



Travel in brief: Maryland plans 'Banner' 1812 bicentennial

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BALTIMORE -- Maryland tourism officials hope to draw more than 1 million people to the birthplace of the "Star-Spangled Banner" next summer as they open a years-long bicentennial commemoration of the War of 1812 with an international maritime festival.

The June festival along Baltimore Harbor during a naval Fleet Week celebration will feature tall ships and gray ships representing navies from around the world and an air show. Organizers hope to have top representatives of the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy on hand to mark the occasion.

The event will be accompanied by arts projects including a giant mesh of spangles in the form of a flag that will fly from the Francis Scott Key Bridge outside the harbor and a new symphonic work.

The Navy, which sees the war as central to the development of its culture, is taking a large role in the anniversary events in Baltimore. The Navy and nonprofit Operation Sail are organizing ship visits around the country in 2012 to kick off the commemoration.

In preparation for the anniversary, the National Park Service recently completed a \$15 million, 17,000-square-foot center at Fort McHenry.

Visit starspangled200.org.