FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Defense Digital Service and the Department of the Air Force Challenge Hackers of all skill levels to compete in their hands-on virtual workshops in Aerospace Village for DEF CON 28 Safe Mode

WASHINGTON – August 6, 2020 – Starting today at 10:00 AM PST / 1:00 PM EST, hackers from every skill level and around the world will have an opportunity to try their hand at completing a number of avionics and aerospace hacking challenges through dds-virtual.com, created by the Defense Digital Service (DDS) in partnership with the Department of the Air Force. The soft launch, opening one day before DEF CON 28 Safe Mode officially kicks off, enables participants to test their Twitch settings, explore all the available workshops and decide which ones they want to compete in during DEF CON.

"Of course we would rather be at DEF CON in person, but under the circumstances of a global pandemic, for the first time in nearly 30 years, DEF CON is completely free and virtual. That's historic. It also meant we had to completely change our strategy and re-create our workshops with only a few weeks to go," said Brett Goldstein, Director of Defense Digital Service. "It was an insane amount of work, but working with the Air Force, we did it and we're honored to be able to contribute to the community."

In order to play, participants only need a Twitch account and no additional VR equipment. The first 500 players to complete one of the Bricks in the Air, CPX SimpleSat, or DDSat-1 challenges will receive a Bricks in the Air DEF CON t-shirt. These workshops are meant to be educational and the U.S. Government does not condone hacking for malicious gain.

"We partnered with Brett's 'SWAT Team of Nerds' because they are exemplars of the kind of private sector talent we intend to collaborate with, and learn from, as we look to design more-secure aerospace systems," said Dr. Will Roper, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. "It's imperative we cultivate technical talent across the DoD, and especially for space systems, as nations depend on the essential services these platforms provide."

Brett Goldstein and Dr. Will Roper will be kicking off the Space Security Challenge: 2020 Hack-A-Sat events with an opening show titled, "Between 2 Nerds," a candid conversation and an inside look at the DDS headquarters in the Pentagon. The show will take place on Friday, August 7 at 11 AM PST / 2 PM EST at hackasat.com.

These workshops are the hands-on learning part of Space Security Challenge 2020: Hack-A-Sat, a joint effort by Defense Digital Service and the Department of the Air Force. The Hack-A-Sat Capture the Flag, a multi-stage challenge for more advanced security researchers, kicked off in late May with a qualification event that hosted over 2,000 teams from around the world. Eight of the most talented teams have been invited to the Hack-A-Sat

final event taking place virtually Aug 7-9 on hackasat.com. Together, the Hack-A-Sat CTF and the educational workshops contribute to the Aerospace Village's mission of building an inclusive community of next-generation aerospace cybersecurity expertise and leaders.

For more information about the Bricks in the Air avionics hacking workshops or the aerospace hacking workshops, CPX-SimpleSat, DDSat-1, and Nyan-Sat, visit dds.mil/defcon/ or to check out the Hack-A-Sat CTF final event, visit www.hackasat.com.

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About Defense Digital Service (DDS)
The Defense Digital Service was established by the Secretary of Defense in November 2015 as a SWAT team of nerds that provides the best in modern technical knowledge designed to bolster national defense. We are primarily based in the Pentagon, but we also have satellite offices in Augusta, Georgia, and co-located at the Defense Innovation Unit in Mountain View, California. Our range of talent includes world-class software developers, designers, product managers, digital experts, and bureaucracy hackers from both the private sector and within government. Learn more at https://dds.mil/.

About Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL)
The Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) is the primary scientific research and development center for the Department of the Air Force. AFRL plays an integral role in leading the discovery, development, and integration of affordable warfighting technologies for our air, space, and cyberspace force. With a workforce of more than 11,000 across nine technology areas and 40 other operations across the globe, AFRL provides a diverse portfolio of science and technology ranging from fundamental to advanced research and technology development. For more information, visit www.afresearchlab.com.

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