

► DIVISION WEAPON AND AMMUNITION

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Major order from Switzerland: Rheinmetall supplying Swiss Army with new generation of Maske 76mm rapid smoke/obscurant cartridges

The Swiss procurement authority armasuisse has contracted with Rheinmetall to supply a new generation of the tried-and-tested, highly effective Maske 76 rapid smoke/obscurant cartridge, known in Switzerland as the “7,6cm Nebelpatrone 21 mit elektrischer Zündung”, or “7.6cm Smoke/Obscurant Cartridge with Electric Fuse”. The order is worth a figure in the mid-two-digit million-euro range. A pilot lot is due to undergo acceptance testing starting in November 2022. Delivery of the final lot is expected to take place in August 2027. Rheinmetall overcame rival bids to win this order. The order will keep the Maske production unit at Rheinmetall’s plant in Neuenburg am Rhein in Baden-Württemberg working at high capacity for years to come.

Issued at the end of 2021, the order heralds the Swiss Army’s replacement of the Maske-C predecessor generation after a roughly 25-year service life with an up-to-date new product. An additional contract was concluded for conducting periodic test firing during the entire lifespan of the smoke/obscurant shells.



The Maske 76 is designed to be fired from tactical vehicles as a force protection measure. The Maske family is based on a bimodular, bispectral ammunition concept. It consists of two rapid reaction decoy modules that generate an intensive blooming effect using proven deception technologies. Moreover, a long-lasting decoy module employs visible and infrared smoke/obscurant to interrupt the enemy line of sight in the visual and infrared spectrum. This way, Maske smoke/obscurant cartridges provide armoured vehicles with effective protection against weapon systems with visual or infrared optical aiming systems, seekers, laser target illuminators and laser rangefinders.

Maske rapid smoke/obscurant cartridges come in a variety of different calibres. Only recently, Rheinmetall unveiled the latest Maske 81 version. It is compatible with all 81mm cal. smoke/obscurant dispensers and can be fired from existing legacy launchers. This makes the Maske 81mm especially attractive for users whose combat vehicles are equipped with former Warsaw Pact-type smoke/obscurant dispensers.

► Key facts

- Swiss Army orders Maske 76 smoke/obscurant cartridges from Rheinmetall
- Planned delivery period runs from November 2022 to August 2027
- Order worth a figure in the mid-two-digit million-euro range
- Tried-and-tested ammunition family for maximum force protection

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