

USS St. Louis (LCS 19) Crew Completes Self-Sufficient Repair While Deployed



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by [LCSRON TWO Public Affairs](#), Aug 21, 2025

TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA – Sailors aboard the Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS St. Louis (LCS 19) recently completed an at-sea Main Propulsion Diesel Engine repair, enabling the ship to remain on mission. This self-sufficient repair, a task previously requiring contractor assistance, marks another milestone in the Navy's effort to strengthen crew-led maintenance and improve operational readiness of the LCS fleet.

The St. Louis' engineering department dedicated several hours conducting repairs and operational testing, ultimately resulting in the ship being able to meet mission requirements. Additionally, the warship's supply department played a crucial role, ensuring the rapid delivery of required equipment to the enginemen, facilitating the timely completion of the repairs.

“I am beyond proud of all the hard work the St. Louis team has demonstrated over the past few weeks. They have shown exceptional professional curiosity, truly embodying becoming masters of their equipment,” said Lt. Cmdr. Jasmine Hilton, chief engineer of St. Louis. “The LCS community as a whole has been working to build on enlisted technical expertise over the years, and these Sailors have proven that it can be done.”

The deployed repair underscores a two-year push to increase LCS self-sufficiency by training Sailors to perform more maintenance and repairs at the point of need. Alongside enhanced training, the Navy has strategically positioned high-demand spare parts onboard. This allows crews to restore full operational capability more quickly. This approach is improving the reliability of critical systems and extending the operational endurance of deployed LCS warships.

“The engineering team has proven that with the right parts and tools, our Sailors have the technical knowledge and skills to maintain our equipment without dependence on off-hull support,” said Cmdr. Lee Shewmake, commanding officer of St. Louis. “That allows them not only to conduct preventive work but also corrective maintenance when needed. The Freedom-variant class was originally designed to utilize contractors and off-ship personnel to conduct routine repairs and maintenance throughout the ship.”

The milestone aboard St. Louis highlights both the adaptability of the platform but also the broader LCS sustainment effort. By empowering crews to take ownership of repairs at sea, the Navy is reducing reliance on shore-based support and ensuring ships remain combat ready throughout deployment.

“This is just the most recent example in a two-year community effort to improve self-sufficiency across Freedom-variant LCS

warships. Every Freedom deployer over the last two years has delivered increased operational availability and capability from the previous one,” said Capt. Mark Haney, commodore of Littoral Combat Ship Squadron Two. “At every iteration we are delivering a more capable warship to Fleet Commanders to conduct missions they are ideally suited for, like the two Freedom LCS currently in 2nd and 4th Fleet, while freeing up other Navy surface assets for key missions across the globe.”

St. Louis, along with an embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment, is deployed in the U.S. Second Fleet area of operations to support counter-illicit drug trafficking and participate in exercises and exchanges with partner nations.