



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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MEMORANDUM FOR DEFENSE INNOVATION UNIT

SUBJECT: Congratulations to the Defense Innovation Unit on your fifth Anniversary

Dual-use commercial and emerging technologies are critical to maintaining America's military technological edge and, more broadly, our global economic competitiveness. As the *2018 National Defense Strategy* highlighted, "success no longer goes to the country that develops a new technology first, but rather to the one that better integrates it and adapts its way of fighting."

The Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) has played a critical role in bringing new processes, methodologies, and technologies to the Department. In light of this, I congratulate DIU on its fifth anniversary. Some of your earliest successes include a rapid procurement process with the Commercial Solution Opening; agile software development with the Tanker Planning Tool prototype leading to the Air Force's Kessel Run; secure small unmanned aerial systems; and scaling machine learning solutions for predictive maintenance across the joint force.

Since its establishment in August 2015, DIU has successfully transitioned and fielded 21 commercial solutions to the warfighter, broadened the national security innovation base by welcoming more than 60 new and 120 non-traditional companies, and improved our relationship with innovation ecosystems around the country. In 2018, DIUx transitioned to a permanent part of the Department in recognition of the value that it provides in rapidly and cost-effectively fielding capability and expanding the national security innovation base. In recognition of becoming an enduring element of the Defense enterprise and no longer being merely experimental, DIUx dropped the "x".

The need for the Department to move at the speed of relevance is only growing, and I challenge DIU to maintain its entrepreneurial approach to continue to deliver and scale transformational capabilities across the joint force.

Mark T. Esper

