



**For immediate release**

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## **USS Constitution to Sail for First Time since 1997**

CHARLESTOWN, Mass. – USS Constitution is scheduled to set sail Aug. 19 to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her victory over the British frigate HMS Guerriere during the War of 1812. This underway demonstration on Guerriere Day is the first time that she has sailed on her own since 1997.

The underway will begin at approximately 10 a.m. Once Constitution is at President Roads (between Deer Island and Long Island) at approximately 11:30 a.m., the crew will set up to four sails and make toward open water for about 10 minutes. After leaving President Roads, a 21-gun salute exchange with the Massachusetts Army National Guard's 101<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Regiment will then be fired toward Fort Independence on Castle Island at approximately 1 p.m. The 101<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Regiment is the oldest regiment in the Army. Sails will be furled at 2:30 p.m. and crew members will depart the ship at 3 p.m. Constitution will re-open for free public tours at 4 p.m.

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More than 150 chief petty officer (CPO) selectees will also assist Constitution's crew in setting sails. CPO selectees will be participating in Constitution's annual CPO Heritage Weeks, a weeklong training cycle divided by two weeks that teaches selectees time-honored maritime evolutions, such as gun drills, line handling and setting sails. The training is also designed to instill pride in naval heritage in the Navy's senior leadership.

"I cannot think of a better way to honor those who fought in the war as well as celebrate Constitution's successes during the War of 1812 than for the ship to be under sail," said Cmdr. Matt Bonner, Constitution's 72nd commanding officer. "The event also ties our past and present by having the ship not only crewed by the outstanding young men and women who make up her crew but also the 150 Chief Petty Officer Selects who join us for their Heritage Week."

The last time Constitution sailed under her own power was to honor the ship's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. This year's sail will honor Constitution's decisive victory over the HMS Guerriere during the War of 1812, marking the first time a United States ship defeated a Royal Navy frigate at or nearly equal size. It's also the battle in which the ship earned her famous nickname "Old Ironsides."

Constitution is the world's oldest commissioned warship afloat and welcomes more than 500,000 visitors per year. She defended the sea lanes against threats from 1797 to 1855, much like the mission of today's Navy. America's Navy: Keeping the sea free for more than 200 years.

Constitution's mission today is to offer community outreach and education about the ship's history.

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For more information, visit [www.history.navy.mil/ussconstitution](http://www.history.navy.mil/ussconstitution) or [www.facebook.com/ussconstitutionofficial](https://www.facebook.com/ussconstitutionofficial).