

USCGC Forward returns home following counterdrug patrol in the Caribbean Sea



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

April 24, 2023

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the USCGC Forward (WMEC 911) returned to their home port in Portsmouth, Saturday, following a multi-week training exercise and counterdrug deployment in the central Caribbean Sea.

While underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility and in support of Joint Interagency Task Force–South, Forward traveled more than 6,000 miles conducting counterdrug operations as part of a multi-faceted approach to

combatting illicit narcotics trafficking across maritime borders.

Part of this effort included international partnerships with the HNLMS Holland (P840) of the Royal Netherlands Navy and other U.S. military vessels, including USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909), USCGC Margaret Norvell (WPC 1105), and USS Little Rock (CL 92).

Throughout the patrol, Forward held approximately 4,700 pounds of cocaine on deck worth an estimated \$81 million. Forward intercepted three suspected narcotics smugglers earlier this month and held nine others throughout the patrol. On Tuesday, the crew conducted a further offload to partner agencies in Port Everglades, Florida.

"The crew lived up to our namesake 'Ever the Sentinel' and was ready to take on any mission," said Cmdr. Staci Rutsch, Forward's commanding officer. "Forward's crew demonstrated the Coast Guard's resiliency and adaptability by maintaining proficiency in interagency and international operations while upholding the ability to meet the nation's maritime demands. I am truly impressed and thankful for their devotion to duty."

Forward is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter's list of mission sets include law enforcement, search and rescue, protection of living marine resources, homeland security and defense operations, international training and humanitarian operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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