

THE PRESSURE COOKER BOMBS

Devices were packed with ball bearings to inflict the most injury

By David Williams and Chris Greenwood

THE Boston Marathon bombs were built inside pressure cookers and packed with shards of metal, nails and ball bearings, it emerged last night.

The aim was to cause maximum carnage as red-hot shrapnel tore through spectators and runners.

Investigators believe the explosives – which killed three and injured more than 170 – were in six-litre pressure cookers with gunpowder and set off by an electronic timer.

The devices are used by terrorists in Afghanistan, are a preferred weapon of al-Qaeda and listed as the ‘most effective’ weapon of jihad.

Details of the crude but effective devices emerged as President Barack Obama told the United States to be on the alert for anything suspicious and admitted it was still not known who was responsible.

He said the Patriots’ Day blasts were ‘a heinous and cowardly act’ of terror used to target innocent people and promised those responsible would feel the ‘full weight of justice’.

But Mr Obama also said it was unclear if the attacks were carried out by an international or domestic organisation,



Bloodied: Injured runners and spectators lie on the pavement after two bombs exploded near the finish of the Boston Marathon on Monday

‘Full weight of justice’

or perhaps by a ‘malevolent individual.’ One of the bombs was placed in a black back-pack before being put on the ground among spectators, the other was left in a dustbin. One may have been triggered by a mobile telephone.

The pressure cooker devices have been used in Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

At least one was employed in the attempted May 2010 bombing of Times Square in New York by Faisal Shahzad, who admitted he had undergone bomb-making training at a militant Islamist faction camp in Pakistan.

However, the Pakistani Taliban, which claimed responsibility for the 2010 attempt in Times Square, has denied any role in the Boston attack.

Three people, including an eight-year-old boy, were killed and 176 injured, 17 critically, in the blasts near the finishing line of the showpiece event watched on TV by millions across the United States on Monday.

Yesterday Richard DesLauriers, of the FBI, said: ‘We will go to the ends of the Earth to identify the subject or subjects who are responsible for this despicable crime.’

Officers, who checked the course before the marathon started, now think the bomber had a ‘three-hour window’ to plant the devices before the blasts and are looking into a number of suspect groups and theories.

The include the possibility of a fanatical right-winger or ‘Lone Wolf’. The crude, basic nature of the bombs are said to point towards this and the attack was launched



PREFERRED WEAPONS OF AL QAEDA FIGHTERS

PRESSURE cooker bombs have been widely used by Al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Terrorists in the region, where the cookers are used for preparing dishes such as rice, are thought to use the household items because they are commonplace and do not raise the suspicions of security forces.

The devices work by propelling shrapnel at huge force after pressure has built up inside the cookers, killing or seriously injuring anybody who is hit. A step-

by-step guide on how to construct the weapons was published in the Al Qaeda-affiliated online magazine, Inspire, three years ago.

The article advised potential terrorists how to ‘make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom’, and listed the necessary components.

A document issued by America’s Department of Homeland Security in 2010 warned about the use of pressure cookers as bombs, saying they should be ‘treated as suspicious’ if spotted in unusual locations.

suspects.

Last night police said that no one was under arrest but refused to provide any insight into a raid on a residential building in Revere, eight miles north-east of Boston, late on Monday – said to be the home of a Saudi Arabian man.

Several large bags were taken from a fifth-floor apartment early yesterday.

Police, who confirmed explosives experts had accompanied them in the search, which was done ‘under warrant’, were earlier said to have questioned two men from Saudi

‘A variety of sharp objects’

Arabia.

The leader of the 9/11 attacks and several members of the cells that hijacked four planes were from Saudi Arabia, but officials ‘cautioned’ against putting ‘great significance’ on the raids ‘at this stage’.

A 20-year-old student linked to the address is said to be under police guard in hospital, where he is being treated for burns and shrapnel wounds to his legs, after he was tackled to the ground by a civilian who believed he was acting suspiciously.

At Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital, investigators seized the man’s clothes to examine whether they held any evidence that he was linked to the attack.

Law sources told the New York Post that after the man was grabbed by police, he smelled of gunpowder and said, ‘I thought there would be a second bomb’, before asking, ‘Did anyone die?’

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From Daniel Bates in Boston

THE boy of eight killed cheering the runners at the finish line of the Boston Marathon was part of a ‘perfect family’, neighbours said last night.

Martin Richard became ‘the boy who will never come home’ when two bombs went off as he waited in the crowd with his family.

The explosions happened after they had returned to their seats in the grandstand with ice creams to look for friends who were running, according to US reports.

Martin’s mother Denise, 43, a librarian in his school, was critically injured and has had brain surgery, while his sister Jane, six, lost a leg. His older brother Henry, 12, is thought to be unharmed.

Just hours after the tragedy their father Bill, 42, a community organiser, was said to be in such shock he ‘looked like the walking dead’.

Neighbours described how he came back to his £500,000 flat in Dorchester, Massachusetts, at 10.30pm on Monday still wearing hospital scrubs.

Jane Sherman, 64, said Mr Richard spent about ten minutes inside as he got some clothes. She said: ‘Oh my God Bill, are you okay?’ He didn’t even look at me and his friend came over to tell me. He told me that Martin had died and that the others were in the hospital.’

She added: ‘There are no words to describe this whole situation. They have lived in the neighbourhood for 20 years and I’ve been here 30 so I’ve seen those boys grow up.’

‘They are a wonderful family and this is a horrific tragedy. I don’t know if they are ever going to get over this. Put yourself in their situation if you have a family.’

In a statement last night, Mr Richard said: ‘My dear son Martin has died from injuries sustained in the attack on Boston. My wife and daughter are both recovering from serious injuries. ‘We thank our family and friends, those we know and those we have never met, for their thoughts and prayers. ‘I ask that you continue to pray for my family as we remember Martin.’

Last April, Martin posed with a sign saying: ‘No more hurting people’ and ‘Peace’ in a deeply poignant photograph. He was pictured after learning in class about the death of Trayvon Martin, the black US teenager shot after he got into an argument with a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator. It was posted on Facebook yesterday by school friend Lucia Brawley who said: ‘My hope is that

we all live by Martin’s words... by following his example’.

Although he is a runner, Mr Richard had been injured and did not compete in the marathon.

Dan Aguilar, 50, a project manager who lives next door, said the Richards seemed to be the ‘perfect happy family’.

He said: ‘I saw them on Easter Sunday all sitting on the porch as a family and they all looked so happy.

A boy of 8 dead and a family torn apart

TERMS APPLY



Above: The Richard family. Left: Martin with a tribute to teen Trayvon Martin

The boys were always playing in the yard, Martin seemed so full of life.

‘They were just a typical American family. When I heard the news it kept me up at night. Their little boy will never come home again.’

On the pavement outside the family home last night, somebody had written the word ‘Peace’ in chalk.

Among the other victims of the bombings were two brothers who both lost legs.

JP and Paul Norden were stand-

ing next to Martin Richard when the bombs went off.

Paul Norden, 31, whose girlfriend was also seriously burnt, rang his mother, Liz, from the back of an ambulance. ‘Ma, I’m hurt real bad,’ he told her. He said his older brother had been beside him but he now didn’t know where he was.

Although he said only that his legs were badly burned, the damage proved far more serious and one had to be amputated.

Mrs Norden, a mother of five, rushed into Boston from her home in Wakefield, Massachusetts, and discovered her other son was in a different hospital. The 33-year-old had also lost a leg in the same spot – just below the knee – due to serious burns.

‘I’d never imagined in my wildest dreams this would ever happen,’ said Mrs Norden.

‘I really don’t know too much because it’s just so overwhelming.

It’s like a nightmare.’

She said neither brother knows that the other was badly hurt because they remain heavily sedated. They had gone to the marathon with five other friends, one of whom also lost a leg.

At least 17 people have had to receive amputations. Surgeon George Velmahos said some victims had been considered ‘automatic amputees’, adding: ‘We just completed what the bomb had done.’

Patriots’ Day, a black day for America

THE Boston Marathon attacks will go down in history as yet another atrocity associated with Patriots’ Day.

Investigators fear the timing of the bomb blasts on a day full of significance for many Americans is no coincidence.

The celebration of freedom marks the anniversary of the first battles of the American Revolution in 1775 – the ‘shot heard around the world’.

But its meaning has been warped by a growing number of white supremacists and other far-Right groups who have turned it into a

rallying point. The Boston bombings join a litany of other terrible events connected to the day, including:

- The Waco siege which left 76 dead at self-declared messiah David Koresh’s compound on Patriots’ Day in 1993.

- White supremacists blew up a federal building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, killing 168. Bomber Timothy McVeigh, who was executed in 2001, planned the blast to coincide

with the second anniversary of Waco.

- The 1999 Columbine school massacre, which left 15 dead and 21 injured, took place on the day after Patriots’ Day. Gunmen Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold murdered 12 students and one teacher before killing themselves.

- The Virginia Tech massacre, the deadliest school shooting in US history, took place on April 16, 2007. Seung-Hui Cho, a senior student, shot and killed 32 people and wounded 17 others in two separate attacks before committing suicide. Patriots’ Day is April 19, but in Massachusetts

and Maine it is commemorated with a public holiday on the third Monday in April.

On Monday night, President Barack Obama noted the date, saying: ‘Today is Patriots’ Day – a day that reflects the freedom Boston has celebrated throughout its history.’

Counter-terrorism expert Richard Barrett said the incident had hints of a right-wing attack rather than Al Qaeda-inspired extremism.

Mr Barrett said the timing on Patriots’ Day and the relatively small size of the devices suggested the work of a domestic extremist.