

Minutes of the 54th Depleted Uranium Firing Environmental Review Committee (DUFERC) Meeting held at QinetiQ Eskmeals on the 26th January 2010

Present:

M. P. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (BIV)
[REDACTED] (M)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

A4-Continued

MEAD

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[REDACTED]

Director, Economics Capability Manager (Chairman)

MOD TEST Team

MOD DE

Dstl Environmental Sciences Department Principal Scientist

SO2 RAD (CESOA)

MOD Commandant KTA

MOD DE

MOD DE

SDS Project Manager

REJECT MARK

DSTL Environmental Sciences Health Physicist

Apologies:

[REDACTED]

Deputy Radiation Advisor

MOD DE

1. Introduction

██████████ welcomed the committee to QinetiQ Farnborough for the 54th meeting of the DUFERC.

2. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising

The distribution list at the end of the minutes should have read [REDACTED] MoD Directorate of Safety and Claims SSD&C rather than [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] has taken over from [REDACTED] before. Apologies to [REDACTED]

The rest of the minutes of the 53rd DUFERC Meeting were approved by the committee.

3. Actions

Action 52.1 - [REDACTED] to draft a paper for the next meeting for members to review giving details of the findings of the review of the trial file.

inherited this action from [REDACTED] and tasked his delivery manager, [REDACTED] to review the trial file. The impression given to the committee previously was that the trial file held all of the information necessary to replicate the trial. However the wider DU aspects were not present. This is largely because the file covered only the firing aspects of the trial, other specialised inputs were fed into the trial by both the Radiation Protection Supervisor and DUFERC and not seen as relevant. It was agreed in the previous meeting that this "Health Physics" information was therefore vulnerable and should be recorded. [REDACTED] asked that this action was closed and the capture of the missing information be addressed in action 52., the committee agreed

Action Complete

Action 52.2 – [REDACTED] to bring a draft standing order (SO) to the next meeting which will be extended to include timeline.

During the previous meeting (DUFERC 53) [REDACTED] was given the action of capturing the unique information required to carry out a trial involving the use of depleted uranium (DU). The key point in this action is that DU firings are essentially different from conventional firing as they involve radioactive materials. Thus meaning that there will be additional statutory and political responsibilities placed onto stakeholders in the trial process. The additional problem with capturing and retaining a methodology for Depleted Uranium (DU) firings is that they are very infrequent and as trial files are not retained indefinitely all of the specialist knowledge lay with individuals. 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 QQ could lose the expertise necessary to carry out a DU firing. It is therefore important for business continuity reasons to centralise this information in a straight forward way to assist in the planning of future trials involving DU.

[REDACTED] reported to the committee that his team had now produced a power-point presentation that he felt was a suitable aid to future trial planners. He submitted the presentation to the committee who were actioned with reviewing the content and commenting at the next DUFERC meeting.

[REDACTED] added that reference to where this information is held will need to be included into the Eskmeals standing orders. Once the format is agreed he will ensure that this is done.

Action ongoing

New Action 54.1 – [REDACTED] to circulate the presentation with the DUFERC minutes.

New Action 54.2- All to review the Eskmeals presentation and comment at the next meeting.

Action 53.1 – [REDACTED] to produce a 'Management and Remediation' plan.

[REDACTED] reported that he had produced an initial draft and that he had sent a copy to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] but has not yet received any comment.

The issue of KTA and Defence Estates (DE) managing a supervised contamination area without suitable expertise gave rise to some discussion. It was felt by the committee that although supervised areas at KTA are managed well, this is largely due to local knowledge therefore there is a need for a written management plan held at a local level and a formal strategy for remediation or control held by DE as the owner of the site.

[REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] local management plan will go some way to handling the local presentational issues by describing the current controls and laying out some form of contingency plan for foreseeable incidents but he advised that DE should have a closer involvement.

[REDACTED] pointed out that DE as the landlord of a contaminated site should also appoint an RPA to oversee the arrangements. This would not put a full time presence on the ground but would at least give the manager of the area a point of contact in the event of an incident or enquiry from a regulatory body.

[REDACTED] stated that he felt sure that DSTL were appointed as the RPA for KTA as they were the RPA for the Army as a whole however he would look into this and obtain assurance that this was the case.

[REDACTED] stated that he believed DE used RPAs for specific projects but he did not think they had a retained appointed RPA.

[REDACTED] suggest that as DSTL are an RPA body and are currently employed by the Army to carry out the KTA DU Environmental Surveys until at least 2015 so it might make sense for DE to contract the RPA support to them.

Action Ongoing

New Action 54.3 – [REDACTED] to clarify who is the Army RPA for KTA

New Action 54.4 – [redacted] to set up the occasional contract with an RPA.

Action 53.2 – [redacted] to discuss with [redacted] the replacement of a suitable contamination survey instrument.

[redacted] gave the background to this action:-

Historically the Eskmeals and Kirkcudbright ranges were both operated by MoD DERA, as Eskmeals has the expertise in DU it had always given Kirkcudbright health physics support with its DU firings. Consequently when Kirkcudbright ceased being part of DERA their health physics equipment was passed to Eskmeals. However as both organisations were still, at that time MoD there remained an understanding that some support would remain in place. This relationship has been continued although Eskmeals is now under private ownership (QinetiQ) due to the unique relationship that QinetiQ has with MoD regarding DU.

[redacted] stated that currently this support simply amounts to the loan of a suitable contamination monitor. Eskmeals has now replaced the KTA instrument that was due calibration with a recently calibrated unit

Action Complete

Action 53.3 – [redacted] to write a letter to [redacted] at the Scottish Environmental Group.

[redacted] has spoken to Elizabeth Grey. She appreciated the consultation and is happy to leave monitoring for 2 years

Action Complete

Action 53.4 – [redacted] to put timelines against future actions.

Action Complete

4. VJ Future – Possibility of Phase 2 Decommissioning

[redacted] reported- Currently QinetiQ is contracted to manage Phase 1 of the decommissioning. However this is now nearing completion and the contaminated arrisings from this activity are awaiting either disposal to the Low Level Radioactive Waste Repository at Drigg for the compactable waste or recycling by smelting for the metal.

He went on to ask when will work on Phase 2 start. He went on to state that in his opinion, based on experience that there is likely to be much more DU contamination present in the butts and surrounding contaminated land therefore it is important to have a clear strategy for either disposing of it in the short term or managing the legacy should further decommissioning be put on hold.

[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 structure.

[redacted] said that this assessment would be initiated by TEST and took an action to discuss the matter with [redacted]

[redacted] suggested that one theoretical way to gauge the gross activity would be to cross reference the records of the number of rounds fired against the total activity sent to LLW. If the latter is taken from the former this should give an indication of the activity deposited since records began in 1980. This was agreed and [redacted] took an action to obtain these figures for the next DUFERC meeting.

New Action 54.5 – [REDACTED] to give a statement of what tonnage of DU has been fired from VJ Battery.

New Action 54.6 – [REDACTED] to approach [REDACTED] and request a timeline on when the assessment of activity within VJ may take place.

5. LLW Waste Inventory

[REDACTED] reported that he had been involved in a dialogue between QinetiQ (RW) and TEST [REDACTED] concerning requests from MoD (through their contractors) for information concerning LLW generation. He confirmed that Eskmeal should release any historic and current information but as QQ would not be able to make any forecast for future waste arrisings because this was a TEST remit. [REDACTED] took an action to release the current figures to the requesting body and to write to [REDACTED] stating that QQ were not able to produce a forecast of LLW arrisings as QQ are not party to the decommissioning plans. [REDACTED] took an action to pass on a statement from QQ to TEST concerning its inability to forecast future arrisings

New Action 54.7 [REDACTED] to release the figures for LLW up to VJ 2010

New Action 54.8 [REDACTED] to receive and pass on the QQ statement regarding future arrisings to MoD

6. Eskmeals Report (Review of VJ Sampling Programme)

[REDACTED] Reported that given that there is likely to be a significant period of time between the completion of VJ Phase 1 and the commencement of Phase 2 he has produced a plan for future monitoring. The document 'Overview of the VJ Task List' was handed out to DUFERC members. He added that, although this was produced to act as part of an interim management plan, numerous RPA reports have noted the inadequacy of the monitoring programme.

[REDACTED] pointed out that this review was important because the workload would dictate the staffing level and that as the support staff for VJ controlled area are currently paid for by the phase 1 project the ending of the project could lead to the staffing numbers being reduced to a level that is unable to manage the controlled area

New Action 54.9 – All to review the proposal and comment at the next meeting.

7. DUFERC ToR Review

For the benefit of the non DUFERC members of the meeting [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] gave a brief history of DUFERC and an overview of its functions

The committee proceeded to review the existing terms of reference. [REDACTED] stated that the issues around DU are much wider than the existing ToR and it was agreed that QinetiQ, the Army and TEST feel that this meeting is useful and needs to maintain membership. [REDACTED] stated that the DUFERC had a limited aim i.e. the environmental aim and this is what is encapsulated in this ToR. It was a consensus of the committee that the wording of the ToR needed to be updated and [REDACTED] took an action to re write a daft based on the recommendations made by the committee and put before the next meeting.

Additionally there was some discussion about why the chair of the committee was QinetiQ and it was decided to invite [REDACTED] of SSD&C to take the chair of the DUFERC [REDACTED] took an action to raise the matter with him

New Action 54.10 – [REDACTED] to update the DUFERC ToR.

New Action 54.11 – [redacted] to ask [redacted] if he would like to chair the meeting and to discuss the DUFERC ToR.

8. Kirkcudbright Report

No firings and no sampling, therefore nothing to report. The contract is being rendered.

9. Dstl Report

SofS received a letter concerning a Coroner's verdict that DU was more likely than not to be a factor in a Gulf veteran's death and learned the Coroner had decided not to give the jury a Dstl report on MOD's view. SofS found the verdict very surprising and apparently entirely dependant on speculation as opposed to mainstream peer-reviewed expert evidence. Health studies confirm Gulf veterans do not suffer an excess of mortality compared to personnel that did not deploy and so there is no reason for MOD going further than it already does in relation to the use of DU munitions. Similar replies were sent to NHS, US Army and DOD colleagues.

Other Ministerial correspondence covered DU safety instructions during Op Granby, allegations about flaws in MOD's view on DU munitions risks and the MOD and Medical Assessment Programme policy on DU monitoring. An FOI enquiry on "movement of radioactive materials for military purposes in Scotland" referred to "plutonium and DU shells" but this was deleted to avoid disproportionate cost. To date, there is no indication that DU issues will be considered by the Iraq Inquiry.

There was a UN resolution on the prohibition of dumping radioactive waste that could be an attempt to influence the use of DU munitions and an EU enquiry for information to assist in a DU munitions study. In a BBC interview, Professor Wesley of the Centre for Military Health Research said he did not think DU was playing a major or indeed any role in the so-called Gulf War illness, or Gulf War syndromes.

Dstl drafted a revised DU munitions section for the MOD web site. The aim is for a more holistic and concise "front page" with links to key MOD reports and more detailed information on specific topics.

A US paper suggested DU exposure might be a factor in prostate cancer in military personnel. INM state the paper demonstrates a rising trend in prostate cancer in US Civilian and military populations but there is no need to invoke a solely military cause and the DU reference is completely spurious. There is an issue on how to respond to peer-reviewed studies in obscure or very low impact journals as MOD has made some statements on the need for and reliability of peer-reviewed as opposed to other types of work. NER is preparing a report on their DU research and SG is updating his Policy Letter on DU monitoring and the handling of casualties.

10. DUFERC Investigation and Action Levels

2008 KTA Environmental Survey was led by [redacted] of DSTL ES who is now the author of the KTA and Eskmeals Environmental reports. In the 2008 report there are 2 samples above the action level.

[redacted] stated that with reference to the 2008 KTA Environmental Report he would like clarification from DSTL regarding the action that needs to be taken. The recommendation was that a "walk over" survey was required but he was not entirely clear what a walk over survey entailed or who should carry it out

explained that a walk over survey would mean using a suitable hand held contamination instrument to monitor the area surrounding the survey.

then raised the question of what to do if the survey was to reveal contamination.

There followed some discussion on this point and it was decided that at this time the precedent is set by the current management of the known contamination hot spots at Raeberry and India Target. That is to leave the contaminated material in situ and mark any areas of contamination with a stake. If necessary the area is to be fenced off and warning signage posted. suggested that samples that exceeded the action level should to be dealt with in accordance with the site standing orders. He added- If contamination is found and it is not in a fenced area it should be dealt within site orders. The committee agreed that such an occurrence and following actions should be addressed in the management plan (see Action 53.1).

then asked who should carry out this work and it was agreed that, as the KTA staff had access to a suitable instrument that they could carry out the work.

stated that the need for action was the result of having investigation levels set on the cautious side and that it might be worth considering reviewing the investigation and action levels. stated that last year DUFERC had reviewed the levels and decided to leave the levels were they are and this may not be a good time to change them.

New Action 54.11 - to discuss with his senior management the new Management Plan which will include the action to carry out contamination surveys.

New Action 54.12- to re-draft paragraph 1 of the 'Depleted Uranium Survey Report: Kirkcudbright Training Area 2008, Part 1 'Terrestrial Environment' dated 30th November 2009.

11. Any other Business

stated that to date it had been within the sampling protocol for the Environmental Sampling Program to take 6 samples from each point. He suggested that this should be reduced to 3. This was accepted by the committee.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 10:00 hrs on Wednesday 12th May 2010 at Netheravon.

Distribution: All present+

[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.
May 2010

Action 54.1- [REDACTED] to circulate [REDACTED] presentation with DUFERC 54. minutes
April 2010

Action 54.2- All members to review [REDACTED] presentation and comment at the next meeting.
May 2010

Action 53.1 - [REDACTED] to produce a 'Management and Remediation Plan' for the DU contaminated areas at KTA. Present for discussion at the next meeting
May 2010

Action 54.3 - [REDACTED] to clarify who is the Army RPA for KTA
April 2010

Action 54.4- [REDACTED] to set up the occasional contract.
May 2010

Action 54.5 - [REDACTED] to give a statement of what has been fired from VJ Battery.
May 2010

Action 54.6 - [REDACTED] to approach [REDACTED] and request a timeline on when the assessment of activity will take place.
April 2010

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 arrivals
April 2010

Action 54.8- [REDACTED] to receive and pass on QQ statement regarding LLW to MoD contractor
May 2010

Action 54.9- All to review RW proposal for future monitoring at VJ and bring comments to the next meeting.
May 2010

Action 54.10- [REDACTED] to update DUFERC ToR and circulate for discussion at the next meeting.
March 2010

Action 54.11- [REDACTED] to approach [REDACTED] SSD&C regarding Chairmanship and ToR of DUFERC
Feb 2010

Action 54.12 - [REDACTED] to discuss with his senior management the new Management Plan which will include the action to carry out contamination surveys.
April 2010

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