

# Mare Island Naval Cemetery 150th Anniversary Commemoration



*The Mare Faire* – a project of Arc Ecology

Friday August 8 and Saturday August 9 2008

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CELEBRATION HONORS 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF NAVY'S OLDEST CEMETERY IN THE PACIFIC AND 64TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PORT CHICAGO MUTINY

[VALLEJO}, CA – On Saturday, August 9, 2008 at 11am a free event on Mare Island will commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Mare Island Naval Cemetery and the 64th Anniversary of the Port Chicago Mutiny. Among highlights of the naval cemetery commemoration service, a U.S. Navy Honor Guard will raise an American flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol by the office of Congressman George Miller and a Navy bugler will play Taps. The Mare Island Naval Cemetery is located in the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve. The program will include music and history. Those gathered will be invited to sing the Navy Hymn and recite some of the names of those buried in the cemetery. Three medal of honor recipients, a former U.S. Congressman Daniel Turner and his wife, the daughter of Francis Scott Key, author of our national anthem, 15 crew members of the USS Boston who died in an ammunition explosion in 1892 and even Russian sailors who lost their lives in a valiant effort to save

lives in a San Francisco fire, are some of the Navy and Marine Corps personnel and their families, along with foreign sailors are buried at the cemetery.

For the second year, Arc Ecology will host a free gathering at the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve on the area of Mare Island that is the original Island totaling about 900 acres as compared to the now more than 5,000 acres created by the Navy's filling of the bay. Visible from the hilltop vantage point is some of the most breathtaking views and scenery in California, including scenic vistas of 7 Bay Area counties, the Carquinez Strait, Mt. Tamalpais and Mt. Diablo. The property's 150 years of Navy history and natural wildlands make it a magnet for history buffs, birders and nature lovers and artists and photographers. The property has been off limits to the public until recently due to sensitive Navy munitions manufacturing, storage and transport and more recent environmental cleanup.

Friday, August 8, beginning at 9am guided outings and self-guided walks and opportunities to paint and photograph, will be followed by evening programming until 8pm followed by stargazing at the hilltop. Friday, 9am-11am, David Takeuchi, Napa Solano Audubon Society Field Trip Chairman, will guide a birdwatching outing in search of hawks, turkey vultures, song birds and recently fledged osprey and great blue herons. Continuing on Saturday, August 9, 2008, 9am-7pm the public will learn about the search for buried munitions as part of the Navy's environmental cleanup, future plans for a regional park, the difference between a magazine and a bunker, and archeological history of the property in free guided hikes and tours led by naturalists, archeologists and historians.

At 2pm, Saturday, August 9, a commemoration will be held to mark the 64<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Port Chicago Mutiny an important part of our nation's history that took place in Vallejo where the Vallejo Sanitation District headquarters and treatment plant is now located on August 9, 1944. Dr. Robert L. Allen, University of California Berkeley professor of African American and Ethnic Studies and author of *The Port Chicago Mutiny: The Story of the Largest Mass Mutiny Trial in U.S. Naval History*, will be the keynote speaker at the ceremony on a pier at the edge of the Napa River/Mare Island Strait.

Pianist Guy Arrostuto and friends play music Friday evening and Saturday afternoon. Food will be available for purchase throughout the day Saturday. The event is free thanks to generous sponsors and individuals including Weston Solutions, Inc. CS Marine Constructors, Inc, Lennar Communities, Touro University and The Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District. Sponsors and volunteers are still needed. For information and directions visit [www.mareislandpreserve.org](http://www.mareislandpreserve.org) or call 707-557-9816 or 707-649-9464.

### **The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve**

Although planned as a park, regular access is currently limited to the Second Saturday Access Day each month, 10am-6pm hosted by Arc Ecology, during which the public has free access to 98 acres of the future 215 acre parkland for hiking and bicycling on the paved roadway, visiting the cemetery, picnicking and birdwatching. Visitors may view displays about the history and natural features of the parkland and an art show by members of the Benicia Plein Air Group portraying paintings in The

Preserve at the future park headquarters and visitor center in a former munitions storage magazine, Building A-167.

The first parcels of the property in which the Access Day takes place, were transferred to the City of Vallejo in a grant from the California legislature through the California State Lands Commission in 2002 for public trust uses for all Californians. The remainder of the 215-acre site is still undergoing environmental cleanup by the U.S. Navy and is not open to the public except through occasional hikes led by the Sierra Club Solano Group. The next hike led by the Sierra Club is scheduled the 3rd Saturday in September.

Please note: Tours of The Preserve are available to any reporter or photographer covering this event. Call Myrna Hayes, 707-557-9816 or 707-249-9633 (cell) to schedule.

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## Highlights of Event

### 150th Anniversary Naval Cemetery August 9, 11am

- Naval Cemetery Commemorative Ceremony, U.S. Navy Honor Guard, flag flown over nation's capitol, music, speakers, playing of Taps by Navy Bugler, gravestone rubbing, docent tours

### 64th Anniversary Port Chicago Mutiny, August 9, 2pm, Berth 24

- Port Chicago Mutiny Commemoration Ceremony, Featured Speaker: Dr. Robert L. Allen, author, history, music

### Plein Air Art Show and Painting Demonstration

Members of the Benicia Plein Air Group [[www.pleinairlinks.com](http://www.pleinairlinks.com)] will show their work of The Preserve and regional natural and scenic locations. Artists Joanne Corbaley and Catherine Fasciato and Iris Sabre will demonstrate plein air painting at the Park Headquarters. Tim Baskerville, the Nocturnes [[www.thenocturnes.com](http://www.thenocturnes.com)] will also show his Mare Island night photography.

## Directions

Online maps aren't yet accurate because they haven't found us yet. The best directions are on our website.

[www.mareislandpreserve.org](http://www.mareislandpreserve.org)

- From I-80 east or westbound: Exit Tennessee St., continue west to Mare Island. Follow Mare Faire signs.
- From Napa and Sonoma: Travel south on Highway 29 to Tennessee St., turn right and follow directions above.
- From Contra Costa County: Cross the Benicia-Martinez Bridge on I-680. Take I-780 west toward Benicia and Vallejo. Continue on I-780 for approximately 7 miles. Exit at I-80 east. Continue on I-80 toward Sacramento. Exit on Tennessee St. and follow directions above.
- From Marin and Sonoma: Travel east on Highway 37 to the Mare Island exit just before the Napa River Bridge. Turn right at the north entrance to Mare Island; continue to stop at G St. Turn left. Continue 2 blocks to Nimitz Ave. Turn right.
- Mare Island Directions: Continue on Nimitz Ave. to a right turn at 15<sup>th</sup> St. Turn right to Railroad Ave. Turn left. Continue to PARKING at Touro University and beyond the Army Reserves.

## Hours

- Friday, guided outings and self-guided walk with 13 stops, 2.5 mile roundtrip scenic route with Trail Guide, 9am-5pm. Bring snacks. Kickoff event music by Guy Arrostuto: 5-8pm. Stargazing: 8-10pm.
- Saturday, guided outings 9am-11am; 12:30-2pm; 3-7pm. Exhibits and presentations: 9am-7pm. Food for purchase: 9am-5pm. Music, gift basket raffle, silent auction. All ages. Accessible. Pedestrian only. Shuttle available for commemoration services.

Complete Schedule available online at [www.mareislandpreserve.org](http://www.mareislandpreserve.org).

## Full Schedule of Events

### Friday, August 8

#### Hikes, Guided Tours and Evening Celebration

##### 8:45-11am **Birding the South Shore**

Join David Takeuchi, Napa Solano Audubon Society Field Trip Chairman, for a birding tour of the South Shore bunkers and mitigation ponds, escorted by the U.S. Navy. See pairs of Ospreys. Perhaps the baby Western Gull will still be on the nest. Examine evidence of Barn Owls. In Chinese numerology, 08-08-08 is an auspicious number; we hope this will be an auspicious morning for “vagrant” waterfowl. At the Naval Cemetery we may see a Brown Creeper working the trunks of the trees. Bring binoculars. Meet at park entrance gate at 8:45 am to form carpools.

##### 12noon-6pm **Gourd Art & Fun with Gourd Guru Kemper Stone**

*Repeats Saturday 10am-6pm*

Learn to transform gourds into bowls, vases, birdhouses, rattles and trumpets. Information about gourds, cultivation, techniques, classes and organizations. Find Kemper in the shade on the road to the Cemetery, except during both Saturday commemoration services.

##### 10am-6pm **Benicia Plein Air Group Painting Demonstrations and Art Show**

*Repeats Saturday 10am-6pm*

Plein Air Group members have painted The Preserve for the past year and begun to show at the Visitor Center during the Second Saturday Access Day. The **Mare Faire** will be their first art show and sale at The Preserve. They have donated two

paintings to our Silent Auction and 10%

of their sales. Joanne Corbaley will demonstrate painting Friday morning, followed by Catherine Fasciato in the afternoon. Iris Sabre will demonstrate painting Saturday from 10am-1pm. Stop by the art show to learn where the painters will be set up. Borrow our carts or bring yours. An afternoon shuttle can return painters and gear to the Visitor Center. All painters are welcome to paint both days in any location access is allowed; there is no need to be linked with the Plein Air Group.

##### 1-2pm **Guided Mare Island Naval Cemetery Tour**

*Repeats 4pm and 7pm*

Meet Joyce Giles, Mare Island Historic Park Foundation volunteer guide, for a walk to the cemetery to explore the first Naval Cemetery in the Pacific. Meet at Outing Tent, Park Headquarters.

##### 1-3:30pm **Guided Hike to South Shore**

Hike the South Shore of the former Naval Ammunition Depot with Brian Collett. The 4-mile roundtrip hike is on level paved and gravel roads on land planned for regional parklands but not yet open to the public due to ongoing environmental cleanup. The Navy will escort, so the group must stay together and no one may leave early. Arrive promptly. No facilities. Meet at Outing Tent at the Park Headquarters.

##### 4-5pm **Mare Island Naval Cemetery Visit**

See Friday 1pm description.

*Repeats 1pm and 7pm and Saturday*

##### 5:30-7pm **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Refreshments and Champagne Toast**

Park Headquarters and Visitor Center. Music by local pianist Guy Arrustuto, mingling, and a toast to the 150<sup>th</sup> of the Mare Island Naval Cemetery.

### 7-8pm **Mare Island Naval Cemetery Twilight Tour**

See Friday, 1pm description.

*Repeats Friday, 1pm and 4pm and Saturday, 12noon-4pm*

### 7:15-8:15pm **Sunset Vista Point Visit**

Walk, bike or travel by shuttle if available, to the highest point on Mare Island with spectacular vistas of 7 Bay Area counties, San Pablo Bay, Mt. Diablo, the Carquinez Strait and Mt. Tamalpais to view the sun setting.

### 7:15-8:15pm **Explore Bunkers and Magazines**

*Repeats Saturday, 4:30-5:30pm*

Explore with Myrna Hayes, Volunteer *Mare Faire* Coordinator, a couple of bunkers and magazines once used to store naval munitions. Learn the difference between a magazine and a bunker. This evening visit may be just a little scary and if the fog doesn't send a chill up your back maybe something else will. Bring flashlights.

### 8:15-11:15pm **Hilltop Stargazing**

It's a "first quarter" moon and a perfect time to view the sky. The lights of the region are dramatic and have not prevented viewing the night sky. Bring your telescope and share your knowledge of the night sky; talk a friend with a scope into bringing it along; bring binoculars, a camera and flashlight if you have them and join Rick Meleski and John Ewing who will set their scopes up at the top of the hill following the sunset. Since there is very, very limited space to park, carpools will be required. Meet on the roadway at the Visitor Center at 8pm to form carpools.

## **Saturday, August 9**

### **Hikes, Guided Tours, Presentations and the Naval Cemetery and Port Chicago Mutiny Commemorations**

#### **9am-11am Archeological Explorations**

Join Bill Roop and Katherine Flynn, Partners at Archeological Resource Service based in Petaluma and authors of much of the documented early history of Mare Island, for a historical archeology guided tour including the site of the 1917 explosion at an ordnance magazine reported to have sent the roof flying over the hill in the direction of Contra Costa County, Building A-1 and the Civil War era earthworks built in August 1863 on the hill overlooking the naval magazines to protect the Shipyard from the threat of Confederate attack.

#### **9am-6:30pm Self-guided Walks**

Pick up a Trail Guide with 13 stops, at the welcome sign in front of the Park Headquarters; walk at your own pace on the 1.5 mile roundtrip climb up the 384 ft. high hill. Stunning views await of 7 Bay Area counties and Mt. Diablo, Mt. Tamalpais, the Carquinez Straits, San Pablo Bay and the East Bay hills. Visit the "Spirit Ship" Art Tribute to Mare Island shipyard workers.

#### **10am-6pm Benicia Plein Air Group Painting Demonstrations and Art Show**

See Friday 10am description.

*Repeats Friday, 10am-6pm*

#### **10am-6pm Gourd Art & Fun with Gourd Guru Kemper Stone**

See Friday 10am description.

*Repeats Friday, 10am-6pm*

#### **11am-12noon 150th Anniversary Naval Cemetery Ceremony**

Plan time to walk to the top of the graveyard where the service will be. A shuttle from the cemetery gate will transport mobility challenged. Only vehicles displaying handicapped placards will be allowed to drive to the cemetery. A U.S. Navy Honor Guard will raise an American flag flown over the Capitol and a Navy bugler will play Taps. Join in singing the Navy Hymn and reading the names of some of the 922 buried here. Also, do a gravestone rubbing and join docent tours both days.

#### **12noon-4pm Mare Island Naval Cemetery Visit**

Join Joyce Giles, Mare Island Historic Park Foundation volunteer at the cemetery for docent-guided tours.

12noon-6pm **Mare Faire Headquarters–Park Visitor Center**  
Information, Food, Music, Educational Displays, Presentations

There are all kinds of celebrations to mark historic moments in our nation's history. You simply won't find any other like this one; no one else has the Navy's oldest cemetery in the Pacific and the Navy's oldest arsenal in the Pacific at the Navy's oldest installation in the Pacific. Period. It is well on its way to becoming a regional park of state and national importance! Bring a picnic lunch or purchase Mexican food and cold drinks from Martha and Jose–Mare Island's favorite taco truck. Or, how about a sandwich and cookies, coffee, iced tea and/or lemonade. Relax in the shade of the "tennis court" picnic area by the cemetery, or under the tent at the Visitor Center. Enjoy the music of local pianist Guy Arrustuto and Friends.

2-3pm **64th Anniversary Port Chicago Mutiny**

**Location:** *Berth 24 just beyond Army Reserves off Railroad Ave. just outside the gate to the Shoreline Heritage Preserve*  
Port Chicago Mutiny Commemoration Ceremony, Dr. Robert L. Allen, Author, "*The Port Chicago Mutiny*", Guest Speaker; Share in our tribute to 258 men who made history here during WWII.

3-4:30pm **Historic South Vallejo: A New View**

Guided talk and walk led by Jim Kern, Executive Director, Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum

Mare Island served as Vallejo's economic engine for nearly 150 years, but the City of Vallejo boasted other commercial activities as well. South Vallejo is a historic neighborhood known for flourmills, lumber docks, brickyards, and fishing fleets. Historically, it was also Vallejo's transportation center - from the California Pacific Railroad to the Six-Minute Ferry at Morrow Cove to the Carquinez Bridge. Visualizing South Vallejo's history from the Vallejo side of the channel is difficult at best, but from Mare Island the picture becomes clearer. Learn about the fascinating people, places and events of South Vallejo including Jack London and Robert Louis Stevenson, the Port Chicago Mutiny and its link to the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot, Greek & Portuguese fishermen, the railroad and the ferries. Meet at the Outing Tent–Visitor Center. Note: Since this outing follows the Port Chicago Mutiny commemoration, it will leave after that program is over.

4:30-5:30pm **Explore Bunkers and Magazines**

See Friday 7:15pm description.

*Repeats Friday, 7:15-8:15pm*

Explore a bunker and a magazine and learn what's the difference, with Myrna Hayes, Volunteer *Mare Faire* Coordinator.

5:30-6:30pm **How The Island Grew and Changed**

Presenter, Myrna Hayes, Volunteer *Mare Faire* Coordinator

Learn about the varied uses of the "original" Mare Island from navigational aides to a golf course and how it has changed over time. Park Visitor Center.