

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE AUGUST 17, 2004

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT MARK MAZZAFERRO (707) 649-5462

## MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD SESQUICENTENNIAL SET FOR SEPT. 16-17

VALLEJO – Visits from past shipyard commanders, a gala dinner and other ceremonies will highlight the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Mare Island Naval Shipyard, set for Sept. 16-17, 2004.

A monument commemorating Admiral David Farragut's assuming command of the naval yard in 1854 will be dedicated on Thursday, Sept. 16 in Alden Park on Mare Island.

Ceremonies will begin at 10:30 a.m. and are open to the public.

On Friday, September 17, a hand-carved plaque honoring the Navy's Medal of Honor recipients will be dedicated at St. Peter's Chapel Park. Tours of the chapel and the Island will be given during the day following the ceremonies.

Dinner will take place at the Officers' Club beginning at 6 p.m. with no-host cocktails followed by dinner. Tickets, priced at \$50 per person, can be purchased by sending a check to John Hoffmann, P.O. Box 3370, Vallejo, CA 94590. Checks should be made payable to the MI150/Mare Island Historic Park Foundation. No refunds will be available after Sept. 10.

Call Lou Burgelin at (707) 552-3510 for information.

## A Brief History of Mare Island Naval Shipyard

In 1852, Commander John Sloat recommended Mare Island to President Fillmore as the site for the first Pacific naval installation. It was established as such by Commander David Farragut in 1854.

The first ship built on Mare Island was launched in 1860. In all, 513 vessels, ranging from wooden sailing ships to nuclear-powered submarines, were constructed and as many as 1,227 were repaired or overhauled at the Shipyard facilities. The majority of this activity was

during the five years of World War II, making the Shipyard one of the busiest in the world with a peak employment of over 41,000. In the 1950's, the Navy designated the facility as a building and overhaul yard for submarines, which remained its primary use until the base was closed.

In 1988, there were approximately 10,000 employees on Mare Island. The downsizing of the Shipyard workforce began in 1989 due to a number of factors. Defense spending was cut to reduce the national deficit, newer naval vessels required less maintenance, and the end of the Cold War reduced the need for defense facilities and operations. When Congress confirmed closure in October 1993, Shipyard employment was approximately 5,800 civilians.

The BRAC Commission in its June 1993 report to President Clinton recommended the closure of Mare Island. President Clinton approved the Commission's recommendations in July 1993, and the 103rd Congress accepted the decision. The Navy completed its scheduled work by the spring of 1995, and the Shipyard was closed on April 1, 1996.