

Farragut's Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE MARE ISLAND MUSEUM, 1100 Railroad Ave, Vallejo CA 94592

Mare Island Historic Park

Dec 2017

EXPLOSIONS ! at the Ammo Depot

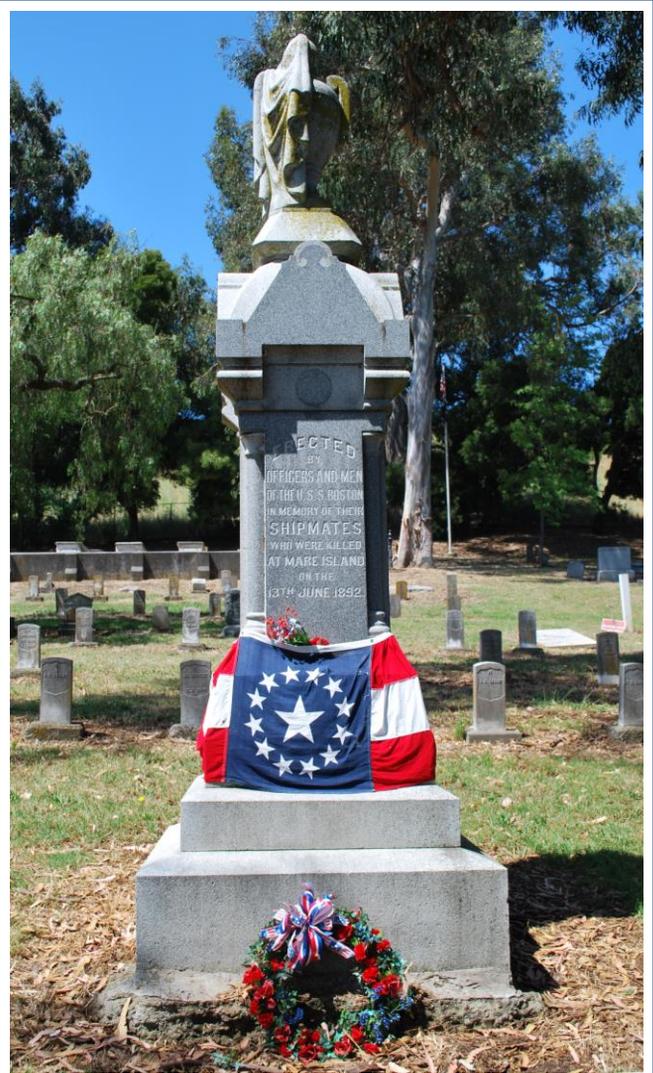
The Ammunition Depot on the south end of Mare Island was founded in 1857 and the first shell building, A-1, is still standing as is the first quarters, A-45, both started in 1857 but not finished until 1858. Also in 1857 a pile driver was sent to the lower end of the island where they began constructing a wharf. By July 1858 all ammunition was "safely and properly stored" in the shell building which had stone walls and a tin roof designed to force any explosion to only go up and out.

The common practice in the early days was when a ship came to the island for repairs or overhaul was that the ammunition was taken to the Ammo Depot and the shells were emptied of the black powder, or explosive, in the shell. When the ship was ready to leave the island, the shells were refilled in the depot and loaded aboard the ship. Usually professional explosive handlers, wearing special rubber boots and using only copper or wooden tools, refilled the six or eight inch shells for the big guns.

In 1892 the *USS Boston* was in dry dock and ready to leave Mare Island as her maintenance was finished. On 13 June fifteen sailors from the ship were sent to the powder magazine or ammo depot, an isolated part of the island. The buildings were few and the possibility of an accident was unlikely, and in the more than 30 year it had been in existence there had never been an explosion on the shipyard.

In charge of the crew was Gunner George Hittinger. Since these were ordinary sailors they all worked in soft slippers or stocking feet. As was required their tools were copper or wood and they worked on screens so no powder would be under their feet. The task before them was to measure the black powder carefully, pour it through a funnel into the top of the shell and then attach the head to the shell. They were filling the six and eight inch shells.

All of a sudden there was a tremendous explosion which the captain of the *Boston* could hear in the dry dock. As he looked to the south end of Mare Island he could see a huge cloud of smoke and could hear continuing explosions. Everyone knew there had been



The *Boston* Memorial, Mare Island Navy Cemetery

an explosion in the magazine. The captain summoned his launch and with the watch officer immediately headed to the ammo depot, When they arrived they saw the magazine had been destroyed and there were embers and pieces of the charred remains of the men everywhere. Three of the crew was still alive. One, John Briscoe, was at the water's edge, naked, no skin and his raw flesh was still smoking. Asked what had happened, he said he did not know. He was filling an eight inch shell and then there was an explosion. As he was being taken to the hospital he kept asking to be shot because the pain was so unbearable and he said it would be an act of mercy

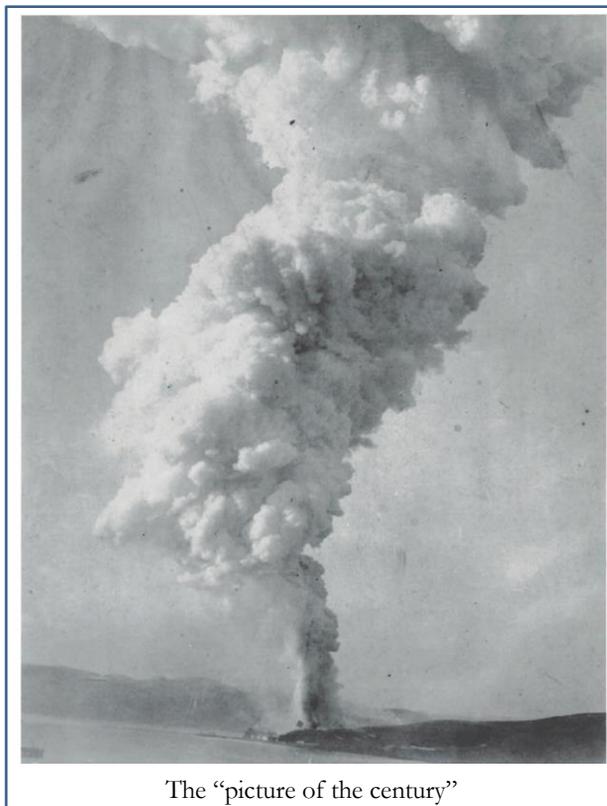
if they killed him. Two other men were also badly injured and taken to the hospital, but all three died. In August of 1892 a large monument was erected in the Mare Island cemetery commemorating the 15 men who died in the explosion. A court of inquiry was held, but nothing could be learned about the cause. The three survivors, who had been questioned, were in such a state that their answers were considered to be valueless. Many felt that the Navy was responsible for not using professional handlers instead of untrained sailors lacking proper gear and training. There was another explosion on 5 June 1901, but unlike the previous one this explosion was silent. A well-known Vallejo photographer, W. F. Henry, was on the Vallejo side of the Napa River getting ready to photograph the newly refurbished steamer General Frisbie as she came down the Mare Island Strait on its run to San Francisco. His camera was on the tripod, perfectly focused with the exposure bulb in his hand. Suddenly there was an atomic light column of smoke 1500 feet high and he snapped what was then called the "picture of the century."



General Frisbie, by William A. Coulter for *May 11, 1901 San Francisco Call*

no noise, no one was killed and two had minor injuries. In the space of a few seconds \$580,000 worth of powder had been destroyed. The new smokeless powder was composed primarily of guncotton which had tremendous force when ignited. Because the magazine walls were brick and the roof light metal, the force went upward and there was no damage to another magazine within 500 feet which stored 800,000 pounds of black powder. The shipyard reacted quickly and the greatest concern was for nearby magazines and the grass on the hillside. The explosion was peculiar in that there was no noise and no explosion. Smokeless powder is unusual in that in open air it will sputter and burn slowly, but in a confined space it will burst and consume anything in its way. As the roof was flimsy, it was simply lifted and the vapor escaped and disappeared in a very short time. All that was evident were the magazine walls and

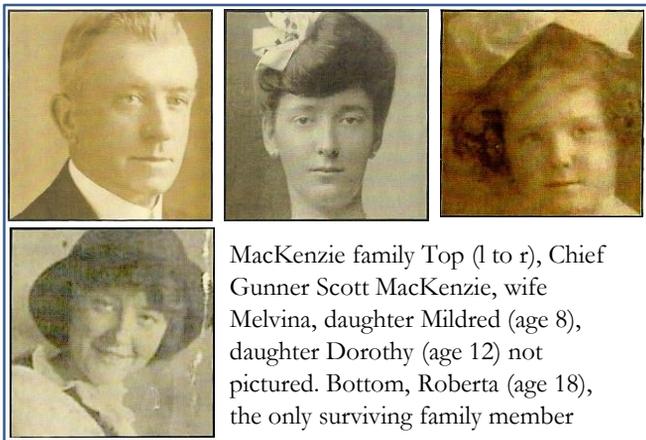
In actuality the "smoke" was vapor from 650,000 pounds of smokeless powder. There was no shock and no



The "picture of the century"

the burned grass. The cause was never determined. A third major explosion in the Ammunition Depot took place on 9 July 1917 shortly after America entered World War I in April 1917. 13 buildings, which included shell houses, packing houses and quarters, were partially or totally destroyed and six people were killed. Windows were shattered all the way to the north end of the yard and a ship in the strait received the full effect of the explosion. Had it been further along, the damage would have been much more significant. All people knew for hours was that an explosion had occurred.

Four of the deceased were Chief Gunner Allen MacKenzie, USN, his wife and his two daughters aged 12 and 8. Also killed were George Stanton, a gardener, and N.C. Damstedt, an ordnance man. Mrs. MacKenzie and the daughters were preparing to leave to go east to the wedding of an older sister. The family lived in a duplex shared with Gunner J.F. McKenna. The house was totally destroyed and while the entire Mac Kenzie family was killed, Gunner McKenna, whose residence was separated only by a thin partition, along with his wife, his baby and the baby's nurse all survived. Although it is difficult to believe, supposedly McKenna saw the flash of the explosion and threw himself and his family out of



MacKenzie family Top (1 to r), Chief Gunner Scott MacKenzie, wife Melvina, daughter Mildred (age 8), daughter Dorothy (age 12) not pictured. Bottom, Roberta (age 18), the only surviving family member

doors in time to save them all.

The shipyard was immediately closed, Marines surrounded the depot and no one was allowed to leave the installation for more than two hours even if they had an ID card or pass.

In Vallejo there was much damage. Windows were shattered as might be expected - all the windows on the western side of a Southern Pacific train in the station were smashed as were many of the shop windows along Georgia Street. The Sperry Flour Mill had no damage to their machinery though right across from the explosion but a fish cannery near the flour mill was nearly collapsed. Chimneys were cracked throughout the city and people were warned to check their chimneys carefully and if there was any doubt to contact the fire department. A piece of steel 5/8 inches thick and 3x 8 inches wide was hurled across the strait cutting through a 10x2 beam and embedding in another. Unfortunately according to newspaper accounts, little of the damage, especially to the windows, was not covered by insurance.

The immediate concern was what had caused the explosion. Many thought it was espionage and here is

where the story gets quite interesting. One of the characters involved was a young German, Wilhelm von Brincken, who was transferred to the German consulate in San Francisco in 1915. In 1916 he was found guilty of espionage and sentenced to Alcatraz along with dozens of other Germans including the consulate-general, Franz Bopp. He was released from prison in 1920 due to the treaty signed at the end of war and then went on to become an American citizen and an actor in both featured and minor roles using several names including Robert Vaughn or Vaughan as well as von Brincken. He is important to this story because he confessed to American authorities that the incident at Mare Island was a German plot to blow up the ammunition depot.

Two other Germans, Lothar Witzke and Kurt Jahnke, were also "involved" with the supposed plot to blow up the magazines. Both were German born, but Jahnke came to the US in 1898, joined the US Marines, served in the Philippines and became a naturalized American citizen. By 1914 he became a saboteur under command of Franz Bopp, the German Consul General in San Francisco. Witzke had served in the German Navy and became an active spy in the US and Mexico during WWI. In 1916 he came to San Francisco and was also under the command of Franz Bopp. Both were extremely capable in secret service work and far outclassed any other spies who worked for Bopp. Both also worked on activities on the East Coast and in Mexico where one plan was to train a Mexican group who would come to the US in 1918 and "arouse the Negroes to civil war."

Jahnke supposedly thought it clever to report his own sabotage before he blew up Mare Island because then he would never be suspected. In the efforts to identify the saboteur the US government turned to a colonel in



Left to right: Wilhelm von Brincken (as Yussuf Streyer in the movie "A Yank in Libya", Consul-general Franz Bopp, Kurt Jahnke, Lothar Witzke, and the Mexican Army Colonel/counterspy, Paul Altendorf

the Mexican Army, Paul Altendorf, who was very pro-American and agreed to act as a counterspy. In a bar, he turned up Jahnke who was a heavy drinker and he admitted he was the public spirited citizen who had informed the authorities in San Francisco about the plot and then boasted he was an explosives expert who could blow up anything. He also claimed he had done the job with another German spy, Lothar Witzke, who was also hiding out in Mexico City.

Witzke was maneuvered to Nogales, AZ where he was immediately arrested by US agents. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged. However, like others, after the end of the war his sentence was commuted and he was released in 1923 due to the Versailles Treaty agreement and deported to Berlin.

On his return he was awarded the Iron Cross, First and Second Class, the same awards earned by Hitler during WW I. After WW II he was elected as a member of a state parliament in Germany.

Jahnke also returned to Germany and established in the late 30s, the "Jahnke Buro," a private investigative service which reported to Rudolf Hess. After Hess landed in England, Jahnke was no longer in favor with German authorities and was eventually captured by the Soviets and executed.

Highway 37

A major public issue in the Solano, Sonoma, Napa and Marin County area is Highway 37 which extends from HWY 80 in Vallejo to Hwy 101 in Marin which then connects to the Golden Gate Bridge. There is also an intersection at Sears Point, now called Sonoma Raceway, which connects Hwy 121 with roads from Napa. At its beginning in Vallejo and only to Mare Island and beyond Sears Point it is four lanes, but it narrows to two lanes between those two entry points causing massive traffic delays at commute times – often traffic is literally at a standstill completely across the Wilson Avenue Bridge on the Napa River. If there is an accident in the two lane section it can be catastrophic. Add to that at the western end during the past winter season the road was closed for many days due to flooding. And as this article is being written it is once again closed due to the fires in Sonoma and Napa County.

On the Vallejo side of HWY 37 the road was originally part of the El Camino Real. In 1917 the western portion was opened by the state, but the eastern section from Sears Point was a toll road managed by



In 1940, this was the Sears Point Rd connection to Walnut Ave. The guard house had been moved from the prison area, near the present Top Four Club. The sign reads: "Navy Yard Mare Island. General visiting not allowed". Bldg. 503, for many years home of the Paint Factory and now housing the Naval Reserves, is in the center of the picture. Bldg. 505, at right, was the High Frequency Transmitting Station – later the Town and Country Center.

Golden Gate Ferry which was opened in 1926. When Farragut arrived in 1854 everything north of A Street was tule land and underwater at high tide. They began to fill in the marshes in 1928 and when the Sears Point toll road near the shipyard was opened, Mare Island began work on connecting to it. In 1929 a gravel one lane road was built to connect Walnut Avenue from A Street to the toll road.

By 1932 the work of filling the north end of Mare Island was going on 24 hours a day and was done by the Bechtel Corporation with dirt from both the shipyard and the city of Vallejo. The idea was to make a permanent connection to Sears Point Road which was now toll free and under control of the state. By 1940 there was a guard shack which had been moved from the prison area and a sign advising that general visiting was not available. A more permanent building was built later.

In 1932 the state highway commission recommended purchasing the toll road and invested close to \$400,000 by 1936. However, the US Navy owned rights to the right of way on a small part of the route and they opposed the sale. Finally a deed permitting the state to



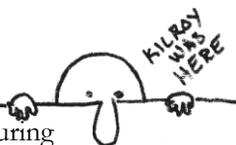
1967, when this picture was taken, the identifying title running down the submarine sail (guardhouse) was "San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard". Between May 1965 and Jan 1970, the combined Mare Island-Hunters Point shipyard had this title.

purchase the road was granted by the U.S. Attorney General in 1938 and it became Rte.48 until renumbering in 1964. With the construction of the interchange to Hwy37 in 1965 more changes were necessary.

In October 1967 a new guardhouse was erected in the shape of a sail of a nuclear submarine (this was the era when Mare Island was building seventeen nuclear subs.) It was designed by two men who worked as architects on the base. The sail was removed in 1979 because the planes on the bottom of the sail were constantly being hit by trucks entering the shipyard and thus ended the life of one of the most distinctive buildings on Mare Island. Bldg 959 next served as the sentry, but the north gate is now open to anyone who wishes to enter the former naval shipyard.

Interestingly enough one of the plans now in discussion is to turn Hwy 37 back into a toll road to raise sufficient funding to rebuild the road at a height where it will not be flooded. What goes around, comes around!!

Kilroy Was Here



One of the best known icons during WW II was the drawing of a bald headed man with a large nose peeping over a fence and the words Kilroy was here printed beside it. It was to be found over much of the European theater where the U.S. Army fought during the war.

However, the inspiration for Kilroy was here actually came from an inspector at Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, MA. James J. Kilroy marked parts of the ships he had already inspected with the drawing so he would not duplicate work already done. American servicemen who sailed on the ships saw some of the drawings and, thus, at least according to one story, the famous "Kilroy was here" soon began appearing all over the European Theater.

Mare Island Museum Hours

Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Every Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Closed Sundays

Tel: (707) 557-4646

Shipyard tours by appointment, please call:

(707) 664-4746 or (707) 280-5742

Boy Scouts??

During WW II Eugene Fluckey of the **USS Barb**, along with his crew, came up with an unusual mission on the twelfth, and Fluckey's last patrol as commander, of the **Barb**.

Fluckey gathered a landing party to make a foray onto the Japanese homeland to blow up a train with an explosive package planted by the track. The biggest problem was how to set off the explosion when a crewman explained how he had cracked nuts on train tracks in Kentucky. He explained that the rails sag as the trains go over them so they placed the nut between the rail and the tie. When the train passed, the nut cracked. He thought he could do the same thing with a microswitch to set off the explosion.

Where to get a micro switch? Fortunately the radar section had one and the next job was to select an eight man crew. Any sailors interested were asked to volunteer and Fluckey would choose among them. There was no shortage of volunteers, including a Japanese POW who was on board.

Fluckey decided that the following criteria would apply: No married men except Hartfield who had designed the microswitch.

The party would include men from each department. The opportunity would be equally divided between



The men of the raiding party with the USS Barb (SS-220) battle flag. From l to r: Chief Gunners Mate Paul G. Saunders, Electricians Mate 3rd Class Billy R. Hatfield, Signalman 2nd Class Francis N. Sevei, Ships Cook 1st Class Lawrence W. Newland, Torpedomans Mate 3rd Class Edward W. Klingsmith, Motor Machinists Mate 2nd Class James E. Richard, Motor Machinists Mate 1st Class John Markuson, and Lt. William M. Walker. All were men of the USN or USNR. (navsource.org)



23 March 1945 Commander Eugene B. Fluckey, USN

Commander Eugene B. Fluckey, USN (third from left) having received the Medal of Honor from Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal (second from left). Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King (first from left) and Mrs. E.B. (Marjory) Fluckey (third from right). Commander and Mrs. Roy M. Davenport, USN are the remaining couple. Cdr. Davenport received the Navy Cross. (navsource.org)

regular Navy and Navy Reserve.

At least half of the men had to have been Boy Scouts. Fluckey intended to lead the party himself until his officers strongly objected that it was inappropriate for a man who had just been awarded the Medal of Honor and was essential to the operation of the sub to undertake that role. Finally one of them threatened to notify ComSubPac and Fluckey allowed Lt. Walker to be in charge.

The only necessity then was for a cloudy night to hide the moon. That finally arrived on 22 July and the mission was on. By midnight, now 23 July the operation began and by 0145 the men were on their way back to the sub when a train approached. The microswitch worked and destroyed the track, the locomotive and all 16 cars behind. Pieces of the train blew 200 feet into the air and the Japanese thought they were being invaded. This was the only American ground combat mission on Japanese soil during the entire war.

All vessels in the Navy had battle flags which recorded their successes, but the **Barb** had the only battle flag with a locomotive displayed on it. Each of the eight men received the Navy Cross, the second highest award in the Navy. But why did Fluckey, the most highly decorated man in the Navy, favor Boy Scouts? Fluckey had been a scout during boyhood. He knew

anyone who had been a scout was trained in first aid and knew how to exist if they were unable to return to the sub. The alternate plan was to go through the forest to get to the Sakhalin Peninsula which was safe territory. He felt former Boy Scouts could do that, though it proved unnecessary.

At the age of 37, at the suggestion of BSA, Fluckey completed the requirements and was awarded his Eagle rank in February 1948. He is one of nine Medal of Honor recipients who are also Eagle Scouts.

An added note is that **Barb** was at MINSY in January 1943 and from 27 February to 16 May 1945 for overhaul. During the second overhaul (and alteration) a 5 inch rocket launcher was added to her arsenal. This launcher was not normal Navy equipment and it was only at Fluckey's unrelenting insistence that it was mounted on the submarine.

Prior to blowing up the train, the **Barb**, from 22 June through 25 July 1945, attacked four Japanese towns with rockets, the first use of rockets on submarines in Navy history.

Launching and Christening a Ship

One of the momentous occasions in the life of a ship is the christening and launching when she is transferred from land to the water where she will spend most of her life. The christening is to give her a name and a blessing for a safe and long life.

Vikings made human sacrifices and Tahitians used human blood to humor the gods and assure a long life for the ship. The Greek god, Poseidon, and the Roman god, Neptune, were honored at their christenings and shrines to them were placed on the quarterdecks of the ships. All large Chinese ships always had a shrine to the Mother of the Dragon. Turks of the Ottoman Empire said prayers to Allah, sacrificed sheep and then had a great feast.

Wine was also used early on, but the Greeks and the Romans used water as a sign of purification. Christians used both wine and water- water for purification and wine as a sacrament. In the Middle Ages ships were given the names of saints and carried shrines and effigies to honor their saint. In France, a bit more recently, christenings were like a ceremonial baptism and were always conducted by priests.

The first ship christened by a woman, Ms. Watson, was the **Germantown** in October 1846 and a mixture of



(left) The unrehearsed first attempt at launching the Theodore Roosevelt, (right) the aftermath, Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth cradling the eventually smashed bottle after the ceremony

wine and water was used. Ms. Watson wore a completely white dress, as one would wear for a wedding. Queen Victoria was responsible for the religious part of the ceremony now used in christening British ships and in the latter part of the 19th Century women, out of respect for Victoria's position, were chosen as regular sponsors for the ships and performed the christening ceremony.

The Japanese were the first to introduce birds into the launching to symbolize the escaping of the ship into the water. In American they later released doves or pigeons. The airship **Akron** was christened by Mrs. Herbert Hoover with the release of pigeons, but unfortunately the ship crashed in a storm. Eleanor Roosevelt christened the flying boat, **Yankee Clipper**, with a mixture of water from the seven seas.

Wine went out of favor during Prohibition and was later replaced by champagne because the bubbles made it easier to break the bottle than with simple wine.

Interestingly enough the cheaper the champagne, the better it is for christening, because cheap champagne has more bubbles and more bubbles mean more pressure inside the bottle.. Often to make absolutely sure the bottle will break, it is scored before being placed into the metal container which the sponsor will strike against the side of the ship. That container then is kept in a display case in the wardroom of the ship or in a museum as a memento of the christening.

There is an old superstition that if the sponsor misses the ship at launching that the vessel is doomed to a horrible fate. That, then, brings us to an infamous launching at Mare Island.

When the **Theodore Roosevelt, SSBN 600**, was to be launched in October 1959 his daughter, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, was chosen as the sponsor. Alice was a socialite, notorious for her hijinks, and some of her quotes are priceless. Referring to Calvin Coolidge, she said, "He looks like he was weaned on a pickle." As for her father, "He wanted to be the corpse at every funeral, the bride at every wedding and the baby at every christening." Perhaps her most infamous is, "If you haven't got anything nice to say about anybody, come sit next to me."

The normal procedure for a christening was to have the sponsor come the day before, stand on the platform and practice swinging the "bottle" until she knew where to stand so she could hit the side of the vessel. Her footprints were then drawn on the platform so she knew exactly where to stand for the actual christening.

Alice was in San Francisco and refused to come to practice noting that anybody could hit the side of a ship with a bottle. On the day of the christening the champagne and container were lowered on a rope from the bow of the submarine and Alice grabbed it and swung ...and missed! She then threw the bottle at the boat as it was moving down the ways ...and missed a second time. Fortunately the man holding the rope quickly pulled the bottle up and smashed it on the bow before the boat was completely in the water. The **Theodore Roosevelt**, fortunately, did not suffer any ill effects from the botched launching. Neither did Alice who lived to the ripe old age of 96.

Coal Sheds

When the United States Navy was founded 15 October 1775, the fleet consisted entirely of sailing ships. In 1815 the Navy acquired its first steam ship which was used only for ceremonial purposes. In 1841 two steamships (PS- paddle steamers) were acquired by the Navy, and were the first steam ships used by the Navy in sailing across oceans. But paddle steamers and the more modern SS (screw steamers) always had sails as well as steam engines. Since these engines could use from 4 to 14 tons of coal per day, and that required enormous storage space, the steam engines were either used for just one part of the voyage, when the engine needed maintenance or repair, in calm waters or in entering or leaving a harbor.

In 1859 Mare Island Navy Yard launched her first ship, the *USS Saginaw* which was a paddle steamer. Steam engines were so new that no one at Mare Island knew how to install a steam engine. So the *Saginaw* was sent to Peter Donahue's yard in San Francisco (later to become Union Iron Works) for her engines.

Donahue's did not know how to install the engine to the shaft of the paddlewheel and neither did the head engineer or the commandant at Mare Island, so weeks were spent waiting for information to arrive from Washington, D.C.

Shortly thereafter the yard built a wharf with a coaling shed from which ships could be "re-fueled." In 1901 the first of the present coal sheds (Bldgs. 147, 149 and 151) were built and two years later Bldgs. 153, 155 and 163 were completed. Each had an opening along the ridge line so coal could be placed for storage and loaded onto ships by gantry cranes. These sheds were only used for this purpose for a little more than a decade because the Naval Refueling Depot was moved to Tiburon at the beginning of WWI. And at the same time oil was becoming the primary fuel for ships, so coal sheds were no longer needed

Over the years the coal sheds have undergone various transformations and remodeling and were used for everything from storage to actual shops on the yard. In 1944 the fronts were re-constructed and in the latter days of the shipyard one of the primary tenants was Shop 38, the Outside Machine Shop.

After the shipyard closed artists moved into the coal sheds and now they are being converted to commercial use. Mare Island Brewing Co. is already brewing their beer there and will shortly open a tap room. Plans are

for more companies to operate from there to provide amenities for people visiting Mare Island and for making the coal sheds a destination rather than just a place to stop.



(Above) The Mare Island Coal Sheds, 1903; (Bottom) the Mare Island Brewing Company housed in the former Mare Island Coal Sheds



Coming Events

MIHPF Board Meeting

30 Jan, 2018

10:00 A.M., MI Museum

POC: Ken Wright, (707) 557-4646

MIHPF Board Meeting

27 Feb, 2018

10:00 A.M., MI Museum

POC: Ken Wright, (707) 557-4646

For further information on any of these events contact the museum at mihp46@att.net or call (707) 557-4646

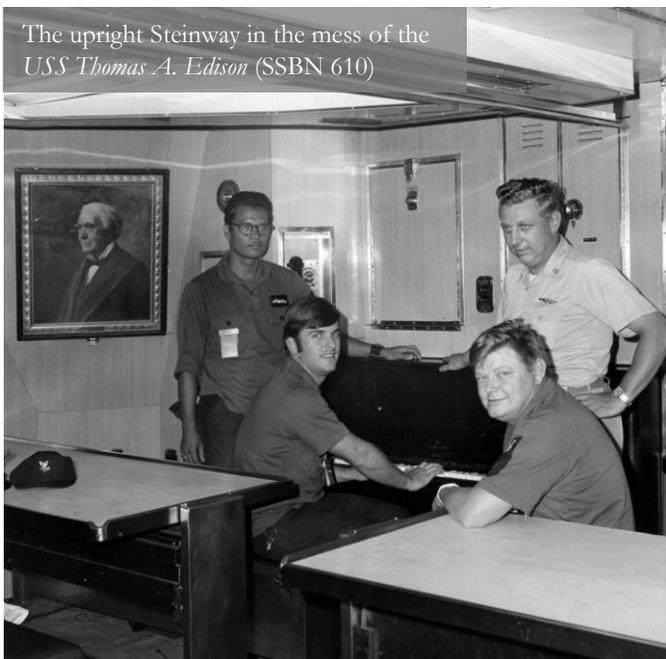
Did you know?

The **USS Thomas A. Edison, SSBN 610**, is the only submarine to have had a piano onboard in the enlisted mess. It was on board from 1961-1983 and is now in the Steinway Museum in NYC. It was put on before the patch was sealed on the control room.

One Sunday a drunken man on a sailboat came across the channel and ended up on the top of a submarine tied to the seawall. The Marines came and arrested him.

A common quote on the shipyard was "When the paperwork outweighs the boat, it's complete."

The upright Steinway in the mess of the USS Thomas A. Edison (SSBN 610)



Christmas in time of Influenza (1918)

This following Christmas related article was extracted from an entry written by Captain (Retired) Tom Snyder, MD, USN(MC), found on <https://ofshipssurgeons.wordpress.com>. The article is a summation of reports sent to the Navy Surgeon General by the Mare Island Navy Hospital Commander Ammen C. Farenholt, (retired in 1936 ranked Rear Admiral, USN (MC)). In the reports, Commander Farenholt stated that the hospital has received about 840 influenza patients between the beginning of October and just before December 1918. This high number of patient load came with the cost of 68 deaths, including the deaths of three staff members,

Corporate Members of Mare Island Museum

We like to thank the following corporate members for supporting the mission of the Mare Island Museum:

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Kenneth A. Writght Charitable Trust

Lennar Mare Island

Mare Island Brewing Co.

Mare Island Dry Dock, LLC

Touro University

Weston Solutions

Thank You!

Lt. R. C. Christiansen (Physician and Chief of Hospital Labs), a nurse, and a Female Yeoman.

The numbers of admitted patients attested to the virulence of the 1918 influenza outbreak and how very busy the Mare Island Navy Hospital was during the Christmas season.

The most interesting mentions in the blog entry, however, was not the patient numbers of the 1918 outbreak. It was, in fact, Commander Farenholt's photos (quite a photography enthusiast was our good Commander Farenholt) of the Mare Island Hospital Wards decked out for the Christmas season and the fact that, despite the patients streaming in, the hospital staff celebrated Christmas in a friendly competition to see who amongst the hospital's 22 wards is the best decorated for the Christmas season. The prize in question was a silver cup and boasting rights. The cup will be placed in a glass case and retained in the winning ward until next Christmas, when the

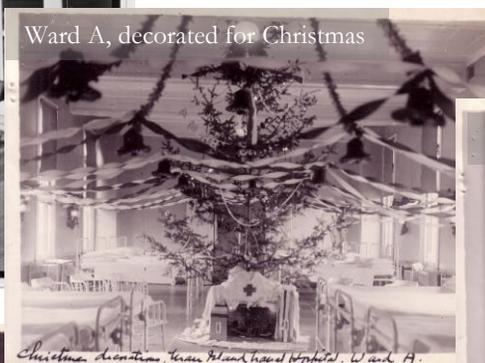
competition will begin anew. According to Commander. Farenholt, the wards were decorated with products from the surrounding counties. All the decorations obtained using an Amusement Fund. The winner of the silver cup was Ward K of the Mare Island Navy Hospital. Looking at Commander Farenholt's photos of Ward K, it is easy to understand why, indeed, Ward K was the winning ward.

Visitors

This quarter Mare Island Museum has had visitors from Washington, D.C. and 28 states including Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin. Visitors from other countries included people from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, Mexico, Philippines, Saipan and Taiwan.



Then Captain Farenholt at his desk



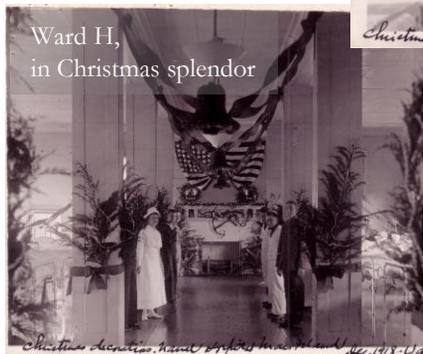
Ward A, decorated for Christmas

Christmas decorations, Mare Island Naval Hospital, Ward A.



Ward F, filled with cheer

Christmas decorations, Mare Island Naval Hospital, Dec. 1918, Ward, F.



Ward H, in Christmas splendor

Christmas decorations, Mare Island Naval Hospital, Dec. 1918, Ward H.



Christmas decorations, Mare Island Naval Hospital, Dec. 1918, Ward, K. This ward won the prize in the decoration contest.

Ward K, the winning ward!



Female Yeomen of Mare Island Navy Hospital, from Commander Farenholt's collection



Happy Holidays
and
Merry Christmas
From the
Mare Island Museum

Mare Island Museum Membership

1100 Railroad Avenue, Vallejo, CA 94592

(707) 557 4646 mihp46@att.net www.mareislandmuseum.org

The Mare Island Historic Park Foundation keeps alive the history of Mare Island Naval Shipyard and chronicles its shipbuilding activities in the museum, as well as preserving the most historic buildings – St. Peter’s Chapel, the Shipyard Commander’s Mansion and Building 46, the oldest building on the island dating from 1855. The shipyard founded in 1854 by Commander David G. Farragut, first admiral in the USN, was the first naval installation on the West Coast and was an important contributor to success in World War II in the Pacific. It also played a prominent role in the Cold War by building 17 nuclear submarines. We invite **YOU** to become a part of this endeavor by becoming a member of the Mare Island Museum and supporting its work.

Benefits of Membership:

- Free Admission to the Mare Island Museum (Bldg 46) for the year of partnership
- 10% discount on purchases in gift shop
- Can loan materials and books from museum library
- Free newsletter via email
- Helping to preserve the history of Mare Island Naval Shipyard

Membership Levels: All partnerships are for one (1) year

- Individual \$25.00 – Admits partner named on card
- Out of State \$20.00 – Admits partner named on card
- Family \$40.00 – Admits two household members and their children or grandchildren 12-18 (under 12 are free)
- Student \$15.00 – Admits student named on card with a student ID card
- Corporate \$250.00 – Admits corporation rep and guests, publicity

Mare Island Museum Membership Application

Name/Corporation _____ Date _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Membership Level:

Individual \$25 Out of State \$20 Family \$40 Student (with ID) \$15 Corporate \$250

Visa Mastercard American Express Card number _____

Exp. Date _____ Security Code: _____ (3 or 4 digit number)

Make checks payable to **MIHPF**

Remit to: ATTN; Membership

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