

NAVWAR Highlights Information Warfare's Role in Connecting a Joint Future Force at WEST 2023



[Release from Naval Information Warfare Systems Command](#)

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From Kara McDermott

SAN DIEGO – Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR) leaders and technical experts highlighted digitization, automation, and agile software delivery as key tenants to connecting a joint future force during WEST 2023 at the San Diego Convention Center, Feb. 14-16.

Gathering with a contingent of other information warfare (IW) commands, the team shared the IW mission and priorities with attendees through speakers, panels, subject matter experts, and technology demonstrations at the three-day conference and exposition.

The lead for the IW community, Vice Adm. Kelly Aeschbach, commander, Naval Information Forces, touched on readiness, capability, and capacity by noting that people are the weapon systems in information warfare.

“Our biggest challenge right now is facing demand,” she said. “We are needed everywhere, and I cannot produce enough

information warfare capacity and capability to distribute it everywhere that we would like to have it. That remains a real pressing challenge for me – how we prioritize where we put our talent and ensure that we have it in the most impactful place.”

As a part of the IW speakers’ series, Rear Adm. Doug Small, commander, NAVWAR, answered questions on a variety of subjects including risk management, future opportunities and constraints for continuous connectivity, and how unmanned systems play into Project Overmatch. As a Navy high-priority initiative, Project Overmatch is aimed at connecting platforms, weapons, and sensors together in a robust Naval Operational Architecture that integrates with Joint All-Domain Command and Control for enhanced Distributed Maritime Operations.

“Networking for unmanned systems is a core part of what we are trying to do,” said Small. “We are charged with making sure all the components of the architecture, what the CNO called the ‘connective tissue,’ reaches every single one of those platforms to include unmanned systems. Everything from networking to the computing plant onboard to how it communicates.”

Small also joined top leaders from across the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard on a panel to discuss what is being done to provide clarity in the requirements and acquisition processes, recruiting and retaining the right talent in a competitive hiring environment, and explaining their toughest challenges and areas of opportunities.

“As we continue to bring digital platforms to ships with modern methods of software delivery, we are using new ways to tap into our amazing talent pool,” said Small. “With events like script-a-thons and coding challenges, we are pushing to get the very best from our Sailors and Marines who are absolutely experts in their fields.”

Back at the IW Pavilion, attendees had the opportunity to meet informally with dozens of program managers, business portfolio managers and subject matter experts through the engagement zone program. Open to all registered attendees with no appointment needed, these one-on-one and small group conversations discussed capabilities, service offerings, and opportunities for partnerships.

“WEST and other similar industry forums are vital to program managers to ensure we’re aware of commercial technologies we can leverage for the Fleet,” said Capt. Kris De Soto, program manager, Communications and GPS Navigation Program. “I was excited to participate in the event and the engagement zone and very pleased that we were able to meet so many of our industry partners in one place.”

In addition to the engagement zone, the IW pavilion also hosted a variety of technology demonstrations as a way to share insights into Navy tools, capabilities, and tactics so attendees could understand opportunities for collaboration or support.

“This year, Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific is showcasing a wide breadth of our capabilities, with many of them showing the power of digitization and automation to the Fleet and for overall joint service readiness,” said Amanda George, business portfolio manager at NIWC Pacific.

One of those demonstrations was CyberKnight, a toolset that provides a method to automate the analysis of security technical implementation guides for command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems.

“CyberKnight is beneficial because the operating system type it analyzes is prevalent throughout the Department of Defense (DoD),” said Michael Price, cyber assessment and authorization branch head at NIWC Pacific. “It speeds up onerous

requirements, allowing the security and engineering teams to address any security risks in a more timely fashion.”

NIWC Pacific also demonstrated their Space and Stratospheric Systems Program, where they have developed a small satellite and payload integration lab that enables rapid prototyping and demonstration of capabilities for Navy and other DoD sponsors in a government-owned and operated environment.

“Working jointly with other services is the best way to move fast,” said Jason Bousquet, NIWC Pacific space systems branch head. “Every organization has something of value to offer with contributions in technical expertise, experience, and valuable lessons learned. Knowledge gaps are filled quickly allowing for accelerated progress and increased success.”

Jara Tripiano, NIWC Pacific’s chief engineer, closed out the IW pavilion speakers’ series by acknowledging that there is increased recognition of the importance of *how* capabilities are developed and delivered, and how it truly matters at an operational level.

“In support of Project Overmatch, we recently delivered a software package via the Overmatch Software Armory’s continuous integration/continuous delivery pipeline over-the-air to an operational platform,” she said. “In the future, we want that to be the norm. That WILL be the norm.”

Co-sponsored by the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA) International and the U.S. Naval Institute (USNI), WEST 2023 is the premier naval conference and exposition on the West Coast.

About NAVWAR

NAVWAR identifies, develops, delivers, and sustains information warfighting capabilities and services that enable naval, joint, coalition, and other national missions operating in warfighting domains from seabed to space and through

cyberspace. NAVWAR consists of more than 11,000 civilian, active duty and reserve professionals located around the world.