

## Port Chicago:

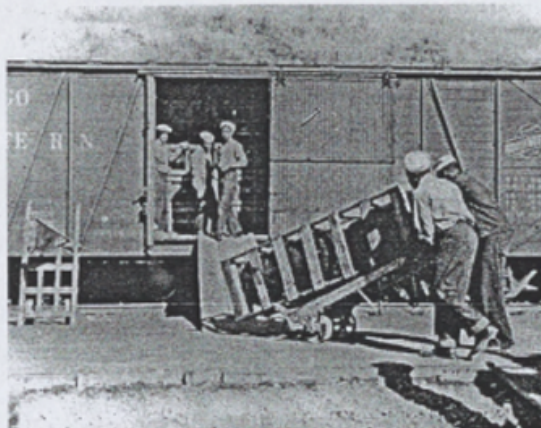
### What really happened?

It was the worst war-related disaster in the United States during World War II. On July 17, 1944, Port Chicago, a Navy ammunition loading base in the San Francisco Bay Area, was destroyed by a devastating explosion that killed hundreds and heavily damaged the nearby town of the same name.

Most of those who died were young African American sailors, serving in a segregated Navy that showed little concern for proper training or their safety. When the surviving sailors balked at going back to work under the same officers and the same conditions 50 of them were convicted of mutiny in a major miscarriage of justice.

The convictions sparked public protests and drew the attention of Thurgood Marshall and Eleanor Roosevelt. Although the black sailors were imprisoned, their protest and the subsequent public outcry prodded the Navy to initiate a process of racial desegregation, eventually to be followed by the armed forces as a whole.

Presently a campaign is underway to establish a permanent Port Chicago National Memorial to remember those who died in the tragedy. Efforts are also being made to overturn the unjust mutiny convictions of the African American sailors.



### IMPORTANCE OF PORT CHICAGO IN WWII

Built in 1942 following the attack on Pearl Harbor and named after the nearby town, Port Chicago quickly became the largest ammunition shipping facility on the West Coast. Hundreds of thousands of tons of bombs, artillery shells, depth charges, infantry ammunition, and other urgently needed munitions were loaded onto cargo vessels and shipped to U.S. forces in the Pacific. Ammunition loaders at Port Chicago played a critical role in winning the war.

*Only with the help of individuals  
like you can the stories of  
Port Chicago be told.  
Working together we can make  
a difference!*



### Remembrance and Justice

Few people today know of the Port Chicago events and how they have indirectly impacted the lives of Americans. As for the survivors the memory of the terrible explosion cannot be erased. The families of men who died suffered the irreplaceable loss of a son, husband, father, or brother. For the Navy and the nation a reluctant step toward racial equality was compelled. If we are to learn from the past, it is necessary to recover and remember this important part of the nation's history.

With publication of a book, newspaper and magazine articles, and the release of several documentaries and films, interest in the Port Chicago story has grown. In 1999 President Clinton issued a pardon to one of the only surviving convicted sailors.

Most recently, a campaign for remembrance and justice has gained widespread public support. Many persons have expressed support for the campaign. Congressman George Miller has taken the lead in this campaign, characterizing the mutiny trial as "a miscarriage of justice based on the racism of the time." Miller is working for exoneration of the convicted sailors, and is now taking the lead to establish a permanent Port Chicago National Memorial to be administered by the National Park Service.



## TAKE ACTION TO KEEP THE STORY ALIVE!

Your help is urgently needed. Most important now is public support for Congressman Miller's bill (details)

You can help by ~~doing~~ visiting:  
[www.portchicagomemorial.org](http://www.portchicagomemorial.org) and

~~1. Write letters of support~~

2. Sign our on-line petition

3. Donate to the campaign

### RESOURCE LIST

Port Chicago Committee:  
[www.portchicagomemorial.org](http://www.portchicagomemorial.org)

National Park Service website:  
[www.nps.gov/poch](http://www.nps.gov/poch)

The Port Chicago Mutiny  
(website of docudrama produced by  
Morgan Freeman):  
~~[www.portchicagomemorial.com](http://www.portchicagomemorial.com)~~

*The Port Chicago Mutiny: The Story  
of the Largest Mass Mutiny Trial in  
U.S. Naval History*, by  
Robert L. Allen (New Edition, 2006)

## PORT CHICAGO COMMITTEE

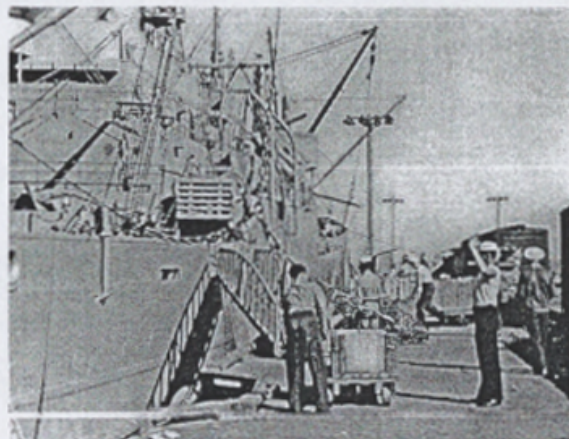
We envision a future Port Chicago National Memorial that will expand the current Memorial, located on the site of the explosion, and will encompass a multi-acre parcel of the former Port Chicago waterfront. The Memorial will pay tribute to those who died in the explosion. Educational programs will be provided focusing on the importance of the base operations to the war effort, as well as the injustices of racial discrimination and segregation at the base prior to the explosion. The work stoppage, mutiny trial, and desegregation outcome will be included in exhibits.

An interpretive visitor center will exhibit maps, photographs, memorabilia from survivors, and audio and video presentations on the history and significance of the base. A quiet space for remembrance and reflection will be provided for visitors. Special interactive exhibits will be developed for school children. An audio-tour with voices of survivors will contribute to the information and emotional depth of exhibits. A small auditorium will be included for lectures, video showings, and memorial events. Outreach efforts to local communities and schools will be organized to inform the public about site activities and encourage organized visits by school groups and others.

We invite your support to keep the story of Port Chicago alive.

Port Chicago Committee  
[www.portchicagomemorial.org](http://www.portchicagomemorial.org)

## PORT CHICAGO COMMITTEE



## Remember Port Chicago?

Learn more and take  
action to preserve this  
important story!