



# C4ISR

SYMPOSIUM

***WARFIGHTER RELEVANT AI***

***STRATEGICALLY DECISIVE COGNITIVE COMBAT IN ALL DOMAINS.***

*Courtyard by Marriott Liberty Station*  
*2592 Laning Road, San Diego, CA 92106*  
*November 4-5, 2025*

November 4-5, 2025, AFCEA C4ISR Symposium

Courtyard San Diego Airport/Liberty Station (2592 Laning Rd, San Diego, CA 92106)

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We are grateful to have so much Department of War support for this year's Symposium. Agencies represented among panelists and featured guests include—



U.S. Department of War



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**Registration page:** <https://sandiego.afceachapters.org/c4isr-symposium/>

**When:** 4-5Nov2025

**Where:** Courtyard San Diego Airport/Liberty Station, 2592 Laning Rd, San Diego, CA 92106

**Discounted hotel rates at venue:** <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1740599990211&key=GRP&questreslink2=true&app=resvlink>

This year's C4ISR Symposium commemorates the—

- 250<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Army; and
- AFCEA San Diego Chapter's 45<sup>th</sup> Annual C4ISR Symposium.

In honoring these milestones, AFCEA San Diego Chapter continues our tradition of—

**1) Positive and ethical engagement** through the orchestration of meaningful networking and educational opportunities which enable military, government, industry and academia to align technology to meet the National Security and National Defense needs across defense, security, cyber and intelligence.

**2) Geo-strategically relevant programming** illuminating the most urgent, technologically advanced, and mission-critical needs of our time.

**3) Cross-service collaboration and unity of effort** across the NAVWAR Enterprise Commands, other Department of Navy Echelon 2 Commands, and Joint Force stakeholders.

As a demonstration of our Chapter's commitment to excellence and to our community's continued success in pursuit of strategic security, modernization, and readiness objectives, we're pleased to feature **ADM Michelle J. Howard (Ret.)** as this year's **keynote speaker**.

ADM Howard's 35-year career in the U.S. Navy was distinguished by her exceptional record as Commander of: a ship, an Expeditionary Strike Group, Task Force, and a Naval theater. In 1999 Michelle J. Howard became the first African American woman to command a ship in the U.S. Navy. In 2014, she was the first woman to become a four-star Admiral in the U.S. Navy and the first woman to be appointed to the position of Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO). She is the first African American woman to reach the rank of three-star and four stars in the Armed Forces.



**ADM Michelle J. Howard (Ret.)**



Her last command was from 2016 to 2017 as U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa (NAVEUR-NAF). She simultaneously led NATO's Allied Joint Force Command Naples with oversight of missions from the Western Balkans to Iraq. Operations in her career include NATO peacekeeping, West African Training Cruise,

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Indonesia Tsunami Relief operations, and the rescue of Maersk Alabama from Somali Pirates. Michelle is a Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran.

She is currently one of 13 members of the IBM board of directors. She also served on the Board of Visitors for the U.S. Naval Academy from 2022 to 2024, and on an advisory panel to the US Institute of Peace.

Consistent with the 2024 inaugural Vice Admiral Samuel L. Gravely Jr. Trailblazer Awards, the **2025 ADM Michelle J. Howard Senior Leader Award** recognizes the community's senior-most leaders from active duty (AD) military, GS civilian, industry, and academia. To qualify, awardees' careers must be distinguished by—

- Current rank not less than O-6 (AD military).
- Current grade not less than GS-15 (GS civilians).
- More than 25 years of continual service to U.S. DoD organizations.
- Extensive Joint operations, where applicable.
- Significant contributions to U.S. National Security, U.S. National Defense, and/or domestic technological comparative advantages.

This year's technical panels (**CEU Approved**) will focus on four key dimensions of deploying Warfighter- and Warfighting-enabling AI.

**DAY 2 UNCLASSIFIED TRACK:** Featuring a Keynote address from **Mr. John W. R. Pope III, Executive Director, NAVWAR.**

- Appointed SES in January 2016 and began his government career in 1983.
- Responsible for approximately 12,000 civilian and military personnel and an annual budget of more than \$9 Billion, focused on the acquisition, delivery and sustainment of major command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, enterprise information, and space systems for the Department of the Navy.
- Mr. Pope's tours within NAVWAR include Joint Task Group Manager, Afloat Installations Manager and Advanced Tactical Data Link Systems Engineer in the Tactical Data Link Programs Office (PMW 159). In December 2000, Mr. Pope was selected as the Deputy Program Manager for the Navy Satellite Communications Program Office (PMW 176). After serving as the fifth Commanding Officer of Naval Information Warfare Center Atlantic, Charleston, S.C., he returned to PEO C4I where he served as the Major Program Manager of the Communications Program Office (PMW 170) and the Principal



**Mr. John W. R. Pope III (SES),  
Executive Director, NAVWAR**



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Deputy Program Executive Officer. As a plank owner of NAVWAR's Fleet Readiness Directorate, Mr. Pope served as the Fleet Support Program Manager. After 29 years of active duty, Mr. Pope began his civilian career in 2012 as the Director for the Data Center and Application program within NAVWAR.

- Defense Acquisition Corps, certified Level III in Acquisition Program Management.
- BS - Electrical Engineering, University of Pennsylvania.
- MS - Electrical Engineering, NPS.
- Received Navy commission via the University of Pennsylvania NROTC in 1983.
- Active duty awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit with Gold Star in lieu of fourth award, Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star in lieu of third award, Navy Commendation Medal with Gold Star in lieu of second award, Navy Unit Commendation, and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon. Mr. Pope received the Department of the Navy Superior Civilian Service Award in June 2020.

Following Mr. Pope's remarks, **Command Master Petty Officer Chief Jeanette M. Hafer, NAVWAR**, will provide an address underscoring the operational conditions of today's afloat warfighter.

- Jeanette M. Hafer hails from Chicago, Illinois. In March 1998, she reported for active duty at Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes Illinois. After completing boot camp, Master Chief Hafer reported to Radioman 'A' School at Naval Technical Training Center in Great Lakes, Illinois.
- She has served in multiple sea and shore assignments, including Commander Naval Forces Korea in Seoul, Korea, Center for Information Dominance (CID) in Norfolk, Virginia, USS EMORY S LAND (AS-39) in La Madellena, Italy, Naval Special Warfare Development Group (NSWDG) at Damneck, Virginia, EODMU FIVE located on Santa Rita, Guam, Expeditionary Strike Group Seven located on Okinawa, Japan as the Senior Enlisted Leader and Navy Personnel Command in Millington, Tennessee.
- She has served as the Command Master Chief onboard USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51), Norfolk VA. Her second CMDCM tour was as a CMDCM/COB Course Facilitator at the Naval Leadership and Ethics Center, Newport RI. She then reported to COMDESRON 23, San Diego CA as their first Command Master Chief. In November of 2024 she reported to NAVWARSYSCOM, San Diego CA as their Command Master Chief.
- CMDCM Hafer holds a Master's Degree in Workforce Education and Development from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, IL. She is a graduate of the National Defense University Keystone Course, CMC/COB (Course 181) and the Senior Enlisted Academy (Class 162). Her decorations



**CMDCM Jeanette M. Hafer,  
NAVWAR**



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include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (four awards), Joint Service Commendation, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation (five awards), Joint Service Achievement (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement (four awards), and other various unit and service awards.

Additional panels will follow.

**DAY 2 CLASSIFIED TRACK:** SECRET//REL FVEY level briefings providing additional context and clarification to accompany subjects discussed during Day 1.

Time	Track	Sponsor	Presenters / Featured Guests
<b>Tuesday, November 4th</b>			
0800	Breakfast		
0845	Pledge of Allegiance, Welcome and Symposium Program Overview		AFCEA
0900	Invocation & In Memoriam		AFCEA
0915	<b>Keynote address</b>	AFS	<b>ADM. Michelle J. Howard (Ret.)</b>
1015	<b>ADM Howard Senior Leader Award Ceremony</b>	AFS	
1025	<b>Networking and Engagement Break in (30 mins)</b>		
1025	<b>VIP Coffee Reception with ADM Howard</b>	AFS	
1055	Program Transition (5 mins)		AFCEA
1100	<b>Compute for Tactical and Strategic Advantage</b> <i>The foundational computing capabilities enabling AI at scale—edge, cloud, HPC.</i>	IBM	<b>Dr. Joanna Ptasinski</b> , Ph.D., Branch Head, Cryogenic Electronics & Quantum Research, NIWC PAC <b>Dr. Kristin Schaaf</b> , ICAM's Deputy Director, Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS), Innovation Capability and Modernization (ICAM), Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy <b>Dr. Paul Parazzoli</b> , Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Lead, IBM Quantum <b>Ms. Gretchen Stewart</b> , Principal Engineer, Responsible AI Council Member, Intel Corporation <b>Dr. Nathaniel J. Fuller</b> , Senior Fellow, Noblis <b>Mr. Michael Coronella</b> , Federal Account Manager, Department of the Navy, USMC, DHA, Nutanix (moderator)
1200	<b>Networking Lunch &amp; US Marine Corps Birthday Cake Celebration (60 mins)</b>		
1300	<b>Dominant Decision Superiority</b> <i>Seeing the fight before it starts with enhanced sensing, processing, and command decision-making across the kill chain.</i>	Maximus	<b>CAPT David Gast</b> , Innovation Lead and C4IMERA Military Lead, PEO C4I <b>Mr. Christopher J Raney</b> , Deputy Executive Director Technical Director, NIWC PAC <b>Mr. Rob Weaver</b> , 5.0 Mission Engineering Department Head, NAVWAR



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			<b>Mr. Tom Skradski</b> , Modernization Solution Specialist, Navy, RedHat <b>Ms. Tara Duckworth</b> , Sr. IT Principal Architect - Software Engineering, Maximus <b>Mr. Randy Velliquette</b> , Senior Manager, Deloitte (moderator)
1400	<b>Networking and Engagement Break in (30 mins)</b>		
1425	Program Transition (5 mins)		AFCEA
1430	<b>Trust at Machine Speed</b> <i>Exploring secure, encrypted communications and AI's role in adaptive, contested network environments.</i>	Deloitte	<b>Mr. Dean LoNigro</b> , Branch Chief, Cyber Threat Response, SSC, USSF <b>CAPT Nicole K. Nigro</b> , Program Manager, PMW 160 Tactical Networks Program Office, PEO C4I <b>Mr. Richard Storey</b> , Managing Director, Deloitte <b>Dr. John Zehnpfennig</b> , Director of Offensive Security, CGI Federal <b>Mr. Mike Lindsey</b> , Sr. Major Account Manager, USINDOPACOM/US Navy/USMC, HPE Juniper Networking (moderator)
1530	<b>Networking and Engagement Break in (30 mins)</b>		
1555	Program Transition (5 mins)		AFCEA
1600	<b>Combat System and Kill Web Orchestration</b> <i>Fusing AI into platforms, sensors, and operations—multi-domain, system-of-systems integration.</i>	Armada	<b>Mr. Brian Miller</b> , Program Manager, PMW 790 Tactical Shore and Expeditionary Integration Program Office, PEO C4I <b>Col Kevin J. Stepp</b> , AC/S, G-6 Communications (IC6) "Tomahawk 10", I Marine Expeditionary Force <b>Lt Col Kevin Champaigne</b> , Acting Division Director Materiel Leader, Ground Systems Narrowband SATCOM Acquisition Delta, USSF <b>Mr. Douglas Orellana</b> , VP of Digital Engineering Solutions, ManTech <b>Mr. Tony Schwarz</b> , Head of Federal Business Development, Armada <b>Ms. Sarah Carter</b> , President, Gnostech (moderator)
1700	Transition		AFCEA
1700-1900	Networking Social / Happy Hour	AFS	
<b>Wednesday, November 5th</b>			
<b>UNCLASS Track</b>			
0730	<b>Breakfast</b>		
0825	<b>Welcome Back</b>		AFCEA
0830	<b>Day 2 Keynote</b>	AFS	<b>Mr. John W. R. Pope III</b> , Executive Director, NAVWAR
0915	<b>Transition &amp; Departure of CLASSIFIED Track Attendees (15 mins)</b>		
0930	<b>The Warfighter Experience</b> <i>Defining readiness, modernization, and innovation from the Warfighter's perspective.</i>	Noblis	<b>CMDCM Jeanette M. Hafer</b> , Command Master Chief, NAVWAR

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1015	<b>Shortening the Flash to Bang</b> <i>Driving practical innovations at speed through unconventional problem-solving and imagineering.</i>	<b>ManTech</b>	<b>Ms. Rachel Bondi</b> , Deputy Director Cyber Directorate, NAVWAR <b>Mr. Thomas Johnson</b> , Senior Principal Engineer – Combined & Joint Interoperability, MCTSSA <b>Mr. Mike Taylor</b> , Hospital Ship Joint Task Director, Military Sealift Command <b>Mr. Eugene Bailey</b> , Technical Director – Navy, ManTech (moderator)
1115	<b>Networking and Engagement Break in (15 mins)</b>		
1130	<b>Preparing Future Generations for Success</b> <i>Integrated technological advancements and interdisciplinary approaches for addressing contemporary security challenges through STEM.</i>	<b>Red Hat</b>	<b>Dr. Xiaofeng Liu, Ph.D.</b> , Associate Professor, Department of Aerospace Engineering, San Diego State University <b>Dr. Diba Hadi</b> , Principal Director for the Cyber Academic Engagement Office (CAEO), OCIO, Department of War <b>Ms. Denese Cordaro</b> , Professor of Program and Financial Management, DAU <b>Mr. John “JD” Morrison</b> , Science Advisor to Commander, Naval Air Forces <b>Mr. Daryl Porter, PMP, MBA</b> , VP of Academia and Industry Relations, AFCEA San Diego (Moderator)
1230	Closing Remarks		<b>Mr. Matt Beekman</b> , AFCEA San Diego Chapter President
<b>CLASSIFIED Track</b>			
0900	Bus departs Courtyard San Diego Airport/Liberty Station for Topside		
0930	Arrival at Topside access control		
1000	<b>SECFORN briefs corresponding to Day 1 panels (i.e., compute, applications, networking, and integration)</b>	<b>AFS</b>	<b>Mr. Brian Miller</b> , Program Manager, PMW 790 Tactical Shore and Expeditionary Integration Program Office, PEO C4I <b>CAPT Charles N (Newt) McKissick</b> , Defense Innovation Unit <b>Mr. Christian Szatkowski</b> , NISE Technical Product Portfolio Manager – Fight From the MOC, NIWC PAC
1400	Bus return to Courtyard San Diego Airport/Liberty Station		
1430	Return to Courtyard San Diego Airport/Liberty Station		

**AFCEA Membership Renewal**



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