

# Ford Carrier Strike Group Operates in the High North with NATO Allies



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The High North is a critical region for the U.S. and NATO

Alliance to stand together in support of a safe, stable and secure Euro-Atlantic region by enhancing military capabilities, readiness and interoperability.

“What we’re doing is a building block on the last three years of our U.S. Carrier Strike Groups’ work off the coast of Norway and in the High North seas with the Royal Norwegian Navy. This consistent teamwork has fostered a strong and enduring relationship between our two navies,” said Rear Adm. Paul Lanzilotta, commander of Carrier Strike Group Twelve. “Our mutual understanding of each other’s naval priorities, perspectives, and methods ensures efficient and effective work whenever we operate together. We are extremely fortunate to continue to build on this steadfast U.S.-Norwegian naval relationship to defend against threats to maritime security.”

A surface action group (SAG), led by USS Bainbridge (DDG 96) and USS Mahan (DDG 72), was joined by Royal Norwegian Navy HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl (F 314) and French Navy FS Aquitaine (D 650) operating under national authorities and FGS Hamburg (F220) operating under MAROM Standing NATO Maritime Group 1.

The SAG transited Southeast of Svalbard off the Northern coast of Norway and conducted various operations supported by coalition auxiliary ships USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12), HNoMS Maud (A 530) and FS Somme (A 631).

“We are thrilled to work alongside our friends and Allies as we take on the challenge of ensuring peace and freedom are shared by all traversing our waterways,” said Royal Norwegian Navy Cmdr. Lars Ole Hoknes, commander of Thor Heyerdahl. “The Norwegian Sea and the areas surrounding it must remain free, no matter the cost.”

Additionally, the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) and USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) conducted flight operations and strike exercises in the Norwegian Sea in collaboration with the Royal Norwegian Air Force.

In July 2024, the Department of Defense released the 2024 DoD Arctic Strategy, the fourth iteration for the Department, which outlines the United States' commitment to preserving the Arctic as a secure and stable region with Allies and partners.

The allied maritime force's operations, led by GRF CSG, are a testament to this commitment, advancing the strategy's lines of effort to enhance maritime domain awareness and the ability to campaign in the Arctic. The strategy builds upon the 2022 National Security Strategy, the 2022 National Defense Strategy, and the 2022 National Strategy for the Arctic Region.

The GRF CSG continues to support U.S. 6th Fleet's maritime operations and theater security cooperation missions, working alongside Allies and partners to deter aggression, preserve economic prosperity and keep the seas free and open.

Carrier Strike Group Twelve is on a scheduled deployment to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations to support the warfighting effectiveness, lethality, and readiness of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, and defend U.S., Allied and partner interests in the region. For more than 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-U.S. Naval Forces Africa has forged strategic relationships with our Allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability. You can find more information on DVIDS at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/CVN78>.