A Bash for 250th Birthdays

Days of celebrating Navy and Marine Corps set for 2025.

A celebration in honor of the 250th birthday of the U.S. Navy and the Marine Corps is planned for fall 2025 in Philadelphia, where the Continental Navy was founded Oct. 13, 1775, a month before the Marine Corps began recruitment efforts at the city’s old Tun Tavern.

Plans for the multi-day celebration are in the works by Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps, a nonprofit organization and an affiliate of the America 250 Foundation, Inc. The foundation is a nonprofit partner of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, created by Congress and established to organize national 250th anniversary celebrations.

The event is envisioned to include tours of historic ships, appearances by naval vessels, flyovers, and more, said George S. Leone, chair of the board of Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps.

“The idea of celebrating in Philadelphia just has a great deal of appeal, not only for military veterans and officers, but also the general public,” said Leone, a retired judge whose father was a naval officer in World War II. “It is going to be a tremendous celebration, and we need it for the Navy, Marine Corps, and our country.”

Some of the historic ships set to be part of the celebration include the World War II-era USS New Jersey (BB-62), the USS Olympia (C-6) of the Spanish-American War, the USS Niagara from the War of 1812, and replicas of the Civil War-era USS Monitor and Revolutionary War-era USS Providence. It will also include the USS Becuna (SS-310) submarine.

Plans are underway to reconstruct a new Tun Tavern, said Leone. It may not be done in time for the anniversary but will be an ongoing attraction for Marines.

“These are the things that get Marines’ hearts beating,” said Leone. “… The building did not survive the [American] revolution, but Marines come to Philadelphia looking for it every day.”

The celebration has received endorsement from local and state officials; the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware congressional delegations; and former U.S. Navy secretaries, some of whom serve on the event’s national advisory board.

Leone hopes the event will reconnect the American public with the nation’s armed forces and the city of Philadelphia, which has retained a strong naval presence, though it is no longer the hub for shipbuilding that it was during much of the 20th century.

Vice Adm. Fritz Roegge, USN (Ret), a MOAA member, joined the Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps Advisory Committee, in part because he believes in the mission. Roegge hopes people from across the nation will come to appreciate Philadelphia’s place in history.

“If you live in Norfolk or San Diego, you probably don’t need any reminders of who the Navy is and what they do,” Roegge said. “But that is not to say that everyone … has that awareness.”

—By Kipp Hanley, MOAA’s staff writer

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“250
NAVY
MARINES
1775-2025
HOW YOU CAN TAKE PART
Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps welcomes volunteers and donors for the celebration of the Navy and Marine Corps birthdays. Visit www.homecoming250.org/donate for more information.

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Tun Tavern

Birthplace of the Continental Marines