# USCGC Forward Returns Home Following 60-Day Deployment in the Central Caribbean Sea




Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC 911) steams, July 19, 2024, while underway in the Caribbean Sea. Forward conducted a 60-day Caribbean Sea patrol to interdict illegal drugs and apprehend suspected smugglers on the high seas in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)
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PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC 911) returned to their home port in Portsmouth, July 27, following a 60-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea.

During the deployment, Forward patrolled within the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South. Crew members conducted detection and monitoring operations throughout the joint

operating area and executed interdiction and apprehension missions, which directly contributed to the reduction in flow of illegal drugs bound for the United States. These activities also served toward degrading and dismantling transnational criminal organizations (TCO).

Coordinating with naval forces from Canada, the Netherlands, and the U.S., along with an embarked aviation detachment from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, Forward assisted with the apprehension of five suspected smugglers and the seizure of 8,248 pounds of narcotics. Information gained from these at-sea interdictions was also used by federal agencies in multiple nations to arrest an alleged high-ranking member of a TCO.

While underway, Forward's crew rescued three migrants from a vessel taking on water. After they were provided with medical attention, the migrants were repatriated to their country of origin. The rescue exemplified Coast Guard missions to preserve the safety of life at sea and safeguard the maritime boundaries of the United States.

After departing the joint operating area, Forward's crew carried out activities aimed at strengthening partnerships and interoperability. On July 22, crew members conducted a narcotics offload in Port Everglades, Florida, which allowed for professional exchanges and training with both the Panama Express Strike Force, an organized crime drug enforcement task force, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection canine handlers. Forward also served as the platform for ship-helicopter landings with the U.S. Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

"Forward's operational success came down to two things: the crew's superior dedication and the strength of the Joint Interagency Task Force – South network," said Cmdr. Andrew Grantham, commanding officer of Forward. "I am proud of the crew's tenacity to overcome all challenges to get the job

done.”

Forward is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter’s primary missions are counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws, as well as search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.