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State-of-the-art detection system speeds removal of radioactive waste

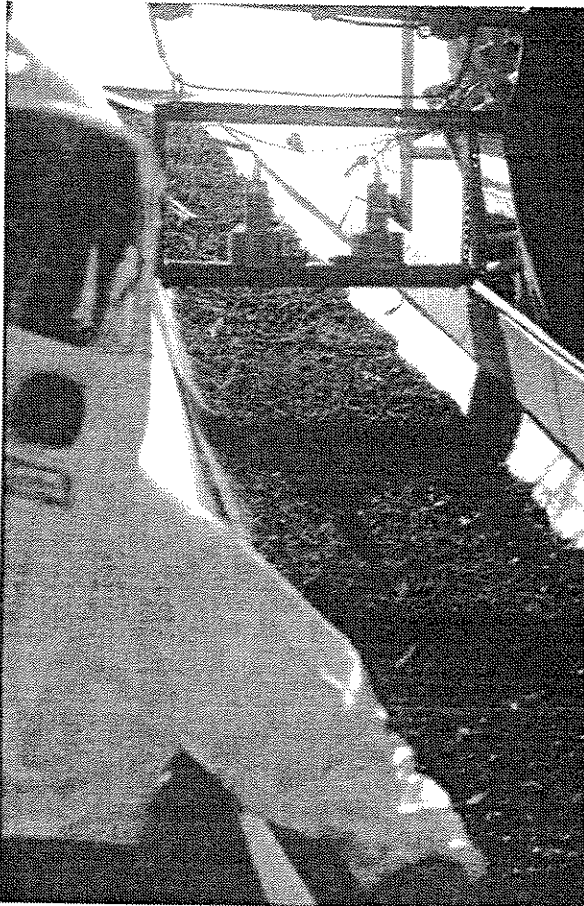


Photo: Courtesy of Mare Island Caretaker Site Office

Soil at the DRMO site was screened to remove ordnance. Workers in protective clothing separating materials on covered conveyor belts.

**"All radiological surveys
to be completed by end
of 1996"**

MARE ISLAND COMPLETES RADIOLOGICAL REMOVAL

Bob O'Brien
Technical Support Contractor
to SSPORTS

The Navy and its contractors have successfully completed the removal of radioactive contaminants at the old five-acre Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office (DRMO) Scrapyard. The removal work was done in just over a month's time from July 23 through September 5, 1996 and the material was disposed of at the APTUS facility in Argonite, Utah. The scrapyard was previously used to receive equipment and material from government organizations for disposition or sale to the general public until April 1, 1996 when the shipyard closed.

Initial characterization of the DRMO Scrapyard found soil contaminated with PCBs, heavy metals, pieces of unexploded ordnance and low level radioactivity in the form of Radium 226 from ship markers and gauges. The radioactive markers and gauges each contained 3 to 7 microcuries of radium or the amount found in radioluminescent watches commonly sold to the public during the 1950's and 60's.

The main problem was to safely remove the radioactivity from the mix of other contaminants, thereby simplifying treatment options for that area.

The removal consisted of:

1) 100 % radiological survey of the Scrapyard and its perimeter using a new state-of-the-art USRADS Automated SurveySystem with a Navy designed survey array

(Continued on back page)

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Published by the RAB
Community Outreach
Focus Group:
Myrna Hayes, Diana Krevsky,
Sandy Schady

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- Community Concerns: Mare Island's Natural Habitat, What's At Risk?
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- Cleanup Plan at a Glance
- Did You Know? Building 505 and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife's Proposal

SSPORTS* Report

ORDNANCE REMOVAL STATUS

John Randell
UXO Project Manager

The time-critical ordnance removal operation at Installation Restoration Site IR-5 which began last November is progressing well despite a wet winter and spring. Over ten tons of discarded ordnance material, including live ordnance items, has been recovered from the site. The loud sounds sometimes heard coming from the south end of Mare Island are the live ordnance items being destroyed. Ordnance removal work at the site should be nearing completion by late fall with the site restoration and preparation of the removal action report extending into 1997.

The Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Site Investigation (SI) of Mare Island has been completed. A draft SI Summary Report was issued in June and is currently under review with the final version scheduled for release as soon as draft comments are received and incorporated. The investigation involved the sampling of small arms range soil for metal contamination and the search of nearly 1000 acres of land and water area for unexploded ordnance using magnetometers, metal detector, and side

The investigation involved a search of nearly 1000 acres of land and water area for unexploded ordnance (UXO) using magnetometers, metal detectors and side scan sonar.

scan sonar. Over 3300 magnetic anomalies located during the search were mapped for future investigation.

Preparations for removal actions in three of six areas identified as possible ordnance areas by the Site Investigation (Western Magazine, Upland Magazine, and South Shore Areas) are currently in the engineering design phase with work expected to begin on the first removal in late 1996.

After conducting an ordnance building survey, 105 former ammunition related buildings have been found to have no ordnance concerns. We are continuing our investigation of other buildings which are known to have some degree of ordnance residues.

[DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY]

*SSPORTS= Supervisor of Shipbuilding Conversion and Repair, Portsmouth, Virginia
Environmental Detachment, Vallejo

RAB Notes

In Sympathy

To family and friends of the late Mary D'Ippolito-Hamlet of Vallejo, Mary was a member of our RAB.

Congratulations and Welcome New RAB Members:

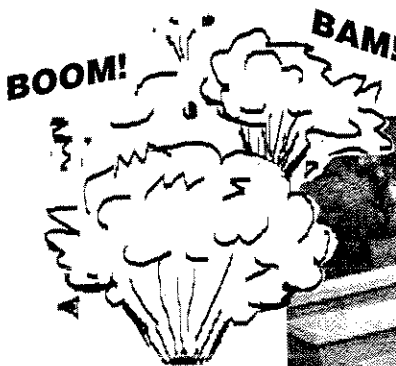
Bonnie Arthur, Kenn Browne, Vincent Christian, Helen Hillman, Gerald Karr, Diana Krevsky, Ralph Lee, James Mitchell, and Chris Shields

Thank You

Tom Huetteman, Dennis Kelly, Robin Leong for having served on the RAB, a valued contribution to our community.

RAB Members' E-Mail Connection:

Myrna Hayes: 102503.404@compnserve.com
Karen Hack: arc@apc.org
Jim Haas: James_Haas@fws.gov
Kenn Browne: Browne13@aol.com



FACT: Mare Island Naval Shipyard has a long history of ordnance manufacture, storage and disposal. Removal of unexploded ordnance (UXO) is currently underway and will continue past the year 2000. Examples of material recovered are small arms and large explosive gun ammunition, civil war era mortar fuzes, grenade and cannonball.



FACT: The Cemetery on Mare Island was established in 1858. One of the most notable gravesites is that of Anna Key Turner's, the daughter of Francis Scott Key who wrote the national anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner".

Discredit: D Krevsky 1996

Cleanup at a Glance

SUMMARY OF THE BRAC* CLEANUP PLAN

*Environmental Baseline Survey
March 20, 1996*

Restoration Activities

Installation Restoration (IR) Program

- Complete Remediation Investigation (RI)
- Prepare Remedial Action Plan (RAP) /Record Of Decision (ROD) for No Further Action (NFA) sites

Unexploded ordnance (UXO)

- Survey all potential UXO sites
- Remove UXO

Hazardous Waste Management

- Close permitted facilities

Air Quality

- Resolve disposition of air emission reduction credits
- Determine if air permits are required for IR site remediation

Asbestos

- Complete asbestos survey report
- Perform asbestos abatement as required

Lead-Base Paint

- Perform surveys of residential property

PCB (Polychlorinated Biphenyls)

- Complete PCB surveys of buildings and equipment

Radiological

- Complete Radiological Site Survey Plan for G-RAM (General-Radioactive material)

Underground Storage Tanks (UST)

- Develop strategy for cleanup of UST contamination
- Remove additional tanks

NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)

- Perform Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

CERCLA 120 (h)(3) Considerations

(Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act)

Environmental condition of the property

- Further studies for Type 7 properties

Community relations

- Support the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) efforts

Management and Administrative Support Activities

- Establish database for information management
- Establish background concentration levels for use in risk assessments

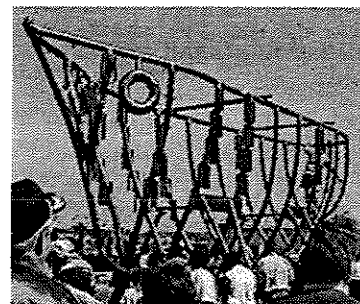
**Base Realignment and Closure*

COMMEMORATIVE SCULPTURE: A TRIBUTE TO THE WORKERS OF MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD

Diana Krevsky

During the summer of 1995, The Mare Island Conversion Celebration Steering Committee, (MICC) a mix of Navy and civic leaders, community and commercial organizations, and members from the Navy Yard Association, sponsored a seven county Bay Area competition seeking a commemorative art tribute to the workers of Mare Island. They selected a final proposal by William Wareham, an artist from San Francisco.

The Mare Island Conversion Celebration held March 29-31, 1996 marked the base's transition from military to civilian use. Mare Island Navy Yard Association President and active member of the MICC Committee, Dennis Kelly, was instrumental in the evolution of the project. "The legacy of over 140 years as a Naval Base and the hundreds of thousands of people who have worked there should have some kind of fanfare and commemoration of its past and anticipation of its future," says Kelly, "... the celebration and memorial will be part of the closing ceremonies." The nearly completed sculpture was unveiled at Pier 21 at that time.



*The unveiling of
William Wareham's
"The Spirit Ship"*

Video still: Jon Rife

The art tribute now called, "The Spirit Ship", was installed September 23, 1996, at its permanent location. Symbolically "a last ship built on Mare Island and generic to all these ships", the sculpture rests on the hill as if stranded from some other point in time. The site is located at the southern end facing the sea, in an area designated for reuse as park or open space by the City of Vallejo.

Hundreds of stainless steel tags with names of ships built on Mare Island hang from a skeletal steel frame of steel pipe. The sculpture's size is about 30 ft. long and 10 ft. high. Wareham explains the meaning of a steel platform at the sculpture's base which is pierced with die-cut images of workers' tools, "My intent is to use the "tools" of the shipbuilding process... to stand in for the people that were there. It is almost as though they took a lunch break and set down their tools".

When ordnance removal is completed, the public will be able to access the area. Until then, specially arranged tours will be the only way to view "The Spirit Ship" upclose. It is visible (in the distance) from various points in Old Town and South Vallejo, the waterfront, the ferry and Mare Island Strait.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND THE REUSE OF MARE ISLAND

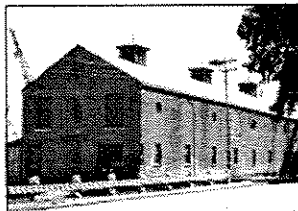
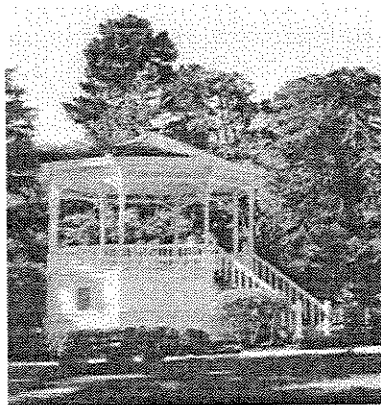
Elizabeth G. Johnson
Legacy Project Coordinator
Western Regional Office
National Trust for Historic Preservation

Much has been said about the historic value of Mare Island. Most people are aware of the value of Building 47. The beauty of the officer's housing and the hospital complex come to mind when the architectural resources of the island are mentioned. However, few realize that the major portion of the island, 1,000 acres of it, contains almost 500 contributing structures and landscaping areas that are considered to be important to the history of the nation.

National Historic Landmark

The consultant for the Navy has recommended that the National Historic Landmark on Mare Island be expanded from four smaller districts to one large district of over 500 structures and 1000 acres. The original National Register/National Historic Landmark nomination was prepared in the 1970's. In the meantime, so many more of the shipyard buildings have reached the 50-year criterion to be eligible for the National Register .

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation, and may be of local or state status, as well as national importance. National Historic Landmarks are those places listed on the Register that have been designated by the Secretary of the Interior for their significance to all Americans.



"... few realize that the major portion of the island contains almost 500 structures and landscaping areas that are considered to be important to the history of the nation."

From wooden ships to nuclear submarines

Mare Island is one of the few places in the United States where the history of the Navy and maritime technology from the time when wooden ships sailed San Francisco Bay to the modern era of nuclear submarines is illustrated by the sheer range of building types. Some of the oldest shipyard building anywhere in the United States are found there, as well as a large ammunition depot, a major naval hospital, a Marine barracks, and the submarine base.

Reuse of historic buildings

Knowing that there is a large historic area of the closed shipyard, however, is not sufficient to save it.

The City of Vallejo is conducting a study, using consultants, to determine how economically feasible various reuse scenarios for the core historic area would be. The consultants, who are well-versed in the economics of historic preservation and the reuse potential of historic buildings, are looking at scenarios for establishing a Maritime Park and Museum and reusing as many of the buildings as possible. They are investigating a ship attraction as part of the overall plan to draw visitors to the historic area.

Before the Navy can turn over the historic properties to the city, however, they must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This requires that they reach an agreement with the city, the Advisory Council on Preservation, and the State Historic Preservation Officer for California about how the buildings will be preserved. The Navy has prepared a draft of the agreement, and the city is waiting for the results of the feasibility study to finalize the agreement.

Significant for the entire country, not just Vallejo

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service have been working to explain to all parties how important the National Historic Landmark district is. By providing examples of other large NHLs, such as the Presidio of San Francisco, we have shown the use of innovative financing to find paying tenants who will preserve the buildings by using them. The citizens of Vallejo need to understand the importance of the NHL, and that Mare Island is a site that should be preserved for the entire country, not just the city of Vallejo. The entire district needs to be planned and marketed in order to make preservation of the historic buildings and landscaping possible. The best way to ensure this is to learn about the ways buildings could be put to productive use without destroying their historic character, or detracting from the character of the shipyard as a whole. Then, make sure the city's plans include these priorities.

Above: Old Stable Building
Left: Bandstand in historic Alden Park
Photos: Courtesy of Mare Island Naval Shipyard

DOD ENVIRONMENTAL POLICYMAKER URGES STREAMLINED CLEANUP RULES

As Deputy Secretary of Defense for Environmental security, Sherri Goodman is the Defense Department's principle environmental policy maker, focusing on cleanup, conservation, and pollution prevention. Following is an excerpt from an interview earlier this year with Sigrid Bathen of the BASE REUSE REPORT:

Q: Communities affected by base closures are very concerned that BRAC cleanup funds will run out. Comment?

A: It is not an unreasonable concern for a community, but the evidence right now I believe is favorable. In the last several years, Congress has approved, and in fact has sometimes added funds to ensure that the DoD has enough money to cleanup its closing bases. We plan and program our budgets in the DoD in six-year increments. Now, there likely will be funds needed to do the environmental cleanup work beyond those six years. So, as we plan and program those funds, we will have to accommodate that.

Q: Will DoD accept local reuse authority (LRA) input as to how and where to spend limited cleanup money?

A: That should be happening already. The ideal arrangement is for the LRA to understand the environmental conditions of the property before it begins to develop its reuse plan, so that it can include that knowledge in its decision-making process and come up with the most practical future use plan. We also have the Restoration Advisory Boards at our closing bases, which are groups of citizens and local stakeholders as well as the military department, the EPA and the state environmental authority, who meet regularly to review environmental cleanup plans and get advice from the local community on priorities.

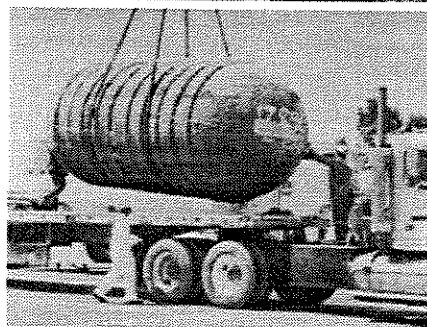
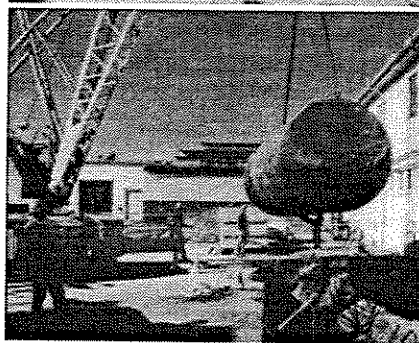
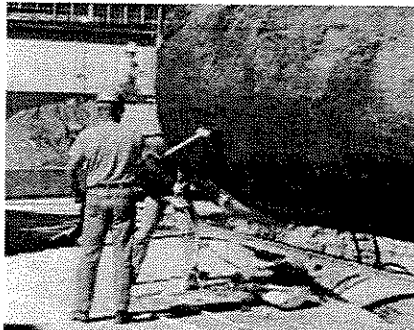
Q: Some say that these bases are being "studied to death; that duplicative environmental studies are being done, which unnecessarily slows the process. Comment?

A: The current law, which is Superfund and other state hazardous waste laws, has required in many cases more study, or what some call "paralysis analysis." We would like the Congress to reform that law, to streamline it some and make it easier to use and allow our cleanups to be more cost-effective. Congress has debated that for the last two years, and it looks again this year that it is not going to pass a comprehensive reform. However, within what is permitted under the existing law, we have greatly accelerated the schedules and limited duplicative studies. That has been accomplished in good measure by the cleanup terms that the President created in 1993 for all of our closing bases. EPA has also issued some administrative reforms to Superfund that help streamline the process.

Photo: Courtesy of Mare Island Caretaker Site Office

Q: Are the cleanup standards too stringent? Why is DoD looking only at risk-based standards?

A: The cleanup standards should be based on ensuring human health and safety. We should attempt to get there at the lowest reasonable cost. Not all of the standards that have been developed, either in federal or state law, really fit that objective today, which is why there is in part a national consensus that we need to rewrite the Superfund law, the major hazardous waste law. Unfortunately, there is not a consensus as to how it should be done. What we need are common-sense standards that do incorporate risk, that do recognize the importance of future land use in designing remedies and that take cost into account. That, I believe, will enable us to fully protect human health and the environment and to do so at a reasonable cost to the American taxpayer.



Underground storage tank removal

Q: Obviously the environmental standards in effect when many of these bases were opened were considerably less stringent than those standards are today. Could you describe some of the types of contamination on closing bases, and how is that avoided on active bases today?

A: The more we can prevent pollution, the better off we are, both in terms of human health and the environment and also in terms of the costs involved. Much of the contamination at military installations is the same as found at industrial sites: petroleum, oils, lubricants, solvents, metals, heavy metals, PCB's. Our problems in the DoD are very similar to industry, and we have certainly changed our practices over the years. We have become smarter about environmental management along with the rest of the nation. Of course, there is still quite a lot left from many years of practices when we did not know how better to dispose our wastes than to put them in the ground. But we've changed our practices. For example, at our depots, we no longer use solvents to take paint off aircraft. That is a very toxic and hazardous process which creates a lot of waste.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for LRA's in coping with cleanups?

A: My advice to them is to meet early and often with their cleanup team, to have a cleanup team come in and brief them on the environmental condition of the military base so that they understand what the issues are, what the schedule is, what needs to be done. And to make them part of their process so that the cleanup team will benefit by understanding what the communities reuse priorities are and the LRA will benefit by understanding the environmental conditions and what's within the realm of the possible. Additionally, a member of the LRA should serve on the Restoration Advisory Board.

MARE ISLAND'S NATURAL HABITAT, WHAT'S AT RISK?

Wallace NeVille
*Environmental Engineer and
 Resident of Vallejo*

Mare Island is a protected wildlife oasis in a rapidly growing Solano County. While much of the available habitat has been probed, scraped, plowed and dug up for construction, some of Mare Island Naval Shipyard's 5,500 acres have remained undisturbed for the last 45 years or more.

The wetlands on the western side of Mare Island contain the largest population of the federally endangered Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse has adapted to life in the salt water marshes of the Bay Area. It lives almost entirely in pickleweed with saltgrass and pickleweed as its main food sources.

Also living in the remote regions of the Mare Island's tidal lands are the California Clapper Rail a federally endangered species and the California Black Rail, a State of California threatened species.

California Clapper Rails are so named for their clapping or clattering calls, and are about the size of a small chicken and have a long bill which enable them to probe the soft mud for insects, worms and invertebrates.

The California Black Rail is a very small and feisty bird about the size of a sparrow, black in color with white spots.

Each of the above species have sedentary natures and are not inclined to, nor capable of expanding their ranges any great distance. This lack of mobility makes each vulnerable to habitat destruction.

Mare Island is an excellent place to birdwatch

Large flocks of migrating water fowl and shorebirds stop over during the spring and fall migrations to rest and replenish their

**"Human activities in this area
 ...have changed the habitat."**

fat supplies. Among these seasonal visitors are the European Tufted Duck and the Eurasian Widgeon. Egrets and herons are year 'round residents. Ducks, geese, stilts, and avocets raise broods in Mare Island's seasonal wetlands. Northern Harriers, Red Tailed Hawks, and various owl species have increased in number at Mare Island. On any given day they may be seen perched on a post or wafting over the marshlands looking for a meal.

Home to rare and endangered plants

The Mason's Lilaepsis is a California rare plant which maintains a precarious existence on Mare Island. It's home is the small part of land in the intertidal zone along the lapping waters of the Napa River. During the winter storms its required habitat is continually eroded, so it's no surprise that Mason's Lilaepsis is able to thrive in only a few selected spots.

At best, it's a hard life for most wildlife and native plants. Human activities in this area such as filling the bay and erecting retaining walls have changed the habitat.

When Mare Island is finally given to the City of Vallejo, and the once undisturbed land is available, what will be the future of creatures that are seldom seen, seldom heard, that hardly make a noticeable contribution to our life style?

This is a question that must be answered long before there is a gleam in the eye of the developer as he looks over open land. We as citizens have the right and responsibility to answer these questions. Are we up to the task? With some foresight and community action these residents of the marshlands can have a home for many years to come.

The great blue heron is a year round resident.



Photo: Wally NeVille

Sample excavation of a dredge pond to determine level of remaining water.

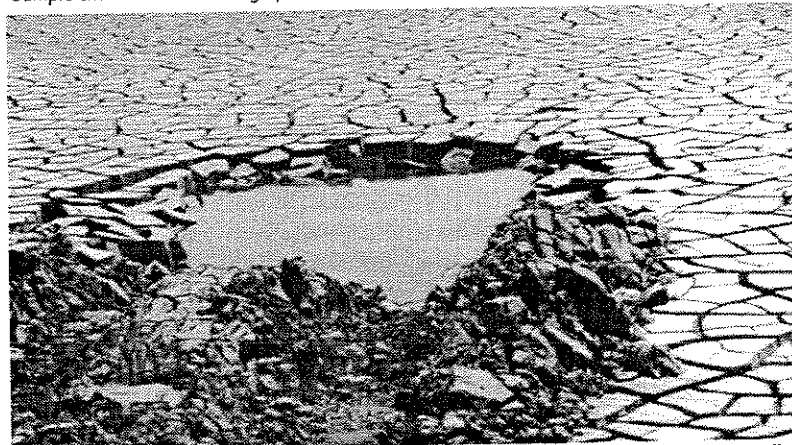


Photo: Courtesy of Mare Island Caretaker Site Office

Did You Know?

BUILDING 505 AND THE U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE'S PROPOSAL

Myrna Hayes
RAB Community CoChair

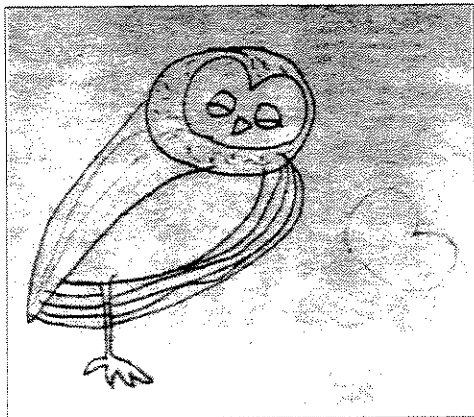
History of Mare Island's Building 505

At one time pigeons were used as messengers between Mare Island and naval activities at Yerba Buena Island. The work of pigeons in early communications was later replaced by the first wireless station, or "radio shack" on the Pacific Coast. Mare Island became the hub of Pacific radio communications by 1915. To meet the increasing demand for Pacific communications, Building 505 was built in 1940.

Eligible for listing on the National Register, it is reported that through this facility, the mainland learned of the bombing of Pearl Harbor during WW II. The Radio Station gradually fell out of use and the building became a Navy Exchange retail store until the base closed earlier this year.

About the proposed Environmental Education Center

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has proposed establishment of an Environmental Education Center on Mare Island. The Service has requested the no-cost transfer of 670 acres of the 3800 acres of wetlands on the Island and Building 505. The facility and wetlands would be added to the adjacent San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This one-of-a-kind multi-agency environmental education and interpretive center would serve as a vital connection between wildlife resources and the communities of the entire Bay area.



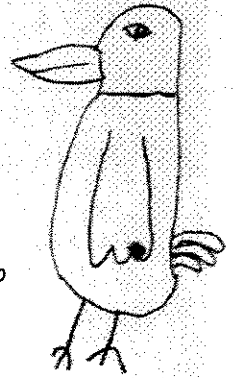
MARE ISLAND RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Mare Island Restoration Advisory Board is to provide the primary, participatory forum through which the Shipyard, regulatory agencies, environmental and social justice organizations, and surrounding communities can work together to increase community awareness, promote a balance of public safety, environmental and economic development concerns, and responsibly and effectively guide the environmental cleanup, restoration and transfer of Mare Island from military to civilian use.

"Dear Vallejo Mayor,

My name is Ashley. I am in the third grade. I go to Matthew Turner school in Benicia. I would like to see more birds fly in the wild. We would like to have one of your buildings for building 505. I do not like to have to go to the library to look up things. I would like to see things in action. It would take 15 min. to get to Vallejo from our school. Our school loves to learn about things. From, Ashley"

(1995)



Drawings by students at Matthew Turner Elementary School in Benicia

Mailing List

You can make a difference! Participate in our future. The restoration process is a continuous one. The public is encouraged to attend RAB meetings on the last Thursdays each month at the JFK Library in Vallejo or the various focus group meetings that interest you.

To be on the mailing list, SEND THIS TO:

Myrna Hayes, RAB Community CoChair, 816 Branciforte Street, Vallejo, CA 94590 or call 707-557-9816.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

ANY COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS _____

INTERESTED IN WRITING AN ARTICLE FOR A FUTURE RAB NEWS?

YES ___ SUBJECT _____

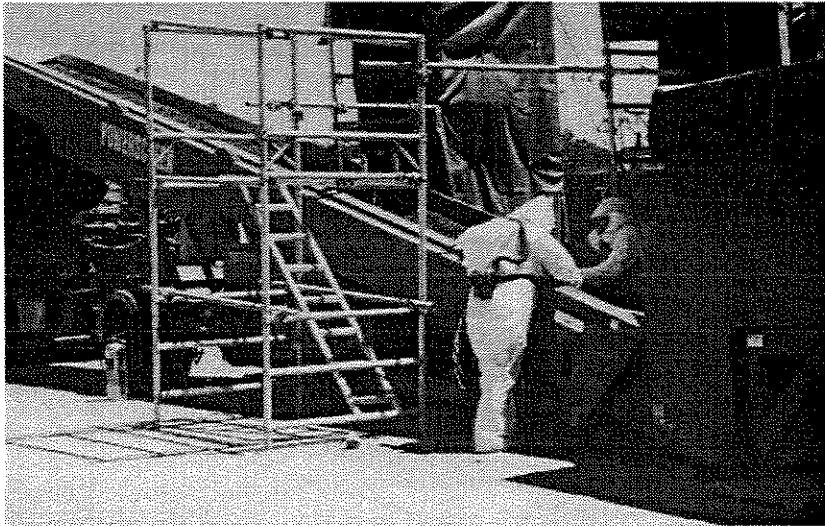


Photo: Courtesy of Mare Island Caretaker Site Office

Spaceman-like workers looking for unexploded ordnance and scanning for radioactive materials

(Continued from front page)

- 2) Analysis of representative soil samples from selected Scrapyard areas
 - 3) Removal and disposal of markers and gauges
 - 4) Removal and disposal of soil containing radioactivity above limits
 - 5) A final USRADS radiological survey confirming the removal of radioactivity
- The Mare Island Restoration Advisory

Board (RAB), consisting of members from the general public and federal and state regulatory agencies were kept informed of these actions and were able to provide comments regarding the removal plans.

A final release report is being prepared for state regulatory concurrence. The Navy expects to complete all radiological surveys before the end of 1996.

MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD

CARETAKER SITE OFFICE MARE ISLAND
Bldg 535
P.O. Box 2193
Vallejo, CA 94592-0193

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

This is a publication of the Mare Island Restoration Advisory Board. The contents of this newsletter are the views of the particular authors, and are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Navy.

SEE YOU AT THE RAB

The Public Is Invited!

RAB Meetings are held
on the last Thursday
of every month
7:00-9:00 pm.

at the

Joseph Room

John F. Kennedy

Public Library

505 Santa Clara Street

Vallejo

Want to know more about the RAB and how you can participate?

SCHEDULE A PRESENTATION
ABOUT THE RAB, FOR YOUR
NEIGHBORHOOD, COMMUNITY OR CIVIC
GROUP. CALL MYRNA HAYES,
COMMUNITY CO-CHAIR
707-557-9816