

**MARE ISLAND  
SHORELINE  
HERITAGE  
PRESERVE**



## EVENT ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Remembering a Month of Explosions

#### **AT THE MARE ISLAND SHORELINE HERITAGE PRESERVE**

**JULY 9 MEMORIAL SERVICE TO COMMEMORATE 94TH ANNIVERSARY OF EXPLOSION THAT  
KILLED THE AMMUNITION DEPOT CHIEF GUNNER AND HIS FAMILY WHO ARE BURIED AT  
HISTORIC MARE ISLAND NAVAL CEMETERY**

[VALLEJO], CA – The final commemoration in the Month of Explosions at the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot will be held on the July Second Saturday Access Day, July 9, 2011, at 3pm at the Naval Cemetery. Preserve volunteers will hold a special memorial commemorative service for an explosion that occurred nearly a century ago on July 9, 1917 in which the Chief Gunner at the Naval Ammunition Depot, his wife and two young daughters, along with their gardener and another ordnanceman were killed by the blast of an explosion blamed on a German saboteur.

Chief Gunner, Allen Scott MacKenzie, his wife Malvina and their daughters, Dorothy, age 12 and Mildred, age 8 were killed in their home from the blast of a black powder explosion at the Naval Ammunition Depot in what is now the Shoreline Heritage Preserve. The family is buried in the Mare Island Naval Cemetery, also in the Preserve. Since the explosion took place early in WWI, the blast was determined by the Department of Justice and the Department of the Navy to have been the work of a German saboteur. In late June 2010 Myrna Hayes, volunteer Shoreline Heritage Preserve manager made contact with Allen Scott Harris, grandson of the MacKenzie's and his daughter Linda Garwick, both of San Diego. She will give a slide show about her research and photos from the family at 2:30pm at the Visitors Center. Visit the Preserve blog for the story of the research and for photos at

[http://www.mareislandpreserve.org/Discover\\_the\\_Preserve\\_Blog/Discover\\_Mare\\_Island\\_Preserve\\_Blog/Entries/2010/6/25\\_Roberta\\_E.\\_McKenzie\\_and\\_her\\_family\\_live\\_on.html](http://www.mareislandpreserve.org/Discover_the_Preserve_Blog/Discover_Mare_Island_Preserve_Blog/Entries/2010/6/25_Roberta_E._McKenzie_and_her_family_live_on.html)

#### **Guided hikes at the Preserve July 8 and 9**

Friday July 8, Preserve volunteers continue their weekly Friday evening *Wine and Walks in the Preserve* 4:30-7pm. Share good company, appetizers and good wine supplied by Preserve volunteers or bring your own at the Visitors Center and other locations in the Preserve, followed by a docent led Preserve walk to view sunsets and visit sites such as the naval cemetery, Rowser Garden and former ammunition bunkers.

At 9:30am Brian Collett, Sierra Club-Solano Group hike leader gives a guided 3.5 mile hike in the Preserve. Meet at the “Palmer Hut” at the entrance to the Preserve Visitors Center through the gate at the south end of Mare Island, 1595 Railroad Ave. in Vallejo, CA.

### **Guided hikes at the Preserve every Friday-Sunday**

Volunteer Preserve manager and long-time Mare Island volunteer Myrna Hayes, leads a daily afternoon wildflower, nature and history walk along a portion of the main trail, including a visit to the Bill and Alma Rowser Legacy Gardens to learn about progress on the discovery and plans for rehabilitation of the more than 80 year-old garden. This leisurely walk is about 1.5 miles and leaves from the Preserve Visitors Center at 3:30pm. Meet at the Preserve Visitors Center through the gate at the south end of Railroad Ave. on Mare Island. Wear comfortable shoes and a hat and bring water and snacks, sunscreen, binoculars and cameras.

### **Public access at the Preserve**

The Preserve will continue to open three days a week every Friday through Sunday 10am-sunset staffed by volunteers of the Mare Island Heritage Trust. The public is welcome to visit the Preserve free of charge. The Preserve is located at 1595 Railroad Ave. at the southern end of Railroad Ave. south of Touro University and the Army Reserve on Mare Island.

During the open days the public can walk or ride bicycles on a self-guided paved roadway trail with 14 interpretive stops along the 3-mile roundtrip route to the top of the hill and beyond. At this time of year, Preserve users will have the opportunity to view nesting osprey and great blue herons on their walk on the paved road trail leading to the oldest U.S. Naval cemetery in the Pacific and winding through portions of the Naval Ammunition Depot National Register Historic District to the scenic lookout at the top of Mare Island Hill with panoramic views of seven counties, Mt. Tamalpais, Mt. Diablo and the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. The Preserve is open rain or shine. Dress in layers. Picnic grounds are located on a former tennis court adjacent to the Naval Cemetery with nearby ammunition bunkers to explore. Refreshments are available at the Visitors Center. Dogs are allowed on leash.

Although entrance to the Preserve is free, donations help to keep the Preserve open regularly. Donations will also make possible Preserve volunteer’s ability to increase the number of open days in the future and provide funds for purchase of tools and supplies for work parties, nature club activities, historic preservation, native plant restoration and special events.

Key features of the Preserve are spectacular scenic vistas encompassing seven Bay Area counties, Mt. Diablo, Mt. Tamalpais and Mt. St. Helena, the Carquinez Strait and Sonoma and Napa Valleys and the U.S. Navy’s first cemetery in the Pacific, founded in 1858. Visitors may also view interpretive displays and an art show by members of the Benicia Plein Air Group portraying the Preserve at the Visitors Center in a former munitions storage magazine, Building A-167. Visit [www.mareislandpreserve.org](http://www.mareislandpreserve.org) for directions to the Preserve, located at 1595 Railroad Ave. on Mare Island.

The first parcels of the Preserve, were transferred to the City of Vallejo in a grant from the legislature through the California State Lands Commission in 2002 for public trust uses such as a park, for all Californians. Additional parcels were transferred in the Fall of 2010. The remainder of the 215-acre site is still undergoing environmental cleanup by the U.S. Navy. Volunteers have hosted free public access on the second Saturday of each month since April 2008 with expanded hours to every weekend Fri-Sun beginning in October 2010 through a use agreement with the City of Vallejo.

### **Upcoming Events at the Preserve:**

**June 21 Tuesday, Summer Solstice Celebration Picnic/Potluck 5:00pm-10:00pm. Free. Bring your**

friends and family to the first Preserve Summer Solstice event, welcoming the summer and celebrating the longest day of the year. Bring music to play and food to share (potluck begins at 6pm). Cold and hot drinks provided. Join in an evening sunset hilltop walk at 7:30pm.

**June 24 Friday, Historic Naval Ammunition Depot and Shipyard Boat Tour with Dolphin Charters, Mare Island Heritage Trust and The Society for the History of Navy Medicine.** 10:00am-3:00pm. \$60 per person. Bring lunch. Leave from Vallejo Marina Guest Dock. Reservations: call 510-527-9622 or 1-800-472-9942.

**July 4 Monday July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday Access** Preserve open 10am-10pm. Preserve volunteers will open the Preserve over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, Friday-Sunday 10am-sunset and Monday, 10am-10pm. Watch area fireworks from the hilltop. Walking access only. No fireworks or fire of any kind allowed in the Preserve.

**July 9 Saturday July Second Saturday Access Day** Preserve open 10am-8pm. Preserve volunteers will hold a special memorial commemorative service at the Mare Island Naval Cemetery for an explosion that occurred July 9, 1917 in which the Chief Gunner at the Naval Ammunition Depot, his wife and two young daughters, ages 12 and 8, were killed by the blast of an explosion blamed on a German saboteur. They are buried in the Mare Island Naval Cemetery.

**July 24 Sunday Fennel and Dill Pollen Cook-off Tasting and Potluck 1pm-3pm at the Visitors Center.** Join Preserve volunteers for a first ever and first of its kind cook-off using wild fennel pollen and blends and wild dill pollen. Timed to coincide with the wild-craft harvesting of fennel pollen on the Preserve by Pollen Ranch, the supplier and creator of Pollen Ranch fennel and dill pollen and seasoning blends, which can be purchased at the Preserve Visitors Center Bomb Magazine Marketplace.

**July 30 Saturday Mare Island Heritage Trust** volunteers will host two free tours with no pre-registration required, as part of the [18th Annual Laborfest 2011](#). Participants in the first tour starting at 11:30am, will learn about some of the labor issues that influenced work life at the shipyard and walk through the central shipyard with some of the workers who built and repaired Navy vessels up until the base closure in 1996. Following an optional brown bag lunch where complementary drinks will be served at the Shoreline Heritage Preserve picnic grounds, a second narrated walking and driving tour is scheduled to begin at 2pm with retired ILWU member Jeff Bonneville and Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve manager Myrna Hayes. "A 'Mutiny' that Changed History" will describe what became known as the Port Chicago Mutiny that took place at the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot August 9, 1944, 3 weeks after the Port Chicago Explosion that resulted in the greatest loss of life on home soil during WWII.

**August 12-14 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Mare Faire** 10:00am-8:00pm. Naturalist and docent-led hikes throughout the Island, exhibits, music, food and a silent auction at the Preserve Visitors Center. The event is free and features, guided hikes and tours of a range of Preserve features including munitions bunkers and the Naval Cemetery, historical and nature oriented presentations and displays.

**Info.** Call 707-557-9816 or 707-249-9633.

Visit our website: [www.mareislandpreserve.org](http://www.mareislandpreserve.org)

**Please note:** High resolution photos of the Historic Shoreline available. Tours of The Preserve are available to any reporter or photographer covering these events. Call Myrna Hayes, 707-557-9816 or 707-249-9633 (cell) to schedule.

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