

# USS Fitzgerald En Route to San Diego After Collision Repairs



The guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald prepares to depart Ingalls' Pascagoula, Mississippi, shipyard on June 13 for its return to San Diego. U.S. Navy via Derek Fountain/Huntington Ingalls Industries

PASCAGOULA, Miss. — The guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald departed Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding shipyard on June 13 to return to its homeport in San Diego, Naval Sea Systems Command said in a release.

The sail away reflects more than two years of effort in restoring and modernizing one of the Navy's most capable warships after it was damaged during a collision in 2017 that claimed the lives of seven Sailors.

"Today the 'Fighting Fitz' is returning to the Pacific Fleet as one of our nation's most capable warfighting platforms, marking a significant step in her return to warfighting readiness," said Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage, director of surface ship maintenance and modernization and commander of the Navy Regional Maintenance Center. "The Fitzgerald sailors, our Navy project teams, and the men and women of Ingalls put forth a tremendous effort to restore the ship to fighting shape and did so on schedule."

To restore the impacted spaces to full operations and functionality, various hull, mechanical and electrical, combat system and command, control, communications, computers and intelligence repairs and upgrades were completed. This work ranged from partial to complete refurbishment of impacted spaces to replacement of equipment such as the radar and

electronic warfare suite.

Due to the extent and complexity of the restoration, both repair and new construction procedures were used to accomplish the restoration and modernization efforts. Throughout this restoration, the U.S. Navy made it a priority to ensure the Fitzgerald returned to a peak state of warfighting readiness to contribute to an agile and dynamic fleet.

The Fitzgerald's crew completed multiple training and certification events, such as navigation assessment and light off assessment (LOA), to ensure the crew was at peak readiness to operate the ship as it returns to homeport.

"Completing repairs and upgrades to Fitzgerald was only possible because of the outstanding teamwork between the government and industry teams over the last 2 1/2 years," said Cmdr. Scott Wilbur, commanding officer of the Fitzgerald. "My thanks go out to everyone involved in making sure the ship is ready, and I'm especially proud of my crew's hard work ensuring we are trained and prepared to take our ship back to sea."

Prior to departing Pascagoula for San Diego, the Fitzgerald's crew began a pre-movement sequester on May 23 in accordance with U.S. Navy pre-deployment guidelines – compliance with Navy and CDC guidance is critical to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

The Fitzgerald is assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 1 and upon return to her homeport in San Diego, crew training and certifications will commence in support of basic phase training.