RAPID PROGRESS IS being made by Thales Australia in the local manufacture of key components for the Rheinmetall MK 30-2/ABM 30mm cannon.

Following on from the announcement of a contract with Rheinmetall Defence Australia (RDA) on 28 September, the company’s Lithgow Arms facility and select Australian suppliers have successfully manufactured components for the MK 30-2/ABM weapon system as required to meet initial Rheinmetall manufacturing, first article inspection (FAI) and certification standards.

Thales Australia was first approached by RDA in November 2019 to ascertain whether building major elements of the weapon was possible in Australia as part of the latter’s Australian industry capability obligations under the Land 400 Phase 2 contract. Thales Australia was subsequently tasked with undertaking a feasibility study and assessment that focussed on manufacturing the gun’s cylindrical, 35cm long recoil assembly.

Determining that it was, indeed, feasible to manufacture that component in Australia, Thales proceeded to provide its Lithgow-made recoil assembly to Rheinmetall Waffe Munition (RWM) in Oberndorf, Germany, for FAI.

Overcoming the added challenge of creating CAD models of the recoil assembly based solely on the original 2D drawings from RWM, Thales then supplied six fully functional recoil assemblies to RWM for 100% feature measurement as part of the factory certification process. This was followed by initial testing on a dedicated rig and then integration into a complete weapon for live firing. This process was successfully completed in September this year.

As well as a tick in the box for the all-round capability of the Lithgow facility, the successful manufacture and testing of the recoil assembly was a milestone.
KONGSBERG PROTECH SYSTEMS USA has received a production contract from the US Marine Corps (USMC) to deliver 30mm remote weapon stations (RWS) to fulfill part of the Marine Air Defense Integrated System (MADIS) program requirement.

The indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contract has a ceiling of US$94 million (AUD$125 million) and includes a series of low-rate initial production systems and full-rate production units. This contract follows a September 2020 contract award to Kongsberg for test articles and activities, which included design verification testing.

The Kongsberg MADIS solution comprises the RS6 RWS mounted on a Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) and armed with an XM914E1 30x113mm electrically-driven cannon, a co-axial M240 7.62mm machine gun, an integration kit for two Stinger air-to-air missiles and provisions for future counter-unmanned aerial vehicle defeat systems.

USMC awards Kongsberg 30mm RWS contract

The RS6 is the first 30mm RWS to be qualified on the JLTV platform, Kongsberg said in a 5 October release, and leverages off thousands of Protector RWS already fielded with the USMC and US Army.

For the MK 30-2/ABM 30mm cannons arming the 111 turreted direct fire high survivability lift variants of the Block 2 Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle (CRV) production run, Thales Australia will supply 85 dual feeders and recoil assemblies to RDA for assembly at its Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence outside Brisbane.

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