

IMI Multi-Purpose Tank Round Wins Israel's 2011 Defense Award

Ramat Hasharon, Israel, July 7, 2011 -Israel Military Industries (IMI) Ltd. has received yesterday the prestigious Ministry of Defense Annual Defense Award, for the development of the M-329 Multi-Purpose 120mm tank round. The new round is currently in series production, has been fielded, and combat proven with IDF Merkava Mk 3 and Mk 4 tank brigades.

So far, the heavily armed tanks, designed primarily to fight other highly protected tanks, lacked efficient capability to engage 'soft targets', including infantry anti-tank squads, as well as infantry dispersed in open terrain, troops hidden behind defilade, or taking cover inside urban structures.

The unique contribution of the M-329 as a direct-fire multi-function ammunition, revitalizes the combat capabilities of the main battle tank in modern, asymmetric warfare. The M-329 is part of IMI's family of multi-purpose tank ammunition, first introduced as the M-117/1 for 105mm rifled guns of the M-60 and Merkava Mk 2 tanks. The M-329 was later developed for the modern 120mm smoothbore gun used with current Merkava Mk 3 and Mk 4 main battle tanks, and is also compatible with NATO 120mm smoothbore tank guns (STANAG 4385, 4493 etc.).

M-329 enables the tank to employ effective firepower against such targets from 'stand off' distance, offering armor formations new levels of combat flexibility. Combining an advanced in-Bore programmable electronic fuze system, M-329 can be set to detonate in air-burst, impact or delay modes. Airburst mode effectively defeats troops behind cover (exploding overhead) or hovering helicopters. The delay mode ensures that the round penetrates a bunker, or a concrete wall,

exploding inside the target, thus maximizing lethal effect while minimizing the risk of collateral damage. The impact mode defeats light armor and other 'soft' targets. When employed in urban combat scenarios against concrete or brick walls, the M-329's impact detonation blasts a man-size breach, enabling troops to avoid doors, by gaining alternative movement access in urban terrain.

Maximizing combat capabilities as a primary type of ammunition used in asymmetric / urban warfare, M-329 contributes to reducing logistic load and simplifying crew performance in combat. Since fuse setting is provided by the Fire Control System, the M-329 can be used as a standard round. Carried as the primary round, it is loaded into the breech, ready to fire. The introduction of M-329 as a standard round requires no modification to the breech or the gun.

Awarded with the 2011 prize, IMI's M-329 development team is joining a growing number of IMI engineers, scientists and experts that have won this prestigious prize through the years for leading defense systems.