

► WEAPON AND AMMUNITION

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Birdie for the Bundeswehr: Rheinmetall awarded €50 million order for infrared decoys

The Bundeswehr has awarded Rheinmetall a substantial order for decoy flares for protecting aircraft. The German military can now procure over 470,000 decoys from Rheinmetall's tried-and-tested Birdie product line. Covering the period December 2023 to December 2029, the contract is worth nearly €50 million.

Birdie is an acronym standing for "Bispectral Infrared Decoy Improved Efficiency". Marketed by Rheinmetall Waffe Munition GmbH of Fronau, these infrared decoys, or 'flares', are ejected from helicopters, transport planes and jets to distract oncoming infrared-homing guided missiles. The flares simulate the heat signature of exhaust gases emitted by the aircraft engine.

The current contract specifies delivery of two different Birdie products: IR-Birdie 118 BS and IR-Birdie 218 BS. Both are already in service with the Bundeswehr, which refers to them as "Decoy, Aircraft, DM189A1, PT" and "Decoy, Aircraft, DM169A1, PT", respectively.

Owing to the current security situation, aircraft self-defence has come sharply back into focus again. Decoys are one way of accomplishing this. Among other things, these include pyrotechnic flares, i.e., products designed to distract infrared search head-equipped surface-to-air missiles (SAM) and air-to-air missiles (AAM). Other techniques include chaff for thwarting enemy radar, and smoke-obscurant munitions such as Rheinmetall's fast-acting ROSY smoke screen.



► Key facts

- Rheinmetall to supply the Bundeswehr with over 470,000 aircraft protection decoys
- Contract runs from December 2023 to December 2029
- Order volume around €50 million
- Effective deception of infrared-homing guided missiles

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