Built to Defend, Ready to Build: Jason Goins on American Manufacturing and the Supply Chain That Protects Freedom

An Air Force Veteran Makes the Case for Domestic Industrial Growth, Private Investment, and the Workforce That Will Power the Next Generation of Aerospace and Defense

Washington, D.C, District of Columbia Mar 11, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - The Foundation Beneath the Technology

The most advanced defense systems in the world — the ones that read like pages from a science fiction novel — share a common dependency that rarely makes headlines: they all require materials, components, and baseline infrastructure produced by suppliers scattered across the United States and, increasingly, around the globe.

Jason Goins spent years inside that system. As an Air Force Veteran whose career spanned nuclear forensics, missile defense operations, crisis coordination, and innovation programs like Project Arc, he saw firsthand how the strength of American defense ultimately depends not on any single weapons platform but on the vast and fragile supply chain that makes every platform possible.

Now, as he transitions into the private sector, Goins is focused on a mission he considers just as urgent as anything he undertook in uniform: strengthening the domestic manufacturing base that underpins national security.

Why Domestic Manufacturing Is a National Security Imperative

From his vantage point inside the Department of Defense, Goins watched the ambition of American defense programs grow while the industrial foundation supporting them remained unevenly resourced. The United States continues to develop increasingly complex and capable systems, but those systems depend on materials and components — from specialized polymers and coatings to precision nuts and washers — that are produced by independent companies, not government facilities.

“If you want to be able to maintain a technological advantage anywhere, anytime, you need the suppliers who make those components to keep their doors open,” Goins says. “As small as a washer, as large as a missile — every piece matters.”

The implication is straightforward: when domestic manufacturing capacity erodes, or when critical supply chains run through nations whose interests do not align with American security, the ability to produce, maintain, and scale defense systems is at risk. The technological edge that deters conflict depends on industrial capacity as much as it depends on engineering brilliance.

Two Weaknesses That Demand Attention

Goins identifies two structural weaknesses in the current aerospace and defense supply chain that require urgent attention.

The first is human capital. The skilled workers who operate the machines, manage the processes, and maintain quality standards at defense suppliers are the backbone of production capacity. But the workforce is not growing fast enough to meet the scaling demands that the Department of Defense has outlined for current and future systems.

“We need to grow these jobs in communities across the country,” Goins says. “Growing the number of people with the skills and the compensation required to do these jobs is critical.”

The second weakness is geographic and geopolitical: too much manufacturing expertise still resides in nations that could, under certain conditions, manipulate supply or deny access entirely. Moving that expertise to domestic facilities or allied nations is essential to maintaining full control of the defense supply chain and eliminating the leverage that adversaries could exploit.

The Irreplaceable Role of Small Suppliers

While large prime contractors assemble, integrate, and test complex systems, the critical subcomponents that make those systems function are overwhelmingly built by small and mid-sized suppliers — many of them family-owned businesses that have been doing the work for decades.

These suppliers occupy a unique and essential niche. Prime contractors cannot economically justify producing low-volume, highly specialized components that represent a fraction of a larger system. But small suppliers can, because they diversify their portfolios across multiple industries — aerospace, defense, automotive, medical — and use that diversification to sustain production lines that would otherwise be unprofitable in isolation.

“A prime contractor can’t make a business case to produce every small component,” Goins explains. “But a diversified small supplier can, because defense work is part of a broader portfolio. That creates a more competitive, sustainable landscape for the supply chain for years and decades to come.”

This ecosystem of small suppliers is the foundation upon which the entire defense industrial base rests.

When those suppliers are healthy, resilient, and growing, the nation's ability to produce and scale defense systems remains intact.

Military Experience Meets Private Sector Reality

Goins's transition from government service to the private sector has given him a dual perspective that few possess. From inside the Department of Defense, he could see the policy signals and programmatic intentions. From the outside, he can now see how those signals land — or fail to land — in the companies that are expected to respond.

"Working for the government, I could see that we thought we were communicating well," he says. "But translating over to the corporate and private side, those messages aren't always landing. It's a confusing landscape, and the incentives aren't necessarily there. We need to communicate more, communicate better, and work with industry on creative ways to close these gaps."

What is needed, he argues, is a concerted, funded, long-term strategic plan — not vague rhetoric, but specific targets backed by resources that incentivize companies to pursue them. The government's role is to set direction and create conditions for growth. The execution must come from the private sector.

The Case for Private Capital

Goins is emphatic that the reindustrialization of American defense manufacturing will not succeed as a government-led initiative alone. The government can incentivize, but it should not and cannot pick winners and losers by directly building out entire industrial sectors.

"Private capital is good at making a sustainable, long-term business case and growing sustainably with the market," he says. "Capital markets are really good at scaling capabilities, and that's exactly what private investment can do here."

The logic is clear: private investors bring incentive structures, market discipline, and scaling expertise that government programs inherently lack. By directing private capital toward lower-tier suppliers and emerging manufacturers, the defense industrial base can grow in a way that is both economically sustainable and strategically resilient. Investment in these lower tiers strengthens the broader economy by creating jobs, developing communities, and building capacity that serves multiple industries simultaneously.

Attracting the Next Generation

For all the strategic importance of defense manufacturing, Goins believes the sector faces a branding problem. The jobs are stable, mission-driven, and team-oriented — exactly what surveys show today's workforce wants — but the industry has not done enough to communicate that.

"We need to brand and market these jobs as what they are," he says. "Long-term, sustainable work in close-knit teams with a real mission and purpose. People say they want that. We need to show them that these companies can deliver it."

Compensation, he adds, extends beyond salary. Benefits, community quality of life, affordability, and the intangible value of meaningful work all factor into the equation. The industry must learn to tell that complete story if it wants to attract the next generation of skilled workers — including the high school student deciding between a four-year degree and a manufacturing apprenticeship.

A Veteran's Responsibility

Goins sees a natural role for veterans in leading the next phase of American industrial growth. The skill sets developed in military service — operational discipline, strategic thinking, comfort with complexity, and an instinctive commitment to national defense — are precisely what the manufacturing sector needs as it scales for the future.

"We should be the leaders in these markets," he says. "Take what we already do well, enter these companies, and take them to the next level. Bridge the legacy of what these incredible programs have built to the future of where American defense manufacturing is going."

From the Wright Brothers to today's most advanced aerospace systems, the arc of American manufacturing has been defined by people who believed that what seemed impossible was simply the next problem to solve. Goins intends to be part of that tradition — working at the foundation of the supply chain where practical results matter most.

About Jason Goins

Jason Goin's Air Force career spans national security, scientific leadership, and crisis response. Born in Colorado Springs, he studied chemistry at Creighton University and earned an M.S. at the Colorado School of Mines. His roles include Director of Plans and Programs at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, counter-WMD policy analyst, and founder of Project Arc. He led nuclear forensics operations at Cape Canaveral, commanded USNS Invincible missile defense missions, coordinated readiness for National Special Security Events including a NATO summit, and oversaw a $46 million budget. His record includes a U.S. patent on a cargo ramp design issued in 2023, peer-reviewed research, and an NPR report aired in 2017.

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