EARTH LIBERATION FRONT (ELF) ATTACK ON BLM HORSE CORRAL

Timber Security: terrorism

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INTRODUCTION: The so-called Earth Liberation Front (ELF) claimed responsibility for the October 15, 2001 early morning firebombing of federal corral facilities to protest the roundup of wild horses on government lands. One of four firebombs with timing devices started a fire that destroyed a barn containing 250 tons of hay, causing $85,000 in damage at the Litchfield, California horse facility north of Reno, Nevada. A stretch of U.S. Highway 395 closed for 12 hours as a military ordnance team removed the incendiaries. No one was injured. In a communiqué released through the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), ELF claimed that it set the devices to destroy two barns, two vehicles, and an office building. Agents of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms are studying the three devices that failed to ignite.

According to the ALF, ELF’s action was conducted “in opposition to the Bureau of Land Management’s continued war against the Earth.” The communiqué went on to say that, “For years, the BLM has rounded up thousands of wild horses and burros to clear public land for cattle. . . . In the name of all that is wild, we will continue to target industries and organizations that seek to profit by destroying the Earth.”

SECURITY BREACH / DAMAGE: Since only one of the firebombs ignited, only one of the targets was destroyed. The barn was valued at $35,000, and the hay within the barn at $50,000. No one was injured. No horses were injured, and none escaped or was released from the corrals.

Saboteurs have struck the Bureau’s wild horse and burro program at least seven times in four Western states since 1987. They have freed animals and set fire to barns, offices, and corrals. This incident was the third such attack on the Litchfield facility, including a 1994 office arson. In November 1997, a horse corral and facilities near Hines, Oregon suffered an estimated $474,000 in damage from an arson attack, and in October of 1998, a corral facility in Rock Springs, Wyoming was the target of an arson attack that failed when the incendiary devices failed to ignite. Most attacks fail to release any horses, and those horses that are released have all been recovered.

RECOGNITION: The remote facility was not staffed. The first call came in at 4:30 AM from someone passing by on the highway. BLM and volunteer fire crews responded to the fire and found the failed ignition devices at the office, under a pickup truck and at a second hay barn.

ACTIONS TAKEN: While the BLM is aware if the threat, not all facilities can be guarded on a 24-hour basis. The FBI is giving the ELF claim of responsibility “very serious consideration,” and ATF agents are examining the devices and other evidence from the crime scene to determine any links with other arson attacks claimed by ELF.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The ELF is a shadowy domestic terrorist organization claiming responsibility for over $37 million in arson damages since the early 1990s. ELF members act secretly as members of local cells. Arson is a favorite method, and the ELF and ALF web sites offer primers for building incendiary devices.
Anyone with information of an actual or suspected arson attack should provide that information to the proper authorities and be sure to ask the investigator to consider arson as a cause.

Direct the investigator to the ELF or ALF sites listed below. Your alerting them to these sites may assist them in determining what to look for in their investigation.

Earth Liberation Front: www.earthliberationfront.com
Animal Liberation Front: www.animalliberation.net

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