

# The Navy Yard Association Newsletter



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Volume IV, Issue 3

December 2004

Published Quarterly

## NYA Bulletin Board

If you wish to reach more than 700 of your fellow NYA members, this bulletin board is available for your use to post information. Contact Veronica Cullum or send e-mail to [benefit@mareislandnya.com](mailto:benefit@mareislandnya.com)

### Shop 38 Luncheon

Country Kitchen Restaurant, Vallejo;  
Second Wednesday of each month  
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 2:00pm  
POC: Helen Zajac; (707) 644-7565

### Napa Chapter of NARFE Meeting

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

### Mare Island Historical Park Foundation

Mare Island Quarters "A,"  
3rd Monday quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct) at 10:00am POC:  
Ken Zadwick, (707) 557-1538

### Navy League

Red Lobster Restaurant, 1180 Admiral Callaghan Ln, Vjo  
1st Monday each month at 12:00 noon  
POC: John Hoffman, (707) 642-4925

the successful transition of Mare Island from proud naval shipyard to a thriving community. Lennar Mare Island recently posted a website that provides a multitude of information on the island's development, as well as business opportunities and upcoming housing developments. I encourage you to spend a little time on their website:

<http://www.discovermareisland.com/>.

In October 2004, the last vestige of the former shipyard faded into the past: guards are no longer manning the main entrance on Tennessee Street. The island is now open to the public without the need for a pass or other authorization. If you are interested in seeing the face of today's Mare Island, there's never been a better time.

As 2004 draws to a close, I offer my sincere wishes for a happy holiday season and a prosperous new year. I assure you that the NYA will continue in its efforts to be an organization that provides high quality information and benefits to its members.

## Mare Island 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

Bruce Christensen

On September 16 and 17, the Mare Island community celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the establishment of Mare Island Naval Shipyard. The two-day celebration included a Navy League commemorative monument dedication emceed by the Mayor of Vallejo, a Mare Island Reunion (over 200 attendees) sponsored by the Navy Yard Association, a Navy Medal of Honor Plaque

## President's Corner

Ralph McComb

There have been numerous changes on Mare Island in 2004. Businesses are prospering, quality housing is being constructed, and the Navy Yard Association hosted a Shipyard Employees' Reunion in September, as part of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

Lennar Mare Island has made significant progress in developing the island's property, both residential and business. Their efforts highlight

dedication at St. Peter's Chapel and a gala banquet (over 300 attendees) held in the Old Pipe Shop, Building 46.

Our Navy Yard Association president, Ralph McComb, on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of past Mare Island civilian and military workers, proudly accepted the magnificent 150th Anniversary Monument dedicated to the Shipyard's distinguished naval history. Ralph made his speech accepting the monument, both at the dedication held in Alden Park on September 16 and again, when the actual monument arrived, on November 18, 2004.

The four-ton stone monument presents a brief history of Mare Island, recognizing each 50 year-segment of the Shipyard's 150 year history; from the 1850's when Mare Island built its first Navy ship, the USS SAGINAW, to the early 1900's when Mare Island constructed the Navy's first aircraft carrier, and the late 1900's when the 513th (and last) ship, the nuclear submarine USS DRUM, was built.

The NYA Shipyard Reunion was a huge success, with an excellent catered lunch in the backyard of Quarters "A" and beautiful weather for the event. To celebrate the 150th Mare Island Anniversary, commemorative tee-shirts; silver, bronze and copper coins, and postmarked envelopes were available for purchase by those who attended. Many past Mare Island employees, both military and civilian, enjoyed themselves and renewed old acquaintances at the reunion.

The Mare Island Historic Park Foundation coordinated the dedication of a hand-carved hardwood plaque replicating the Navy Medal of Honor. The plaque will be hung in St. Peter's chapel with the many other plaques commemorating Navy history.

The gala banquet held in Building 46 allowed many people to see the inside of this historic building, constructed in 1855, for the first time. Many Shipyard artifacts were on display to permit the public to have a preview of the contents of the museum, before it officially opens

on a regular basis. Retired admirals Mike Coyle, Skip McGinley, Wade Bagley and retired captains John Cavender, Jack Nunneley, Ned Kellogg, along with many other military and civilian attendees were at the banquet.

### **Mare Island 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorabilia**

The NYA has Mare Island 150th Anniversary commemorative memorabilia available for purchase, for those of you who could not attend the celebrations in September. Arrangements can be made to obtain items by writing to the NYA, P.O. Box 2034, Vallejo, CA 94590 or calling (707) 562-1812, and leaving a message.

Items/Prices are as follows:

Tee-shirts (M, L, XL, XXL): \$10

Coins:

Silver \$20

Bronze \$ 5

Copper \$ 5

Postmarked Envelopes: \$2.50

The memorabilia will also be on sale at the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum and by the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation.

### **NYA Mare Island 150th Anniversary Booklet**

Utilizing the photographs taken during the two-day celebration of Mare Island's 150th Anniversary, the NYA is preparing a booklet to commemorate this memorable event and to update the history of the Association. Once the booklet is complete, details will be provided in the NYA newsletter as to how copies may be obtained.

### **Membership update**

James Porter

Currently, NYA membership stands at 680, which surpasses our 2004 membership goal

of 650! Dental membership stands at 440 members.

We are very pleased at our successful efforts in renewing lapsed members, members recruiting members and recruiting members from the Sesquicentennial Celebration.

We offer a warm welcome to our new members: Michael Bartunek (Robin Leong); Virginia Brooks (Carmen J. Merriman); Ronald J. Chappelone and Tom Cosso (PA Allen); Leslie A. Crozier (Lea & Helen Zajac); Mark DeSoto (Lea and Helen Zajac); Aleatha W. Edsall, A. Allen Green (Robin Leong); David L. Hambrick (Robin Leong); Harry B. Kister, Robert L. Lang (Diana De Haven); Francis Lyons (Penny Hicks); Nancy Matlock (Carmen Meriman); Charles D. Meng II, Ron Munden (Board of Directors donated membership); Bruce Orr (Bruce Christensen); Frank F. Palmaymesa, James I. Porterfield, John M. Richards, Belle S. Routen, David A. Runge (Rudy Balli); Frank Sharkey, Louis I. Sowersby (Sue Lemmon); and Leslie C. Whitney.

We welcome back former members: Earl Bowen (95); Tim Carr (94); Susan C. Hayden, Ralph Boots Hedemark (03); Roger Helbig (00); William Martin (99); Joseph L. Le Page (00); Dori A. McGee-Lundy (96); Rodney Pieper (01); Todd R. Title (95); James A. Wesley Jr. (01), and Susan Young (00 - Bruce Christensen).

The NYA has various items for sale, including conversion celebration tee-shirts. We would be happy to arrange a time during the day at Building 535 when you could come see our merchandise. Please call Bruce Christensen at (707) 562-3460, or Robin Leong at (707) 643-1287 to arrange purchase of the following:

California Gold TV video segment on Mare Island	\$15
Sidewheelers to Nuclear Power by Sue Lemmon and Ernie Wichels	\$25
Various NYA Pins, Tie Tacks	\$ 1
NYA Hats	\$ 5
NYA Wind Breakers	\$25

NYA Lined Wind Breakers	\$30
Closure Celebration poster	\$ 1
Closure Celebration Tee-shirts (different sizes and colors)	\$10
Closure Celebration Mock Turtleneck Tee-shirts (different sizes and colors)	\$15

## Benefit Officer's Column

Robin Leong

Warmest greetings during this festive time of the year!

Your NYA Officers and Directors strive diligently to provide you with membership benefits; and we sincerely hope you find them of use. In order to get certain time-sensitive information to you while it is still timely, I send e-mail notices to members who've provided their addresses. If you would like to update or provide your e-mail address, please contact me via e-mail to [robin\\_leong@netzero.net](mailto:robin_leong@netzero.net), or you may send your contact information to us at: [benefit@mareislandnya.com](mailto:benefit@mareislandnya.com).

For those members living in the Walnut Creek, CA, area, we have contracted recently with a dentist to provide services in that area for our Pre-paid Plan. We continue to actively recruit Federal employees for our dental plans. To that end, we recently participated in the US Forest Service's Open Season Health Fair on Mare Island. Also, current member Evan Evans recruited a new member from the Social Security Administration in Richmond, CA; and we are seeking interested parties in the Agricultural Research Service in Albany, CA. You can help, too! Please pass the word that the NYA has attractive, affordable dental plans for Federal employees and retirees!

If you are interested in obtaining a DOD retirement card, we have some information for you. Although our local member who was authorized to sign the cards has retired (Fair winds and following seas to Jim Teresil), we are able to have the cards signed by Frank Sharkey, Director of Human Resources at Puget Sound

Naval Shipyard. Spread the word that, if you retired from Mare Island, you can get this useful card, which gives you access to some nice benefits. If you are interested, please give me a call or send me an e-mail, and I'll be happy to go over it with you.

NYA Member Marvin Hanson and his wife, Lillie, are managers of Beaver Creek RV Park in Cobb, Lake County, CA. Marvin is offering NYA members 15% off to camp there. Please check out their web site at <http://www.campbeavercreek.com> for additional information, or call them at 800-307-CAMP

At a recent meeting, your NYA Directors approved a measure that would list our members on our website. If someone wishes to contact a listed member, they would send us an e-mail request which we would then forward to the member. The contacted member would then be able to follow up on the contact. In this way, your confidentiality would be maintained. Our webmaster will be working on this in the near future. Stay tuned for more information on this new benefit.

Best wishes for Happy Holidays!

## **And then there was Yesterday**

Sue Lemmon  
Shipyard Historian

### **FAREWELL TO SHIPS**

The recent de-commissioning of USS PARCHE (SSN-683) was a grave occasion. Although the ceremony took place in Bremerton, somber vibrations were felt as far south as Vallejo, and probably beyond. Several Mare Islanders who had worked on the popular ship traveled north to witness the sorrowful event.

Ships, like humans, endure for limited times. Many Mare Island-built ships have undergone de-commissioning ceremonies, some occurring at distant bases. The MONOCACY

(PG-20) was decommissioned at Shanghai on January 1, 1931, then towed to sea and sunk. Not all ships received honorable discharges, and dozens of vessels were sold for scrap, not a befitting way to end a martial career. We are indebted to Historian Tom Lucy for a reminder of Mare Island-built ships whose careers ended with little dignity. Memories of these ships evoke pathos, starting with our first ship, SAGINAW which was grounded at Ocean Island on October 29, 1870.

Over seventy years later, World War II claimed other venerable ships. On February 1942, JUPITER, re-named LANGLEY was hit by nine Japanese bombers while en route to Java. On November 15, PRESTON (DD-379) was sunk off Guadalcanal, and WASMUTH, World War I destroyer converted to a minesweeper, foundered in the Aleutian Islands on December 29.

In January 1943, CHICAGO (CA-29) was sunk by Japanese torpedoes at Guadalcanal; KANAWHA (tanker) was attacked by five Japanese planes in Tulagi Harbor and sank on April 7. POMPANO (SS-181) left Midway August 20 and was never heard from again; and HENLEY (DD-391) was sunk off New Guinea in September. WAHOO (SS--238) entered the Sea of Japan on August 21, sank four enemy ships, and was never heard from again. The year 1944 was another bad one for Mare Island ships. On March 25, TULLIBEE (SS-284) was apparently hit by one of her own torpedoes. On April 4, TRIGGER (SS-237) was ordered to proceed to Midway, but had not arrived by May 1 and was reported lost.

PERRY (DD-340) was operating off Peleliu Island on September 13 when an underwater explosion broke the ship in two, and it sank. On October 24, TANG (SS-306) fired a torpedo which broached and curved in a circular run, hitting and sinking the sub.

In November the famous 17-1/2 day WARD (DD-139) was at Leyte Gulf when it was

attacked by Japanese planes. One crashed on the ship, setting it on fire. The ship was sunk by guns of the destroyer O'BRIEN

On January 3, 1945, SWORDFISH (SS-193) received orders. No further communication was received from the ship. It was reported lost, the victim of unknown causes.

USS SKATE (SS-305), damaged by atomic bomb tests in 1946, was destroyed off the California Coast on October 5, 1948.

STICKLEBACK (SS-415) lost power on May 29, 1958, while going to a safe depth. The ship broached, collided with a destroyer escort and sank.

If there is a gathering place for spirits of old ships, PARCHE has been welcomed by many other vessels who found favor at Mare Island.