

OPSAIL NAMES FIRST 7 TALL SHIPS FOR 2012 SAILING



OPSAIL NAMES FIRST SEVEN TALL SHIPS FOR ITS 2012 SAILING INTERNATIONAL FLEET HEADING TO MAJOR PORTS TO COMMEMORATE BICENTENNIAL OF THE WAR OF 1812 AND THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 29, 2011) – Jose Fuentes, chairman of Operation Sail, Inc., today disclosed the names of the first seven international tall ships that will sail in the OpSail 2012 commemorations being produced jointly with the U.S. Navy.

Fuentes said that tall ships from Russia, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico and the United States are the first confirmed participants in the multi-port commemoration which begins in April 2012. Cities involved include New Orleans, San Juan, New York, Norfolk, Baltimore, Boston and New London.

"It is exciting that so many nations have made early commitments to join these festivities," Fuentes said, adding that planners expect many more commitments in the months ahead.

Naval attaches of invited countries and representatives of the host cities met on September 22 in Washington, D.C.

"Up to two dozen 'Class A' Tall Ships representing national maritime academies around the world will come to the U.S. next spring and summer," he added. "In

addition, a number of privately owned 'Class B' tall sailing ships will join in these magnificent events."

The first seven ships to indicate their participation include some of the world's largest tall ships:

- USCG Barque Eagle, home-ported in New London, Conn., is a 290-foot long globetrotting ambassador and sail training ship of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Eagle always leads the Parade of Sail.
- The Russian ship Sedov, at 386 feet long the largest sailing ship in the world, is a four-masted barque that trains cadets from the universities of Murmansk, Saint Petersburg and Arkhangelsk.
- Juan Sebastian de Elcano, the 370-foot long tall ship of Spain, is a four-masted topsail schooner home-ported in Cadiz. She is the third-largest tall ship in the world.
- Libertad, the 356-foot long full-rigged ship of the Argentine navy, sailed in four previous OpSail events.
- Cisne Branco, the 249-foot long full-rigged tall ship of Brazil, is home-ported in Rio de Janeiro. Built in 1998, she is one of the newest ships participating.
- Guayas, the 257-foot long tall ship of Ecuador, trains cadets from the Ecuadorian Naval Superior School at Guayaquil.
- Cuauhtémoc, the 270-foot tall ship of Mexico, is a barque built in 1982. Homeported in Acapulco, she is a sister ship of Guayas.

OpSail is partnering with the U.S. Navy to produce events next year that celebrate the bicentennial of the writing of The Star-Spangled Banner and commemorate the War of 1812.

Multi-day events in each port will include parades of sail, public visitation, international athletic competitions, community relations activities and spectacular air shows featuring the Navy's Blue Angels. No air show will take place in San Juan or New London.

The Chief of Naval Operations has invited 120 countries to send appropriate combat ships as well as their national academy sail training tall ships.

"Bringing the tall ships of the world back to U.S. waters for the commemoration of this glorious American milestone excites the imagination," Fuentes said. "Throughout 2012-2015, millions of people will watch these graceful and majestic sailing ships as they parade together, and celebrate the brotherhood of the sea and our freedoms."

States, municipalities and civic organizations have formed host committees to organize the week-long events in each port in concert with OpSail executives and Navy officials.

All of the ships will be open for public visiting free of charge, and citizens will have the opportunity of interacting with talented young sailors from around the world.

As the Congressionally chartered non-profit producer of tall ship events, OpSail has staged spectacles for five previous American milestone events such as the 1964 World's Fair, the 1976 bicentennial of American independence, the 1986 State of Liberty centennial, the 1992 Columbus Quincentennial, and the Millennium in 2000.

OpSail events contribute to the economy of participating port cities through increased hotel bookings, restaurant reservations and new infrastructure. OpSail events also attract significant national and international media coverage.

Key 2012 dates for the OpSail / Navy ship visits:

| | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| New Orleans, Louisiana, | April | 17-23 |
| San Juan, Puerto Rico (Tall Ships only), | May | 9-14 |

