

# USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee Returns to San Diego



NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (Dec. 19, 2025) USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123), assigned to the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group, returns to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following operations in the U.S. 3rd, 5th and 7th Fleets. (U.S. Navy photo by Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Timothy Weber.)

[Release From USS Higbee](#)

SAN DIEGO, CA – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123) returned to its homeport of San Diego following a nine-month mission to the U.S. 3rd, 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operations (A00), Dec. 19.

Higbee departed San Diego with the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group (NIMSG) on Mar. 26, 2024, with an air wing detachment from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 49. As part of Nimitz Carrier Strike Group (NIMCSG), Higbee conducted various

missions, including protecting sea lines of communication, supporting maritime stability, and interdiction operations while in the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet AOO.

“I could not be prouder of this crew and their performance on Higbee’s Maiden mission,” said Cmdr. Stephen Skahen Jr., commanding officer of Higbee. “As Integrated Air and Missile Defense Commander, this team rose to the challenge and set the standard. From new mission sets in new fleets, interoperability with foreign allies and partners, and representing the United States with distinguished guests; this crew answered the call with enthusiasm and precision. It’s my honor to be their Captain. Get Wins!”

While in 7th Fleet, Higbee participated in multinational operations, to include the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) in Malaysia and exercises to increase interoperability and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In 5th Fleet, Higbee participated in freedom of navigation operations and worked alongside partners and allies to include the Pakistani, French, Japanese, and Indian Navies. Higbee was honored to host Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Caine, and Commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet, Vice Adm. Wikoff as distinguished guests to demonstrate Higbee and its crew’s capabilities.

Higbee and the detachment from HSM-49, traveled over 75,000 nautical miles, flew over 1,100 hours, conducted 32 replenishments-at-sea, and accomplished 22 sea and anchor details.

Higbee was led by Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Stephen “Jack” Skahen Jr., Executive Officer Cmdr. Donald Northrup, and Command Master Chief Gilberto Silvabecerra.

In addition to Higbee, the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group consists of USS Nimitz, flagship of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 11, embarked staff of CSG-11, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 9, embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17, and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108), and USS Gridley (DDG 101).

Higbee, assigned to the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group, returns to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following nine months operating in the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet AOO. An integral part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute the U.S. Navy's role across the full spectrum of military operations. 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 Indo-Pacific region.