

USS St. Louis assumes U.S. Northern Command mission at Southern Border



MAYPORT, Fla. – Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS St. Louis (LCS 19) departed Naval Station Mayport in support of U.S. Northern Command’s (USNORTHCOM) mission to secure the southern border of the United States, Sept. 13, 2026.

St. Louis assumes duties previously executed by the USS Cooperstown (LCS 23) in support of USNORTHCOM’s border security objectives. U.S. Northern Command is working together with the Department of Homeland Security to augment U.S. Customs and Border Protection along the southern border to disrupt illicit drug trafficking and protect the homeland.

“Our crew has trained relentlessly for this deployment, and they stand ready for whatever challenges lie ahead. I could

not be more proud to lead these Sailors,” said Cmdr. Lester Shewmake, commanding officer of USS St. Louis. “To our families and the Mayport community—thank you for your unwavering support as we head to sea.”

U.S. Navy assets are deployed under U.S. Northern Command’s maritime homeland defense authorities to enable maritime interdiction missions to prevent the flow of illegal drugs or other illegal activity.

St. Louis is assigned to Littoral Combat Ship Squadron (LCSRON) 2 and homeported in Mayport, Florida. The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) is a fast, agile, mission-focused warship designed to operate in near-shore environments to counter 21st-century threats. It is a class of small surface combatants armed with capabilities to defeat challenges in the world’s littorals. LCS can operate independently or in high-threat scenarios as part of a networked battle force that includes larger, multi-mission surface combatants such as cruisers and destroyers.

St. Louis is the 22nd LCS to be delivered to the Navy, the tenth of the Freedom-variant to join the fleet and the seventh ship to bear the name. The first St. Louis, a sloop of war, was launched in 1828. It spent the majority of its service patrolling the coasts of the Americas to secure interests and trade. In addition, it served as the flagship for the West Indies Squadron working to suppress piracy in the Caribbean Sea, the Antilles and the Gulf of Mexico region.

U.S. 2nd Fleet is operating as Maritime Command Element-East (MCE-East) under U.S. Naval Forces Northern Command (NAVNORTH), the maritime component of U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). MCE-E provides maritime forces prepared to conduct homeland defense, civil support operations and theater security cooperation activities when directed by USNORTHCOM. They provide operational planning and coordination support to USNORTHCOM as well as command and control subordinate forces

during the planning and execution of joint missions.

From U.S. Second Fleet, Sept. 13, 2026