



Veterans Policy Unit
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
 Zone H, Floor 7, Main Building,
 Whitehall,
 London, SW1A 2HB

Telephone Direct dial 020 7218 7488
 Helpline 0800 169 4495
 Fax 020 7305 4166

Our Reference:
 D/VPU/05.10.09.02.04
 Date: 12 July 2005

[DRAFT APPROVED BY PROFESSOR COGGON]

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH DEPLETED URANIUM OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING
ON 27 JUNE 2005

Present:			
Board:	Professor David Coggon Surg Cdre Nick Baldock Dr Chris Busby Dr Gordon Paterson Dr David Lewis Professor Ian Gilmore Maj Gen (Retd.) R P Craig Mr Ivor Connolly Professor Malcolm Hooper Dr Margaret Spittle Professor Brian Spratt Dr Derek Hall	MRC RN LLRC BRC INM RCP RBL NGV&FA GVA MRC IEH RS NGV&FA	Chair
Observers:	Dr Kath Wright Dr Chris Morgan Wg Cdr John Aitken	VPU VPU DD/DU DMSD	Secretary
Apologies:	Dr Len Levy Dr Gideon Henderson Dr George Etherington Mr Ron Brown Mr Charles Williams	MH Oxford University NRPB DRPS VPU	Project Manager

Item	Discussion and decisions	Action by
1.	<p><u>Introductions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Chairman gave apologies as indicated. ii. He noted that this was the first meeting of the Board since the sad death of Frances Fry and he recorded his appreciation of Ms Fry's contribution to the Board. Professor Coggon also announced that Dr Muir Gray had decided to resign from the Board due to increasing commitments in other areas. Professor Coggon thanked Dr Gray for his important contributions to the work of the Board and congratulated him on his recently awarded Knighthood. 	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Chairman drew attention to a typographical error in the final line of paragraph 3iii. 	
3.	<p><u>Matters arising</u></p> <p><u>Action 19.1: Dr Lewis to review lab “B” uncertainty paper and report back to Board</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Chairman reported that Dr Lewis' paper had been received but not circulated to the Board since it had only just reached the secretariat and was not yet finalised. Dr Lewis acknowledged that the review was a longstanding action, but said that there were still a number of points which required clarification. Professor Coggon suggested that it might be helpful to seek the views of Professor Henderson on these points. ii. In general, Dr Lewis considered the quality assurance arrangements for both labs to be reasonable for both isotope ratio and concentration measurements, although both labs had more confidence in their ratio values. Professor Coggon asked that any outstanding issues, which could not be resolved, be listed at the end of the paper, so that they could be taken up with the relevant lab. <p><u>Action 20.1: Dr Lewis to liaise with Dr Henderson before sending out a revised version of the report to the Board</u></p> <p><u>Action 19.2: Secretary to collect and file all press reports in order to check the level of coverage that had been achieved</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Secretary reported that the launch of the testing programme had only been reported in two national newspapers. Professor Coggon added that there had, however, been extensive publicity surrounding the launch, which had included an advertisement in The Sun, a press release, articles in the specialist press and an interview with Forces Radio. ii. Professor Coggon asked the Board if they felt that most veterans were aware of the testing programme. Dr Paterson suggested that there were specific subgroups, e.g. officers who had left the services and not become involved with veterans organisations, who might not be aware. Professor Coggon suggested that when the time came to close the testing programme, wide publication of the proposed end date might help to reach those individuals who were still unaware that testing was available. <p><u>Action 20.2: The secretariat to circulate copies of the newspaper articles reporting the launch of the testing programme to members of the Board</u></p> <p><u>Action 19.3: Project manager to seek contact details from Professor Hooper and the views of General Craig before approaching solicitors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Professor Coggon pointed out that the issue of archiving copies of test results and questionnaires with an independent third party had not yet been resolved. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that a nominated firm of solicitors be approached and contract arrangements be discussed. 	<p>Dr Lewis</p> <p>Secretariat</p>

	<p>each sample, and the values that the Project Manager had taken as the standard against which to compare the Lab A measurements were the most recent. He had, however, written to the source lab to check that this was the most appropriate comparator to use.</p> <p>ii. Unfortunately, there had been a hitch in communications, and it was some weeks before he had heard back. It was the view of the lab which produced the spiked samples that the most reliable index of isotope ratio for the samples was that calculated from the known amount of DU that was added to each. Upon re-examination of the data, the measured ratios were consistent with these predicted values. On this basis, a temporary moratorium on the reporting of results had been lifted.</p> <p>iii. Dr Busby asked whether the analytical labs had been made aware which of the samples were spiked. Professor Coggon replied that care had been taken not to alert the labs to the presence of spiked samples. To date, spiked samples had only been analysed by Lab A. Lab B had been asked to analyse a batch of 30 samples (including the first 5 spiked samples) as a priority, but the results were still awaited.</p> <p><u>Action 20.5: Professor Coggon agreed to seek Dr Henderson's views on whether gravimetrically predicted isotope ratios would be the best standard for all spiked samples</u></p> <p>iv. Dr Busby asked if, in light of these issues, all samples should be tested in duplicate. Professor Coggon reminded Dr Busby that Lab B did not have the capacity to analyse every sample but that 50% of all samples would be doubly analysed as a matter of course, including all that showed an anomalous value.</p> <p>v. Professor Coggon thanked Professor Spratt for taking the decision to halt the reporting of results during his absence. He added that since resolution of the issue, the sending out of results letters by the health administrator had been resumed. However, the criteria for referring results to the Board before they were reported had been revised.</p> <p>vi. Dr Busby that where, in the first set of results, the level of uranium was very low, there was some indication of exposure to enriched uranium, and he felt that there might be value in undertaking a statistical analysis to investigate this further.</p> <p><u>Action 20.6: Prof Coggon agreed to undertake a statistical analysis of the results.</u></p> <p><u>b) Issue of Results Letters</u></p> <p>i. Professor Coggon explained that where samples had shown higher than normal uranium excretion, this had been referred to the DUOB subgroup for advice before sending out an appropriate results letter. The results letters to these individuals had been modified, giving the likely causes and health implications of the high excretion.</p> <p>ii. Professor Coggon also relayed to the Board that he had received a query about testing for chromosomal aberrations, to which he had replied that such tests were less useful as an index of exposure to DU because chromosomal aberrations were not specific to DU exposure. This led to a discussion about the appropriateness of such tests. Dr Patterson indicated that he was content with Professor Coggon's handling of the matter.</p> <p>iii. Professor Hooper pointed out that some of the results were being quoted to 3 significant figures and requested that this be amended to 2 significant figures.</p> <p><u>c) Release to Website</u></p> <p>i. Professor Coggon raised the issue of publicly reporting a summary the results to date, and suggested that a report of the first set of 109 samples analysed in duplicate might be produced. He offered to draft a paper, but asked whether it should wait until Lab B had reported analyses of some spiked samples. The general consensus of the Board was to wait for some results from spiked samples before issuing a report. There was then a debate about whether raw data should be reported. It was felt that there were ethical / confidentiality issues to be considered which would make the release of raw data inappropriate. However, it was agreed that some form of numerical/graphical summary of the data would be of value.</p>	<p>Prof Coggon</p> <p>Prof Coggon</p>
6.	<u>Presentation by Professor Dudley Goodhead (Chairman of the CERRIE</u>	

	<p><u>Committee)</u></p> <p>i. Professor Coggon welcomed Professor Goodhead who kindly gave the Board a short presentation on the work of the CERRIE committee before leading the Board's continuing discussion of Dr Etherington's paper "Information for Veterans and their Medical Advisors".</p> <p><u>Action 20.7: Professor Coggon agreed to feedback the outcome of the discussion to Dr Etherington.</u></p> <p>ii. At the end of the discussion, Professor Coggon thanked Professor Goodhead, on behalf of the Board, for his participation in the debate.</p>	Prof Coggon
7.	<p><u>Scientific Background</u></p> <p>i. Dr Busby presented 2 papers he had written which had been accepted for publication in <i>The European Journal of Biology and Bioelectromagnetics</i>. The first was entitled "Local dose enhancement to cellular DNA from Uranium and other metals of high atomic number with DNA affinity through photoelectric effect conversion of incident natural background gamma and X-ray fields with some remarks on the possible consequences for the spectrum of health consequences of exposure" and the second, "Depleted Uranium weapons, metal particles and radiation dose. Considerations of radiation exposure in tissue containing small dense particles of chemical elements of high atomic number as a consequence of secondary radiation fields resulting from scattering and photoelectron excitation".</p> <p>ii. Dr Busby's papers prompted some questions from Board members, and the Chairman thanked Dr Busby for taking the time to discuss his work with the Board.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Future Planning</u></p> <p>i. Professor Coggon introduced this item by stating that since the rate of applications had decreased to around 1-2 per month it was becoming inefficient to maintain the testing programme in its current form. He therefore proposed to write to the new Minister for Veterans (Mr Don Touhig MP) giving an update on the testing programme, and proposing options for its future, including closure. He added that it would be very important to ensure that any announcement of closure received an appropriate level of publicity in both the national and specialist press. The DUOB would also need to release a press statement which could refer to results publicised on its website. Mr Connolly suggested that the test should be re-advertised before setting a closing date in order to ensure that interested parties were fully aware of the test. Professor Coggon replied that a well advertised advance notice of closure would serve to publicise it further and would be likely to result in an upturn in applications. If more application than expected were received as a consequence of this action, it might be appropriate to defer the closing date. Dr Paterson commented that the current contracts were due to expire in November. Professor Coggon replied that it was likely that most contracts would require extension anyway.</p> <p>ii. Professor Hooper suggested that the Board should send a letter explaining any proposed closure of the programme to all interested parties. However, this was felt to be unfeasible. Mr Connolly added that while there were a large number of Gulf Veterans who would like to be tested, they did not trust the DUOB as a result of its links with the MOD. However, both he and Dr Hall would pass news of the possibility of closure to their respective organisations.</p> <p><u>Action 20.8: The Chairman agreed to prepare a draft letter to the Minister detailing these issues, which would be circulated to the Board for comment before submission.</u></p>	Prof Coggon
9.	<p><u>Institute of Occupational Medicine Draft Report</u></p> <p>i. Professor Coggon began by stating that he considered the report, which compared measurements of uranium and isotope ratios in spot and 24 hour urine samples of urine from</p>	

	<p>a civilian population, to be of a high standard. Given the DUOB results to date, he suggested that there was no need to ask IOM to expand their study to assess background levels of DU excretion in a larger general population sample. Prof Coggon then invited the Board to comment on the paper, either during the meeting or by email. Any comments would be fed back to IOM with advice that a larger study would not be required at present.</p> <p><u>Action 20.9: The secretariat would feed back comments and report on the need for future studies to IOM.</u></p> <p>ii. Dr Busby enquired as to when the Op Telic DU-sub study, being conducted out by Professor Wessely, was expected to report. Dr Morgan replied that results were expected in late August.</p>	Secretariat
10.	<p><u>Any Other Business:</u></p> <p>i. Professor Hooper asked if the Board intended to examine data on the effects of radiation pollution on Iraqi civilians. He referred to a report which was quoted in response to a parliamentary question tabled by the Countess of Mar in 1996 which suggested that there could be 500,000 cases of cancer in Southern Iraq over the next 10 years and asked if that paper could be made available to the Board. The Chairman stated that if members had any papers which they thought would be of interest to the Board, they should send them to the secretary who would arrange for their circulation.</p> <p><u>Action: Secretariat to locate paper and to circulate to the Board.</u></p> <p>ii. Wg Cdr Aitken pointed out that the post of D Med Pol was currently gapped but that a successor was expected by the next meeting. He also added that by that time he would have retired. The Chairman thanked him for his contribution to the Board and wished him well for his retirement.</p>	Secretariat
11.	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting:</u></p> <p>i. The Chair suggested that the Board wait until the results of the spiked samples were received before setting the date on the next meeting but suggested late September/October. A date would be confirmed in due course.</p>	

Distribution:

All members

All observers