

Surface Warfare

MAY 2022



DIGITAL FEATURE

MAINTENANCE EXECUTION TEAMS

CONTRIBUTE TO LCS
SUSTAINABILITY,
SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Story By
Commander, Naval Surface Force,
U.S. Pacific Fleet



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist
Seaman Apprentice Darik Leary



*Photo by Mass Communication Specialist
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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*

Going 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.”



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**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*



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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 (COMMINE DIV) 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.”



**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."

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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.