USS Fitzgerald Leaves Dry Dock, Continues Repairs Pierside in Pascagoula

PASCAGOULA, Mississippi – The guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG-62) has taken another step toward returning to the fleet as a fully ready, combat-capable ship, Naval Sea Systems Command said in a release.

The destroyer achieved a milestone in its complex repair and restoration as it successfully launched and moored pierside at Huntington Ingalls Industries' shipyard on April 16. The launch reflects more than a year's worth of effort in restoring and modernizing one of the U.S. Navy's most capable warships.

Since the ship's arrival in Pascagoula in January 2018, work has focused on restoring the integrity of the hull and topside structures that were damaged during a 2017 collision with the containership MV ACX Crystal that killed seven Sailors and injured several others, including Fitzgerald's commanding officer at the time, Cmdr. Bryce Benson.

"The complexity of this overhaul has been challenging, but our planning team at Bath Iron Works and waterfront team at HII is executing repairs and installing upgrades so that Fitzgerald returns to our Sailors lethal and mission-ready," said Rear Adm. Jim Downey, deputy commander for surface warfare and commander, Navy Regional Maintenance Center. "We're excited to have the ship back in the water, where we can begin outfitting and testing efforts in support of getting the ship and crew back underway."

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 are being conducted. These repairs range from partial to complete refurbishment of impacted spaces to replacement of equipment such as the radar and electronic warfare suite. The ship is also receiving various modernization upgrades. Due to the extent and complexity of the restoration, both repair and new construction procedures are being used.

“This undocking is a step forward and brings us that much closer to getting Fitzgerald back out to sea – where the ship belongs,” said Cmdr. Garrett Miller, Fitzgerald’s current commanding officer. “I’m proud of this crew’s hard work over the past year and look forward to returning to the fleet with enhanced warfighting capability and lethality.”