Captain Brett O'Donovan – Naval Network Warfare

Chadwick Bennett

CYSE 200T

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Professor Duvall

Guest Speaker: Captain Brett O'Donovan

BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front)

Captain O'Donovan, Commanding Officer, Naval Network Warfare, delivered an informative lecture today. The three key takeaways that resonated with me were:

1. Cyber is not about computers; it's about keeping warfighters connected and operational under attack
2. Communications failure equals mission failure
3. Think mission

Where Cyber fits into the military

Cyber is not IT support; it is as important to any warfighting component of the military as are the land, sea, air, and space branches. The United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) directs cyber operations. The network operations keep systems running, while the defensive cyber blocks attacks. Why this is important is that whoever controls information controls the fight.

Communications Failure = Mission Failure

Communications includes satellite communications, NC3 (Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications), and backup communications if the network fails. Command decisions are based on the information that flows. They have to be mission ready 24x7. Why this is important is that if communications fail, the mission can fail, and that could risk the lives, infrastructure, and security.

Think Mission

Often, cyber is viewed as systems, software, and hardware, but it supports operational combat capability and readiness. Rethinking cyber as, can the unit fight, is the information flowing, is the infrastructure defended, is the infrastructure able to support warfare? Why this is important is that thinking about real-world impacts significantly changes the stakes that exist and the cost to potential lives if it fails.

Conclusion

Captain O’Donovan’s presentation elevated thinking about cyber to a higher level. Not just about systems and infrastructure, but about a segment of military operations and readiness to support warfare, maintain critical communications, and defend against attacks. Failure to achieve these measures risk faiure of the mission, compromised security, and the risk of lives.