



## Legionnaire Awarded \$3.19M AFWERX Contract to Develop Next Generation Air-refueling System



*Partners with MatrixSpace, Sixdof Space and Target Arm to develop Small Hybrid Air-refueling Kit*

**RIDGEFIELD, Conn. - Sept. 24, 2024 - [PRLog](#) -- [Legionnaire International](#) has been selected for a \$3.19M [AFWERX](#) Challenge SBIR Commercial Services Offering contract to design and deliver a new potentially podded refueling boom for tactical aircraft - the [Small Hybrid Aerial Refueling Kit](#) (SHARK) - to address the most pressing challenges in the [Department of the Air Force](#) (DAF).**

Legionnaire International designs, builds and tests weapons and carriage systems, aerospace components, electrical harnesses and critical defense systems and was selected as the prime contractor with partners [MatrixSpace](#), [Sixdof Space](#) and [Target Arm](#).

The [Air Force Research Laboratory](#) (AFRL) and AFWERX have partnered to streamline the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) process by accelerating the small business experience through direct proposal to award timelines, changing the pool of potential applicants by expanding opportunities to small business and eliminating bureaucratic overhead by continually implementing process improvement changes in contract execution. The DAF began offering the Open Topic SBIR/STTR program in 2018 which expanded the range of innovations the DAF funded. Legionnaire will begin the contract immediately to create and provide innovative capabilities that will strengthen the national defense of the United States of America.

### **Quote from J.R. "Flash" Starch, CEO, Legionnaire International**

"Rapid and sustained power projection depends upon the long reach of airpower which, in turn, hinges on the availability of sufficient in-flight air refueling. Our modular SHARK system will enable traditional and non-traditional tanker aircraft to safely refuel current and future military aircraft in flight – whether crewed or uncrewed. It also provides this critical capability to our tactical fleet as NGAS matures. This is

particularly valuable as the U.S. and our allies depend increasingly upon Collaborative Combat Aircraft and other uncrewed, autonomous aircraft. The SHARK is a perfect example of how to reimagine a standard practice and we are thrilled to be involved in this project with our partners."

**MatrixSpace** delivers an ultra-low SWaP, AI-enhanced radar for robust situational awareness of both airborne and ground-based objects, regardless of lighting or weather.

**Sixdof Space** has developed ultra-fast optical tracking sensors and algorithms to integrate into OEM hardware. The technology uses infrared lights as beacons to report an object's position and orientation at a very high speed.

**Target Arm** provides revolutionary, autonomous launch and recovery products, both software and hardware, enabled by its proven Sensor Fusion Engine.

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### **About the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL)**

The Air Force Research Laboratory 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 12,500 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. [www.afresearchlab.com](http://www.afresearchlab.com)

### **About AFWERX**

As the innovation arm of the [Department of the Air Force \(DAF\)](http://www.daf.gov) and a directorate within the [Air Force Research Laboratory \(AFRL\)](http://www.afresearchlab.com), AFWERX brings cutting-edge American ingenuity from small businesses and start-ups to address the most pressing challenges of the DAF. AFWERX employs approximately 370 military, civilian and contractor personnel at five hubs and sites executing an annual \$1.4 billion budget. Since 2019, AFWERX has executed over 6,200 new contracts worth more than \$4.7 billion to strengthen the U.S. defense industrial base and drive faster technology transition to operational capability. [www.afwerx.com](http://www.afwerx.com).

### **About Legionnaire International**

Legionnaire International is a veteran-owned small business group based in Denison, Texas. The expert team of engineers, flight test pilots and aircraft technicians have set out to provide new technologies to make the warfighter more effective in their mission and to come home. Legionnaire's culture is centered around "Executing with Excellence!" and being agile in response to our customers. Legionnaire has the unique privilege of operating Douglas A-4 Skyhawks for flight test as a commercial alternative to active fleet aircraft for flight testing new weapons. Building on experience supporting GBU-X, CLEAVER, and other munition platforms for the Air Force and Navy, Legionnaire also has been awarded an IDIQ contract from Air Force Research Laboratory to perform R&D for next generation Carriage and Release Technologies. [www.legionnaireintl.com](http://www.legionnaireintl.com)

*Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.*

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