

EXHIBIT 19

Officials confirm dropping firebombs on Iraqi troops

Results are 'remarkably similar' to using napalm

By James W. Crawley

UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

August 5, 2003

American jets killed Iraqi troops with firebombs – similar to the controversial napalm used in the Vietnam War – in March and April as Marines battled toward Baghdad.

Marine Corps fighter pilots and commanders who have returned from the war zone have confirmed dropping dozens of incendiary bombs near bridges over the Saddam Canal and the Tigris River. The explosions created massive fireballs.

"We napalmed both those (bridge) approaches," said Col. Randolph Alles in a recent interview. He commanded Marine Air Group 11, based at Miramar Marine Corps Air Station, during the war. "Unfortunately, there were people there because you could see them in the (cockpit) video.

"They were Iraqi soldiers there. It's no great way to die," he added. How many Iraqis died, the military couldn't say. No accurate count has been made of Iraqi war casualties.

The bombing campaign helped clear the path for the Marines' race to Baghdad.

During the war, Pentagon spokesmen disputed reports that napalm was being used, saying the Pentagon's stockpile had been destroyed two years ago.

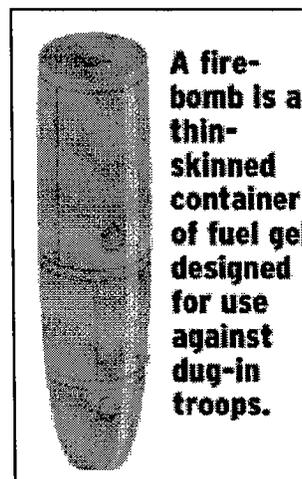
Apparently the spokesmen were drawing a distinction between the terms "firebomb" and "napalm." If reporters had asked about firebombs, officials said yesterday they would have confirmed their use.

What the Marines dropped, the spokesmen said yesterday, were "Mark 77 firebombs." They acknowledged those are incendiary devices with a function "remarkably similar" to napalm weapons.

Rather than using gasoline and benzene as the fuel, the firebombs use kerosene-based jet fuel, which has a smaller concentration of benzene.

Hundreds of partially loaded Mark 77 firebombs were stored on pre-positioned ammunition ships overseas, Marine Corps officials said. Those ships were unloaded in Kuwait during the weeks preceding the war.

"You can call it something other than napalm, but it's napalm," said John Pike, defense analyst with



Mark 77 Firebomb

GlobalSecurity.org, a nonpartisan research group in Alexandria, Va.

**"They were
Iraqi soldiers
there. It's no
great way to
die."**

Col. Randolph Alles

Although many human rights groups consider incendiary bombs to be inhumane, international law does not prohibit their use against military forces. The United States has not agreed to a ban against possible civilian targets.

"Incendiaries create burns that are difficult to treat," said Robert Musil, executive director of Physicians for Social Responsibility, a Washington group that opposes the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Musil described the Pentagon's distinction between napalm and Mark 77 firebombs as "pretty outrageous."

"That's clearly Orwellian," he added.

Developed during World War II and dropped on troops and Japanese cities, incendiary bombs have been used by American forces in nearly every conflict since. Their use became controversial during the Vietnam War when U.S. and South Vietnamese aircraft dropped millions of pounds of napalm. Its effects were shown in a Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of Vietnamese children running from their burned village.

Before March, the last time U.S. forces had used napalm in combat was the Persian Gulf War, again by Marines.

During a recent interview about the bombing campaign in Iraq, Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Jim Amos confirmed aircraft dropped what he and other Marines continue to call napalm on Iraqi troops on several occasions. He commanded Marine jet and helicopter units involved in the Iraq war and leads the Miramar-based 3rd Marine Air Wing.

Miramar pilots familiar with the bombing missions pointed to at least two locations where firebombs were dropped.

Before the Marines crossed the Saddam Canal in central Iraq, jets dropped several firebombs on enemy positions near a bridge that would become the Marines' main crossing point on the road toward Numaniyah, a key town 40 miles from Baghdad.

Next, the bombs were used against Iraqis near a key Tigris River bridge, north of Numaniyah, in early April.

There were reports of another attack on the first day of the war.

Two embedded journalists reported what they described as napalm being dropped on an Iraqi observation post at Safwan Hill overlooking the Kuwait border.

Reporters for CNN and the *Sydney (Australia) Morning Herald* were told by unnamed Marine officers that aircraft dropped napalm on the Iraqi position, which was adjacent to one of the Marines' main invasion routes.

Their reports were disputed by several Pentagon spokesmen who said no such bombs were used nor did

the United States have any napalm weapons.

The Pentagon destroyed its stockpile of napalm canisters, which had been stored near Camp Pendleton at the Fallbrook Naval Weapons Station, in April 2001.

Yesterday military spokesmen described what they see as the distinction between the two types of incendiary bombs. They said mixture used in modern firebombs is a less harmful mixture than Vietnam War-era napalm.

"This additive has significantly less of an impact on the environment," wrote Marine spokesman Col. Michael Daily, in an e-mailed information sheet provided by the Pentagon.

He added, "many folks (out of habit) refer to the Mark 77 as 'napalm' because its effect upon the target is remarkably similar."

In the e-mail, Daily also acknowledged that firebombs were dropped near Safwan Hill.

Alles, who oversaw the Safwan bombing raid, said 18 one-ton satellite-guided bombs, but no incendiary bombs, were dropped on the site.

Military experts say incendiary bombs can be an effective weapon in certain situations.

"Many folks (out of habit) refer to the Mark 77 as 'napalm' because its effect upon the target is remarkably similar."

Col. Michael Daily

Firebombs are useful against dug-in troops and light vehicles, said GlobalSecurity's Pike.

"I used it routinely in Vietnam," said retired Marine Lt. Gen. Bernard Trainor, now a prominent defense analyst. "I have no moral compunction against using it. It's just another weapon."

And, the distinctive fireball and smell have a psychological impact on troops, experts said.

"The generals love napalm," said Alles, who has transferred to Washington. "It has a big psychological effect."

James W. Crawley:
(619) 542-4559; jim.crawley@uniontrib.com

Find this article at:
http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/military/20030805-9999_1n5bomb.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.