

USCGC Cutter Forward returns home following 78-day deployment in the high northern latitudes



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC 911) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Tuesday, following a 78-day deployment in the North Atlantic Ocean.

Throughout the deployment, Forward supported the U.S. Coast Guard's Arctic Strategy and partnered with allied nations and agencies during Operation Nanook 2023, an annual Canadian-led military exercise to strengthen maritime objectives in the

high northern latitudes.

Alongside Canadian and French forces navigating the waters of the North Atlantic Ocean, Forward's crew performed training evolutions including towing and formation steaming, replenishment at sea, visual communications tactical signaling, and cross-deck exercises. In addition, an attached team from Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific conducted a boarding exercise with French Navy vessel BSAM Garonne to demonstrate at-sea capabilities and assist in enhancing partner training curriculums.

During the deployment, Forward also completed two living marine resources enforcement patrols. The first was carried out in support of the First Coast Guard District's living marine resources mission. The second, conducted alongside international partners, was focused on commercial fishing vessels inspections as part of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization. The NAFO fisheries patrol ensured compliance with international fishing norms while safeguarding natural resources and preserving fish stocks, all reinforcing U.S. dedication to combatting illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing.

Forward collaborated with embarked U.S. Navy personnel from the Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Flotilla-1 team to launch their Razorback UUV. The undersea vehicle, equipped with mapping and sonar capabilities, deployed deeper than any U.S. Navy submersible and traveled to a depth of nearly 2,000 feet (600 meters).

Members from the U.S. Navy's Afloat Training Group Atlantic were also embarked aboard Forward to help build their service's Arctic Vision Initiative, which will serve to inform U.S. Navy training entities of seamanship, navigation, engineering, and medical considerations necessary for operating naval vessels in the polar regions.

Forward sailed more than 10,500 nautical miles while the crew liaised with international partners through a series of port calls. Forward visited Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, during their Natal Day celebration to observe the province's birthday. Crew members then traveled to Nuuk, Greenland, and completed a short visit to St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, before transiting back to the United States.

Forward ended the deployment by hosting several Indo-Pacific heads of state who were participating in the 2023 U.S.-Pacific Island Country Summit in Baltimore, Maryland. Approximately 40 international guests joined Forward for a tour and reception ahead of the transfer of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903) to a Pacific Ocean homeport.

"We had the opportunity to advance objectives of the Arctic Strategy and support the IUU Fishing Strategic Outlook," said Cmdr. Staci Rutsch, commanding officer of Forward. "Acting as true ambassadors, we represented the nation in diplomatic engagements with NATO partners, reinforcing U.S. interests and solidifying the USCG as being the partner of choice. This crew's ability to shift to perform highly in our non-standard missions leaves me impressed and motivated every day."

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit www.GoCoastGuard.com to learn more about active duty and reserve officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).