

**Minutes of the 49th Depleted Uranium Environmental Review Committee
(DUFERC) Meeting held at QinetiQ Eskmeals on the 15th May 2008**

Present:

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| [REDACTED] | QinetiQ Radiation Advisor (Chairman) |
| [REDACTED] | MOD TEST IPT |
| [REDACTED] | Dstl Focal Point DU |
| [REDACTED] | SO2 RAD (CESOA) |
| [REDACTED] | MOD Commandant KTA |
| [REDACTED] | QinetiQ Environmental DU RF |
| [REDACTED] | MOD DE |
| [REDACTED] | QinetiQ HSE |
| [REDACTED] | QinetiQ Environmental Capability Manager |
| [REDACTED] | Secretary |

Apologies:

[REDACTED] Range Officer KTA

1. Introduction

[REDACTED] welcomed the committee to QinetiQ Eskmeals for the 49th meeting of the DUFERC.

2. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising

Item 5 Kirkcudbright Report, Section 3 – [REDACTED] name was spelt incorrectly.

The rest of the minutes of the 48th DUFERC Meeting were approved by everyone.

3. Actions

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

This has been overtaken by events. We have moved into remediation phase for the VJ Area. [REDACTED] is Project Director and keeps an eye on risks. [REDACTED] is in negotiation with IPT to firm up what the remaining plans should be. There are 2 phases, firstly clearing all the contaminated items from around the controlled area into the process building, decontamination where applicable and segregating the waste into free release scrap and LLW, then off site disposal through the relevant waste streams. Once all the scrap has been removed, Defence Estates will investigate the wider decommissioning options for VJ Battery. [REDACTED] has been talking with the Environment Agency and they have advised that the local authority (Copeland Council) are the lead authority and they must consider if VJ is to be considered a contaminated site as specified in the Environmental Protection Act (amended 2007). If this is the case they will contact Defence Estates and require a full environmental assessment to be carried out.

TEST IPT will arrange the disposal route for all the Low Level Waste (LLW) through the LLW facility at Drigg.

[REDACTED] asked if SEPA will start asking questions about what is going to happen at Kirkcudbright. [REDACTED] stated that MoD will be able to answer this question i.e. each site has to be dealt with individually. MoD will learn from the clear up of each site as each one is cleaned individually. [REDACTED] stated that every site is very different.

Action Closed

Action 44.1 (part of Action 43.2) – Feasibility of using QinetiQ as MoD's disposal agent for DU contaminated items [REDACTED] to raise with the QinetiQ Project Manager the matters of possible contamination of the gun barrel and the requirement for monitoring and the possibility of MoD using one of the existing contaminated barrels held by QinetiQ. The QinetiQ Project Manager needs to make sure the clearing of the sabots and barrel monitoring/use is included in the plan.

This has been overtaken by events as the sabots and the barrel are back at Eskmeals. Additionally the MOD also has a requirement to dispose of these gun barrels. There is a marked similarity between this proposed work and the decontamination process required by the VJ project, therefore it is proposed to carry out both project within the VJ waste process building (the Rubb). Sabots are being disposed of through the same remediation process as the barrels.

Action Ongoing

Action 45.1 - [REDACTED] to get [REDACTED] contact details from [REDACTED] and draft a letter to him, copy to [REDACTED] highlighting the issue to him.

[REDACTED] stated that since the transfer of Kirkcudbright to Defence Estates there is some confusion regarding who should respond to queries regarding Kirkcudbright DU issues. Currently queries are being handled by the site as the MoD interface with Defence Estates.

[REDACTED] pointed out that since we have lost the focal point as to who handles questions on DU in MoD London the whole matter of DU has become clouded therefore DUFERC needs to have a discussion on who handles these questions. It would appear Defence Estates should take the lead but DE does not appear to have a Radiation Protection Advisor (RPA). [REDACTED] stated that if DE opened a contract with DSTL to have an RPA, they would be better equipped to answer questions on radiation related issues. [REDACTED] stated that (for him) provisional advice on the media response to questions raised is currently obtained from Craggy Hall.

[REDACTED] stated that, so far we have been fortunate that nothing has happened.

[REDACTED] pointed out that unless this was resolved there is a risk or inconsistencies in the future.

[REDACTED] made the observation that with regard to the recent DU firing at Kirkcudbright [REDACTED] had done a very good job in keeping everyone informed. This was generally agreed

Action Ongoing

Action 48.1 – [REDACTED] to investigate the use of the surveillance radar to track shots during CHARM3 trial.

Radar tracking of the DU rounds is feasible but was not required.

Action Complete

Action 48.2 – [REDACTED] to discuss the provision of four safety sentries during CHARM3 trial.

Action Complete

Action 48.3 – [REDACTED] to notify the HSE of the CHARM3 trial.

[REDACTED] This was done, although as usual there was no response from the HSE, however QinetiQ does have it on record that the notification was sent.

[REDACTED] has received an enquiry from Fisheries Research Services (FRS) - an agency of the Scottish Executive. They read of the DU firing in the newspapers and asked [REDACTED] what this was about. [REDACTED] passed them onto [REDACTED] Maybe we should have informed them in

the first place and we should do so in the future as MoD are placing waste in the sea pending recovery. In the same way that we consult with SEPA, we need to consult with the FRS. [REDACTED] stated that the Scottish Government had not gone into the UK Marine Bill. The environmental legislation going round the Scottish Parliament may entangle with our activities therefore this is a future question for the MoD to address

Action Complete

Action 48.4 – [REDACTED] to speak to the Environment Agency regarding bringing sabots back after the CHARM3 trial.

[REDACTED] did speak to the Environment Agency who took the view that the sabots are not radioactive as defined by the Radioactive Substances Act 1993.

Action Complete

Action 48.5 – [REDACTED] to notify SEPA of the CHARM3 trial.

MoD DE has taken this action.

Action Cancelled

Action 48.6 – [REDACTED] to speak with the press office regarding the CHARM3 trial.

This was done

Action Complete

Action 48.7 – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to put together an action plan for the CHARM3 trial.

Action Complete

Action 48.8 – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to discuss the monitoring of the wash down area for contamination.

[REDACTED] has now received the report which shows high levels of DU in the controlled area. It is his view that the report should read the 'wash off area' rather than the 'wash down area'. The elevated result for contamination in the report was of concern to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] pointed out that in the near future the VJ decommissioning programme will address this issue therefore it was reasonable to say that remediation is in hand. [REDACTED] stated that he was still very concerned about the levels of DU contamination and we did not know how much of the contamination was present in the soils surrounding the butts. [REDACTED] stated that we have had an active facility which has just become inactive and although the firings ended more than 10 years ago the facility was in use until Jan of this year. [REDACTED] stated that contamination from DU firing was, by its nature concentrated in discreet areas and the report figures are referring to a specific hotspot and not the whole controlled area. [REDACTED] added that he is prepared to find out where this place is and check it against [REDACTED] monitoring results.

Action Complete

New Action 49.1 – [REDACTED] to go back to the authors of the report and clarify if it is a 'wash off area' or 'wash down area'

New Action 49.2 – [REDACTED] to send a copy of the report to Defence Estates.

New Action 49.3 – [REDACTED] to determine the level of sampling to be done in the area.

Action 48.9 – [REDACTED] send report to TG on how much DU had been found in soil samples in the Eskmeals wash down area.

Action Complete

Action 48.10 – [redacted] to talk to [redacted] to see what registration we have for holding DU for Fort Halstead so that we can give a co-ordinated response if further questions are asked.

There is no longer a Fort Halstead representative in the DUFERC as there is no DU there.

Action Complete

4. Kirkcudbright Proof Firing

The firing went well. However there were a few communication issues. [redacted] reported that it would appear that there was no "Hot Debrief" at the end of the trial. If this was the case there should have been as this is part of the procedure.

New Action 49.4 – [redacted] to check if there was any debrief following the firing and, if there was, whether [redacted] was invited to it.

[redacted] reported that there were comments from a photographer that the T-frame could have been hit. Although this was not the case two rounds did pass very close to the steel structure. If the round had struck the frame it would have been deflected and caused both structural and land contamination – future firing planners should consider this eventuality and take actions to reduce the risk.

[redacted] stated that as a MoD visitor to the firing he was very impressed with the professionalism shown by QinetiQ staff carrying out the task.

[redacted] noted that we need to make sure that we have adequately captured everything so that if this firing is repeated in 5 years time, they can pull out the information on this successful firing. The records of the trial will be kept at Eskmeals.

New Action 49.5 – [redacted] to ask [redacted] to add a digest of the trial.

[redacted] stated that more open discussions about the proof firing should be held before the firing, so that people are aware they are taking place, would be.

[redacted] reported that the local MP decided to visit Kirkcudbright Training Area shortly after the proof firing.

[redacted] had to put together a brief for the local MP to take with him. Everything was copied to DGM.

[redacted] asked if anything occurs which is to do with QinetiQ and TEST, TEST would like a copy.

5. Kirkcudbright Environmental Report

'Terrestrial Environmental Depleted Uranium Survey Report - Kirkcudbright Training Area – 2006'

[redacted] briefed the DUFERC about the report.

This report presents and interprets the results of the DU terrestrial environmental surveys undertaken at the Kirkcudbright Training Area (KTA) during 2006. The surveys are routinely undertaken to measure uranium levels in the terrestrial environment at the KTA and to identify the extent of any dispersion of DU resulting from operations at the site.

[redacted] found evidence of the presence of very low levels of DU in 14 of the 67 grass, soil, water, sediment and animal faeces samples that were collected in 2006.

█████ suggested that the DUFERC action and investigation levels may be too low and the committee may want to raise those levels. █████ stated that we have investigation and action levels and they are set to trigger a response – this is precisely what is happening in this instance. However DUFERC set these levels at the time of firing so it is difficult to use these levels presentationally. Results like these are always possible and so the fencing off of contaminated areas remains a suitable action. █████ stated that he wants everything that goes into the environmental report to be of value as several copies are made of it and sent out to different people. We may need to look at the timescale of the production of the reports. We could ask DSTL to give us the 2007 report as soon as possible.

██████████ stated that we need to decide on a target time for getting results following the sample collection.

New Action 49.8 - [REDACTED] to put together a draft statement on what we are going to do about the issues that have been brought up in the DUFERC and [REDACTED] to circulate the statement to DUFERC members.

6. Kirkcudbright Report

- S 26 - Defence

4. 8th April 2008

Russell Brown MP (Dumfries & Galloway) visited Kirkcudbright Training Centre.

██████████
Commandant
Kirkcudbright Training Centre

Date: 14 May 2008

7. **Eskmeals Report**

██████████ presented the report.

The Challenger work is complete with the exception of the disposal of the ammunition. This is still in the process of being dealt with. The Challenger ammunition is to be collected by AWE in the near future but ammunition recovered from the Scimitar has not yet been allocated a disposal route. Both sets of ammunition remain MoD property but QinetiQ is storing them on the MoD Eskmeals site.

As the Challenger project has now closed the Rubb building is currently redundant although there are plans to use the building as a waste process building in support of the initiative to clear the VJ controlled area of contaminated trials equipment.

8. **DSTL Report**

██████████ Reported

A veteran had a urine test carried out by Harwell and enriched uranium was found in it. Another sample has been taken from him and we are waiting for the result to come back. It would appear from investigation that the first sample was taken in the wrong laboratory and it is considered likely that cross-contamination has occurred. It may be that in future blank control samples should be included in the samples sent to Harwell and if they come back with positive result again then this would infer cross-contamination is occurring.

There has been another report by the NERC. They have discovered that fungi can do interesting things to uranium. The end result appears to be that the fungi can be used as part of the remediation process.

From Balig to The Dun Rod Burn some sequential monitoring has taken place and they have found a plume of low level DU running through the area. The report is part of the MoD funded research programme into the way DU behaves and it is a public document. The programme is nearly finished. The report will be pulled together and a complete report will be put together by NERC.

New Action 49.9 - ██████████ will ask if it is possible for DUFERC members to see all the following reports:-

- a) Corrosion of DU in Marine Environment
- b) Corrosion of DU on Land at Eskmeals and Kirkcudbright
- c) Finalised NERC Summary Report.

██████████ stated that a valuable document from the French government has been produced on urine samples of the troops.

National Academy – The Capstone Reports have been reviewed.

There were parliamentary questions on gun barrels, health effects in Iraq, environment in Kirkcudbright. We have had challenges on our standard letters.

DU counterbalance weights (possible originating from aircraft) have turned up in Luxembourg. Although they were originally thought to be of British origin this is now known not to be the case

Items of DU continue to appear in recycling facilities.

Parliamentary questions concerning DU cross many different spheres and so it probably defaults to the DUFERC to find someone who can answer them. [REDACTED] has become a subject expert by default. There is no succession plan as there is no money. [REDACTED] stated that we are unsure of who has the interest in maintaining the scientific point of contact.

New Action 49.10 - [REDACTED] stated that he will write to the MoD. He will also write to DS&C to ask about the funding of scientific expert advice on DU or other investing for the future.

9. Any other Business

[REDACTED] has obtained film footage of a projectile leaving the barrel which indicates that burning can occur at the back end of the projectile. [REDACTED] showed the film to the DUFERC members at the meeting.

There were no other issues to report.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 10:30 hrs on Wednesday 24th September at the Officers Mess MoD Netheravon.