CNO: Technological Readiness for War ‘Not a Pick-Up Thing’

WASHINGTON –
The Navy’s top officer told a gathering of naval engineers and industry officials that being technologically ready for war is not something that can be achieved overnight but is the result of diligent experimentation and keeping pace with one’s adversary.

“The technological landscape is changing so fast, across all of technology, really fueled by this information revolution that we’re in the middle of right now,” Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson said, speaking June 20 in Washington at the Technology, Systems and Ships Symposium of the American Society of Naval Engineers (ASNE).

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“This is the challenge. We’ve got to move forward on an evidence-based approach.”

Technological agility was a quality Richardson stressed as necessary to keep up with evolving threats.

Richardson said that the supremacy of U.S. naval aviation after the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor crippled the U.S. battleships was not a rapid development but the result of 20 years of innovation and hard work by the fleet and such visionaries as Rear Adm. William Moffett and Adm. Joseph Mason Reeves.

“This was not something we did as a pick-up team on Dec. 8,” Richardson said. “We had evidence, a lot of experimentation, a lot of engineering going into that, so that force [naval aviation] was truly ready to take on that new mission, that new role, and it wasn’t just a pick-up thing overnight.”

“This is the way we have to move forward,” he said. “We have to continue to get out there, experiment, prototype, get that evidence that these new technologies are ready to carry on and take on the responsibility for the security of our nation.

“And we have to do that at pace. We do not want to be the

second Navy
armed with these decisive technologies — directed energy, unmanned, machine
learning, artificial intelligence, etc. … This is a human challenge at the end
of the day.”