

Most expensive destroyer in Navy history breaks down

November 22 2016, by Patrick Whittle



In this Sept. 7, 2016 file photo, the future USS Zumwalt heads down the Kennebec River after leaving Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, on it's way to be commissioned. The Zumwalt, the most expensive destroyer ever built for the U.S. Navy, suffered an engineering problem in the Panama Canal Monday, Nov. 21, 2016, and had to be towed to port. Third Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Ryan Perry said a vice admiral has directed the ship to remain at ex-Naval Station Rodman in Panama to address the issues. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty, File)

The most expensive destroyer ever built for the Navy suffered an engineering problem in the Panama Canal and had to be towed to port.

U.S. Third Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Ryan Perry said a vice admiral directed the USS Zumwalt to remain at ex-Naval Station Rodman in Panama to address the issues, which arose on Monday. The ship was built at Bath Iron Works in Maine and is on its way to San Diego.

"The schedule for the ship will remain flexible to enable testing and evaluation in order to ensure the ship's safe transit to her new home port in San Diego," Perry said in a statement.

USNI News, a publication of the U.S. Naval Institute, reported on its website that the ship was in the canal when it lost propulsion. Crew also saw water intrusion in bearings that connect electrical motors to drive shafts, the website reported.

USNI News also reported that the Zumwalt suffered minor cosmetic damage. The ship had been scheduled to arrive in San Diego by the end of the year to start the activation of its weapon system, the website reported.

The 610-foot-long warship has an angular shape to minimize its radar signature and is regarded as the most technologically sophisticated destroyer ever built for the Navy. One of its signature features is a new gun system that fires rocket-powered shells up to 63 nautical miles.

The Zumwalt cost more than \$4.4 billion and was commissioned last month in Maryland. It also suffered a leak in its propulsion system before it was commissioned. The leak required the ship to remain at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia longer than expected for repairs.

The ship is part of the first new class of warship built at Bath Iron Works in more than 25 years.

The second Zumwalt-class destroyer, which also cost more than \$4.4

billion, was christened in a June ceremony during which U.S. Rep. Bruce Poliquin called it an "extraordinary machine of peace and security." The third ship is expected to cost a bit less than \$3.7 billion.

A spokeswoman for Bath Iron Works said the shipyard was not planning to comment on the breakdown and deferred to the Navy.

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