USS Wichita Crew Completes Critical Repairs at Sea, Sustains Mission Readiness

MAYPORT, Fla. (Nov. 14, 2025) – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Wichita (LCS 13) departs Naval Station Mayport, Florida, to support U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) southern border operations, Nov. 14. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Brandon J. Vinson)

Release From U.S. Fleet Forces Command

CARIBBEAN SEA (Jan. 26, 2026) – Sailors aboard the Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Wichita (LCS 13) recently completed a series of critical engineering repairs while deployed, demonstrating the growing self-sufficiency and technical expertise of the Littoral Combat Ship force.

While operating in the U.S. Fourth Fleet area of operations, Wichita Sailors repaired key ship systems, including a ship's service diesel generator (SSDG), a main propulsion diesel engine (MPDE), and supporting auxiliary equipment. These

efforts allowed the warship to remain fully mission capable.

Repairs of this scope were previously conducted during shipyard availabilities; however, through dedicated training, strict adherence to technical documentation, and a drive to master their craft, Wichita Sailors demonstrated the importance of ownership and self-sufficiency in sustaining operational readiness.

“Our primary task is to maintain and operate the engineering plant in a consistently high state of readiness in order to support the ship’s mission as an instrument of national policy,” said Lt. Brandon Cravey, Wichita’s chief engineer. “Our weekly engineering evolutions and damage control drills allow us to respond quickly and efficiently to a wide variety of casualties. We must be ready to answer all bells.”

The most significant repair began when watchstanders identified an abnormal lube oil leak on one of the ship’s diesel generators. Acting quickly, Sailors secured the engine and isolated the issue before it could escalate into a more serious casualty.

Engineering teams conducted a detailed inspection, identified a failed component, and completed repairs within 24 hours—restoring full electrical generating capability without disrupting operations. Advance planning by Wichita’s engineering and supply teams ensured high-demand spare parts were available onboard, reducing reliance on shore-based support and shortening repair timelines.

In a separate instance, Sailors repaired a failing heating element on one of the ship’s main propulsion diesel engines. Working closely with Littoral Combat Ship Squadron Two and the Navy logistics enterprise, the crew completed the repair within 72 hours with no impact to operational tasking.

Cmdr. Travis Snover, Wichita’s commanding officer, said the crew’s success reflects a broader cultural shift across the

LCS community. “To say I’m proud of Wichita’s engineering team would be an understatement,” Snover said. “Their initiative, professional curiosity, and commitment to mastering their equipment are the enablers of our success at sea. With maintenance requirements becoming less reliant on contracted shore side support in the LCS community, it is imperative that Wichita Sailors take ownership of our equipment and learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of potential failure. We, as a team onboard Wichita, have made ownership the foundation of our culture and strive to demonstrate that Sailors at sea, when provided the necessary tools, parts, and materials, can ensure that each and every ship is ready on arrival when we are called to stand the watch.”

USS Wichita departed Naval Station Mayport in October 2025 for a regularly scheduled deployment with an embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment, supporting missions assigned by U.S. Fourth Fleet and U.S. Second Fleet.