

USS Zumwalt Returns from First Western Pacific Deployment



The Zumwalt-class guided-missile destroyer USS Zumwalt (DDG 1000) sails through the Pacific Ocean. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Christopher Sybert*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The guided-missile destroyer USS Zumwalt (DDG 1000), lead ship of its three-ship class, completed a short deployment to the Western Pacific Ocean on Nov. 11, marking the first operational employment the class as part of the fleet integration process.

The Zumwalt, which departed Naval Station San Diego on Aug. 1, operated in the U.S. 3rd Fleet and U.S. 7th Fleet areas of responsibility. The deployment involved a wide variety of training, testing and evaluation of operational concepts,

fleet integration, crew size and ship systems, said Capt. Shea Thompson, commodore of Surface Development Squadron One, and Capt. Amy McInnis, commanding officer of USS Zumwalt, in a Nov. 16 media roundtable.

The deployment, which concentrated on fleet integration, was termed “very successful” by Thompson who called it an important milestone for the DDG 1000 class and for the Navy” and that it marked “significant strides in learning how to employ, integrate and sustain Zumwalt as she operated forward” and a “significant step forward for the future of this class.”

During the deployment, the Zumwalt operated and trained in joint simulated fires training with a Japanese destroyer and a U.S. Air Force B-1B bomber; mine countermeasures proof of concept work with a forward-deployed explosive ordnance detachment; operations with fleet maritime operations centers, and the staff of the 7th Fleet’s Task Force 71; and operations with U.S. Army aviation. The ship also conducted expeditionary maintenance in Pearl Harbor – a location outside of home port – with contractor maintenance support, which Thompson said was by design for the Zumwalt class.

McInnis, who joined the crew as executive officer in January 2020 and fleeted up to command of the ship in November 2021, said that during a year of work-ups with the crew of 171 the ship practiced integrated and advanced scenarios, as well as radar, acoustic, thermal and magnetic signature testing.

She said the ship did not carry a helicopter detachment during the deployment but did carry two rigid-hull inflatable boats for mine countermeasures exercises.

Thompson said the Zumwalt exercised all of its mission areas typical for a DDG. He also said the ship took advantage of the deployment for testing and assessment of signature management, about which he was not at liberty to detail because of

classification.

“We expect to capitalize on those lessons learned as we continue to employ the ship forward and integrate that platform into fleet operations and exercises,” Thompson said.

Thompson said that in his assessment, Zumwalt achieved Initial Operational Capability “today.”

The commodore said the Zumwalt had no direct interaction with Chinese navy ships during the deployment.

The Zumwalt will be modified during 2024-2025 with Conventional Prompt Strike hypersonic missile launchers for its primary strike mission, he said.