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## Coins to honor Key, War of 1812

Originally published December 15, 2011

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Although an official unveiling at the Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center was canceled, the [U.S.](#) Mint released details Wednesday about two new coins with ties to Frederick.

The 2012 Star-Spangled Banner Commemorative Coins, one gold and the other silver, depict iconic moments in the War of 1812. The scenes include a battle at sea, the Battle of Baltimore at Fort MCHenry, and lyrics from "The Star-Spangled Banner," penned by Frederick's own Francis Scott Key.

The reverse of the 22-karat \$5 gold coin shows the first words of the national anthem, "O say can you see," in Key's handwriting against a backdrop of 15 stars and 15 stripes.

The coins were to be unveiled in [Frederick](#) as part of a tour of historic Maryland sites related to the War of 1812, but scheduling conflicts interfered.

"[Frederick](#) is recognized as the birthplace and burial place of Key," said Bill Pencek, executive director of the War of 1812 Commission. "We thought it was the perfect opportunity to bring it to Frederick."

The unveiling was added as an afterthought to tours scheduled for Wednesday in [Frederick](#) and Montgomery counties.

"It would have been a nice complement to the [event](#)," said Jon Fieseler, executive director of the Tourism Council of [Frederick](#) County.

U.S. Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger of Maryland's 2nd Congressional District and Sen. Ben Cardin spearheaded the effort over four years to push the coin's authorization into law.

Only two to four commemorative coins are minted each year; the upcoming War of 1812 bicentennial brought a near-unanimous vote in the [House](#) of Representatives.



Courtesy Photo

The obverse design of the \$5 gold coin is emblematic of the theme "The Battles at Sea During the War of 1812."

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"It took a couple of years to do it," Ruppertsberger said, explaining that the coin was competing against one marking the Girl Scouts of America centennial. "It's our history ... and it's very patriotic."

The sale of the coins will help fund a yearlong celebration coordinated by the War of 1812 commission and Star-Spangled 200, including educational outreach and re-enactments.

Interest in the 22-karat, \$5 gold coins and 90 percent silver \$1 coins is yet to be determined.

"Certainly U.S. commemorative coins have a strong following," said Matt Lerner, owner of the [Frederick](#) Coin Exchange, "but you can't predict its [success](#)."

A high mintage number is not popular among collectors, he said, so plans to make 100,000 of the gold coins and 500,000 of the silver could decrease the value in a supply-and-demand market such as coin collection.

Coincidentally, the Obama administration announced Tuesday that it would all but halt production of its special presidential dollar coins for general circulation. More than a billion are going unused and piling up at [bank](#) vaults across the country.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.