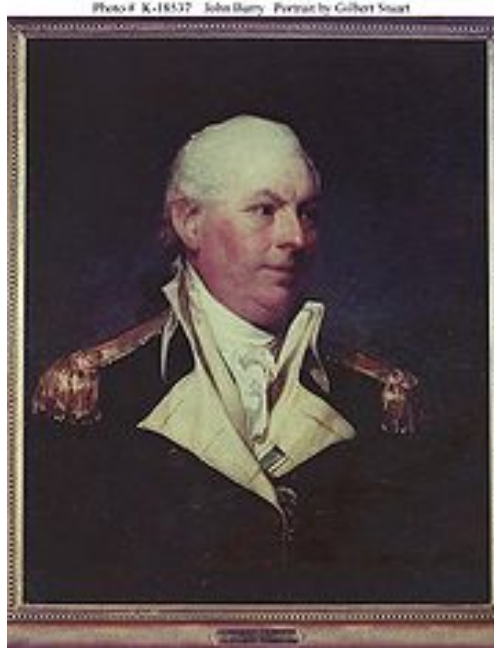


Commodore John Barry Day, 13th September

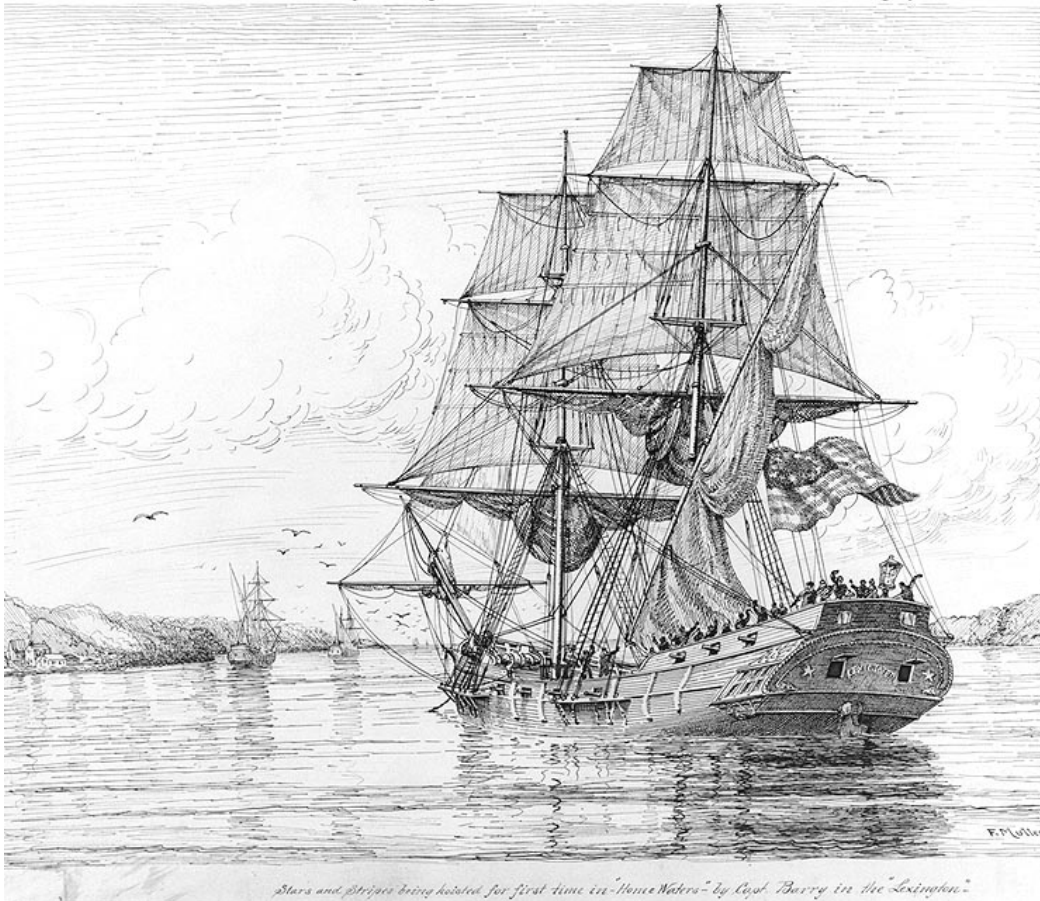
Commodore John Barry (1745-1803) a native of County Wexford, Ireland was a Continental Navy hero of the American War for Independence. Barry's many victories at sea during the Revolution were important to the morale of the Patriots as well as to the successful prosecution of the War. When the First Congress, acting under the new Constitution of the United States, authorized the raising and construction of the United States Navy, **President George Washington** turned to Barry to build and lead the nation's new US Navy, the successor to the Continental Navy. On 22 February 1797, President Washington conferred upon Barry, with the advice and consent of the Senate, the rank of **Captain** with "**Commission No. 1,**" **United States Navy**, effective 7 June 1794. Barry supervised the construction of his own flagship, the USS UNITED STATES. As commander of the first United States naval squadron under the Constitution, which included the USS CONSTITUTION ("Old Ironsides"), Barry was a Commodore with the right to fly a broad pennant, which made him a flag officer.



Commodore John Barry
By Gilbert Stuart (1801)

John Barry served as the senior officer of the United States Navy, with the title of "**Commodore**" (in official correspondence) under Presidents George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. The ships built by Barry, and the captains selected, as well as the officers trained, by him, constituted the United States Navy that performed outstanding service in the "Quasi-War" with France, in battles with the Barbary Pirates and in America's Second War for Independence (the War of 1812). Significantly, and by joint resolution of Congress, pursuant to **Public Law 109-142** (signed by President George W. Bush on 22 December 2005), John Barry was formally recognized, in the Public Law of the United States, as the *first flag officer of the United States Navy*.

Photo # NH 55825 "Stars and Stripes being hoisted for first time in 'Home Waters'". Drawing by F. Muller



In 1777, commanding the Continental Brig LEXINGTON, Captain **John Barry** was the first to raise "**The Stars and Stripes**" in home waters. In battle, Barry was both effective and humane. He gave us our first victory on the high seas. Commanding the Continental Navy Frigate ALLIANCE, Barry captured two British (Royal Navy) warships after being severely wounded in a ferocious sea battle (28 May 1781).



The "Betsy Ross" design
Based on an Act of Congress

14 June 1777
13 Stars and 13 Stripes



The **USS BARRY** (DDG-52) has carried the name, and the successor **Stars and Stripes** flag, of **Commodore John Barry** on the high seas since 1992.

John Barry was born on Good Friday, 1745 (the same year as the decisive charge by the Irish Brigade at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745, where the Irish battle cry was "*Cuimnidh ar Luimneach agus ar Feall na Sasanach!*" - Remember Limerick and the English Treachery); it was also "The '45", the year that "Bonnie Prince Charlie" landed in Scotland in an attempt to regain the throne for his father, James III, the legitimate king). In 1745, on the Gregorian calendar, Good Friday was the 16th of April.

Barry was born in the farming hamlet of Ballysampson, Tacumshin Parish in the Barony of Forth in County Wexford (*Loch Garman*) at the southeastern extreme of the eastern Province of Leinster in Ireland. He would be the eldest of at least six children. Shortly after, the family removed to Rosslare Parish, just south and east of Wexford harbor, where he spent his formative years, manifesting a strong inclination to follow the sea. Ireland had suffered a number of "famines" under English rule over the years, and some effects of the famine of 1739 were still evident. To stay home in Ireland was poverty (or worse), and the inability, as a Catholic, to acquire the means of self-improvement. Some half-million, or more, Irish emigrated, either to the Continent, or to America, during the first half of the 18th century, many as **Wild Geese**, seeking to join the armies (or, in some cases navies) of England's enemies, or potential enemies. This townland beside the sea had an ancient tradition of seafaring, but, like the rest of Ireland was suffering both under the Penal Laws, and under the various Navigation Acts - designed to give special advantage to the mercantile economy and industrial might of England. But no laws could prevent seamen of ambition and ability like Barry from the lure of the sea, which he followed (thanks to his father's encouragement and his uncle's connections), beginning at the age of ten, as a cabin boy on a merchantman. **William Bell Clark** in *Gallant John Barry: 1745 - 1803*, states that the young John Barry carried "*with him hatred of the oppressors and memory of the misery and want of his childhood...*"

Commodore John Barry was one of six foreign-born heroes of the American War for Independence chosen to be represented in the museum in the base of the Statue of Liberty (Lafayette, France; John Paul Jones, Scotland; von Steuben, Germany; Kościuszko, Poland; General Stephen Moylan, Ireland; Commodore John Barry, Ireland). John Barry was an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

The *Commodore John Barry Memorial*, just inside the "Barry Gate," was jointly dedicated, with Tim McGrath as the principal speaker, by the US Navy

and the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America (AOH), at the **United States Naval Academy**, Annapolis, Maryland, 10 May 2014.

The initial **New York Council, Navy League of the United States** *Commodore John Barry Book Award for American Maritime Literature* was awarded to **Tim McGrath** for *John Barry: An American Hero in the Age of Sail* (2010) on 10 June 2014, fittingly at Fraunces Tavern ® in New York City, where Washington bade farewell to his officers in 1783. The dinner was preceded by a reception, sponsored by the **Naval Historical Foundation** and by the **National Maritime Historical Society**, in the “Flag Gallery” of the *Fraunces Tavern Museum*. [See also: William Bell Clark. *Gallant John Barry: 1745-1803, The Story of a Naval Hero of Two Wars* (1938); Rear Admiral Joseph F. Callo. *John Paul Jones: America’s First Sea Warrior* (2006); George C. Daughan. *If By Sea: The Forging of the American Navy – From the American Revolution to the War of 1812* (2008); Tim McGrath. *Give Me a Fast Ship - The Continental Navy and America's Revolution at Sea* (2014) – Naval Order of the US, 2016 Samuel Eliot Morison Award for Naval Literature.]

Tim McGrath also has articles on John Barry in *Naval History* (U.S. Naval Institute, www.usni.org), “I Passed by Philadelphia with Two Boats,” June 2009 Volume 23, Number 3; “Two Captains at Breakfast,” August 2013 Volume 27, Number 4 (John Barry and John Paul Jones were both personal, and professional, friends); and, in *Sea History* (National Maritime Historical Society, www.seahistory.org) “Captains and Their Ladies,” Autumn 2015, No. 152. In a most interesting way, Tim McGrath has captured **Commodore John Barry**, former American Merchant Captain (commissioned Captain, Continental Navy, 7 December 1775), in the context of his times, and in his contributions to the achievement and defense of the Independence of the United States.



John Barry died on **13 September 1803**; he is buried near his Society of the Cincinnati comrade-in-arms, Cork, Ireland-born Stephen Moylan, in Old Saint Mary's churchyard, in their adopted home of Philadelphia.

Commodore John Barry Day is the only constitutionally mandated observance of the AOH, as well as a legal holiday in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and an official observance of the State of New York.



Gaoth Cóir agus Leanúint Fharráige
Fair Winds and Following Seas