



## 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)**

**Like Us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SheaNavalAviationMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/SheaNavalAviationMuseum)**

**Issue #38**

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

**DEC 2022**

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've been given permission to use the Southfield Redevelopment Authority's meeting room at Union Point again. We have been unable to use this venue since the COVID-19 hysteria began and have used the Weymouth Public Library and Fairing Way for in-person meetings in recent months. We are suspending meetings for November and December for the holiday season. So, our next meeting will be held on Saturday January 28, 2023 at the SRA meeting room. We will try to stream the meeting via Zoom, but will not know how this will work until we actually attempt to do it.

There has been some progress recently at Union Point regarding the new master developer, Brookfield Properties, which is partnered with another company called New England Development to build on old NAS South Weymouth. Brookfield Properties/New England Development hosted a public presentation at Weymouth High School on Thursday October 27<sup>th</sup> in which they laid out their long-term vision for redeveloping the site. Their redevelopment plans are tied to the availability of water, which they hope to bring on to the site via a new pipeline. We've been told that Brookfield Properties/New England Development now controls nearly all the property on the old base that had been owned by LSTAR and creditors of LSTAR. So, it looks like they are going forward with the

redevelopment effort, though it still may be some time before we see much in the way of tangible progress. Several Patriot Squadron members, including Donald Canaday and Charlie Collins, are looking into the possibility of using one of the existing buildings on the old base as a temporary venue for the Shea Naval Aviation Museum similar in concept to what we used to do at the Shea Fitness Center gymnasium, until such time that things settle out at Union Point.

Friday September 30<sup>th</sup> was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of NAS South Weymouth. To commemorate this sad event, your newsletter editor put together four slide shows and uploaded them to YouTube. To check them out, open a web browser on an Internet enabled computer, go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), and then do a keyword search for "NAS South Weymouth Anniversary". All four slide shows should show up first in the list. One slide show features over 1,200 images of the base from its beginning in 1941 through the end in 1997 and lasts 1.5 hours. The other three slide shows, which last about 20 minutes each, are organized like a walk from the main entrance to the base all the way to the airfield during the Second World War, during 1960, and during the base's final few years. Check them out and if you like them tell your friends about them.



The SFC Jared Monti memorial tree that we planted at the Shea Memorial Grove a few years ago failed to thrive and did not survive the last winter. SFC Monti's father Paul passed away a few months ago, and in deference to the Monti family we wanted to get a replacement tree in the ground as soon as the weather began getting cooler and wetter. On Sunday September 18<sup>th</sup> Faith Frattasio replaced the old tree with a new one. The new tree is a red Japanese maple, just like the one that did not make it, but we are hoping that it's hardier. It is much bigger than the one that we originally set in the ground a few years ago, and we are hopeful that it will do better. We'll be keeping a close watch over it as spring approaches. So far, a little over a month later, it seems to be doing OK. The photo at left shows Faith putting the new tree in the ground at the park.

Bill Sargent and Frank Ward stopped by Union Point one day recently and found Charlie Collins hard at work mowing the grass, completely on his own initiative, at the Shea Memorial Grove park. For those of you who do not know Charlie, he's a retired Navy CDR and helicopter pilot who lives in Abington during the warm weather months and spends the winters in Florida. As a member of the Naval Air Reserve at NAS South Weymouth Charlie flew the Sikorsky H-3 Sea King with HS-74. However, when he was on active during the mid-to-late 1960s he flew the Bell UH-1 Iroquois on combat missions with HAL-3 in Vietnam. HAL-3, which was known as the Seawolves, was the Navy's only light helicopter attack squadron. Charlie is an active member of the Patriot Squadron who has been involved in many of the group's activities over the years. The photo presented below shows Charlie answering questions from a visitor to the Patriot Squadron's table at the Weymouth 400 Day Festival on September 17<sup>th</sup>.



The Patriot Squadron was invited to set up a fund-raising sales table at the Weymouth 400 Day Festival that was held in the street directly in front of Weymouth City Hall on Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup>. Since opportunities to sell things to the general public have been limited in recent years, between the closing of the museum and the COVID-19 fiasco, we tried to sell off our existing inventory. The only things we purchased to sell at this event were blue NAS South Weymouth command ball caps and Minuteman design triangular base patches, which were very popular at the Weymouth 400 Columbian Square Festival in June and which we completely sold out of at that time. We sold \$391 worth of merchandise and collected \$83 in donations to put towards the aircraft and

sign restoration effort at the Shea Memorial Grove. It is worth noting that we sold our last NAS South Weymouth challenge coins and red Marine Corps Reserve ball caps at this event! The photo presented below shows members Charlie Collins, Faith Frattasio, Donald Canaday, Steve Cohn, Bill Sargent, Leo Salmeri, and Rita Cavonius helping to tend the Patriot Squadron's table. Robert Michaeliski and Julia Saunders also helped out, but are not shown in the picture.



On Saturday September 10<sup>th</sup> Patriot Squadron members Mark Danckert, Doug Folsom, Faith Frattasio, Marc Frattasio, John Margie, and Wally Massenburg attended the Boston chapter of the Marine Corps Aviation Association's annual lobster bake at the Fourth Cliff Military Recreation area in Marshfield, MA. This is an annual event that all Patriot Squadron members are encouraged to attend, not just because it's a great time but also because the seaside location at Fourth Cliff is beautiful at that time of the year. The Marine Corps Aviation Association is a "sister organization" to the Association of Naval Aviation, with similar goals and objectives, and their Boston chapter is mainly composed of Marines who served in the Marine Corps Reserve units that were based over the years at NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth. Many Boston chapter members were in VMA-217 and VMA-322, which operated various model A-4 Skyhawks at NAS South Weymouth, including the A-4B that is on display at the Shea Memorial Grove. When the members of the Boston chapter found out that we are raising funds to repaint the A-4B, they wanted to help. The group presented the Patriot Squadron with a generous \$1,000 check at the lobster bake, for which we are extremely grateful. The photo presented below shows Patriot Squadron directors Wally Massenburg (VADM USN retired)

and Marc Frattasio (AW1 USNR retired) accepting the check from Joe Mahoney (COL USMC retired) of the Marine Corps Aviation Association. Joe Mahoney is the C.O. of the Boston chapter. During his later years in the USMCR he served as the commanding officer of MASS-6 at NAS South Weymouth.



Regarding the A-4 Skyhawk repainting and sign restoration projects, we've done very well in our fund-raising efforts. As of this writing we have raised just over \$23,100 specifically for this purpose. Although we originally set a \$20,000 fund-raising goal, and have exceeded this amount, we are continuing to raise more money. The reason for this is that it looks like it will cost us more than we had expected to get both jobs done. Both the aircraft and the sign-painting efforts are coming in higher than we had thought, although not by a huge amount. Don't worry about this too much because we will have enough to get the job done, even if we have to draw some money out of general Patriot Squadron funds to make up the shortfall. There's also a chance, though not certain and I would not count on it, that we might be able to get some money out of the master developer or City of Weymouth historical preservation funds. Weymouth City Council member John Abbot has indicated that he's willing to help us try to do this, if it has to come to that. The problem is that before we can approach the master developer or the city we'd need to know exactly how much money we'd need, and we can't do that right now. At this point we have a pretty good idea of how much we will need, but we can't say for sure exactly how much we need, and we won't know until we actually sign contracts to get the job done. To give you an idea of what we mean, we have written estimates or quotes from apparently qualified aircraft painters that range from \$18,000 (two companies) to \$45,000

(one company). We also have quotes for restoring/replacing the signs of approximately \$3,000 and \$8,000. As you can see, the numbers have quite a spread from low to high. We've established a committee composed of Donald Canaday, Steve Cohn, Charlie Collins, Marc Frattasio, Bill Sargent, and Frank Ward that will come up with a formal RFP and review all the vendors that we've been dealing with and pick the best ones for the job. We hope to do this by March and be ready to get work started during the May/June timeframe. It is really too late to start work now and we've got to wait until the weather gets drier and warmer in the late spring/early summer.

Although we have a couple of qualified vendors under review, we are committed to review every practical option, within reasonable time constraints, and its not too late for Patriot Squadron members to steer qualified candidates our way for evaluation. We have several offers to repaint the aircraft and repaint/restore the signs, but none have been accepted yet. If you know somebody, please have them contact us via the contact information provided at the masthead of this newsletter. Ideal candidates for painting the A-4B Skyhawk might include companies familiar with painting metal such as an auto body shop, a veteran experienced with painting military aircraft, and of course a company that has painted aircraft before. The signs could be restored by any sign-painter or carpenter.

Since the last issue of this newsletter was distributed we received generous donations towards this effort from Dena Davis, Peter Crone, Miles Barnes, Raymond Demming, Thomas Gannon, John Margie, and Bob Muise. It may interest you all to know that Raymond Demming is a retired Navy captain who was personally responsible for acquiring the A-4B for NAS South Weymouth back in 1978. The story of how the base acquired the aircraft is fairly interesting and is recounted in four pages of the book I wrote about NAS South Weymouth few years ago. Dena Davis and Thomas Gannon are Fairing Way residents who contributed to the A-4B project through the efforts of Mary Jean Hickey. For the record, Fairing Way residents contributed about \$1,800 towards the project through the efforts of Rita Cavanaugh and Mary-Jean Hickey. Rita and Mary-Jean both live at Fairing Way, the over-55 community at Union Point.

Peter Crone generously donated the funds to purchase a new set of American, US Navy, and POW/MIA flags to replace the ones on the flagpole at the center of the Shea Memorial Grove. The old flags on display at the park were starting to get sun-faded and frayed. Like the A-4B and the signs at the park, the flags on the big flagpole are highly visible to the public and because of this we need to ensure that they are in presentable condition.

A motion picture called "Devotion" was released to theaters in November. For those of you who are unfamiliar with it, the film is based upon a book of the same name that is about the heroic attempted rescue of ENS Jesse Brown, the first black naval aviator, by LT Thomas Hudner during the Korean War. Brown and Hudner were both flying Corsairs on a ground attack mission over enemy territory. Brown's aircraft was severely damaged by ground fire and crashed. Brown was trapped in the wreckage, and Hudner purposely crashed-landed his aircraft next to him in an effort to save him. Unfortunately, Brown's legs were pinned and Hudner was unable to extricate. Hudner remained with Brown throughout the night, surrounded by enemy ground forces. Unfortunately, Brown passed away from the combined effects of his injuries and hypothermia before rescue forces could arrive the following morning. For his heroic actions, Hudner was presented with the Congressional Medal of Honor. Your newsletter editor read the book but has not yet seen the film. The books is about both men, while if you can believe the advertisements, the film appears to be more about ENS Brown. Regardless, the story is one worth knowing about, in large part because Thomas Hudner, who retired from the Navy as a Captain, was from Massachusetts and was an honorary member of the ANA Patriot Squadron for many years. He occasionally came to meetings and discussed his wartime experiences flying with Jesse Brown. We strongly recommend that every Patriot Squadron member

read the book and/or see the film. It appears to have very good production values. For example, the ships and aircraft featured in previews appear to be accurate CGI representations of the real things.

### **COMING UP:**

Our annual holiday luncheon will be held at the Abington Ale House restaurant on Saturday December 10<sup>th</sup> from noon to about 3 PM. All members and their guests are invited. There's no need to RSVP, if you want to come, just show up at the restaurant and be prepared to order something off the menu. When you arrive at the restaurant, just ask to be seated with the Patriot Squadron party.

Patriot Squadron membership dues are due, at the end of December, for those of you who pay on an annual basis and for three-year memberships that expire this year. Membership is \$15 per year or \$40 for three years. You can pay at the holiday luncheon or reach out to membership director Wally Massenburg at [wallymassenburg@comcast.net](mailto:wallymassenburg@comcast.net) to pay by mail.

The Patriot Squadron is technically the Boston area chapter of the Association of Naval Aviation. Although we do not require Patriot Squadron members to join both groups, we do highly recommend it. The Association of Naval Aviation is a very worthy group and their quarterly magazine, "Wings of Gold", is worth the price of membership alone. Go to [www.anahq.org](http://www.anahq.org) on the Internet for details.

A reminder that we will suspend monthly meetings until the last Saturday in January. We do this every year because we expect people to be very busy late in the month during the winter holiday season. So, bear in mind that the only time that you will be able to meet with other Patriot Squadron members during the months of November and December will be at the holiday luncheon at the Abington Ale House on Saturday December 10<sup>th</sup>. If you live in the local area, please plan on coming to the holiday luncheon if you can.

The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum is planning another base reunion at old NAS Brunswick, ME over the weekend of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday September 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> in 2023. There will be activities planned every day with a schedule to be announced early next year. The main events, including a new England lobster bake, will be on Saturday. The last NAS Brunswick reunion in September 2021 was very successful, with nearly 1,000 attendees. The museum is expecting the 2023 event to be even more successful, in part because it may be the very last time you will be able to see and possibly get aboard an operational P-3 Orion at old NAS Brunswick, ME. The Navy recently retired the last P-3s in patrol squadron service and the only MPA configured P-3s are used for training with VP-30 at NAS Jacksonville, FL. These are being retained to help train foreign crews and will be retired within the next couple of years. The BNAS people had support from the Navy for the last reunion and hope to get a P-3 Orion, P-8 Poseidon, and CP-140 Aurora too. For those who do not know what a CP-140 is, it's the Canadian version of the P-3 Orion. Technically, CP-140s are not P-3s, but they do look the same (from the outside at least) and sound the same! In the interest of full disclosure, your newsletter editor is a member of the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum and is on the base reunion committee. He will be organizing a squadron "mini reunion" for all VP-MAU Brunswick and VP-92 personnel that go to the base reunion. As was the case with the last base reunion, there will most likely be some kind of free gift presented to every VP-MAU and VP-92 member who goes, while the supply lasts. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

### **HELP WANTED:**

We are always looking for members to take an active role in the administration of the ANA Patriot Squadron. If you would like to become more active in this organization, please reach out to one of the directors at any of our monthly meetings.

## DID YOU KNOW?



In the summer of 1978 Captain Raymond Demming, a member of VTU-9191 at NAS South Weymouth, volunteered to acquire an A-4B Skyhawk to serve as a gate guardian for the base. After spending a considerable amount of time searching for a suitable aircraft, he found one that had been assigned to NAS South Weymouth during the 1960s (and which he had personally flown) being used as an instructional airframe at one of the Navy's technical training schools at NATTC Millington, TN. The aircraft was relocated to NAS South Weymouth on board a USAF C-130 Hercules and cosmetically restored on the base by volunteer labor over the course of the next few years. The aircraft was installed on a pylon near the old main gate on White Street in 1983. In 1987 it was relocated near the new main gate off Route 18. Just before the base closed in 1997 it was moved to the center of the Shea Memorial Grove to serve as a permanent memorial to NAS South Weymouth.

## A WINDOW INTO THE PAST:



During the mid-to-late 1960s TA-4B Skyhawks were assigned to the reserve aircraft pool at NAS South Weymouth. These aircraft were shared by the Navy and Marine reserve attack squadrons on the base at that time, VA-911/VA-2Z1, VA-912/VA-6Z2, and VMA-322, on alternating weekends. Since they were operated by both the Navy and the Marines, these aircraft were marked “Navy-Marine” to indicate their dual use. The A-4B aircraft at the Shea Memorial Grove is actually a TA-4B. This was a special designation used to designate A-4Bs permanently assigned to the reserves that were intended for training purposes only and not considered to be fully mission-capable.

