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Knight Aerospace secures global partnership, boosting medical module sales worldwide **CEO says multimillion-dollar pact with Brazilian aircraft manufacturer has already opened more international doors.**

By W. Scott Bailey
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Knight Aerospace has struck a 20-year deal with Brazilian-based aircraft manufacturer Embraer that's expected to provide a global boost to the San Antonio company's modular air transport systems business — especially sales of its medical modules and medevac pallets described as “flying emergency rooms.”

As part of the deal, Knight Aerospace will supply its Roll-On/Roll-Off modular systems to Embraer's KC-390 Millennium multi-mission aircraft.



Bianca Rhodes, Knight Aerospace. Photo credit: Gabe Hernandez, SABI.

The deal has essentially been in the works for six years and included a significant vetting process.

“It took five years for them to get to a place where they made a decision. Then it took us a year, really, to negotiate all the agreements,” Knight Aerospace CEO Bianca Rhodes told me.

The agreement positions Knight as a core supplier across medical, passenger and transport missions as Embraer ramps up sales of its KC-390 internationally. Rhodes said it's also a testament to the “global trust” in the company's design and execution capabilities and will help Embraer sell more aircraft and also save lives.

Rhodes believes more nations will seek ways to efficiently outfit their military cargo aircraft for rapid response, transport, and humanitarian outreach, and that Knight is ideally positioned now to capture more of that business.

“This is a game changer,” she said.

As a result of the partnership with Embraer, Knight has already secured a new deal with the Royal Netherlands Air Force, which will deploy the San Antonio company's medical modules and medevac pallets on its Embraer C-390 aircraft.

That initial transaction is worth more than \$20 million.

Meanwhile, Rhodes believes the new alliance with Embraer is expected to lead to more deal-making opportunities.

"Up to this point, we have been, for the most part, selling country by country on our own," Rhodes said. "Now, we're in negotiations with several of their customers already."

Knight bases its operations at Port San Antonio, where it intentionally secured a spot with space to grow its operations.

"We are thrilled but not surprised about Knight Aerospace's partnership with Embraer. This small but growing enterprise has been punching above its weight for some time with its best-in-class medical modules," Port San Antonio President and CEO Jim Perschbach said when asked about the company's ascent.

"That life-saving technology pioneered by Bianca and her team on the port campus creates jobs here at home, fulfilling our mission to connect innovations rooted in San Antonio with markets around the world," Perschbach added.

Rhodes attributes the heightened interest in Knight's air medical capabilities to global vulnerabilities exposed by Covid.

"The whole paradigm has shifted," she said.