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Baltimore Celebrates Defenders' Day



Reporting
[Tim Williams](#)

BALTIMORE (WJZ) — It is Baltimore's oldest holiday. Defenders' Day commemorates the successful defense of the city from British attack.

Tim Williams has more.

It's been a Star-Spangled Banner weekend at Fort McHenry in Baltimore.

This is the weekend when war re-enactors from around the region come in authentic period uniforms to recreate the atmosphere and the historic defense of Baltimore City during the War of 1812.



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"We can associate the American flag and the Star-Spangled Banner with a specific place and this fort is original. And it's awesome to be able to come here to see people in uniform, to see history animated, to see history come alive at the birthplace of the Star-Spangled Banner," said Vince Vaise, Chief of Interpretation at Fort McHenry.

It was on Sept. 12, 1814 that American militia fought back professional British soldiers on land.

The following day, the British naval assault began. It lasted 25 hours, but defenders of the fort held firm.

This year, visitors like the Nickersons from Pennsylvania learned that Francis Scott Key immortalized the bombardment 196 years ago with the words, "the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air."

"I knew that the Star-Spangled Banner was written during the Baltimore War. Only thing I did not know is that we won through the British retreating," said Conner Nickerson.

It's a story told with volunteers from as far as Wisconsin and members of the United States Marines.

"The entire message of the program is not only to teach them about the history that happened here, but how relevant that history is to them today," said Retired USMC Gunnery Sergeant, Thomas Williams.

For more on Fort McHenry, click [here](#).