



Press Release

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MARYLAND STAR-SPANGLED 200 PLANS LAUNCHED

Dozens of international tall ships and navy ships expected in June

BALTIMORE, MD (November 17) – Today, Governor Martin O'Malley joined Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and representatives from the U.S. Navy and Operation Sail, Inc. to announce *Star-Spangled Sailabration*, an international maritime festival that will launch Maryland's three-year War of 1812 bicentennial efforts. *Star-Spangled Sailabration* will take place June 13-19, 2012 in Baltimore's Inner Harbor and the Chesapeake Bay.

"The bicentennial of The Star-Spangled Banner and the War of 1812 will depict Maryland's pivotal role in securing America's independence," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "We are pleased to welcome these ships to the Inner Harbor and the Bay for this historic celebration that will remind Americans of how, through courage and conviction, Marylanders from all walks of life came together and gave our nation her flag and national anthem."

Dozens of Navy ships and tall ships from the U.S. and international navies are expected to line Baltimore's harbor during the week, bringing thousands of sailors to the region. Additional activities will include free on-board public tours of ships, official visits by international dignitaries and Navy leadership, fireworks, crew sporting competitions, community service projects, living history displays, educational activities, a new symphonic work, a public art project, and much more.

"We are looking forward to welcoming the international navies and tall sailing ships to Baltimore in June to launch the national bicentennial," said Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. It was on June 18, 1812 that the young United States declared war on Great Britain. "Star-Spangled Sailabration will kick off the events building to the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Baltimore and penning of the national anthem in September 2014."

In addition to Baltimore, the Navy will commemorate the Bicentennial in New Orleans, Norfolk, VA, New York, Boston, and several other historically significant cities. "I'm especially pleased that the Navy is represented in Baltimore for the bicentennial event," stated Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. "The Department of the Navy has a longstanding and vital partnership with the State of Maryland, and the Battle of Baltimore represents an important event in the shared history of the Department, the State of Maryland, and the of the City of Baltimore."

The Chief of Naval Operations has invited 120 countries to send appropriate combat ships as well as their national academy sail training tall ships. Officials have identified 9 U.S. warships and 5 tall sailing ships to visit Baltimore; other vessels from Great Britain, Canada, Columbia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Mexico are expected to participate. The Coast Guard has confirmed its tall ship, the Eagle, will visit and lead the parade of sail.

Operation Sail (OpSail), the Congressionally-chartered nonprofit producer of tall ship events, is partnering with the U.S. Navy to produce next year's commemoration events. "Bringing the tall ships of the world back to Baltimore for the bicentennial excites the imagination," said Jose Fuentes, executive director of OpSail. "The many activities planned here present great opportunities to engage the public in these commemorations in meaningful and interactive ways."

Star-Spangled Sailabration is expected to bring hundreds of thousands of visitors to Baltimore and the region and contribute to the economy through increased hotel bookings, restaurant reservations, and spending at shops and retail outlets. The June events are also expected to attract significant national and international media coverage.

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About Star-Spangled 200, Inc.

Star-Spangled 200, Inc. is the not-for-profit 501(c)3 entity that supports the fundraising goals of the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission. Established in September 2010, Star-Spangled 200, Inc. is charged with educating the public through celebration and commemoration of the historical events of the War of 1812 by supporting the charitable and educational activities of the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission. For more, visit www.starspangled200.com.

About the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission

Established by Governor Martin O'Malley, the commission is staffed by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, Division of Tourism Film and the Arts. The bicentennial period runs from June 2012 through February 2015. It commemorates Maryland's unique contributions to the defense and heritage of the nation, including the pivotal battle that led to an American victory and the birth of "The Star-Spangled Banner." For more information, visit www.starspangled200.org.

About the United States Navy

The U.S. Navy is the sea-service branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. The mission of the Navy is to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas. The United States Navy – A Global Force For Good. For more information, visit www.navy.mil or www.history.navy.mil.

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About Operation Sail, Inc.

Operation Sail, Inc. is a non-profit organization established in 1961 with the endorsement of President John F. Kennedy. Backed by a Joint Congressional Resolution, its mission is to advance sail training and promote good will among nations. OpSail has produced five international sailing events in 1964, 1976, 1986, 1992, and 2000, each tied to a patriotic or historical event. For more information, visit www.opsail.org.

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