did Donald Canaday. It is also worth noting that Rita Cavanaugh, a new member from the Fairing Way community on Union Point who was introduced to the Patriot Squadron by Mary-Jean Hickey, brought a large batch of home made raspberry and chocolate brownie bars for everybody. These things did not last long after they were discovered! There's a few photos of the cleanup effort presented towards the end of the newsletter.

According to our friend Brittany Bessler, a Union Point resident who is also on the Southfield Redevelopment Authority's board of directors, Brookfield Properties asked for and was granted an extension on their exclusive option to purchase land on old NAS South Weymouth. As reported in a previous issue of this newsletter, Brookfield Properties is not the new master developer at Union Point. What they obtained in early 2020 was an exclusive option to purchase land on the old base, and the option was supposed to expire at the end of March. As of this writing, Brookfield Properties has not actually purchased any property from the landowners, who are for the most part creditors of the previous master developer. The fact that Brookfield Properties did not "walk away" when the initial option period expired is a hopeful sign that they are not prepared to give up, at least not yet. The most important thing to know is that Brookfield Properties is not the master developer at Union Point. They may become the master developer, but this is not a certainty. The bottom line is that we will probably be in no position to have any serious discussions regarding the future of the Shea Naval Aviation Museum until a new master developer has been appointed at Union Point – unless of course we think of some other way to re-establish the museum.

Member Michael Wendelin is an accomplished author and photographer who has written several interesting articles for the Association of Naval Aviation's "Wings of Gold" magazine. The most recent issue featured a two-page article that he wrote about Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod, which is located on the former Otis Air Force Base. The Patriot Squadron is the Boston chapter of the Association of Naval Aviation. We highly encourage our members to join the national organization. Membership includes a subscription to "Wings of Gold" magazine, a profusely illustrated publication that covers the past and present of naval aviation. For more information go to [www.anahq.org](http://www.anahq.org).

A friendly reminder that Wally Massenburg handles all membership matters, including new members and renewals. You can reach out to him via e-mail at [wallymassenburg@comcast.net](mailto:wallymassenburg@comcast.net).

### **COMING UP:**

As mentioned in previous issues of this newsletter, the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum, which is a similar organization to the Patriot Squadron that operates a museum on former NAS Brunswick, Maine, will host an NAS Brunswick base reunion over the weekend of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>. The reunion will feature a variety of events scheduled for each day, with the main event being a traditional Maine seafood banquet catered by Cook's on Saturday evening between 5:30 and 10 PM. Other major events include a cocktail reception on Friday night and a golf tournament on Sunday morning. The Navy is expected to send a P-3 (VP-62) and P-8 (VP-8) from NAS Jacksonville, Florida, and these aircraft will be open for visitors on Saturday afternoon between noon and 4 PM. The museum itself will be open on all three days. The complete schedule of events and an on-line reservation form are available at <https://bnamuseum.org>.

The reunion events are being priced on an ala-carte basis and you can choose to participate in all or some of them as you see fit. Reservations are required in advance since the organizers need to know how many people to expect at each event. It will help the organizers greatly if you make your

reservations sooner rather than later. The museum has made arrangements with a professional videographer to record brief interviews with NAS Brunswick veterans. Interview sessions are being scheduled in half hour blocks throughout the reunion weekend. If you were affiliated with NAS Brunswick and have a story that you'd be willing to tell, please schedule an interview session before they fill up. You can reserve an interview session through a link presented on the reunion event schedule's web page.

There will be a combined VP-MAU and VP-92 "mini-reunion" held in the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum's main exhibition hall between noon and 1 PM on Saturday. If you were in the VP-MAU or VP-92 and plan to come up to old NAS Brunswick on Saturday September 18th, please assemble in the museum at noon. An invitation has been extended to former VR-62 and VQ-11 personnel, since these were the other two Naval Air Reserve Force squadrons at NAS Brunswick. If there is sufficient interest expressed, the VP-MAU and VP-92 event will be expanded to cover all four Brunswick-based reserve squadrons.

Please note that your newsletter editor will have some specially commissioned souvenirs to hand out to former VP-MAU and VP-92 personnel at this "mini-reunion". The supply is limited, and these things will be strictly limited to only one set per shipmate, on a first-come first-served basis, while the supply lasts.

### **HELP WANTED:**

As of this writing we are still waiting for the Weymouth Eagles to replace the missing trees at the Shea Memorial Grove. At this point it is too late in the season to plant new trees and this will have to wait until the weather cools down and becomes rainy in the fall. As you may know, we have been trying to engage the Weymouth Eagles for about a year on this. It might just be best for us to take care of the missing trees ourselves. Also, Bill Sargent and Frank Ward believe that the Jared Monti tree that we planted a couple of years ago does not appear to be thriving. We will most likely have to replace this tree too.

A recent inspection of the Shea Memorial Grove exposed two serious problems. The first of these is that the blue paint on the three large signs positioned around the perimeter of the park is peeling again. We have repainted these signs twice over the past two years. Frank Ward believes that the latex paint covering these signs needs to be stripped to bare wood, the signs need to be repaired (there is a lot of rotten wood), primed, and then repainted with an oil-based paint. Ideally, the signs should be removed from the park and repaired/repainted elsewhere, such as in somebody's basement or garage. If any member out there has a home woodworking shop and would like to take this project on, please reach out to your newsletter editor.

The second problem is the A-4B Skyhawk in the center of the park. As many of you know, we performed a touch-up of the aircraft's markings a couple of years ago. This was merely a stop-gap effort buy us some time, and it appears that time has passed. The aircraft really needs to be repainted. This could be done a couple of ways. In the past, members with experience repainting military aircraft have repainted the A-4B, but those members appear to be no longer active in the Patriot Squadron. Alternatively, we could contract the work out, but this would be expensive and possibly problematic. Member Frank Ward said that the USAF recently engaged a local painting firm to repaint several display aircraft mounted on pylons at Hanscom Field in Bedford, MA. He said that it cost the USAF about \$8,000 to paint each aircraft, and they had to provide all the markings. Another possibility might be to try to engage a local High School shop department to take this project on. Again, if some member would like to take this project on, please contact your newsletter editor.



The recent cleanup effort at Building 140 exposed the vulnerability of items that are packed in cardboard boxes, which among other things absorb moisture. The museum's collection was never intended to be in storage for as long as it has been. Many of the cardboard boxes had collapsed to a greater or lesser degree. Although we repacked the worst cases in plastic tubs, it might be a good idea to repack all books and other paper/fragile items in plastic tubs, regardless of the condition of the cardboard boxes in which they are contained. Thanks to the generosity of members Robert Muise and Donald Canaday, we have a fairly large number of plastic storage tubs that could be used for this purpose. A general repacking effort should be organized at some point in the near future.

During the recent annual meeting, the present slate of directors was extended until 2023. If anybody out there is interested in a director position within this organization please inquire at any of our monthly meetings. Some of your present directors, your newsletter editor included, have been serving for ten years or more. It would be beneficial for this organization to have an infusion of "new blood". The Patriot Squadron will not persist unless more people become actively involved.

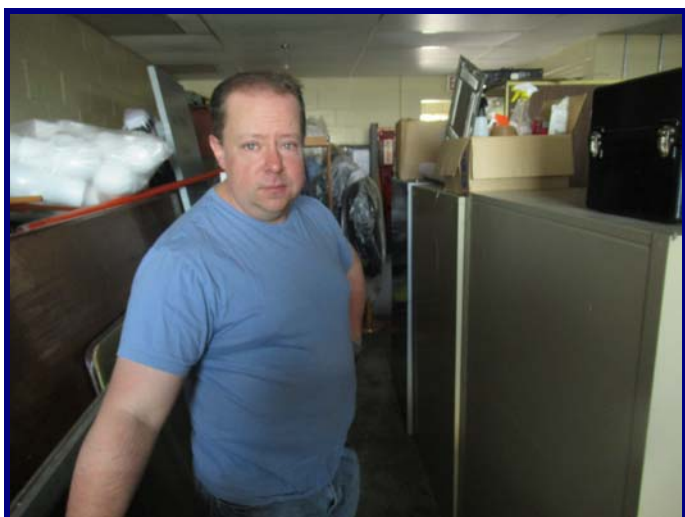
### **DID YOU KNOW?**

NAS Squantum was the second or third (depending upon who you believe) naval air station established after NAS Pensacola, FL. The base was established in the early spring of 1917 as a primary flight training facility for the Massachusetts Naval Air Militia, a state-operated paramilitary organization conceptually similar to the National Guard. The Navy took the base over soon after the country entered the First World War. The Navy attempted to use the base to provide primary flight instruction, but moved this activity to southern areas where the flying weather was better year-round. The base saw limited use for aviation purposes after October 1917, but in 1923 it was reopened to serve as the very first Naval Air Reserve training facility.



The photo presented above shows several Curtiss N-9s and a Burgess-Dunne BD parked along the Dorchester Bay waterfront at NAS Squantum during the summer of 1917. Today, what used to be a sprawling naval air station has been redeveloped into the expensive Marina Bay seaside condominium community. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of the old base remaining at Marina Bay today. The site has been almost totally transformed. An important reason that the Patriot Squadron was established is to ensure that NAS South Weymouth is not forgotten as the old base is redeveloped into Union Point like NAS Squantum was.

**SOME RECENT PHOTOS:**



**TOP LEFT:** Joe Muise transferring items from boxes to plastic tubs. **TOP RIGHT:** Donald Canaday repacking boxes. **MIDDLE LEFT:** Peter Jardim surveying the situation. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** Charlie Collins prepares for some weed-whacking. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Rita Cavonius and Gerti Gillen. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Peter Crone, Leo Salmeri, Al Gilman, and Al Firnrrohr.





**ABOVE:** Charlie Collins, Al Firnrohr, Rita Cavanaugh, unknown volunteer associated with the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans, and Steve Cohn enjoy some of the delicious raspberry and chocolate brownie bars that Rita made for the May 15<sup>th</sup> work party at Building 140. Despite the large number of bars that Rita prepared, these did not last very long.



## A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



In 1966 the Navy commissioned this watercolor of a Curtiss N-9 over the original seaplane hangar at NAS Squantum to run on the cover of a special issue of NAS South Weymouth's "Weymouth Warrior" base newspaper. The special issue was devoted largely to the history of NAS South Weymouth and its Quincy predecessor, NAS Squantum.

