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## **Rheinmetall wins important Bundeswehr force protection orders**

Germany's Federal Agency for Defence Technology and Procurement (BWB) has contracted with Rheinmetall to supply the Bundeswehr with innovative force protection technology, which will soon be providing German troops deployed in Afghanistan with even greater security. The total volume of the two individual contracts, both of which were issued in response to an immediate operational requirement of the Bundeswehr, amounts to around €24 million.

First, Rheinmetall will thoroughly modernize four Büffel/Buffalo armoured recovery vehicles to provide their crews with effective protection against ballistic threats, landmines and improvised explosive devices; the latter pose a particularly serious danger to ISAF forces in Afghanistan.

At the same time, Rheinmetall has been tasked with providing a pioneering high-tech system for reliably detecting mines and booby traps buried in the soil which will enhance the security of frequently travelled routes as well as protecting convoys. In future, remote control systems will be used for this hazardous task, enabling soldiers to remain in protected vehicles outside the danger zone.

### **“German Route Clearing Package” – a high-tech system of systems**

By the end of 2011, Rheinmetall will supply the Bundeswehr with seven systems as part of the German Route Clearing Package (GRCP). A complete system consists of four vehicles, including one for detection and one for clearing explosive devices, as well as a command vehicle and transport vehicle.

In the GRCP 'system of systems', Rheinmetall's remote control Wiesel, equipped with a newly developed built-in dual sensor with ground penetration radar and a metal detector, will take on the task of detecting mines and IEDs concealed on roads and in open terrain.

The Fuchs/Fox 1A8 armoured transport vehicle will serve as a highly mobile, well protected mobile command post, equipped with workstations for operating the remote control systems as well as systems for evaluating signals from the dual sensor.

Ordered separately, the remote control “MiniMinewolf”, which is already in service with the Swiss Army, will be used for neutralizing hazardous unexploded ordnance. Depending on the mission requirements, the 6-ton vehicle can be equipped with a robot arm, mine plough or bulldozer blade. An integrated video system enables the crew onboard the Fuchs/Fox command vehicle to monitor operations at all times.

Made by Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles (RMMV), “Multi FSA” logistics vehicles will serve as the GRCP system's transport vehicles.

Moreover, Rheinmetall is currently developing a manipulator arm for conducting high-precision bomb disposal operations. With an operating reach of over ten metres and a heavy carrying capacity, it will enable verification and disposal of suspicious objects from a safe standoff.

### **Additional protection package for the Büffel/Buffalo armoured recovery vehicle**

The modernization of the BPz 3 Büffel/Buffalo armoured recovery vehicle includes optimization of its ballistic protection features, crucial for safeguarding the crew from rocket-propelled grenades and light antitank weapons. Furthermore, the floor of the hull is to be reinforced with additional anti-mine protection to shield the crew from blasts occurring under the vehicle, while the vehicle's flanks will be fitted with special protection elements to attenuate the blast wave caused by roadside bombs.

The extensive overhaul of the Büffel/Buffalo also involves modernizing the vehicle's C4I systems and improving its ergonomics.

These armoured recovery vehicles, which are mounted on a Leopard 2 tank chassis, are above all required for deployment in Afghanistan where they will be used for recovering and towing tracked vehicles. The heaviest tracked vehicles currently fielded by the Bundeswehr in Afghanistan are the Marder 1A5 infantry fighting vehicle and the PzH 2000 self-propelled howitzer.

Rheinmetall has already carried out comparable modernization work on Büffel/Buffalo armoured recovery vehicles belonging to the Canadian armed forces. Their high level of protection has proven highly effective even in extreme situations.

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