

The Navy Yard Association Newsletter



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NYA Bulletin Board

If you wish to reach more than 600 of your fellow NYA members, this bulletin board is available for your use to post information. Contact Veronica Laird or send e-mail to vcullum@hotmail.com (use subject line "NYA Bulletin Board")

Shop 64 Breakfast Meeting

Rotating between Vallejo, Suisun, Fairfield, Vacaville, and Woodland

Third Thursday each month at 9:00am
POC: Parry Benton; (530) 666-1639

Shop 38 Luncheon

Denny's, 4355 Sonoma Blvd (Hwy 29/37 intersection), Vallejo
Second Wednesday of each month (except July/August)
POC: Rudy Lukes, (707) 643-3225

Vallejo Chapter of NARFE Meeting

Florence Douglas Senior Cntr, 333 Amador St., Vallejo
Second Tuesday of each month at 1:15pm
POC: Lea Zajac; (707) 644-7565

Napa Chapter of NARFE Meeting

Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa
Last Wednesday of each month at 1:30pm
POC: Dick Champion; (707) 253-7242

Mare Island Historical Park Foundation

Mare Island Quarters "A"
Third Monday quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct) at 10:00am
POC: Ken Zadwick; (707) 557-1538

Nuclear Inspectors' Luncheon

The Front Room restaurant, Vallejo
First Wednesday of odd months at 11:30am
POC: Dick Barlow; (707) 642-6022

Ocean Engineering Luncheon

Sports Bar inside the Marriott Hotel, Napa
Last Wednesday of each month at 11:30am
No POC at this time

Nuclear Engineering Luncheon

Locations vary each month
Each Friday at 11:30am
POC: Allen Green; aalgreen@napanet.net

Mare Island. Dredging in the Mare Island Channel will finish soon enabling the towing of two reserve fleet ships from Suisun to Mare Island for scrapping. Allied Defense Recycling (ADR) plans to expand to all types of ship-related work. With a long-term goal to hire as many 500 local residents as their operations get fully functional, applications are being accepted on a continuing basis. The letter-writing campaign facilitated by the Navy Yard Association surely had a hand in some of this work staying in the local area. Thanks to the NYA members who took the time to help out with that effort! Read more about this work in the next column.

Something we're really looking forward to is **September 2011**. Why is that, do you ask? Well, it's because your NYA is already beginning to plan a gala to commemorate both the 15th anniversary of the closing of Mare Island Naval Shipyard, as well as the 157th anniversary of the Shipyard. We'll be pulling out all the stops to make this a festive and fun event for everyone! In addition to the same old boring speech by me, we're planning for a **savory BBQ, drawings for fabulous prizes, memorabilia, tours, and much much more.** Please come help us in the planning and/or execution of this event. Your thoughts, ideas, and willing hands will be welcomed.

So you don't run out of time to read all the other great stuff in this month's newsletter, I wanted to take just a moment to give a special thanks to Officers James Porter, Robin Leong, Lloyd Mahan, Veronica Laird, Sonya Domingo, Chairman of the Board Bruce Christensen, Directors Sue Lemmon, Howard Fitzpatrick, Gordon Triemert, Doug Ghiselin, Rudy Balli, Rich Wright, Mary Rutland, Bob Yeasted, Carmen

President's Corner

Ralph McComb

As 2010 draws to a close, we are seeing the return of ship and dry dock work inch closer to

Merriman, and our Web Designer, Bill Strong, and all their families for allowing them to give so much of their own time and be the heart, soul, arms, and legs of this fantastic group of caring people. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all

Around Mare Island...

Bruce Christensen

Dredging Operations in Progress at Mare Island Waterfront

In November, it was announced that a local company, Allied Defense Recycling (ADR), had been awarded a \$3.1 million contract for dismantling two Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet Ships: the SS SOLON TURMAN and the SS PRESIDENT. These will be the first ships to be scrapped in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Shortly after the contract was signed with the U.S. Maritime Administration, dredging operations commenced at the seawall near Dry Dock 2.

There are 47 ships remaining in the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet after 11 of the mothballed ships had already been towed to Texas for dismantling. The goal of the Maritime Administration is to have all of the Suisun Bay ships removed by 2017, although they have committed to removing 28 of the worst polluting vessels by late 2012.

Allied Defense Recycling expects to hire between 60 and 120 employees for the initial dismantling work at Mare Island. Because the company also does business as California Dry Dock Solutions, further information can be found regarding their work at Mare Island by visiting their web site at: www.californiadrydock.com.

Mare Island 21ers Honored at Monument Unveiling in Alden Park

On November 17, 2010, a monument was dedicated commemorating the actions taken by 21 African Americans in the early 1960s to further the Civil Rights movement at Mare Island Naval

Shipyards. The ceremony was nostalgic and sometimes emotional as several of the original 21ers spoke to those gathered. Six of the seven surviving members attended the dedication along with more than a dozen members of the family of Willie Long; the founder and organizer of the 21ers. The master of ceremonies for the event was the youngest 21er, Jake Sloan. He was joined by fellow 21ers Clarence Williams, Boston Banks Jr., Matt Barnes, Jim Davis, Walter Allen, and Willie Capers. About 75 people, including many NYA members, were present to hear several of the 21ers relive experiences from the early days of their employment at Mare Island Naval Shipyards.

Please plan to view the 21er monument the next time you visit Alden Park. It is located amongst the trees just east of the band stand.

Mare Island Historic Park Foundation

Bruce Christensen

USS VALLEJO Sail Relocation to Alden Park

Fundraising for moving the USS VALLEJO (SSBN 658) sail into the northeast corner of Alden Park (corner of 8th Street and Railroad Avenue) is underway. The “S(ave) O(ur) S(ail)” effort has raised \$25,140 (\$21,416.50 from crew members and \$4,723.50 locally) of the \$35,000 needed to construct a concrete foundation to support the 40-foot long sail and have the sail moved to its new Alden Park location.

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to the SOS Fund, please mail your tax deductible donation check or money order made payable to “Save Our Sail MIHPF” to: Save Our Sail, 257 Cottonwood Drive, Vallejo, CA 94591 or go to the internet at www.SaveOurSail.com and donate using PayPal.

Become a Plankowner of the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation!

The Mare Island Historic Park Foundation (MIHPF) continues to offer its Plankowner Program to those interested in preserving and displaying the history of Mare Island. As a reminder, the MIHPF is a not-for-profit 501(C)(3) foundation.

Those interested in becoming a Plankowner may do so at any of the following levels:

- Ensign.....\$25+
- Lieutenant.....\$100+
- Commander.....\$500+
- Captain.....\$1,000+
- Rear Admiral.....\$5,000+
- Vice Admiral.....\$10,000+
- Admiral.....\$20,000+
- Other.....\$_____

To enroll in the Plankowner Program, please send your tax deductible donation check to:

Mare Island Historic Park Foundation
328 Seawind Drive
Vallejo, CA 94590

To donate by VISA or Mastercard,
Call: 707-280-5742

MIHPF Needs Volunteers

The Mare Island Historic Park Foundation (MIHPF) is the major force in the maintenance and preservation of historic properties and promotion of Mare Island’s past.

Do you have a few hours each week when you can volunteer as a docent, tour guide, or to do gardening or maintenance work in the Mare Island Historic District? If so, the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation (MIHPF) will be glad to put you to work!

Some of the sites for which the MIHPF is responsible are the St. Peters Chapel, Officers’

Mansions (Quarters A and B), the Mare Island Museum (Building 46), and the grounds surrounding each of these sites. If you wish to volunteer, please call 707-557-0662 or 707-280-5742 and leave you contact information or send an email to: kenzad01@sbcglobal.net or JIG313@aol.com.

Also, anyone interested in becoming a member of the MIHPF Board of Directors is cordially invited to attend the next Board Meeting as a guest.

Membership update

James Porter

Currently, NYA membership stands at 602 (just shy of our 2010 goal of 635), while our dental plan membership stands at 295 members. Membership renewals are still trickling in, but we really need to get the word out to our lapsing members to renew now. Enclosed with this issue of the newsletter is a membership form in case you know someone who would like to join. Perhaps you’ll mention that the NYA has a competitive dental plan available to Federal employees and retirees (and their dependents)?

We offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Byron Lines, who passed away on August 20, 2010; Andre Brown, who passed away on August 11, 2010; and Violet Corral, who passed away on September 22, 2010.

Welcome back to returning members: Anthony Brazil (2007, recruited by Mark Dodini); Diji Christian (2007, recruited by Robin Leong); Ursula G. Crockett (2001); Daniel Danielson (2007); Gino Del Chiaro(2007); and Ronda Madrid (2006).

We warmly welcome new member Albert Losado (recruited by Tom Cosso).

Remember to let Robin Leong know if you’ve brought in any new members, so you can get your recruitment award!

Your NYA officers have adopted the following award schedule for recruitment of new members (awards subject to availability).

- Recruit 1 new member: Mouse Pad, key chain, decal, or tie-tack
- Recruit 2 new members: T-Shirt
- Recruit 3 new members: Hat
- Recruit 4 new members: Mare Island Clock
- Recruit 5 new members: Briefcase
- Recruit 7 new members: Watch
- Recruit 10 new members: NYA Jacket or Windbreaker

Benefit Officer's Column

Robin Leong

This past quarter, we've had a lot of interesting developments between the September issue and this newsletter. We relayed these issues to our members via e-mail, so if we don't have your current e-mail address, you didn't get these timely notes.

On 11/10, I sent out an e-mail about the reserve fleet ships being dismantled at Mare Island; and I included a request that you ask your Congressional representative to pass legislation for those federal, state, and local government retirees not eligible for Social Security to be included in any legislation offering a \$250 payment for seniors.

On 11/27, NYA President Ralph McComb sent out an e-mail noting that there was an opening as an estimator for the company that won the contract to break up ships at Mare Island. We got some feedback on that one, as some of you wrote back to me and asked me who was JM (referred to in the e-mail), and others wanted to know exactly what the job entailed. While I told them to contact Mac directly or just give Allied Defense Recycling a call, Ralph McComb subsequently told me that the job might not really require an estimator as we knew it on Mare Island, and anyone interested in the position should not feel they wouldn't qualify because they hadn't been a Mare Island planner or estimator. This job will likely be unique and that anyone interested should contact ADR directly. Also included in the message was a note to save our

pensions and health plans by contacting your congress person using <http://capwiz.com/narfe/issues/alert/?alertid=19706516or>, as well as a message about the upcoming Christmas concert at St. Peter's Chapel, to be held on December 19, at 2:00 pm, for \$15 per person. Tickets are available at the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum, the Vallejo Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Those who received these EMs were happy we had had their e-mail addresses in our NYA Database.

Additionally, we are asking those with e-mail to allow us to save money and receive their NYA newsletter via e-mail. It's great for the environment, too, so just do it! If you're interested, please send an e-mail to robin_leong@netzero.net with "Yes, I want my NYA Newsletter via E-Mail!" in the subject line. It's as simple as that!

Benefits

Our newest member benefit can be found in Vallejo at Bruce Balbin's Smog on Tennessee Street. NYA members get 10% off his list price (it could be more if you are getting your car smog-tested. It's a good idea to call ahead to Bruce, as he has excellent advice for getting the most out of your vehicle and smog-test experience.

One of our most popular benefits is our FREE notary public service. This service is most graciously provided by NYA Officer and Director Sonya Domingo. To make an appointment for notary service, you can reach Sonya by phone at (510) 260-0429 or via e-mail to K-S-Domingo@sbcglobal.net. Please remember to give Sonya a minimum of 24 hours notice for notary appointments.

Dental Plan News

We have updated both the Prepaid and Blue Shield brochures and have posted them on our website. You can view them at www.mareislandnya.com. While you are there, why

not go ahead and print out a membership form, send it to a former Mare Islander, and tell them about our benefits!

If you are having problems with your dentist, you should first talk to your dentist. Next, discuss the issues with Premier Claims, and file a complaint form to document the issues. You may obtain copies of the complaint form in three ways: (1) Get a copy of the complaint form directly from Premier Claims. Their address and phone numbers are:

Premier Claims Administrators, LLC
P O Box 19338
Reno, NV 89511
Office: 775-324-5644
Toll Free: 866-565-7557
Fax: 775-786-9637;

(2) Download a copy of the complaint form from the NYA website at www.mareislandnya.com; or (3) Contact me, and I'll mail a copy to you. My street and e-mail addresses are:

Robin Leong,
336 Benson Avenue
Vallejo, CA 94590-3027
robin_leong@netzero.net

Have a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years!

And then there was yesterday

Sue Lemmon, Shipyard Historian

Recent news of the loss of one of the most popular Department Head secretaries was a reminder of how special and talented were some of the ladies. Always respected, they were given special recognition by ADM Fahey in November 1965 when Mare Island and Hunters Point Shipyards were combined to form the San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard (SFBNS).

In his endeavors to merge and unite two massive organizations he decided it would be beneficial if the secretaries at the top levels at each

location could collaborate. He called the organization NOSES (Noble Order of Shipyard Executive Secretaries). Arrangements were made to gather them together at a luncheon at Mare Island. Some were already "phone friends," and the Hunters Point group enjoyed a tour of the Island as well as the working surroundings of their counterparts.

In return, the array from Hunters Point hosted a luncheon and showed off the enormity of the docks down South.

Several friendships developed that lasted even after the NOSES disbanded with the disestablishment of SFBNS on Jan. 31, 1970.

A different organization was "The Sweethearts" collected by Mare Island stalwart Irv Whitthorne, who learned early on during his very successful career that his ascendancy would be helped by females who held significant positions. While the group started with secretaries in key positions, they soon included other women who played significant roles in the administration. In return for their loyalty, he regularly treated them to lunch and gifts. All these ventures met with the approbation of Mrs. Rose Whitthorne, who no doubt played a role in selecting the small gifts.

It was considered a rare privilege to be a Sweetheart, and remnants of that group formed the Marey Islanders.



FALL QUIZ

During the final twenty years of Mare Island Naval Shipyard, there were many ships nurtured on our waterfront. Today is your chance to match up the ship name with hull numbers. To complicate the process, we will not provide designation of the ships' hull types.

Match the ship name in Column 1 with the appropriate hull number in Column 2. Answers are at the end of the quiz.

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>
ASPRO	575
BARB	21
DACE	835
DRUM	601
FLASHER	665
GUITARRO	613
PIGEON	646
ROBERT E. LEE	648
JOHN S. MC CAIN	599
BATON ROUGE	36
DARTER	604
DOLPHIN	689
GRAYLING	596
HADDO	663
HAMMERHEAD	576
SHENANDOAH	607
WM. S. BATES	687
SEAWOLF	555
PATRICK HENRY	677
RICHARD B. RUSSELL	680

ANSWERS

1. ASPRO (SSN-648)
2. BARB (SSN-596)
3. DACE (SSN-607)
4. DRUM (SSN-677)
5. FLASHER (SSN-613)
6. GUITARRO (SSN-665)
7. PIGEON (ASR-21)
8. ROBERT E. LEE (SSBN-601)
9. JOHN D. MC CAIN (DDG-36)
10. BATON ROUGE (SSN-689)
11. DARTER (SS-576)
12. DOLPHIN (AGSS-555)
13. GRAYLING (SSN-646)
14. HADDO (SSN-604)
15. HAMMERHEAD (SSN-663)
16. SHENANDOAH (YTB-835)
17. WM. S. BATES (SSN-680)
18. SEAWOLF (SSN-575)
19. PATRICK HENRY (SSBN-599)
20. RICHARD B. RUSSELL (SSN-587)

Bringing home the OLYMPIA

Dennis Kelly

Then: The enemy's guns had opened up on the Admiral's fleet as he steamed towards their line of battle. He held fire conserving his limited ammunition until his range had closed enough to ensure effective fire. At 5:22AM on May 1, 1898 United States Navy fleet Admiral George Dewey spoke into a brass communication tube "You may fire when ready Gridley." With those immortal words, the *Olympia* and the fleet she led, commenced to decimate the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay. This command, spoken from the bridge of the *Olympia*, would prove to be the tipping point in the United States' emergence as a world power and set in motion our longstanding relationship with the people of the Philippines.



Figure 1 *Olympia* at Manila Bay

Now: Today, *Olympia* has national historic landmark status and is a museum at the Independence Seaport Museum at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia. She is the sole floating survivor of the US Navy's Spanish-American War fleet and she is the oldest steel warship in the world that is still afloat. However, the museum is no longer able to fund the preservation costs for *Olympia*. *Olympia* has been in the water continuously since 1945, and the hull requires extensive repairs due to corrosion damage. In an effort to save her, the Museum plans to make the ship available for donation to eligible parties who can demonstrate the ability to maintain the vessel and make it available for public display.

If no such entity is found, the museum will scrap or scuttle the *Olympia*.



Figure 2 *Olympia* Pier side at the Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia

Bay Area Ties: Three years before Admiral Dewey's famous order, the *Olympia* departed Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo; and at 6:30 on the morning of August 25, 1895, she passed through the Golden Gate en route to her date with history. The *Olympia* was steaming to relieve the USS *Baltimore* as flagship of the Asiatic Station, a choice assignment, but not one expected to involve sailing into harm's way. Certainly no one at the time would have anticipated that *Olympia* would be tasked to take the offensive against the Spanish fleet following a declaration of war with Spain. A war precipitated by the sinking of the US Navy's second commissioned pre-dreadnought battleship, the USS *Maine*, in Havana harbor in Cuba.

Before leaving Mare Island for the Asiatic station, the *Olympia* had come to life in the Bay Area over the preceding three years. She was constructed in San Francisco at the Union Iron Works located on Potrero Point. Of interest, the Union Iron Works was the builder of the engines for the first warship built on the west coast, the *Saginaw*, which was the first warship launched on the West Coast at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in 1859. By the latter part of the 19th century, the Union Iron Works had become renowned for mastering the technical and logistical difficulties of constructing the new armor protected cruiser designs of the Navy Department.

This was a time of transition and rapid technological change both in industry in general and within the Navy in particular. While the *Olympia*

still carried a full complement of sail, she is steel hulled; one of the first ships to employ vertical-stroke reciprocating three-cylinder triple-expansion steam engines; her armor is both unique in its design and is constructed of what was then cutting edge alloy steel, she employed newly developed electrical generators and lighting, and hydraulically powered turrets. By the time *Olympia* was constructed, the Union Iron Works was a seasoned constructor of naval warships having launched the cruisers Charleston, San Francisco and the battleship Oregon.

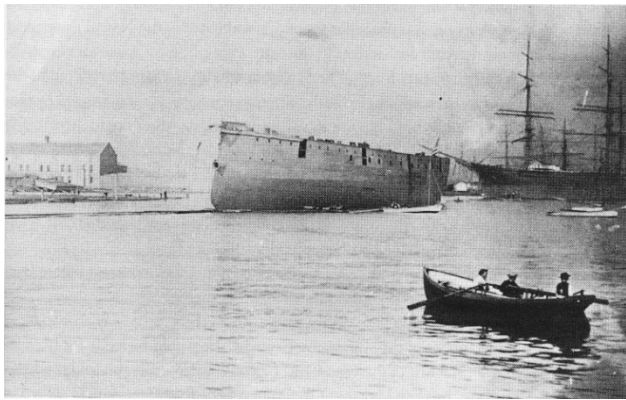


Figure 3 USS *Olympia* launched 5 November 1892

The *Olympia* was launched in late 1892 and following the launching she was brought to Mare Island for outfitting. Her bottom was cleaned and repainted while in Dry Dock to assist with acceptance speed trials. In addition, anchors were procured, torpedoes were loaded, the binnacle stand installed; plated ware procured for the junior and warrant officer messes, ordnance work was completed and the ship was coaled for her transit to the Asiatic Station and destiny.

Take a virtual tour of the *Olympia* at
http://nonplused.org/panos/uss_olympia/

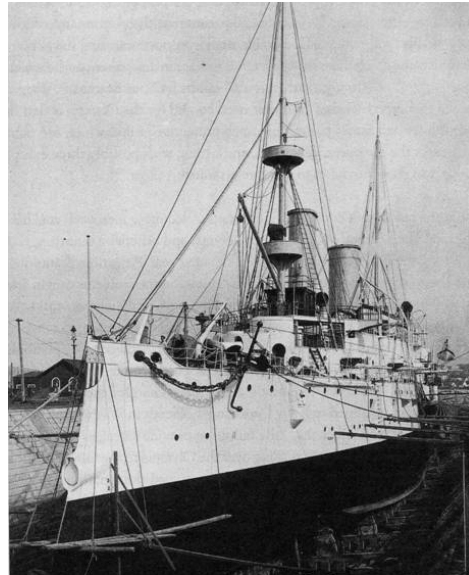


Figure 4 *Olympia* in Mare Island Dry Dock 1 in 1895 just before leaving to serve as the flagship of the Asiatic Station

Bringing her home: The NYA has initiated an effort to bring this national asset back home to the San Francisco Bay Area. Possible display sites include the former National Maritime Museum Association, which operates the USS PAMPANITO SS383 at Pier 45 in San Francisco; Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, where two dry-docks have been set aside as a Heritage Park to include ship displays; Mare Island's historic Dry Dock 1, which is envisioned for historic ship displays in planning documents; and the San Francisco Maritime Park, run by the National Park Service with over 4 million visitors/year.

What can I do? If you are interested in assisting with the important task of saving and bringing home the *Olympia*, contact any of the Officers of the NYA or Dennis Kelly at drkelly107@gmail.com.

Our need now is to get the word out and solicit endorsements from groups such as the Navy Leagues, FMA, NARFE, and others.