



CAPITAL FACTORY CONNECTS SA TECH STARTUPS WITH OPPORTUNITIES IN DEFENSE COMMUNITY

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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS — Startup incubator Capital Factory, which last year launched its Center for Defense Innovation at the Boeing Center at Tech Port, is leading efforts that are helping the region's young tech companies sell their innovations to the U.S. Department of Defense and beyond.

Capital Factory recently hosted the latest installment of its Defense Academy, a free half-day workshop where members from the local startup community engage with a wide range of experienced professionals to have a better understanding of how to empower the military and other users around the world with new technologies being developed in San Antonio.



Left-right: Capital Factory Chief Operating Officer Meg Vrabel, Allose founder and CEO Roman Sandoval, Blockmount founder Mina Guirguis and Darkhive founder and CEO John Goodson exchange ideas during a panel discussion.

"Defense Academy is an educational opportunity for any founder or startup who is interested in working with the government," said Capital Factory Chief Operating Officer Meg Vrabel. "We not only showcase people from the government contracting side, but also highlight founders and startups who have already successfully gone through programs to receive funding in moving their companies along."

"Our goal is for everyone to leave here with more information than they came with, and more people in their network for connecting them with the right people," continued Vrabel.

The presenters and speakers included an array of experienced San Antonio tech firms who were eager to share their experience with newcomers to the local ecosystem, such as Darkhive founder and CEO John Goodson — himself a U.S. Special Operations veteran who is now leading his company's efforts to integrate drone technology as part of national defense and public safety operations.

"Darkhive is focused on developing small autonomous drones for public safety and defense applications — allowing spaces to be investigated safely and in a cost-effective manner," said Goodson. "Our technologies will have relevance in applications both domestic and abroad."



Darkhive's Yellowjacket drone.

"While we are developing solutions that are built for robotics specialists and individuals in the defense realm, our goal is to create autonomy and accessibility for everyone — including hobbyists," continued Goodson.

Other executives from local startups who shared their stories included Roman Sandoval, CEO and Founder of Allosense, a firm that specializes in developing sensors used in electric vehicle manufacturing, and Mina Guirguis, founder of Blocmount, whose company helps protect factories, utilities and other critical infrastructure against cyberattacks.

Capital Factory's efforts to connect innovators with buyers underscore San Antonio's unique standing in the country as a community that has a very large and growing concentration of Department of Defense headquarters coupled with a thriving startup ecosystem that includes leading efforts in robotics, aerospace, space exploration, artificial intelligence (AI) and other applied technologies.



Kimberly Mata with the 502nd Contracting Squadron out of JBSA

"At Capital Factory, we are the center of gravity for entrepreneurs in Texas," added Vrabel. "It is our mission to get founders and startups their first or next round of funding, their next employee and their next customer. Capital Factory is the platform for anyone who is interested in technology, entrepreneurship and helping one another become successful in each other's journeys."

"Defense Academy is helping companies with commercially viable technologies to enter the national security space," said Port San Antonio Vice President of Talent & Technology Development & Integration Will Garrett. "Our federal government is trying to keep up with pace of change of technology, and they are more frequently looking outside the traditional federal contractor space to find technology and solutions that are moving more quickly. An important component of Defense Academy is to locate companies who don't think they want to do business with federal customers and to show them the advantages of interacting with such end-users."

"Capital Factory provides so many great resources to companies, and one of the things they do an amazing job at is providing access to people who have experience in a variety of verticals in the tech ecosystem," continued Goodson. "There is something valuable about coming into an open space and finding support among others who are getting started or in the process of accelerating their companies."



Above: Attendees network during the Defense Academy workshops.