

Surface Navy Boss Sets Goal of 75 Mission-Capable Ships on Any Day



ARLINGTON, Va. – The type commander of the Navy’s surface combatant fleet has set a goal of sustaining a fleet of 75 mission-capable (MC) ships.

“We’ve come up with a North Star goal to drive all of our readiness objectives, and that’s get at 75 mission-capable ships ready on any given day,” said Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, commander, Naval Surface Forces and commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, speaking to reporters in a virtual roundtable on Jan. 5 – embargoed until Jan. 10.

Data-Accessed Readiness Goals

“The goal is not arbitrary,” Kitchener said. “It’s not random. It was born from our investment in our data analytics, a really good, thorough assessment across the fleet’s operational requirement. That 75 drives every program and action we take across our force.”

The admiral characterized the initiative as “sharpening the competitive edge” to produce the most capable ships, weapons technologies and the Sailors that will use them, and “getting more ready” for potential conflict in the Western Pacific.

The 75 MC ships initiative is modelled after an effort by the Naval Aviation Enterprise to achieve a certain number of mission-capable strike fighters. The initiative was in an effort to overcome a lack of readiness that was hampering

naval aviation's combat readiness and aircrew flight proficiency and retention.

The surface boss is defining ship readiness in three categories:

- Not Mission-Capable (NMC): a ship in deep maintenance or just emerged from deep maintenance

- Mission-Capable (MC): readiness to deploy with a certain level of certification but not fully mission-capable

- Full Mission-Capable (FMC): all certifications complete, deployed, ready for high-end combat

Kitchener is establishing readiness groups to staff, train, and equip ships for combat; a Surface Response Plan to prioritize and allocate ships where most needed; and surface maintenance operations centers to reduce engineering casualty reports (CASREPs).

He emphasized the need to more fully stock ships with spare parts to make equipment readiness more sustainable when deployed at sea.

The ships included in the North Star goal include all surface warships with the exception of Zumwalt-class guided-missile destroyers and Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary sea base ships.