

CASE STUDY

Strengthening Software Security Posture for Defense Missions with RapidFort

How Defense Unicorns achieved a near-zero CVE state and reduced container image sizes by 140 MB across 32 images — without slowing mission-critical deployments.

INDUSTRY

Defense Software & Mission Systems

CHALLENGE

Harden containers at scale without delaying delivery to defense customers

SOLUTION

RapidFort Platform and RapidFort Curated Images

The Challenge

Defense Unicorns delivers software for defense missions often in classified environments where security is non-negotiable. As a veteran-founded company, its team has personally experienced the burden of outdated software in the DoD and is committed to building solutions that enable modern, secure software delivery. While building their secure runtime platform, Unicorn Delivery Service (UDS), the team encountered several critical hurdles.



Complex Hardening at Scale

Hardening containers at scale was complex and labor-intensive.



Delivery Delays

Internal security processes would delay delivery to defense customers.



Balancing Security and Speed

Achieving a strong security baseline without slowing down mission readiness required a new approach.

The Solution

Defense Unicorns conducted a thorough build-versus-buy evaluation and determined that partnering with RapidFort offered the most effective path to delivering mission value at the speed required. The company licensed RapidFort Curated Images to secure UDS and other internal environments. These images enabled the team to achieve a near-zero CVE state across the platform providing flexibility for both open-source and custom-built tools.

To further strengthen security and streamline operations, Defense Unicorns leveraged several key capabilities of the RapidFort Platform:



Container Hardening for Proprietary Tools

Defense Unicorns used the RapidFort Platform to harden containers for proprietary products such as UDS Registry, an OCI-compliant registry launched in June 2025.



FIPS Validated Modules

RapidFort delivered FIPS- validated modules for all 32 UDS Core images, supporting deployment into compliance-sensitive environments.



Optimized Image Sizes

Smaller image sizes, reduced by 140 MB total (5.9%), enabled faster deployments in both low-bandwidth and tactical-edge environments.



Collaborative Partnership

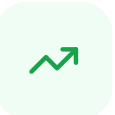
The collaborative nature of the partnership played a key role especially when engineers required new FIPS-compliant images or encountered issues with existing builds.

“RapidFort’s experience within classified environments and collaborative approach have made the company a trusted partner in helping us deliver secure, reliable software to the teams who need it most, without slowing down mission-critical deployments.”

Rob Slaughter
CEO, Defense Unicorns

Results

By working with RapidFort, Defense Unicorns achieved the following results:



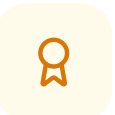
Accelerate Delivery

of a near-zero CVE UDS platform without building in-house hardening pipelines



Optimize Deployment

by reducing UDS Core image sizes by a total of 140 MB (across 32 images)



Strengthen Compliance Posture

by embedding FIPS-validated modules across their curated images



Collaborate Effectively

on security improvements through responsive engineering support

Conclusion

Defense Unicorns selected RapidFort to support its mission of delivering secure, reliable software. With RapidFort Curated Images and a flexible hardening platform, they enhanced their container security posture while maintaining the speed and agility required in defense operations. The partnership continues to be shaped by shared values, responsiveness, and an understanding of the unique demands of delivering national security software.

Start Secure, Stay Secure with RapidFort

Eliminate up to 99.9% of CVEs Continuously without Code Changes,
OS Changes, or Pipeline Modifications

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