DEFENSE TECH

200+ ATTENDEES

55% FOUNDERS
35% INVESTORS
10% GOVERNMENT

NOVEMBER 3–4, AT THE MARINES' MEMORIAL CLUB & HOTEL, SF

MEET THE SPEAKERS

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Owen West

Private Capital Integrator at Army FUZE

U.S. MARINE CORPS VETERAN | FORMER DIU DIRECTOR



Owen is a Marine Corps combat veteran who served in infantry and reconnaissance leadership roles, including deployments to Iraq.

He previously served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict and Director of the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU). Today, he leads Project Agincourt, an initiative modernizing the military's approach to acquiring unmanned systems and laying the groundwork for a new Autonomous Warfare Command.

DAY 1 SPEAKER

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Lenore Karafa

Co-Founder & Partner at UA1

U.S. MARINE CORPS VETERAN | NAVAL ACADEMY GRADUATE



Lenore served seven years as a Marine Corps officer, including a deployment to Iraq, before transitioning into finance and venture capital.

With experience at First In and Context Ventures, she now invests in early-stage defense and dual-use technologies at UA1, focusing on innovations emerging from Ukraine's defense ecosystem.

DAY 2 SPEAKER & PITCH JUDGE

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Grant Demaree

CEO and Co-Founder of OneBrief

FORMER U.S. ARMY OFFICER AND WEST POINT GRADUATE

Grant founded Onebrief after experiencing the challenges of military operational planning firsthand.

A Y Combinator alumnus, he has helped scale Onebrief into a widely adopted military planning platform, raising over $103M in venture capital.

DAY 2 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Cameron McCord

CEO and Co-Founder of Nominal

FORMER U.S. NAVY SUBMARINE OFFICER

Cameron served as a nuclear-qualified submarine officer before leading counter-drone software development at Anduril and managing national security investments at Lux Capital.

Drawing on his experience across military operations, defense technology, and venture capital, he co-founded Nominal, scaling the company into a $1 billion business focused on testing and validating complex hardware systems.



DAY 2 SPEAKER

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Ian Kalin

CEO and Co-Founder of TurbineOne

FORMER U.S. NAVY OFFICER

Ian began his career as a counterterrorism officer and nuclear engineer in the U.S. Navy before becoming the first Chief Data Officer of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

With additional experience at Google, Socrata, and energy technology startups, he co-founded TurbineOne, developing AI-powered intelligence tools that help military operators make faster, more informed decisions.



DAY 2 SPEAKER

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

John Keh

Co-Founder & CEO of Valtec

U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN | GEOSPATIAL INTELLIGENCE

John brings experience in military drone operations and geospatial intelligence from his service in the U.S. Air Force.

Today, he leads Valtec in developing AI-powered unmanned aircraft systems that provide real-time maritime intelligence, monitoring, and operational decision support.



DAY 1 SPEAKER

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Peter Dixon

Co-Founder & CEO of Arkenstone Defense

FORMER U.S. MARINE CORPS MAJOR | COMBAT VETERAN

Peter served as a Marine Corps officer, leading infantry and scout sniper platoons in Afghanistan and advising Iraqi security forces.

He previously founded Second Front Systems and now leads Arkenstone Defense, helping technology companies navigate government contracting, security, and compliance to bring new capabilities to the warfighter.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Col. Arlon Smith

Director of Project Dynamis | U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. MARINE CORPS COLONEL | DEFENSE INNOVATION

Arlon brings more than 20 years of Marine Corps experience, including deployments to Iraq and leadership roles in military intelligence and operations.

Today, he leads Project Dynamis, a Marine Corps initiative accelerating the integration of commercial technology, AI, and advanced command-and-control systems into military operations.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

LTC Sam Spencer-Pittman

Private Capital Integrator at Army FUZE

U.S. ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONEL | DEFENSE INNOVATION

Sam leads private capital engagement and technology scouting for Army FUZE, helping connect emerging defense technologies with Army modernization priorities.

With experience across Special Operations, congressional affairs, and Army innovation initiatives, he works to bridge the gap between private-sector innovation, investment, and military capabilities.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Matt Hays

Program Manager at Air Force CyberWorx

U.S. MARINE CORPS VETERAN | DEFENSE INNOVATION



Matt previously served as a Marine Corps officer, including as a Weapons Company Commander, before transitioning into technology and program management.

Today, he works with Air Force CyberWorx, connecting industry, government, and academia to address military challenges and explore innovative solutions for the warfighter.

DAY 1 SPEAKER

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Maggie Gray

Vice President at Shield Capital

NATIONAL SECURITY INVESTOR | AI & CYBERSECURITY

Maggie brings experience across national security, technology policy, and venture capital, including work with Snowflake, MITRE, and NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence.

Today, she invests in early-stage companies at Shield Capital, focusing on emerging technologies across AI, autonomous systems, cybersecurity, and space.

DAY 2 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Daniel Austin

Partner at Ashurst Perkins Coie

U.S. ARMY VETERAN | FORMER FIELD ARTILLERY CAPTAIN

Dan is a former U.S. Army field artillery officer who now advises startups and investors on venture capital financing, strategic partnerships, and corporate growth.

Having served as both startup legal counsel and an executive team member, he brings firsthand experience helping founders navigate legal challenges, avoid common pitfalls, and scale their businesses.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Adam Warmoth

Founder & CEO of Chariot Defense

STANFORD-TRAINED ENGINEER | FORMER ANDURIL EXECUTIVE

Adam previously led counter-drone technology programs at Anduril Industries, bringing advanced defense systems from development into military operations.

Today, he leads Chariot Defense, developing intelligent battlefield power systems that support drones, electronic warfare, and other mission-critical technologies. The company recently secured a $7.6M contract to deliver its Amphora systems to U.S. Army units.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

John Price

Co-Founder & CEO of HighGround

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES VETERAN | FORMER GREEN BERET

John is a former Army Green Beret with multiple combat deployments to the Middle East and Africa, bringing firsthand military experience to the defense technology industry.

After holding leadership roles at Deloitte and advising on defense technology policy in the U.S. Senate, he founded HighGround, an AI-powered platform helping investors and companies better understand government spending, procurement, and defense market opportunities.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Alex Harstrick

Co-Founder & Managing Partner of J2 Ventures

U.S. ARMY RESERVE | SPECIAL OPERATIONS & MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Alex served as a U.S. Army Reserve military intelligence officer, including leading a joint military unit supporting counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and Iraq with USSOCOM.

He previously worked with DIU and AFWERX and now co-leads J2 Ventures, investing in early-stage companies developing technologies for commercial and national security applications.

DAY 2 SPEAKER & PITCH JUDGE



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Margaret Roth

Principal at Squadra Ventures

STARTUP FOUNDER | VENTURE CAPITAL & PORTFOLIO OPERATIONS

Margaret is a former startup founder who co-founded Yet Analytics, a dual-use data analytics company serving government, industry, and education.

Today, she leads portfolio support at Squadra Ventures, working closely with early-stage defense and enterprise technology companies to develop growth strategies, strengthen operations, and scale their businesses.

DAY 2 PITCH JUDGE



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Andrew Dimitruk

Co-Founder & CEO of Ironflow AI

U.S. MARINE CORPS VETERAN | FORMER COBRA PILOT

Andrew served as a Marine Corps attack helicopter pilot, flying AH-1W Cobra and AH-1Z Viper aircraft during deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

After serving as COO of Shield AI, he co-founded Ironflow AI, developing AI-native manufacturing software to help defense companies improve operations, streamline production, and scale.



DAY 1 SPEAKER

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Steve Kiser, PhD

General Partner at Veteran Ventures Capital

RETIRED U.S. AIR FORCE LIEUTENANT COLONEL | DEFENSE INVESTOR



Steve served 20 years in the U.S. Air Force, including squadron command and service as a special advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

With additional leadership experience at Cubic Global Defense and Valiant Integrated Services, he now leads deal flow at Veteran Ventures Capital, investing in early-stage national security technology companies and mentoring founders.

DAY 2 PITCH JUDGE

DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Clay Kroschel

Co-Founder & CEO of XMX Defense

U.S. MARINE CORPS VETERAN | UAV OPERATIONS

Clay brings more than 20 years of experience in military operations, unmanned aircraft systems, and defense technology.

With over 3,500 UAV combat flight hours and 500 combat sorties, he now leads XMX Defense, advancing unmanned aircraft capabilities for the modern battlefield.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Matt Cox

Co-Founder & CEO of Beacon AI

U.S. NAVY VETERAN | F/A-18 FIGHTER PILOT

Matt served 11 years in the U.S. Navy as an F/A-18 fighter pilot before transitioning into autonomous vehicle technology at Cruise and AI development at Scale AI.

Today, he leads Beacon AI in developing AI-powered pilot assistance technology to improve flight safety, reduce pilot workload, and support military and commercial aviation.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//MEET THE SPEAKERS

Rob Winston

Co-Founder & CEO of HopFlyt

U.S. MARINE CORPS VETERAN | MILITARY AVIATOR

Rob brings more than 30 years of experience in military aviation, aerospace engineering, and unmanned aircraft development.

A former Marine Corps aviator and test pilot, he now leads HopFlyt in developing hybrid-electric VTOL aircraft designed to expand the capabilities of unmanned aviation.

DAY 1 SPEAKER



DEFENSE TECH

//JOIN US

YOUR NETWORK. YOUR NEXT OPPORTUNITY.

We're looking forward to two days of meaningful conversations, new connections, and collaboration across the defense tech and dual-use innovation ecosystem.

JOIN US AT DEFENSE TECH CONFERENCE 2026



NOVEMBER 3-4, 2026

THE MARINES' MEMORIAL CLUB & HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO