

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SEAMEN'S TRAINING CENTER SHIP ARRIVES IN VALLEJO

VALLEJO – Another educational element has been added to the growing list of opportunities in the City of Vallejo as the Seamen's Training Center has officially found a home at Mare Island.

Working in conjunction with the California Maritime Academy, the Seaman's Training Center's classroom is the White Holly, a former Navy yard freighter built in Napa and christened on D-Day – June 6, 1944. The ship - 133 feet long with a 10-foot beam - had a long history of service before being purchased by Capt. Vincent Backen for use as a training ship.

The Seamen's Training Center is a 501(c) 3 non-profit providing assessments to individuals who wish to become merchant marines, and to Merchant Mariners who want to advance their careers in the maritime industry. The mission of the center is to "Serve the community and maritime industry by providing career-oriented, live-aboard, merchant marine training."

Vallejo City Council member Dan Donahue is vice chairperson of the Seamen's Training Center.

"This is a true win for Vallejo," Donahue said. "With our community's powerful history with the Navy and seafaring industry, it's appropriate that the only live-aboard training vessel in the United States be based in Vallejo."

The Training Center has a four-week hands-on course that provides all the assessments needed to students to qualify for a career as a Merchant Mariner. To date the organization has trained 37 students, with an 89 percent success rate in job placement. The ship is berthed at Berth 6 on Mare Island.

To celebrate its non-profit status, the Board of Directors of the center is hosting a VIP event for Fleet Week on October 11, 2003. To receive one of 10 free passes on the trip, send an essay on the topic "Why I want to be a Merchant Mariner" to P.O. Box 932, Benicia CA 94510.

For more information on the Seamen's Training Center, contact Capt. Vincent Backen at (707) 552-6053 or visit the center's website at

www.seamenstrainingcenter.org.