



Event Recap

July 4, 2025

Fort Monroe | Hampton, VA





Kicking off America's 250th year in the place that made it possible.

From the ideas that inspired it to the battlefields that decided it, there is simply no America without Virginia. So to celebrate the start of our Nation's 250th year, Virginia went all in. On July 4, 2025, the American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250) alongside The Fort Monroe Authority, the Hampton VA250 Local Committee, and the National Park Service hosted Fourth at the Fort, an all-day Independence Day event like no other.

The deeply historical Fort Monroe location set the stage for a powerful and fun-filled event that welcomed over 24,000 attendees from 43 Virginia localities and 15 states!

The day was chock-full of wonderful moments – from the Naturalization Ceremony that welcomed nearly 100 new citizens, to the all-day Out of Many, One Festival that truly had something for everyone and every taste, to the culmination of the day's events with the Grand Ceremony and fireworks show – see more details below.





Naturalization Ceremony

The celebration began with a moving tribute to our nation's ideals during the Naturalization Ceremony. A civic milestone honoring nearly 100 new U.S. citizens from around the world. The day opened with an Eagle Staff Posting and Flag Song, led with reverence by members of Virginia's Tribal Nations and the Lone Eagle Singers. During the Call of Countries, the new citizens were recognized for their journey to citizenship. Speaking on the meaning of the moment was Scott Martin, Executive Director of the Fort Monroe Authority; Alison McNealy, Norfolk Field Office Director for USCIS; Attorney General of Virginia, Jason S. Miyares; Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director of VA250, and Governor of Virginia Glenn Youngkin.



Out of Many, One Festival

Kicking off the year of commemoration of America's 250th birthday at Fort Monroe, known as "Freedom's Fortress", had special significance. On the very land where the first enslaved Africans arrived in 1619 and where the Civil War's "Contraband of War" decision set the stage for the Emancipation Proclamation, we gathered to honor the past and look to the future. The afternoon activities had something for everyone – with a panel discussion featuring Dr. Anthony Parent, Jr., energizing drum performances, exhibits from museums and cultural organizations including the VA250 Mobile Museum Experience, and the best of local food trucks, and craft beer from across Virginia.



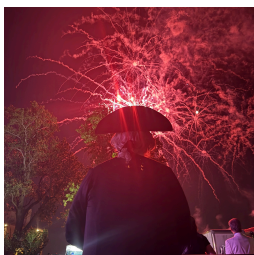
American. Made in Virginia. Reception

Honored guests, speakers, volunteers, and community leaders and families gathered for a reception at the Fort Monroe Commanding General's Residence in recognition of the time, resources, and talent they lend to making the commemoration a success in Virginia. VA250 Commission leaders and members remarked on the appreciation for what has been accomplished, and passion and excitement for what's ahead in 2026.



Free to Dream Grand Ceremony

Set against the backdrop of history at Fort Monroe, the Free to Dream Grand Ceremony wove together music, movement, spoken word, and reflection. The program opened with powerful patriotic performances with a percussion tribute titled the "Heartbeat of Freedom" that featured the musical traditions of Indigenous drums, West African rhythms, and 18th century colonial marches. Two new musical works debuted included "Made in Virginia" and "A More Perfect Union."



This ceremony also included a flyover by the U.S. Air Force, reading of excerpts of the Declaration of Independence by Virginia student leaders, a Sister Cities salute from Hampton's sister city in Malanje, Angola.

Speakers included Master of Ceremonies, Geoff Bennett, co-anchor of PBS NewsHour; Cheryl Wilson; Virginia Senator Mamie E. Locke, Vice Chair of VA250; Dr. Anthony Parent, and Mayor of Hampton Jimmy Gray. Keynote speaker and VA250 National Honorary Chair, Carly Fiorina reminded the crowd that the Semiquincentennial movement is about reconnection to our shared history and was a call to reflect, remember, and rise to the promise of a more perfect union.

The evening closed with a dazzling drone and fireworks show synchronized to an original score by the U.S. Air Force Heritage of America Band.

By the Numbers

Attendance:

24,000 in attendance

43 Virginia Localities

15 States (Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia)

3,824 registrations online

2,511 Grand Ceremony livestream viewers



Digital Impact

Social Media Impact

June 27 - July 7, 2025

Social Platform	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Twitter/X
Total Views	1,593,677	109,300		
Total Reach/Impressions	667,911	33,875	10,924	NA
Total Engagement	14,774	4,312	618	NA
Follows (on July 8, 2025)	+ 1,264	+ 217	+ 30	+ 878
Organic Views	187,789	95,438		
Organic Reach	58,531	26,438		

Social Media Advertising

June 27 - July 7, 2025

Ad	Views	Reach	Post Engagements	Amount Spent	Amount Spent Per Person
Ad # 1 (June 4 - 26)	41,965	17,558	585	\$158.39	\$0.27
Ad #2 (June 27 - July 4)	557,028	247,069	7,642	\$2,586.53	\$0.35

Digital Impact

Website Impact

Social Platform	Users	Views
VA250 Website (June 27 - July 7)	45,085	74,067
Fourth at the Fort Page (All Time)	19,944	29,269
Fort Monroe Website - Event Page (All Time)	12,230	19,833
Visit Hampton Website - Event Page (All Time)	5,259	7,443

AMERICA
MADE IN
VIRGINIA

VA250

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Fourth
AT THE
FORT

Join us for the start of America's
250th year in the place that made it possible.

An all-day 4th of July event featuring the largest Fort Monroe family-friendly
fireworks show to date! Come celebrate America Made In Virginia.

Date
July 4th, 2025

Place
Fort Monroe at
Hampton, VA

Time
8:45 AM – 9:30 PM

Cost
Free to the public
(Free parking!)

Register Now

Hosted by

HAMPTON
VA250

FORT
MONROE

NATIONAL
PARK
SERVICE

AMERICA. MADE IN VIRGINIA.

What People Are Saying

2025/07/05 00:05

The best firework show and best way to celebrate our independence. Thank you from the Welch family



2025/07/06 08:01

Thank you for marvelous and memorable 4th!
Truly enjoyed the total experience. Well done



“The drone show and fireworks show, combined with the Langley AF Band, were fantastic!”

“wow you guys did an amazing fourth at Fort Monroe. It was safe clean and still amazed free! thank you guys we had a blast it was the best fourth thank you thank you to you and staff”

“The event was phenomenal”

“Well worth the drive down”

“The fireworks show was the best I’ve seen - and I’m 58 years old!”



freemanstore_museum Love this. Can't wait to have the 250 Mobile Museum in our town this week!

3d 2 likes Reply

“I appreciate the strong focus on historical aspects.”



morgainemary Oh the stories this quilt will tell! Can't wait to see it!!!! Representation rocks!!!

21h 2 likes Reply

“Was extremely impressed with the drone show and fireworks display. Traffic coming and leaving was well organized.”

Semiquincentennial Pledge

We, the People of the United States of America,
Raise Hand & Heart
And mutually pledge:

To embrace the spirit and responsibilities of Citizenship;
To renew our commitment that all people are created equal,
And are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights:
That among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.
And, in recognition of our nation's 250th anniversary,

We mutually pledge:
To learn from the Past,
To engage with the Present,
And to help inspire America's Future
As we strive to form
A more perfect Union.
And so we will.

This is our Semiquincentennial Pledge.