

U.S. hit ISIS with largest non-nuclear bomb ever used

By ROBERT BURNS
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. forces in Afghanistan on Thursday struck an Islamic State tunnel complex in eastern Afghanistan with “the mother of all bombs,” the largest non-nuclear weapon ever used in combat by the U.S. military, Pentagon officials said.

The bomb, known officially as a GBU-43B, or massive ordnance air blast weapon, unleashes 11 tons of explosives. When it was developed in the early 2000s, the Pentagon did a formal review of legal justification for its combat use.

The Pentagon said it had no early estimate of deaths or damage caused by its attack, which President Donald Trump called a “very, very successful mission.”

The U.S. military headquarters in Kabul said in a statement that the bomb was dropped at 7:32 p.m. local time Thursday on a tunnel complex in Achin district of Nangarhar province, where the Afghan affiliate of the Islamic State group has been operating. The target was close to the Pakistani border.

The U.S. estimates 600 to 800 IS fighters are present in Afghanistan, mostly in



In this May 2004 photo, a group gathers around a GBU-43B, or massive ordnance air blast (MOAB) weapon, on display at the Air Force Armament Museum on Eglin Air Force Base near Valparaiso, Fla. U.S. forces in Afghanistan struck an Islamic State tunnel complex in eastern Afghanistan on Thursday with a GBU-43B, the largest non-nuclear weapon ever used in combat by the U.S. military, Pentagon officials said.

Nangarhar. The U.S. has concentrated heavily on combatting them while also supporting Afghan forces battling the Taliban. Just last week a U.S. Army Special Forces soldier, Staff Sgt. Mark R. De Alencar, 37, of Edgewood, Maryland, was killed in action in Nangarhar.

The MOAB is a custom-

made Air Force weapon that has been in the arsenal for more than a decade but never used on the battlefield, although it was available throughout the Iraq war. It is designed to hit softer targets such as surface facilities, tunnel entrances and troop concentrations. It is pushed out the rear of the launching aircraft, guided to its target

by GPS and slowed by a parachute.

A separate non-nuclear weapon known as the Massive Ordnance Penetrator, or MOP, which is larger in its physical dimensions but carries a smaller load of conventional explosives, is designed to take out deeply buried targets like reinforced bunkers. The MOP has never

“It is expected that the weapon will have a substantial psychological effect on those who witness its use.”

— Pentagon report from 2003

been used in combat.

In its 2003 review of the legality of using the MOAB, the Pentagon concluded that it could not be called an indiscriminate killer under the Law of Armed Conflict.

“Although the MOAB weapon leaves a large footprint, it is discriminate and requires a deliberate launching toward the target,” the review said. It added: “It is expected that the weapon will have a substantial psychological effect on those who witness its use.”

Adam Stump, a Pentagon spokesman, said the bomb was dropped from a U.S. MC-130 special operations transport. He said the bomb had been brought to Afghanistan “some time ago” for potential use.

Army Gen. John W. Nicholson, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said in a written statement that the strike was designed to minimize the risk to Afghan and U.S. forces conducting clearing operations in the Achin area “while maximizing the destruction” of IS

fighters and facilities. He said IS has been using improvised explosive devices, bunkers and tunnels to strengthen its defenses.

“This is the right munition to reduce these obstacles and maintain the momentum of our offensive against ISIS-K,” he added, using the U.S. military’s acronym for the IS affiliate.

Ismail Shinwari, the governor of Achin district, said the U.S. attack was carried out in a remote mountainous area with no civilian homes nearby and that there had been no reports of injured civilians. He said there has been heavy fighting in the area in recent weeks between Afghan forces and IS militants.

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said IS fighters had used the tunnels and caves in Achin to maneuver freely.

“The United States takes the fight against ISIS very seriously and in order to defeat the group we must deny them operational space, which we did,” Spicer said.

Misdirected U.S. strike killed 18 allied fighters in Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — A misdirected airstrike by the U.S.-led coalition earlier this week killed 18 allied fighters battling the Islamic State group in northern Syria, the U.S. military said Thursday.

U.S. Central Command said coalition aircraft were given the wrong coordinates by their partner forces, the predominantly-Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces, for the strike on Tuesday that was intended to target IS militants south of their Tabqa stronghold, near the extremists’ de facto capital, Raqqa. The strike hit an SDF position instead.

Several nations have lent their air power to the U.S.-led coalition to defeat the Islamic State group, and it wasn’t clear which air force was behind the errant strike.

The SDF acknowledged the strike, saying a number of its fighters were killed and wounded. On Thursday, the group held funerals for 17 of its fighters in the border town of Tal al-Abyad, the SDF-linked Hawar news agency said, though it did not say whether they were killed in the friendly fire incident.

An activist-run group, Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently, said three days of mourning had been declared for the town. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 25 SDF fighters were killed in the last two days of battle.

The SDF, meanwhile, announced the launch of a new phase of its campaign to

retake Raqqa. The Kurdish fighters, with U.S.-led air and ground support, have surrounded Tabqa, some 25 miles southwest of the city and are working to clear Islamic State militants out of Jalab Valley, north of Raqqa.

The SDF says it wants to isolate Raqqa before attacking it. Its closest position is less than five miles northeast of the city. But the countryside south of Raqqa is still under IS control.

Canadian legislation would legalize marijuana

TORONTO (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government introduced legislation to let adults possess up to 30 grams of marijuana in public — a measure that would make Canada the largest developed country to end a nationwide prohibition on recreational marijuana.

Trudeau has long promised to legalize recreational pot use and sales. U.S. voters in California, Massachusetts, Maine and Nevada voted last year to approve the use

of recreational marijuana, joining Colorado, Washington, Oregon and Alaska.

The South American nation of Uruguay is the only nation to legalize recreational pot.

The proposed law allows four plants to be grown at home. Those under 18 found with less than five grams of marijuana would not face criminal charges but those who sell it or give to youth could face up to 14 years in jail.

“It’s too easy for our kids to get marijuana. We’re going to change that,” Trudeau said.

Officials said Canadians should be able to smoke marijuana legally by July 1, 2018. The legislation must still be approved by Parliament but with Trudeau’s Liberal party holding a majority its passage is considered assured.

The federal government set the age at 18, but is allowing each of Canada’s provinces to determine if it should be higher. The provinces will also decide how the drug will be distributed and sold. The law also defines the amount

of THC in a driver’s blood, as detected by a roadside saliva test, that would be illegal. Marijuana taxes will be announced at a later date.

The Canadian government closely followed the advice of a marijuana task force headed by former Liberal Health Minister Anne McLellan. That panel’s report noted public health experts tend to favor a minimum age of 21 as the brain continues to develop to about 25, but said setting the minimum age too high would preserve the illicit market.

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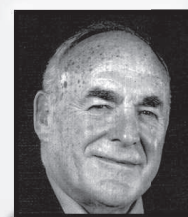
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Becky Fletcher Waggoner of Pilot Rock, is a fourth generation Happy Canyon Show participant and Round-Up volunteer and a fifth generation resident of Umatilla County. Besides cattle ranching Becky works part-time for Mautz & O’Hanlon, LLP. Becky began volunteering in the Happy Canyon show at the age of three, coming out of the trunk. She has played several roles in the show over the years including an emigrant and for the last 17 years, she has been honored to play the part of the nurse in the Doctor Act. Becky currently serves as the Show Director for Happy Canyon in its 103rd year. Out of her love of the show and its colorful history, Becky began a quest to see Happy Canyon’s story preserved and to honor a century of people who have volunteered. After many years of research, document and photo collection, Becky recently authored Happy Canyon: A History of the World’s Most Unique Indian Pageant and Wild West Show. Becky and her husband, Allen, former Happy Canyon Show Director and President, have three children, Kyle, Kaleigh and Riley—all fifth generation Happy Canyon volunteers and actors. On with the show!



Bobbie Conner is the director of Tamástslikt (Tah-mahst-slickt) Cultural Institute, the 45,000 square foot tribally-owned museum on the Umatilla Reservation. The Institute has three goals: to preserve the Tribes’ culture, to accurately present the Tribes’ history, and, to contribute to the tribal economy. The homelands of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla have long been an intersection for trade, adventure and migration. Three historic trails traverse the Tribes’ aboriginal lands — the Oregon Trail, the Lewis & Clark Trail, and the Whitman Mission route — while a fourth, the nearby Nez Perce National Trail, signals the shared histories of Cayuse and Nez Perce. This crossroads provides a great location for a new migration — tourists — who visit Tamástslikt and Wildhorse Resort & Casino. Prior to moving home, Bobbie worked 13 years for the U. S. Small Business Administration. She began her federal career as a Presidential Management Intern. Before that she provided technical assistance to federal Indian education programs in the Northwest for United Indians of All Tribes Foundation. She currently serves on the Boards of Directors for the Umatilla Tribal Community Foundation and the American Association of Museums and on the Board of Trustees for the National Museum of the American Indian. Bobbie served as Vice President of the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Board of Directors and as a leader of its Circle of Tribal Advisors. Bobbie is Cayuse, Umatilla and Nez Perce and a member of the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla. She is a graduate of Pendleton High School, the University of Oregon, and Willamette University’s Atkinson Graduate School of Management.

Emile Holeman was born, raised, and lived his entire life in Pendleton, Oregon, with the exception of his college years at the University of Oregon in the late 1940’s and early 50’s. As a young boy, Emile was in the Happy Canyon Show, playing the son of an Indian Chief who was shot and fell into the waterfall, and one of the Chinese laundry men, who also fell into the water! Emile spent 8 years in the 1960’s on the Happy Canyon board as the Ticket Director. He was Happy Canyon President in 1970-71 when Pendleton District Attorney Joe Smith called for a gambling ban at Happy Canyon. The ban lasted one year, during which time the Happy Canyon board took the issue before the Oregon legislature who ruled “social gambling” at Happy Canyon allowable by law. Emile owned Doug and Emile’s Texaco for 33 years in Pendleton, and served 4 terms as Umatilla County Commissioner from 1991 to 2006. He was married for 60 years to Betty Lou Holeman, who loved Native American history, and they had four children. Emile is the oldest living past Happy Canyon President.



For more information about the EO Forum, please contact: Karen Parker at 541-966-3177.

The EO Forum is a collaborative effort among leaders from Blue Mountain Community College, InterMountain Education Service District; the East Oregonian; American Association of University Women; and Harriet Isom; a former United States ambassador who also serves on the committee. This EO Forum program is offered as part of Blue Mountain Community College’s annual Arts and Culture Festival. For more information on the festival go to www.bluecc.edu.

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