

father, mentors, dive teammates, and the caretaker of D/V *Tenacious* in New Bedford. The Sea Rovers Boston team gave the privilege of the first dive on *Le Lyonnais* to their newest member. As for their quest, she ruminates that “there are times you can drop the rest of your life to go wreck hunting, and times you cannot” (338). “What moves us is the hunt. The truth is that we are addicts – addicted to the pursuit, ...the rush, ...the feeling we get when we find the thing for which we have been searching. The problem is how quickly the moment fades... The search never ends” (350).

Sellitti concludes by reminding us how “*Le Lyonnais* is more than a twisted pile of metal and wood on the ocean floor: she is a revenant. She connects us to a bygone era and to unresolved mysteries. More than a mere ghost, what remains of her has a story to tell. It is up to us to give that story voice” (350). Sellitti has certainly given this story a voice. Her team plans to create a program educating us about wrecks and repercussions. Readers will be glad they boarded this book and sailed it to its rich and surprising foreign ports.

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**Snyder, Thomas L. *Mare Island Naval Hospital: 1864–1957*  
McFarland & Company, 2025**

241 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index

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Naval history usually focuses upon clashes at sea, legendary vessels, illustrious commanders, and brave sailors. After the smoke clears, the spray dissipates, and silence again prevails, however, many of the participants must deal with the suffering from the battle’s aftermath, often in a naval hospital. This book by Thomas Snyder is a very well-documented account of one of these storied facilities.

A northern peninsula on San Francisco Bay is named after Mexican General Mariano Vallejo’s favorite mare that was thought to be drowned in the inlet but fortunately swam safely to the flat land’s shore. Elated, the general named it *Isla de la Yegua* or, in English, Mare Island. Mexico controlled California from 1821 through the late 1840s, but several battles between US and Mexican troops stationed there led Congress to declare war against Mexico in the spring of 1846. This developed into the Mexican-American War, and the bulk of the forces available to the United States in

California were the sailors and marines stationed on board the ships of the Pacific Squadron.

A little more than a decade after California was acquired from the Mexicans, Confederate Navy warships operated in the Pacific Ocean. The commerce raider CSS *Shenandoah* fired the last shot of the war while patrolling the Bering Sea off Alaska. The Confederacy endeavored to purchase or seize ships on the West Coast, but was foiled by the Union's Pacific Squadron. A naval hospital based on the West Coast ultimately became necessary to treat sick or wounded naval personnel and it was decided to locate it on Mare Island. Near the newly established naval base in the San Francisco Bay, razed receiving ships (USS *Warren* and *Independence*) were the initial housing for sick personnel. Shortly thereafter a more substantial shore-based facility was built. Also, the neighboring town of Vallejo became the site of a major naval base, shipyard, and repair facility, and thus the area's naval population grew substantially.

The naval bureaus of Yards and Docks and Medicine and Surgery became more central to the island, and the repurposed "Granary" became the first hospital building on the barren site. As the need for sophisticated medical care increased, a series of buildings was added at the site to provide efficient means of communications from people requiring care and a sanitary surgical theater. Also, it became necessary to provide adequate clean water, sanitary plumbing, as well as sturdy buildings in this earthquake-prone zone (Mare Island experienced six significant quakes between 1862 and 1957). Over its operation the hospital provided a series of technological advances in the care and treatment of the patients assigned there. These included operating rooms, X-ray facilities, a contagious disease facility for isolation to combat the Spanish influenza epidemic and other infectious diseases, a diagnostic laboratory, and other specialized care. Perhaps its most enduring contributions were the creation of ambulance boats to transport patients from various facilities within San Francisco Bay, a alienist (psychiatry) building for treating mental illness, and a sophisticated brace-shop to rehabilitate patients with missing or compromised limbs caused in the course of their military duties. This became a principal center for the rehabilitation of USN and Marine amputees who had served in the Pacific during World War II.

Mare Island became the home of 20 nurses. They were initially recruited and assigned to the naval hospital in Washington, DC for their naval indoctrination, but many of the best were sent to Mare Island. They became known as the "Sacred Twenty," a corps of women nurses treating veterans and servicemen living or serving on the West Coast. Throughout the

book Snyder emphasizes that the physicians were also commissioned naval officers and had to carefully walk the fine line that sometimes divided the two professions.

After World War I, the hospital had to survive the fiscal restraints of the Great Depression, but then ramped up as a major medical facility during World War II. There were fears that the hospital, which treated about 2,300 patients, might be bombed, but the 23 structures survived the war unharmed. It became a major mainland or continental infirmary after wounded personnel were evacuated from Hawaii's Tripler Army Hospital, enabling family and friends easier access to loved ones who had served and been wounded in the Pacific Theater. A broader number of services were available, including general family care as well as for obstetrical cases. Later the Korean War brought more armed services personnel to the Mare Island shipyard, but general clinical and hospitalization services started to limit the number of beds available for admission and foretold the 1957 closure of the hospital. The nearby supporting town of Vallejo evolved, as did the use of Mare Island. The Navy Yard became a light industrial facility and the remnants of the hospital went to the Department of Veterans affairs. Its buildings and campus were repurposed by the United States Navy Schools Command. Ultimately, what was left of the facilities became the Touro University California, an institution that in a way carries on the navy's Mare Island tradition by granting several professional degrees in healthcare.

*Mare Island Naval Hospital: 1864–1957* is a good resource book for those who wish to study the creation and evolution of a naval post in and between times of war. The book contains a great amount of primary source material, but the narration is bureaucratic in style and can be tedious. Despite this minor flaw, Thomas Snyder's work is a worthwhile contribution to an understudied aspect of American naval history.

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**Solly, Ray. *BP Shipping Pictorial: The Golden Years 1945–1975*  
Whittles Publishing, 2023**

viii + 148 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index  
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The first three decades after the end of World War II saw the development of tankers from ships not much larger than any other cargo-carrying vessel