

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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USS Constitution Forever Stamps Set Sail *Old Ironsides Stamp Commemorates War of 1812 Bicentennial*

To obtain a high-resolution image of the stamps for media use only, email maureen.p.marion@usps.gov

BOSTON — The oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world, and America's Ship of State, the USS *Constitution* sets sail in the form of Forever stamps to commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812. All 25 million War of 1812: USS *Constitution* stamps will be available at usps.com/shop, 800-STAMP24 and the nation's Post Offices beginning Saturday, August 18.

The 10 a.m. ET First-Day-Of-Issue stamp dedication ceremony, free and open to the public, takes place at the Charleston Navy Yard, next to "Old Ironsides." Special collectables will be given away to the first 500 attendees.

Attendees 18 and older will need valid government issue photo identification to enter the Navy perimeter where the ceremony takes place. As parking is limited, the public is asked to take public transportation. Directions are at this [link](#).

"It is such an honor for *Constitution* to be immortalized on a Forever stamp," said USS *Constitution*'s 72nd commanding officer Commander Matthew Bonner. "And there is no better time than during the bicentennial of the War of 1812 during which *Constitution* and the Navy played such a pivotal role."

“What better way to salute the nation’s longest serving commissioned warship than with a commemorative stamp depicting the oldest known painting of the USS Constitution,” said U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors Vice Chairman Mickey Barnett, referring to a circa 1803 painting by Michele Felice Cornè that is exhibited in the USS Constitution Museum, on loan from the Navy Art collection. “Giving this stamp its ‘Forever’ status means the stamp will always be accepted to serve as a lasting tribute to a cherished American icon.”

Art director Greg Breeding of Charlottesville, VA, evokes the times by using the color and texture of a contemporary map of the war for the stamp pane’s background. He also places a portrait of President James Madison by Gilbert Stuart in the margin of the verso text.

This is the third time the USS *Constitution* has been commemorated on postage. The first was a 3-cent First-Class stamp issued in 1947 commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Constitution’s launch, and the second was 6-cent non-profit stamped envelope issued in 1985.

Scheduled to join Barnett and Bonner in dedicating the stamps tomorrow are USS *Constitution* Museum President Anne Grimes Rand; Boston National Historical Park Superintendent Cassius Cash; Boston Naval History and Heritage Command Detachment Historian Margherita Desy; and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino. Boston Postmaster James Holland will serve as emcee.

The War of 1812, sometimes called “the forgotten conflict,” was a two-and-a-half year confrontation with Great Britain that brought the United States to the verge of bankruptcy and disunion. With this stamp, the Postal Service begins a series commemorating the bicentennial of a war that ultimately helped forge our national identity and gave us our national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

The United States declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812. In his war message to Congress, Madison charged the British with violating the nation’s sovereignty by restricting American trade with Europe and by removing seamen from American merchant ships and making them serve in the Royal Navy.

The War of 1812 also was fueled by a desire among frontier settlers to force the British out of Canada and end their support of Indians in the Old Northwest. Many Americans, including expansionist “War Hawks” in Congress, alleged that the British supplied arms to Indians and incited them to raid settlements on the frontier.

Customers may view the USS *Constitution* stamp, as well as many of this year’s other stamps, indicate which stamps they like, and vote for their favorite stamp on Facebook at facebook.com/USPSStamps, through [Twitter @USPSStamps](https://twitter.com/USPSStamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview. Beyond the Perf is the Postal Service’s online site for background information on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

How to Obtain the First-Day-Of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the First-Day-Of-Issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop or by calling 1-800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

The War of 1812: USS Constitution Stamp
Postmaster
25 Dorchester Avenue
Boston, MA 02205-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes by mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Oct. 18, 2012.

How to Order First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers First-Day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official First-Day-Of-Issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic Catalog, online at

usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

For the first time, the Postal Service will offer a limited number of uncut press sheets perfect for framing. Each press sheet contains 5 panes of 20 stamps and is 10.3 inches wide by 36.2 inches high and is configured as 1 pane wide by 5 panes high.

There are 11 philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 578461, First-Day Cover, \$0.89.
- 578462, Full Pane First-Day Cover, \$11.50.
- 578464, Cancelled Full Pane, \$11.50.
- 578465, Digital Color Postmark (DCP), \$1.60.
- 578484, Uncut Press Sheet w/die cut, \$45.00 (Print Quantity of 1,000).
- 578486, Uncut Press Sheet w/o die cut, \$45.00 (Print Quantity of 3,500).
- 578491, Ceremony Program, \$6.95.
- 578492, Stamp Deck Card, \$0.95.
- 578494, Stamp Deck Card w/DCP (random stamp), \$1.95.
- 578497, Commemorative Stamp Panel, Set of 2, \$16.95.
- 578499, Cancellation Keepsake (DCP w/Pane), \$10.95.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional, please go to <http://about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf>.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation — 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office™ Boxes. The Postal Service™ receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*®, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, Oxford Strategic Consulting ranked the U.S. Postal Service number one in overall service performance of the posts in the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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