



 **sail250**[®]
1776 – 2026

★ AMERICA'S 250 MARITIME CELEBRATIONS ★



VIRGINIA
June 12-23, 2026
**Suggested Maritime
Projects**

Suggested Maritime Projects for Students of All Ages

In June 2026, Virginia will welcome an international fleet of more than 60 tall ships and military vessels from around the world to our harbors. Sail250® Virginia will be a maritime extravaganza like no other – commemorating the 250th anniversary of our nation. The Sail250® Virginia events will highlight the importance of the maritime industry to our region, the role Virginia has played in our military history, and the impact our region has on national and international maritime activities today. As part of the Sail250® Virginia educational program, we offer this collection of activities – specifically designed to engage students of all ages in activities related to these themes. There is a little something here for everyone, and we hope you enjoy exploring these activities with your family or class!



Maritime Themed Coloring and Activity Books

Hampton Roads Naval Museum – [Activity Book & Coloring Sheets](#)

The Navy & Marine Corps Living History Association – [Coloring Book](#)

U.S. Coast Guard – [Learn About the U.S. Coast Guard Activity Book](#)

U.S. Naval History & Heritage Command – [At Home Activities](#)

USS MIDWAY Museum – [Little Skippers Activity Sheets](#)

USS CONSTITUTION Museum – [“Old Ironsides” Activity Book](#)

USS CONSTITUTION Museum – [War of 1812 Crew Coloring Pages](#)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – [Be an Ocean Guardian Activity Book](#)





Maritime Themed Lego[®] Projects

Hampton Roads Naval Museum – [Brick by Brick Shipbuilding Plans](#)

USS CONSTITUTION Museum – [USS CASSIN YOUNG Instructions](#)

USS CONSTITUTION MUSEUM – [USS CONSTITUTION Instructions](#)

 Hägerman YouTube – [Time Lapse video of building a Lego[®] replica of a 7ft 10in reproduction of the battleship USS MISSOURRI](#)



Sail250[®] Virginia does not control nor endorse YouTube content or ads. Please use discretion when utilizing social media as an educational tool.

From the Galley – Maritime Inspired Projects for Home Cooks

Food is one of the most important aspects about life on ships. A good cook can make or break a crew's morale. Check out these ideas for historic meals and try recreating some of them at home or in school. Looking for a fun way to engage a larger group – create a potluck event using these menu ideas or using locally sourced seafood from the Chesapeake Bay. Make sure you learn a little bit about ecology of the Bay and the watermen that harvested the seafood as part of the process!

USS CONSTITUTION Museum – [Cook a Sailor's Meal, Dandyfunk](#)

USS CONSTITUTION MUSEUM – [Eat Like a Sailor, Plum Duff](#)

USS CONSTITUTION Museum – [Make Ship's Biscuit](#)

USS CONSTITUTION Museum – [Eat Like a Sailor, Switchel and Hot Chocolate](#)

San Francisco Maritime National Park Association – [Plan and Cook a U.S. Navy World War II Meal](#)

Navy Production  – [How Aircraft Carriers Make 17,000 Meals a Day for U.S. Navy Sailors](#)



Signal Flags, Morse Code, Semaphore, & Code Breaking Projects

National Park Service – [Signal Flag Activities](#)

The Institute of Engineering and Technology – [Semaphore Messaging](#)

School Outdoor Learning  – [Signal Strength](#)
YouTube

National Geographic Kids – [Women Code Breakers in World War II](#)

The Eisenhower Foundation – [Spy Kids, Code Talkers](#)

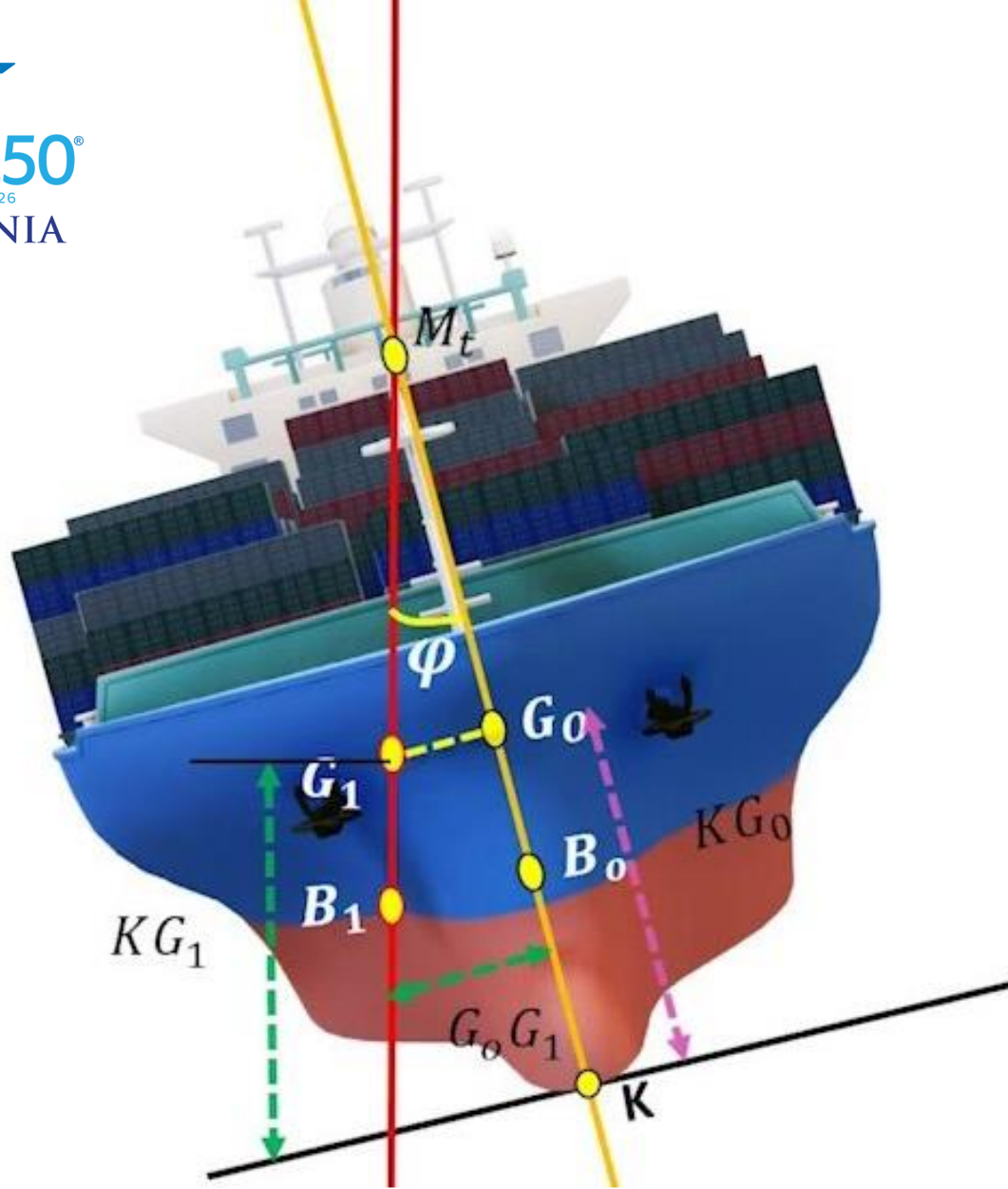
National Museum of the American Sailor – [Code Breaking](#)

NASA – [Code Breaking History](#)



Sail250[®] Virginia does not control nor endorse YouTube content or ads. Please use discretion when utilizing social media as an educational tool.





The Science of Shipbuilding Projects

These videos explain the scientific principles that allow boats and ships to float and sail. Once you have learned these principles, get to work building your own boat!

Design Squad  - [What is Buoyancy](#)

Design Squad  - [What is Stability](#)

Design Squad  - [What are the Parts of a Sailboat](#)

Kids Want to Know  - [Buoyancy: What Makes Something Float or Sink](#)

Kyrin Crafts  - [How to Make a Paper Boat](#)

KSUiTeach  - [How to Make a Tin Foil Boat](#)

National Maritime Day



National Maritime Day is observed by Congressional resolution on May 22 each year. The purpose of the day is to recognize the important contributions of America's maritime industry to our nation.

The American Merchant Mariners' Memorial in New York City is a powerful illustration of the sacrifices made by U.S. merchant throughout our history. The memorial depicts three figures marooned from a torpedoed ship, with one reaching down to the outstretched hand of a fourth in the water below. As the tide rises each day, this fourth mariner's hand is lost below the water.

During World War II, more than 700 U.S. ships and 6,000 merchant mariners were lost to enemy action. This was a higher percentage of deaths than any branch of the military during World War II. Many of these mariners came from maritime communities in Virginia.

The links below explain the history of the merchant marine, the importance of the merchant marine in service to our country, and the current outlook of the merchant marine. We encourage students to explore these topics, teachers to include assignments related to the merchant marine in their curriculum, and schools and families to find ways recognize National Maritime Day each year – writing essays, laying wreaths, or flying the U.S. Merchant Marine's flag.

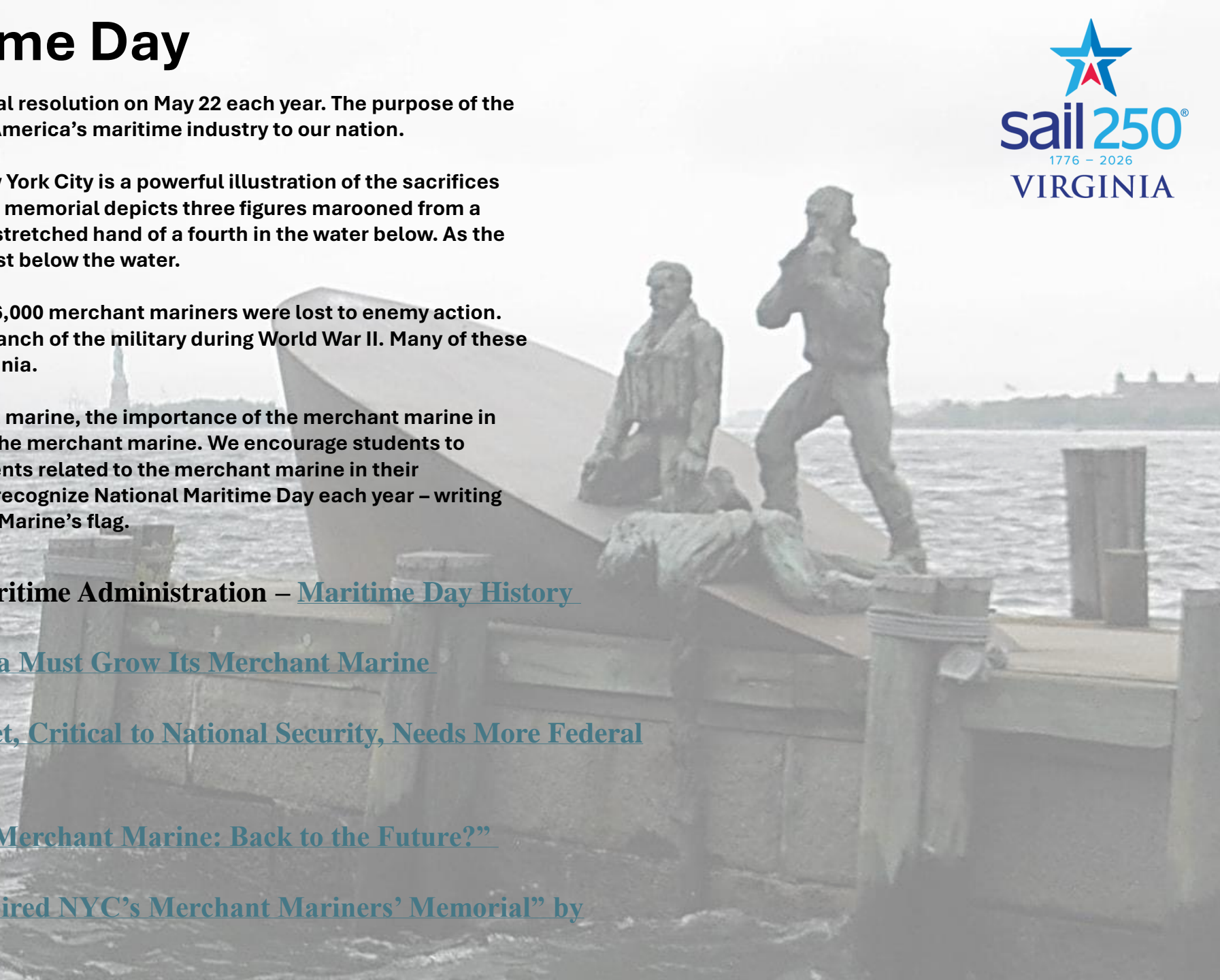
U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration – [Maritime Day History](#)

Center for Maritime Strategy – [America Must Grow Its Merchant Marine](#)

Forbes – [Struggling U.S. Merchant Fleet, Critical to National Security, Needs More Federal Support](#)

Navy War College Review – [“The U.S. Merchant Marine: Back to the Future?”](#)

Turnstile Tours – [“The Photo That Inspired NYC's Merchant Mariners' Memorial” by Andrew Gustafson](#)



DIPLOMACY IN ACTION PROJECTS



...that no single nation or private individual shall be permitted exclusive possession of the high seas, that the ocean is free to everybody, that no legal titles exist whatsoever that would grant its possession to anyone in particular, that neither nature nor usage permits its seizure, and that the domains of the sea are the common property of all men. - Queen Elizabeth I, 1580

Outside a small region adjacent to geographic borders, the international community recognizes the importance and neutrality of the oceans, as well as the rights of all peoples to do commerce upon those seas. Throughout history, this principle has been challenged, resulting in diplomatic emergencies and conflict. The United States has played a pivotal role in recognizing and maintaining freedom of the seas

The following links provide background to explore these concepts – legally, historically, and in current affairs. The last three links from the National Museum of American Diplomacy offer students an incredible opportunity to explore historic incidents where the principle of freedom of the seas was challenged, and to engage in a diplomatic simulations on responding to those emergencies.

United Nations – [Oceans and the Law of the Sea](#)

[International Maritime Organization](#)

U.S. Naval Institute – [“Freedom of the Seas”](#)

National Museum of American Diplomacy – [Barbary Pirates Hostage Crisis: Negotiating Tribute and Trade](#)

National Museum of American Diplomacy – [Spanish American Conflict of 1898: Treaties and Self-Determination Simulation](#)

National Museum of American Diplomacy – [Suez Canal Crisis: National Sovereignty versus International Access to Waterways](#)

MARITIME THEMED ART PROJECT

Sail250® Virginia will inspire incredible artwork – from the event’s official painting to thousands of people capturing pictures of the ships as they sail into the harbor! You can be part of the excitement by creating your own maritime inspired art project. This can be a personal project, or a theme embraced by entire school systems. Students can study American maritime artists, explore the history that inspired their works, visit a local museum with maritime art exhibits, and/or challenge students to create their own maritime themed artwork. Here’s a few links to get you started:

U.S. Naval History & Heritage Command – [Artists](#)

National Museum of the Marine Corps – [Marine Corps Combat Art Program](#)

U.S. Coast Guard – [Art Program](#)

[The American Society of Marine Artists](#)

The Mariners’ Museum & Park – [Behind the Frame](#)

Peabody Essex Museum – [In American Waters Art Exhibit](#)



Maritime Music Project

While sea shanties may not always have been the subject of internet sensation, they have been an important part of maritime history. Many other types of music have been inspired by the sea, maritime history, or movies with a maritime theme.

Sail250® Virginia offers the perfect opportunity for you to put together a maritime play list, learn a song inspired by the sea, schedule a maritime themed school concert, or maybe even write your own song about the ocean or sailing!

Need inspiration? Here's a few of our favorite musically inspired links:

The Smithsonian Folk Ways Recordings – [Songs of the Water](#)

Royal Museums Greenwich – [A History of Sea Shanties](#)

Library of Congress – [A Deep Dive into Sea Shanties](#)

The National World War II Museum – [Victory at Sea: Timeless Film, Soaring Music](#)


San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park – [Chantey Pathfinder](#)



Field Day!

Engage your students, classmates, or friends in a maritime themed field day. You can include tug of war, knot tying, cargo net and rope climbing. You can even have them walk the plank! Here's a few links to get you started:

OSMEtv  [Basic Knot Tying](#)

PhysEdUniverse  [3 Field Day Water Games](#)

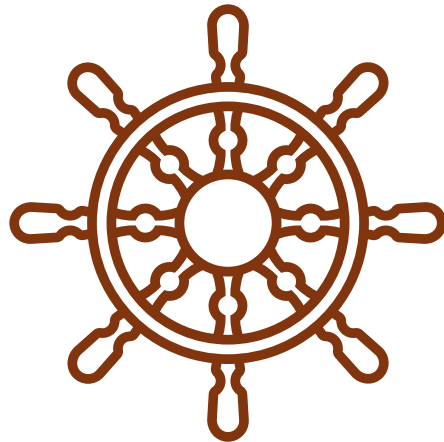
Open – [Tools & Resources for Field Day Planning](#)



Nautical Career/Dress Up Day

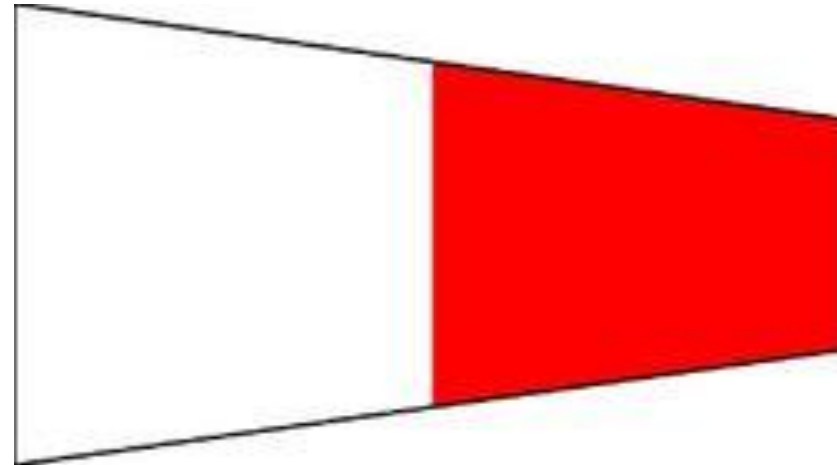
Let your students show their creativity and spirit:

- Incorporate a nautically themed day into your school's spirit week.
- Encourage the study of occupations related to the water for career day.
- Have some fun with a maritime themed after school dance or party.

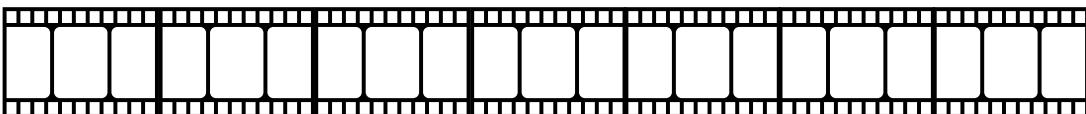


Nautical Trivia!

Engage your students, family, or friends in an exciting game of nautical trivia! Make this a true educational project by having them create the questions from information they learn from reading a selection of maritime books, watching maritime themed movies, or studying nautical terminology or skills. Create nautical themed prizes for the winners to encourage competition. For another twist, try nautical charades.

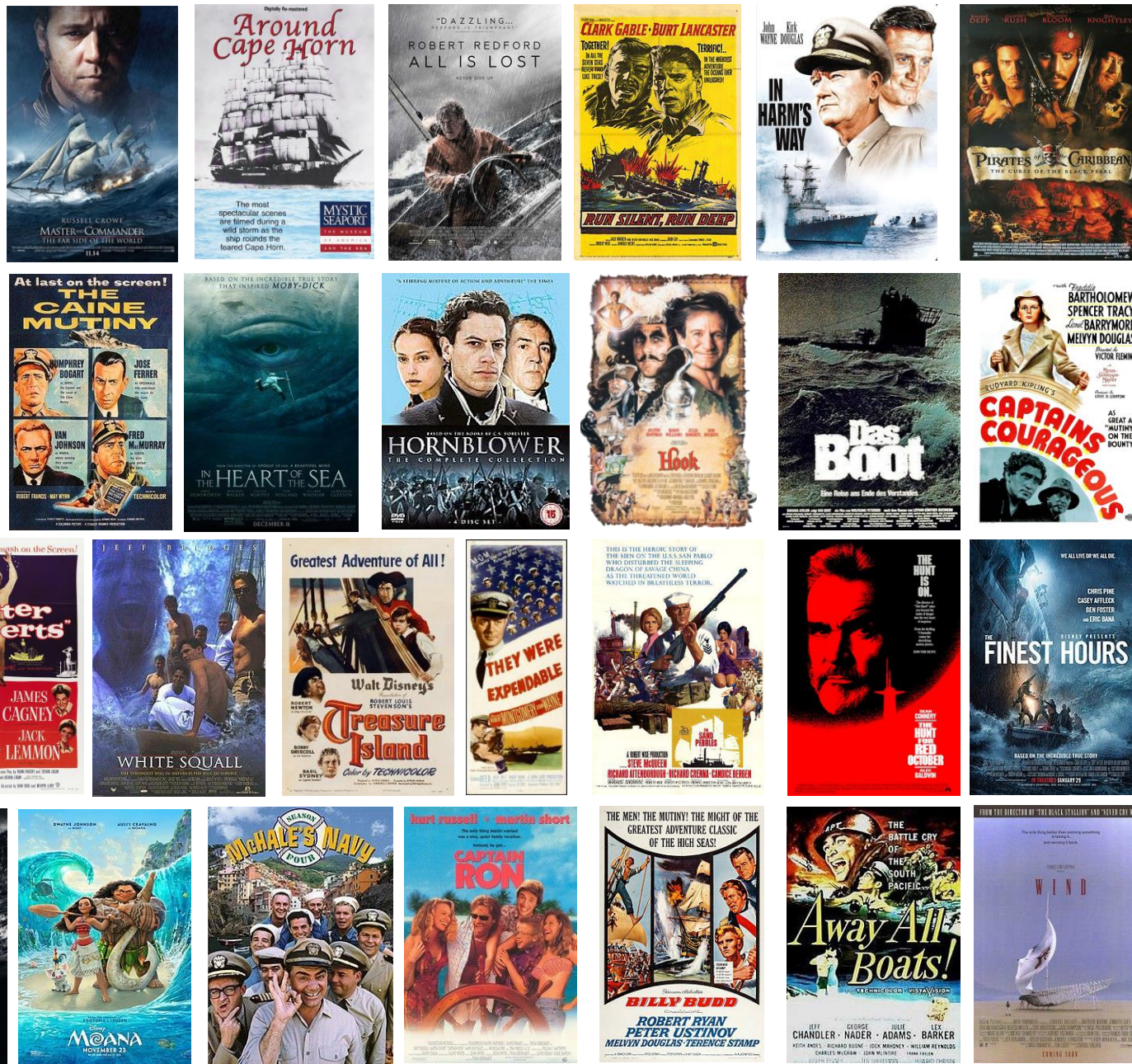


Maritime Movie Marathon



There is an incredible catalogue of great maritime themed movies from a variety of genres. Pick one to watch with your students, or have a maritime movie marathon at home. Some of these movies are perfect for exploring history leadership lessons. Others are just for fun!

Take time to ensure that the movies you pick are age appropriate.



Build a Model Boat

This is a great family project for rainy days that can also be used for youth groups. Display the boats like an art project or build rain gutter [regatta boats](#) for a competitive twist. If you want to get fancy, build an RC boat from scratch and put it through its paces on a local waterway! You can turn this into an exciting challenge for older kids or adults with a cardboard box or plywood boat building challenge. Be sure to wear your life jackets!



Maritime Themed Virginia Road Trip



Planning your next summer vacation? Planning to attend Sail250® Virginia and want to see some other sites along the way? Here's a list of some of our favorite maritime destinations in Virginia. String together an epic road trip that will provide incredible memories.

[American Revolution Museum at Yorktown](#)

Yorktown, VA

[Barrier Islands Center](#)

Machipongo, VA

[Canal Basin Square & Outdoor Transportation History Park](#)

Scottsville, VA

[Deltaville Maritime Museum](#)

Deltaville, VA

[Eastern Shore Waterman's Museum](#)

Onancock, VA

[Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Foundation](#)

Chesapeake, VA

[Hampton Roads Naval Museum](#)

Norfolk, VA

[Jamestown Settlement](#)

Williamsburg, VA

[Lightship Portsmouth Museum](#)

Portsmouth, VA

[MacArthur Memorial](#)

Norfolk, VA

[Mariners' Museum & Park](#)

Newport News, VA

[Matthews Maritime Foundation Museum & Boat Shop](#)

Matthews, VA

[Museum of Chincoteague Island](#)

Chincoteague, VA

[National D-Day Memorial](#)

Bedford, VA

[National Museum of the Marine Corps](#)

Triangle, VA

[Nauticus](#)

Norfolk, VA

[Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum](#)

Portsmouth, VA

[Reedville Fisherman's Museum](#)

Reedville, VA

[Senator John Warner Maritime Heritage Center](#)

Alexandria, VA

[Steamboat Era Museum](#)

Irvington, VA

[U.S. Army Transportation Museum](#)

Newport News, VA

[U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial](#)

Arlington, VA

[Watermen's Museum](#)

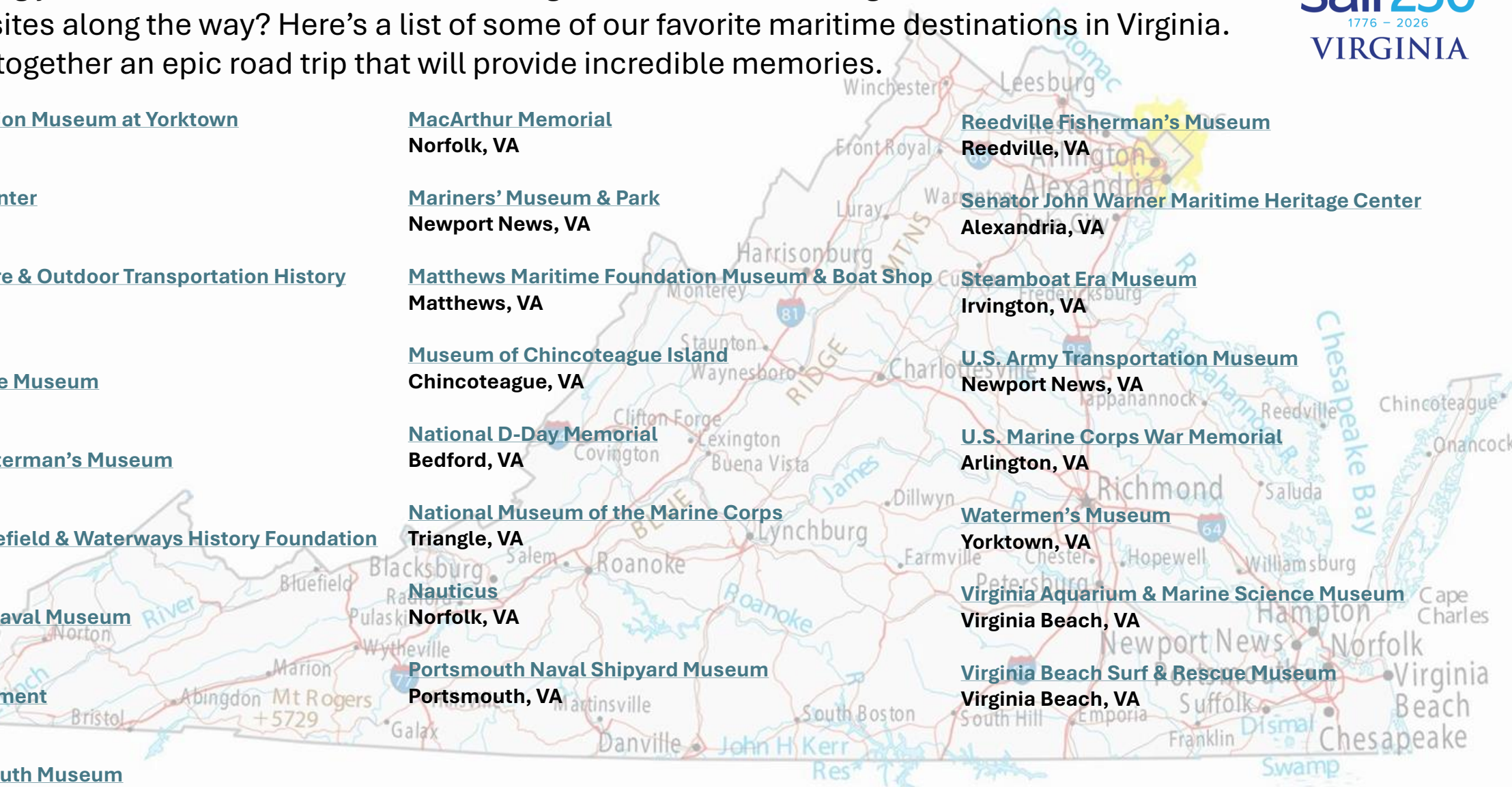
Yorktown, VA

[Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Museum](#)

Virginia Beach, VA

[Virginia Beach Surf & Rescue Museum](#)

Virginia Beach, VA





OTHER LINKS & ACTIVITIES

Intrepid Museum – [Learning Library](#)

USS CONSTITUTION Museum – [Fun & Games](#)

NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries – [Free Educational Materials](#)

National Maritime Heritage Foundation – [Sea History Magazine](#)