USS Gridley Returns to Everett After Seven-Months of Operations



EVERETT, Wash. – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gridley (DDG 101) returned home to Naval Station Everett, Oct. 9, 2026, after a seven-month deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations.

Gridley departed Everett with Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68), March 9, 2026. The destroyer served as an escort for Nimitz's transit and participation in Operation Southern Seas 2026, oversaw the carrier's successful transition into the U.S. 2nd Fleet area of operations, and continued operating under the direction of Joint Task Force-Western Hemisphere as a part of Operation Southern Spear aimed at countering narcotics trafficking and distribution in the

Caribbean and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Supporting Southern Seas 2026, Gridley escorted Nimitz during portions of the carrier's final sail around South America as the carrier strike group supported engagement objectives throughout the region. Gridley participated in bilateral events with partner nations to enhance capability, improve interoperability, and strengthen maritime partnerships through joint, multinational, and interagency exchanges and cooperation.

"I am extremely proud of the Gridley crew and all they accomplished during this surge deployment to the 4th Fleet area of operations." said Cmdr. Magdalena Keel, commanding officer of Gridley. "Their efforts were vital to advancing bilateral relationships with 18 nations in South America. Through forward presence and demonstrated warfighting readiness, they were vital to countering designated terrorist organizations."

While in U.S. 4th Fleet, Gridley and Nimitz conducted a transit of the Strait of Magellan, the first such by a U.S. warship in two years. Gridley conducted its first ever transit of the Panama Canal, and made port visits to Panama, Chile, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and Ecuador. Ashore, Gridley Sailors participated in community relations projects aimed at bolstering alliances with regional partners and host navies.

The ship traveled approximately 90,000 nautical miles, conducted over 50 special evolutions, executed one maritime counter-narcotics interdiction, and engaged with 18 allied navies and partner nations from the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. The embarked Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 73 detachment completed nearly 490 flight operational hours providing integral support to regional counternarcotics efforts during the deployment. Gridley also conducted joint helicopter operations with three allied navies, enhancing interoperability during Operation

Southern Seas 2026.

An integral part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the region and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute our Navy’s role across the full spectrum of military operations – from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster response. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation and overflight, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the region.

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