



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

**PO Box 30**

**Pembroke, Massachusetts 02359**

**[inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org](mailto:inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org)**

**[www.anapatriotsquadron.org](http://www.anapatriotsquadron.org)**

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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:**

Please note the new temporary mailing address presented on the masthead above. If you need to send something to us via the US Postal Service please use this PO Box address until further notice.

The Shea Naval Aviation Museum remains closed and as of this writing we do not know when it will reopen. As soon as anything changes in this regard, we will let you know. We are still meeting from 11 AM to noon on the last Saturday of the month in the South Shore Tri-Town Development Corporation/LStar Ventures meeting room in what used to be the NAS South Weymouth base housing office at Union Point. This is the white building located next to the Shea Memorial Grove park and is, in fact, the last structure built by the Navy on the old base. If you live in the local area we strongly suggest that you attend the monthly meetings, especially while the museum is in this period of transition from where it was to where its going to be.

Our moving activities got to a slow start since the last newsletter because of the severe snowstorms that affected eastern Massachusetts throughout most of the month of March. We were unable to do any more packing/moving work until Saturday March 31<sup>st</sup>. On that date members Kevin Cahill, Mark

Danckert, Albert Firrohr, Faith Frattasio, Marc Frattasio, Allan Gilman, Peter Harrington, Peter Jardim, Robert Mandeville, Robert Michaelski, and Bill Sargent met at the Shea Fitness Center gymnasium to continue the move. On Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup> members Steve Cohn, Albert Firrohr, Marc Frattasio, Allan Gilman, Dan Haff, Peter Harrington, Peter Jardim, Robert Mandeville, Robert Michaelski, and Bill Sargent basically finished moving the museum's collection out of the old Shea Fitness Center gymnasium. On Saturday April 21<sup>st</sup> members Steve Cohn, Marc Frattasio, Peter Harrington, Peter Jardim, Robert Mandeville, Robert Michaelski, and Bill Sargent met one last time at the gymnasium to do a final walk-around to ensure that we didn't miss anything. It's a good thing that we did this because we found a few items that had been left behind and we had second thoughts about some cabinets that we originally thought we did not want. After closing the doors to the museum's spaces in the Shea Fitness Center for the last time, everybody involved with this last work party except for Robert Michaelski (who had something else he had to do) went to have brunch at "Joe's Coffee Shop" in Hanover. Thus an important era for the ANA Patriot Squadron has ended and hopefully a new and better one will soon begin.

Tom Berkley of LStar Ventures was supposed to give a presentation on his company's vision for the future of the Shea Naval Aviation Museum and Shea Memorial Grove at 10 AM on Saturday May 19<sup>th</sup> and we moved our meeting for the month of May to that date. Unfortunately, Tom had a family matter come up at the last minute and we had to cancel both the presentation and the meeting. The presentation will be rescheduled and as soon as we have a date firmed up we will let you know.



This year is shaping up to be one of substantial change on old NAS South Weymouth. The photo presented above, which was taken by Bill Sargent on Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup>, shows the former Base Administration building going down. About fifteen former military structures will be demolished before the end of this year. As of this writing the original gatehouse at White Street and what most people

will remember as the Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) building, but which started off as the original Second World War Galley and was used for a variety of other purposes over the years too, are now gone

The primary mission of the ANA Patriot Squadron is to ensure that the military history of NAS South Weymouth and NAS Squantum are not forgotten. We do whatever we can in support of this objective. A commercial art company that is working for a bank that is building a branch on Union Point recently contacted us seeking some old photos of the base to display in the bank's lobby. We are presently helping these people select some appropriate images of the base from our collection for this purpose.

### **COMING UP:**

The Experimental Aircraft Association chapter located at Cranland Airport off Route 58 in Halifax, MA hosts a pancake breakfast and fly-in from about 8 to 10 AM on the third Sunday of the month between April and October, weather permitting. A number of Patriot Squadron members gather there at Marc Frattasio's brother Damian's hangar. Come join us if you live in the local area. It's a cheap breakfast (\$7 per person) and a good time.

There are three major air shows coming up in the New England area this summer that may interest you. The first of these is the Rhode Island Air National Guard Open House and Air Show on June 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at old NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The Navy's Blue Angels will be there. See <https://www.rhodeislandairshow.com> for details about this event. Next up is the Great New England Air Show at Westover AFB in Massachusetts on July 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The Air Force's Thunderbirds will be there. See <https://www.rhodeislandairshow.com> for more details. Please note that admission is free for both of these events. Last up is the Great State of Maine Air Show at old NAS Brunswick, Maine on August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The Blue Angels will also be at this event. Please note that there is an admission fee for the Brunswick event. See <http://greatstateofmaineairshow.us> for more details. There is a discount on admission for the Brunswick event if you order your tickets on-line through this web site in advance.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's "The Wall That Heals" will be on display at Union Point from July 25<sup>th</sup> through the 29<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed to greet visitors, direct them to The Wall and mobile education center, and to help visitors find the names of their loved ones on the wall. For more information or to commit to volunteer go to <https://www.facebook.com/SouthShoreTheWallThatHeals>.

Member Steve Cohn would like to host another W1NAS public ham radio event at Union Point on Saturday August 18<sup>th</sup> between 9 AM and 3 PM. Since the museum is closed, and is expected to still be closed at that time, Steve is hoping to hold this event at the Shea Memorial Grove. However, there is no guarantee that the park won't be in the process of being relocated too at that time (LStar Ventures recently obtained permission from the Navy to move the A-4B Skyhawk jet), so there is a chance that this event will have to be held somewhere else at Union Point or it may not happen at all this year. As things firm up we'll let you know exactly what's going on, but for now hold Saturday August 18<sup>th</sup> open on your event calendar if ham radio interests you.

The VP Association, which is a group composed mainly of people who were associated with the Navy Reserve patrol squadrons that were based over the years at NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth such as VP-911 and VP-92, will hold its annual reunion on Saturday September 22<sup>nd</sup> from noon to 5 PM at the Sons of Italy Hall in Weymouth, MA. Over the years many people who were associated with NAS South Weymouth, and not necessarily in the patrol squadrons, have been coming to this event. Basically, anybody who is interested in NAS South Weymouth is welcome to

come. Reservations are required in advance and the event includes a nice buffet meal and a guest speaker. For more information, go to the VP Association web site at <http://www.vpassociation.org>.

A friendly reminder that the Navy will be commissioning a new guided missile destroyer named after Massachusetts Medal of Honor recipient Thomas Hudner in Boston sometime later this year. The date has not been determined at this time but rumor has it that it could be in December. Hudner was an honorary member of the ANA Patriot Squadron. He was a Navy pilot who purposely crashed his Corsair in enemy territory in an effort to rescue a squadron-mate, Jesse Brown, who was shot down during the Korean War. Tickets are required to attend the commissioning ceremony. These are free and available for the asking. However, if you want to go you must obtain your tickets in advance. To get them, go to <http://www.usshudnerddg116.org/commissioning-tickets>.

### **HELP WANTED:**

We have two vacancies in the Patriot Squadron's leadership team at this time. We need a chaplain and we need a judge advocate. Both positions were filled for many years by the late Leo Lazo. New member Peter Harrington recently volunteered to serve as the organization's chaplain, but we still need somebody to fill the judge advocate position. The ideal candidate will be an attorney or somebody with paralegal experience. If this is something you can do, and you're interested, please reach out to any director at one of our monthly meetings.

At this time, with the museum closed and our collection of artifacts in storage, the most important thing that any of you can do to help the ANA Patriot Squadron is to remain engaged, interested, and enthusiastic. This is a very unsettled and difficult period for our organization. It may be instructive now to tell you all how the Shea Naval Aviation Museum came about, why it exists, and how the ANA Patriot Squadron came to be its custodian.

The ANA Patriot Squadron sprung from a now-defunct group of Navy and Marine Corps veterans that was called the NAS Squantum/NAS South Weymouth Old-Timer's Association. Many members of this group were involved with NAS Squantum when that base was closed during late 1953 and its Navy and Marine Air Reserve activity was relocated to NAS South Weymouth. As NAS Squantum was redeveloped into the Marina Bay condominium community the old base was largely forgotten. Today, there is basically nothing left at Marina Bay to remind anybody that the property was once an important naval air station.

When the Base Realignment and Closure Commission decided to close NAS South Weymouth during the mid-1990s, Patriot Squadron members and military personnel (including the last base commanding officer, CAPT Robert A. Duetsch), who were very mindful of what had happened to NAS Squantum after it was closed, wanted to ensure that NAS South Weymouth would not also be forgotten as it was redeveloped. These people made arrangements to include a provision in the BRAC law that obligated the property developers to provide space for a military heritage museum, provided that there are volunteers to tend it. That's how the ANA Patriot Squadron came to be involved with the Shea Naval Aviation Museum. We are the organization who provide the volunteers to tend the museum.

The lesson here is that if you want to ensure that NAS South Weymouth and its Quincy predecessor NAS Squantum are not forgotten as the old base is transformed into the new Union Point community, please continue your association with the ANA Patriot Squadron. As indicated at the top of this issue, we really do not know when the museum will be reopened, but until it does reopen we have to keep this organization going. Please be patient and try to remain engaged, interested, and enthusiastic.

## DID YOU KNOW?:

The first Navy Reserve patrol squadron based at NAS Squantum started as VP-919 in the summer of 1946, changed to VP-ML-69 before the end of the year, and then became VP-911 in late 1949. At that time the squadron was the only patrol squadron in Reserve Air Wing 91 and was flying radar equipped Consolidated PBY-5A and PBY-6A Catalina amphibian flying boats. It does not appear that VP-919 or VP-ML-69 had squadron insignia. In early 1950 VP-911 held a contest to adopt a squadron insignia and a number of artistically inclined members submitted proposals. Three unused VP-911 squadron insignia proposals are shown below along with the final design selected. As you can see, there was substantial artistic talent in VP-911. This squadron was one of the predecessors of VP-92 that was at NAS South Weymouth during the base's final years.



**SOME RECENT PHOTOS:**



**Top Left :** Local members at a recent meeting. **Top Right:** Members having lunch together at Warren's Place in Weymouth. **Middle Left:** Our museum as it was back in the "good old days". **Middle Right:** The same space just before we locked the doors for the final time. **Bottom Left and Right:** Members Peter Jardim, Steve Cohn, Bill Sargent, Marc Frattasio, Robert Mandeville and Peter Harrington having brunch at Joe's in Hanover after the last museum move work party on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

## A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



Here's a PBY-6A Catalina flown by VP-911 at NAS Quantum sometime during the early 1950s. At that time the individual reserve squadrons did not have aircraft assigned directly to them. All aircraft were assigned to a reserve aircraft pool on the base, like a motor pool, and were checked in and out by the squadrons as needed to support their training requirements. VP-911 was the only reserve patrol squadron in NAS Quantum's Reserve Air Wing 91 so anytime you see a photo of a Catalina with NAS Quantum or NAS South Weymouth markings you can be sure that the aircraft was flown exclusively by VP-911. RAW-91's Catalinas migrated to NAS South Weymouth in December 1953 but did not last long. The last of them was traded in for a Consolidated P4Y Privateer by July 1954.

