

DID YOU KNOW...?

- By one estimate, the U.S. military used 1.2 million barrels of oil in Iraq in just one month in 2008.[3] This increased rate of fuel use compared to non-wartime has to do, in part, with the fact that fuel must be delivered to vehicles in the field by other vehicles, using even more fuel.
- Between 1962 and 1971, the U.S. military sprayed 20 million US gallons (80,000,000 L) of chemical herbicides and defoliants in Vietnam, eastern Laos and parts of Cambodia, as part of Operation Ranch Hand.
- Depleted uranium is almost twice as dense as lead and has been found to have significant, long-lasting radiological impacts on human health and soil. This is the most controversial of recent chemical war agents.

References:

- [1] The Costs of War, "The Environmental Costs," <http://costsofwar.org/article/environmental-costs>
- [2] The Sierra Club of Canada, "The Environmental Consequences of War," <http://www.sierraclub.ca/national/postings/war-and-environment.html>
- [3] Associated Press, "Facts on Military Fuel Consumption," *USA Today*, 2 April 2008, http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2008-04-02-2602932101_x.htm.
- [4] SAE Technical Papers Series, 2004-01-1586. 2004 SAE World Congress, Detroit, Michigan, March 8-11, 2004. <http://delphi.com/pdf/techpapers/2004-01-1586.pdf>
- [5] Green Living. "Bombed: The Effects of War on the Environment" <http://greenliving.about.com/od/greenprograms/a/Effects-Of-War-And-The-Environment.htm>
- [6] JustPacifism.com, <http://justpacifism.com/?m=201007>

NATIONAL CONTACT

Veterans For Peace
216 S. Meramec Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105
P: 314-725-6005 | F: 314-227-1981
veteransforpeace.org vfp@veteransforpeace.org

LOCAL CONTACT



Version Updated April 2014

VETERANS FOR PEACE



Environmental Costs of War

The Pentagon is the single largest consumer of oil in the world.



**Exposing the True Costs of War
and Militarism Since 1985**

ADVANCED WEAPONRY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The impact of war is measured by not only the social, economic and political consequences, but also by the lasting impact on the environment. Modern day warfare and technological advances have increased the ecological disturbances associated with war. The progression of warfare from chemical weapons to weapons of mass destruction has increasingly created stress on ecosystems and the environment.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The most extreme environmental damage from warfare is nuclear weapons. Besides the significant loss of civilian life and subsequent radiation sickness and birth defects, the environmental impact of the A-bombs was profound. The water supply was contaminated, the ecosystem was damaged, and the natural habitat was destroyed. Nuclear weapons do not have to be deployed for similar effects to happen during wartime production.

The production, testing, transport and use of these advanced weapons are perhaps the most destructive effects of war on the environment. Although their use is strictly regulated since WWII, analysts have grave concerns regarding the continued production and potential use of these weaponry.

One of the most controversial of recent chemical war agents, depleted uranium, has been found to have significant, long-lasting radiological impacts on human health and soil. Almost twice as dense as lead, it's valued in weapons for its ability to penetrate tank armor and other defenses.

AGENT ORANGE

Probably the most infamous of chemical weapons, Agent Orange, has had long-lasting effects on Vietnam's water supply and ecosystem. The defoliant was used extensively during the U.S. conflict in Vietnam to kill off hundreds of acres of dense rainforest. Overall, more than 20% of South Vietnam's forests were sprayed with Agent Orange at least once over a nine year period. Although the use of Agent Orange is now illegal, other defoliants continue to be deployed as a military tactic with devastating effects on the land and water.

“More than 20% of South Vietnam's forests were sprayed with at least once over a nine year period”



“Modern day warfare and technological advances have increased the ecological disturbances associated with war.”



WAR AND THE ENVIRONMENT: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Increased Production: Even in regions not directly affected by warfare, increased production in manufacturing, agriculture and other industries that support a war effort can wreak havoc on the natural environment.

Infrastructure Collapse: Among the first and most vulnerable targets of attack in a military occupation are the enemy's roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. While these don't form part of the natural environment, the destruction of wastewater treatment plants, for example, severely degrades regional water quality.

Refugees: When warfare causes the mass movement of people, the resulting impacts on the environment can be catastrophic. Widespread deforestation, unchecked hunting, soil erosion and contamination of land and water by human waste occur when thousands of humans are forced to resettle in a new area.

Invasive Species: Military ships, cargo airplanes and trucks can carry more than soldiers and munitions; non-native plants and animals can also ride along, invading new areas and wiping out native species in the process. This has unforeseen consequences on the ecosystem in that region.

Future Conflicts: While the effects of war on the environment may be obvious, what's less clear are the ways that environmental damage itself leads to conflict. Factions in resource-poor countries have historically used military force for material gain, having few other options. The desperation leads to a vicious cycle of conflict.

“As long as militaries around the world are consuming natural resources, producing toxic messes, and tearing apart ecosystems, our planet's environment will be threatened.”