

USS Robert Smalls returns to San Diego after a 7-month deployment



SAN DIEGO – Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Robert Smalls (CG 62) arrived at its new homeport of Naval Base San Diego, following a 7-month deployment supporting U.S. 7th Fleet operations, including two carrier strike groups in the Pacific, Oct. 9, 2026.

Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Robert Smalls (CG 62) arrived at its new homeport of Naval Base San Diego, following a 7-month deployment supporting U.S. 7th Fleet operations, including two carrier strike groups in the Pacific, Oct. 9.

After departing Yokosuka, Japan, on March 9, 2026, Robert

Smalls, along with an air wing detachment from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 51, conducted operations to strengthen regional partnerships and demonstrate the U.S. Navy's commitment to achieving peace through strength in the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Robert Smalls supported the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group, the George Washington Carrier Strike Group, and the Tripoli Amphibious Ready Group/31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, as well as partners and allies. The ship served in multiple critical command and control roles for both the George Washington and Abraham Lincoln Strike Groups, including Alternate Composite Warfare Commander, Air and Missile Defense Commander, and Aircraft Control Unit.

"The crew of Robert Smalls performed with distinction throughout this deployment and homeport shift," said Capt. Francisco X. Garza, commanding officer of Robert Smalls. "Whether serving as the sole escort for a carrier during CVN sea trials, workups and certification, responding to a shipmate in need, or conducting complex air defense operations in the South China Sea, our Sailors consistently demonstrated the professionalism and tactical excellence that defines Forward-Deployed Naval Forces. I am incredibly proud of what this team accomplished."

While underway, Robert Smalls made a historic return to Da Nang, Vietnam, where the ship visit served to underscore the two nations' commitment to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that spans political, security, economic and people-to-people ties.

Robert Smalls steamed more than 40,000 nautical miles across U.S. 3rd, and U.S. 7th Fleets; and transited through five strategic waterways. Robert Smalls integrated three Australian warships and one Japanese warship into strike group battle rhythm, strengthening maritime interoperability with allies in the region. Robert Smalls completed 14 successful underway

replenishments, including two with an Australian oiler and one with a U.S. commercial tanker.

This homecoming marks Robert Smalls' transition from Yokosuka to San Diego as part of a scheduled rotation of forces to comply with federal law requiring that Forward-Deployed Naval Forces ships not exceed 10 years forward deployed. Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mustin (DDG 89) arrived in Japan, March 2026, to replace Robert Smalls.

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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