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## **The British are coming — again**

### **Families watch as re-enactors from both sides don period uniforms to refight the 1814 Battle of North Point**

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The redcoats descended on North Point Sunday morning, ready to challenge American soldiers and militiamen standing between them and Baltimore.

"We're here to reclaim what is rightfully ours," said Matt Moore, of Aston, Pa., who was dressed in British military garb from the period and toting a musket.

Moore and several other men donned British and American uniforms to re-create the Battle of North Point, which took place Sept. 12, 1814 - one day before the famous Battle of Baltimore at Fort McHenry - during the War of 1812. Sunday afternoon's re-enactments were staged at Fort Howard Park in southeastern Baltimore County, and also served to celebrate the county's 350th anniversary.

Hundreds of people, including many families with children, stepped back nearly two centuries to relive a pivotal moment for Baltimore and a critical juncture for post-Colonial America.

During the early 19th-century North Point battle, American soldiers fought to keep the British from taking a strategic Chesapeake Bay foothold, killing the British general whose troops had participated in burning the White House, the Capitol and other government buildings in Washington. The British ultimately abandoned their attempt to attack Baltimore by land.

Yesterday, the smell of smoke from the occasional cannon blast and the light melody of a fife filled the park clearing where white tents were erected, some of them sheltering soldiers resting for what lay ahead. Women in bonnets traversed the pathways or sat down to spin wool or sew. "It's an interesting era that is underrepresented," said Brian Alexander of Catonsville, dressed as a second lieutenant in the American army. His family tree includes a Western Maryland militiaman who was a reservist during the War of 1812, he said.

While Alexander sat at a desk under a tent, his wife, Wendy, and other women sewed cotton napkins for a tavern exhibit at Fort McHenry. One sewed a button onto a musician's coat - by

hand, of course.

Mike Seufert, originally of Essex, flew back from Texas with his wife, Kelly Mynatt, to wear a red coat and join the English ranks directed by his father.

"It's fun to teach people, in a different way, history," said Seufert, who has been involved with re-enactments since age 5. "Bringing it alive ... it's always amazed me how much people really enjoyed that."

Seufert spread out a large cloth map on the ground, dotted with green spots for trees and blue for the bay waters surrounding the peninsula.

"This is roughly where the battle took place," Seufert said, pointing out how North Point Road basically follows the dirt road the British traveled. Using red- and blue-painted blocks to represent the troops on both sides, he walked through the events leading up to the fight for a growing group of listeners.

Jessica Eurice, 15, of Hereford, came to see the program for extra credit in her history course. But the sophomore, who asked her grandfather, George Hinkel, to join her, said she was easily swept up in the scene as she listened to Seufert and watched other demonstrations.

"It's really exciting ... all the sounds, the smells," Eurice said.

Robert Dickerson, a self-described "history buff," shared a similar sentiment. "I get that sort of rush where I believe I'm here in [the War of] 1812," the Edgemere resident said.

His grandson, 8-year-old Carson Frey, also got to experience some of the period's action, participating in a basic swordplay lesson with Victor Markland, a park ranger.

While looking forward to the afternoon's re-enactment, Carson already had a highlight for the day.

"Getting the gun," he said, holding a small wooden rifle modeled after the 19th-century soldiers' weapons, which his grandfather had bought him.

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