

Fairwater Labs

Fellowship



Fairwater Labs is a startup studio partnering with founders to build the next generation of national security tech companies.

We've built an engine for developing the future of defense technology. We help veterans transition from the military into defense tech entrepreneurship by developing and vetting ideas together, supporting them with the necessary education and connections, and providing a suite of services to ensure their endeavors succeed.

background

about us

Fairwater Labs creates value by crafting industry expertise and a proprietary framework to rapidly screen, evaluate, and sharpen business plans for national security and dual use technologies.

We are mission-driven to solve national defense problems with leading-edge technology. Backed by experienced veteran leadership and Silicon Valley tech expertise, our team is leading the charge to get the best technology into warfighters' hands.

our team

Garrett Smith

Co-founder and Chairman

Isaac Riddle

Advisor
CEO of DFL Tech

Kyle Olson

Director of Operations

Neil Sequiera

Founding Investor
Defy VC

Hayley Menser

Co-founder and Principal

30+ combined years of military
experience in SOF and elite tactical units

Hatched and backed by Defy VC



defy.

kyle olson

Kyle thrives when giving bold direction in high risk/high reward environments by aligning stakeholder interests and taking decisive action. Kyle is a Marine Raider and Special Operations Officer with worldwide experience who is most proud of leading his team neutralizing ISIS cells terrorizing northern Iraq. Inspired by the technological challenges he faced in combat, Kyle decided to leave active duty to focus on putting America's best technology into the hands of those that need it the most.

garrett smith

Garrett builds and leads dynamic teams that solve tough problems and succeed. He has a passion for mindfully leveraging human ingenuity and technology to create value, build strong networks, and win. Garrett is a Reconnaissance, Intelligence, and Infantry Officer in the United States Marine Corps Reserve, serving alongside some of the finest patriots he has ever known.

hayley menser

Hayley loves fast paced, high growth environments, and is passionate about helping people grow and reach their potential. She hatched Fairwater Labs with Garrett and Neil while working at Defy VC, an early stage venture capital firm. Prior to Defy, she worked in sales, operations, and marketing at Splunk, GoPro, and Tinder.

neil sequeira

Neil is a founder and partner at Defy VC. He has spent more than two decades as a venture capitalist, helping entrepreneurs build their teams, expand their networks, identify new customers, pull in revenue, solidify partnerships, and assist with future fundraises. Having sat on over 50 boards, he is committed to being his CEOs' most helpful and supportive board member and to bringing significantly more value than just the capital he invests.

He is passionate about technologies that support intelligence collection, tactical survivability, unmanned systems, and digital privacy. Kyle is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and an MBA Candidate at the Wharton School. He is married with two children and no pets (yet). He is an avid backpacker, runner, skier, and diver who dabbles in skydiving when he has time. He is always ready for an adventure.

Garrett is a graduate of Stanford University's Ford Dorsey Program in International Policy Studies, having earned a masters degree in June 2015. His focus of study was International Security and Cooperation, with background experience in South, Southeast, and East Asia. He also holds a certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship from Stanford's Graduate School of Business.

Hayley graduated from Colorado College, where she studied quantitative economics. She is especially interested in the intersection of technology, innovation, and national security. In her free time, she likes getting outside, being active, and reading (always taking recommendations).

Prior to Defy, Neil was a Managing Director at General Catalyst Partners for 11 years, where he joined a couple of years after the firm's founding. Neil earned a BA in Business Economics from the University of California, Santa Barbara and an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

our beliefs

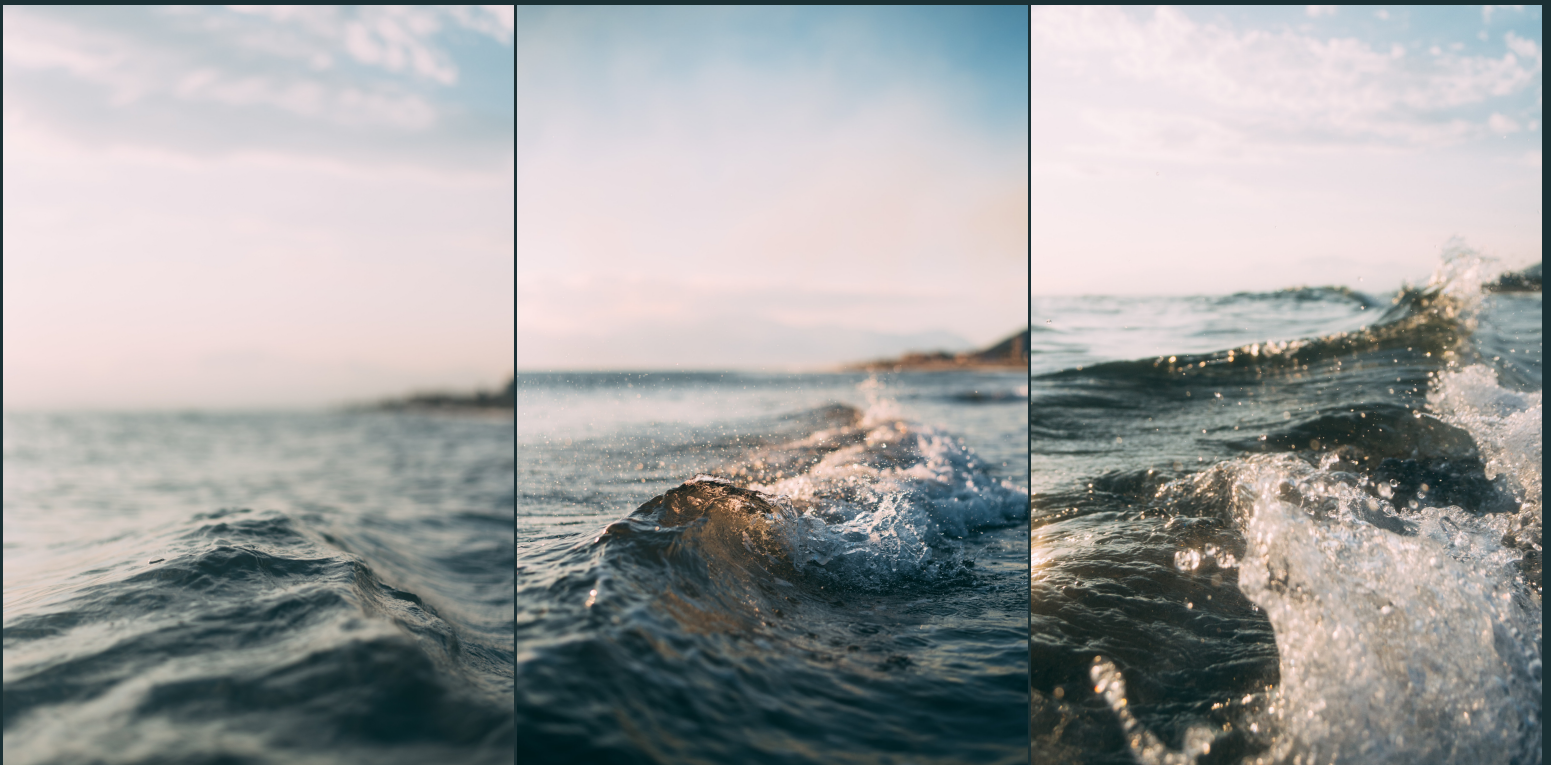
Our country is at its best when it harnesses the diverse strengths inherent in many sectors of the economy. To face the challenges of rising authoritarianism and revisionist powers, we need to operate at our best.

That's why Fairwater Labs is committed to uniting two of the strongest – and most different – parts of America: military veterans and technologists. While these groups hail from different parts of the country and chose different paths in life, they are connected by the thread that none of what they have accomplished would have been possible anywhere but America.

We also believe that centuries of military and business experience consistently teaches one lesson, captured in the 1st SOF Truth: humans are more important than hardware (or software).

Because people are the most critical part of anything great, we believe in investing in them. One way we are doing that is forging founders, enabling them to prototype and found companies alongside us.

We build great teams around business concepts with national security applications (otherwise known as dual-use technologies). To build these teams, we rigorously vet ideas and teams and aggressively invest in the best of both. The result is a community of like-minded, mission-oriented companies sharing FWL's expertise, contacts, and connections to solve our nation's highest-stakes challenges.





fairwater is for founders

Fairwater's Fellowship program guides you through the company creation process. We specialize in hatching startups from scratch, and we'll partner with you from ideation to building a product and beyond.

We partner with founders and companies for the long haul. Fellows gain full access to our bullpen of advisors and resources. You'll connect with and learn from venture capitalists, successful founders, and industry experts. Our curated ecosystem helps you develop deep knowledge of the startup and national security landscapes.

Fairwater assists in the rapid development of a product, curates introductions to trusted capital sources, and provides the backend and financial support to launch your business. We'll operate, invest, and take on projects like we're part of the team.

[Apply to the Fellowship](#)