

HQ SACT kicks off Norfolk NATO Festival - ACT

Written by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Sarah Langdon
Wednesday, 28 April 2010 00:00

On a spring day in Norfolk, Va., staff and guests of Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT), celebrated the opening of the 57th Norfolk NATO Festival with a flag raising ceremony April 28, celebrating the festival's Most Honoured Nation, France, and paying tribute to all 28 NATO Nations.

The event was attended by more than 300 HQ SACT military and civilian staff and guests, and City of Norfolk representatives.

During his opening remarks, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, French Air Force General Stephane Abrial, talked about the ties that France and the U.S. have shared throughout the history of the City of Norfolk.

"Norfolk and Hampton Roads are linked to France in many ways," said Abrial. "The memory of the Battle of the Chesapeake is still very much alive as is that of countless American servicemen who sailed here during the second World War to free Europe and my homeland from aggression. Today, Norfolk maintains a vibrant sister city relationship with Toulon, the town that hosts the largest harbour in Europe and of course, in France."

After his address, Abrial presented gifts to the Most Honoured Guests Norfolk NATO Festival Ambassador French Captain Geraldine Ribereau and France Guest of Honour Major General Gratien Maire, French Defence Attaché to the U.S.

"While the 28 flags were being raised in the sky over Virginia this morning, my thoughts were directed at these men and women who are serving throughout the world in keeping with the values that are the basis of the Atlantic Alliance," said Maire. "But, the Norfolk NATO Festival is not only about France. It's not only about ACT and NATO. It's also about the people of the Hampton Roads community who welcome citizens from 28 different Nations."

Also in attendance was Norfolk Mayor Paul Fraim who said his city is particularly proud of its military tradition, and their role as an anchor for the transatlantic link.

HQ SACT kicks off Norfolk NATO Festival - ACT

Written by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Sarah Langdon
Wednesday, 28 April 2010 00:00

“Norfolk citizens understand the significance and sacrifice of military service, so we are very proud to serve as the Alliance’s North American headquarters,” said Fraim.

The Norfolk NATO Festival is the longest continuously running festival in the Hampton Roads region, and the only one of its kind in the United States which honours the NATO Alliance and its member Nations.