

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Sail250® Virginia announces the commissioning of national maritime artist Patrick O'Brien as the official artist for Virginia's maritime celebration of America's 250<sup>th</sup>!**

**Date:** Thursday, December 19, 2024

**Norfolk, VA**— With America's 250<sup>th</sup> celebration fast approaching (June 2026), **Sail250® Virginia** Norfolk organizers announced today that national maritime artist [Patrick O'Brien](#) has been named as the official artist for Sail250® Virginia.

Mr. O'Brien will work with Sail250® Virginia organizers to create the official painting for the June 12-23, 2026, events, which will represent the unique history and importance of the Port of Virginia as the home of the U.S. Navy, a vital East Coast shipbuilding and repair center, and one of the U.S.'s most active harbors. This commemorative artwork will be completed by October 2025, with prints, posters, and giclées available for pre-order and delivery before Christmas 2025.

Patrick O'Brien is an award-winning maritime artist and the president of the American Society of Marine Artists. He attended the University of Virginia, graduating in 1982 with a biology degree. Patrick began his career as an artist working for his father as a drafter, before becoming an illustrator for the Martin Agency in Richmond, VA. His passion for artwork and a talent for writing led him to publish a dozen children's books as both author and illustrator, while illustrating additional books for other authors.

O'Brien began painting maritime art in the early 2000's, specializing in scenes representing the age of sail and tall ships. He has been commissioned by the U.S. Coast Guard to paint the USCG Barque EAGLE, The Kalmar Nyckel Foundation, ExxonMobil, The Gaylord National Resort, The National Harbor in Maryland, Lockheed Martin, and has produces artwork for the covers of "Sea History" and "Naval History". His awards include the National Maritime Historical Society's Distinguished Service Award (2010), Mystic Seaport's Museum Purchase Award (2013), The Mystic International Marine Art Exhibition's Award of Excellence (2013) and Maritime Heritage Award (2015), and the American Society of Marine Artist's Outstanding Service Award (2020). Please visit <https://www.patrickobrienstudio.com/> to learn more about Patrick O'Brien.

Sail250®Virginia CEO Karen Scherberger states "For seven days in June 2026, 4,000 officers, cadets, and crews of more than 55 ships from 20 nations will engage residents and visitors across the region in events and programs symbolic of the bonds of international goodwill and our nation's 250<sup>th</sup>." Scherberger adds "We are excited to have Patrick O'Brien aboard as our Sail250® Virginia official artist. He is a talented and well-respected maritime artist that will create a painting truly representative of Virginia's important place in our nation's maritime history."

**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, Hampton Roads Shipping Association, Fairlead, Light Tech, Inc., Colliers International, Colonna's Shipyard, Inc., Perry Family Foundation, Visit Norfolk, BAE Systems, Coastal Precast Systems, Coastal Virginia Tourism Alliance, Elizabeth River Concrete, Hilton Norfolk The Main, S. B. Ballard Construction Company, Bay Power Solutions, MHI Ship Repair & Services, The Dwight and Jane Schaubach Fund of the Suffolk Foundation, Bruce Bishop.

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

**Sail250® Virginia** is one of five official US ports selected to host the 2026 **Sail250® America** tour, including New Orleans, Baltimore, New York, and Boston.

**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 [sail250virginia.com](http://sail250virginia.com).

Inquiries and requests for more information, email [Sail250vainfo@festevents.org](mailto:Sail250vainfo@festevents.org).  
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