



Top 20 VC-Backed Defense Technology Startups

2026 Landscape Report

Compiled by CoExcel Solutions | SourceBoard® · Current as of June 2026 · Sources: Crunchbase, PitchBook, Fast Company, Citybiz, Value Add VC

Market Overview — Defense Tech VC Funding in 2026

Investors have committed more than \$14.6 billion to defense tech companies in the first five months of 2026 alone — already surpassing the previous annual record of \$9.6 billion set in all of 2025. VC investment in the sector has grown from under \$1 billion annually in 2018 to a projected \$18 billion+ in 2026. The 20 companies profiled below represent the leading VC-backed defense startups by funding volume, valuation, strategic significance, and operational momentum.

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Anduril Industries Costa Mesa, CA • Est. 2017

Focus: Autonomous Systems, AI, Surveillance, Counter-Drone

Funding: \$5B Series H (2026) | \$30.5B Valuation

Key Investors: Founders Fund, Andreessen Horowitz, Lux Capital, 8VC, General Catalyst

Anduril is the most valuable VC-backed defense startup in the world. Founded by Oculus creator Palmer Luckey, Anduril builds vertically integrated autonomous weapons, AI-powered surveillance platforms, the Lattice command-and-control software suite, the Fury autonomous fighter drone, and the Barracuda cruise missile. The company's May 2026 \$5B Series H at a \$30.5B valuation cemented its status as the defining "neo-prime" of the defense tech era, competing directly with legacy primes on autonomous systems, directed energy, and undersea warfare.

Website: <https://www.anduril.com>

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Shield AI San Diego, CA • Est. 2015

Focus: Autonomous Aviation, AI Pilot Software

Funding: \$2B Series G (2026) | \$12.7B Valuation

Key Investors: Andreessen Horowitz, Riot Ventures, Shield Capital, Boeing HorizonX

Shield AI develops Hivemind, an AI pilot platform capable of flying aircraft without GPS, communications, or human pilots. The software flew Anduril's Fury aircraft during the U.S. Air Force's Collaborative Combat Aircraft program in February 2026, establishing Shield AI as the leading autonomy software layer across multiple platforms. The company's \$2B Series G in 2026 reflected growing conviction that autonomous flight intelligence is a critical, platform-agnostic asset across defense aviation.

Website: <https://www.shield.ai>

Saronic Technologies Austin, TX • Est. 2022**Focus:** Autonomous Naval Vessels, Maritime Security**Funding:** \$1.75B Series D (2026) | \$9.25B Valuation**Key Investors:** Andreessen Horowitz, 8VC, Founders Fund

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Saronic designs and manufactures unmanned surface vessels (USVs) for naval surveillance, maritime security, and offensive operations. The company's autonomous vessels range from 6-foot to 13-foot platforms deployable as coordinated swarms, integrating AI targeting and loitering munitions. Saronic's March 2026 \$1.75B Series D — the largest maritime defense tech financing on record — reflects investor conviction that autonomous warships are reshaping naval doctrine. AUKUS partner nations are among its growing customer base.

Website: <https://www.saronic.com>**Epirus** Torrance, CA • Est. 2018**Focus:** Directed Energy Weapons, Counter-UAS, Counter-Drone Swarms**Funding:** \$500M+ Total Raised | \$1.5B+ Valuation**Key Investors:** SoftBank, Founders Fund, Bedrock Capital

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Epirus develops high-power microwave (HPM) directed energy systems capable of neutralizing drone swarms, electronic systems, and small unmanned platforms at scale. Its flagship Leonidas system is under active U.S. Army contract and has been fielded in operational environments. Epirus addresses the asymmetric threat of drone proliferation by enabling a single directed energy system to defeat large numbers of drones at a fraction of the cost of traditional kinetic interceptors.

Website: <https://www.epirusinc.com>**Hermeus** Atlanta, GA • Est. 2018**Focus:** Hypersonic Aircraft, Unmanned Aerial Systems**Funding:** \$350M Round (2026) | \$1B Valuation**Key Investors:** Khosla Ventures, Founders Fund, Canaan Partners, In-Q-Tel, RTX Ventures

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Hermeus is building the world's fastest unmanned aircraft, targeting speeds above Mach 5 — exceeding the SR-71's 50-year airspeed record. The company's Quarterhorse Mk 2.1 prototype broke the sound barrier in May 2026. Hermeus works with the U.S. Air Force and NASA on hypersonic platforms designed to outrun every existing missile threat. Its April 2026 \$350M financing round at a \$1B valuation reflected strong investor confidence in the hypersonics market as a critical pillar of next-generation air dominance.

Website: <https://www.hermeus.com>**True Anomaly** Centennial, CO • Est. 2022**Focus:** Space Domain Awareness, Orbital Conflict, Space Warfare**Funding:** \$600M Series D (2026) | \$1B+ Valuation**Key Investors:** Riot Ventures, Champion Hill Ventures, Space.VC

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True Anomaly develops spacecraft, mission software, and training systems for orbital security. Its Autonomous Orbital Vehicles (AOVs) are designed for space domain awareness, inspection, and threat response. The company provides AI-enabled tools for tactics validation, threat replication, and operator training — from course-of-action recommendations to full mission autonomy. Its \$600M Series D in 2026 positions True Anomaly as a leading player in the emerging space warfare domain as the U.S. Space Force accelerates orbital security investment.

Website: <https://www.trueanomaly.space>

Mach Industries Huntington Beach, CA • Est. 2022

Focus: Autonomous Drones, Defense Manufacturing

Funding: \$300M Series C (2026)

Key Investors: Andreessen Horowitz, Lux Capital

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Mach Industries is building next-generation autonomous drone systems for U.S. defense customers. The company focuses on high-volume, cost-competitive drone production aligned with the Pentagon's Replicator initiative, which aims to field thousands of autonomous systems rapidly. Mach's \$300M Series C announced in 2026 underscores investor belief in scalable drone manufacturing as a decisive military capability, particularly in contested environments where attritable autonomous systems are strategically essential.

Website: <https://www.machindustries.co>

Slingshot Aerospace El Segundo, CA • Est. 2017

Focus: Space Domain Awareness, Orbital Tracking

Funding: \$400M+ Total Raised | \$1B+ Valuation

Key Investors: Booz Allen Ventures, Space Capital, Razor's Edge Ventures

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Slingshot Aerospace operates a commercial space domain awareness (SDA) platform that tracks and monitors objects in Earth orbit. Its software correlates sensor feeds from radar, optical, and radio frequency sources to deliver real-time situational awareness of orbital threats, debris, and adversarial activity. Slingshot's capabilities are critical as low Earth orbit becomes increasingly congested and contested. The company serves both commercial satellite operators and U.S. Space Force customers under active contract.

Website: <https://www.slingshotaerospace.com>

Shift5 Arlington, VA • Est. 2019

Focus: OT Cybersecurity, Onboard Data Analytics, GPS Anti-Spoofing

Funding: \$100M+ Total Raised

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Key Investors: Canaan Partners, 645 Ventures, Revolution Growth

Shift5 embeds hardware and software on military aircraft, vehicles, and rail systems to deliver real-time onboard operational technology (OT) cybersecurity and analytics. Its platform detects anomalies and potential GPS spoofing attempts up to 200 nautical miles away using an industry-first RF-based monitoring approach. Partners include Boeing, AWS, and Carahsoft. Shift5



expanded vehicle deployments by more than 100% in 2025 and is recognized as a Fast Company Most Innovative Company in defense tech for 2026.

Website: <https://www.shift5.io>

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Forterra Clarksburg, MD • Est. 2017

Focus: Autonomous Ground Vehicles, Edge Compute, Anti-Drone

Funding: \$238M Series C (2025) | \$1B+ Valuation

Key Investors: Andreessen Horowitz, 8VC, SineWave Ventures

Forterra (formerly RRAI) develops autonomous ground vehicle platforms and edge computing systems for defense and commercial logistics. In 2025, the company partnered with BAE Systems, Volvo Defense, Raytheon, and Oshkosh on autonomous armored vehicles and air-defense systems. Forterra also acquired GoTenna, a mesh networking startup used by special operations forces in communications-denied environments. Its platform is positioned to coordinate swarms of robotic ground vehicles across both defense and port logistics applications.

Website: <https://www.forterra.com>

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Vannevar Labs Palo Alto, CA • Est. 2019

Focus: AI Decision Intelligence, OSINT, Defense Software

Funding: \$100M+ Total Raised

Key Investors: Felicis Ventures, DFJ Growth, In-Q-Tel

Vannevar Labs builds AI-powered intelligence software for defense and national security customers, including SOCOM, the CIA, and the NSA. Its platform fuses open-source intelligence (OSINT), signals, and structured data to deliver decision-support tools for operators and analysts. Vannevar enables faster intelligence cycles with less analyst burden, applying large language models to military-grade data environments. The company has appeared on the Silicon Valley Defense Group NatSec100 multiple years running.

Website: <https://www.vannevarlabs.com>

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LeoLabs Menlo Park, CA • Est. 2016

Focus: Space Domain Awareness, Radar Tracking, Hypersonic Threat Detection

Funding: \$100M+ Total Raised

Key Investors: Airbus Ventures, Horizons Ventures, Khosla Ventures

LeoLabs operates a global network of ground-based phased-array radars that catalog and track nearly 25,000 objects in low Earth orbit. In 2025, the U.S. Department of Commerce and Space Force licensed access to LeoLabs' orbital catalog. The company is also developing truck-mounted Scout radars to track hypersonic missiles — a centerpiece of the Trump administration's Golden Dome initiative. LeoLabs' data underpins collision avoidance for commercial operators and space traffic management for the U.S. government.

Website: <https://www.leolabs.space>

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Hadrian Los Angeles, CA • Est. 2020**Focus:** Defense Manufacturing, CNC Automation, Precision Parts**Funding:** \$260M (2025)**Key Investors:** Lux Capital, Andreessen Horowitz, Founders Fund

Hadrian is building automated precision manufacturing factories to address the defense industrial base's severe capacity constraints. The company uses robotics and software to run computer-controlled machine shops capable of producing aerospace-grade metal parts faster and at lower cost than traditional suppliers. In July 2025, Hadrian announced \$260M in new capital and expanded factory footprints across California and Arizona, with dedicated capacity for shipbuilding and naval defense. Hadrian is solving a bottleneck that software-only defense companies cannot.

Website: <https://www.hadrian.co>

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Divergent Technologies Torrance, CA • Est. 2014**Focus:** 3D-Printed Defense Manufacturing, Missile Airframes**Funding:** \$290M Series E (2025) | \$2.3B Valuation**Key Investors:** SoftBank, AECOM, Divergent Capital

Divergent Technologies has developed a proprietary 3D-printing manufacturing system capable of producing complex aerospace and defense structures at radically lower cost and lead time. As of March 2026, Divergent was 3D-printing cruise missile airframes and claimed the ability to produce hundreds annually at roughly one-tenth the traditional cost. This cost compression is strategically significant given DoD demand for affordable, mass-producible munitions under the Replicator initiative and follow-on attritable weapons programs.

Website: <https://www.divergent3d.com>

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Saildrone Alameda, CA • Est. 2012**Focus:** Autonomous Ocean Surveillance, Unmanned Surface Vessels**Funding:** \$300M+ Total Raised | \$700M+ Valuation**Key Investors:** Social Capital, New Enterprise Associates, Lux Capital

Saildrone builds wind- and solar-powered unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) for ocean surveillance, maritime security, and scientific data collection. The company operates a dual-use model, providing persistent ocean monitoring for NOAA as well as maritime surveillance for the U.S. Navy. Saildrone's vessels can operate continuously for months at sea, delivering persistent ISR in areas inaccessible or hazardous to manned platforms. The company's dual commercial-defense revenue base supports its valuation and growth trajectory.

Website: <https://www.saildrone.com>

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Astranis San Francisco, CA • Est. 2015**Focus:** Geostationary Satellites, Resilient Military Communications



Funding: \$500M+ Total Raised

Key Investors: Andreessen Horowitz, Initialized Capital, DCVC

Astranis is building small, affordable geostationary orbit (GEO) satellites to deliver dedicated broadband connectivity to underserved regions and defense customers requiring hardened, persistent communications. Unlike traditional large GEO satellites that cost hundreds of millions, Astranis builds smaller platforms at a fraction of the price, enabling rapid deployment. The company has customers in commercial broadband and is actively pursuing defense contracts requiring resilient, GPS-independent communications — a critical capability in GPS-denied operational environments.

Website: <https://www.astranis.com>

Gecko Robotics Pittsburgh, PA • Est. 2014

Focus: Infrastructure Inspection Robotics, Defense Asset Maintenance

Funding: \$100M+ Total Raised

Key Investors: Founders Fund, Tiger Global, Bessemer Venture Partners

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Gecko Robotics deploys climbing robots to inspect and maintain critical infrastructure including Navy ships, Air Force aircraft hangars, and industrial facilities. Its robots traverse vertical and curved ferromagnetic surfaces while capturing high-resolution sensor data to detect corrosion, thickness loss, and structural defects. The DoD relies on Gecko's AI-powered inspection platform to reduce maintenance costs and extend the operational lifespan of aging military assets — a critical capability as the defense industrial base faces shipbuilding and sustainment backlogs.

Website: <https://www.geckorobotics.com>

Skydio San Mateo, CA • Est. 2014

Focus: Autonomous Drones, Computer Vision, Military UAS

Funding: \$340M+ Total Raised

Key Investors: Andreessen Horowitz, Accel, Next47

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Skydio develops autonomous drone platforms powered by onboard AI and computer vision, enabling hands-free flight in complex environments without GPS dependency. The company's drones are used by the U.S. Army, Department of Defense, and allied forces for reconnaissance, site inspection, and force protection. Skydio has appeared on the SVDG NatSec100 multiple years consecutively and is a primary domestic alternative to Chinese-manufactured drones following the ban on DJI products within the U.S. military.

Website: <https://www.skydio.com>

Second Front Systems Washington, DC • Est. 2019

Focus: DevSecOps, Software Accreditation, ATO Acceleration

Funding: \$60M+ Total Raised

Key Investors: Shield Capital, Tusk Venture Partners

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Second Front Systems (2F) accelerates the delivery of commercial software to national security customers by streamlining the government's Authority to Operate (ATO) and FedRAMP accreditation processes. Its Game Warden platform provides a pre-authorized cloud environment that reduces time-to-mission from years to weeks for defense software companies. 2F serves as critical infrastructure for the defense tech ecosystem, enabling startups like Palantir, Primer, and others to rapidly deploy classified and unclassified software to DoD and IC customers.

Website: <https://www.secondfront.com>

Chaos Industries Los Angeles, CA • Est. 2022

Focus: Counter-UAS, Electronic Warfare, Drone Defense

Funding: \$75M+ Total Raised

Key Investors: 8VC, Lux Capital, Founders Fund

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Chaos Industries is building electronic warfare and counter-UAS systems designed to defeat drone threats across a wide frequency spectrum. The company is developing high-capacity, software-defined radio frequency systems for drone detection, jamming, and neutralization. Chaos has partnered with Forterra to develop an autonomous air-defense system targeting small unmanned aerial threats. Backed by the leading defense tech investors, Chaos is positioning itself in the fast-growing counter-UAS market, which analysts project will exceed \$7B annually by 2028.

Website: <https://www.chaosindustries.com>

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