



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE WORLD IS COMING TO SAIL250® VIRGINIA. MEET THE FLEET AND WELCOME TO NORFOLK

Experience a World's Worth of Culture From 20,000+ International Sailors, Representing Dozens of Nations, Through Ship Visits, Tours, and a Parade of Cadets

NORFOLK, Va. (JUNE 17 - 2026) — Sail250® Virginia, June 19–23, 2026, in downtown Norfolk, will deliver one of the most remarkable opportunities for international cultural exchange that Hampton Roads has ever seen.

More than 20,000 international officers, cadets, and crew members from nations spanning every continent will participate in Sail250® Virginia and FleetEx 250 this June. They are sailors, naval officers, training cadets, and maritime ambassadors representing their home countries. Visitors to Norfolk's waterfront this June will find themselves quite literally *in the middle of the world*.

“At its heart, Sail250® Virginia is about connection — to our history, to the sea, and to the wider world,” said Karen Scherberger, President/CEO, Sail250® Virginia. “We want every family, every student, every person who walks through our festival gates to leave with a broader sense of the world and their place in it. That’s the gift this event gives to Hampton Roads and the gift we give back to the world.”

STEP ABOARD: [SHIP TOURS FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC](#)

One of the most extraordinary features of Sail250® Virginia is the opportunity to board and explore the visiting ships in person. Attendees can walk the decks, see the rigging up close, speak directly with crew members, and get a feel for life under sail aboard the great training vessels of the world's naval academies. The visiting fleet also includes private character vessels, and even a limited number of U.S. Navy and international military ships participating in FleetEx 250. Tour availability and public visitation hours vary by vessel. Specific schedules will be posted throughout the festival grounds during the event. Go to: <https://sail250virginia.com/Festival-Map>

- Ship tours will be offered at **Town Point Park, Freemason, and Front Street venues** in downtown Norfolk, **June 19–22, 2026**.
 - Friday, June 19, 2026 / 3 PM – 6 PM
 - Saturday, June 20, 2026 / 12 PM – 6 PM
 - Sunday, June 21, 2026 / 12 PM – 6 PM
 - Monday, June 22, 2026 / 12 PM – 6 PM
- Selected ships open for tours at **Norfolk Naval Base** will be open:
 - Saturday and Sunday, June 20-21, 2026 / 11 AM to 5 PM
- Visit **www.sail250virginia.com** for the full schedule and ship listings.

(more)

DON'T MISS IT: THE PARADE OF CADETS — SUNDAY, JUNE 21

The cultural spectacle reaches its peak with the Parade of Cadets — a grand procession unlike anything most people have ever seen.

- Sunday, June 21, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM in downtown Norfolk

Approximately 500 cadets and sailors from the crews of every visiting ship will parade along the downtown Norfolk waterfront, representing their home nations in a living display of international military tradition, color, and music. Comprised of drill teams, marching units, and bands from among the World Fleet, the Parade of Cadets will converge on the Nauticus Forecourt for a breathtaking grand finale: international crews manning the rails of the USS Wisconsin, the legendary battleship berthed at Nauticus, in a time-honored naval ceremony of respect and celebration.

The Parade of Cadets begins simultaneously from separate origination points in Town Point Park, the Freemason district, and surrounding areas, and converges at the Nauticus Forecourt as streams of international sailors in uniform pour in from every direction. Norfolk's own Bob Batcher will emcee the parade ceremony.

Festivalgoers are warmly invited to join the march. Fall in behind any unit and follow the cadets to Nauticus — and find yourself part of a moment that will be remembered long after the fleet has sailed for home.

Sail250® Virginia is a free, family-friendly waterfront festival open to the public. Ship tours, the Parade of Cadets, the Discovery Deck, and musical entertainment are also free of charge. For full event details, ship listings, schedules, and Affiliate Harbor information, visit www.sail250virginia.com and follow Sail250 Virginia on Facebook and Instagram. **Together, we're making history again!**

Sail250® Virginia support includes:

In Partnership with VA250.

Sponsors: Virginia is for Lovers, The City of Norfolk, Sentara, TowneBank, W.F. Magann Corporation, Crofton, E.G. Middleton, Inc., Dominion Enterprises, McLeskey, VIGOR Marine | MHI Norfolk, The Port of Virginia, Dominion Energy, Robbins Maritime, Hampton Roads Shipping Association, Fairlead, Light Tech, Inc., Colliers, Virginia Pilot Association, Nauticus, Carnival Cruise Line, ICON, Colonna's, Inc., Perry Family Foundation, Hilton Norfolk The Main, Visit Norfolk, City Cruises, BAE Systems, Coastal Precast Systems, LLC, Elizabeth River Concrete, S.B. Ballard, Bay Power Solutions, Caligari Gerloff Painting Inc., STIHL, Coastal Virginia Tourism Alliance, Rivers Casino Portsmouth, Navy League of Hampton Roads, City of Virginia Beach, Bruce Bishop, Decker Law, Sherwin Williams, Centennial, Schaubach Fund/Suffolk Foundation, Town Point Club, New Journal & Guide, 13News Now, WAVY TV 10. Produced by Norfolk Festevents, Ltd.

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About Sail250® Virginia

Sail250® Virginia, hosted by the City of Norfolk, is part of the United States' national commemoration of America's 250th anniversary. This signature event is planned as the largest public event in the Commonwealth for the 250th. Scheduled June 12–23, 2026, the event will bring a fleet of international tall ships, military ships, historic and character vessels to Norfolk (June 19–22, 2026) and Affiliate Harbors (June 12–21, 2026) in the Chesapeake Bay Region for multi-day waterfront festivals, featuring ship tours, fireworks, concerts, and educational programming. Sail250® Virginia will showcase Virginia's role as a maritime gateway to the world, bringing together participants and visitors from around the globe.

For more details, visit www.sail250virginia.com, Facebook, and Instagram

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