

Official Press release of A-10 friendly fire incident

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A-10 Friendly Fire Investigation Completed

MacDill AFB - The investigation into a March 23, 2003 friendly fire incident between U.S. forces is complete. The investigation was thorough and deliberate, and has the concurrence of the CENTCOM leadership.

A full copy of the report is available at www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/newsfeatures.asp

The investigation, ordered by U.S. Central Command and conducted by U.S. Air Forces, Central Command, thoroughly examined the circumstances surrounding an incident involving a U.S. A-10 aircraft firing on a company of U.S. Marines in An Nasiriyah, Iraq.

The investigation revealed that several factors contributed to this tragic event, including problematic communications links between U.S. forces and a battle plan that, due to unforeseen circumstances, changed as the situation unfolded.

The investigation determined that the pilots involved acted appropriately based on the information they possessed at the time of the incident.

The decision on possible administrative or disciplinary action, if any, with respect to any Marines involved, was deferred to Commander, Marine Corps Central Command.

A total of 18 Marines were killed and 17 were wounded. Eight of the deaths were verified as the result of enemy fire; of the remaining 10 Marines killed, investigators were unable to determine the cause of death as the Marines were also engaged in heavy fighting with the enemy at the time of the incident.

Of the 17 wounded, only one was conclusively determined to have been hit by friendly fire. Three Marines were wounded while inside vehicles that received both friendly and hostile fire, and the exact sequence and source of their injuries could not be determined.

U.S. Central Command mourns the loss of life and regrets the injury of our servicemembers resulting from this tragic event.

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