The Aftermath of War

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Finding More than Honey with Bees

Buried within the US$44 billion appropriations bill for the U.S. Department of Defense’s fiscal 2007 budget is $5 million for a new military tracking system—honey bees. The project would train honey bees for a variety of military and commercial uses, including finding landmines and other explosives.

Researchers at the University of Montana and Montana State University claim the bees can be monitored via a laser-tracking system; that is, the investments will never equal the profits from sale of metal. A munitions-exercise facility should be located in a remote area with plenty of buffer zone in all directions. Barricades will be held-exploited: locally produced and using rubber tires filled with sand or sand-filled concrete pipes; no permanent facilities will be constructed. Disposal tools will be remotely operated and procedures monitored via closed-circuit TV. With some modification, many of the tools and procedures used by the Golden West Explorers Harvesting System may be appropriate for use in the demilitarization facility. When fuzes cannot be safely removed, projectiles can be cut behind the booster or fuse well. Once the forward part of the projectile is removed, the explosive can be removed out the forward, hinged portion bound in a portable demilitarization furnace. Once the explosive charge is removed, the metal is added to the scrap to be sold. No fuzes containing primary explosives will be held and all will be mixed with heat or destroyed by detonation.

The key to this program will be well-trained, competent EOD and demilitarization personnel. They must be willing to submit to a stringent training and quality-assurance/quality-control program, and concentrate on safety at all times. All the skills needed to make an EOD team effective can be taught or reinforced by this program. Large areas of land can be cleared of the most dangerous items in fairly short order by these teams. While the teams will do no surface clearance past shallow-buried projectiles, the surface clearance will pay big dividends.

Despite repeated warnings and dedicated MRE programs, casualties from scrap-collection-related deaths and injuries. Golden West will develop and implement this program when funding is secured.

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over 34 days of fighting between Israel and the Hezbollah militia in southern Lebanon, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1701 on August 11, 2006, which was aimed at ending hostilities, and a ceasefire entered into force August 14. Despite only a month of fighting, the conflict greatly disrupted the normal lives of many Lebanese due to the damage to their homes and fields, and the remaining unexploded ordnance—mainly cluster submunitions—that littered the ground. The conflict killed over 1,500 people, many of whom were Lebanese civilians, and displaced approximately 900,000 Lebanese and 350,000 Israelis.

The Victims

Many of the victims of this conflict were civilians in Lebanon and Israel. As artillery and missiles fired by both Hezbollah and Israel, approximately one-quarter of the Israelis killed by Hezbollah and the majority of the Lebanese killed by Israeli forces are reported to have been civilians.

Little information is available on UXO in Israel, but it is clear that the estimated 1,800 cluster bombs (containing over 1.2 million cluster submunitions) fired into Lebanon have devastated the local infrastructure. Along with houses and fields destroyed, hospitals, schools, bridges, roads, factories, airports and main seaports were also demolished. Particularly affected areas were southern Lebanon, Beirut and the Bekaa Valley. The northern part of Israel was most affected by Hezbollah attacks, which sometimes consisted of 150 rockets fired per day.

It has been reported Israel used cluster munitions primarily delivered by artillery projectiles, followed by Multiple Launch Rocket Systems and a lesser number of aerial cluster bombs. MILRS in particular are believed by many to be highly toxic.

For the United Nations and the government of Lebanon there has been no end to the problems. The war left a large area littered with unexploded ordnance—mainly cluster submunitions, which are designed to burst into submunitions at a planned altitude in order to blanket the enemy army and personnel on the ground with smaller explosive rounds. The cluster rounds that fail to detonate—believed by the United Nations to be up to 40 percent of munitions fired by the Israeli Defense Forces in Lebanon—remain on the ground as unexploded submunitions. In addition to the cluster submunitions, an estimated 15,300 items of unexploded ordnance—including air-dropped bombs of 500 to 2,000 pounds (220 to 900 kilograms), ground- and naval-launched artillery rounds and air-delivered rockets—now litter the ground in southern Lebanon.

In an August 30 Reuters AlertNet article, Stéphane Jaquemet, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees representative in Lebanon, said the organization’s top priority following the conflict was the safe return of the approximately one million Lebanese who fled the month-long war. Though U.N., Lebanese Army and nongovernmental clearance teams immediately started removing remaining bombs and other UXO, the United Nations and the government of Lebanon have remained seriously concerned about the danger remaining. At the time of writing, the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre of Southern Lebanon assessed approximately 85 percent of southern Lebanon for cluster-bomb strikes, and it is estimated that up to one million people to obtain needed money in exchange for suspect items. There will no longer be an excuse that they had no choice because we are providing a choice. People do not need to endanger their families, neighbors or themselves to make a little extra money.

The senior EOD Team Leader will be provided with tools to help eliminate the illegal collection and use of explosives for fishing or other illicit purposes. Certainly it is not a total solution, but it may begin to reverse the climbing rates of injuries and deaths resulting from the scrap-metal business. Costs of this program could easily be offset by real reductions in the fiscal and societal costs resulting from scrap-collection-related deaths and injuries. Golden West will develop and implement this program when funding is secured.
Cluster Munitions and ERW in Lebanon

The recent 34-day conflict between the Lebanese armed faction Hezbollah and Israel from July 12 to August 14, 2006, saw extensive use of surface-launched munitions and air-dropped munitions (to a lesser degree), resulting in wartime casualties for military and civilian actors in both Lebanon and Israel. Since the ceasefire agreement, international post-conflict attention has focused on Lebanon due to the large number of explosive remnants of war left behind in the conflict. In particular, cluster munitions are proving problematic for post-conflict reconstruction activities in Lebanon due to their apparent high failure rate and the potential threat they pose to returning civilians, aid workers and military personnel. This article examines cluster munitions and the impact of their presence in Lebanon.

by Daniella Ressler and Elizabeth Wise [Mine Action Information Center]

Early cluster munitions were used in World War II and were later deployed extensively by U.S. forces in Southeast Asia during the American/Vietnam War. Billions of units of cluster submunitions were dropped on Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam—90 million on Laos alone.2 Cluster munitions were further used extensively during the Gulf War of 1991 (by the United States, United Kingdom and Netherlands), in Kosovo and Yugoslavia in 1999 (United States, United Kingdom and Netherlands), Afghanistan in 2001–2002 (United States and Iraq) and in 2003 (United States and United Kingdom).

A cluster weapon consists of a munitions container deployed by a weapon-delivery system such as a bomb dropped by aircraft, rocket launcher or artillery projectile, which then releases smaller munitions in mid-air that are spread over a particular area. These smaller munitions, or submunitions, are designed to explode on impact or close to the time of impact. Typically the delivery systems are designed to carry and deploy hundreds if not thousands of submunitions at a time. Submunitions are also called bomblets, bomblets, BLUs (bomb-like units) or grenades.

Cluster munitions can be delivered by air or surface. Air-dropped cluster dispensers (or bomblet pods) are released from aircraft and after a specified amount of time or distance, the dispenser opens to allow submunitions to fall via gravity. With the exception of some para-aramid, CBUs all fall into the “dumb bomb” or unguided category, meaning once released, their trajectory cannot be controlled or redirected.3 Surface-launched munitions are delivered by artillery launchers on the ground that are fired over a long range to detonate either in the air or on impact. In the case of cluster munitions, each dispenser (e.g., missile, rocket, projectile) carries a payload of submunitions that is released after the dispenser is in flight, to drop over the target area.

During a conflict, cluster weapons are used by the military for attacking an area where the target may be moving, such as a military convoy, either to attack and destroy the enemy by dropping explosive bomblets (impact) or to prevent or deter enemy movement from an area by dropping devices that essentially function

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1. CBU-58, produced by Martin Marietta, contains 10,000 bomblets weighting 500 g each.
3. Submunitions are typically bomblets, BLUs, dud rounds or dud submunitions.
4. Arabian Peninsula.
5. Numbers are approximate.

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Cluster munitions can be dropped from the air or seen here being dropped from a B-52 bomber. At launching height, bomblets remain in their pods for a specified amount of time or distance, after which the dispenser opens, releasing the bomblets. Upon impact, bomblets are designed for ground-to-ground or ground-to-air use. Once they enter the air, bomblets are propelled forward through a distributing device, releasing smaller submunitions in mid-air. In the case of cluster munitions, the term “bomblet” is used to indicate the cluster munition submunition (SM). The term “cluster munition” is used to refer to the weapon system. Cluster munitions, also referred to as cluster bombs or dumb bombs, are relatively low-accuracy, high-yield munitions that are used to attack areas rather than specific targets. Cluster munitions are designed to disperse submunitions in a wide area and are often used to attack areas where enemy forces may be located. Cluster munitions are used to attack areas where enemy forces may be located. Cluster munitions are used to attack areas where enemy forces may be located.