



More live events for Defenders Day

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Retreat of British to return Sunday in Fort Howard

by Randy Leonard

One hundred and ninety five years later, the militia that thwarted a British attack on Baltimore and very well may have preserved our infant nation will once again send Redcoats beating a retreat for their ships – an element absent from the past few years of re-enactments of the 1814 Battle of North Point.

Uniforms, gunpowder, cannons and games – all are being put to ready for this year's Defenders Day celebration Sunday, Sept. 6, in Fort Howard Park.

"It's going to be much improved," said Defenders Day committee co-chair Harry Young of the events scheduled for the day.

The main difference will be a greater number of living presentations, with new or renewed presence by the Maryland Historical Society, the Pride of Baltimore organization, Todd's Inheritance, the Flag House and the Carroll Mansion, Young said. A total of 15 organizations will be involved to present period games, doll- and boat-making activities for children, blacksmithing demonstrations and information on the battle logistics and tactics.

"It's meant to be a fun day for families," Young said.

Visitors to the free event can bring picnic lunches or purchase food at the park. Alcohol is not permitted.

With rattling musket and rifle fire, 82 re-enactors from Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina and Texas will set off about 100 pounds of powder with the help of two cannons, a 14-pounder and an 18-pounder.

The first re-enactment is scheduled for 1:15 p.m., slightly later than in past years to allow folks time to arrive after church, Young said. The second re-enactment at 4 p.m. will feature the previously neglected British retreat.

The idea was to give a different view, said Essex resident and leader of the British re-enactors Cpl. Ed Seufert. In previous years, the invaders would take the peninsula, striking the American flag and raising the Union Jack. During a break, the American flag would be hoisted once again, only to be taken down in the second re-enactment.

Pulling back from the militia forces entrenched at Hampstead Hill in modern-day Patterson Park, British marines under the command of Col. Arthur Brooke made a leisurely retreat for the tip of North Point and were besieged by a small ambush, Seufert said. For the sake of entertainment, the re-enactment of the retreat will be built up a little, he said.

Between re-enactments, guests can venture into the American and British tent camps to observe cooking and drilling demonstrations and understand the geographic movements of forces on a map.

This year's celebration includes sponsorship from McDonald's, Mars Supermarket, Patapsco Bank, Food Lion and Dundalk Florist, Young said.

Baltimore County Executive James T. Smith Jr. is scheduled to attend the event in conjunction with the county's 350th anniversary, according to a county spokeswoman.

As the bicentennial of the War of 1812 approaches, local, state and national figures are drawing attention to key points of the conflict. The Defenders Day visitors will be able to view the newly renovated exterior of the historic Todd House, the predecessor of which the invading British stopped at before burning it in 1814. Between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., visitors will be permitted to pass through the interior, which is yet to be renovated.

"It's kind of a forgotten part of American history," Young said of the invasion and battle, but the events of Sept. 12 and 13, 1814, remain an important indication to the world that "our little nation was going to stand up" for its rights.

• For additional information, go to the Web site battlenorthpoint.org or call the Dundalk-Patapsco Neck Historical Society at 410-284-2331. Free admission and parking.



Members of the re-enactment group Aisquith's Sharp Shooters poise to attack the British in retreat this Defenders Day. *photo by Randy Leonard*



"Camp followers" who historically prepared meals and cared for soldiers will lead demonstrations and activities Sunday. *photo by Randy Leonard*