

**Minutes of the Twenty First Meeting of the
Depleted Uranium Firing Environmental Review Committee
held at [REDACTED] on Thursday 27 January 2000**

Present

[REDACTED]	DERA Boscombe (Chairman)
[REDACTED]	DERA Eskmeals (Secretary)
[REDACTED]	DRPS
[REDACTED]	Bae/Royal Ordnance
[REDACTED]	DERA Eskmeals
[REDACTED]	DRPS
[REDACTED]	MoD Abbey Wood
[REDACTED]	DERA Eskmeals
[REDACTED]	DERA Boscombe
[REDACTED]	Kirkcudbright Training Area
[REDACTED]	DRPS

The Chairman welcomed Group Captain [REDACTED] who acts as the DERA T&E Ranges/Armed Forces interface, to the meeting.

Item 1: Apologies for Absence

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

Item 2: Minutes of the 20th Meeting

2. Minute 3.d) on page 2: **amend** the reference to the Firemaster at Kirkcudbright to read the Dumfries and Galloway Firemaster.
3. Minute 15 on page 7: **delete** the last sentence, *Barrels which 'failed'...*
4. Subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 1999 were approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Item 3: Matters Arising

5. Actions from the 20th and previous meeting were discussed:
 - a) Action 20/1. Analysis of the latest environmental samples from Kirkcudbright and preparation of the report will be complete shortly. The action to check for possible cross-contamination pathways at the Eskmeals and DRPS ends of the environmental sampling chain is one of continual review. Action **complete**.

- [REDACTED]
- b) [REDACTED] noted that there appeared to be a discrepancy in the numbers of samples from Eskmeals that were expected and received.

Action 21/1: [REDACTED] to liaise with DRPS to try and resolve the apparent problem.

- c) Regarding the anomalous results from Mullock Farm, there had been a suggestion that spoil from previous ground strikes had been 'dumped' in the area. [REDACTED] said that this might have been done, but it would certainly not have included material from any DU strikes.
- d) Action 20/2. The Eskmeals Site Operating Plan is being revised and will be published very soon. Action **continuing**.
- e) Action 19/3. [REDACTED] had spoken to [REDACTED] regarding Terms of Reference for staff at Eskmeals but these still require confirmation after recent staff changes. Action **continuing**.
- f) Action 19/4. The assessment of a possible injection dose from a recovered DU projectile (e.g. via a cut) has been complete and will be circulated with the minutes. Action **complete**.
- g) Action 20/3. [REDACTED], DEC(DBE), had been briefed by [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had discussed funding arrangements with DERA Centre and an outcome was expected soon. A proposal had been prepared and submitted to [REDACTED] Director Corporate Affairs. Actions **complete**.
- h) Action 20/4. Due to a number of uncertainties regarding work at Kirkcudbright, no further action on this item is required. Action **discontinued**.
- i) Action 19/5. Although the action to establish ownership of DU was completed at the last meeting, [REDACTED] was able to provide some additional information regarding liability. According to DG(Nuc), the current custodian is accountable for nuclear material held outside the Armed services. It therefore seems probable that DERA is accountable for the various quantities of DU in varying states held at locations within DERA.

Action 21/2: Eskmeals to review and collate the information on DU holdings within DERA. This is first to be discussed with Corporate Affairs to determine the full extent of the review.

- j) Action 19/6. See minute 5.g). Action **complete**.
- k) Action 20/5. [REDACTED] reported that there had still been no response from StarMet, despite numerous reminders to them. He said that he will be visiting the US shortly and may be able to visit StarMet to achieve a result. Action **continuing**.

- [REDACTED]
- l) Action 20/6. [REDACTED] commented that if DU used in manufacture of rounds was contaminated with small quantities of fission products with short half-lives, this may not particularly be a problem, but that gross contamination was. A rough 'worst case' estimate had been prepared and it had been concluded that, from the available information, the quantities of contaminants were so low as to be insignificant. The results will be circulated with the minutes. It was suggested that a summary be provided to customers, regulators, and other interested parties, and that assessments on some material coming in to ROSM should be carried out as a QA check. The cost would be, very roughly, £200 per sample. It was noted that CBD Porton can carry out mass spectrometry. Action **complete**.

Action 21/3: [REDACTED] will continue to press StarMet. [REDACTED] will investigate analysis methodology and liaise with [REDACTED] to arrange for the collection of a sample and carry out the analysis in the event that no information is forthcoming from StarMet.

- m) Action 19/9. [REDACTED] visit to the UK later this year will now be a 'personal' one, although he may take the opportunity to visit various people. Action **closed**.
- n) Action 20/7. [REDACTED] informed the Committee that the use of Luce Bay as a site for the underwater DU garden was no longer possible, owing to public and regulatory interest in other matters at that site. The site will now probably be established in the Solway Firth. Action **discontinued**.
- o) Action 19/11. There had been no further progress on the use of computer modelling of DU round impacts using Hydrocode due to a lack of resources and the intervention of higher priority work. Action **discontinued**.
- p) Minute 7. It was agreed that if there were no response from [REDACTED] regarding the alleged DU mooring blocks in Kirkcudbright Harbour no action would be taken.
- q) Action 20/8. Liaison with HQ Scotland had now been taken over by [REDACTED]. The contingency plan to deal with DU enquiries that had been prepared by [REDACTED] and submitted to them had been approved in principle. Action **complete**.
- r) Minute 18. BBC TV had visited Eskmeals in connection with their proposed programme 'Close-Up North' on DU. They were given full briefing and allowed to film VJ Battery and surrounding areas. This resulted in a 30-second insert of Eskmeals in the [regional] TV programme, *Radioactive Service*. The programme highlighted the extent of care taken to monitor the effects of DU at Eskmeals. An off-air copy of the programme is available from Eskmeals [REDACTED] on request.

[REDACTED]

Item 4: DU Corrosion 'Gardens'

6. [REDACTED] reported that she had been encountering difficulties in finding a suitable method of removing the corrosion products from DU pellets without attacking the DU metal as well. Various suggestions had been received and trial and error tests were under way, but they are time consuming and, to date, had been inconclusive. She therefore proposed that no further samples should be recovered until a suitable method had been found. The samples already recovered would be used for experimentation.
7. Regarding the marine garden, Luce Bay was no longer a viable option; consideration was now being diverted back to Kirkcudbright. One problem concerned the placing and recovery of the samples. The Fleet Diving Commander was worried about the question of liability, i.e. carrying out work without military authority. [REDACTED] said that he would see if he could make contact and deal with this difficulty. Work on manufacturing the 'cage' at Eskmeals was progressing.
8. [REDACTED] raised the question of public relations. It was agreed that before proceeding but after the details had been confirmed, information should be made available to the SEPA, Dumfries & Galloway Council and the Coastguard.
9. The cost of this work would, unavoidably, continue to be charged to Eskmeals, until a separate charge code was created as part of the overall funding arrangements.

Action 21/4: [REDACTED] to check that separate account for DU expenditure is being created.

Item 5: Kirkcudbright Update

10. [REDACTED] reported that there had been no major activities. There was a great deal of continued interest from regulators, MPs and others. A meeting had been held with the SEPA on 29 November 1999, following which a '7-point plan' had been outlined in a letter from them.
11. SEPA had agreed with DERA's proposal that training of various agencies such as the Fire Brigade should be carried out and should include reference to other rounds, e.g. explosive. [REDACTED] made the offer that a presentation was already available from DRPS, which could probably be tailored to meet the need.

Action 21/5: [REDACTED] to discuss training/informational material with [REDACTED]

12. Planning had gone ahead for a trial to investigate possibility of using a soft-banded projectile to 'clean' contaminated barrels. The work was to be carried out at Kirkcudbright during week commencing 29 February 2000. The health hazard was estimated as minimal, and there would be an update at the next meeting.

[REDACTED]

Item 6: Kirkcudbright - Future Monitoring and Management

13. [REDACTED] referred to the increasing pressure for one or another of the parties involved to take responsibility for an increased programme of sampling and analysis at Kirkcudbright. This had been the subject of correspondence between [REDACTED] and HQ Scotland.
14. Owing to the way the DERA trading fund had been designed to operate, DERA could not undertake additional work without customer funding. There was no provision for legacy issues pre-dating the formation of the Agency on 1 April 1995. The situation was compounded by the fact that approximately 87% of the DU firings at Kirkcudbright had been carried out under the auspices of the MoD, and 83% of the ground strikes had occurred in that period. In addition, the land at Kirkcudbright had not been vested in DERA on 1 April 1995.
15. These legacy issues could only be resolved by high-level debate between DERA and the MoD, and not within the confines of the DUFERC. Meanwhile, the DUFERC would continue to take action to manage the impact of current arisings.
16. [REDACTED] queried whether previous attempts had been made to obtain support from MoD. [REDACTED] replied that a meeting at DPA Abbey Wood had been held in May 1998 to discuss the provision of resources for investigational work, but no agreement had been reached on funding. Equally, to date there had been no success in appealing to DERA Centre for support for investigational work. T&E Ranges Sector currently provided limited funding from its overheads for the work now being done.
17. DOR(Land) [now DEC(DBE)] was sympathetic toward the need but had not, so far, been able to assist. [REDACTED] who worked for DUS(S&T), had been briefed by [REDACTED] and was taking an interest in DU affairs, prompted by a televised interview on the subject of DU and also attention from the Secretary of State.
18. [REDACTED] pointed out that, although Eskmeals had or could obtain the necessary instrumentation to carry out surveys at Kirkcudbright, there was insufficient manpower available without diverting resources.
19. [REDACTED] recommended that there was a need to pursue this subject vigorously and suggested that other channels be investigated, including further contact with [REDACTED] to see if he has any continuing interest. [REDACTED] also suggested [REDACTED] as another possible contact.

[REDACTED]

Action 21/6: [REDACTED] to consider a second approach to [REDACTED] DEC(DBE), depending on the outcome of negotiations with DERA Centre.

[REDACTED]

Item 7: Any Other Business

20. [REDACTED] noted that the new Ionising Radiations Regulations (IRR99) had now been published and took effect on 1 January 2000. These Regulations reduced public dose limits and there was therefore a need to revise our dose estimates.
21. [REDACTED] noted that the Gulf Veterans Information Unit had prepared additional public briefing material and had consulted with Eskmeals before publishing it.
22. [REDACTED] noted that the Royal Society was carrying out investigations into the effects of DU. [REDACTED] of DRPS had been involved in this at their invitation.
23. [REDACTED] noted that the Committee's ToR were due for review. A copy would be circulated with the minutes for comment at the next meeting.
24. A letter had been received from [REDACTED] drawing attention to the possibility that rules governing firing into the sea may be revised in the next few years.

Item 8: Date of Next Meeting

25. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at [REDACTED] commencing at 0930 on Thursday 18 May 2000.

Post-Meeting Note: The location has since been revised. The meeting will now be held at [REDACTED] and include a tour of the relevant areas.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed at 1200.