



# Ramparts

Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812

March 1, 2012

Vol. 2 No. 2

## *The Fort McHenry Guard (1814) Preparing for The War of 1812 Bicentennial*

**Winter Months spent in preparing Volunteers-In-Parks Living History Program & Staff Volunteers.**

**VIP Dave Cole** –“The Quartermaster” for our Living History program has been extraordinarily busy with uniform accoutrements, leather goods, hat plates, shoes and other equipage for the Fort McHenry Guard (FMG). For thirty members that is a lot of responsibility and determination to get the FMG looking good for the 2012 season.

**Ranger Tim Ertel & VIP Thomas Brown** “The Carpenter” have been very active in cleaning out the old quarters and constructing new lockers for the FMG.

**The 1814 Gun Battery** – The gun battery maintenance crew under **Jerry Pesch** has been productive as well with new gun tackles, breeching and side lines for all four cannon. Forest Taylor will be constructing new wooden munition boxes, handspikes, lin-stocks and re-inspecting the 6-Pdr field gun for its annual check-up and repairs.

**Volunteer-In-Parks Staff** – We have obtained all new nps-vip winter clothing for the crew and preparing for the spring-summer clothing season. With the seasonal rangers gone, the Volunteers have kicked in as always with much needed assistance by the park staff.

**The FMG Fifes & Drums** - Ranger Tim Ertel has been working with Dave Cole to repair and refit instruments and uniforms for the summer season. We have already started to receive numerous offsite requests for



**Fort McHenry Guard-1814 NPS Music Director -Ranger Tim Ertel shares a War of 1812 moment with two young defenders onboard the bay skipjack *Nathan of Dorchester***

1812 music programs in an already busy schedule as we approach the June 18, 2012 date of the declaration of war upon Great Britain in 1812.

**Civil War Programs** - As well as trimming up the uniforms and equipage for the FMG1814 program we are taking an active role in the sesquicentennial learning new music for the tattoos this summer..

### **“Major New Acquisitions for Fort McHenry Collection”**

**By Gregory R. Weidman, Curator**  
A number of important acquisitions have been come into Fort McHenry’s museum collections in recent months. Just since November, donors have contributed several highly significant items dating principally from the War of 1812. These objects

will enhance exhibitions and interpretation at the Fort as the Bicentennial years unfold.

An out-of-state individual has returned to Baltimore two important pieces that saw service in our city’s defense in 1814. One is a painted leather shako (military hat) worn at the Battle of North Point by Private Darius Stansbury of the "Baltimore Mechanical Volunteers" militia unit.

Its history is recorded in an attached note written by Pvt. Stansbury’s daughter. A musket carried by Pvt. Stansbury was also donated. Made by Waters & Whitmore of Sutton, MA, 1812, it is the first firearm used in the defense of Baltimore to enter the Fort’s collection. Mr. and Mrs. G.

**(Continued, page 4)**

## A Letter from Superintendent Tina Orcutt

It's hard to believe that the new Fort McHenry Visitor and Education Center has been open for a year now. It has been really wonderful to see people of all ages from around the world enjoying the new interactive exhibits and movie.

March marks the anniversary of the designation of the Star-Spangled Banner as the national anthem. Whether you haven't had the opportunity to come visit yet or we are a part of your daily routine, March is a great time of the year to enjoy some warmer weather here at the park. Our seawall trail is a good place to get some exercise and watching the flag flying over the ramparts on a breezy day can be truly inspirational. The park rangers and volunteers can tell you fascinating stories about the history of Fort McHenry and the people who were here.

As you can see from some of the dates listed in this newsletter, there are many events and programs being planned this year to kick off the bicentennial – and it is only just beginning! Be sure to follow us on twitter, facebook, or online for our calendar of events and activities.

I hope to see you soon!

Tina Orcutt

### FALL-WINTER PARK HOURS

September 2011 – June 2012

Visitor Center: 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Star Fort: 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Park Closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day.

## Spring Events – 2012

**Morning Bird Walks** with ornithologist Jim Peters from 8 a.m. to 12 Noon on the following dates; March 7, 17; April 4, 21 and 19. Park in the Visitor Center parking lot and meet outside the Visitor Center. Walks are cancelled if weather is inclement (rain, snow, fog). Bring binoculars, dress for the weather and be prepared for insects.

**“Fighting For Freedom”** – April 21, 23, & 24. Kick off the War of 1812 Bicentennial at Fort McHenry in dramatic fashion with a performance of “Fighting for Freedom!” with the first performance held on April 21 at 2 p.m. Additional performances will be held on April 23 and 24 at 10 a.m. at Fort McHenry and April 27 at the Maryland Historical Society at 6 p.m. The program is a collaborative effort between the Baltimore School for the Arts, Maryland Historical Society and the National Park Service. The production includes three scenes about the beginning of the War of 1812 and last 45 minutes.

**Cultural Resources – Did You Know?....** With rehabilitation of the Seawall Trail, you probably noticed the many new plantings that were installed as part of the project. Because of the trail's impervious surface and its proximity to the Patapsco River and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, the park enhanced existing plantings to increase absorption of surface water and reduce runoff. The majority of the plantings reflect the native plant communities found in the Mid-Atlantic, including Eastern White Pine, American Holly, Serviceberry and Bald Cypress. As part of the project, Japanese Cherry trees were planted near the water entrance to the park to restore an orchard planted by the children of Baltimore in 1932 as part of the commemoration of Washington's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. This species is one of several that form the Cherry Blossom display at the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C.

**Area Services** - Interior work continues in the Enlisted Men's Barracks in preparation for the new exhibits. Masonry repairs are proceeding well, as damaged brick and deteriorated painted surfaces are being replaced. The preservation team will be headed next to the Electric Map room as they complete the work in the Mannequin room. Installation of the new exhibits for the Star Fort buildings should begin in late spring. The reseeding of grass along the edges of the Seawall Trail will begin shortly by the Contractor. Hopefully by mid-summer most of the barren areas will be converted back to grass.

The Baltimore National Aquarium is planning another wetlands clean up day at Fort McHenry. Tentatively this event is scheduled for Saturday, April 28th. All volunteers are welcomed!

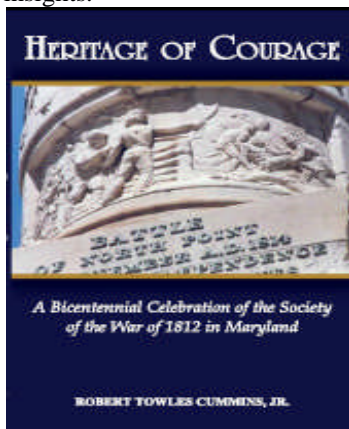
**Resource Protection** -On November 15, 2011 the newly finished, wider seawall trail at Fort McHenry NM&HS reopened. The original plan, which had called for a paved trail wide enough for a bicyclist to pass a pedestrian, had to be reworked in order to avoid causing damage to the environment by creating too much run-off into the Chesapeake Bay. As a result, the safest maximum speed for both authorized motor vehicles and bicycles along the trail is ten miles per hour. In order to ensure visitor safety, Visitor and Resource Protection Rangers are monitoring speed along the seawall trail. They look forward to seeing you bike, run, jog, and walk along the newly completed trail. Just remember, safety first.



# Books & Old Defenders.

**NEW 1812 BOOK – *Heritage of Courage: A Bicentennial Celebration of the Society of the War of 1812 in Maryland*** by Robert Towles Cummins, Jr. (Llumina Press, 2012)

Robert's new book is about the Old Defenders' Association of Baltimore in 1814 and the formation of the Society of the War of 1812 in Maryland. Robert is the society's Bicentennial Committee Chairman and a descendant of five veterans of the war. The book has an abundance of new findings and fresh insights.



**Brig. General William Madison**

**William Madison (1762-1843)** was the younger brother of President James Madison. During the War of 1812 he served as a brigadier general in the Virginia Militia with headquarters at Fredericksburg. On July 24, 1814 his brigade was called into federal service and saw action at the skirmish of Kirby's Windmill, Herring Bay below Annapolis on October 31, 1814. British Marines and

sailors landed to raid the tobacco port when they were confronted by Captain James Burd's one-hundred and twenty U.S. Light Dragoons in the midst of severe musket fire. General Madison's Infantry and artillery reached the scene from their Patuxent River camp and closed the action along with a gallant charge by the U.S. Light Dragoons. The British returned to their ships offshore.



National Park Service  
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Fort McHenry is the birthplace of the U.S. national anthem "The Star-Spangled Banner" written during the War of 1812 in Baltimore harbor. Here, literally, "by the dawn's early light" on September 14, 1814, following a 25 hour naval bombardment by the British navy, Maryland attorney Francis Scott Key, while on the deck of an American flag-of-truce vessel, witnessed the raising of the fort's great garrison flag over the ramparts of the Star Fort.

Fort McHenry was established as a national park in 1925, then in 1939 re-designated as a national monument and historic shrine commemorating the defense and inspiration for a new national song "The Star-Spangled Banner."

#### Address

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2400 East Fort Avenue  
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## Front Line: 200 Years Ago Spring 1812 - Newspaper Notices

**A Prologue to War** – In the spring of 1812, five years after HM frigate *Leopard* had fired upon and boarded the US frigate *Chesapeake* in June 1807 the nation found itself once more on the brink of war. Americans continued to suffer denial of their rights from England's impressment of sailors and often violent interruption of our free trade. Once again this was an affront to American sovereignty on the high seas. Barely avoiding war during this period American commerce and pride continued to suffer from the American Embargo Acts, 1807-1810 and similar trade restrictions upon the US from England.

Following the elections of 1811 a new Congress under the leadership of Henry Clay (Ky), John C. Calhoun (SC) and John Randolph (Va.) clamored for war. They were known as the "War Hawks." President Madison's request for a declaration of war met opposition from the Federalists, especially in New England, where the maritime economy continue to suffer from trade embargoes placed by the Jefferson and Madison administrations.

The Madison administration faced formidable obstacles — a divided cabinet, a factious party, a recalcitrant Congress, a US Treasury facing a war it could not finance; obstructionist governors, and incompetent generals, together with militia who refused to fight outside their states. Most serious was a lack of unified popular support. There were serious threats of disunion from New England.

All of these and more obstacles confronted the nation as war now seemed inevitable. On June 18, 1812 the US would declared on war on Great Britain.



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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

This late 18<sup>th</sup> century star-shaped masonry fort is world famous as the birthplace of the U.S. national anthem. As the guardian of Baltimore harbor during the War of 1812, the valiant defense by American forces led Francis Scott Key to write the words of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

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**(Cont. from page 1)** Leamon Martin has donated two additional pieces of rare War of 1812 headgear. One is a brilliantly painted leather shako with "tombstone" style front plate featuring an American eagle and shield. Above these is the name "Union Guards" for the Philadelphia militia unit which saw service in the fall of 1814.

The other is an important Maryland type Light Dragoon helmet of the 1810-1815 period, complete with horsehair plume. Helmets of this style have documented use by Captain Bouldin's company of Baltimore cavalry or dragoon militia, troops present at the Battle of North Point in 1814.

Fort McHenry formerly had no spy glasses in its collection. Now, thanks to donor Stephen Shanahan, that gap has been filled by an English brass single-pull spyglass (naval telescope) dating c. 1810. The spyglass is very similar to the one on the Smithsonian Institution's website which illustrates the type likely

used by Francis Scott Key to view the Star-Spangled Banner. The Fort's is engraved "G, Brooks" on the pull, possibly for George Brooks, commander of US Revenue Cutter James Madison in War of 1812.

In addition to these historic and rare items from the War of 1812 period, the Fort was recently able to acquire important items of more recent vintage. We were able to purchase at auction a group of 15 black and white images of Fort McHenry, 1928-1970. These views are silver gelatin prints by renowned *Baltimore Sun* photographer A. Aubrey Bodine and have his original identification notes on the reverse.

