JOIN THE CREW
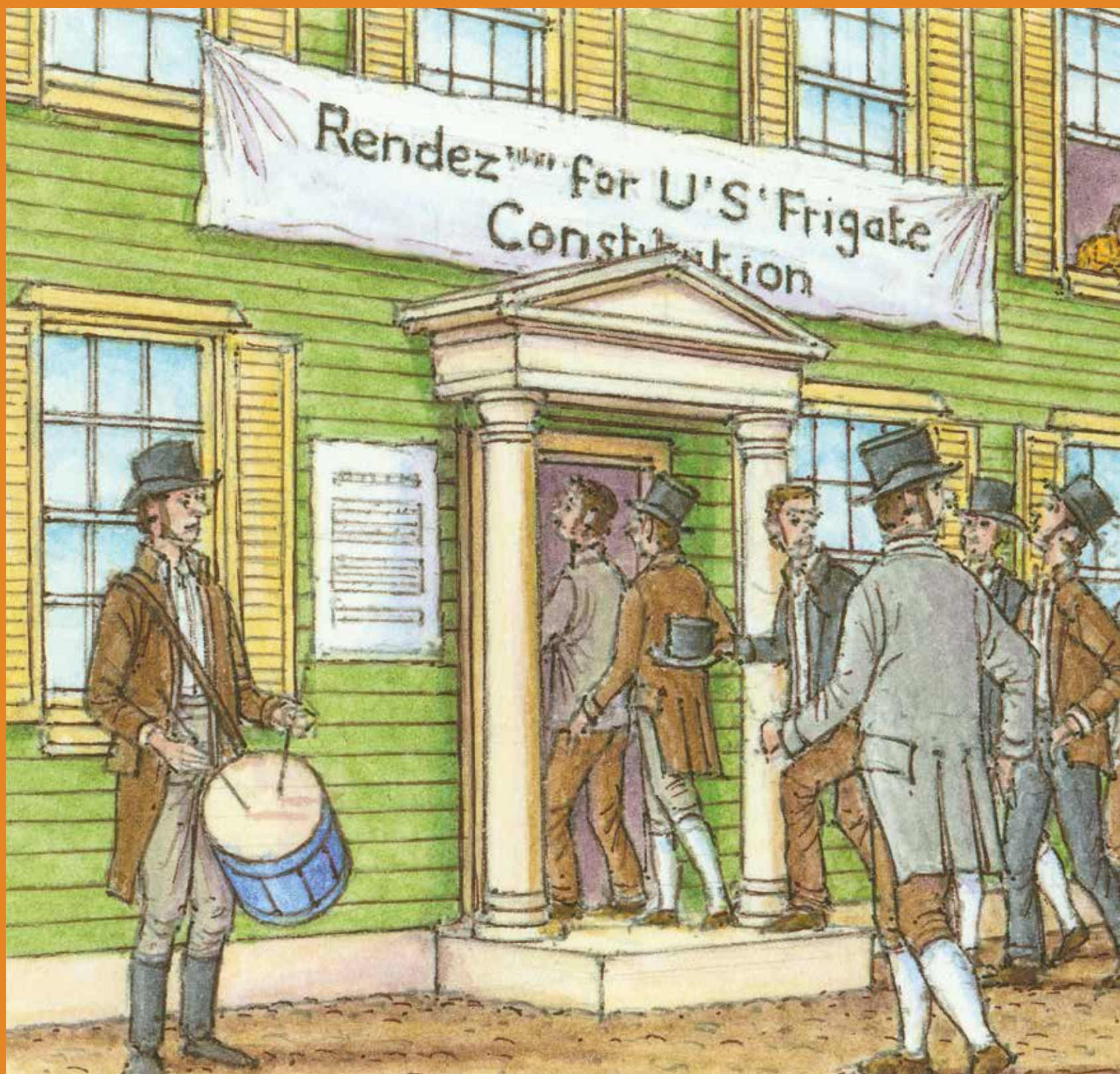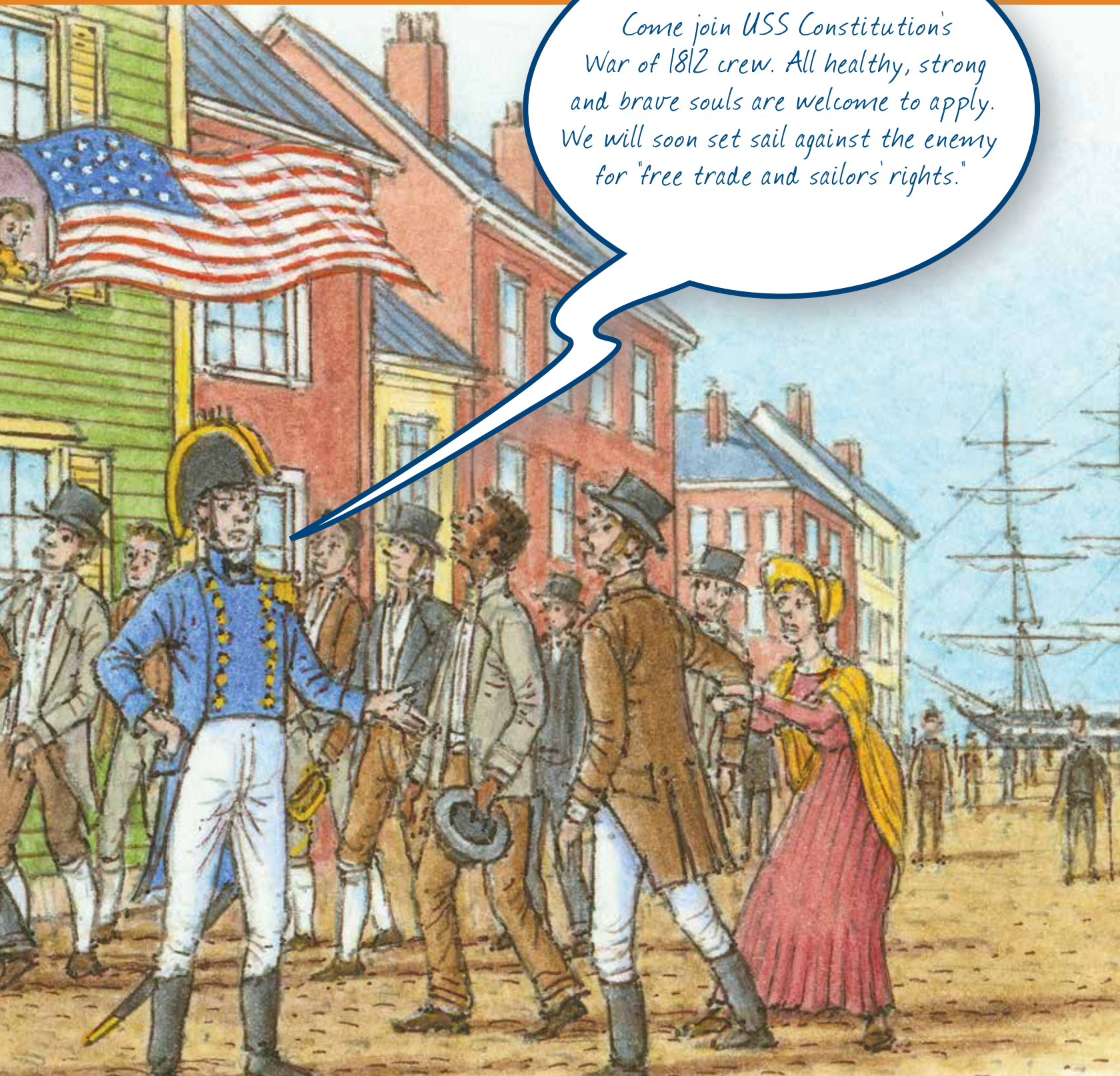
Come join USS Constitution's War of 1812 crew. All healthy, strong and brave souls are welcome to apply. We will soon set sail against the enemy for "free trade and sailors' rights."
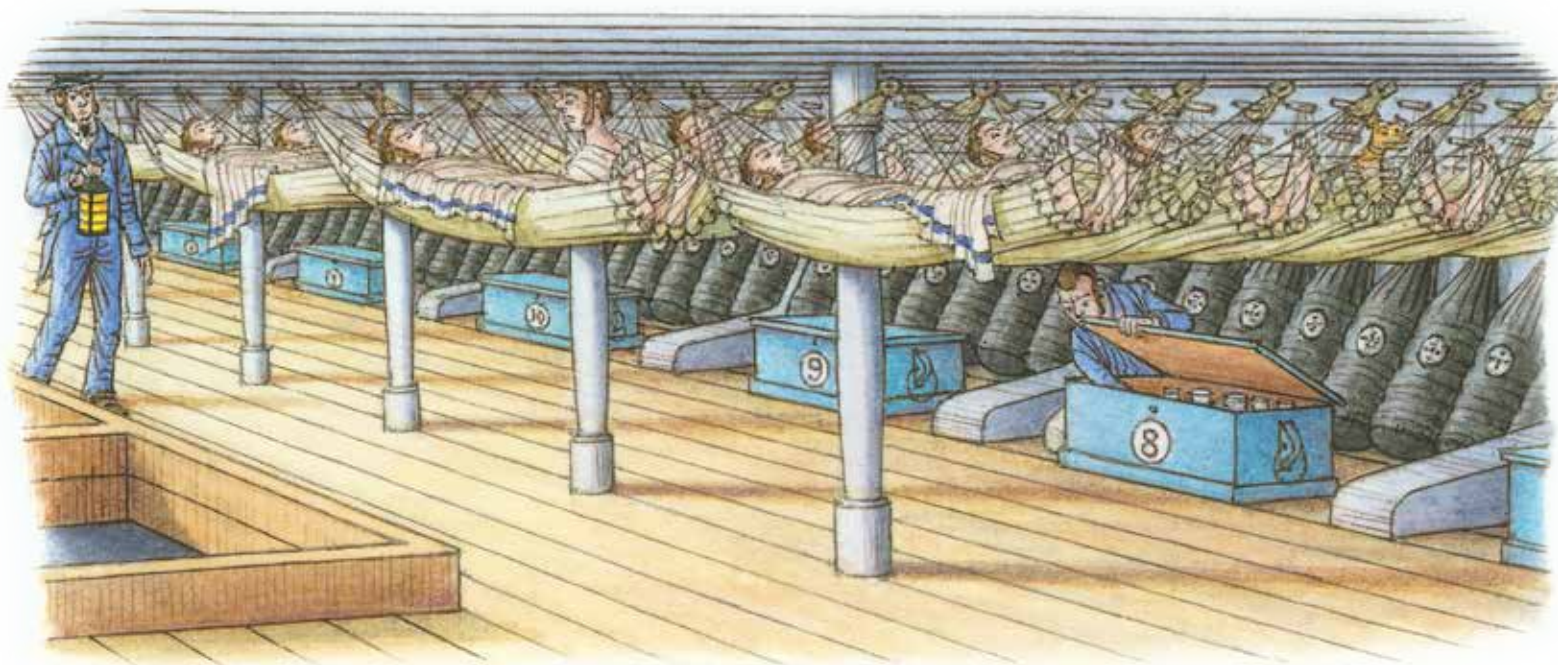
Join the Crew

Answer the recruiter's questions to see if a sailor's life is for you. On a separate piece of paper, keep a tally of your "yes" answers, and then see where you rank in *Constitution*'s crew.

1 & 2: Have you ever swung in a hammock? Are you willing to sleep next to 200 of your closest friends who badly need baths?

Ships are crowded places. There is no way to escape the sounds and smells of your shipmates.

3 & 4: Do you have all of your teeth? Do you have all your fingers and toes?

A sailor must move quickly and learn to tie many knots – hard to do without fingers and toes.

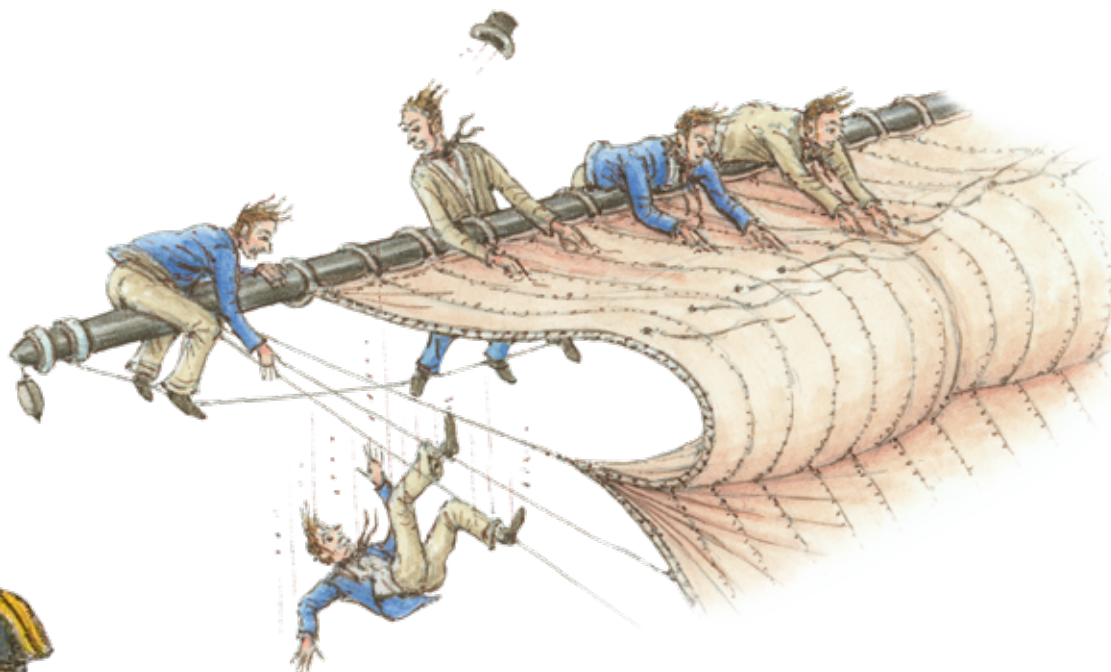### 5: Are you willing to eat biscuit as hard as a brick?

At sea, sailors eat hard bread called ship's biscuit. They dunk it in their stew to make it easier to chew.

6: Are you healthy and free from scurvy, rickets or gout?

There is no place in the Navy for sick sailors. Yet the lack of fresh food on board makes many of them ill.

7: Are you afraid of heights?

Sailors must climb high up the masts and balance on a thin rope while they haul in heavy sails.

Quiz scoring summary:

0–2: You're better off ashore, mate! But I'm short of recruits, and I will take you on if you promise to shape up.

3–5: I've seen worse, so welcome to the Navy. Be sure not to step out of line, though.

6–7: Hey, you are a natural sailor! Are you sure you have never been to sea before? I'm proud to have you aboard.

Did you know?

A Sailor:
- Enlists for two years
- Joins a specific ship
- No height requirement
- No age restriction
- Must know how to hand, reef and steer
- Must buy own clothes
- Pay for Ordinary Seaman: $8-10/month
- Pay for Able Seaman: $12/month

A Marine:
- Enlists for five years
- Joins the Corps of Marines
- Must be 5 ft 6 in or taller (except musicians)
- Must be between 18 and 40
- A soldier at sea, doesn't need sailing experience
- Receives an eye-catching uniform
- Pay for Marine Private: $6/month

Which would you rather be?

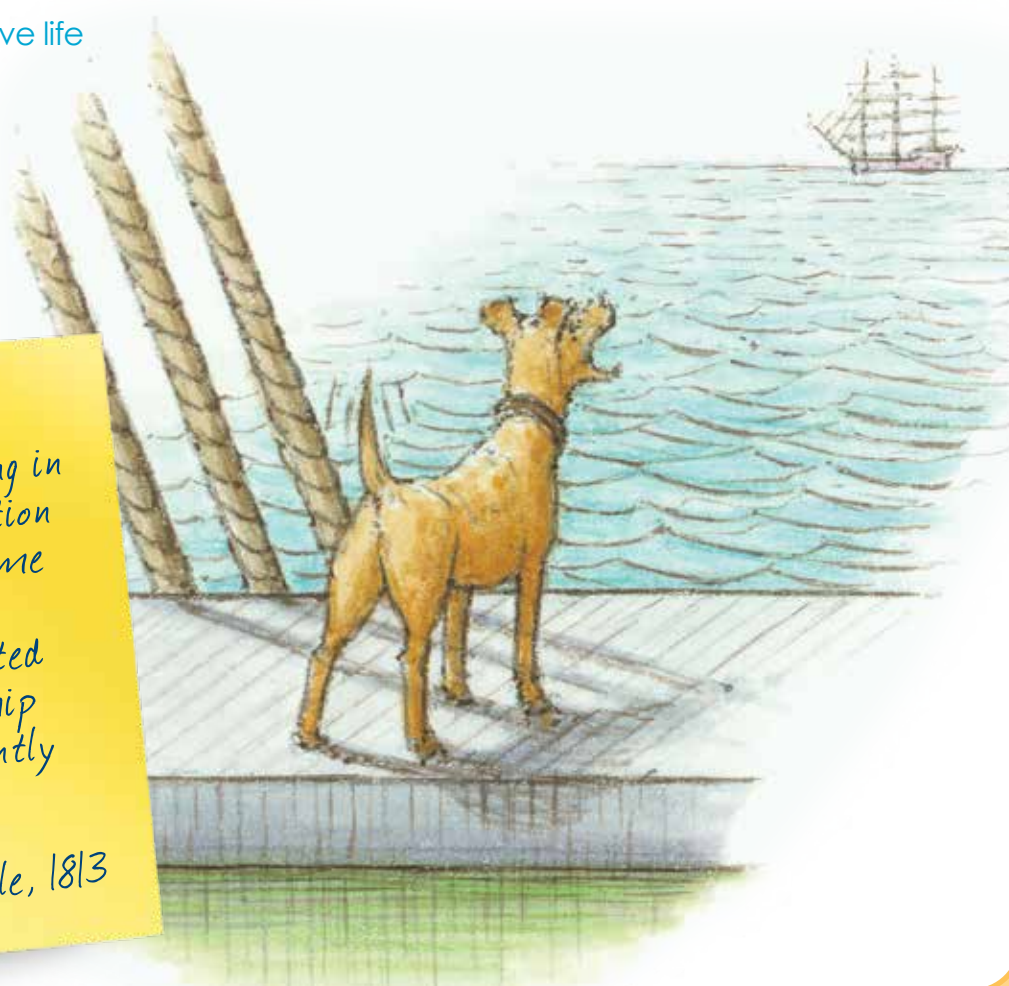# Why did men join *Constitution*'s crew during the War of 1812?

There was a range of motivations, including:

- The need for a job
- Advance wages
- Limited options ashore
- Owing money to someone, such as a landlord
- Livelihood interrupted by the War
- Prize money (extra pay for successful battles)
- Desire for adventure and an active life
- Family tradition
- Buddies signing on
- Reputation of the Captain
- Patriotism

In My Own Words

"After having been kept so long in suspense it is like emancipation from slavery to have my name enrolled on the list of this gallant crew and be permitted to serve my country in a ship which has already so eminently distinguished herself..."

- Pardon Mawney Whipple, 1813

THE REAL THING

MIRROR-OFFICE, June 22, 1812.

WAR DECLARED!!

Extract of a Letter from Washington, received in this City, dated June 18, 1812.

" The injunction of secrecy is just removed. An act has passed, and been approved by the President, declaring —THAT WAR EXISTS BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND AND THEIR DEPENDENCIES, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; and also authorizing the President to employ the land and naval force to carry it on, and to issue Letters of Marque and Reprisal."

In the House of Representatives—Yeas 79, Nays 49, majority for War 30; Senate—Yeas 19, Noes 13, majority 6.

From the New-York Evening Post of Saturday last.

Brigadier-General BLOOMFIELD, commander of the United States' forces on this station, received a letter by a government Express from the Secretary at War, this morning, and immediately issued the following :—

(COPY.)

" GENERAL ORDERS.

" HEAD-QUARTERS, 20th June, 1812.

" General Bloomfield announces to the troops that " WAR IS DECLARED BY THE UNITED STATES AGAINST GREAT-BRITAIN."

" By order,

" R. H. MACPHERSON, Aid-de-Camp."

Government Expresses passed through this city, about 10 o'clock for Albany and Boston, with the above intelligence.

In 1812, America declared war against its old enemy, Great Britain. The young nation defended its right to trade freely and protested the offensive British practice of plucking sailors from American ships and forcing them to sail under the British flag. Notices like this were posted for all to see to help spread the word that the country was at war.

Thousands of these broadsides were printed in 1812, but this fragile, ragged poster is one of the few that have survived.

"War Declared!!" Broadside, 1812
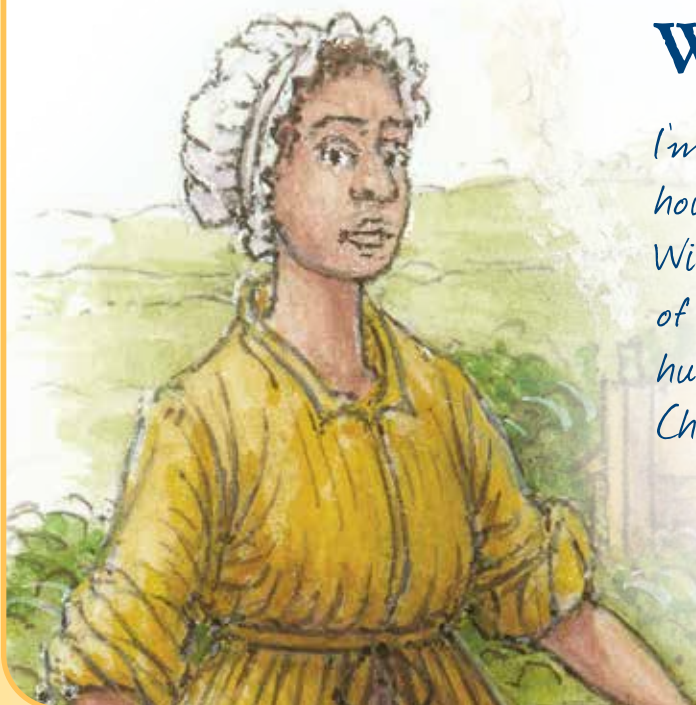Collection of the USS Constitution Museum, Boston

> Our family is being torn apart
>
> My daughters won't see their father for two years while he serves his country on board Constitution. With him gone, I'll be our girls' only comfort and financial support.

JOIN THE CREW

Who am I?

I'm Dorothea. I work as a servant in the Robert household in Brookhaven, New York. After I married William Cooper, a member of the Unkechaug tribe of Long Island, the Robert family employed my husband on their farm. We've got two little girls, Charlotte and Fanny.

THE REAL THING

Sailor's Seabag

What would you bring to entertain and comfort you while separated from your family and friends for so long?

Space on board ship was extremely limited. Sailors had to fit all their belongings into a small bag like this one owned by John Lord. After packing the clothes required there was little space left for reminders of home.

Seabag owned by John Lord, early 19th century
Lord was Gunner on board *Constitution* from 1824-1828
Collection of the USS Constitution Museum, Boston
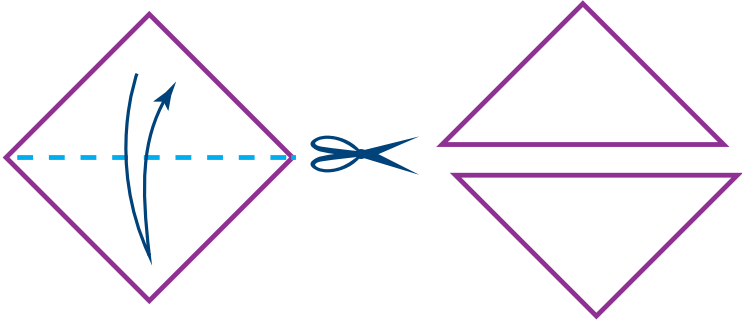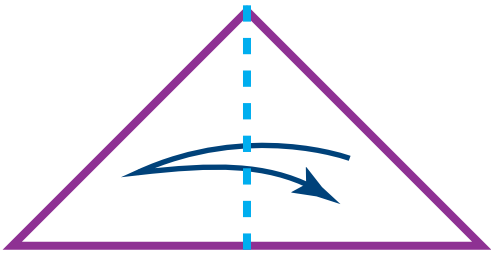
Hands-On Activity

Make a Paper Boat (Easy)

Sailors left their lives on land behind for a life of adventure at sea. Separated from family and friends ashore, sailors considered the ship, home, and their shipmates, family.

Try your hand at origami, the ancient Japanese art of paper folding, to create a model of the sailors' home afloat.
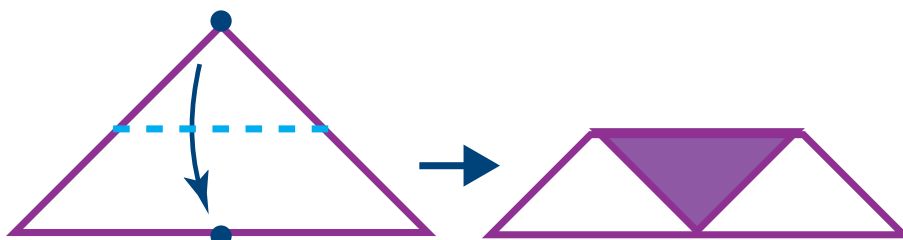
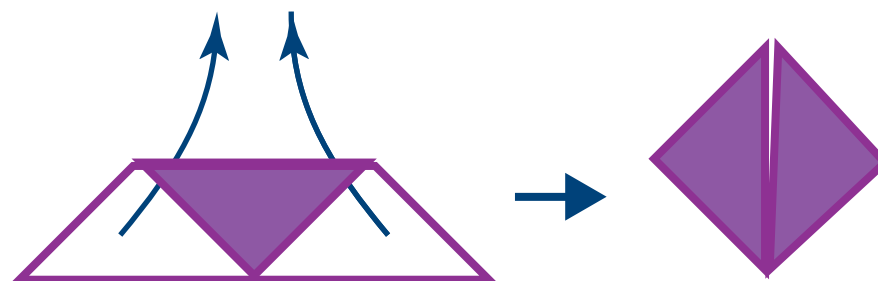|	
Step 1 Fold a square piece of paper in half and open it back up. Cut the paper in half along the crease.	
Step 2 Fold one of the triangles in half and open it back up.	

Step 3

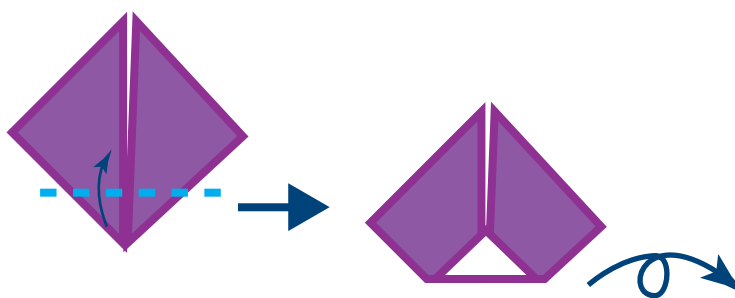Fold the top corner down to meet the bottom of the triangle.

Step 4

Fold the two bottom corners up to meet together in the middle.

Step 5

Fold the bottom corner up to the center of the model.
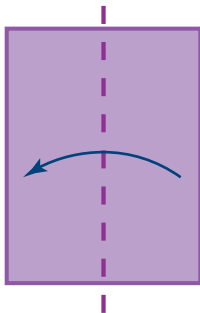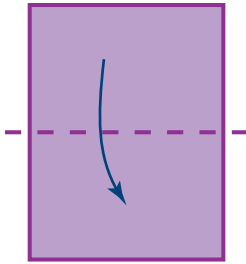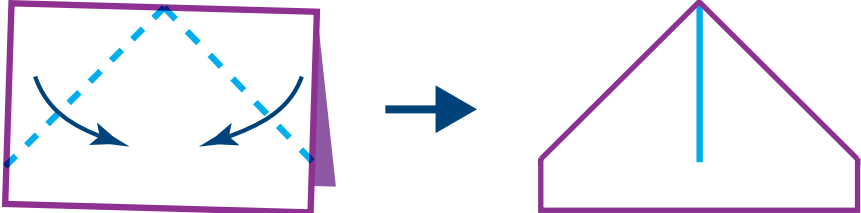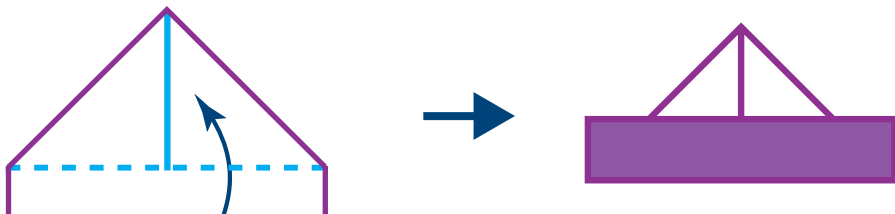
Then turn the model over.

Congratulations!
You've completed your boat. Now you can decorate it.

Hands-On Activity Hands-On Activity Hands-On

Make a Paper Boat (Harder)

Step 1	
Fold a piece of rectangular paper in half and open it back up.	

Step 2	
Fold the paper in half towards the bottom.	

Step 3	
Fold the corners down to the center.	

Step 4	
Fold the bottom of the front layer up. Turn the paper over and fold the other bottom up.	

Step 5 Pull the sides apart and flatten.	
Step 6 Fold the front layers up to the top then do the same to the back.	
Step 7 Pull the sides apart and flatten into a square.	
Step 8 Gently pull the top part of the folded paper out and flatten well, creasing all the folds.	

Congratulations!
You've completed your boat.
Now you can decorate it.

How would you feel if you or a loved one left home for two years?

"It appears to me at present that a man must be happy who sacrifices everything for his country. My ambition leads me this way, and should I be so fortunate as to prove serviceable to my country, I shall be in the zenith of my glory."

- Pardon Mawney Whipple, 1813

"My parting was ... a mixture of hopes and fears, of tears and smiles, of sunshine and cloud."

-Samuel Leech, 1810

"I leaned over the taffrail and gazed on the departing boat -with mother on board-, and when it disappeared, I turned away and wept."

- Samuel Leech, 1810

"I continue to feel as cheerful as our separation would admit - I will not, indulge myself with gloomy fears - but anticipate the pleasures your safe return will certainly produce."

-Abby Chew, 1813

"We have both felt and expressed the greatest anxiety, in the present state of affairs his post must be a hazardous one...."

- Elizabeth Hull, 1812

"Towards night, my mother left me; it scarcely need be said, she wept when we parted. What mother would not?"
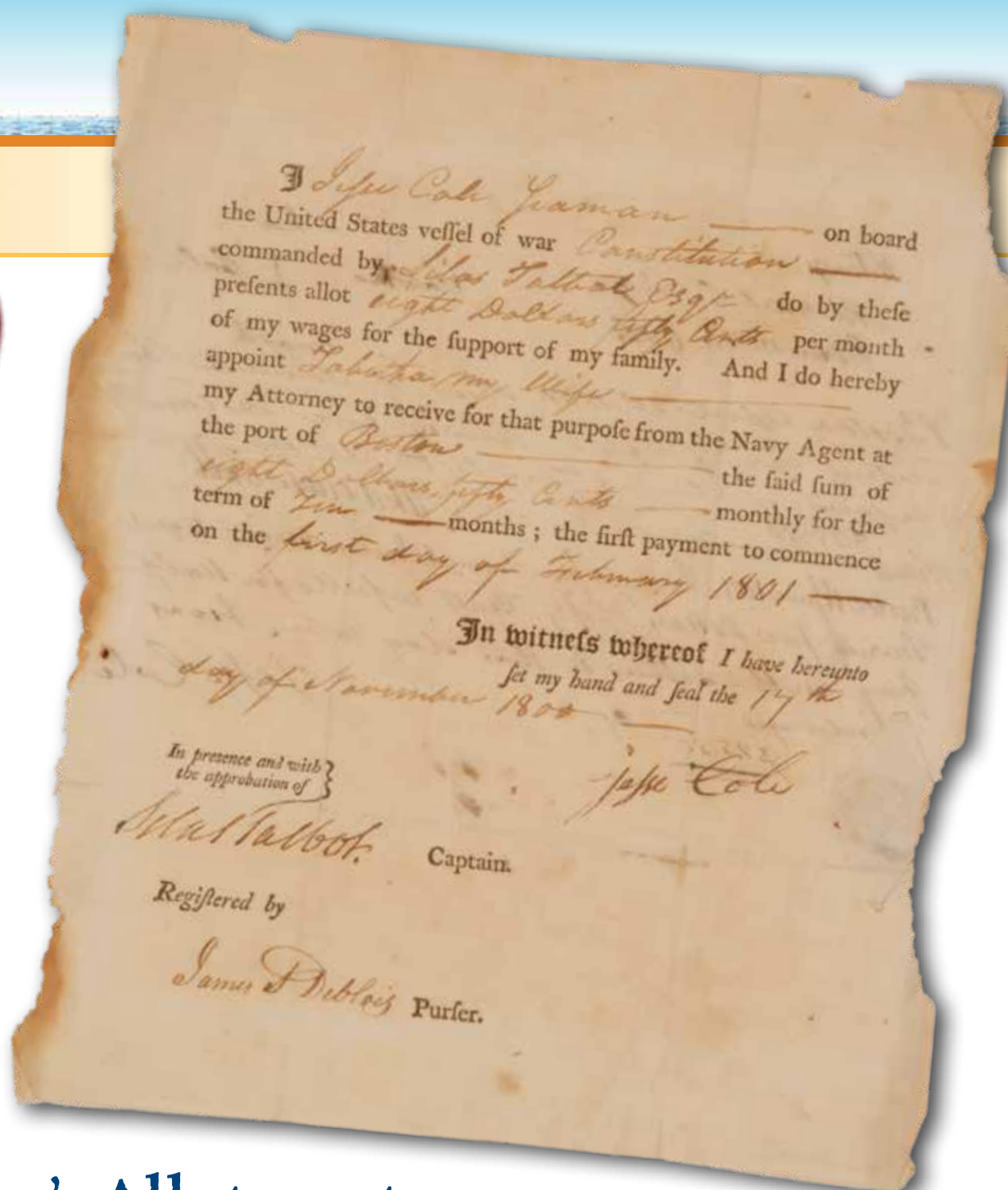
- Samuel Leech, 1810

"It is only those that are blessed with an affectionate mother that can appreciate my feelings at taking leave of her."

-Isaac Mayo, 1809

THE REAL THING

Sailor's Allotment

Although many sailors went to sea to provide for their families, their absence meant the loss of a steady income until they returned. With mouths to feed and households to keep, women might take on small jobs to make ends meet; however, this was often not enough to cover expenses. Luckily, the Navy allowed sailors to sign an allotment like the one pictured here, giving half their monthly pay to their wives or children. This system helped sailors provide a small but steady income to their families until they returned home.

Allotment from Jesse Cole to his wife, Tabitha, 1801
Cole was a Seaman on board *Constitution* from 1800-1801
Collection of the USS Constitution Museum, Boston

Did women join the crew?

Women were not allowed to join the Navy in 1812, but they did help in other ways, like supplying hand-sewn clothing needed for the ships' crews.

Despite being officially banned from American warships, there is evidence of a few cases of women on board Navy vessels.

- In 1803, there were at least five women on board USS *Chesapeake* - the wives of some of the junior officers, including the Captain of the Forecastle, the Gunner, the Boatswain, the Carpenter, and the Marine Corporal. One of them gave birth to a son in the Boatswain's storeroom.

- Two women, Mary Allen and Mary Marshall, were on board USS *United States* as nurses in May 1813.

- Surgeon Usher Parsons discovered a woman among the crew of USS *John Adams* in 1812 - she was disguised as a man!

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