

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 26, 2021

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,

We write to you in strong bipartisan support of the proposed celebration of the 250th anniversaries of the Navy and Marine Corps on the Delaware River and in Philadelphia and Camden.

As part of the Semiquincentennial of the Independence of the United States, it is important to commemorate the events which were pivotal to protecting 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 U.S. Navy, whose first ship was soon commissioned on the banks of Delaware. On November 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution to raise the first battalions of Marines, who were recruited nearby at Tun Tavern. Those Marines would later sail down the Delaware on their first amphibious operation.

There is no more fitting place to celebrate the 250th anniversaries of the Navy and Marine Corps than at their birthplace – on the Delaware River and the cities on its shores: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Camden, New Jersey. A group of New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania organizations and citizens have joined together to form “Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps” and to propose “Launching the Semiquincentennial” with two exciting historic celebrations.

The 250th anniversary of the Navy will be commemorated in October 2025 by ceremonies and parades at Independence Hall in Philadelphia and on both banks of the Delaware River. It will also be celebrated by assembling on the Delaware River historical, replica, and active-duty ships representing every major war which 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 the subsequent conflicts in the Middle East. This unprecedented gathering of Navy history is only possible at its birthplace. Philadelphia’s Independence Seaport Museum has preserved the USS *Olympia*, the only surviving ship from the Spanish-American War, which also served in World War I, and Camden’s Home

Port Alliance has preserved the USS *New Jersey*, the only battleship to fight in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War, as well as conflicts in the Middle East.

The “Launching the Semiquincentennial” plan will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Marine Corps in November 2025 with ceremonies and parades on both banks of the Delaware, including at Independence Hall, and by assembling ships on the Delaware with a special connection to the Marine Corps, including the *Olympia* and the *New Jersey*. Most importantly, the Marines’ 250th will be celebrated by rebuilding Tun Tavern, the hallowed birthplace of the Corps, near its original location on the Delaware River. The historic tavern will be a mecca for Marines and Sailors alike for decades to come as it will continue to operate as a nonprofit charity.

We ask that you support this proposal to have the main celebrations of the 250th birthdays of the Navy and Marines at their birthplace by authorizing those services to represent the Navy and Marine Corps of recent years, today, and the future. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to hearing from you and working with your team on this request.

Sincerely,



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Robert Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Pat Toomey
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress

Scott Perry
Member of Congress

Dan Meuser
Member of Congress

Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress

Fred Keller
Member of Congress

John Joyce, M.D.
Member of Congress

Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress

Glenn Thompson
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress

Josh Gotteimer
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
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Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell
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Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Donald Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Brendan Boyle
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Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress