

Navy to Christen Guided-Missile Destroyer Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee



The Navy will christen its newest Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, the future USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123), on April 24. It is a FLIGHT IIA destroyer, similar to the USS John Finn, the first FLIGHT IIA Arleigh Burke class (DDG 51) ship, shown here. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy will christen its newest Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, the future USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123), during a 6:30 p.m. CDT ceremony Saturday, April 24, in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the service said in an April 23 release.

The ship's namesake, Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee, served as the second superintendent of the Navy Nurse Corps in 1911, and was also the first living woman recipient of the Navy Cross. When

she entered naval service in 1908, she was one of the first 20 women, known as the "Sacred Twenty," to join the newly established Navy Nurse Corps and contributed her nursing skills to the Navy during the First World War. This is the second ship named after Higbee. The first, USS Higbee (DD 806), was the first combat warship named after a female member of the U.S. Navy.

Ray Mabus, 75th secretary of the Navy, will deliver the christening ceremony's principal address. Jay Stefany, acting assistant secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) and Rear Adm. Cynthia Kuehner, commander, Naval Medical Forces Support Command, will also provide remarks. In a time-honored Navy tradition, the ship's sponsors, Louisa Dixon, Virginia Munford and R. Pickett Wilson, will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

"The future USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee will serve for decades as a reminder of Ms. Higbee's service to our nation and her unwavering support of a strong and healthy Navy and Marine Corps team," said Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Harker. "This ship honors not only her service but that of all of our Navy nurses who support the strength and wellbeing of our service members and their families."

The ship will be the 73rd Arleigh Burke-class destroyer and one of 20 currently under contract for the DDG 51 program. The ship is configured as a Flight IIA destroyer, which enables power projection and delivers quick reaction time, high firepower, and increased electronic countermeasures capability for anti-air warfare. The future USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee will be 509.5 feet long and 59 feet wide, with a displacement of 9,496 tons. It will be homeported in San Diego.