

[REDACTED]

**Minutes of the Twenty Second Meeting of the  
Depleted Uranium Firing Environmental Review Committee  
Held at [REDACTED] on Thursday 18 May 2000**

Prior to the meeting there had been a tour of Kirkcudbright Range, taking in Balig firing point, India Target, Raeberry firing point and Doon Hill firing point.

Present

[REDACTED]	DERA Boscombe (Chairman)
[REDACTED]	DERA Eskmeals (Secretary)
[REDACTED]	DRPS
[REDACTED]	BAe Royal Ordnance
[REDACTED]	MoD DEC(DBE)
[REDACTED]	DERA Eskmeals
[REDACTED]	DERA Eskmeals
[REDACTED]	MoD Abbey Wood
[REDACTED]	DERA Eskmeals
[REDACTED]	DERA Boscombe
[REDACTED]	CESO(A)
[REDACTED]	Kirkcudbright Training Area
[REDACTED]	CHSEO DERA Farnborough
[REDACTED]	DERA Fraser
[REDACTED]	DRPS

The Chairman welcomed [REDACTED] Eskmeals' Range Manager and SDR, to the meeting.

Item 1: Apologies for Absence

1. Apologies for their absence were received from [REDACTED] MoD and [REDACTED] DERA.

Item 2: Minutes of the 21st Meeting

2. [REDACTED] requested that the minutes of the 21st meeting be amended to include his comment that *there are unquantified traces of DU on the Range and that this constitutes a hazard to the public.*
3. The Chairman felt it would be more accurate to record that the traces of DU from early firings were *as yet unquantified, and may constitute a hazard to the public.* This would be more in keeping with the evidence available to date.
4. Subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2000 were approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Item 3: Matters Arising

5. Actions from the 21st and previous meetings were discussed:
  - a) Action 21/1. The apparent discrepancy between the number of samples sent to DRPS from Eskmeals and the number expected had been resolved. It had arisen due to unclear communications and a misunderstanding. Action **complete**.
  - b) Action 20/2. Revisions to the Eskmeals Site Operating Plan had been completed but publication had been delayed. As an interim measure, [REDACTED] had issued a local

[REDACTED]

notice detailing telephone numbers of staff to be contacted in the event of an incident involving radioactive materials generally. Action **complete**.

- c) Action 19/3. The review of ToR for Eskmeals' staff had been completed and was being incorporated into documentation. Action **complete**.

**Action 22/1:** The ToR included responsibilities for receiving a recovered DU projectile. DRPS and Eskmeals to liaise and review the risk assessments.

- d) Action 21/2. [REDACTED] apologised for the fact that, for various reasons, no action had been taken to review and collate information on DU holdings within DERA. Action **continuing**.
- e) Actions 20/5 and 21/3. [REDACTED] was able to confirm that he had received a number of documents regarding the purity of DU from Starmet. These had been passed to the Secretary for distribution as necessary. Actions **complete**.
- f) Action 21/5. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had discussed training/information material for the Fire Brigade and other organisations and a basic package has been identified which could relatively easily be modified to make it specific to DU. Action **complete**.

**Action 22/2:** The responsibility for taking this forward was currently with D&G Fire Brigade. [REDACTED] agreed to contact them to enquire whether or not they still required the training.

#### Item 4: Finance

6. [REDACTED] gave a brief presentation outlining the current position. In summary:
7. FY1999/2000 had seen expenditure of approximately £660k, by T&E Ranges, covering corrosion studies, environmental monitoring, surveys and the DUFERC. Support for these activities would have to continue from the Sector's budget (albeit at a significantly reduced level), as the DERA Finance Director had not agreed to allowing the Sector to treat these as 'exceptional costs'.
8. Additionally, a series of activities had been proposed which would result in 'one-off' expenditure of approximately £900k in 2000-01. This would cover items such as land remediation, marine and terrestrial modelling, a seabed search, and PQ management. As no central funding was available from DERA and no source had been forthcoming from MoD, it would not be possible to proceed with this programme.
9. The Finance Director had agreed to allow a sum of £235k to be taken out of the Sector's profit line. However, the Chairman pointed out that this resulted, in practice, in very little additional money.
10. During the lengthy discussion that followed, the following points emerged:
- a) It was decided that an additional £16.5k should be spent at Kirkcudbright - specifically radiological surveying at Raeberry - with work to start as soon as possible.

- [REDACTED]
- b) [REDACTED] was able to inform the Committee that DEC(DBE) was, in principle, prepared to meet the costs attributable to PQ management.
  - c) It was suggested that an approach to DUS(S&T) for funding could prove fruitful.
  - d) There was a general feeling that responsibility for the Kirkcudbright and, particularly, Eskmeals 'legacies' should be firmly placed with the MoD. However, [REDACTED] pointed out that whilst the Regulators generally follow the principle that the polluter pays, they could decide that the new owner is liable. This is particularly relevant at Eskmeals.

**Action 22/3:** [REDACTED] to continue working to find the most appropriate way of approaching the MoD with a view to resolving finance issues.

- 11. On a side issue of the Public Private Partnership arrangements for DERA, [REDACTED] was able to tell the Committee that current proposals were that the portion retained by the MoD 'R-DERA' would include CBD and CES Sectors, part of CDA and other "sensitive" areas. DRPS would fall within the same group as CBD Porton Down. This would leave 'P-DERA' with all technical, systems, CHS and T&E groups - totalling approximately 75% (9000) of current staff with effect from 1 January 2001. Real estate would, most likely, remain in MoD ownership.
- 12. [REDACTED] informed the DUFERC that he also sat on the MoD's newly-formed Depleted Uranium Working Group and that he would also raise the issue of finance in that forum.
- 13. [REDACTED] noted that DERA's internal "800" cost codes had been discontinued without direct replacement and that this left him and other DERA members of the Committee with no way of accounting for time or expenditure on DUFERC business. The Chairman agreed to look into this and arrange for new accounts to be created as soon as possible.

Item 5: Kirkcudbright Update

- 14. [REDACTED] reported that a programme of proof firings was continuing. Three rounds had struck Big India gantry and this had resulted in an internal investigation which had attempted to determine whether or not these incidents had resulted from any failure of the weapons system, procedures or human error, so far without conclusion. [REDACTED] confirmed that remedial work had been successfully carried out and that the SEPA had been informed. A brief report would be produced and placed on file, with a copy to the SEPA.
- 15. Work on L27 rounds was scheduled to continue until July this year, with L27A1 Continuing to October 2001. There would be a gradual withdrawal of DERA T&E Ranges from Kirkcudbright in this period and recovery of sabots would continue until the last possible moment. Removal of sabots and contaminated protection plates to Eskmeals would be left until late in the programme. There was currently no DU firing work projected beyond October 2001.
- 16. The firing point at Doon Hill had never been used by DERA, although it had been used for DU firings in the past and these had resulted in some contamination of the area. There was now a requirement for a one-off ~~proof~~ series, which would be fired from there in July 2000.  
Trial.

- [REDACTED]
17. [REDACTED] asked whether DERA had any further information regarding possible 'blowback' of DU contamination into the crew compartment of the vehicles. It was confirmed that trials to date had revealed no evidence to suggest that this occurred.
  18. [REDACTED] also reported on the trial carried out to investigate whether the firing of an inert HESH round from a DU-contaminated barrel reduced the amount of contamination in that barrel. Post-trial monitoring results showed that although the contamination had relocated within the barrel there was effectively no overall change in the total amount present. With hindsight, it was unfortunate that a relatively highly contaminated barrel had been used for this trial and a different barrel with lower levels of contamination might well have produced a more beneficial result.
  19. The possibility of repeating the trial was discussed and [REDACTED] asked what the cost of such a trial would be. This information was not immediately available but [REDACTED] agreed to prepare an estimate and forward it to [REDACTED]

Action 22/4: [REDACTED] to forward cost information regarding the HESH trial to [REDACTED]

Item 6: Alleged DU Mooring Blocks in the River Dee

20. [REDACTED] reported that he had attended a meeting with [REDACTED], a Kirkcudbright resident and anti-DU campaigner, with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] of D&G Council's Environmental Health Department. The meeting included a site visit to the River Dee where [REDACTED] was able to point out the exact location of the alleged mooring blocks. Following this, a further visit to Kirkcudbright to investigate [REDACTED] allegations was arranged.
21. On the second visit, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] met on the bank of the Dee just prior to a spring low tide on the evening of 6 April. [REDACTED] had also arranged for the local Coastguard to be present to assist with personnel safety. The hydroelectric power station at Tongland, several kilometres upstream, had also been contacted to ensure that they had no plans to open any sluices or carry out other actions that could affect the quantity of water coming downstream.
22. Although initially present, [REDACTED] had left shortly after arrival as he was suffering from a cold. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] however, continued with the planned activities, which involved wading in the river at the location identified by [REDACTED] in an attempt to locate the mooring blocks. If they, or anything like them as described by [REDACTED] had been found, monitoring equipment carried by both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] - who had brought his own equipment - would be used to verify whether or not it was radioactive.
23. Although several mooring blocks of varying shapes and sizes were found during a thorough two-hour search of the area, at times waist deep in the water during one of the lowest tides of the year, it had not been possible to locate any blocks resembling [REDACTED] description and none of the mooring blocks that had been found were radioactive.
24. From this investigation and from other information that [REDACTED] had provided, [REDACTED] had said that he was satisfied that there was no case to answer. A member of the local press had also arrived during the search and requested a statement for publication. [REDACTED] thanked [REDACTED] for his information but, following the evening's work, concluded that his allegations had no basis in fact.

- [REDACTED]
25. A subsequent article in the local press had prompted a response from [REDACTED] which seriously misrepresented the discussion that had taken place at the original meeting. [REDACTED] had decided against responding; this had at the time been agreed with the Chairman and with DERA Press Office and was endorsed by the other members of the DUFERC.

Item 7: DU Gardens

26. [REDACTED] was please to report that most of the barriers to establishing the marine garden at Kirkcudbright had been removed and it was hoped that this work would be carried out during the week commencing 10 July using divers from the Northern Diving Group. The necessary consents and licences have been applied for and there appear to be no problems.
27. It had not yet been decided how - or, indeed, whether - to mark the location of the garden. Possibly the simplest option would be to arrange for a Temporary Notice to Mariners to be issued with details of the location.
28. It was noted that we should make a formal approach to the Scottish Executive and also pass relevant information to any of the marine laboratories that may be interested in the effects of this work. It was also agreed that D&G Council and the SEPA should be kept informed.

**Action 22/5:** [REDACTED] to write to the Council and SEPA regarding the marine DU garden.

29. DERA Bingleaves had expressed an interest in obtaining data on the depth of mud, and there was a suggestion that the divers could drop a tungsten copy, or even a real DU round, into the mud from a known distance above the seabed to observe and measure how far it penetrates. This would of course be secured with a line to allow for subsequent retrieval. [REDACTED] said that he would look at the possibility of RO providing a projectile.
30. With respect to the terrestrial gardens, [REDACTED] was still looking for an effective method of removing the corrosion products from the DU pellets. Until this is resolved, the DU will remain in situ.

Item 8: Review of the DUFERC's Terms of Reference

31. Various amendments to the ToR were proposed; these have been incorporated into a revised document, which is attached to these Minutes for further comment and/or ratification at the next meeting.

Item 9: Any Other Business

32. [REDACTED] passed a copy of the minutes of the first meeting of the DU Working Group to the Secretary for distribution with these minutes. The Working group recognised the fact that there are gaps in our knowledge and D/SEF Pol are to look at this.
33. [REDACTED] passed draft copies of two reports, the Eskmeals Terrestrial Environmental report for 1997-98 and a review of the Kirkcudbright Environmental Monitoring Programme 1985-94 (for internal use), to the Secretary for further distribution and comment within the DUFERC.

- [REDACTED]
34. [REDACTED] suggested that future reports should include a formal distribution list, which was agreed, and asked if there was a way of expediting approval for release as the last report had taken five months from issue. [REDACTED] replied that the procedures had recently been streamlined and clearance should in future come through considerably quicker.
  35. [REDACTED] suggested that the final version Review of Monitoring 1985-94 should not be restricted to internal use but circulated to D&G Council, SEPA and so on. This was agreed.
  36. [REDACTED] said that the SEPA had raised a question regarding the use of DU at Cape Wrath. It was confirmed that, so far as we were aware, there had been none.

Item 10: Date of Next Meeting

37. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at [REDACTED] commencing at 1030 on Thursday 17 August 2000. [REDACTED] said that he would be pleased to arrange a tour of the DRPS facilities for anyone that wished to have a look around, starting at 0900 on that day.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending, with special thanks to [REDACTED] for his hospitality, and the meeting was closed at 1530.