

IW Deputy Chief: 'Fusing Together Information Faster' Will Create Advantage



Rear Adm. Gene Price, Vice Commander of Naval Information Forces, said AI and machine learning are areas that warrant critical attention. *SOLARES PHOTOGRAPHY*

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – All hopes of prevailing in the next conflict, if and when it arises, hinge on seizing the advantage in information warfare, the Navy's chief officer of that domain said Aug. 2 audience at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space expo in National Harbor, Maryland.

"Technologies that exist today are all about fusing together information faster," said Vice Adm. Jeffrey Trussler, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare. "Our data, our information, the use of artificial intelligence, robotics – the nation that harnesses that the best is going to have the advantage should we go to conflict. And I'm one of those guys who says we're in conflict right now."

Trussler then turned the floor over to Rear Adm. Gene Price, Vice Commander of Naval Information Forces, who described the roughly 11-year-old command as a place under which data from a host of communities is amalgamated.

"Information warfare is a combination of oceanography, meteorology, intelligence, electronic warfare, cryptology, cyber warfare, IT [information technology] – all these things – come together," Price said.

By integrating all of these disciplines as one, Price said, the Navy creates awareness, assured command and controlled integrated fires in the battlespace.

"This is the heart and soul of what information warfare is all about – pushing [data] out to whoever needs it, whenever they need it, wherever it is," Price said. "Our job is to make sure that the right weapon is in the right place at the right time."

Price cited AI/ML – artificial intelligence and machine learning – as a critical area that warrants attention.

"It's a data problem, a platform problem, a management problem," Price said.

Work on transferring data to AI/ML is ongoing, Price said. He also discussed continuing efforts in the field of LVC – live, virtual, constructive training. He noted that the aviation community has been involved in LVC for years, and that it should be incorporated more widely through all areas of training. The security benefits are tangible, he said.

"If we go out and practice, we tip our hand to what we want to do," Price said. "It's readily apparent to information warfare that we have to have a way to train for the high-end fight in a way that the rates could do their thing without tipping off too much."

The capability is being managed mainly at the acquisition level, Price said, where a cross functional team with information forces is developing the command requirements and content necessary to make sure information is readily available in a controlled but usable environment.