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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

First of Many International Tall Ships Announced for Sail250® Virginia in 2026

*Epic Maritime and Military Event Planned for June 2026 to
Commemorate the 250th Anniversary of America*

Release Date: Thursday, October 9, 2024

Norfolk, VA- Sail250® Virginia today released a list of early confirmations for seven of the world's most spectacular international tall ships planned to visit Norfolk, VA in June 2026 as part of the nation's 250th Anniversary, the Semiquincentennial.

"We are seeing unprecedented interest from around the world to participate in Sail250®", reports Sail250®Virginia CEO Karen Scherberger, based in Norfolk. "International tall ships typically confirm 12 – 18 months in advance of a major event like this." Scherberger continues "To have seven of the world's most popular tall ships committed this early in the planning is a clear indication of the tremendous potential to see a record size fleet in Virginia's harbors for the 250th."

Scherberger expects five additional major international ship confirmations to be announced after the first of the year, and by January of 2026, the anticipated 60 ships from 20 countries will be confirmed. Additionally, US Navy, USCG and other Sea Services will be participating with modern day military vessels.

Sail250® Virginia is one of only five official US ports selected to host the 2026 Sail250® America tour, including **New Orleans, Baltimore, New York, and Boston**, and according to Scherberger, "we are extremely proud to be an official VA250 Partner and one of the Commonwealth's 250th signature events."

Sail250®Virginia Host City Norfolk will welcome the following confirmed international naval sail training tall ships June 19-23, 2026 to dock along the downtown Norfolk waterfront:

CAPITAN MIRANDA, Uruguay, 198'

GLORIA, Colombia, 249'

GORCH FOCK, Germany, 293'

GUAYAS, Ecuador, 257'

ISKRA, Poland 140'

UNION, Peru, 378'

The **Swedish** Navy has confirmed participation with one of their two sail training tall ships, to be named at a future date.

The International and US fleet of tall ships, historic character vessels, and modern military ships will arrive on Thursday, June 18, 2026 off the Virginia Beach shore in time for the traditional **Parade of Sail** on Friday, June 19, 2026 into downtown Norfolk. Sail250® Virginia will coincide with Norfolk's traditional maritime festival **Norfolk Harborfest** and the national **Juneteenth** holiday.

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Sail VirginiaSM 2026, announced September 16, 2024, represents the official **Virginia Affiliate Harbors** that will host non-government, historic tall ships, character, and military vessels from June 12 – 23, 2026 in the following cities:

June 12 -15, 2026

Alexandria - June 12-15, 2026
Hampton – June 12-15, 2026
Isle of Wight/Smithfield – June 12-15, 2026
Onancock – June 12-15, 2026
Richmond – June 12-15, 2026
Yorktown – June 12-15, 2026

June 18 - 23, 2026

Cape Charles – June 19-22, 2026
Chesapeake – June 19-22, 2026
Portsmouth – June 19-22/23, 2026
Virginia Beach (Ship Anchorage off Lesner Bridge June 18-19; Parade of Sail starting point, June 19 early morning.)
Norfolk- Official *Sail250[®] Virginia* Host Port- June 19 – 23, 2026.

For these two weeks in June 2026, 7,000 officers, cadets, and crews from the Sail250[®] Virginia and SailVirginiaSM 2026 fleets will engage with residents and visitors across Hampton Roads and the Virginia Chesapeake Bay region in dozens of events and programs, “symbolic of the bonds of international goodwill”, says Scherberger.

Planned in partnership with the United States Coast Guard, United States Navy, and other military commands, Sail250[®] Virginia is partnering with the Virginia250 Commission, local, regional, and national government departments and agencies, civic and volunteer organizations, and endorsed by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission.

Scherberger concludes, “In the tradition of the past six iconic OpSail and Sail Virginia events held in the Norfolk/Hampton Roads/Chesapeake Bay region since 1976, the international fleet will once again bring extraordinary experiences and opportunities to every corner of our communities”.

Sail250[®] Virginia sponsors include:

Virginia is for Lovers, City of Norfolk, Sentara, TowneBank, Crofton Industries, Dominion Enterprises, E. G. Middleton, Inc., W.F. Magann Corporation, Fairlead, Visit Norfolk, Hampton Roads Shipping Association, Colonna’s Shipyard, Inc., Perry Family Foundation, Light Tech, Inc., Colliers, BAE Systems, Coastal Precast Systems, Elizabeth River Concrete, S. B. Ballard Construction Company, Bay Power Solutions, Coastal Virginia, MHI Ship Repair & Services, The Dwight and Jane Schaubach Fund of the Suffolk Foundation, and Bruce Bishop.

Sail250[®] Virginia is planned and directed by Sail Norfolk, the maritime division of Norfolk Festevents, Ltd., based in Norfolk, VA.

Regular updates and more information can be found at <https://sail250virginia.com>

Inquiries and requests for more information, email Sail250vainfo@festevents.org.

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