



BICENTENNIAL OF THE WAR OF 1812

America's Navy:
Keeping the Sea Free for More Than 200 Years.

Why Commemorate

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Why Commemorate the War of 1812 Bicentennial?

From 2012 to 2015, the United States Navy and its partners will commemorate the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the writing of our National Anthem, the Star Spangled Banner. It is remarkable that 200 years ago, the first declared war in our nation's history was fought against the two nations which have become our closest allies. Many things change in 200 years, but what doesn't change is the importance of sea power in the affairs of maritime nations.

Since its birth in 1776, the United States has always been a maritime nation, which means that unobstructed access to and free use of the world's oceans are essential to our national welfare and prosperity. That's what the United States went to war in 1812 to defend, and that is what the United States Navy has been protecting ever since.

Why is keeping the seas free so important? Here are a few facts about the world:

- 70% of the world is covered by the oceans
- 80% of the world's people live near the oceans
- 90% of all international trade travels on the oceans
- 95% of all global communications are transported under the oceans

That's the world America lives in today. Looking at those numbers, one begins to understand the immense importance of ensuring the freedom of the oceans with capable and effective sea services. Since America's Navy began with only six frigates, American sea power has been essential to countering threats, winning wars and furthering the interests of peace and prosperity worldwide. Today one of those first six frigates that 200 years ago fought in the War of 1812, the USS Constitution, is still a commissioned ship in the United States Navy.

Ultimately, the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 is a salute to all of our Sailors and Marines who fought so gallantly against great odds in that conflict, in all of our nation's conflicts between then and now, and those who are today defending freedom around the world – from the mountains of Afghanistan to the coasts of Africa to the Straits of Hormuz – and

standing ready to provide compassionate humanitarian aid from Haiti to Japan to wherever catastrophe strikes. The Navy and Marine Corps and Coast Guard are what they are because of the quality of the people that served over the last 200 years, and the tens of thousands of Sailors and Marines now making sacrifices every day, something that America can be very grateful has not changed over the past 200 years.

If America remembers the lessons of the naval war of 1812, lessons paid for with the lives of Sailors and Marines, then America can be confident that the nation will always answer Francis Scott Key's question in the affirmative:

"Oh, say does that that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?"

For more information on the Bicentennial: www.history.navy.mil/Commemorations/812/1812-index.htm

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