

Minutes of the 55th Depleted Uranium Firing Environmental Review Committee (DUFERC) Meeting held at MoD Netheravon on the 12th May 2010

Present:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Dstl Environmental Sciences Department Principal Scientist
SO2 RAD (CESOA)
MoD Commandant KTA
Director CESA
Director Quality Manager
Director Test (Secretary)
MoD SSD&C

Apologies:

[Redacted]

MoD TEST Team
Director Capability Manager
MoD SSD&C
[Redacted] Deputy Radiation Advisor
MoD DE

1. Introduction

[Redacted] welcomed the committee to MoD Netheravon for the 55th meeting of the DUFERC. He welcomed, in particular, [Redacted] of MoD SSD&C. [Redacted] Thanked the committee for inviting SSD&C to the meeting and offered apologies for [Redacted] who was unable to attend due to other work commitments.

2. Previous Minutes

There were several observations from the committee concerning the numbering of actions particularly with regard to the summary of actions not corresponding to the minutes. On investigation it was found that a draft summary had been released in error but the file copy was correct.

The additional observations were made and are to be taken as correct:

Item 2, para 1

MoD Directorate of Safety and Claims SSD&C should read: **DS&C**. DS&C has now become Safety Sustainable Development and Continuity.

Item 3, para 1

In the last sentence of this paragraph there was an incomplete action number. The action number should have read: 52.2

Item 3, para 2

The final 2 sentences should have read: *'It was considered reasonable to assume that it will be at least 5 years before the next DU firing trial will be carried out and it is possible that in that time MoD and QQ could lose the expertise necessary to carry out a DU firing. It is therefore important for **cost efficiency and business continuity** reasons to centralise this information in a straight forward way to assist in the planning of future trials involving DU.*

Item 3, last para

This should have read: [REDACTED] has spoken to [REDACTED]. She appreciated the consultation and is happy to leave the meeting for 2 years'.

Item 4, para 3

This should have read: [REDACTED] replied that before any further work could go ahead there would need to be an assessment of how much contamination is present within the Butts and control [REDACTED]

Item 4

This should read- A view expressed by the Environment Agency is that there should be a full environmental assessment of the VJ facility if remediation is planned. [REDACTED]

Item 10, para 5

The last but one sentence should have read: 'If contamination is found and it is not in a fenced area it should be dealt with in site orders.'

On the 'Summary of Actions' the following should be noted: [REDACTED]

Action 531.1 should have been against [REDACTED] and not [REDACTED]

The last action should have read 'Action 531.1 [REDACTED]

The rest of the minutes of the 54th DUFERC Meeting were approved by the committee.

3. Actions Outstanding

Action 52.2 - [REDACTED] to produce a presentation for future firing of DU. (See Item 5)

Action Ongoing

Action 54.1- [REDACTED] to circulate [REDACTED] presentation. (See Item 5)

Action Complete

Action 54.2- All to comment on [REDACTED] Presentation. (See Item 5)

Action Complete

Action 53.1 - [REDACTED] to produce a 'Management and Remediation Plan' for the DU contaminated areas at KTA and present for discussion at the next meeting.

[REDACTED] did a draft and has submitted it to his new Commanding Officer. However he is extremely busy as the ILPM runs out next year and will be replaced by the RIMP. This task gets under way in June 2010.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have been sent copies for comment.

Action on-going.

[REDACTED] will be leaving on 26th August 2011. The MoD is trying to find someone to replace him.

Action 54.3 - [REDACTED] to clarify who is the Army RPA for KTA.

[REDACTED] reported that is unclear, possibly no-body. What is certain is that no one at Dstl is the overall RPA for DE.

[REDACTED] stated that he has made approaches to DE on this matter twice in the last 5 months and nobody in Defence Estates seems to be taking on the issue.

[REDACTED] added Defence Estates employs an RPA for specific jobs but has no-one for Kirkcudbright which is the point in question. [REDACTED] will discuss the politics with [REDACTED] and then

he will discuss the issue with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] can then go to [REDACTED] to let him know that [REDACTED] is concerned about this issue.

Action completed.

New action 55.1. [REDACTED] to speak to Defence Estates to clarify who is the RPA for KTA

Action 54.4 - [REDACTED] to set up the occasional contract.

[REDACTED] not present to report

Action on-going.

Action 54.5 - [REDACTED] to give a statement of what has been fired from VJ Battery.

[REDACTED] presented the firing data for Eskmeals 1981- 1996 (see Annex A). (See item 7)

Action completed. See new action 55.2.

Action 54.6 - [REDACTED] to approach [REDACTED] and request a timeline on when the assessment of activity will take place. (LLW Waste inventory)

[REDACTED] suggested that he could raise this issue with [REDACTED] in a letter.

[REDACTED] advised that Defence Estates were already meant to be responding on behalf of the MoD.

[REDACTED] stated that this is not happening.

[REDACTED] added that there was a real danger that failure to respond could mean that there is a serious omission in MoD's returns which could result in there being no allocation for the Eskmeals LLW arisings from decommissioning. He added that TEST and Defence Estates should be managing this issue but it is outside their area of expertise and they may not fully understand the implications of failing to respond.

Action on-going.

New action 55.3. [REDACTED] to write to Defence Estates stating that there needs to be a focal point for the Eskmeals LLW inventory -Can they confirm that they are the focal point.

Action 54.7 - [REDACTED] to release the LLW figures to MoD and to write to [REDACTED] stating that QQ will not be able to produce a forecast of arisings.

[REDACTED] Has passed the information to [REDACTED] as the TEST representative on the Eskmeals site.

Action completed.

Action 54.8 - [REDACTED] to receive and pass on QQ statement regarding LLW to MoD contractor.

[REDACTED] not present to report

Action on-going.

Action 54.9 - All to review [REDACTED] proposal for future monitoring at VJ and bring comments to the next meeting.

[REDACTED] to proceed. [REDACTED] will discuss the proposal with [REDACTED]

Action completed. See new action 55.5

Action 54.10 - [REDACTED] to update DUFERC ToR and circulate for discussion at the next meeting.

(See Item 9)

Action ongoing See new action 55.4.

Action 54.11 - [REDACTED] to approach [REDACTED] SSD&C regarding Chairmanship and ToR of DUFERC.

[REDACTED] was invited along to this meeting. Due to the pressure of work [REDACTED] would prefer not to be chairman of the DUFERC. [REDACTED] will continue to be the DUFERC chairman.

Action completed.

Action 54.12 - [REDACTED] to discuss with his senior management the new Management Plan which will include the action to carry out contamination surveys.

Action completed.

Action 54.12 - [REDACTED] to re-draft para.1 of the Depleted Uranium Survey Report: Kirkcudbright Training Area 2008 Part 1 "Terrestrial Environment dated 30th November 2009.

Action completed.

4. DUFERC Future

Since the last meeting the MOD TEST LTPA Ops. Delivery Manager has challenged whether QinetiQ should be using LTPA time for DUFERC activities and whether DUFERC had any purpose when there were no DU firings planned for the foreseeable future. This was discussed by the committee and it was considered that as nothing has been heard on the subject since it was initially raised it was simply a question that has been answered.

This view was strongly supported by the MoD members of the committee

[REDACTED] stated that the DUFERC was highly regarded by the SSD&C and that [REDACTED] considered that the committee was an effective insurance for the MoD when needing to respond promptly to any DU issue raised, either in parliament or in the media.

[REDACTED] Stated that it was essential for the MoD to have a coordinating body for DU issues and that since the demise of the DUWG the DUFERC was the only such committee

[REDACTED] Agreed and added that in his experience in dealing with the regulatory bodies QinetiQs presence on the committee gave the MoD the extra credibility added by having independent expert advice.

It was decided that no action would be taken unless direction came from a senior MOD source

5. DU Firing Presentation.

In response to action 52.2 [REDACTED] had produced a power point presentation intended to capture all of the necessary requirements for the future firings of DU. The presentation was distributed to the committee and comments sought from the DUFERC

[REDACTED] was not present at the meeting so [REDACTED] has undertaken to amend the presentation and pass it back to him.

New Action 55.5 [REDACTED] to amend DU Firing Presentation to reflect DUFERC input and return to [REDACTED]

6. **VJ Future Sampling**

█████ stated that the plan submitted to the committee should be started soon as there is still a likely to be significant Depleted Uranium contamination in the dunes surrounding VJ Battery

Both █████ and █████ supported this and █████ went on to point out that the work from NERC and BGS had found DU in the sand sample they had taken from these areas.

New Action 55.6 - █████ to discuss the proposed sampling with █████ (RPA for Eskmeals) .

7. **VJ Historic Firing Data**

█████ submitted the historic firing data to the committee and suggested that the discrepancy between fired DU and that disposed of the LLW (accounted for) indicated that there were likely have been GBq. quantities dispersed during firing, the greatest proportion of which is likely to have remained within the controlled area.

Copies of this data will be distributed with the minutes

New action 55.2. █████ to distribute the VJ firing data with the minutes

8. **Eskmeals Report**

█████ reported that the remediation (phase1) had reached a hiatus and QinetiQ was waiting for the LLW arrisings to be removed from the controlled area. It was his understanding that Amec are coming back to site on 24th May 2010 to load the Drigg containers onto the transport vehicles for delivery to the LLW Repository at Drigg. (Transportation is also being handled by Amec).

He went on to report he is also are just waiting for a date for the Iso-freights containing the contaminated metal for reprocessing to be moved. and their removal will mark the end of Phase 1.

Beyond this QinetiQ is picking up some of the cost for care and maintenance of the facility but we are not sure of interference with the QinetiQ/ Balfour Beatty maintenance contract. However this issue have been raised with █████ of QinetiQ Estates.

9. **DUFERC ToR Review**

█████ Reported that he had produced a draft but this item should not be considered closed as there is currently a lack of clarity regarding the status of the DUFERC.

New Action 55.4 █████ to circulate his suggestions regarding the amendments to the DUFERC ToR.

10. **Kirkcudbright Report**

Nothing to report.

11. **Dstl Report**

There has been no obvious impact from a report in which █████ and the self-styled European Commission on Radiation Risk repeated the view that Depleted Uranium

munitions risks are being underestimated. A peer-reviewed paper shows that radiation doses from the photoelectric effect described by [REDACTED] are broadly comparable with natural background and hence of no practical significance when calculating the health risk from uranium microparticles.

Dstl are assisting SPVA in defending a War Pension Appeal in which it is alleged that Depleted Uranium exposure has been responsible for a Gulf veteran's ill-health, even though there is no evidence to suggest that his illness has ever been shown to be linked to radiation exposure. It was noted that War Pensions do not require the degree of proof required in a court of law and so it cannot be assumed the appeal will fail.

Dstl assisted SSDCD in responding to an FOI request for a copy of a report on the MoD reconnaissance visit to Kosovo and to a request for a copy of the information MoD provided for use in the inquest into the death of [REDACTED], a Gulf veteran.

Following discussions with D News, Dstl posted an article advising that copies of the report of MoD's DU monitoring in Iraq could be provided. The offer was made on the Society for Radiological Protection's website. It was very disappointing that only 3 out of many hundreds of professional scientists requested the MoD report. DMSD confirmed that there was no reason why the revised SG Policy Letter on Depleted Uranium monitoring should not be made publicly available.

Dstl were contacted by a Canadian researcher asking for an interview on Depleted Uranium health effects and veterans' compensation. A short reply was prepared in consultation with the MoD Press Office. This set out the current MoD position and referred the researcher to the MoD and Dstl Press Offices. Nothing further has been heard.

There was no obvious impact from a Guardian article in which it was reported that a joint study by the Iraqi Environment, Health and Science ministries had found that scrap yards in and around Baghdad and Basra contained high levels of ionising radiation, thought to be a legacy of Depleted Uranium used in munitions.

12. Any Other Business

No other business to report.

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 10:00 hrs on Tuesday 21st September 2010 at Eskmeals.

Distribution: All present+

[REDACTED] - MoD TEST Team

[REDACTED] - MoD SSD&C

[REDACTED] - MoD DE

File ESK/327/001

Summary of Outstanding Actions

Action 52.2 – [REDACTED] to bring a draft standing order to the next meeting.

Still working on it. Action on-going.

Sept 2010

Action 53.1 [REDACTED] to produce a Management and Remediation Plan for the DU contaminated areas of KTA.

Sept 2010

Action 54.4 [REDACTED] to set up the occasional contract for an RPA for KTA.

Sept 2010

Action 54.6 [REDACTED] to approach [REDACTED] and request a timeline on when the assessment of activity will take place. (LLW Waste Inventory)

Sept 2010

Action 54.8 [REDACTED] to receive and pass on the QQ statement regarding LLW to the MoD contractor.

June 2010

Action 54.10 [REDACTED] to update the DUFERC ToR and Circulate for Discussion at the next meeting.

Sept 2010

Action 55.1 [REDACTED] to speak to DE to clarify who is the RPA for KTA

Sept 2010

Action 55.2 [REDACTED] to distribute the VJ firing data with the minutes

July 2010

Action 55.3 [REDACTED] to write to DE stating that there needs to be a focal point for the Eskmeals LLW inventory- Can they confirm that they are the focal point.

Sept 2010

Action 55.4 [REDACTED] to circulate his suggestions regarding the amendments to the DEFERC ToR.

July 2010

Action 55.5 [REDACTED] to amend the DU firing presentation to reflect the DUFERC input and return it to [REDACTED]

July 2010

Action 55.6 [REDACTED] to discuss the proposed (Eskmeals) sampling with [REDACTED] (RPA for Eskmeals)

June 2010