

ALLIANT ACTION INFO SHEET 4: Depleted Uranium Munitions

Over 16 million DU shells produced in Minnesota at TCAAP by Alliant Tech

What are DU munitions?

A DU munition contains a solid metal rod inside the shell. They are sometimes referred to as kinetic energy munitions. The penetrators consist of uranium-238, a radioactive, alpha emitting metallic toxic waste left over from the uranium "enrichment" process. Combined with titanium, the DU alloy is extremely hard and makes devastating armor piercing ammunition. The shells burn through armor upon impact. Over 500 tons of DU was used in the recent Gulf War.



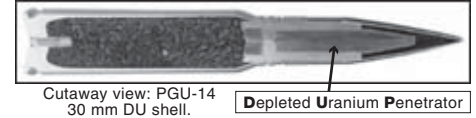
DU penetrators collected at the Twin City Army Ammunition Plant

Depleted Uranium isn't painted or coated on the shell, but rather a solid metal rod inserted inside the shell. A one and a half pound 30mm shell contains a half lb. DU penetrator. Alliant has produced over 15 million **30mm PGU-14** shells for the US Air Force and over one million **120mm M829** rounds for the US Army. Both of these munitions use depleted uranium penetrators. The Army describes the 120mm M829 as the world's most lethal kinetic energy shell. The 30mm PGU-14 is used with a Gatling (7 barrel) gun on the USAF A-10 close support aircraft.

The problem

The danger posed by DU warheads is when they burn through the armor of a tank, uranium oxide dust is produced, which is easily spread by the winds.

Small particles can be permanently trapped in the lungs, where the alpha radiation dose, both cumulative and irreversible, increases over the victim's lifetime. The UN's World Health Organization is investigating the health effects of the DU weapons.



The effects

Symptoms that often result from radiation exposure: hair loss, fatigue, bowel disruptions, cancer and increased birth defects, miscarriages, still birth and infant mortality. Those involved in the production could also exhibit these symptoms. An untold number of the Gulf states populations are affected by the 800 tons of DU the US dropped in Gulf Wars one and two. In the United States, one study found a 30% birth defect rate among Gulf War vets' children. The Department of Defense denies any link between depleted uranium and Gulf War Syndrome, but this is being challenged by many veterans groups and scientists.

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04/08

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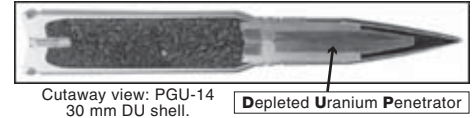
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