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U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to Celebrate 250th Anniversary in Philadelphia

Philadelphia to host landmark Homecoming 250 events honoring the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps – two military branches founded here in 1775 – just ahead of the nation’s 250th birthday.

PHILADELPHIA, April 23, 2025 – In 1775, America’s founders convened in Philadelphia to establish the military forces that would fight for and win the nation’s independence. In 2025, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps return to their birthplace to mark 250 years of service with [Homecoming 250](#)—a six-week celebration of military history and legacy, set against the historic backdrop of the city where it all began.

Running **October 9 through November 10, 2025**, Homecoming 250 features parades on land and water, a veterans’ picnic, formal galas, military flyovers, a documentary film screening, patriotic concerts and citywide activations in permanent sites retelling the story of the armed forces in the United States of America.

Whether you’ve proudly worn the uniform or respect those who have, Philadelphia is the place to be – and explore – this fall.

Philadelphia’s Rich Military History

On October 13, 1775, the Second Continental Congress gathered in Philadelphia’s Pennsylvania State House (now Independence Hall) and agreed to supply General George Washington with an armed schooner and sloop, thereby establishing the Continental Navy.

One month later, on November 10, 1775, the same Congress resolved to create the Continental Marines, which would land troops to work in concert with their naval counterparts, later becoming the U.S. Marines.

Philadelphia’s status as a naval powerhouse was cemented with the founding of the Philadelphia Navy Yard, the country’s first, in 1762. Throughout the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, Philadelphia, with its vast port, served as a major hub of recruitment, supply and manufacturing.

Although little wartime or military activity takes place in Philadelphia today, the city and region are integral to the story of the people who fought “on land and sea” to establish the nation.

Homecoming 250 in Philadelphia

Homecoming 250 officially begins on October 9, 2025, with a spectacular parade of ships along the Delaware that will culminate in an opening ceremony and formal blessing of the Fleet. For this occasion, watch parties are planned for Philadelphia's Navy Yard and historic Penn's Landing, along with historic Fort Mercer and the Camden Riverfront, both in New Jersey.

October 9 through October 16, look for:

- Ship tours of: the Battleship New Jersey, Cruiser Olympia, Submarine Becuna, Navy and Coast Guard vessels, plus Revolutionary-era ships, including Marine ships
- Free performances of The United States Navy Band, USMC Band and Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon on Independence Mall and elsewhere

Through November 10, expect additional programming and exhibits at these museums and historic sites:

- [African American Museum in Philadelphia](#)
- [American Swedish Historical Museum](#)
- [Battleship New Jersey Museum and Memorial](#)
- [Independence Mall](#)
- [Independence Seaport Museum](#)
- [Library Company of Philadelphia](#)

Events not to miss:

- **A free preview of *The American Revolution*:** Filmmaker Ken Burns' new documentary on Independence Mall (October 9, 2025).
- **Army-Navy Cup:** The storied soccer rivalry returns to Subaru Park, home of the Philadelphia Union, for the 14th annual Army-Navy Cup. Tickets are required (October 10, 2025).
- **Navy-Temple Football Game:** A renewal of the teams' multi-decade rivalry, at Lincoln Financial Field. Tickets are required (October 11, 2025).
- **Navy 250 Gala:** With naval leadership at the National Constitution Center. Tickets are required (October 11, 2025).
- **All Veterans Reunion Picnic:** A Sunday outing for veterans of all armed services and their families, with fare provided, on Independence Mall (October 12, 2025).
- **"Victory at Sea" Concert and Fireworks:** Featuring the U.S. Navy Band, a Marine Band and the sky alight over Independence Mall (October 12, 2025).
- **Memorial Service for Navy and Marine Corps at Christ Church:** A religious remembrance inside one of the city's most historic churches, near the site of the first commissioning of a Navy ship (October 13, 2025).

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- **250th Salute to Youth Parade:** A procession featuring the next generation of servicemembers, including midshipmen of the Naval Academy, ROTC, NROTC and JROTC, along Independence Mall (October 13, 2025).
- **Navy 250th Commemoration:** A ceremony honoring the Navy’s founding, with the Secretary of the Navy, and a flyover by the Blue Angels and other military aircraft, at Independence Hall (October 13, 2025).
- **Marine Corps Commemoration:** A ceremony with an address by the SECNAV and Commandant of the Marine Corps at Independence Hall (November 10, 2025).
- **Toast the Recreation of The Tun:** The unveiling of the long-awaited return of the tavern where the first Marines were recruited, on 2nd Street between Market and Chestnut streets (November 10, 2025).
- **100th Marine Corps Birthday Ball:** An elegant affair in the very same ballroom where Commandant Lejeune held the original Birthday Ball, the Benjamin Franklin Hotel (November 10, 2025).

Philadelphia’s Historic Military Monuments, Sites and Museums

From the cobblestone streets of Historic Philadelphia to the storied Navy Yard of South Philly, across the Schuylkill River and over the Delaware into Camden, New Jersey—this region is rich with sites that helped shape the freedoms America’s military continues to defend. Here are some must-visit landmarks for history buffs and cultural explorers alike.

- [Statue of Commander John Barry:](#) A “Father of the Navy,” outside Independence Hall
- [Statue of Captain John Paul Jones:](#) A “Father of the Navy,” just north of the Philadelphia Museum of Art
- [Free Quaker Meetinghouse:](#) Home of the final, unidentified grave of Commandant Samuel Nicholas, “Father of the U.S. Marines,” at 500 Arch Street
- [Christ Church Burial Ground:](#) The final resting place for more military heroes than any other non-government graveyard, including Commodore William Bainbridge, commander of Old Ironsides; Joseph Hewes, a signer of the *Declaration of Independence* and First Secretary of the Navy, on Arch Street between 4th and 5th Streets
- [Cruiser Olympia:](#) World’s only steel warship, under the command of Admiral Dewey in the Spanish-American War, open for tours of officers’ quarters, sailors’ sleeping hammocks, barbershop and operating room, docked outside the Independence Seaport Museum
- [Submarine Becuna:](#) Which served in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War, open for tours of the radio room, sailors’ mess, torpedo heads and bunks, docked outside the Independence Seaport Museum
- [Independence Hall:](#) Formerly the Pennsylvania State House, where the Second Continental Congress first established the U.S. Navy and Continental Marines — and the nation’s founders signed the *Declaration of Independence*
- [Battleship New Jersey:](#) The nation’s most decorated battleship, docked across the Delaware River in Camden, New Jersey, with guided tours of the ship’s hospital, communications center,

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mess halls, machine shop, brig, gun turrets and Combat Engagement Center with video recreations of a Tomahawk missile launch

- [Independence Seaport Museum](#): On Penn's Landing and the Delaware River, tells the origin story of the U.S. Navy, with tales of the Barbary Pirates, a board-able replica of the 1797 Schooner Diligence, dozens of model ships, a wooden ship-building workshop and interactive exhibitions about the river itself
- [The Tun](#): The famed tavern where Continental Marines Commandant Nicholas was said to have recruited the very first Marines, long commemorated by a historic marker, is undergoing a full reconstruction, just feet from its original site — and is slated to open by November 2025, just in time for Marine Corps Day
- [Museum of the American Revolution](#): Where 18th century stories, art and artifacts from the Army, Navy and Marines intertwine to tell the story of our country's foremost struggle for independence, 101 S. 3rd Street

About Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps:

Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to celebrating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps in their birthplace – Philadelphia and the Delaware River – as a grand opening event of the Semiquincentennial of the United States. For the Navy 250th, Homecoming 250 plans to assemble for touring ships from both historical and current. For the Marine Corps 250th, Homecoming 250 plans to host the 100th Marine Corps Ball, where the 1st Ball was held, and celebrate at the site of Tun Tavern, the birthplace of the Marines. Homecoming 250 is bringing these celebrations to Philadelphia, Camden, and the Delaware River to support our military, salute our Veterans, and educate the public about the role of the Navy and Marines to defend America and freedom.

www.homecoming250.org.

About Visit Philadelphia:

VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy. On Greater Philadelphia's official visitor website, visitphilly.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages.

Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the site an effective trip-planning tool. Visitors can also find loads of inspiration on Visit Philly's social media Channels.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.

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