

USS Fitzgerald returns to San Diego following three months underway



From USS Fitzgerald, June 22, 2026

SAN DIEGO (June 19, 2026) – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) returned to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following a three-month underway to the U.S. 3rd Fleet and 7th Fleet areas of operations, June 19.

While underway, Fitzgerald conducted a wide range of maritime security, logistical, and multinational missions, demonstrating the U.S. Navy's long-term commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The ship participated in several major multinational exercises, enhancing interoperability and strengthening partnerships with key regional allies. Fitzgerald participated in the Royal

Australian Navy's (RAN) International Fleet Review in Sydney Harbour alongside 20 partner nations to celebrate the service's 125th Birthday. Immediately following the review, the destroyer took part in Exercise Kakadu 2026, executing integrated air and surface warfare serials, divisional tactics, and formation steaming across Darwin Bay and Jervis Bay.

Fitzgerald provided escort support to the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group from Guam to the South China Sea. During these escort operations, the crew advanced naval aviation readiness, conducting deck landing qualifications with Marine and Navy aviation squadrons. As a lethal and agile force, the Sailors aboard Fitzgerald exemplified fleet readiness, which was further highlighted by leadership visits from the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Daryl Caudle, and Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, Vice Adm. Pat Hannifin.

"The grit and dedication demonstrated by this crew were on full display every single day," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Paul F. Richardson III, commanding officer of Fitzgerald. "Whether working with our regional allies or executing critical support missions, our Sailors performed above and beyond. We are thrilled to be back home with our families and are grateful to those whose love and support kept us strong while we were away."

The professionalism and resilience displayed by the crew throughout their operations directly honored the legacy of their ship's namesake.

Fitzgerald is named in honor of Lt. William Charles Fitzgerald, a U.S. Navy officer who was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his extraordinary heroism in the Vietnam War. The ship's motto, "Protect Your People," is a direct tribute to his sacrifice, when he was mortally wounded while providing covering fire for his evacuating men during an attack by Viet Cong forces.

As a multi-mission surface combatant, Fitzgerald is capable of conducting Anti-Air Warfare (AAW), Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), and Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW) operations.

An integral part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific 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 Indo-Pacific region.