

# Surface Warfare

SNA 2023  
ISSUE



**Getting Ready,  
Maintaining Our  
Competitive Edge**

This issue:

**Task Force Hopper:  
Surface Force Moves Toward  
Data-Driven Decision Making**

**Surface Warfare  
Officers of the Year**

**Navy Increases Capabilities  
with Newly Established  
Unmanned Surface Division**

**AUTHORIZATION**

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**CHARTER**

*Surface Warfare Magazine* is the professional magazine of the surface warfare community. Its purpose is to educate its readers on surface warfare missions and programs, with a particular focus on U.S. surface ships and commands. This journal will also draw upon the Surface Force's rich historical legacy to instill a sense of pride and professionalism among community members and to enhance reader awareness of the increasing relevance of surface warfare for our nation's defense.

The opinions and assertions herein are the personal views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy.

# Surface Warfare

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BATTLE-MINDED**

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*Cover: A Seahawk medium displacement unmanned surface vessel participates in U.S. Pacific Fleet's Unmanned Systems Integrated Battle Problem (UxS IBP). UxS IBP 21 integrates manned and unmanned capabilities into challenging operational scenarios to generate warfighting advantages. Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Shannon Renfro*

# Commander's Corner

Team,

Get Ready. The challenges of tomorrow are here today and the Surface Force must be prepared to face them. Over the past year, we've dedicated ourselves to this effort by self-assessing and pushing the community towards greater warfighting readiness by advancing our Competitive Edge Campaign. This strategy enables us to harness our collective ingenuity, strength, and grit to take on the complexities of modern warfare.

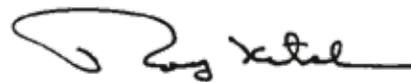
As we focus on the future fight, we should take time to reflect on our Navy's storied past. The Sailors who fought valiantly throughout our Force's toughest battles; Guadalcanal, Leyte Gulf, and Midway, to name only a few, turned hardship into victory. I encourage all of you to

reflect on their grit and determination. The Sailors who fought those battles did so with bravery, persistence and resolve and we must be ready to do the same. Are we ready like they were?

On countless ships across the fleet, I've seen that same grit and determination – the warfighting spirit displayed by American Sailors throughout history. That spirit is testament to tough minded Sailors who understand the thin margin between victory and defeat is determined by how we train and prepare before the fighting begins.

We must now embrace "Getting Ready" as our call to action. Our imperative is to make sure we have the culture, training, and tools to fight and win. The threat is real. The time is now. Get Ready. ⚔

SWOBOSS





SAN DIEGO (Mar. 24, 2022) – Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, left, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, speaks with Seaman John Loeffler, assigned to the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset (LPD 25), during a scheduled visit to the ship. While aboard, Kitchener evaluated the ship's current state of readiness and spoke with Sailors. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Stevin C. Atkins)

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
3rd Class Stevin C. Atkins

PEGASUS



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
3rd Class Isaak Martinez*

# STARS GUIDE ESSEX HOME

Story by  
USS Essex Public Affairs,  
Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Brett Miles McMinoway





**WE OPERATED FOR OVER 1,800 NAUTICAL MILES WITHOUT OUR MOST ADVANCED SYSTEMS, USING TECHNOLOGY FROM THE 18TH CENTURY, AND WE SHOWED UP ON TIME AND ON TRACK.**

*– Walt O'Donnell*

Sailors aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) used celestial navigation (CELNAV) to travel more than 1,800 nautical miles while underway in the U.S. 3rd Fleet.

Guided by the stars, moon, sun, and planets, the ship's crew successfully steamed from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to the San Diego area of operations without any GPS assistance or electronic systems for six days during Essex's Western Pacific 2021-2022 deployment.

"GPS satellites are vulnerable to destruction and jamming, but sextants and paper charts are not," said Walt O'Donnell, a Surface Navigator (SURFNAV) course supervisor at Surface Warfare Officers School Command (SWOSCOLCOM), embarked aboard Essex. "We operated for over 1,800 nautical miles without our most advanced systems, using technology from the 18th century, and we showed up on time and on track. I am confident that Essex could cross the entire Pacific Ocean using the same techniques if it had to."



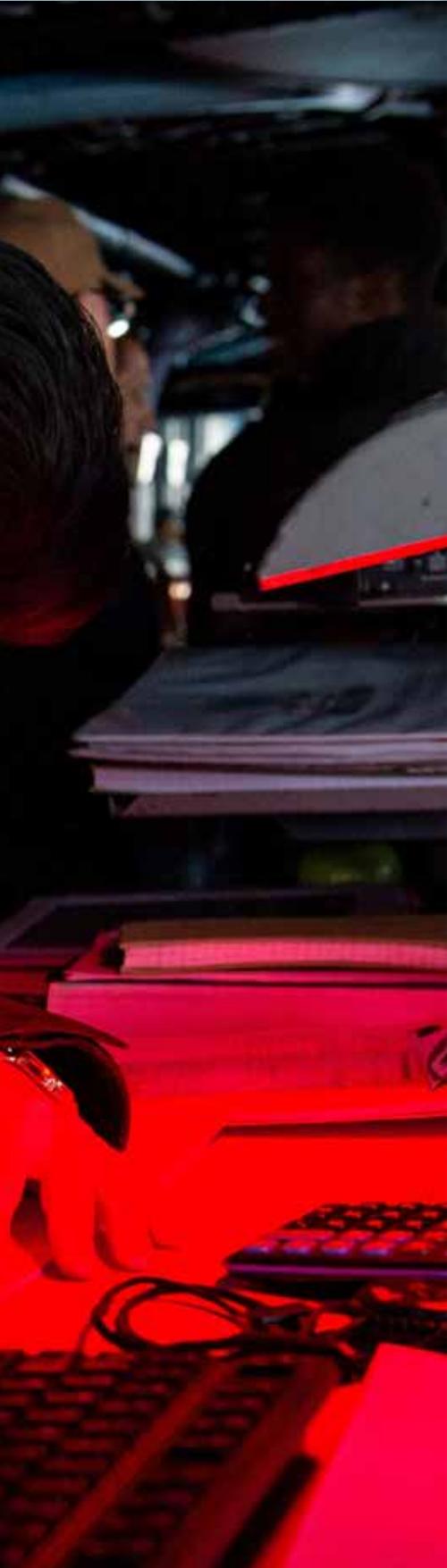
Lt. Cmdr. Caroline Stanton, a native of Dowagiac, Michigan, navigator aboard Essex, originally proposed the idea prior to Essex's deployment. She planned to gather data from the sky using a sextant, have her quartermasters aid in plotting the course, and have the helmsmen and Officers of the Deck (OODs), guide the ship according to her calculations instead of using Voyage Management System (VMS), an electronic mapping program similar to mapping apps on most smart phones.

To ensure a 100 percent electronic-free voyage, her plan included making all calculations by hand and having the navigation team plot the celestial fixes on paper as opposed to relying on the Navy's navigational computation system, known as STELLA. She explains the gravity of navigators being able to use CELNAV in the event that modern navigational methods become unavailable. "If you're out in the open ocean and you have no GPS, no land for radar, no visual reference points for bearing, and all you see is water around you – how do you know where you are? Or how to get to where you want to be? You have to use celestial sights," said Stanton



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
3rd Class Isaak Martinez*





The first step in navigating the 847 foot-long, 45,000 ton, multi-billion dollar warship and her approximated 3,000 crew members without electronic aid for almost 2000 nautical miles was for Stanton to get permission from Essex's Commanding Officer, Capt. Kelly Fletcher.

"Most commanding officers would've said, 'that's a great idea, but it's too risky. You can do CELNAV, but the OODs need VMS to steer,'" said Stanton. "Capt. Fletcher knows the reality of potentially losing navigation sources. As GPS denial and degradation capabilities increase from our adversaries, we have to get ahead of it or plan around it so we can still operate our Navy all over the world. She's a forward-thinker in that way."

As her right hand, Stanton embarked the help of O'Donnell, a fellow subject matter expert, who served as navigator aboard amphibious transport dock USS Anchorage (LPD 23) from 2014 to 2015. He currently serves as a SURFNAV course supervisor at SWOSCOLCOM in Newport, R.I., specializing in teaching CELNAV.

"Professionally, I wanted to prove that the Navy has capable navigators who can operate without complicated electronic systems," said O'Donnell, a native of Hingham, Massachusetts. "We proved that the Navy does have [at least] one of those navigators, Lt. Cmdr. Stanton, and I bet there are a few more of them out there. They just haven't been given the opportunity to prove themselves yet. Maybe Capt. Fletcher's example will inspire other commanding officers to do the same."

While trusting in her navigation team, Fletcher, a native of West Hempstead, New York, still needed to implement security measures to ensure the ship and crew's safe passage in case CELNAV was unsuccessful. Naval governing guidance for navigating requires ships to log their position, but the location was never shared with Stanton's navigation team or bridge watch standers. They were required to guide the ship completely by the Navigator's instructions.

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**PROFESSIONALLY, I WANTED TO PROVE THAT THE NAVY HAS CAPABLE NAVIGATORS WHO CAN OPERATE WITHOUT COMPLICATED ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS.**

*– Mr. Walt O'Donnell, Surface Navigator Course Supervisor,  
Surface Warfare Officers School Command*



**I WATCHED MANY ESSEX QUARTERMASTERS SHOOT THEIR OWN SUN LINES WITH A SEXTANT, HAVE LT. CMDR. STANTON OR I CALCULATE THEM, AND THEN PLOT OUR POSITION ON A PAPER CHART.**

*— Mr. Walt O'Donnell, Surface Navigator Course Supervisor,  
Surface Warfare Officers School Command*

While Stanton and O'Donnell navigated the ship from the bridge, watch standers in the Combat Information Center, or "Combat," aboard Essex silently tracked the ship's progress on GPS and VMS. If Essex traveled 10 nautical miles or more off its expected course, Combat had orders to intervene and get Essex back on track.

"The expectation was that we could do it, but we had to build in some safeties," said Stanton. "We had to keep the ship's position log as required by Navy doctrine, and Combat would watch us but provide no recommendations unless the ship got 10 nautical miles off track. But we couldn't use GPS at all to get back. I didn't even know where we were until I got a fix. At any given time I knew the approximate latitude and longitude of the ship, but not to the degree of decimal places like GPS does."





*Photos by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Brett McMinoway*

While the ship operates with different influences affecting it like current, wind, and human error among watch standers, steering a single degree off for a few hours makes a massive difference where you end up. "Every decision made for the course or speed change had to be intentional," said Stanton.

Yet over the course of her nearly-2,000 nautical miles voyage, Essex averaged a margin of only two nautical miles off track at any given time. Stanton stated, "On only one occasion did I get as far as five nautical miles off track, which was immediately corrected."

"While that may sound like a lot, five miles is nothing in the middle of the Pacific Ocean," said O'Donnell. "Overall, Lt. Cmdr. Stanton was the key to this success. If she had taken the easy way out and had given in to the administrative burdens of being the Navigator, instead of spending countless hours training her bridge watch standers and quartermasters, then Essex would not have been prepared for such a daunting undertaking."

While several bridge team members attest to Stanton's continuous CELNAV mentoring and training for watch standers since she came aboard in April 2021, the in-depth formal training and preparations for this voyage began at the start of deployment.

"I watched many Essex quartermasters shoot their own sun lines with a sextant, have Lt. Cmdr. Stanton or I calculate them, and then plot our position on a paper chart," said O'Donnell. "And they had that capability before I showed up, because Stanton and Chief Quartermaster Hamilton spent many hours teaching them these skills."

Stanton said she had the quartermasters and OODs keep separate celestial plots and dead reckonings, or predicted position based on courses steered and distance run from a last known position, from San Diego all the way to Guam, then again from Japan to Hawaii, during the beginning of the deployment. This was all to train them for the final leg of the journey back home.



**THERE'S THIS HISTORY THAT'S IN OUR BLOOD AS  
SAILORS - THAT THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE US  
NAVIGATED THEIR SHIPS BY THE STARS.**

*— Lt. Cmdr. Caroline Stanton*

"By the time we made this voyage, they knew what they were doing," said Stanton. "I can't state the value of the team enough, truly. Basically since the beginning of deployment they've been practicing this skill. That was the only way we could have done it because it requires so much accuracy. They were ready by the time we did it; it's something they can be really proud of."

Completing the voyage was a combined effort of not only the navigators, Stanton and O'Donnell, but also the team of quartermasters keeping accurate plots, the OODs interpreting and carrying out the planned route, and boatswain's mates standing helmsman watch to steer the ship true. All stations were manned 24 hours a day to ensure Essex's safe and expeditious transit from Pearl Harbor to her home port in San Diego.

"When you think of it from a bird's eye view that a navigator got a ship - a multibillion dollar asset - over 1,800 nautical miles from Hawaii to the continental U.S. using only celestial bodies, I think that sounds tremendously amazing," said Stanton. "Knowing we have a capital asset that we can deliver across a long voyage using no electronics is a huge deal, and providing value to the Navy so it can improve after I leave is very fulfilling. I'm very proud of that and thankful for the opportunity."

While Fletcher and the crew attribute the

successful venture to their navigator, Stanton credits the highly capable crew, especially their commanding officer. Stanton said CELNAV was extremely risky for Fletcher because if the Navigator didn't do well, then the Commanding Officer would take the fall for the risky decision.

"It took so much backbone for the captain to say yes," said Stanton. "It takes an intelligent, competent, and really careful person to analyze a plan and know what proper safeties to build in. There's a fine line between being brave and innovative and being reckless. The Navy doesn't want someone reckless, but we can't grow without taking risks. And that's what the Captain did. That's what needs to be rewarded the most - not what I've done as the navigator, but Capt. Fletcher saying, 'yes, you have my blessing. Go ahead.'"

Stanton said she believes CELNAV will play a larger role in the way the Navy trains future navigators. Essex's successful and timely arrival in San Diego with extreme precision demonstrates the U.S. Navy's ability to operate without GPS and electronic charts with several lessons learned along the way. These will be used to update course curriculum across the fleet and help better equip Navy surface navigators for celestial navigation, she said.

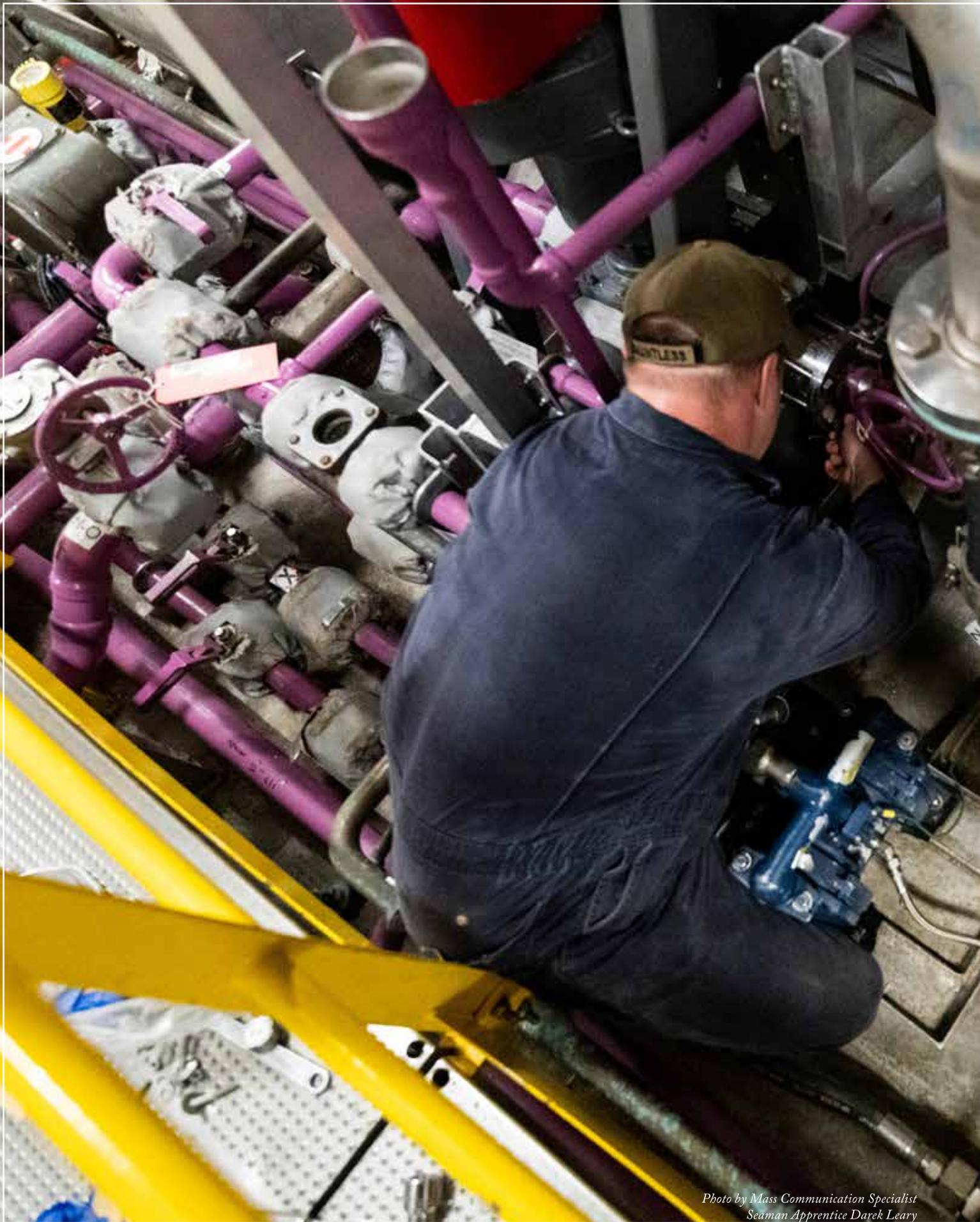
"There's this history that's in our blood as Sailors - that those who went before us navigated their ships by the stars," said Stanton. "We've gone away from it, and now to go back to it, I think there's this tremendous sense of belonging to this community in an old school way." †



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Brett McMinoway*



*Photo by Walter O'Donnell*



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
Seaman Apprentice Darek Leary*



# MAINTENANCE EXECUTION TEAMS

**CONTRIBUTE TO LCS  
SUSTAINABILITY,  
SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

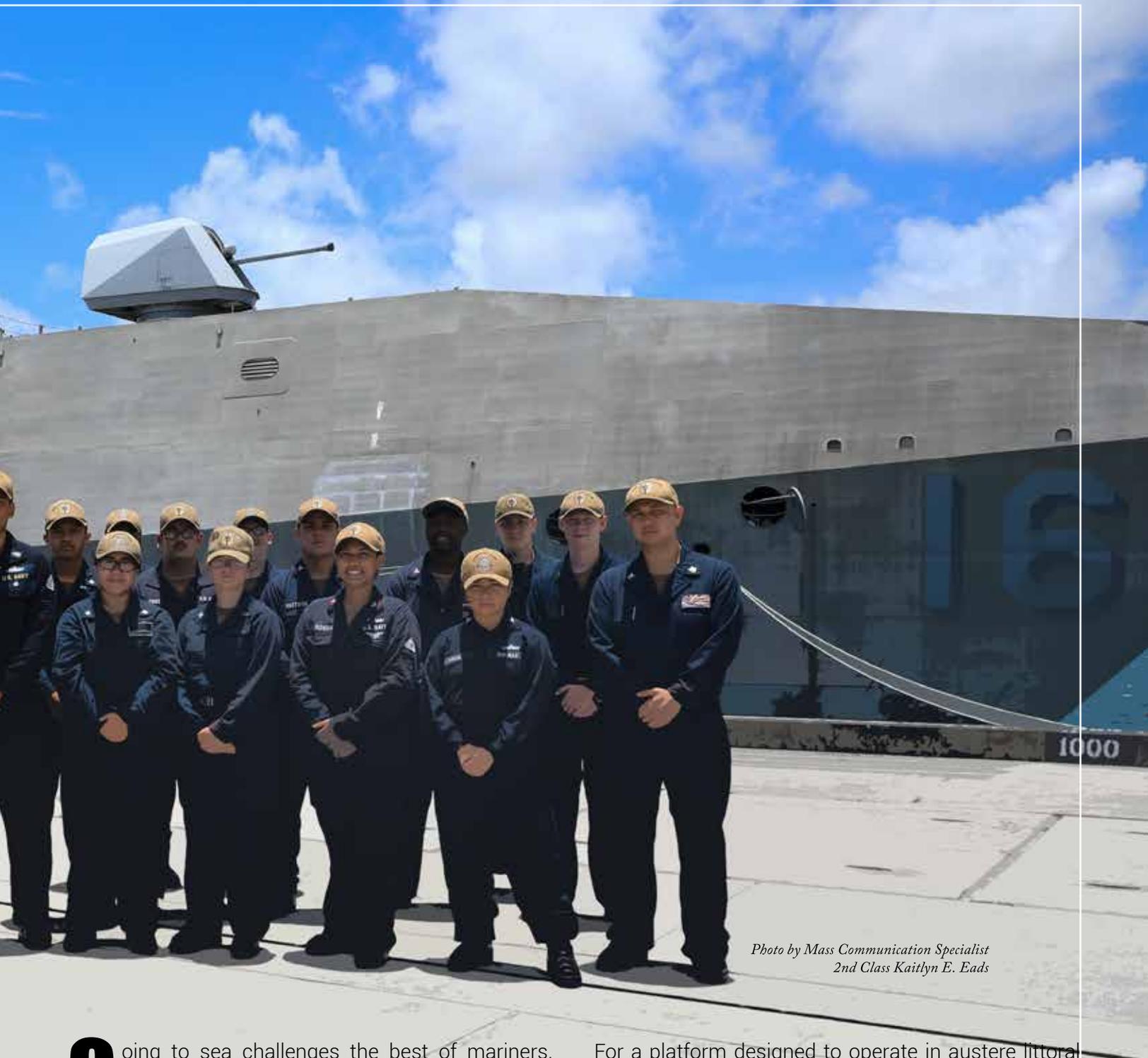
*Story by  
Commander, Naval Surface Force,  
U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs*



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**SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS INDISPENSABLE FOR  
MAINTAINING OUR COMBAT READINESS.  
OUR SAILORS HAVE TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT  
AND GET OUR SHIPS BACK INTO THE FIGHT.**

*— Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander,  
Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet*



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Kaitlyn E. Eads*

**G**oing to sea challenges the best of mariners. When your crew is only 100 Sailors depending on the variant or mission, time spent operating and maintaining the ship requires teamwork. So how does maintenance get done on a Littoral Combat Ship? With the help of LCS Maintenance Execution Teams (METs) who augment and support the minimally manned crews.

The Surface Force surges METs forward to conduct maintenance and repairs previously accomplished by contractors. This pivot to Sailor maintainers increases self-sufficiency and helps keep the LCS fit for sea.

For a platform designed to operate in austere littoral environments, self-sufficiency may be the difference between success or failure.

"Self-sufficiency is indispensable for maintaining our combat readiness," said Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. "When we go to war, it will be difficult to get engineers and techs out to ships and supply lines will be challenged. Our Sailors have to be self-sufficient and get our ships back into the fight. I have great confidence in our Sailors. We just need to give them the right tools, the right parts, and the time."



## THESE ARE HIGHLY MOTIVATED SAILORS WHO HAVE TREMENDOUS WORK ETHIC.

*— Lt Cmdr. William Rivers,  
LCS Class Program Manager Commander,  
Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.*

### WHO ARE THEY?

METs are technical experts. These Sailors understand the ins and outs of the LCS and know how to maintain these ships. The teams encompass various ratings from E-1 to E-8, including Damage Controlman (DC), Engineman (EN), Electrician's Mate (EM), Electronics Technician (ET), Gas Turbine System Technician Mechanical (GSM), Gunner's Mate (GM), and Fire Controlman (FC).

Each MET has about 31 Sailors who deploy to maintenance hubs in Guam, Singapore, and Puerto Rico. There, they integrate with the LCS crews, accomplishing thousands of preventive maintenance checks that allow Sailors assigned to the ship to balance maintenance requirements with training and qualifications. MET Sailors are also learning new skills from original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) that will enable them to conduct emergent and voyage level repairs.

"These are highly motivated Sailors who have tremendous work ethic," said Lt Cmdr. William Rivers, an LCS class program manager for Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. "When ships arrive at their maintenance hubs, these teams are ready to expedite maintenance and repairs."



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
3rd Class Aaron Lau*



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
3rd Class Aaron Lau*



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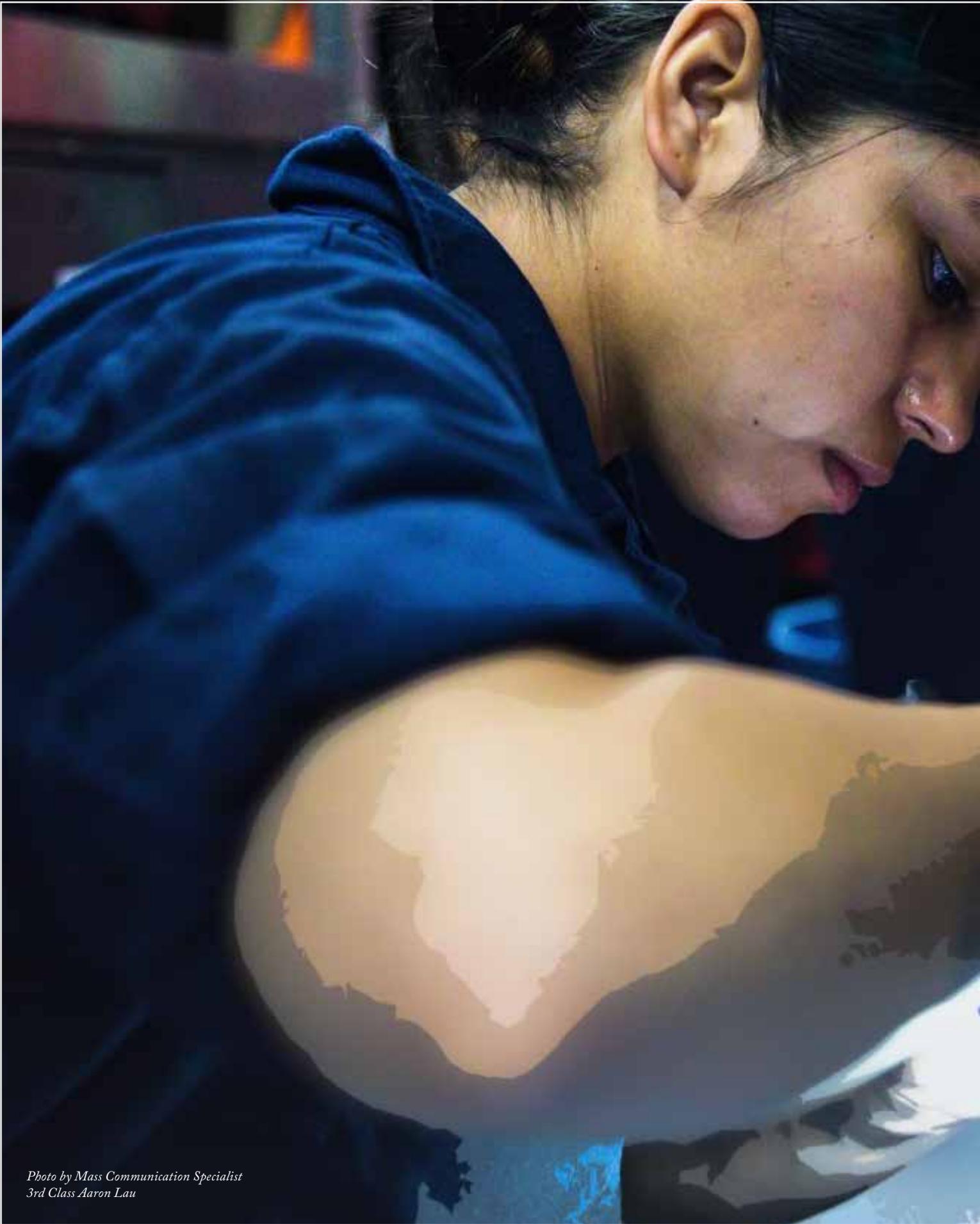
## MAINTAINING AN LCS IN A FORWARD OPERATING ENVIRONMENT IS NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART.

– Chief Warrant Officer Rob Mann,  
Department Head, Mine Division (COMMINDIV) 12.

## TOUGH AND CAPABLE SAILORS

Where there is a successful ship, there are tough and capable Sailors. Sailors fight and maintain the ship. They solve tough problems in the face of adversity. METs Sailors embrace toughness because they understand that in a deployed environment, maintaining an LCS is no easy task.

“Maintaining an LCS in a forward operating environment is not for the faint of heart,” said Chief Warrant Officer Rob Mann, who oversees the METs. “We need creative Sailors who can work their way through difficult challenges. Every time we send a MET forward, we build experience in maintaining the LCS. We’ll rely on this experience when push comes to shove.”



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
3rd Class Aaron Lau*



**THESE SAILORS STRENGTHEN OUR TEAMS  
AND ADD ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY IN HOW  
WE SUPPORT LCS CREWS.**

*– Rear Adm. Robert Nowakowski,  
Task Force LCS Lead for Commander,  
Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet.*

## INTEGRATED TEAMING

It takes more than toughness for METs to succeed. Building team chemistry and integrating talent take time. Pairing experienced Sailors with more junior Sailors is part of the MET's team building process. Junior personnel benefit from seasoned maintainers who provide on the job mentorship and instill the fortitude to overcome difficult maintenance challenges. The result of this integration is stronger, more capable teams.

The teams also benefit from integrating Reserve Sailors into METs.

"Active-Reserve integration adds depth and experience to METs," said Rear Adm. Robert Nowakowski, the Task Force LCS Lead for Commander, Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet. "These Sailors strengthen our teams and add additional flexibility in how we support LCS crews."



## CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

The METs concept is about building capability and capacity. Fleet Commanders need ships that are ready for tasking. These teams of maintainers ensure forward deployed LCS are ready when tasked.

In early 2021, METs conducted two availabilities with USS Tulsa (LCS 16) and USS Charleston (LCS 18) in Guam. METs from Mine Division 12 in San Diego met the ships and executed 100% of the current maintenance along with deferred checks from previous availabilities.

By the end of fiscal year 2022, the Surface Force expects METs to complete 65% of deployed LCS preventative maintenance. As skillsets and efficiency continue to improve, the aim is for METs to take on 95% of preventative maintenance availabilities by the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2024.

There's a broader role envisioned for METs that goes beyond preventive maintenance. A pilot group of eight Sailors are in training with an OEM to conduct maintenance on the twin-boom-extensible crane (TBEC) on the Independence variant of LCS. This training will provide LCS crews with a ready team to surge forward for troubleshooting equipment and tackling emergent maintenance. MET leaders noted similar training initiatives are in place to have maintenance teams engaged in voyage level repairs. The end goal, MET leaders note, is to train Sailors who know the LCS and its equipment so well that they can make the necessary repairs to keep LCS in the fight no matter where it's deployed.

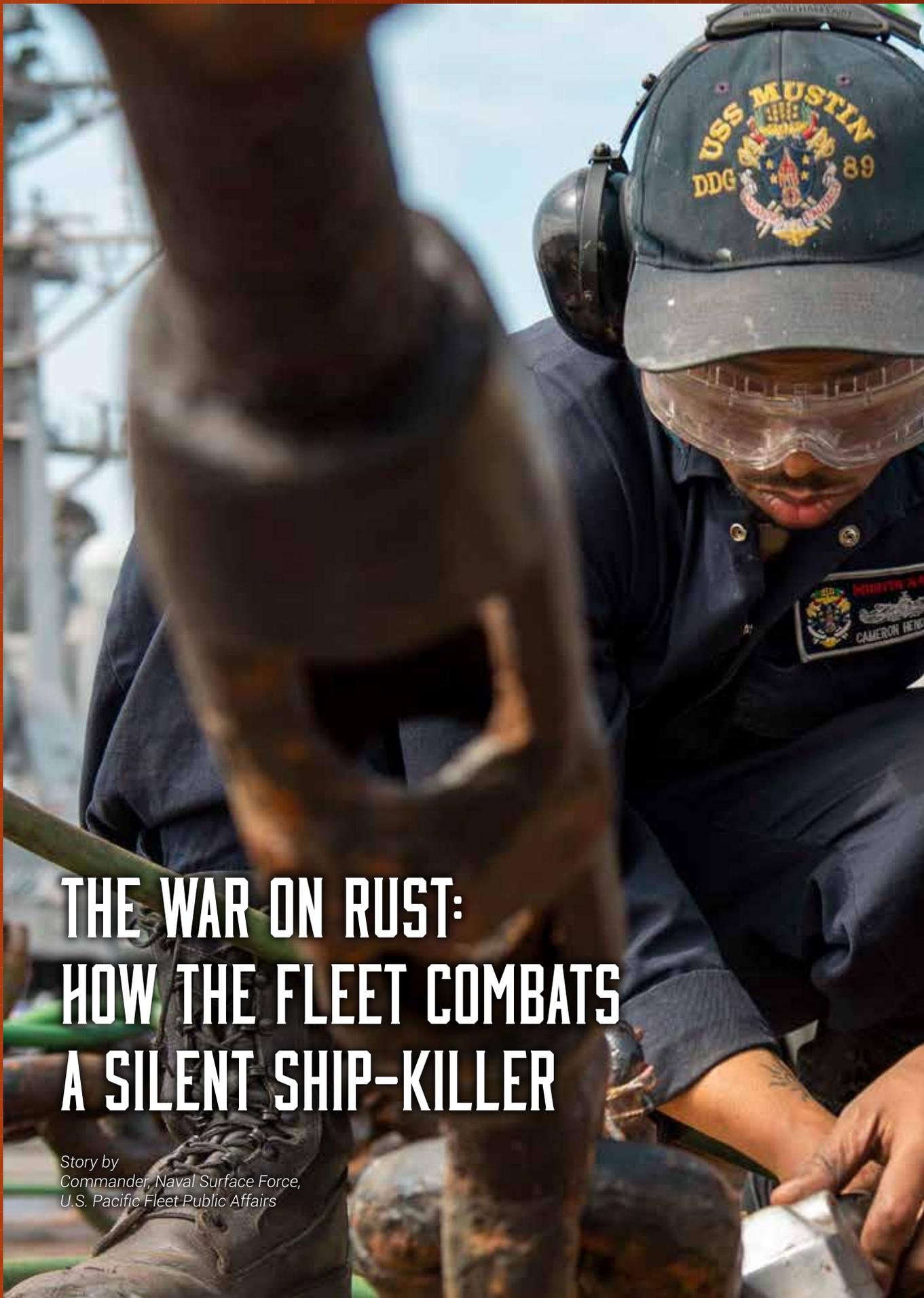
"The concept of the METs is still evolving and we are looking for the best ways to employ their talents," said Chief Electrician's Mate Mike Cochran, departmental leading chief petty officer of the LCS METs. "The capabilities and capacity will grow as we get more senior personnel and as the junior Sailors get more training and experience. METs are helping us create the kind of self-sufficiency we need to keep LCS in the fight." ↓

*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
3rd Class Aaron Lau*

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**METS ARE HELPING US CREATE THE KIND  
OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY WE NEED TO KEEP  
LCS IN THE FIGHT.**

*— Chief Electrician's Mate Mike Cochran,  
Departmental Leading Chief Petty Officer of the LCS METs.*



# THE WAR ON RUST: HOW THE FLEET COMBATS A SILENT SHIP-KILLER

Story by  
Commander, Naval Surface Force,  
U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
3rd Class Erica K. R. Higa*

***Navy ships are designed to withstand extreme elements, but consistent preservation from Sailors is key.***

Topside of USS Makin Island (LHD 8), the deck department is busy cleaning, sanding, and painting the exterior of their distinctive haze grey vessel. The ship sits pierside at Naval Base San Diego and its Sailors don personal protective equipment (PPE) as they work hard to keep the vessel looking pristine.

Navy ships are designed to withstand extreme elements, but consistent preservation from Sailors is key. When rust threatens a ship's structural integrity, deck department gets to work fighting their elemental enemy.





**IT TAKES TIME TO GET OUR SHIP TO LOOK THE WAY  
IT LOOKS NOW, BUT WE ALWAYS GET IT DONE.**

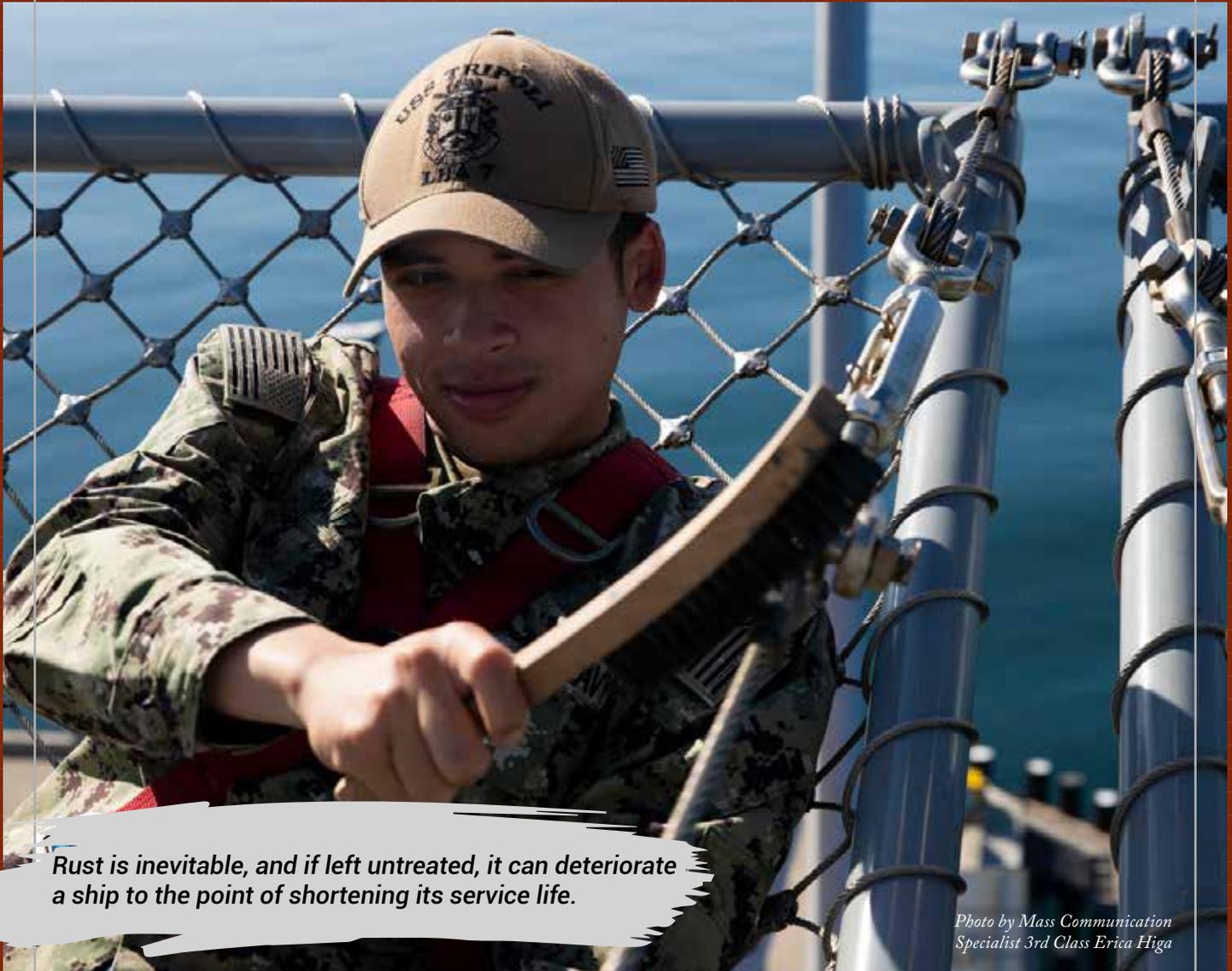
*– Maurice Wiley, Chief Warrant Officer,  
USS Makin Island*

Chief Boatswain's Mate Jordan Magdelenski, aboard Makin Island, said that when a warship constantly goes to sea, saltwater takes a heavy toll on its exterior. "When rust occurs, it is the responsibility of the deck department to make the ship look good," said Magdelenski.

The deck department workforce is made up of hard-working professionals who train, direct, operate, and conduct maintenance operations, among other topside shipboard duties. The boatswains mates, alongside a cadre of undesignated seamen are the backbone of a shipboard crew.

The primary responsibility of a boatswain's mate is taking care of the ship. Chief Warrant Officer Maurice Wiley, the Boatswain aboard Makin Island, is confident that he can accomplish this with his team. "They're in charge of painting the hull from forward to aft, a length of approximately 847 feet," said Wiley. "It takes time to get our ship to look the way it looks now, but we always get it done."

It is evident that USS Makin Island's deck department has put in an extensive amount of effort to preserve its ship. It has been cleaned and painted to perfection, without a single streak of rust. The crew takes an immense amount pride in its appearance.



**Rust is inevitable, and if left untreated, it can deteriorate a ship to the point of shortening its service life.**

*Photo by Mass Communication  
Specialist 3rd Class Erica Higa*

Makin Island completed a seven-month deployment in October 2021 with limited port visits and minimal opportunities for proper ship preservation. "COVID-19 played a big part in us not being able to preserve the ship like we normally would," said Wiley. The global pandemic prevented the Navy from pulling into port due to the concern of deployed Sailors becoming infected and bringing coronavirus back to their close quarters, risking the rest of the crew's health and safety. Any time we'd pull into port, we wanted to paint the side of the ship because we're representing the United States Navy, and we want to represent it well."



*Photos by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Marianne Guemo*

“  
IT'S DIRTY AND MESSY, BUT IT'S THE FACE OF A  
SHIP, AND THE REPRESENTATION OF WHAT THE  
NAVY REALLY IS.

— *Elijah Jenkins-Hall, Boatswain's Mate Seaman,  
USS Makin Island*

Boatswain's Mate Seaman Elijah Jenkins-Hall from USS Makin Island, said a ship in need of preservation is not every Sailor's cup of tea. "A lot of people don't like the sides of a ship," he said. "It's dirty and messy, but it's the face of a ship, and the representation of what the Navy really is. It's not the work that everyone wants to do, but it has to get done."

Rust is inevitable, and if left untreated, it can deteriorate a ship to the point of shortening its service life. However, a ship with rust does not imply the crew lacks readiness or lacks

pride in its appearance. Rather, it may show that they are due for a port visit.

The deck department aboard USS Hopper (DDG 70) also added its take on ship preservation.

"If preservation doesn't happen at all or the proper way, the ship will weaken, you'll get holey decks, holey bulkheads, and just more work in the end when people realize that we should get preservation efforts going," said Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Valles.



**TO DO PRESERVATION THE CORRECT WAY IS A TIMELY EVOLUTION, YOU NEED TO PICK THE AREA YOU'RE GOING TO PRESERVE, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE PROPER TOOLS AND ALWAYS WIPE DOWN.**

*– Gary McCoy, Boatswain's Mate 1st Class,  
USS Makin Island*

Due to the constant exposure to salt water, even when a ship is in port, ship preservation is always a priority. Shipboard crews devote considerable time and effort to maintaining the interior and exterior areas of a ship while also balancing operational requirements and adhering to Navy shipboard procedures along with federal and state environmental regulations.

Chief Quartermaster Adam Congello, acting BMC, aboard USS Hopper said the majority of exterior preservation must take place while a ship is pierside. "Underway it is almost impossible to preserve topside," said Congello. "You can work on an area, sand and prime it, but when one wave comes over the bow, it

will take all that hard work away. Moreover, the salt doesn't help."

Salt water causes metals to rust quickly, and it does not need full exposure to the water – something as light as salt spray can create damage. U.S. Navy deck departments take specific actions in a precise order to restore their ships, and the Sailors of USS Makin Island and USS Hopper explained the steps in detail.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Gary McCoy from USS Hopper gave a rundown of what preservation looks like on their ship once it has pulled into port.

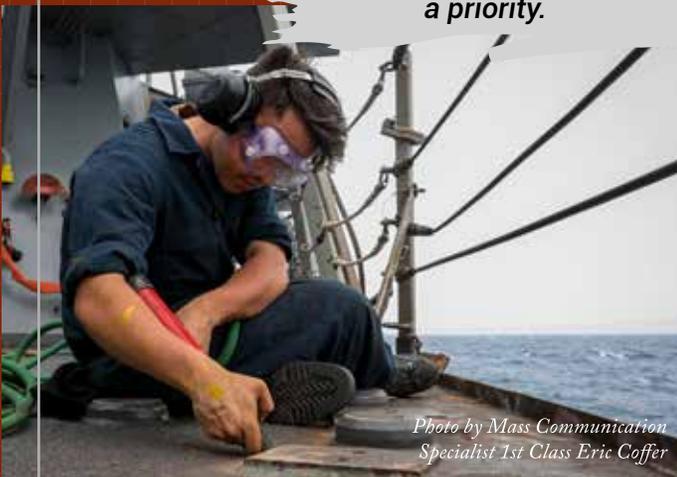


*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Eric Coffey*



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Isaac A. Rodriguez*

**Due to the constant exposure to salt water, even when a ship is in port, ship preservation is always a priority.**



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Eric Coffey*



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jessica Kibena*

"To do preservation the correct way is a timely evolution," said McCoy. "You need to pick the area you're going to preserve, make sure you have the proper tools and always wipe down your area. Start preparation by using water and rags. When you're done, you take your needle gun and hit rust spots until its busted away. Grab that fresh bucket of water and wipe it down again. Get your sander and

feather out the rough edges. You have to wipe down the area next, and then apply two coats of primer, and rough sand the primer with sand paper. Finally, you can paint it. You need to make sure your area is very clean when you do preservation."

He added that Hopper is an older ship and deck department is committed and proud to keep it looking good.

Most ships serve for more than 20 years, which is a testimony to how well the Navy cares for its ships. It would not be possible without personnel having the proper equipment and materials, being adequately trained in the correct application of these materials, and taking pride in doing a good job.

Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Jacob Mansur said that while preservation of a ship is important, a necessary component to the process on a ship is the strength of the deck division.

"Deck has to preserve everything topside; they start preservation from forward to aft, and by the time they reach to aft, forward will need to be preserved again," Mansur said. "Since our junior Sailors have to manage the work, they deal with the responsibility to uphold the cosmetics of the ship, which can

weigh on their morale, so I believe your division is your pride."

"The comradery in the deck department is like a family," said Jenkins-Hall. It's all about having your energy, and coming in and giving 110 percent."

Valles said he enjoys the final product of his newly preserved ship. "Preservation is one of those things you want to get done and over with, but once you get that needle gun going, it's oddly satisfying. When you finish the job and think about the before and after, you think 'wow, I made that happen. I took that rusted bulkhead and turned it into a haze gray masterpiece – now what's next?'"

Luckily for Valles and other deck department Sailors that want to know what's next, preservation teams must start the process over again before returning to sea. †



**THE COMRADERY IN THE DECK DEPARTMENT IS LIKE A FAMILY, IT'S ALL ABOUT HAVING YOUR ENERGY, AND COMING IN AND GIVING 110 PERCENT.**

*– Elijah Jenkins-Hall, Boatswain's Mate Seaman,  
USS Makin Island*



*Photos by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Daniel Serianni*



**Most ships serve for more than 20 years, which is a testimony to how well the Navy cares for its ships.**

# LT. THOMAS WESTER NAMED SHIPHANDLER OF THE YEAR

Story by

Commander, Naval Surface Force,  
U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs



Surface warfare officers (SWOs) are expert handlers of their ships charged with braving all types of weather, formation maneuvers, channels and fairways in ports and harbors. The Shiphandler of the Year is the SWO that represents the pinnacle of performance in these areas. Each year, The Shiphandler of the Year award is presented to the SWO who demonstrates superior performance while standing officer of the deck underway and excel at the art of naval shiphandling. This year, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CNSP) presented the award to Lt. Thomas Wester.

Wester most recently served onboard USS Howard (DDG 83), operating throughout the Indo-Pacific with both the Carl Vinson and Ronald Reagan Strike Groups. Wester and his ship conducted various integrated fires exercises such as Noble Jaguar

and Katana Strike, and sailed to Wellington, New Zealand, helping Howard become the first U.S. navy destroyer to do so in five years.

"From day one in the Navy, you're continually being tested," said Wester. "As a SWO, you must quickly learn that it's impossible to succeed alone, without working together as a team. I consider myself extremely fortunate to represent the amazing crew onboard USS Howard, who are an inspiration and helped me get to where I am today."

Wester fundamentally believes success is a team effort and said the award is a direct representation of the hard work and dedication of the Sailors and leaders who helped him along his way, along with his family. "From the commanding officers and executive officers who provided unparalleled mentorship, trust, and opportunities, to the peers





**AS A SWO, YOU MUST QUICKLY LEARN THAT  
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SUCCEED ALONE, WITHOUT  
WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM.**

*— Lt. Thomas Wester*

who constantly challenged and pushed me, to the Sailors who I served with on the bridge, to the civilian instructors at the simulators, this award is a reflection of the team effort required in every aspect of service in the Navy," said Wester. "Every success of mine is directly attributed to the unwavering and loving support my family provides. Their support serves as the very foundation of who I am."

Speaking about leadership, Wester said he considers one of the most important characteristics of a leader is humility, which in his opinion plays a vital role in building lasting relationships.

Wester's advice for junior officers is to be a sponge. "Learn from everyone around you and don't be afraid to ask questions," he said. "From the most junior technician to the captain, everyone has different experiences, insights, and perspectives.

Don't become so consumed with the "what" – seek to understand the "how" and "why." It's important to recognize that when you're on a ship far out at sea, your knowledge can mean the difference between life and death."

He also offered up advice to future ship handlers by recalling a quote by the late Adm. Ernest J. King: "The mark of a great shiphandler is never getting into situations that require great shiphandling." This advises leaders to recognize their problems before they become problems, and to always have a plan that considers what could go wrong.

Wester currently serves as the battle watch captain of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Allied Maritime Command in Northwood, United Kingdom. He will be recognized at the Surface Navy Association (SNA) National Symposium in January. †



*Photos by U.S. Navy*

# Gone but Never Forgotten: USS Fitzgerald & USS John S. McCain Five Years Later

PHILIPPINE SEA – Five years after the collision that took the lives of seven Sailors, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and her crew held a remembrance ceremony for the fallen while on deployment in U.S. 7th Fleet.

*Story by Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs*

On June 17, 2017 Fitzgerald collided with Philippines-flagged container ship MV ACX Crystal, 56 nautical miles southwest of Yokosuka, Japan. Chief Fire Controlman Gary Rehm, Gunner's Mate 1st Class Noe Hernandez, Personnel Specialist 1st Class Xavier A. Martin, Fire Controlman 1st Class Carlos V. Sibayan, Yeoman 3rd Class Shingo A. Douglass, Sonar Technician (Surface) 3rd Class Ngoc T. Truong and Gunner's Mate Seaman Dakota K. Rigsby, all perished in the subsequent flooding in their berthing.

Fitzgerald flew the ship remembrance flag throughout the day. The ceremony began with an invocation from Chaplain Brandon Greene over the 1MC to honor the fallen and the safety of all crews at sea.

Cmdr. David Catterall, commanding officer of Fitzgerald, also spoke to the crew.

"We must never forget the fallen, they made the ultimate sacrifice," said Catterall. "Every day we are out here, we must never forget the dangerous nature of our jobs and why readiness and safety must always be at the forefront."

Fitzgerald is on its first deployment since the collision and is currently serving in the U.S. 7th Fleet.

The ship won the CY21 VADM Thomas Copeman III material readiness award, demonstrating the team understands that the foundation of a safe deployment is material readiness.

"Our training and watch qualifications maintain adherence to community requirements, while being underpinned by a thorough and effective briefing and debriefing process that ensures lessons learned are lessons applied to future evolutions," said Catterall. †



“

EVERY DAY WE ARE OUT HERE, WE MUST NEVER FORGET THE DANGEROUS NATURE OF OUR JOBS AND WHY READINESS AND SAFETY MUST ALWAYS BE AT THE FOREFRONT.

— *Cmdr. David Catterall,  
commanding officer of USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62)*

*Photo by Mass Communication  
Specialist 3rd Class Catie Coyle*

## *We must never forget...*

*Five years ago today, our Navy lost ten shipmates when the McCain collided with a tanker. As our Navy continues to operate and adapt in an increasingly competitive security environment, we must never forget our past — we must learn from it.*

*—Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday*



*(Top) IT2 Corey George Ingram, IC1 Abraham Lopez, IC3 Logan Stephen Palmer  
ET3 John Henry Hoagland III, ET3 Dustin Louis Doyon,  
(Bottom) ET2 Jacob Daniel Drake, IT2 Timothy Thomas Eckels Jr., ET1 Charles Nathan Findley,  
ET3 Kenneth Aaron Smith, ET2 Kevin Sayer Busbell*



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
1st Class Torrey W. Lee*



*Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Catie Coyle*

# Tactical Excellence by Design: WTIs Deliver High ROI

Story by  
SMWDC Public Affairs



"The best thing a surface warfare officer can do to prepare for command at sea is to qualify as a warfare tactics instructor," said Rear Adm. Christopher Alexander, commander, Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SMWDC). "The return on investment for the Navy, and an individual in their professional development, is second to none."

Surface warfare officers (SWOs) looking to gain a competitive edge with specialization in advanced tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP), weapon systems development processes, and cutting-edge warfighting experimentation, can qualify as a warfare tactics instructor (WTI) in one of four warfare areas: anti-submarine and surface warfare (ASW/SUW), integrated air and missile defense (IAMD), amphibious warfare (AMW) or mine warfare (MIW).

Since the WTI program's inception in 2015, over 600 tactically-minded warfighters completed

WTI courses of instruction (COI) and eight years later the majority still contribute to the increased lethality of the surface force. SWOs who qualified early in the lifecycle of the WTI program are now post-commander-command Captains and can attest to the return on investment (ROI) of the WTI program.

"As a commanding officer, the training I received as a WTI directly contributed to not only my tactical decision making, but also to the way I approached tactical training aboard my ship," said Capt. Chad Trubilla, director of SMWDC's Fleet Training Directorate Pacific (FT-P) and former commanding officer of USS Rafael Peralta (DDG 115). "As a SMWDC

Plankowner, I completed my IAMD WTI COI, and accompanying WTI production tour, post-department head afloat, due the newly created command and associated WTI course at that time."





**AS A COMMANDING OFFICER, THE TRAINING I RECEIVED AS A WTI DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED TO NOT ONLY MY TACTICAL DECISION MAKING, BUT ALSO TO THE WAY I APPROACHED TACTICAL TRAINING ABOARD MY SHIP.**

*– Capt. Chad Trubilla,  
director of SMWDC's Fleet Training  
Directorate Pacific (FT-P)*

"Nonetheless, I can attest the immediate ROI was tangible, from the aspect of my approach to real-world mission execution all the way down to how I chose to conduct warfare qualification boards aboard Rafael Peralta," Trubilla continued. "Furthermore, witnessing the performance of my junior officer WTIs, and their magnificent tactical and technical expertise at such an early point in their careers, was awe inspiring."

WTI training is open to highly-qualified SWOs (designators 1110/1117) in paygrades O1 to O4. Senior officers may audit the COIs but are not eligible to earn the WTI additional qualification designator.

Regardless of rank, the ethos of "Warrior, Thinker, Teacher" and "Humble, Credible, Approachable" is embodied across the WTI cadre throughout their production tours and in the fleet.

"As soon as I stepped aboard my ship after the AMW WTI class, I immediately started training the ship in any capacity they allowed me to," said Lt. Meagan Barron, an AMW WTI who now supports SMWDC's WTI Management Cell. "From wardroom training on the commanding officer's battle orders down to duty section training, I didn't care what it was – I wanted to teach and train at the level SMWDC trains at."

WTI COIs are tactically-challenging, fast-paced courses that teach techniques, watchstanding procedures, and advanced TTP. Courses range from three to six months in length, are typically offered on a quarterly basis, and beginning in 2024 will be located at the Surface Advanced Warfighting School (SAWS) in San Diego, Calif. regardless of warfare specialty area.



"Becoming a WTI was very challenging for me, but I am proud to wear the AMW WTI patch on my uniform," said Barron. "I know the investment from SMWDC in my training helped me return to the fleet and form a more cohesive team that was ready to perform."

Completing the COI can occur at any time in a junior officer's career regardless of their sea-shore rotation timeline. When a newly qualified WTI is due for their next shore tour they will be slated into a production tour to directly contribute to one of SMWDC's five lines of effort: advanced tactical training; doctrine and tactical guidance development; operational support to combatant commanders, numbered fleet commanders, and task force commanders; capability assessments, experimentation, and future requirements; or WTI production.

"A production tour is where we really see the ROI from our WTIs," said Alexander. "These tactical experts typically return to SMWDC and

develop and teach the concepts needed to increase the proficiency of the surface force and prepare warships and their crews to prevail in the high-end fight."

In addition to traditional production tours planning and leading SMWDC's flagship Surface Warfare Advanced Tactical Training (SWATT) exercises or working on TTP development and teaching a COI at SAWS, WTI's now have shore duty opportunities working at program executive offices to provide real-time fleet feedback into the weapons system development process.

"What I'm really excited for is the new production opportunities for WTIs and the investment we're making in our SWOs," said Alexander. "In addition to refining and expanding our production tour billets, we're also working on creating new opportunities for WTIs to complete graduate education or other highly sought-after shore tours."



**THESE TACTICAL EXPERTS TYPICALLY RETURN TO SMWDC AND DEVELOP AND TEACH THE CONCEPTS NEEDED TO INCREASE THE PROFICIENCY OF THE SURFACE FORCE AND PREPARE WARSHIPS AND THEIR CREWS TO PREVAIL IN THE HIGH-END FIGHT.**

*– Rear Adm. Christopher Alexander,  
commander, Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting  
Development Center (SMWDC)*



**I KNOW THE INVESTMENT FROM SMWDC IN MY TRAINING HELPED ME RETURN TO THE FLEET AND FORM A MORE COHESIVE TEAM THAT WAS READY TO PERFORM.**

*– Lt. Meagan Barron,  
Amphibious Warfare (AMW)  
Warfare Tactics Instructor (WTI)*

One such WTI to take advantage of the expanded opportunities for graduate education was Lt. Joshua Miller, an ASW/SUW WTI who earned his Master of Arts in Homeland Defense from Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., in 2022.

“I believe earning a master’s degree at the Naval Postgraduate School and becoming a WTI during my shore duty were steps in the right direction toward my professional goals of being an outstanding Department Head and ultimately being a Destroyer Commanding Officer,” said Miller.

High-performing SWOs who are interested in becoming WTIs should communicate with their commanding officers – each commanding officer can select one officer annually to bypass

the traditional WTI application process and receive a guaranteed spot in their preferred warfare COI through the “Red Chip” program. Additionally, all perspective WTIs require a commanding officer’s endorsement for consideration.

Interested officers should reach out to the WTI Management Cell at [swo\\_wti@navy.mil](mailto:swo_wti@navy.mil) for more information about the application process and updated timelines for the WTI selection board which typically meets six times a year.

For a glimpse into the life of a WTI or to learn more about the WTI Management Cell, follow the team on Instagram at [@swo\\_wti](https://www.instagram.com/swo_wti) – you won’t regret it. †



# Task Force Hopper: Surface Force Moves Toward Data-Driven Decision-Making

*Story by Commander, Naval Surface  
Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs*

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**ANALYTICS AND AI/ML ENABLED CAPABILITIES ARE A  
GAME CHANGER TO ACHIEVING DECISION ADVANTAGE.**

*– Capt. Peter Kim  
Task Force Hopper Lead*

The Information Age is transforming the character of warfare. In the coming years, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) will touch and impact every aspect of naval operations. If this technology is implemented with speed and scale, it will provide a decision advantage that will enhance the competitive edge of the Surface Force.

Task Force Hopper was established to enable AI and ML implementation and integration across the Surface Force. Named for the late Rear Adm. Grace Hopper, a pioneer of computer science, Task Force Hopper plays a leading role in laying the keel for artificial intelligence (AI) and ML. The Task Force’s primary function is to create a complex digital infrastructure that drives a cultural transformation to utilize AI-enabled capabilities across the Surface Force.

At the head of Task Force Hopper is Capt. Peter Kim, who leads the Surface Analytics Group.

“Analytics and AI/ML enabled capabilities are a game changer to achieving decision advantage,” said Kim. “There is a huge demand signal that is driving the Surface Force to integrate, share, and exploit data at speed and scale.”

One of the initial goals of Task Force Hopper is to ensure the Surface Force has access to clean and accessible data that will enable development environments for AI/ML to thrive while finding and recruiting talented Surface Warriors who have digital backgrounds and talent. The goal is to get the infrastructure and talent right, and this will be the foundation to scale AI/ML across the force.



Another key lead in Task Force Hopper is Lt. Brandon Strain, a Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) who came to the team with a background in AI/ML. Strain drew parallels from the Surface Force's decision to work toward an AI infrastructure to the Combat Information Center (CIC) Handbook from 1943, when Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet was Commander, Destroyers Pacific Fleet. This document shows that leaders knew there was a need for data analytics to be leveraged for decision making in the Navy.

"We find ourselves in a place where decision makers are overwhelmed by information," said Strain. "The 1943 CIC Handbook shows that we have found ourselves in this situation before; WWII commanding officers dealt with information overload from the addition of RADAR to ships. The CIC Handbook lays down the core principles by which we can (again) take advantage of information overload: we are building data driven decision making CICs across the force to support lethality, maintenance, and administration."

The data the task force plans to mine can be thought of similarly to oil. While oil can be used to make gasoline and jet fuel, if left unrefined, the oil cannot be consumed. The same can be said for data – if there is raw data but no way to properly filter it, the data cannot be applied to a data-reliant system or report.

"AI is wholly dependent on high-quality and accurate data," said Kim. "We believe that data management is the most important discipline for our era, and that's what we want to focus on. One of our initiatives was to draft a data AI strategy and implementation plan for the force to establish that structure."





**WE BELIEVE THAT DATA MANAGEMENT IS THE MOST  
IMPORTANT DISCIPLINE FOR OUR ERA.**

*– Capt. Peter Kim  
Task Force Hopper Lead*

Task Force Hopper's primary objective is to operationalize AI/ML solutions that enhance Sailors' effectiveness at sea and ashore. Their projects will add measureable value to the Surface Warfare Enterprise by addressing fleet needs and increasing efficiency in maintenance, administrative, and lethality.

Maintenance will be addressed through conditions-based maintenance, optimizing shipboard maintenance workflows, and generating shipyard efficiencies, which are proven industry capabilities with wide applicability in the Surface Warfare Enterprise.

Administrative efficiency will be conducted through personnel management, supply distribution, business analytics, and other administrative functions that have automation and cost-savings potential.

The Surface Force is improving its warfighting effectiveness by gathering existing data on maintenance, weapons systems and sensor performance, ship survivability, surface warfare training, and unmanned vehicle performance.

Sailors on the deckplates are the originators of the data that the surface force analyzes and uses. Every time they write a job, log training, or submit reports, they are contributing to the data sets which drive Task Force Hopper's efforts. Once the data is organized and collated, that data becomes the fuel for AI/ML tools that drives efficiency and effectiveness in processes and work flows.



This efficiency comes through a federated model and approach to data governance. By using a federated model approach to data governance, Task Force Hopper is creating data standards with a centralized data catalog. Currently the task force utilizes a platform known as Jupiter, which serves as the Naval Enterprise data and analytics environment. It will also be employed as a platform for data storage, cleaning, and the development of AI models.

Data professionals, also known as distributed nodes, provide their central hub with data dictionaries, updates on ongoing analytics and AI initiatives at their commands, and data to support analytics and AI projects at other nodes. The nodes will align themselves with their parent command's priorities to provide technical expertise and subject matter expertise.

Along with data governance, having the right team of professionals with digital experience to oversee these efforts is paramount. Without digital talent, this Task Force cannot meet its goals, and their ability to adapt depends on the development of a new generation of skills. Individuals must be involved with the infrastructure because AI will not run correctly on its own – AI still needs a human to discern what data is correct, organized, and to edit when necessary.

Task Force Hopper's next steps are to scale its data gathering efforts to provide access to data and computing environments to tenant commands across the Surface Warfare Enterprise so that commanders at every level will be able to make better and faster decisions, and build tools to automate and streamline their current business processes.

The task force recognizes that the failure to adopt AI/ML and evolve the Surface Warfare Enterprise's culture to leverage its use will result in a loss of naval supremacy and by extension, lead to a decline in national prosperity. †



*Photo by U.S. Navy*

# Surface Warfare Officers of the Year

Story by  
Commander, Naval Surface Force,  
U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs





Surface warfare officers (SWOs) have one of the most distinguished, time-honored roles in the Navy. They are tactical warfighters, skilled ship drivers, and are among the most highly trained mariners in the world. From combat systems to navigation, shipboard engineering, and damage control, SWOs are the Navy's subject matter experts for anything and everything surface warfare.

Although SWOs are already a part of the most prestigious Navy community, two individuals stand out each year. These SWOs are selected from the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets and honored with an esteemed award: the SWO of the Year. This year's winners are Lt. Cmdr. Matt Intoccia (Atlantic) and Lt. Cmdr. Corey Campos (Pacific).





**TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY IN THIS WAY  
INSPIRES ME TO BE BETTER THAN I AM.**

*– Lt. Cmdr. Matt Intoccia*

Intoccia was selected as SWO of the Year for Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet while assigned to the Cyclone-class patrol coastal ship USS Tempest (PC 2). Intoccia currently serves as the combatant modernization resource officer at the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (N96). “I’m incredibly humbled by my selection,” said Intoccia. “There are so many deserving officers in the fleet – to be considered by Commander, Naval Surface Forces Atlantic to be among the best in our community is such an honor. And to represent the community in this way inspires me to be better than I am – I will do my best to live up to this honor.”



*Photo by U.S. Navy*

Tempest was decommissioned in Bahrain on March 7, 2022 after 29 years of service. The ship was the oldest serving patrol ship in the U.S. Navy. In its last year of service, Tempest partnered with USS Typhoon (PC 5) and with their embarked U.S. Coast Guard team, they conducted multiple interdictions with a high seizure yield.

Intoccia attributes his success to his family, including his wife and their son. "My wife has selflessly

sacrificed so much, including her own career ambitions, to take care of our family while we move around the world, serving our country," said Intoccia. "She is my shining example of servant leadership and I am lucky to have her in my life. I am a better naval officer and a better man because of her. And my son is a kind and generous young man, who also knows the worth of sacrifice for service to country. I am proud of who he is becoming and he challenges me to be better every day."



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
1st Class Mark Thomas Mahmud*



He also thanked his commodores – Capt. Jeff Baker and Capt. Rob Francis who enabled him to execute mission command and gave clear direction. Intoccia said he will carry their lessons with him for life and that he's eternally grateful for their confidence and wisdom.

Last, Intoccia thanked the crew of Tempest. "They are particularly special to me since they served alongside me as I learned how to be

a commanding officer," said Intoccia. "They treated each other with dignity and respect in all things. They were passionate and professionally curious. And I attribute our own mission accomplishment to their 'extra-mile' commitment to protecting our national interests and regional stability in U.S. 5th Fleet. I'm honored to call myself their captain and whatever success I saw in command was because of them."



*Photo by U.S. Navy*



*Photo by Sgt. Brandon Franklin  
U.S. Army*



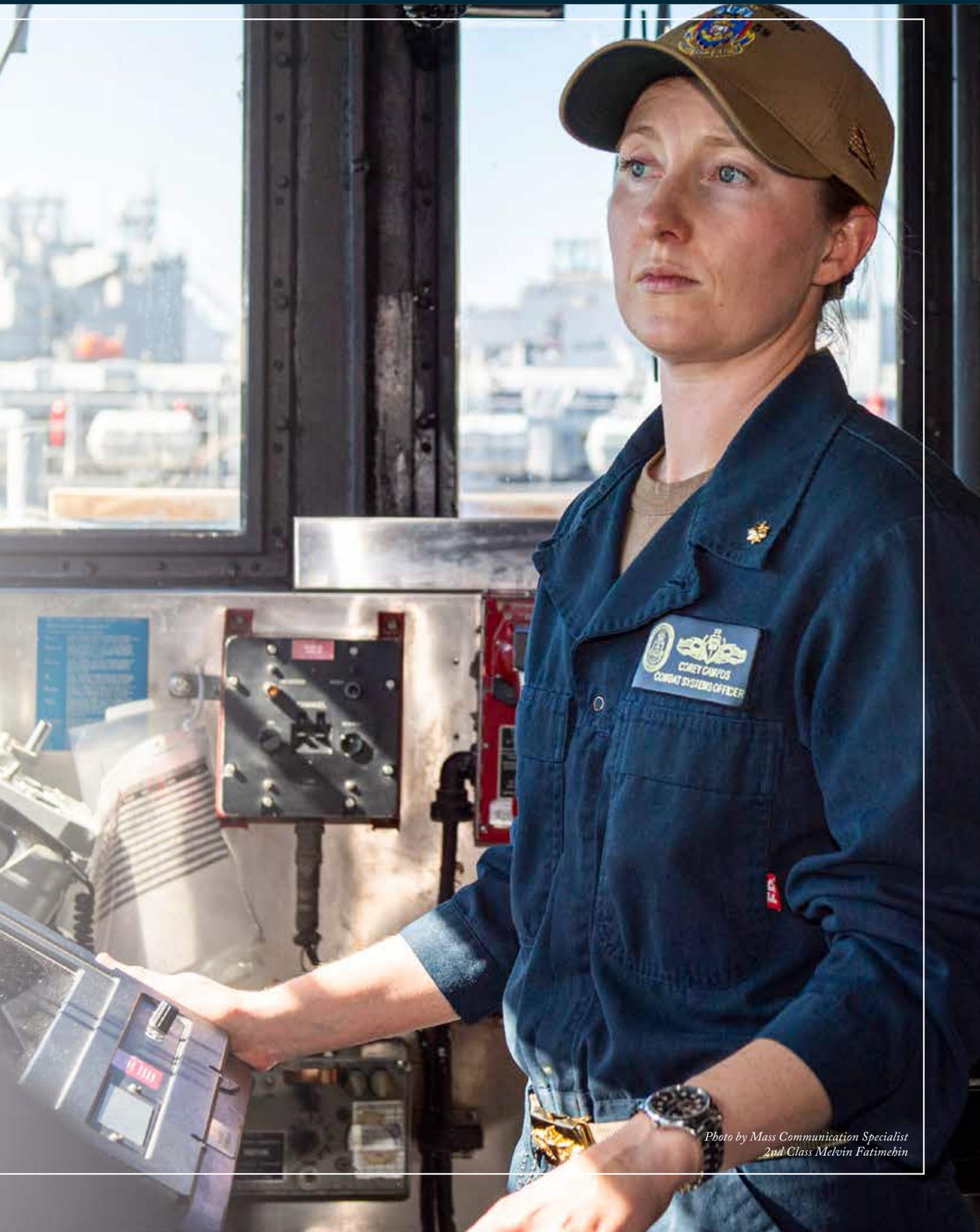
**BOTH OF MY PARENTS WERE IN THE NAVY,  
WHICH PROVIDED ME WITH PERSPECTIVE AND  
APPRECIATION FOR SERVICE.**

*— Lt. Cmdr. Corey Campos*

Campos was selected as SWO of the Year for Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet while assigned to Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59), where she currently serves as combat systems officer.

Campos attributes her success to her upbringing and experiences. "Both of my parents were in the Navy, which provided me with perspective and appreciation for service," said Campos. "They have been my number one supporters. Since joining the Navy, I have been lucky enough to work for and be surrounded by some pretty amazing people, who both encouraged and challenged me."





*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Melvin Fatimehin*

During 2021, Princeton completed an 11-month deployment to U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet, participated in sustainment operations in April, and executed a seven-month Selected Restricted Availability (SRA) at NASCO Ship Yards.

As department head, Campos was thankful for the true sense of family, fighting spirit, and the grit of the Princeton crew. She said it is inspiring to work amongst the country's "finest Sailors."

"I also wouldn't be able to do what I do without the drive and support of my husband," she said. "Our alternating deployment schedules have been challenging, but I wouldn't embark on this journey with anyone else."



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Melvin Fatimehin*



Campos said this award is humbling and she is honored to be recognized among the naval officers she serves with. She believes her award is a reflection of those who have mentored her and dedicated time towards her development as a leader and surface warrior. Campos reflected on her first division officer tour as an ensign, which she says was arguably one of her most formative tours, where she was surrounded by leaders who invested in her, including Capt. Dan Uhls (ret.), Cmdr. Dan Hancock, and Chief Boatswains Mate Gabriel Alvizo. "Fast forward, I can only hope to make the same impact on future generations of surface warfare officers," said Campos.



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Melvin Fatimehin*



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Devin Wray*



## Advice for the future generation of SWOs:

Lt. Cmdr. Corey Campos

- ▶ Ask the hard questions.
- ▶ Lean in and uphold the standard.
- ▶ Be sure to take care of yourself and your Sailors. Lead by example in investing in your well-being; whether that's working out, reading, or just taking 30 minutes to recharge. The more even-keeled you are, the more effective leader and warfighter you will become.

*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist  
2nd Class Melvin Fatimebin*



**Lt. Cmdr. Matt Intocchia**

- ▶ Build rapport through genuine love.
- ▶ Try to understand each Sailor's "why" and, likewise, tell them your "why."
- ▶ Be transparent with your communication.
- ▶ Trust your team.
- ▶ Be consistent and frequent when discussing your commander's intent.
- ▶ Know when to get out of the way and let your team achieve excellence.

*Photo by U.S. Navy*



*Photo by Chief Mass Communication  
Specialist Shannon Renfro*

# NAVY INCREASES CAPABILITIES WITH NEWLY ESTABLISHED UNMANNED SURFACE DIVISION

*Story by Commander, Naval Surface  
Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs*



**USVDIV ONE WILL BE A CATALYST FOR INNOVATION  
AS WE EMPLOY UNMANNED SURFACE CAPABILITIES  
IN THE PACIFIC FLEET.**

*– Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener,  
Commander, Naval Surface Force,  
U.S. Pacific Fleet*

SAN DIEGO – Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CNSP) established Unmanned Surface Vessel Division (USVDIV) One during a ceremony, May 13, which also included a change of command ceremony for Surface Development Squadron (SURFDEVRON) One.

During the combined ceremony, Cmdr. Jeremiah Daley assumed command of the newly established USVDIV One.

“To meet the challenges of the 21st Century, we must continue to innovate the surface force,” said Daley. “USVDIV One will accelerate the delivery of credible and reliable unmanned systems in conjunction with increasingly capable manned platforms into the fleet.”

USVDIV One will oversee medium and large unmanned surface vessels including the Sea Hunter and its sister vessel, the Sea Hawk. The division will focus on unmanned surface vessel (USV) experimentation and fleet advocacy for the surface force. The division will be a cornerstone in building the foundational knowledge required for Sailors to operate and maintain the USV fleet and spearhead the development of the processes required for USV operations and sustainment.

A large US Navy ship, likely a Zumwalt-class guided missile destroyer, is docked at a pier. In the foreground, a smaller boat with a white hull and a grey superstructure is visible. The boat has an American flag on the left and a sign that reads "SEA HUNTER". The water is blue, and the sky is clear. The background shows a pier with various structures and equipment.

Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, presided over the ceremony.

"USVDIV One will be a catalyst for innovation as we employ unmanned surface capabilities in the Pacific Fleet," said Kitchener. "The implementation of unmanned systems will increase decision speed and lethality to enhance our warfighting advantage."

Capt. Shea Thompson relieved Capt. Jeffrey Heames as commodore of SURFDEVRON One.

"It's been an honor and privilege to lead a team of surface warriors who are shaping the future of our force," said Heames. "I know Capt. Thompson shares this enthusiasm and drive to innovate and transform the surface force into a formidable 21st century fighting organization."

Heames was SURFDEVRON One's second commodore. Previously, he commanded USS Preble (DDG 88) and served as the Commodore for Destroyer Squadron 23.

SURFDEVRON One is responsible for the maintenance, training, and manning oversight for medium and large USVs, Zumwalt-class guided missile destroyers, and the future USS Lyndon B. Johnson (DDG 1002). †



# SURFACE FORCE

**VISION:** A Surface Force second to none that controls the seas and provides the Nation with combat naval power when and where needed.

**MISSION:** Man, Train, and equip the Surface Force to provide Fleet Commanders with credible naval power to control the sea and project power ashore.

## Pacific Fleet

[public.navy.mil/surfor](http://public.navy.mil/surfor)

[facebook.com/SurfaceWarriors](https://facebook.com/SurfaceWarriors)

[youtube.com/ComNavSURFPAC](https://youtube.com/ComNavSURFPAC)

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## Atlantic Fleet

[surflant.navy.mil](http://surflant.navy.mil)

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Read Surface Warfare Online:  
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