

For Immediate Release

AFWERX Vegas' Fixed Wing Helmet Challenge a Soaring Success

Recent technology showcase at Enclave Las Vegas propels Air Force's innovative collaboration program to new heights

Las Vegas, NV - **AFWERX** — the Air Force's program dedicated to solving some of the toughest problems it faces via collaborations between the nation's top entrepreneurs, industry experts, academic professionals, and non-traditional contributors — recently asked for innovators to submit components, materials, or technologies that could specifically improve the **USAF Fixed Wing Helmet** used by many of its pilots and aircrew. On November 14th, AFWERX showcased 37 solutions selected from the 100+ submissions from across the US, UK and Australia to an audience of USAF Airmen from the nearby Nellis and Creech Air Force Bases and members of the program management office from the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center. Also present for the showcase were members of the local technology and manufacturing community eager to experience these modern Air Force advancements firsthand.

The following day, 16 of the most promising teams were invited for follow-on discussions at the **AFWERX Vegas Innovation Hub** for individual detailed reviews and the opportunity to attain prototype funding to further advance their solutions and have them tested that could lead to a \$20M+ government contract.

The outcome of the showcase is that 3 full-helmet solution providers and 7 component companies have been selected to continue. These companies will potentially be awarded prototyping funds to further develop their solutions and integrate components. Ultimately, these prototypes will be submitted to the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center on or before May 15th, 2019. The companies selected to continue officially include: Lift Aviation, Gentex, Aviation Specialties Unlimited, Rockwell Collins / Elbit (RCEVS), Vicis, Spotlight Labs, Specialized Bicycles, Bell Helmets, Banzai Defense, and BAE Systems.

"It is amazing to see the diversity of ideas and innovative solutions from both non-traditional companies and those who are well-established in this industry. We are moving forward with companies of all sizes and those who have expertise never considered in an effort like this before. It is extremely exciting and our hope is to leverage the best of each contributor to ultimately deliver an amazing product to our deserving Air Force Airmen." - Colby Edwards, Deputy Director AFWERX Vegas Innovation Hub.

"It's not only exciting but very impressive what we've been able to accomplish over a span of 20 weeks. We have been able to reach many non-traditional defense companies, that until now have been unresponsive to traditional market research methods. Now, thanks to AFWERX, we have emerging technologies at our fingertips, ready to integrate into systems for our warfighters. We are executing our leadership's rapid-prototyping direction and "bringing the future faster", exciting times ahead!" – Lt. Naomi Harper, Program Manager, US Air Force Aircrew Performance Program Office.

Since it was first established in 2017 by the Secretary of the Air Force, AFWERX's core mission has been to improve Air Force capabilities by connecting innovators, simplifying technology transfers, and accelerating results to the warfighter. This most recent event has propelled the collaboration program to new heights.

To learn more about the event, as well as future challenges, visit: afwerxchallenge.com

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