



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

PO Box 30

Pembroke, Massachusetts 02359

inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org

www.anapatriotsquadron.org

Like Us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SheaNavalAviationMuseum

Issue #34

A 501c3 Non-Profit Educational Organization

DEC 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 remain unable to use the SRA's meeting room at Union Point. However, we conducted a test using a meeting room at the Tufts Memorial Library in Weymouth on October 30th. This worked OK, so we intend to use this room for our next meeting, which will be held on Saturday January 29th.

On Wednesday October 20th, Building 134 on old NAS South Weymouth was destroyed by fire. This was a small gray wood-frame structure adjacent to the control tower. It was built in the late 1980s, served as an office for the ATC department, and was abandoned when the base was closed in 1997.

Several Patriot Squadron members including Steve Cohn, Faith and Marc Frattasio, Robert Mandeville, Joe McCann, and Wally Massenburg attended the NAS Brunswick base reunion sponsored by the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum over the weekend of September 17th, 18th, and 19th. This was an extremely successful event that was attended by more than 900 people. The Navy had a strong participation, sending two P-3 Orions and a P-8 Poseidon from NAS Jacksonville and two T-6 Texan IIs from NAS Pensacola. The Patriot Squadron could learn a lot from the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum's people. Despite a total lack of sponsorship from the redevelopers of old

NAS Brunswick (essentially the situation we find ourselves in today) the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum has been able to establish a thriving and fairly well-funded military heritage museum on the old base. They raised the money to purchase their own museum building (the old base chapel), have custody of a P-2 Neptune and P-3 Orion, and are 100 self-supporting. Your newsletter editor strongly encourages all Patriot Squadron members who can do so to take a trip some day up to Brunswick, Maine and check out what the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum has managed to accomplish during the ten years since that base was closed.



One of the highlights of the NAS Brunswick reunion was the presence of 100-year-old Navy veteran Jack Holder. Mr. Holder was at Pearl Harbor on December 7th 1941 during the dastardly Japanese sneak attack on the Army and Navy installations in and around there. During the Second World War he served as a flight engineer and gunner on board PBY Catalina flying boats and P4Y-1 Liberator patrol bombers. He was engaged in several combat actions where his aircraft destroyed Axis warships. He gave two very interesting and informative presentations about his wartime experiences to standing-room-only crowds at the reunion. Mr. Holder wrote a book about his time in the Navy, which is called "Fear, Adrenaline, and Excitement". This book is well worth reading. You can order it on-line or through any decent bookshop. The photo presented at left shows our very own Membership Director, retired Navy admiral Wally Massenburg, standing with Jack Holder at the reunion.

On September 18th a work party composed of Rita Cavonius, Joe Muise, Charlie Collins, Donald Canaday, Bill Sargent, and Frank Ward performed "weed-whacking" and other minor cleanup activities outside Building 140 at Union Point. The photo presented at right shows the work party posed in front of Building 140, with the exception of Frank Ward, who was taking the photo.





On Saturday September 11th Patriot Squadron members Charlie Collins, Doug Folsom, Faith and Marc Frattasio, Mark Danckert, and John Margie attended the annual Boston chapter of the Marine Corps Aviation Association lobster bake at the 4th Cliff Military Recreation Area in Marshfield. We raised \$160 for the Shea Naval Aviation Museum via memorabilia sales at this event. The photo at left shows Sharon and Charlie Collins and Faith and Marc Frattasio dining with a Marine Corps couple.



The photo above left shows John Margie and Doug Folsom. The photo above right shows Mark Danckert, in black polo shirt, enjoying clam chowder with some of his old friends from NAS South Weymouth's VMA-322. John Margie, who is a member of the Boston chapter of the Marine Corps Aviation Association as well as the Patriot Squadron, organizes the lobster bake every year towards the end of the summer. It's a fun event and all Patriot Squadron members are welcome to attend.

Your newsletter editor had another article published in the October issue of the Naval Institute's "Proceedings" magazine. This issue was focused on submarines and the article, "Simulation Could

Help Reservists Retain Airborne ASW Skills”, was printed in the magazine’s “Nobody Asked Me But” section. The article is reproduced in italicized text below:

Airborne antisubmarine warfare (ASW) is a difficult discipline to master, requiring equal measures of training and experience to become proficient. The training pipeline for tactical crewmembers is both intellectually and physically demanding, and a high proportion of those who meet the initial qualifications for entry wash out.

Because airborne ASW tactical crewmembers are hard to get and retain, the Navy operated an extensive reserve program during the Cold War. An important element of this program was the reserve patrol squadrons. During the 1950s and 1960s, there were dozens of these squadrons on Navy bases across the country. Their numbers were reduced over the years, but through 1990, there were still more than a dozen operating.

Thus, it was fairly easy for airborne ASW tactical crewmembers to continue in the Navy Reserve after they left active duty. At least one reserve patrol squadron was within commuting distance of most major population centers. During the 1990s, this changed dramatically.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the recasting of Communist China from a mortal enemy to a vital link in the global supply chain brought about a dramatic reduction in potentially hostile submarine deployments. In the cuts to U.S. military forces that followed, reserve patrol aviation was hit especially hard. There now are only two reserve patrol squadrons remaining, VP-62 at NAS Jacksonville, Florida, and VP-69 at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington.

VP-62 and VP-69 operate the venerable P-3 Orion, which was first introduced in 1962. The Navy recently retired the P-3 from front-line service in the ASW role and replaced it with the P-8 Poseidon. The reserve P-3s will be retired in 2023. Although there had been talk of eliminating reserve patrol aviation when the last P-3s are retired, current planning has VP-62 and VP-69 programmed to transition from the P-3 to the P-8.

It is good that reserve patrol aviation will continue. But with only two reserve patrol squadrons on opposite corners of the country, it will be impossible for the majority of P-8 tactical crewmembers who leave the regular Navy to continue their military careers in the Reserve. P-8 pilots, maintainers, and administrative personnel can easily retain their military skills in the civilian world. The P-8 is derived from the Boeing 737, the most widely used commercial airliner in the world today. However, there is no civilian occupation that will keep a P-8 sensor operator or naval flight officer’s skills sharp once he or she leaves active duty.

The good news is that much of what a tactical crewmember does on board a P-8 during an ASW mission can be easily simulated on the ground. All the tactical stations on the aircraft are physically identical—with changes in functional configuration accomplished entirely by software configuration at boot-time—so building a basic P-8 tactical crew simulator would not be that complex. In essence, each tactical crew station on a P-8 is like a high-end video gaming console equipped with a programmable keyboard, a joystick, and two flat-screen monitors.

For many years video gamers have been using networked PC-based flight simulators combined with realistic controls, instrumentation, seating, etc., to wage large-scale aerial battles featuring detailed computer models of military aircraft and dozens of participants. Similar gaming technology could be adapted for the Navy’s purposes at fairly low cost. The Navy could set up small reserve units equipped with networked PC-based P-8 tactical crew simulators at selected reserve centers. These could be located anywhere significant numbers of former P-8 tactical crewmembers tend to migrate.

Each of these reserve units could be affiliated with a regular Navy P-8 squadron. Ideally, the squadrons could send a P-8 to the nearest suitable airfield, perhaps on a quarterly basis, to provide reservists with actual flight time. In addition, reservists could perform their two-week annual training with the squadron, where they could fly operational missions.

This would provide a relatively inexpensive means of ensuring the skills of veteran P-8 tactical crewmembers are not lost when they leave the Navy. A scan of recent headlines shows that the submarine threat thought to be over in the 1990s is showing strong signs of resurgence. Let's not throw away veterans' airborne ASW skills simply because they do not settle near the two remaining reserve patrol squadrons. The Navy may need them back!

Warren Smith, a friend of Bill Sargent who is the Weymouth Veteran's Grave Officer, recently donated a Navy aircrew life vest and a Navy survival vest to the Shea Naval Aviation Museum's collection. Both items came from old NAS South Weymouth.

COMING UP:

Patriot Squadron members at the Tufts Memorial Library for the combination virtual and in-person meeting held on Saturday October 30th. Although only six members showed up at the library, the meeting room worked well enough that all participants, in-person as well as remote, voted to give an all in-person meeting a try at this location on Saturday January 29th.



As indicated on the first page of this newsletter, we remain unable to use the Southfield Redevelopment Authority's meeting room at Union Point. However, we recently conducted a test using a meeting room at the Tufts Memorial Library, located at 46 Broad Street in Weymouth, and this test worked OK. During the test, the meeting was conducted primarily using the "Zoom" Internet based virtual meeting service, as we have been doing since the so-called "pandemic" began in 2020. However, member Joe Muise made arrangements to reserve a meeting room capable of holding twenty people at the library, as a test, and invited any member who wanted to meet in person to come there to do so. He set up a laptop computer so the members who came to the library could see and hear the "Zoom" meeting. Six or seven members showed up and the library, and by all accounts the room worked out well for this purpose. We intend to hold the next meeting, which will be held on Saturday January 29th between 11 AM and noon, at the Tufts Memorial Library. All members who live in the local area should plan to come to the library. If this works out OK with the larger group, then we will try to keep meeting there until such time that the SRA meeting room becomes available to us again. We are going to try to continue to use "Zoom" to "simulcast" our meetings for the benefit of those members who do not live in the local area. We do not know how this is going to work, or even if it will be practical, but we do intend to try. Again, if you want to participate in the next meeting, be at the Tufts Memorial Library at 46 Broad Street in Weymouth at 11 AM on Saturday January 29th.

We will most likely go out for lunch as a group afterwards, perhaps at Warren's in South Weymouth or perhaps someplace closer to the library. We'll probably determine this at the meeting.

Patriot Squadron membership renewal season is about to begin. As you should know, Wally Massenburg (wallymassenburg@comcast.net) is the group's membership director. If your Patriot Squadron dues are due, he will reach out to you before the end of the year. Membership in the Patriot Squadron is \$15 per year or \$40 for three years. The Patriot Squadron is the Boston area chapter of a national organization called the Association of Naval Aviation. Although we do not require local members to also be members of the national group, we encourage you to do so. For more information about the Association of Naval Aviation, go to www.anahq.org.

A reminder that Patriot Squadron meetings will be suspended for the holiday season. There will be no meetings in November or December. The next meeting will on January 29th as mentioned above.

We intend to hold a holiday luncheon at the Abington Ale House, located on Route 18 just a few miles from old NAS South Weymouth, on Saturday December 4th. As in previous years, we have made arrangements with the restaurant's management to reserve several tables in the main dining room close to the fireplace. If you want to come, just be at the restaurant at noon on Saturday December 4th and be prepared to order something off the regular lunch menu. Please note that you will be responsible to pay for whatever you order and you should also plan on tipping the staff. No reservation or notice is required. If you want to come, just show up. All Patriot Squadron members and their guests are welcome. We'll probably stay there until 3 PM or so.



AG3 Daniel Banach is shown here standing in front of the sign at the original main entrance to NAS South Weymouth at White Street. Some of you may recall that we had blue and gold t-shirts made up with this same design to raise money for the museum at the reunion held to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the closing of the base. Now you know where the shirt's design came from.

Your newsletter editor was recently provided with an opportunity to scan a collection of 35mm color slides that were taken on NAS South Weymouth during the early 1960s by Daniel Banach, who was an aerographer's mate assigned to the base weather station at that time. Among other things, the slides present a very interesting "walk around" the base from the main entrance to the airfield, as it was in those days. Your newsletter editor will give a presentation using these slides at some venue at some point, and all Patriot Squadron members will be invited.

September 2022 will mark the 25th anniversary of the closing of NAS South Weymouth. No promises, but it is possible that a reunion event will be organized in the Weymouth area that month in cooperation with the VP-92 alumni association. More information will be provided if this happens.

HELP WANTED:

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

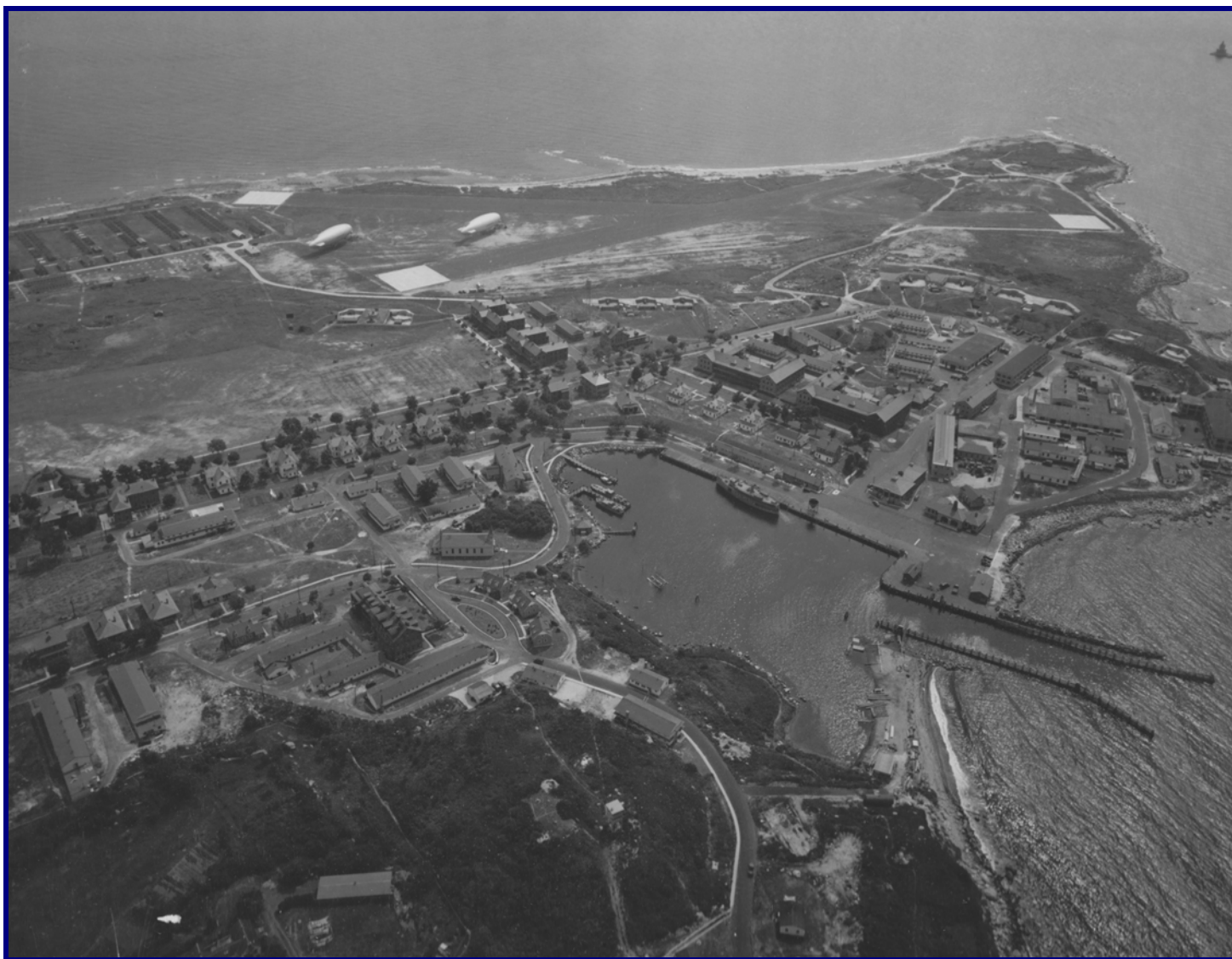
1) The three large wooden signs around the perimeter of the Shea Memorial Grove need to be restored or replaced. Some of the wood has rotted and the paint is peeling off in sheets. There were three or four separate efforts over the past few years to repaint the signs. At that time the signs were machine 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.

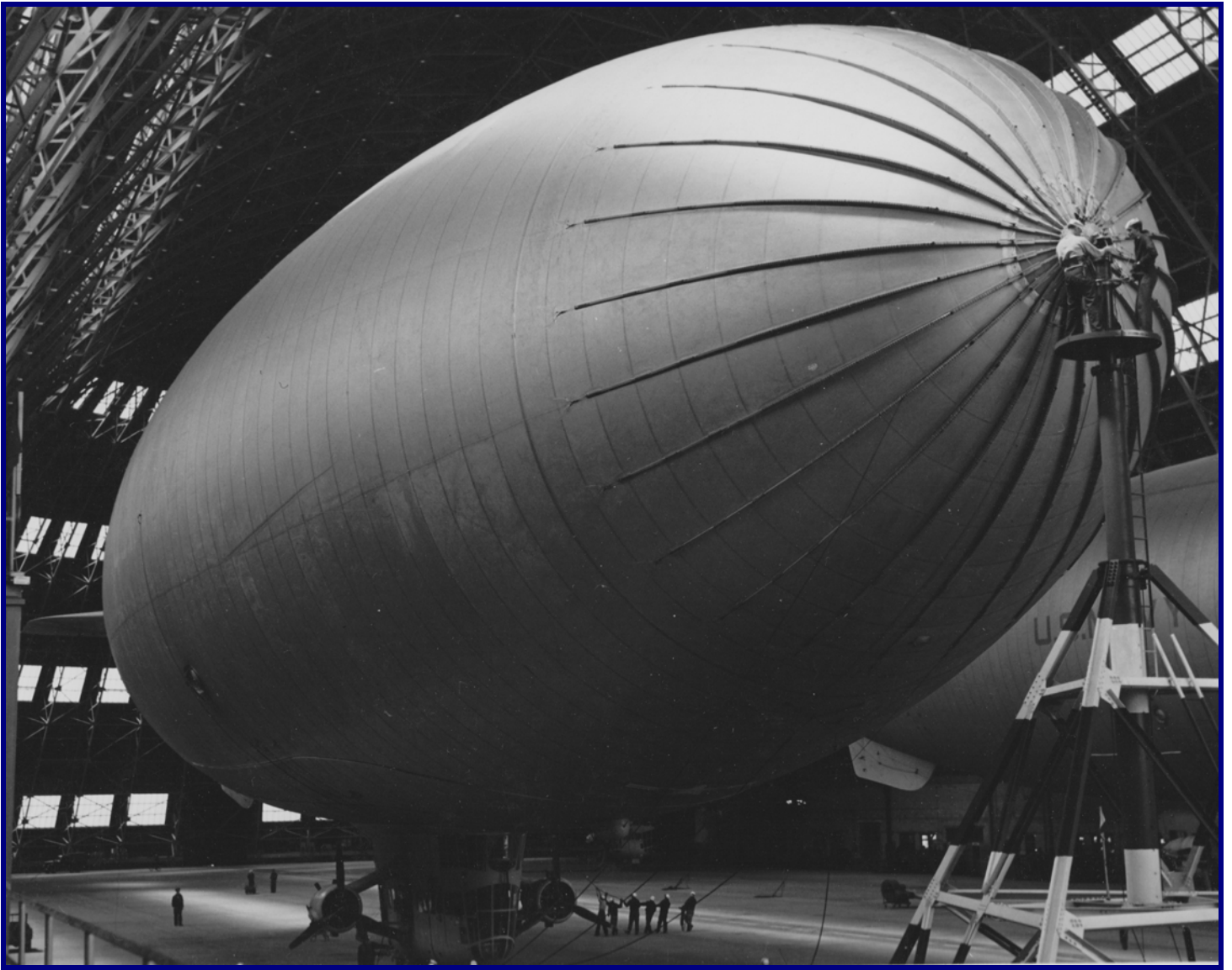
If there's anybody out there who would be interested in assuming a leadership position within the Patriot Squadron, please reach out to any member of the board of directors at any of our monthly meetings to express interest. Don't assume that just because somebody has been serving in a leadership position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

DID YOU KNOW?



The ZJ-1 detachment based at NAS South Weymouth during the Second World War operated a sub-detachment of ZNN-G type blimps at Fisher's Island off the coast of Rhode Island. The blimps based at Fisher's Island were primarily used to assist the Naval Torpedo Station at Newport, RI test torpedoes. The blimps followed the inert test torpedoes and marked the spot where they sank with smoke markers so they could be recovered by divers for inspection. On NAS South Weymouth, the ZJ-1 sub-detachment personnel were known as "the island folk".

A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



ZP-11 ZNP-K type blimp being inspected inside NAS South Weymouth's LTA Hangar One on May 2nd 1944 after suffering what was characterized as "envelope abrasion". If you look carefully, you can see the abrasion marks on the bottom half of the blimp's gasbag behind the nose stiffening battens

