

Weapons Systems as Sources of Mass Entertainment

By Richard Sanders, coordinator, Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade

Besides providing entertainment at military air shows, war planes have also been used to dispense a bewildering variety of weapons on populations around the world. The following pages highlight a very small fraction of the hundreds of munitions carried by warplanes that are regularly used to entertain the public at Canadian war shows.

Information on these weapons is certainly not given to those attending military air shows. Neither are they told how these weapons have wreaked havoc upon the lives of so many people around the world. Such information is, in fact, actively avoided by war show organizers and their media allies. The only way the public will learn of this reality is if activists take on the responsibility. The following information is provided in the hopes that activists will use it in their interactions

with those who collaborate to make war shows possible (see pages 5-14).

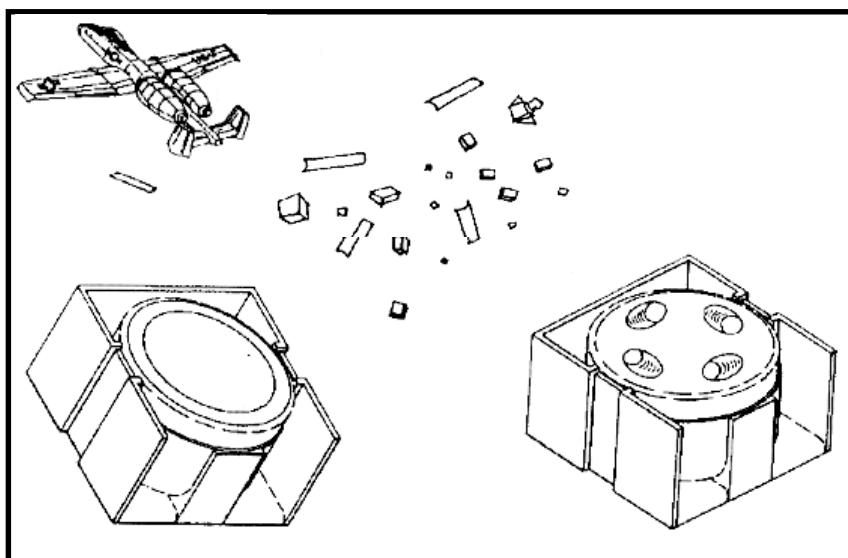
If spectators knew the murderous capabilities of the aircraft celebrated at war shows, many might stop attending. If it became common knowledge that these warplanes have been used to drop such horrendous weapons on millions of innocent people, we can only hope that politicians, corporations and community groups would be shamed into withdrawing their complicity in these events.

(1) Landmines: *Killing and Maiming for Years to Come*

The so-called "American Family of Scatterable Mines" (SCATMINES) came into use during the early 1980s. They are delivered by aircraft, artillery, missiles and ground dispensers. SCATMINES allow fields of anti-tank (AT) and anti-personnel (AP) land-mines to be laid rapidly in enemy-held areas. The current US arsenal of such landmines for use by US warplanes includes the BLU92/B "Gators." Each bomb can quickly scatter 564 mines (432 AT mines and 132 AP mines) over a 200 x 650 meter area. The AP Gators use shrapnel (metal fragments from a blast-fragmentation warhead) to "produce a kill" when the landmine is triggered by a trip wire. Although these landmines can be set to self-destruct 4 hours, 2 days or 15 days after launch, they don't always do so, thus creating deadly traps for anyone who stumbles upon them.

Gator landmines are dispersed by the following warplanes that are known to have entertained at Canadian air shows:

O/A-10A Thunderbolt II (US)
A-10 Thunderbolt / Warthog (US)
A-10A Thunderbolt II (US)
A-6 Intruder (US)
AV-8B Harrier II (US)
B-1B Lancer (US)
B-52 Stratofortress (US)
B-52H Stratofortress (US)
F-15A Eagle (US)
F-15B Eagle (US)
F-15C Wild Weasel (US)
F-15D Eagle (US)
F-15E Strike Eagle (US)
F-16A Fighting Falcon (US)
F-16B Fighting Falcon (US)
F-16C Fighting Falcon (US)
F-16CJ Wild Weasel (US)



The A-10 Thunderbolt or Wart Hog is depicted dropping a BLU92/B "Gator" cluster bomb that then scatters anti-personnel landmines.

F-16D Fighting Falcons (US)
F-16N Fighting Falcons (US)
F-4 Phantom II (US)
F-4D Phantom (US)
F-4E Phantom II (US)
F/A-18B Hornet (US)
F/A-18C Hornet (US)
F/A-18D Hornet (US)
F/A-18E/F Super Hornet (US)

Gators are also scattered using the "Volcano Mine Dispenser." It is affixed to a truck or a UH-60A Black Hawk helicopter, that scatters 960 Gator landmines per sortie. Each of the 160 M87 mine canisters contains five AT and one AP landmine. The UH-60 is known to have entertained at military air shows in Cold Lake, Ottawa, Saskatoon and St. Stephen.

Land Mine Treaty

A treaty to ban antipersonnel landmines has been signed by 122 nations. The U.S., however, has refused to sign, along with Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Vietnam, Egypt and Turkey. President Clinton rejected the treaty, claiming that antipersonnel landmines are needed to protect South Korea against North Korea's "overwhelming military advantage." He stated that the US would "eventually" comply, in 2006. This was disavowed by President George W. Bush in August 2001.

Source: <www.unicefusa.org/infoactiv/rights.html>