



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Griffiss Institute Announces HUSTLE Defense Accelerator Winners, Welcomes Five New Tech Companies to Mohawk Valley



Rome, NY- The excitement was palpable as Griffiss Institute revealed the exceptional achievements of the eight tech companies who completed the HUSTLE Defense Accelerator program in Rome this summer and celebrated the prize winners of the second cohort during the HUSTLE Demo Day held on August 17th.

Griffiss Institute's HUSTLE Defense Accelerator, a rigorous 12-week immersive professional development program for emerging tech startups focused on national security, has gained

significant momentum with unwavering support from distinguished partners Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), New York State's Empire State Development (ESD), and National Grid. The AFRL science and technology community has rallied around the opportunity to attract new tech companies to the region, educating HUSTLE teams on aligning their technologies with warfighter needs, offering technical expertise and networking opportunities to discover collaborators across the national AFRL enterprise. ESD has demonstrated resolute commitment to sponsoring seed capital investments and support from its statewide ecosystem of entrepreneurship programs. And the generous financial support provided by National Grid further empowers these emerging companies to drive technological breakthroughs, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the local economy.

The winning teams, comprised of EMPEQ, BosonQ Psi, Paterson Aerospace Systems, Drone City, and Accessible Automation, all received investments to grow their ventures in the Mohawk Valley. Accessible Automation and Drone City each secured an impressive \$50,000 investment to fuel the growth of their companies. BosonQ Psi and Paterson Aerospace Systems received \$100,000, while EMPEQ took the grand prize of \$150,000 dollars.

HUSTLE Demo Day offered a captivating glimpse into the trailblazing tech companies in the 2023 cohort, who pitched their revolutionary ideas and plans to scale their ventures in the Mohawk Valley. The event was not only a platform to showcase the culmination of the 2023 HUSTLE Defense Accelerator program but also a festive celebration of innovation and entrepreneurship featuring all local refreshments and valuable networking opportunities.

"I am thrilled to congratulate the eight diverse and extraordinary teams who have built dynamic tech companies developing national security solutions, and who worked hard to complete the HUSTLE program with us this summer," said Heather Hage, President & CEO of Griffiss Institute. "We look forward to continuing to support their journeys to grow strong and healthy in the Mohawk Valley, and believe they will all go on to accomplish great things."

"These teams have been on a transformative journey, I am profoundly proud of the breakthroughs they've achieved, and the collaborative spirit thriving within the teams this summer," said Seth Mulligan, Senior Director of Innovation & Partnerships at the Griffiss Institute. "The future they are shaping is brighter and more secure because of the advances these companies are pioneering. This is not merely the end of a program; it's the launchpad for a new era of innovation."

"The passion, dedication, and ingenuity demonstrated by these teams have paved the way for groundbreaking innovations," said President, CEO and Commissioner of Empire State Development Hope Knight. "The accomplishments of these companies are a testament to their unwavering commitment to advancing innovation in the Mohawk Valley. These successes ignite a new chapter of technology that will undoubtedly shape industries and inspire future entrepreneurs. ESD is proud to support companies that will create solutions for real world issues and increase New York State's economic competitiveness in national security."

"We are steadfast in our commitment to invest in the future of Oneida County and the Mohawk Valley," said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. "By fostering innovation, education, and sustainable growth, we are not only shaping a brighter tomorrow but also ensuring that our region remains a beacon of opportunity for generations to come."

"Collaborating with the HUSTLE Defense Accelerator program underscores our commitment to fostering innovation in the realm of national security. By empowering these startups with cutting-edge technology and resources, we're contributing to the advancement of technological solutions that will shape the future of defense. The journey of these visionary entrepreneurs is a testament to the power of collaboration between the public and private sectors, and we're excited to witness the transformative impact they will have on our nation's security landscape." - Dr. Michael Hayduk, Deputy Director of AFRL Information Directorate

"The purpose of National Grid's economic development programs is to promote growth in local economies and support companies at all stages of their development. We are pleased to assist the startup companies of HUSTLE through our entrepreneurship program, which provides investment to springboard companies in their earliest days," said Alberto Bianchetti, National Grid's regional director of customer and community engagement.

The HUSTLE Defense Accelerator is an elite and immersive 12-week training academy for seed-stage tech startups pushing artificial intelligence, machine learning, cybersecurity, quantum science, and unmanned aircraft system solutions. Eight startups were chosen to pitch for HUSTLE Demo Day because of their validated potential to elevate U.S. national security and economic competitiveness.

The Accelerate program track welcomed emerging pre-seed companies, while the Elevate program track included more advanced seed stage ventures. The Accelerate teams for cohort 2 consisted of:

- **Accessible Automation** ([accessibleautomation.wordpress.com](http://accessibleautomation.wordpress.com)), located in Verona, NY, developed a long-range wireless communication system. The first product projected to roll out with this technology will be a wireless thermostat to control the temperature in any room of your house whenever. Principals: Greg Bush, Amy Bush
- **Drone City LLC** ([dronecity.ai](http://dronecity.ai)) Our elegantly designed drones are built and operated with safety and quality in mind. We pride ourselves on creating a people-friendly drone delivery service. That's why all of our drones are installed with sophisticated sensors, the latest spatial awareness technology, and automatic safety parachute mechanisms. Our drones can carry out automated delivery services, transporting your precious cargo from a to b quickly and safely. Principal: Mehdi Salehi

The Elevate track, encompassing more advanced seed-stage companies with minimum viable products (MVPs), featured:

- **Paterson Aerospace Systems Corporation** ([patersonaerospace.com](http://patersonaerospace.com)) Paterson Aerospace Systems aims to explore innovative solutions to space-related problems through research.

We are a think tank of professional engineers and scientists with a passion for protecting environmental assets for safer and cleaner space exploration. Principal: Kaylon Paterson

- **BosonQ Psi** (bosonqpsi.com) Vision: To be the premier Simulation software company utilizing Quantum Computing to serve enterprise customers. Emerging technologies pose challenges, and Quantum computing is not an exception. To keep our promise to customers, we have formulated short-term and long-term strategies. Our immediate focus is on hybrid approaches using NISQ-era Quantum computers and classical HPCs. While delivering this, we strive to develop fault-tolerant methods for future simulations. Principal: Abishek Chopra
- **LLUME** (organic robotics corporation) (llume.io) Born at Cornell University, Light Lace™ technology has received numerous grants and awards. The team behind LLUME is now applying Light Lace™ to chest straps to provide a seamless performance monitoring experience to anyone who wants to learn more about and improve their well-being. The core team of Light Lace™ is working on applying these game changing sensors to different form factors to provide real time feedback on motion, muscle fatigue, and vitals of professional athletes. Be on the lookout for the launch of LLUME: The Shirt, designed with pitchers in mind. Principals: Ilayda Samigil, Dr. Robert Shepherd
- **EMPEQ** (Empower Equity, Inc.) (empeq.co) Efficient, Accurate Site Surveys. Fast Site Survey™ combines One-Click Capture™ of detailed, accurate data on building equipment and customizable forms and templates to make site surveys up to 80% more efficient. An efficient, reliable system based on fast, accurate, detailed data capture, data centralization, and unique flexibility. Principals: Herbert Dwyer, Derek LeClair
- **Cyberspara** (cyberspara.com) We are developing a transformational and unique game-based learning platform, called Digital-PASS, to empower individuals to mitigate security threats from the Internet. DIGITAL-PASS is a simulation-based educational model that uses gamification principles to educate internet users on common privacy/security vulnerabilities encountered on social media platforms. Principal: Kambiz Ghazinour
- **Imagine Aerial** (iaflight.com) is a UAS (drone) and AI Data company that deploys advanced sensors on UAS to assess critical infrastructure quickly and safely. Acquired data is processed through proprietary AI/ML and delivered direct to client workflows to inform and prioritize their critical infrastructure strategies. The company has IP technologies under patent and trademark pursuit and has performed in 26 states, within the restricted airspace of 13 military bases and dozens of major airports to deliver proven technology that substantially reduces critical assessment time while improving safety. Principal: Gavin Snyder

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#### **About Griffiss Institute:**

*The Griffiss Institute cultivates talent and technology that tackles the world's biggest challenges. It does so alongside the United States Department of Defense's Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate (AFRL/RI) and an international network of academic, government, and industry partners. Founded in 2002 in the Mohawk Valley region of Upstate New York, Griffiss Institute has origins as an incubator of ideas. With technology transfer at its core, it forges*

connections and pathways that enable real-life solutions to make their way from the lab bench to commercial uses. Griffiss Institute continues to elevate and develop the next generation of STEM students, professionals, and technologies that enhance our national security. Visit [griffissinstitute.org](http://griffissinstitute.org).

### **About Innovare Advancement Center**

Innovare Advancement Center is a 150,000 square foot open innovation hub that converges world-class scientific, engineering, and entrepreneurial talent from universities, government, and industry to tackle new challenges in artificial intelligence, machine learning, cybersecurity, quantum, and unmanned aerial systems. Innovare's unique capabilities include highly specialized laboratories for experimentation in quantum communications and neuromorphic computing, 40,000 square feet of high-tech and high-speed communications-enabled collaboration spaces, an auditorium with capacity for up to 150 people, an access point to the NYS UAS Test Site, and SKYDOME – an indoor/outdoor uncrewed aerial system (UAS) research and testing facility - the largest in the United States. [www.innovare.org](http://www.innovare.org)

### **About Empire State Development:**

ESD is New York's chief economic development agency. The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing the New York State Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, please visit [www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov](http://www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov) and [www.esd.ny.gov](http://www.esd.ny.gov).