

Fiber Innovations will build launch tubes

Fiber Innovations Inc. (Walpole, Mass.) has been awarded a contract to produce the launch tubes for the U.S. Marine Corps' SMAW-HEDP ground weapon system. SMAW-HEDP, which stands for shoulder-launched multipurpose assault weapon - high explosive dual purpose, is a man-portable 83 mm weapon fire tube for small rockets. Fiber Innovations will produce the parts for prime contractor Talley Defense Systems (Mesa, Ariz.).

The approximately 30 inch long tubes will be made from S-2 triaxial fiberglass braids, which are fabricated over a steel mandrel. The braids are impregnated with a 250°F curing epoxy resin in a resin transfer molding (RTM) process to achieve final net shape.

An end collar and electrical wiring for the rocket weaponry are molded into the tube as part of the RTM process.

The braiding and RTM process allow automated high production at low cost. More than 5,700 units will be made under the contract, with options for potential production of 15,000 units annually. Delivery of the first launch tube is scheduled for late June. Circle 245



Source: Fiber Innovations Inc.