

CNO Cites History, Recalls Founding Fathers in Reinforcing Message of a 'Decisive' Navy



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson during his keynote address at the Sea Services Luncheon at Sea-Air-Space 2019 on May 6. Lisa Nipp

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – George Washington spoke May 6 at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space exposition – by way of Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson, who used a famous quote by the Founding Father from 1781 to remind the audience of the necessity today – more than ever – of a “decisive” U.S. Navy.

Washington's quote is, “Without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it, everything honorable and glorious.”

“The Navy was there at the very beginning. We're in the nation's DNA,” the 31st CNO told the audience, delivering a bit of a history lesson during a keynote that also touched on Thomas Jefferson's belief that a potent Navy was essential to protect trade, commerce and the American economy.

“America depends on the seas,” Richardson said.

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CNO Adm. John M. Richardson

Much of the nation's economy, he reminded the audience, runs through the Far East now. He talks often these days about the resurgent "Great Power Competition" – and the CNO wasted no time doing so again at Sea-Air-Space, reminding the audience of China's naval expansion and mentioning such events as recent Chinese missile exercises in the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea.

"That's where your Navy is going to be," Richardson said, adding that a third of world trade runs through the South China Sea. "That's why the United States Navy is there."

He also mentioned Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, who believed the Navy's role is to deter conflict but still ensure prosperity.



The Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Award for 2019 went May 6 to James Herdt (second from left), CEO of Herdt Consulting and a retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. Helping to present the award were (from left) Navy League National President Alan Kaplan, Adm. Richardson, Herdt and Navy League Executive Director Mike Stevens. Lisa Nipp

Richardson took part in ceremonies before his keynote address to laud recipients of two Navy League awards – including one that is named after Nimitz and honors an industry leader who has made a major contribution to the nation's maritime strength.

The Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Award for 2019 went to James Herdt, CEO of Herdt Consulting and a retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. "I know my name is on this award," Herdt said, but in thanking Navy League he accepted it on behalf of the people of his consulting firm.



The Albert A. Michelson Award went to Dr. Bruce G. Danly, director of research at the Naval Research Laboratory. Lisa Nipp

The second honor of the day, the Albert A. Michelson Award, went to Dr. Bruce G. Danly, director of research at the Naval Research Laboratory

(NRL). He credited the men of women of NRL, "who ensure that our forces have the best technology, unmatched by none."

Navy League National President Alan Kaplan and Navy League Executive Director Mike Stevens, also a retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, the 13th, helped present the Nimitz and Michelson awards. Richardson also spoke about the Navy's recruiting and retention in a recovering economy and added that the sea service has met its recruiting goals for more than 12 years in a row. "What is it that attracts people" to the Navy? the CNO asked. "Honorable and glorious, no better organization to join than the Navy to espouse those two ideals."