



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:

As you know, the ANA Patriot Squadron suspended regular monthly members' meetings after the Commonwealth of Massachusetts first restricted public gatherings in reaction to the "Wuhan Flu" in March. Recently, the state governor put further restrictions in place such as mandating the wearing of masks at all times while outdoors, a nightly curfew, and limits on the number of people who can gather in private residences. In order to regain a small measure of normality in these irrational times, the Patriot Squadron began holding monthly members' meetings using the "Zoom" Internet-based virtual meeting service. The first of these virtual meetings was held on Saturday September 26th. We expect to continue holding virtual meetings going forward, from 11 AM to noon on the last Saturday of the month, for as long as there is sufficient interest in doing so.

Please note that our next members' meeting will be held on Saturday January 30th. The reason for this is that we have always suspended our monthly meetings during the holiday season. Immediately after the members' meeting on October 31st your newsletter editor gave a slide presentation on various types of military aircraft based at NAS Squantum over the years. This presentation was well received, so other similar presentations will be given going forward. Although this feature should not

be expected at every meeting, there will be a presentation on the various types of helicopters that were based at NAS South Weymouth at the end of our next meeting. If anybody out there has something of interest to the membership that they would like to present at a future "Zoom" meeting, please reach out to us at inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org.

We are obligated to conduct a meeting of the board of directors on an annual basis in order to comply with 501c3 requirements. Normally we hold this annual meeting in March, but since everything has been delayed this year, we conducted our annual meeting in conjunction with the members' "Zoom" meeting on October 31st. We have filled three of the vacancies that existed within our organization chart, and the new officers were ratified by the participating members during the annual meeting.

Walter (Wally) Massenburg agreed to assume the role of Membership Officer, Mary Jean Hicky is our new Chaplain, and Walter McLean is our new Flight Surgeon. Wally is a retired Navy vice admiral. He started out as a P-3 Orion pilot and eventually commanded patrol squadron VP-6. He served in many other high leadership positions in the Navy, finishing up his military career as the commander of the Naval Air Systems Command. He's got his own Wikipedia entry if you'd like to review the details of his entire naval career! After retiring from the Navy in 2007 he moved to Massachusetts and went to work for Raytheon. Mary Jean Hicky has been an active member of the Patriot Squadron for many years. She's a physicist who worked as an aeronautical engineer for the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Company. Mary Jean helped design several aircraft for the Navy including the F9F Cougar and S2F Tracker. She's quite a remarkable person who presently lives in the Fairing Way community at Union Point, which give her the opportunity to serve as one of our "eyes and ears" to inform us of what's going on at the old base. Walter McLean is an M.D. and a former USN flight surgeon. He also worked for the Federal Aviation Administration as a medical officer. If you need health-related advice, feel free to call Walter at 508-524-5913.

On Thursday October 8th member Robert Mandeville put another coat of blue paint on all the signs at the Shea Memorial Grove. As you may recall, these signs were repainted in the spring but they really needed a second coat of blue paint to cover up thin spots. Thanks to Bob's hard work, the signs now look good from up close as well as from a distance.

As previously reported, two memorial trees were lost at the Shea Memorial Grove in recent months. At the suggestion of member Tom Rizzo, the Weymouth Fraternal Order of Eagles volunteered to replace the missing trees for us. As of this writing we are waiting for the Eagles to reach out to Grove Director Peter Crone to schedule some time to do this.

High wind conditions during storms in late October and early November caused considerable damage to several trees at the Shea Memorial Grove. Bill Sargent, with the help of SouthField Redevelopment Authority personnel and some of his friends, cleaned up the fallen tree limbs. We will re-assess the situation in the spring. It is possible that we may have to replace a third memorial tree.

We recently received a generous cash donation from Douglas MacLeay and Wilma Stimeling of Plantation, Florida for the Shea Naval Aviation Museum. This has been an extremely difficult year for the Patriot Squadron, since we have been shut-off from all our normal avenues of fund-raising. Thus, Doug and Wilma's generous donation is very much appreciated.

COMING UP:

Our next major group activity would normally have been the annual holiday luncheon. However, this will be impractical if not impossible to do this year, so we aren't even going to try. Sorry about that!

We've been told that the new master developer at Union Point, Brookfield Properties, is presently engaged in negotiations with all the landowners on the old base. We've been told that these landowners are organizations that the previous master developer owes money to, for the most part. It is our understanding that negotiations are expected to continue through the spring of 2021. We will not be in a position to discuss the future of the Shea Naval Aviation Museum with Brookfield Properties until they acquire the property.

We've been told that Brookfield Properties intends to use the old "Welcome Center" for their site office. This is the red barn like building adjacent to the Shea Memorial Grove, which as you may know was supposed to eventually house the Shea Naval Aviation Museum. This building suffered water damage in recent years and needs to be repaired before Brookfield Properties can move in. It is our intention to send Brookfield Properties a letter to remind them that we want to meet with them as soon as possible after things are organized at Union Point to discuss the future of the museum.

Membership Officer, Wally Massenburg, is reaching out to everybody whose Patriot Squadron membership lapses at the end of this year. A friendly reminder that the Patriot Squadron is the Boston area affiliate of the national Association of Naval Aviation. Though we don't force Patriot Squadron members to join the national group, so as to support the museum, we do encourage all our members to join the national group. For one thing, Association of Naval Aviation membership gets you "Wings of Gold" magazine, a slick color quarterly publication that presents terrific articles on the past and present of naval aviation. To join or for more information go to www.anahq.org.

HELP WANTED:

Although we have been fairly successful in filling the gaps in our organization chart recently, we can always use help. If you would like to take an active role in the Patriot Squadron, please contact us via e-mail at inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org and we will find something meaningful for you to do.

DID YOU KNOW?



Between 1962 and 1964 several Lockheed TP-2F Neptunes were assigned to the reserve aircraft pool at NAS South Weymouth for use by the Naval Air Reserve patrol squadrons on drill weekends.

At that time there were seven different reserve patrol squadrons at NAS South Weymouth. These squadrons were VP-911, VP-912, VP-913, VP-914, VP-915, VP-916, and VP-917.

The TP-2Fs were originally P2V-6s that were configured for the anti-shipping role. They had no specialized anti-submarine warfare equipment such as sonobuoys, diesel exhaust “sniffers”, or magnetic anomaly detectors. When they were assigned to the reserve training role they were stripped of most mission equipment and considered to be not mission-capable. For example, they were fitted with gun turrets on nose and tail but had no guns. The “T” in TP-2F stood for “training”.

These aircraft were used as “bounce birds” and for basic pilot and crew proficiency training. They were sent to NAS South Weymouth during the Cuban Missile Crisis when most of the mission-capable SP-2Es were pulled from the base and redeployed to operational commands.

BILL HORSCH (1925 – 2020):



We normally do not put member’s death notices in the newsletter for a number of reasons. For one thing it’s a depressing subject. Another reason is that generally by the time the newsletter is distributed deaths within the membership are “old news”. However, we really have to make an exception for Bill Horsch, a founding member of the Patriot Squadron who we lost in early November.

Bill was a retired Navy senior chief electronics technician, who enlisted right after graduating from Weymouth High School in 1943, literally during the middle of the Second World War. He was trained as an airborne radar technician and operator at a time when everything about radar was a closely guarded secret. He was initially assigned to Carrier Aircraft Service Unit 27 at NAAS Charlestown, RI. CASU-27 maintained various kinds of radar-equipped aircraft that were used to train Navy

night-fighter pilots and early airborne warning and control crews in tactics to counter Japanese kamikaze attacks. Towards the end of the war, Bill was transferred to Headquarters Squadron One of Fleet Air Wing Five based at NAS Boca Chica, FL, where he continued to maintain airborne radar and radio systems.

Bill remained in the Navy after the war ended. He was reassigned to a night fighter squadron, VF(N)-90, and deployed with this command on board the aircraft carrier USS Franklin D. Roosevelt for a Mediterranean cruise. While on the ship, Bill qualified as a naval aircrewman on Curtiss SB2C Helldivers. In later years he also qualified as a radio/radar operator on PBY Catalinas, P4Y Privateers, P2V Neptunes, S2F Trackers, and a rare variant of the R4D Skytrain that was specially equipped to train airborne radar operators.

In 1947 Bill became an active duty stationkeeper at NAS Squantum, MA, the birthplace of the Naval Air Reserve. While at Squantum, he played a leading role in establishing a reserve electronics training program to which other Naval Air Reserve Training Command air stations across the country sent part-time reservists to be trained as aviation electronics technicians. In late 1953 Bill relocated the electronics training program from NAS Squantum to NAS South Weymouth, just before Squantum was closed.

During his final years in the Navy, Bill was reassigned to electronics training roles for reservists at NAS Los Alamitos, CA and NAS Minneapolis, MN. He retired from the Navy in 1962 as an ATCS and embarked upon a second career with Honeywell.

After he retired from the Navy, Bill joined a local group of Navy and Marine Corps veterans who had served at NAS Squantum or NAS South Weymouth that was called the “NAS Squantum/NAS South Weymouth Old Timers Association”. This group eventually evolved into the ANA Patriot Squadron.

When the Navy announced that NAS South Weymouth was to be closed in 1997, Bill (and others) wanted to ensure that South Weymouth did not suffer the fate of Squantum, which was redeveloped into the Marina Bay community with no reminders that it was previously the site of an important military installation. Bill played an instrumental role in ensuring that a provision was included in the BRAC law that closed NAS South Weymouth, which obligates the developer to provide a place for a military heritage museum on the old base, with the ANA Patriot Squadron providing volunteers to tend it. Thus, Bill played a key role in establishing the framework for the Shea Naval Aviation Museum.

Although he suffered serious health problems in recent years that prevented him from being an active member, back when he was active, nobody did more for the Patriot Squadron than Bill did. Your newsletter editor does not want to go into details here, but he can assure you that if it wasn't for Bill Horsch, this organization would be substantially different today and it might no longer exist.

Bill's passing literally marks the end of an era. He may have been the oldest of the NAS Squantum “old-timers”. Your newsletter editor, who has extensively researched NAS Squantum over the years, does not know anybody alive today who was on the base before Bill got there.

Bill also had the foresight to write and publish his Navy memoirs some years ago. His book is called “ATCS Bill Horsch: One Man's Career In Naval Aviation”. It is still available directly from the publisher, Lulu Press, at www.lulu.com. If you'd like to learn more about Bill or about NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth, check his book out.

A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



Here is John Shea Jr. helping to dedicate the plaque honoring his heroic father at NAS Squantum on July 20, 1946. The plaque was relocated to NAS South Weymouth in 1953 and is now at the Shea Memorial Grove. It is directly in front of the flagpole and you can't miss it. The next time you visit the park, please check it out. Of course, CDR Shea is why the park is called the Shea Memorial Grove...

