

Hangar One 'Mini-Museum' Good News To History Buffs

Local history buffs, and Naval Air Station fans in particular, are happy to hear the news that the Glenview Hangar One Foundation (GHOF) will have a "mini-museum" in the Glen Town Center within a few months.

The retail space between the Joseph A. Bank men's clothing store and the Aloft Luxury Apartment sales office, opposite the Navy Park, will be leased to the hangar One Foundation, and the mini-museum will be open in time for the dedication of the Town Center in June.

GHOF President Frank Mack, former Glenview Historical Society President Beverly Dawson and others on the Museum Committee, are not sure how many large artifacts can be accommodated inside the store (nothing as large as the Von Maur N2S). However, the GHOF presence in the Retail Center will be an additional reminder of the history of the former Naval Air Station.

Right now, the presence of the old Hangar One building, occupied by Von Maur's beautiful store, Galyan's sporting goods, and the Book Store, is the most

imposing reminder of the past use of the area by the Navy for 58 years, from 1937 to 1995 as Naval Air Station Glenview — call sign NBU. The distinctive "pods" at the north and south ends of the building, with the Control Tower in the center, are enough to bring back vivid memories of fighter and attack planes, dive bombers, Stearman trainers and C-45s left over from WWII, shuttling in and out of the huge hangar doors, which had to be replaced in order to make the building suitable for commercial use.

There are a few other former NAS buildings left, too — the former Navy Chapel with stained-glass windows and plaques dedicated to Naval Reservists who died while on training duty, and the Army Reserve hangar at the north end, which is now part of NIPSTA, the Northern Illinois Public Service Training Academy. However, before separate hangars were added for the Marines, the Coast Guard and ASWP-3 patrol planes, most of the Reserve squadrons had their administrative spaces in Hangar One. We can still look at Hangar One and point out the

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"pod" — called the "north fishbowl" or the "south fishbowl" fifty years ago — where our Commanding Officers and their staffs hung their hat, or the Flight Operations area where the pilots got their weather reports from the Aerology "weather guessers" and went across the hall to file their flight plans, right under the Control Tower.

When the Navy finally closed shop in 1995, Navy veterans and local historians had dreams of converting Hangar One into a Museum of Naval Air Station History, including a Challenger

Learning Center to educate local students in aeronautical and space science. However the money needed to renovate the building, not to mention the future costs of heating and maintaining such a structure, were not available. The Defense Department has no funds for nostalgia, and the taxpayers of Glenview could not afford it. Fortunately, Dene Oliver, the head of the Oliver McMillan team the Village selected for the development of the shopping and entertainment area, is the son of a WWII Marine aviator, and had some empathy for the feelings of NAS veterans. He worked with GHOF leaders Liz Dinsmore, John Witten and especially super-salesman Ace Realic, to preserve Admiral Dan Gallery's U-505 Memorial, and bring in the life-size bronze statues of a pilot, an aircrewman and a "yellow jacket" flight deck mechanic to overlook Navy Park.

The Hangar One Foundation,

through the sale of memorial bricks and with the help of the Village Board, has bought and paid for one of the bronze statues, which are modeled after those in the Naval Air Museum in Pensacola, Florida; they hope to have the other two in place for the June dedication. The cooperation with the Pensacola Naval Air Museum will probably yield some more interesting exhibits later on. In addition, GHOF has resumed its efforts to find a place for the Challenger Learning Center in the Glenview area, if not at the Glen.

As for now, the Hangar One Foundation, the Navy League, the "Old Timers" who still get together every year and local historians have no full-fledged museum, which we once hoped for, but we will have a mini-museum right across from Hangar One to remind us of the history of NBU, NASGLEN — Naval Air Station Glenview.

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