



## GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

May 2, 2023

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro  
Secretary of the Navy  
Office of the Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652  
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Del Toro,

As Governor of Pennsylvania, I write to strongly support your decision to direct the Navy and Marine Corps to celebrate the Navy and Marine Corps 250<sup>th</sup> birthdays in Fall 2025 in Philadelphia.

As part of the Semiquincentennial of the Independence of the United States, it is important to commemorate the events that enabled and protected that independence: the creation of the American military services in 1775. On October 13, 1775, the Second Continental Congress at Independence Hall in Philadelphia founded the Navy, whose first ship was soon commissioned on the banks of the Delaware. On November 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution to raise the first battalions of Marines, who were recruited at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. From there, the Marines soon sailed down the Delaware on their first amphibious operation. There is no more fitting place to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> birthdays of the Navy and Marine Corps than at their birthplace: Philadelphia and the Delaware River.

A group of Pennsylvania and New Jersey organizations and citizens have joined together as Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps to propose “Launching the Semiquincentennial” by celebrating the Navy and Marine Corps 250<sup>th</sup> with ceremonies at Independence Hall, parades, aerial demonstrations, reenactments, and exhibits, as well as highlight events that can only happen in Philadelphia.

First, Homecoming 250 plans to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Navy’s founding by assembling for touring on both banks of the Delaware River historical, replica, and active-duty ships representing every major war that the Navy has fought: the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish–American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and subsequent conflicts in the Middle East. This unprecedented exhibition of Navy history is only possible on the Delaware, where Philadelphia hosts the USS *Olympia*, which launched America as a naval power, and Camden hosts the Battleship *New Jersey*, the most decorated Navy ship

afloat. They will be joined by historic and replica ships and the most modern Navy vessels, producing a spectacular, unprecedented assemblage of Navy history.

Second, Homecoming 250 plans to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Marine Corps by gathering for touring on the Delaware River ships with a special connection to the Marines, including amphibious and aviation vessels. Homecoming 250 also plans to hold the 100<sup>th</sup> Marine Corps Ball in Philadelphia, where General Lejeune held the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Corps Ball in 1925. Finally, Homecoming 250 hopes to celebrate the recreation of Tun Tavern, the birthplace of the Marine Corps, which will be a destination for Marines and others for decades to come.

Thank you again for deciding that the Navy and Marine Corps will celebrate their 250<sup>th</sup> birthdays at Philadelphia and the Delaware River, and that there will be a preparatory combined Navy/Marine Corps Week in October 2023. I ask that you continue to support this Launching the Semiquincentennial proposal by authorizing the Navy and Marine Corps to bring the necessary active-duty ships, aircraft, and personnel to Philadelphia to represent the Navy and Marine Corps of recent years, today, and the future. I look forward to hearing from you and working with your team on this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Josh Shapiro', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Governor Josh Shapiro

cc: The Honorable James Kenney, Mayor of Philadelphia  
Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps