

USS Virginia Returns Home from Deployment



260803-N-UM74-1001 NAVAL SUBMARINE BASE NEW LONDON, Conn. (Aug. 3, 2026) The first-in-class nuclear-powered fast-attack submarine USS Virginia (SSN 774) returns to Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Conn., Aug. 3, 2026, following a six-month deployment to the U.S. European Command area of responsibility. Virginia and crew operate under Submarine Squadron (SUBRON) 4, whose primary mission is to provide attack submarines that are ready, prepared, and committed to meet the unique challenges of undersea combat and deployed operations in unforgiving environments across the globe. (U.S. Navy photo by John Narewski)

GROTON, Conn. – The first-in-class nuclear-powered fast-attack submarine USS Virginia (SSN 774), under the command of Cmdr. Jeremy Wheelis, returned to Naval Submarine Base New London Monday, Aug. 3, completing a six-month deployment to the U.S. European Command area of responsibility.

Capt. Thomas Flaherty, commander of Submarine Squadron (SUBRON) 4, under which Virginia operates, welcomed the crew home and praised their efforts.

"The deployment of USS Virginia to the European theater underscores the critical role our undersea forces play in maintaining security and stability alongside our international partners," Flaherty said. "The crew of Virginia executed highly demanding missions with the utmost professionalism and precision, demonstrating the elite capabilities of our fast-attack fleet. Their performance on this deployment has set a high standard for readiness, and we are incredibly proud to welcome them back to their homeport here in New London."

Wheelis said he considered it an immense privilege to welcome the crew and their families back to Submarine Base New London after a challenging and rewarding deployment.

"This homecoming is a time to celebrate the sacrifices made by our Sailors and the support of their families and loved ones," Wheelis said. "To the families: thank you for your patience and strength while your Sailor dedicated six months to defending our freedoms and strengthening national security. To the crew: your steadfast commitment to each other is astonishing. Keeping Virginia in the fight and ready to execute was no easy task, but your grit was unmatched and reflects great credit on this command and what the United States Navy is about."

During the deployment, the crew successfully kept Virginia on station through three extensive periods of national tasking in arduous and austere environments.

"My ship and my crew were consistently in the right place at the right time and ready to respond to any threat to our freedoms with overwhelming force," Wheelis added. "As we reunite, we look forward to a period of well-deserved rest, maintenance, and time with family, while remaining ready to answer the nation's call whenever needed. Welcome home,

Virginia—I'm proud of you and your accomplishments." While deployed, Virginia steamed more than 36,000 nautical miles and conducted a key port visit to Tromsø, Norway.

The deployment marked major milestones for the crew: 46 personnel earned their submarine warfare devices—commonly referred to as “dolphins”—and five Sailors welcomed new babies.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class David Griffenberg and his spouse, Molly Griffenberg were honored with the ceremonial first kiss on the pier. Chief Logistics Specialist (Submarine) Brian Boyd was awarded the ceremonial first hug with his spouse, Sarahi Boyd.

USS Virginia is the tenth U.S. Navy vessel named for the Commonwealth of Virginia, following the most recent USS Virginia (CGN 38), a Virginia-class cruiser commissioned in 1976 and decommissioned in 1994. Previous ships to bear the name USS Virginia included the first USS Virginia of the Continental Navy, a 28-gun sailing frigate built in 1776, and the Virginia-class battleship (BB 13), commissioned in 1906. The submarine Virginia has a crew of more than 130 personnel, is more than 377 feet long, and can displace nearly 7,900 tons.

The Virginia-class of nuclear-powered fast attack submarines are designed for a broad spectrum of open-ocean and littoral missions. Fast-attack submarines are multi-mission platforms enabling five of the six Navy maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security and deterrence. They are designed to excel in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare. Fast-attack submarines project power ashore with special operations forces and Tomahawk cruise missiles in the prevention or response to regional crises.