Navy Surface Chief: Western Pacific Ship Readiness Improving

ARLINGTON, Va. – The readiness of the Navy's Forward-Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) stationed in Japan is improving, the Navy's surface warfare chief said, crediting a new command, the Naval Surface Group Western Pacific, with driving much of the improvement.

"The ships are producing better readiness," Vice Adm. Richard A. Brown, commander, Naval Surface Forces and Naval Surface Force Pacific, told reporters in a Jan. 11 teleconference, noting that there was "a lot of hand-wringing" when the additional layer of command was added to the FDNF following the two 2017 at-sea collisions involving the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain.

Investigations revealed that many FNDF surface ship crews were going on patrol without all of the certifications in specific warfare areas, caused in part by heavy operational schedules that hindered crew training in all of the required areas.

The Naval Surface Group Western Pacific was established to provide more supervision of the training and other support to the FNDF surface ships.

"The Naval Surface Group Western Pacific is on point," Brown said, noting that ships in the group are now "going out fully certified."