

► WEAPON AND AMMUNITION

04 March 2026

Rheinmetall investigates B-17 aircraft wreckage in the North Sea on behalf of transmission system operator Amprion

Over a period of several weeks, Rheinmetall examined the wreckage of a US B-17 bomber from the Second World War in the German North Sea. Rheinmetall Project Solutions GmbH, a subsidiary of the Düsseldorf-based technology group, was commissioned by Amprion Offshore GmbH. The contract value is in the single-digit million euro range. The wreckage was discovered in the summer of 2025 near the DolWin4 offshore grid connection system – an important energy transition project in Germany. The find, located around 260 metres from the platform, necessitated an explosive ordnance investigation.



Rheinmetall took on the planning, coordination and execution of the investigation. Electromagnetic meters were used to map the location and extent of the wreck. The object was then washed free section by section. The layer of sand, sediment and silt directly above the wreck was 1.5 metres thick. The Defence POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), a specialised agency of the US Department of Defence, supported the investigation. This enabled the bomb bay of the B-17 wreck to be located quickly. The interior of the bay was exposed and inspected through open hatches: there were no bombs on board the wreck.

Amprion was thus able to clear the area around the site for further project work without having to expect any delays in the project schedule. This result of the investigation is a fundamental prerequisite for the construction of the offshore converter platform. According to current plans, the grid connection systems are scheduled to go into operation in the course of 2028.

► Key facts

- Rheinmetall examines B-17 aircraft wreckage for Amprion
- Important energy transition project in the North Sea can start without delay
- Order value in the single-digit million euro range

► Contact

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