

Minutes of the Forty Third Depleted Uranium Environmental Review Committee (DUFERC) Meeting held at Kirkcudbright Training Area on the 14th June 2006

Present:

[REDACTED] (Acting Chairman
and Secretary)

SO2 RAD (CESO A)
DSTL Focal Point DU
MOD DTEG
MOD Commandant KTA
MOD Range Officer KTA

Apologies; [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

1. Introduction

██████████ welcomed the committee to the Kirkcudbright Training Area for the meeting of the DUFERC and invited any members of the committee to view those areas of the range that had been used for DU projectile development after the meeting

2. Previous minutes and Matters arising

It was agreed that the minutes of DUFERC 42 were accurate with the exception of paragraph 2.1. [REDACTED] advised that while DSTL were prepared to advise BAE regarding an employee's concerns, this was not a formal arrangement therefore the word "service" should be amended to "advise" in that context.

This is now taken as amended.

At the last meeting, [REDACTED] had offered to act as a point of contact between VPU and BAE regarding a BAE employee who had health concerns regarding previous contact with DU.

██████████ reported that he had found difficulty in locating a department within the MOD to pass this matter to.

██████████ recommended that he should try ██████████ AD Sci Risk ██████████ thanked him for this advice and said he would continue trying to help BAE in this matter.

3. Actions

Action 41/3 on [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to ensure Radiation and Environmental aspect of DU are considered in relation to future DU firings at KTA.

[REDACTED] stated that at present there were logistical difficulties and that he understood that the programme was on hold.

Action ongoing

Action 41/2 on [REDACTED] to approach Defence Estates on the subject of Land Quality Surveys (LQS) for MOD Ranges

[REDACTED] reported that this was still ongoing and the status of these LQS was not known.

[REDACTED] asked if this had any bearing with regard to the inclusion of radioactive contamination into the Contaminated Land Regulations.

[REDACTED] stated that he felt the situation was still liable to vary due to further planned firings at KTA and that a decision was required regarding the possibility of decontamination

[REDACTED] suggested that currently the situation within the areas of known contamination was effectively controlled as the areas were fenced and subject to authorised entry only.

[REDACTED] asked if it was feasible to remove the known "hot spots".

[REDACTED] said it may be possible to do this at Raebury because there was unlikely to be any further requirement to use this battery for DU.

[REDACTED] asked if any decontamination had been carried out previously.

[REDACTED] said yes it had been started but no resources had been made available to do more than carry out an assessment of part of the Raebury area.

[REDACTED] asked if there was any significant effect on the surrounding flora and fauna.

[REDACTED] replied that there had been nothing significant found by the existing environmental sampling programme.

[REDACTED] asked if there was likelihood of a future strategic requirement to test fire DU

[REDACTED] stated that it was possible that there could be an ongoing requirement for the ranges, particularly if changes were made to the DU ammunition or its propellant. He went on to add that any further requirement for DU firings at KTA should involve DTEG.

[REDACTED] asked why this was and [REDACTED] made the point that future work would almost certainly require QinetiQ's technical experience to carry out DU firings

█████ pointed out that at the moment this was supposition but confirmed that he was the focal point for this issue and that he and █████ would keep the committee advised of any such developments

█████ asked what would be the mechanism for keeping SEPA/EA advised.

█████ said that for KTA it would probably be his remit to open discussions with the regulators but he was concerned that he would need some support with the technical aspects of this.

█████ asked if there were similar issues surrounding VJ Battery at Eskmeals and who within the MOD would be the POC with the EA for that facility

█████ stated that it would be DTEG probably █████

There was some further discussion regarding future use of the VJ Battery at Eskmeals

Action 43.1 on █████ to write to █████ copy to █████, █████ (Defence Estates) and █████ regarding future use of DU at KTA.

Action 43/2 █████ to write to █████ asking him to clarify the MODs long term plan for VJ

4 Kirkcudbright Report. Presented by █████

█████ started by reporting that there had been no DU firings at KTA since the last DUFERC

█████ reported that the RPA had visited and issued a report for the area. Within that report there had been an observation that the controlled area surrounding Raebury battery was in need of some maintenance.

█████ commented that decontamination should be considered and a scoping survey should be carried out

█████ stated that SEPA would need to be involved in any planned remedial work as there were bound to be disposals of spoil that would be of regulatory interest

█████ pointed out that there would also be the issue of unexploded ordnance to be considered

█████ continued the RPA report had also mentioned disposal of a large number of DU contaminated sabots. It was unclear as to whether these were owned by MOD or DERA (now QQ) as they had been collected after DERA trials but could predate DERA.

Action 43/4 █████ to investigate disposal of sabots

5 Eskmeals Report. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reported that currently the DU projects being undertaken at VJ were on hold and that the facility manager was awaiting the MOD decision to proceed with the those projects. The only work currently being undertaken was segregation of legacy scrap and care and maintenance of the controlled area.

6 DSTL Report

[REDACTED] began with an outline of the current situation regarding the demise of the DUWG and said that he would ensure that the DUFERC members received copies of the Heavy Metals Working Group quarterly reports.

He then moved onto some of the issues discussed at the Tidworth DU Seminar particularly work carried out by the British Geological Survey (BGS). Of particular interest were the findings at Dunrod Burn KTA.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] expressed concern that they were not aware of the findings within that waterway.

[REDACTED] explained that the methodology used meant that extremely low levels of DU could be detected and that the levels of DU found were not significant to health but were of scientific interest because it inferred that the DU deposition at KTA could be mobile within the environment.

Action 43/5 [REDACTED] to produce advice on BSG Findings (See Notes attached to minutes)

[REDACTED] asked if this new information would have any impact on the current or proposed environmental monitoring programmes.

[REDACTED] answered that his colleagues, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were more closely involved with environmental sampling and he took an action to discuss this with them.

Action 43/6 [REDACTED] to obtain update from [REDACTED] DSTL re future environmental monitoring strategy for KTA. (See Notes attached to minutes)

[REDACTED] posed the question of whether the new evidence from BSG discredited the current sampling protocol.

[REDACTED] pointed out that QQ was yet to receive the outstanding reports from DSTL.

[REDACTED] replied that he thought they were about to be issued but would check on their progress

Action 43/7 [REDACTED] to check on the progress of the outstanding reports.

[REDACTED] returned to his report from Tidworth and stated that on the whole it had been a useful seminar and that national and international interest was apparently shifting to the behaviour of DU in the environment with the corrosion investigation now becoming secondary.

As far as clinical research was concerned the focus was now moving from Gulf veterans in general to persons with health issues and he understood that a new book had been published on the subject by an author called Brian Sprat.

The US Army is currently funding research to investigate a possible leukaemia link with laboratory rats that had been exposed to DU.

█████ returned to the KTA environmental monitoring question and asked if the committee considered that sediment monitoring was the best means of monitoring for KTA.

█████ stated that in view of the new evidence it could well be time for a review of the protocol.

It was agreed by the committee that this should be discussed at the next meeting and that a specialist in environmental monitoring should be asked to contribute. The committee was in agreement that █████ DSTL should attend the next meeting.

Action 43/8 █████ to invite █████ to DUFERC 44. in September 06

7 Any other business

█████ raised the issue of a proposal from the MOD for QinetiQ to demilitarise uranium ammunition on the Shoeburyness site. █████ noted that this information had come to him via an RPA report from DSTL.

█████ explained that this proposal had come to light during an RPA visit where the visiting RPA had noted an RSA registration to hold 43 tonnes of DU on that site. As this is a very large figure the RPA had asked why the site required such a large registration for DU and was told of the planned work. █████ added that it had been included in the report because DSTL wished to raise their concern that all the ramifications of conducting this work were to be considered.

█████ asked if █████ had any views on this matter.

█████ stated that this was really a matter to be considered by QQ, DTEG and the relevant MOD IPT.

█████ took the action to discuss it with those parties.

█████ stated that he would establish what QQ Shoeburyness had planned with regard to demilitarisation of DU rounds and whether they had included the wider issues involved in respect of carrying out this work.

Action 43/9 █████ to raise the Issue with DTEG and the Ammunition IPT

█████ Raised the matter of placing the DU Environmental reports into the House of Commons Library (HoCL). He stated that he had been making considerable efforts to achieve this but numerous problems had been encountered and was even told by library staff that they had no trace of any such reports being in the library.

As a result of these difficulties he had researched some of the background to this requirement and had found a reference in the minutes of DUFERC 34-05/11/03 in which the MOD (VPU) had taken the action to place all such documents in HoCL.

confirmed that this was his understanding for reports produced prior to the disbanding of the DUWG the reports produced after this time were the responsibility of the owners ie CESO and DTEG, to distribute them.

agreed that he would contact these departments of the MOD and clarify the situation.

added that the Freedom of Information Act now made all such information effectively within the public domain and it was therefore unnecessary to actually place such reports in the HoCL as the public could theoretically view them on request at any time.

Action 43/10 to contact DTEG and CESO to clarify who was now responsible for the distribution of the DU Environmental Reports.

pointed out that the Eskmeals reports had been subject to considerable delays and therefore had not been submitted to VPU as QQ did not have them. However when QQ receives them they will go to DTEG as they own them.

noted this and took an action to check on the progress of these reports (see action 43/7).

stated that the DUFERC had sat 43 times and that its role had altered from its original remit. He therefore proposed that the committee should review its terms of reference (ToR).

The committee agreed with this and took an action to place this as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action 43/12 to include a review of the DUFERC ToRs on the agenda for the next meeting

8 Date of next meeting

The next DUFERC meeting will therefore be held at 10:00, on Tuesday, 26th September 2006, at Eskmeals.

Summary of outstanding actions

Action 41/3. are to ensure that Radiation Safety and Environmental issues are addressed with regard to future firings of DU at KTA

Action 42/1. to approach Defence Estates on the subject of future (DU) land quality surveys for MOD ranges.

Action 41/4 to act as a point of contact to BAE on employee health concern over DU

Action 43/1 to write to (copies to and regarding future use of DU at KTA

Action 43.2 to write to asking him to clarify the MOD long term plan for VJ Area.

Action 43/3 [REDACTED] to investigate disposal of the DU contaminated sabots currently held at Raebury Battery KTA.

Action 43/4 [REDACTED] to produce RPA advice relating to BSG findings/ report

Action 43/5 [REDACTED] to obtain update from [REDACTED] DSTL re future environmental monitoring strategy for KTA.

Action 43/6 [REDACTED] to check the progress in producing Eskmeals environmental monitoring reports

Action 43/7 [REDACTED] to invite [REDACTED] DSTL to the next DUFERC Meeting

Action 43/8 [REDACTED] to raise the Radiological, Legal and public perception of issues related to DU work planned for Shoeburyness by the MOD.

Action 43/9 [REDACTED] to contact CESO and DTEG to clarify who is responsible for the distribution of DU environmental Reports.

Action 43/10 [REDACTED] to include the review of DUFERC ToR in the agenda for the next meeting

Distribution:

All present+

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Capability Manager Eskmeals

[REDACTED] MOD VPU

File ESK/327/001

[REDACTED]
01/08/06