

The Virginian-Pilot

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Norfolk is home to the world's largest naval base, and it turns 100 this year

By Eric Hartley
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L. Todd Spencer | The Virginian-Pilot
The USS Wasp heads into port at Norfolk Naval Station on Saturday, Dec 24, 2016, after a 6-month deployment.



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A thick fog settles over the water at Naval Station Norfolk, as a tugboat maneuvers it way next to the USS George H.W. Bush, right, to assist with its departure, Jan. 21, 2017, for a regularly-scheduled deployment.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Magen F. Weatherwax
The aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush returns to Norfolk Naval Station on Nov. 15, 2014.



Vicki Cronis-Nohe

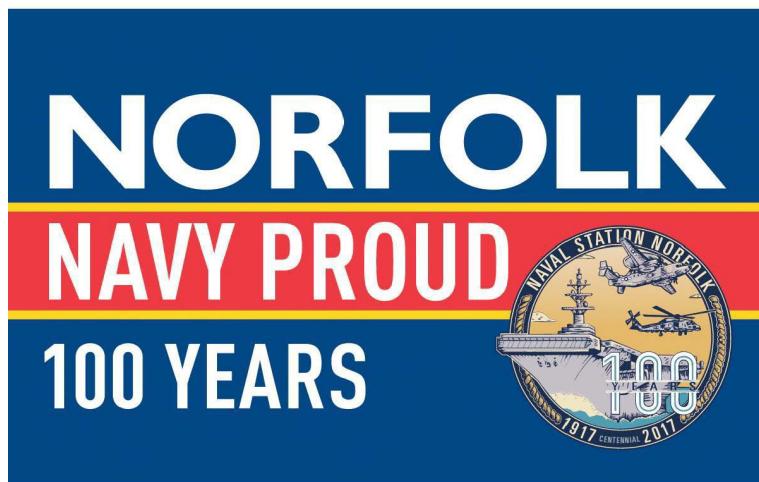
A long line of visitors queue up to tour several Naval ships, including the aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt, during Fleet Fest on Saturday, October 18, 2014, held at Norfolk Naval Station in Norfolk, VA. In celebration of Fleet Week Hampton Roads and the Navy's 239th birthday, Fleet Fest was open to public and included ship tours, a car show, military displays, and a chili cook-off. Vicki Cronis-Nohe | The Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK

The city that's home to the world's largest naval base is planning a year full of celebrations for the base's 100th anniversary.

Centennial events for Norfolk Naval Station kick off this week.

Officials created a logo with the slogan "Norfolk: Navy Proud. 100 Years" that they plan to plaster on billboards, bumper stickers and public buses. There also will be promotions online and in print.



This is the logo and slogan for the city's promotion of Norfolk Naval Station's centennial celebration in 2017.

The plans came from the Naval Station Norfolk Centennial Commission, which the City Council appointed in September.

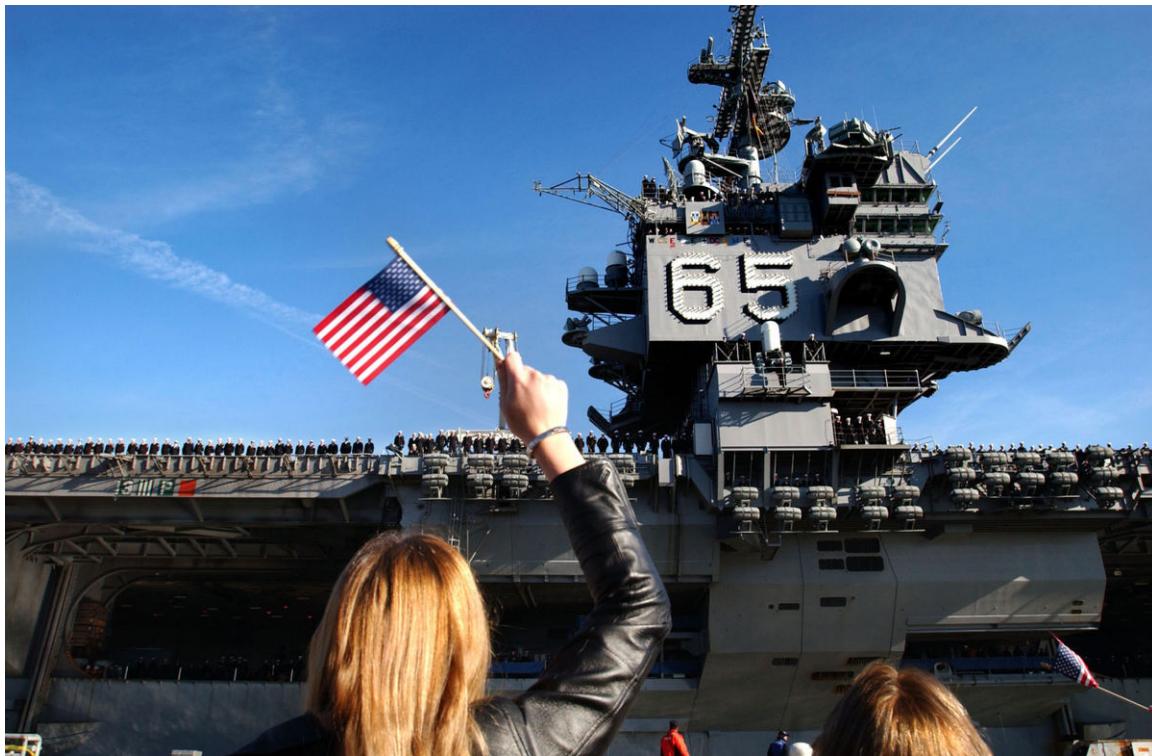
Highlights of the year's events include a Blue Angels flyover tentatively scheduled for Sept. 13, a Navy League gala on June 28 and Navy tribute nights at professional and college sports events.

In many cases, Navy celebrations have been added to existing events. Karen Scherberger, vice chairwoman of the centennial commission, said more than 35 events are confirmed so far, with more in the works.

"It's certainly rewarding and feels wonderful when so quickly the community responded when we sent the invitation out," she said. "It wasn't 24 hours before we started hearing."

The city's plans are in addition to the Navy's own celebrations. The public will be allowed onto the base Oct. 21 to tour ships as part of Fleet Fest.

The centerpiece of the city's plans is Harborfest. Scherberger, the CEO of organizer Festevents, said it draws more people than any other event in Norfolk.



The carrier Enterprise pulls up to the pier at Norfolk Naval Station, Sunday, February 29, 2004, after a six-month deployment in the Persian Gulf.

Genevieve Ross | The Virginian-Pilot

This year's Harborfest, she said, will be a "homecoming," with all who have ever served at Norfolk Naval Station invited. The city is working with the base commander to include more Navy ships in the Parade of Sail, and the fireworks and music will be patriotic, Scherberger said.

Mayor Kenny Alexander and the interim city manager, Doug Smith, said they are still looking at how much the city's celebrations will cost.

In 1917, after the nation entered World War I, the U.S. government bought property for a Norfolk naval base on the site of the 1907 Jamestown Exposition.

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