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**Issue #33**

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

**SEP 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:**

We may be getting closer to resuming in-person meetings. Jim Young of the Southfield Redevelopment Authority recently asked us to contact him in September about resuming the use of the SRA meeting room at Union Point. However, in recent weeks there has supposedly been a "resurgence" in COVID-19 cases across the country. Some communities in Massachusetts have reacted by renewing mask mandates and other restrictions. Until you hear otherwise, assume that we will continue to conduct our monthly member's meetings via the "Zoom" virtual meeting service.

Member Al Firnrohr, who was in VP-92 and its predecessors at NAS South Weymouth, recently had a minor stroke. Al is OK for the most part and recovering at home. If you'd like to send a "get well" card his address is 105 Maryland Street, Marshfield MA 02050. E-mail [akamacs40@gmail.com](mailto:akamacs40@gmail.com).

Little has changed at Union Point since the last newsletter. Brookfield Properties' exclusive option to purchase land on old NAS South Weymouth, which had expired and was temporarily extended during the spring, was subsequently renewed for a longer period. Although Brookfield Properties has not acquired any land at Union Point as of this writing, we have been told that they are getting closer to

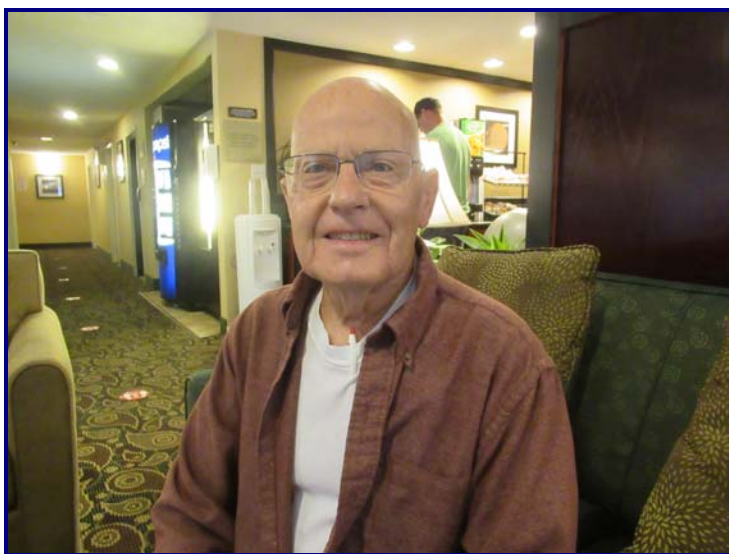
making some deals. So, it looks like Brookfield Properties isn't going anywhere anytime soon but it would be more encouraging to see some real progress in terms of land acquisition and development.

Our friend Brittany Bessler is moving out of Union Point and leaving the SRA board. This is unfortunate because Brittany has been our "eyes and ears" on the SRA board and has advocated on behalf of the Shea Naval Aviation Museum for several years. We wish her well and will miss her.

As of June, the Shea Naval Aviation Museum has been closed and our collection has been in storage for four years. That's much longer than anybody expected. As you may recall, former master developer LSTAR was supposed to move us into a new facility within a few months, but that never happened. There is no way of knowing how long it will take for matters at Union Point to get to where we can start having meaningful discussions with the new master developer, which could be Brookfield Properties or somebody else, regarding a new venue for the museum. Since this could drag out for another four years or longer, member Donald Canaday has been exploring other options at Union Point ranging from acquiring a building to renting a vacant storefront. Donald is not committing us to anything. He is merely exploring contingencies. We need to give Brookfield Properties a little more time to get organized at Union Point, but we also have to be realistic too. The most valid indicator of future performance is previous behavior. When you consider what we have been put through as an organization over the past four years, and the broken promises that have been made going back to the closing of the base in 1997, we have to be realistic. We have to think of some practical alternate courses of action that can be taken if Brookfield Properties ends up going the way of all the previous master developers at Union Point.

Washington Capital, one of the major landowners at Union Point, replaced three dead trees at the Shea Memorial Grove during the last week of July. This was an unexpected, but extremely welcome turn of events. As you may recall, the Weymouth Eagles had offered to replace the dead trees last year, but this never happened. Jennifer Sweeney of Washington Capital said that they will also replace the Jared Monti tree for us. We can't thank them enough for doing this. Its good to see that Washington Capital cares about the condition of the Shea Memorial Grove.

On July 31<sup>st</sup> a work party consisting of Charlie Collins, Joe Muise, Bill Sargent, and Frank Ward performed "weed-whacking" and other minor cleanup activities outside Building 140 at Union Point.



Member Walter Greene Jr. (above left) drove from his home in Pennsylvania to visit family in the South Weymouth area over the weekend of August 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. While Walter was here, he took a few

hours out from his busy schedule to meet your newsletter editor. He had brought a few photo albums and his father's logbooks to show. He also made some copies of some photos of a visit that General Eisenhower made to NAS Squantum during the late 1940s for the museum. Walter's father, Captain Walter Greene Sr., was the commanding officer of Naval Air Station Squantum for a few years immediately after the Second World War ended. The photo above right shows CAPT Greene conducting a personnel inspection at NAS Squantum in 1946. CAPT Greene was a very interesting character. He was an early naval aviator who completed flight training during the First World War. In the 1920s he was a pioneering airline pilot and one of the first members of the organized naval aviation reserve. He served on active duty in the Pacific during the Second World War and during the post-war era he filled leadership positions in several reserve commands, not just at NAS Squantum. Among other things, he established the Naval Air Technical Training Command at Millington, TN. Walter Jr. followed in his father's footsteps and made a career out of the Navy too. He was a supply corps officer who retired as an LCDR.

As some of you know, the members present at the July meeting voted to skip holding a meeting in August. The reason for this was 1) the unavailability of your newsletter editor to run the meeting on August 28<sup>th</sup> due to another commitment and 2) the unwillingness of anybody else to take on this task. Our next meeting will be held on Saturday September 25<sup>th</sup>.

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 you should know, the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum is hosting an NAS Brunswick reunion on that old base in Maine over the weekend of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>. The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum is similar to the Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation Museum. Although the Brunswick group is not a chapter of the Association of Naval Aviation, both organizations have similar goals and objectives. It would be beneficial for Patriot Squadron members to attend the NAS Brunswick reunion, if for no other reason than to see what they are doing with their museum and compare with what we have done and what we would like to do.

The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum has never been supported by the redevelopers of old NAS Brunswick. They own their own building and are 100% self-supporting. We could learn from their experience if the Shea Naval Aviation Museum is forced to go in the direction of self-sufficiency.

About 550 people have made advance reservations to come to the NAS Brunswick reunion so far and more are expected to commit as the date approaches. This is over twice as many people as the organizers had planned for. There will be many events held 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. Please note that due to the response, the organizers intend to stop taking banquet reservations as-of midnight on Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup>. So, if you intend to go to the NAS Brunswick reunion and also want to go to the banquet, get your banquet reservations in before the cut-off. You will be able to walk-in to the reunion the day of, but you must have reservations in advance to attend the banquet.

The Navy has committed to send two P-3C Orions and a P-8A Poseidon. All three aircraft will be open for visitors on Saturday afternoon between noon and 4 PM. Since the Navy intends to retire all its remaining P-3s in 2023 this may be the last chance for most of you to get in one, which is a good reason in itself for you to plan on coming. You can access the complete schedule of events and the on-line reservation form at <https://bnamuseum.org>.



The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum will be open on all three days. If you have any NAS Brunswick related photos that you'd be willing to let them scan for their digital collection, please bring them with you. If you have any NAS Brunswick base or squadron related memorabilia such as insignia patches, award plaques, squadron belt buckles, command ball caps, etc., gathering dust that you no longer want, please consider donating them to the museum.

The guest speaker at the banquet on Saturday will be Admiral Bill Moran, who was the Vice Chief of Naval Operations between 2016 and 2019. The museum has also made arrangements to bring a 100-year-old Navy veteran named Jack Holder in from Nevada. Mr. Holder was a flight engineer on PBY Catalinas and PB4Y-1 Liberators. He was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Mr. Holder is expected to give at least one presentation about his experiences at Pearl Harbor and during WW2. He wrote a book about his wartime experiences, which is called "Fear, Adrenaline, and Excitement" (ISBN 978-1622175215). He is expected to bring copies to sell at the reunion.

The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum has made arrangements with a professional videographer to record interviews with NAS Brunswick veterans. Interview sessions are being scheduled for 30-minute blocks throughout the weekend. If you would like to talk about any aspect of your military experiences at NAS Brunswick and have it recorded for posterity, please schedule an interview session before they fill up. You can reserve a session through the reunion event schedule web page.

The reunion organizers are making space available in the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum's main exhibit hall at one-hour intervals on Saturday for squadron alumni associations to conduct "mini-reunions" on Saturday. Your newsletter editor, who was a reservist with VP-MAU and VP-92 at NAS Brunswick, has made arrangements to hold a joint VP-MAU and VP-92 "mini-reunion" from 11 AM to noon. If you are coming to the NAS Brunswick reunion and were in VP-MAU or VP-92 please come to the museum at 11 AM on Saturday. 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 only one set per person will be handed out while they last on a first-come first-served basis.

The Navy's famous Blue Angels flight demonstration team will appear at the "Great State of Maine Air Show" at old NAS Brunswick during the weekend of September 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. This is an unexpected turn of events and you probably won't see Brunswick, ME appear on the team's event calendar for 2021, which has led to some confusion, but they are definitely coming. What happened is that the Blue Angels were scheduled to appear elsewhere else that weekend, but cancellation of this event made them available for Brunswick. Please note that the air show at Brunswick will not coincide with the upcoming base reunion – they are on different weekends. So, if you are coming to old NAS Brunswick for the base reunion on the weekend of September 17, 18, and 19 do not expect to see the Blue Angels there!

### **HELP WANTED:**

There are a number of things that we can use some volunteers to organize and/or do for us.

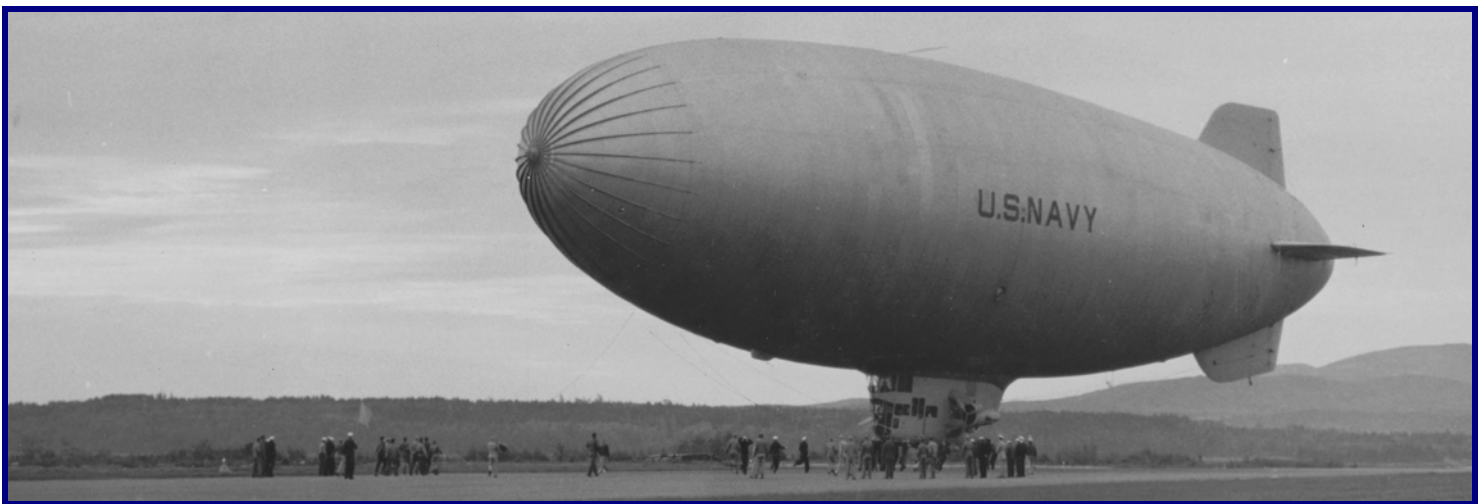
1) The three large wooden signs around the perimeter of the Shea Memorial Grove need to be restored or replaced. Some of the wood has rotted and the paint is peeling off in sheets. There were three or four separate efforts over the past few years to repaint the signs. At that time the signs were machine or hand sanded and then repainted using latex enamel paint. These repainting efforts were stop-gap efforts to try to make the signs presentable for a time. The paint did not adhere for long and more extensive restoration work or a total replacement is now required. If the existing signs are not replaced, they should be stripped down to bare wood, the rotten sections replaced, and then they

should be primed and repainted using oil-based sign paint. Ideally, the signs should be taken up and the work done off-premises. If a member with the necessary equipment and skills would like to take this on as a project, please let us know.

2) The A-4B Skyhawk at the center of the Shea Memorial Grove park needs to be repainted. It looks OK from a distance, but if you approach the old aircraft and look closely at it you will see that the paint is in deplorable condition. We performed a touch-up a couple of years ago, but the aircraft really needs to be completely repainted. This will not be a trivial undertaking, in large part because the aircraft must be repainted in accordance with the Navy's standards for such things. Technically, the A-4B is still owned by the Navy and the Patriot Squadron is only its custodian. The Navy is very particular about the type of paint that has to be used, surface preparation, etc. The aircraft will most likely have to be completely stripped down to bare metal. In the past the aircraft was repainted by Patriot Squadron members with experience painting military aircraft, but these members are no longer active with us. We might be able to reach out to one or more of these people on a consulting basis, but that is probably about it. It might make sense to contact the Navy and inquire if they could have Navy personnel paint the aircraft for us, but considering that there's not much in the way of Navy commands left in the Boston area this may be a long-shot. Likewise, we could reach out to local high schools with vocational programs and see if this is something that they might want to take on as a community service project. There may be other options too. If some member would like to take the A-4B repainting project on, please let us know.

3) If nobody steps forward to restore or replace the three large signs at the Shea Memorial Grove, it will probably cost something on the order of \$6,000 to have a professional sign shop do the job. Likewise, contracting out to have somebody repaint the A-4B will probably cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000. Paying for these efforts out of Patriot Squadron funds would wipe us out. Perhaps somebody can organize a "Go-Fund-Me" campaign to raise money for these purposes? Again, if somebody would like to take on a fundraising project for these or other efforts, please let us know.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**



NAS South Weymouth's ZP-11 send occasional airship detachments to the naval air facility at Bar Harbor, Maine during the Second World War. These single-ship detachments were sent there during periods of heavy German submarine activity in the Gulf of Maine. The photograph presented above shows a Goodyear ZPN-K type blimp being ground-handled at NAF Bar Harbor on June 9, 1943

## A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



This aerial photo of NAS South Weymouth was taken on July 20, 1943. The circular area above LTA Hangar One is the blimp landing mat, which in recent years is where recalled Volkswagens were stored. The photo shows LTA Hangar Two nearing completion. The second blimp hangar was built because NAS South Weymouth was supposed to get a second blimp patrol squadron. This never happened, and although a detachment of blimp utility squadron ZJ-1 was assigned to the base, LTA Hangar Two remained underutilized through the war. It was demolished during the summer of 1951.

