



DEFTECH

DRIVING INNOVATION AND DEFENSE IN NORTH CAROLINA

By the North Carolina Military Business Center

INTRODUCTION

The North Carolina Defense Technology Transition Office (DEFTECH) is at the forefront of innovation, bridging the gap between emerging technologies and critical technology needs of the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security. In this article, the new Director of DEFTECH, Bob Burton, shares his vision for fostering technological advancement within North Carolina's robust innovation ecosystem.

ABOUT DEFTECH

DEFTECH, a state-funded entity of the North Carolina Military Business Center (NCMBC), is dedicated to enabling elements of the North Carolina innovation ecosystem to address complex national security problems through technology transition. DEFTECH's mission is to increase economic opportunities for businesses and to grow jobs in the state, while ensuring America's warfighters, first responders and homeland defenders have access to the best possible technologies.

DEFTECH headquarters is located at the First Flight Venture Center in Research Triangle Park. DEFTECH support is available across the entire state of NC, with a program manager in the eastern part of the state and recruitment of another program manager opening soon. DEFTECH serves as a vital

link between the innovation community and the Departments of Defense (DoD) and Homeland Security and other federal agencies. DEFTECH scouts for breakthrough technologies, coaches industries on defense applications of their technologies, communicates federal technology needs, positions businesses to meet these requirements and represents North Carolina innovators to federal customers.

THE DIRECTOR'S JOURNEY

Bob joined the North Carolina Military Business Center on February 1, 2020 as the Senior Manager of Technology Transition. In January 2024, the NCMBC appointed him DEFTECH Interim Director, and on June 1 Bob started in his new role as Director. A deep commitment to national security and technological innovation has shaped Bob's journey to this position.

Bob is a retired Special Forces Command Sergeant Major with over 30 years of special operations leadership experience. His career began with a 12-man Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (SFODA) and culminated in executive-level leadership roles, including serving as a trusted advisor to a 3-star general officer at the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). His deployments across US Central, European and Pacific Command areas of responsibility have refined his combat leadership, force development expertise and strategic insight.



VISION FOR DEFTECH

DEFTECH defines technology transition as the process by which significant innovations are transitioned from science and technology or commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) innovations into funded prototypes, tested by the DoD, and then added as modifications to existing programs of record. DEFTECH is committed to making North Carolina a national leader in defense technology innovation.

TECH PROTECT INITIATIVE AND ADDRESSING NEW DUE DILIGENCE REQUIREMENTS

In alignment with its commitment to security, DEFTECH proactively addresses the DoD's new due diligence requirements for its Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. These requirements are designed to assess and mitigate security risks presented by small business concerns seeking DoD awards. DEFTECH fully supports compliance with rigorous standards by building awareness of DoD security requirements and assisting NC innovators to understand and adhere to these standards.

HOW DEFTECH WILL DELIVER ON ITS PROMISES

To ensure it meets these promises – and to execute any assigned responsibilities as a component of a future North Carolina Defense Innovation Network – DEFTECH will execute the following actions:

- **Enhanced Scouting and Networking:** DEFTECH will increase its efforts to scout for innovative technologies across the state, leveraging its extensive network of businesses, Community Colleges, Universities and public-private partnerships. By hosting and participating in technology forums and events, DEFTECH will keep a finger on the pulse of emerging technologies across the state.
- **Proactive Industry Coaching:** DEFTECH will provide targeted coaching and support to businesses, helping them understand and navigate the complexities of the defense and homeland security sectors. This includes workshops, webinars and one-on-one consultations to ensure they are well-prepared to meet federal requirements.



Bob Burton with Laura Winters at the Navy Clothing and Textile Research Facility at NATICK Soldier Systems Center.

- **Robust Communication Channels:** DEFTECH will establish clear and effective communication channels to disseminate federal technology needs and opportunities. Community building and regular weekly DEFTECH Coffee Call updates will keep the innovation ecosystem informed and engaged.
- **Strategic Positioning:** DEFTECH will highlight NC businesses at the federal level, ensuring that our state's capabilities are recognized and valued. DEFTECH will work closely with federal agencies to position NC businesses to secure defense contracts successfully.
- **Comprehensive Due Diligence:** DEFTECH will ensure that all participating businesses meet the highest security and compliance standards by building awareness of the new due diligence requirements. DEFTECH focuses on informing and guiding businesses to understand and adhere to these standards, protecting America's national security interests.

LOOKING AHEAD, "FRONTLINE OF THE FUTURE"

As Bob takes on this leadership role at DEFTECH, he will focus on strengthening DEFTECH's existing relationships and building new ones to expand its network and to support new business opportunities in North Carolina. Bob is committed to helping North Carolina maintain and improve its status as the best place to innovate, live, work, and prosper – and to making North Carolina the "Frontline of the Future" for defense innovation.

Together, all of us can drive technological advancements that enhance our national security and create significant economic opportunities for our state. Bob looks forward to working with businesses to achieve these goals and to ensure North Carolina remains a beacon of innovation and excellence.

For more information visit ncmbc.us or deftech.nc.gov.



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