



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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Bicentennial of the War of 1812 – Keeping the Sea Free for More Than 200 Years

"The War of 1812 really signified our rebirth as a Navy and as a nation. A lot of what we do, a lot of what we're about really started from the War of 1812 - a lot of our traditions, and our heritage." – **Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert**

Beginning in April 2012 and continuing through 2015, the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and partners will commemorate the [Bicentennial of the War of 1812](#) and [The Star Spangled Banner](#). Since winning our independence in 1776, the United States has been a maritime nation, relying on unobstructed access and free use of the world's oceans which are essential to our national security and prosperity. It is those reasons – access and free use – the United States went to war in 1812 to defend, and that is what the U.S. Navy has been protecting ever since.

200 Years Ago

- In 1812, the United States, experiencing the growing pains of its recent independence, once again went to war with Great Britain to preserve its economy, its way of life and its independence – the U.S. Navy emerged as the key to victory, with the war serving as the U.S. Navy's first trial by fire.
- Born of necessity and forged in battle, the U.S. Navy took on and prevailed against the world's strongest fleet and proved to be a force of innovation, technology, esprit and expert seamanship. The Navy kept the sea lanes and America free during the [War of 1812](#) and continues to fulfill this vital mission today.
- During the Battle of Ft. McHenry, Francis Scott Key was inspired to write the poem that later became the lyrics to our national anthem, The Star Spangled Banner. Our Navy proved that it was essential to our nation's defense and prosperity to protect national commerce, enforce trade laws and ensure freedom of the seas.

The U.S. Navy: Then and Now

Throughout the Navy's 236- year history, the force has been and continues to be comprised of highly trained and motivated Sailors and civilians with diverse backgrounds.

- The commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 is a salute to all Sailors and Marines who fought gallantly in that conflict, who served in all of our nation's conflicts since then, and who are defending freedom around the world today.
- The commemoration underscores the importance of the United States as a maritime nation dependent on a strong Navy and fostering international good will. Our Navy operates forward around the globe always ready to defend our national security, while providing assistance to those in need.
- The performance of America's Sailors and Marines in the War of 1812 set the standards upon which our naval forces continue to build today.

Key Messages

- **Warfighting First:** In 1812, we had an Officer Corps of exceptional warfighters. Today's force has been honed and combat tested by many global conflicts.
- **Operate Forward:** In 1812, U.S. Navy frigates fought the British from the coast of England to the southwestern tip of South America. Today, our Navy maintains a global maritime presence, remaining at the front lines of our nation's efforts in war and peace.
- **Be Ready:** In 1812, innovative ship designers created superior fighting ships crewed by Sailors who out-fought the British Navy. Today, our warfighters are the most capable and flexible force in the world.

Facts & Figures

- Navy commemoration [events](#) will take place in [14 U.S. cities](#), beginning in [New Orleans](#) on April 17, 2012, and concluding with a Bicentennial Commemoration of the Battle of New Orleans in January 2015.
- War of 1812 commemoration events will be held in conjunction with [Navy Weeks](#) in the following nine cities: New Orleans, Baltimore, Boston, Milwaukee, Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland, Detroit and Buffalo
- 124 international navies have been invited to participate in the commemoration.
- For more information about War of 1812, visit <http://www.ourflagwasstillthere.org/>