



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

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A 501c3 Non-Profit Educational Organization

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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 aboard" a new member, Howard "Hobie" B. Ellis, a retired Navy captain who presently lives in Maine but grew up in Weymouth.

Although the "current thing" appears to have progressed from COVID-19 to a variety of highly publicized crises, as of this date we have not been given permission to renew meetings at the Southfield Redevelopment Authority meeting room at Union Point on old NAS South Weymouth. For the past few months we have been holding our meetings on-line via the "Zoom" virtual meeting service and also in person at the Weymouth Public Library. This will continue until further notice.

In recent months nothing of substance appears to have changed at Union Point regarding Brookfield Properties. We learned from a Weymouth town official (John Abbott) during the March meeting that Brookfield Properties has been designated the master developer at Union Point, however, they have not assumed the duties of a master developer since they have not acquired any land on the old base.

Recently, the Federal Government announced their intention to sell via competitive bid 51 acres of government-owned land near Shea Memorial Drive on the old base. During the base's final three decades as a military installation this land was the Navy and Marine Corps family housing area. For a time after the base closed the houses there were occupied by U. S. Coast Guard families. The houses were abandoned and demolished between 2003 and 2015 and the land has been vacant since then. The Southfield Redevelopment Authority made at least two attempts to purchase this land, but their offers were rejected. As of this writing no other bids have been submitted.

We'd like to thank all the members who recently responded to Frank Ward's request for a lawnmower to help keep the grass around Building 140 on old NAS South Weymouth, which is where we have the Shea Naval Aviation Museum's collection in storage. Appropriately enough, Claudette Shea was the first person to respond to our request for help and we ended up getting a lawnmower from her. Claudette's late father-in-law was the famous CDR John J. Shea for whom the Shea Naval Aviation Museum, Shea Memorial Grove, Shea Fitness Center, Shea Field, Shea Memorial Drive, etc., are named in honor of. Her late husband Jack, who used to visit the Shea Naval Aviation Museum from time-to-time when it was open, was the eponymous "Jackie" from CDR Shea's "Letter to Jackie". If you are not familiar with CDR John J. Shea, the "Letter to Jackie", and its significance to the history of NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth, then go on-line to https://bcm.bc.edu/issues/winter_2002/II_jackie.html and check out that article that appears there.



During May membership director and retired USN Vice Admiral Wally Massenburg, representing both the Patriot Squadron and the Order of the Daedalians, made achievement award presentations to outstanding NJROTC and MCJROTC cadets at several Massachusetts high schools. The photos above show Wally presenting certificates, medals, and copies of General James Doolittle's book "I Could Never Be So Lucky Again" to an NJROTC cadet (with the NJROTC unit commander, retired USN Captain Dan Brennock) at the Quabbin Regional High School and to a group of MCJROTC cadets (with the MCJROTC commander retired USMC CWO Richard Muth) at Gloucester High School. The Order of the Daedalians is a fraternal organization for military pilots that started after WW1.

Wally is on the board of directors of the Association of Naval Aviation, which is the parent organization of the Patriot Squadron, and was formerly its president. As mentioned before, the Patriot Squadron is the Boston chapter of the Association of Naval Aviation. Although we do not require Patriot Squadron members to also be members of the national group, we do highly encourage all to do so. The ANA is a very worthy organization in its own right and their quarterly magazine, "Wings of Gold", is well worth the price of membership. For more information, go on-line and check out www.anahq.org.



On Monday May 9th your newsletter editor gave a presentation about NAS South Weymouth at the Fairing Way over-55 community on Union Point. The presentation was a slide show on the base and its facilities during the Second World War. Approximately forty people attended the presentation, and among them were several Patriot Squadron members. The photo above left shows finance director Faith Frattasio tending the laptop and projector with Fairing Way residents entering the room before the presentation began and the photo at right shows your newsletter editor giving the presentation.

COMING UP:

As indicated in the previous issue of this newsletter, September 2022 will mark the 25th anniversary of the closing of NAS South Weymouth, which occurred in September 1997. Your newsletter editor organized a reunion event five years ago in 2017 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the closing of the base that year, and had considered putting something together to commemorate the 25th anniversary this year too. Unfortunately, a 25th anniversary reunion is not going to happen. We'd hoped to reduce the financial risk by partnering with the VP Association, a group composed mainly of veterans who served in VP-92 and its predecessor reserve patrol squadrons at NAS South Weymouth. A solicitation of interest published in the March issue of the VP Association's quarterly newsletter, which is distributed to several hundred people, resulted in a total of seven affirmative responses. Even fewer Patriot Squadron members have expressed interest. Under the circumstances, your newsletter editor can't justify risking the time and expense to organize a reunion event this year. This is a real shame, because the 25th anniversary of the closing of NAS South Weymouth is a significant milestone that should be commemorated, but if there's little interest, there's no point in doing it.

In somewhat related news, the Brunswick Naval Museum recently announced that they intend to hold another NAS Brunswick base reunion over the weekend of September 15th, 16th, and 17th 2023. That's next year. The NAS Brunswick group's previous base reunion attracted something on the

order of a thousand attendees and had enthusiastic support from the Navy, which sent two P-3 Orions, a P-8 Poseidon, and two T-6 Texan IIs for static display. If you can go to the NAS Brunswick event in 2023, you should. The reunion event that they held last year was terrific, and they are going to attempt to make the next one even better.

The Navy is making preparations to retire its last Lockheed P-3 Orions. As many of you should know, P-3s were flown out of NAS South Weymouth by VP-92 between 1975 and 1996. There had even been some consideration given to putting a second reserve P-3 squadron at NAS South Weymouth. The last patrol squadron on the east coast, VP-62, will be retiring its last P-3s in a ceremony that will be held at NAS Jacksonville, Florida on Saturday June 4th. Your newsletter editor will be going to this event. If you were involved with P-3s, you may want to consider going too. Once VP-62's P-3s are gone, the only patrol squadron flying them will be VP-69 in Whidbey Island, Washington on the west coast, and they will not have them for long.

HELP WANTED:

As mentioned in previous issues of this newsletter, the A-4B Skyhawk jet mounted on a pylon at the center of the Shea Memorial Grove at Union Point is in need of repainting and the major wooden signage around the park needs extensive restoration work or replacement. In the past the aircraft was repainted by Patriot Squadron members who had military experience doing this kind of work, but these people are no longer active with us.

In the recent past we touched-up the markings on the old aircraft and we repainted the signs. These were stopgap measures intended to help keep these things looking presentable as long as possible. More comprehensive restoration work of a more lasting nature is now required. We have a verbal estimate for \$8,000 to \$12,000 from a local contractor (R. J. McCauliffe Painting) who has repainted military display aircraft on Hanscom AFB. Member Frank Ward is making arrangements to have the contractor conduct a physical inspection and provide a written quote. We feel that raising a sum closer to \$20,000 would allow us to repaint the A-4B, restore the signs around the park, and perhaps have a little left over for contingency and to help with ongoing maintenance.

So far we have either raised or have had committed to us (but not yet received) more than half the estimated cost of repainting the A-4B and either restoring or replacing the major signs around the park. We are looking for somebody to commit to lead a project to 1) raise the remaining funds to get all the work done and 2) manage the work through to completion.

An attempt should be made to raise the necessary funds through a GoFundMe campaign tied to Facebook and other social media as well as through reaching out to local organizations such as the A-4 Skyhawk Association and the local chapter of the Marine Corps Aviation Association and also by placing signs (like political campaign signs) around the Shea Memorial Grove Park soliciting donations. Using Patriot Squadron funds for this purpose, although possible, would weaken our financial condition substantially. Therefore, we should try to raise the money to do this instead of tap into our general funds.

Potential benefits of a public fund-raising campaign for the A-4 and signage restoration effort, rather than tap into our general funds, include:

- 1) Provides an indication of public support (or lack of it) for preserving the history of the old base.
- 2) Provides a mechanism for people to become aware of the Patriot Squadron.
- 3) Provides an opportunity for people to get involved in a tangible effort to help preserve a part of the old base.

Again, for this effort to go forward we need someone to volunteer to manage this project.

If there's anybody out there who would be interested in doing this, or in assuming a leadership position within the Patriot Squadron, please reach out to any member of the board of directors at any of our monthly meetings to express interest. Don't assume that just because somebody has been serving in a leadership position in this organization for many years means that person wants to remain in that position. If this organization is to continue into the future, more people need to get involved.

We'd like to thank the following Patriot Squadron members and other people for generously donating funds towards the A-4B repainting and sign restoration/replacement effort as of this writing:

- John Bott
- Robert Benedetti
- Rita Cavanaugh
- Steve Cohn
- Howard B. Ellis III
- Faith and Marc Frattasio
- Robert Mandeville
- Wally Massenburg
- Donald Peterson
- Mary Ready
- Gene Sich
- Herkus Von Letkemann II

Although everybody on this list donated generously, we'd be remiss to not mention that one individual, Donald Peterson, donated nearly half the total amount raised so far and warrants an equally big "thank you". Donald was an airship guy who was assigned to the Naval Air Development Unit at NAS South Weymouth during that unusual command's final years. Thanks Donald!

In addition to the individuals listed above, Eversource Energy, the A-4 Skyhawk Association, and the Old Fogey's Club made very, very, generous donations towards this effort. Peter Cole of the A-4 Skyhawk Association served as the point of contact for that group and Herkus Von Letkemann II was responsible for the donation from the Old Fogey's Club.

If anybody else out there would like to contribute funds towards repainting the A-4B and the restoration or replacement of the signage at the Shea Memorial Grove, send a check to:

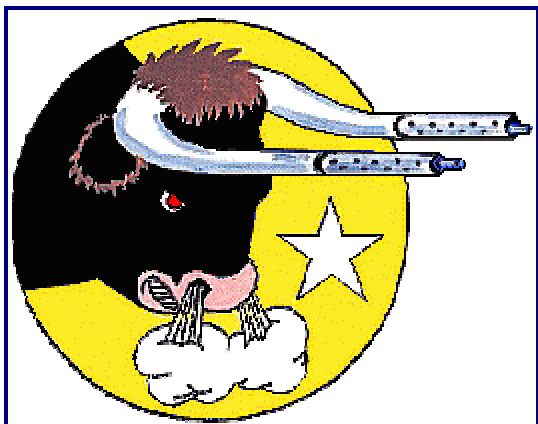
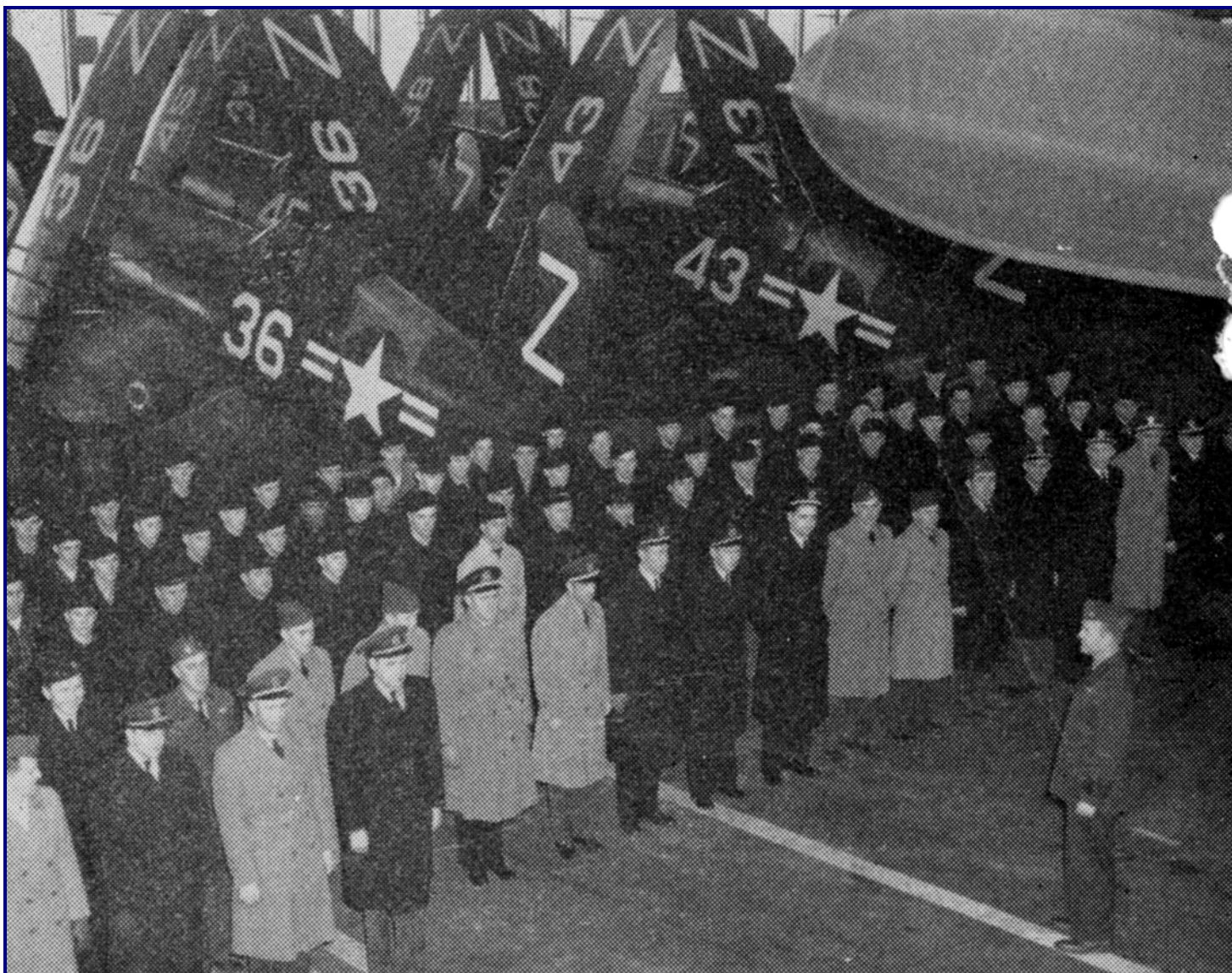
ANA Patriot Squadron
C/O Marc Frattasio
PO Box 30
Pembroke, MA 02359

Be sure to make all checks payable to "ANA Patriot Squadron" and write "A-4B Repainting Fund" on the check too. Do not make the checks payable to Marc Frattasio or any other member of the Patriot Squadron. They must be made payable to "ANA Patriot Squadron".

The ANA Patriot Squadron is a 501c3 non-profit educational corporation. As such all donations to this group should be tax-deductible as charitable contributions. The Patriot Squadron's EIN for tax purposes is 04-3370127.

Its also worth noting that the Jared Monti memorial tree that we planted at the Shea Memorial Grove a few years ago to commemorate this local hero did not survive the past winter and needs to be replaced. Would anybody out there like to take this on as a project? If so, please reach out to us using the contact information presented on the first page of this newsletter.

DID YOU KNOW?



Naval Air Reserve fighter squadron VF-916, organized at NAS Quantum after the Second World War, was one of several Navy and Marine reserve units called up to active duty for the Korean War. The photo presented above shows the members of VF-916 assembled in the old Neutrality Patrol hangar at NAS Quantum as they reported for active duty on February 1, 1951. Note the F4U/FG Corsairs with NAS Quantum base markings in the background. The image presented at left is VF-916's insignia. The squadron called itself "The Roaring Bulls".

A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



This Navy or Marine Air Reserve FG-1D Corsair ran off the runway and nosed over in a marsh on NAS Squantum on September 26, 1948. This view is looking approximately northwards towards Dorchester Bay and Boston. Note the old Neutrality Patrol hangar visible in the background. For many years after the base closed this old hangar was used to house a permanent “flea market”. It was demolished about 1984 as part of the first phase of Marina Bay housing construction.

