

K149-4  
21 JAN. 1958

COPY NO. 21

MINUTES OF SEVENTH MEETING OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT -  
ATOMIC WEAPONS TESTS HELD AT 339 SWANSTON STREET,  
MELBOURNE, ON TUESDAY, 21st JANUARY, 1958

PRESENT:

[Redacted names]

- Chairman
- Department of Supply
- Department of Navy
- Department of Army
- Department of Air
- U.K.J.S.L.S
- U.K.M.O.S.S.(A)
- Department of Supply
- Department of Defence
- U.K.M.O.S.S.(A)
- Secretary to Board

ABSENT:

[Redacted names]

- Department of Supply
- Department of Army

.....

The meeting opened at 10 a.m.

Apologies were received from [Redacted] and [Redacted].

Item 51 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Sixth Meeting held on 18th October, 1957, were confirmed.

Item 52 Matters arising from Minutes

Item 47 Maralinga - Requirement for Blood Counts

Members were informed that subsequent to the last Board meeting, discussions on blood counts at Maralinga had taken place between [Redacted] and [Redacted], and, as a result, the former undertook to raise the matter from a medico legal aspect upon his return to the U.K.

In a recent communication [Redacted] advised :-

" After consultation with our Medical and Health Physics Divisions I now wish to continue to press for blood counts. The reasons are substantially those I gave at the Board meeting. The U.K. has a responsibility under the Agreement with Australia for radiological safety at the Range. In the first instance we wish to exclude people with existing pathological conditions from the Range. In the second, we wish to be able to demonstrate that this has been done in any case in which a claim for damage is made. In order to reduce the amount of work to a minimum I withdraw my previous suggestion of classification of personnel based on time spent at the Range by the following :-

...../2

[Redacted signature]

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- [REDACTED]
- (a) Blood counts required before arrival on site :-

All members of Services .  
All scientific staff  
All other civilians who will be required to work in active areas.

- (b) Blood counts not required before arrival on site :-

Civilians whose duties do not require them to enter active areas.

In the case of civilians who enter the Range under (b) but are subsequently found to have a need to enter an active area a blood count would be required. Facilities should preferably exist for such examinations at Maralinga. In addition to blood counts, film badges would continue to be issued to all entrants to the Range.

I should be glad if you would raise this matter with the Board of Management. If it is agreed, we shall include a suitable paragraph in the Maralinga Safety Regulations."

The Chairman informed the Committee that [REDACTED] communication had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Safety Committee. The Committee unanimously accepted the proposal and expressed particular support for the continuation of the film badge monitoring.

Decision:

ACTION:  
Chief  
Executive  
Officer.  
Secretary.

- (a) [REDACTED] proposal be adopted in its entirety.  
(b) Chief Executive Officer to ensure that facilities exist at Maralinga for the carrying out of such examinations as may be necessary for civilians who, after arrival on site, are found to have a need to enter an active area.  
(c) Secretary to advise appropriate Commonwealth and State authorities of blood count requirement.

Item 53 Maralinga - Australian Component of Basic Force for Standby period 1958.

The Chairman said members would be aware of the present position from a study of the papers issued with the Agenda for the meeting. He suggested the Board should determine a constructive reply to the letter dated 19th December, 1957 from the Minister for Defence to the Minister for Supply.

The Board unanimously affirmed its view that the current staffing proposals represent the minimum needed to meet operating requirements at the Range.

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

The Naval representative stated that the R.A.N. was critically short of manpower and could not meet its full Maralinga commitment of 27 personnel beyond June, 1958. The most drastic cuts, particularly in shore establishments, had been made in an unsuccessful endeavour to meet Cabinet directives which demand, in numbers, more than the resources available. If the Maralinga requirement is to be met a major fleet unit will have to be paid off as the Maralinga R.A.N. component is all highly skilled and would drain the skilled element of the ships company.

Both the Army and R.A.A.F. representatives agreed in principle - subject to isolated variations in trades - that their respective Services could meet their commitments in the basic force for 1958, but emphasised that manpower difficulties in both Services prevented them from enlarging their contribution to compensate for any deficiencies in the R.A.N. component.

The possibility of recruiting civilian tradesmen to man the powerhouse and other utilities instead of the R.A.N. component was raised by the Army representative and the Chief Scientist. It was noted that the question of partly civilianising the operation of Range facilities had previously been discussed in all its aspects, and any extensions beyond the absolute minimum rejected for a number of practical reasons - not the least being the likely loss of vital control in key facilities.

[REDACTED] asked if the Army and R.A.A.F. could proceed immediately to implement their components of the new establishment and, if so, to discuss with him any individual alterations in the trades required which it was felt would be to the mutual advantage of the parties. This was agreed.

Decision:

- (a) That no reduction in the overall figure of 245 personnel (Aust. 97, U.K. 148) for the basic force could be entertained.
- (b) That owing to the inability of the Service representatives to give any undertaking that the 97 men required would be available, the Board was unable to give effect to the request made by the Minister for Defence in his letter of 19th December, 1957.
- (c) The Minister for Defence to be informed in terms of (b) above with the suggestion that the Defence Committee be asked to consider how the requirement should be met.

ACTION  
Secretary

Item 54      Seventh Progress Report - Maralinga Range Support Unit

The Range Commander's report was tabled at the meeting and a copy is attached to these minutes.  
Decision Progress noted.

Action  
Complete

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[REDACTED]

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Item 55     Maintenance - 1958 Maintenance and Works Programmes

[redacted] reported that the original Works Programme for 1958, which was based on a Trials series in September/October of that year, was reduced on revision, to approximately £A900,000. As a result of the more recent information that there is unlikely to be a Trials series until 1959, proposals for a further reduced programme totalling about £400,000 for completion during 1958 have been forwarded to the U.K. In addition, £A150,000 has been asked for for maintenance and minor new works. The figure of £A400,000 is intended to cover certain essential new construction, and the overhaul of the evaporator plant, all of which should be completed before the Range Support Unit starts building up for a future Trials series.

No information has yet been received from the U.K. regarding the money which will be made available this year.

ACTION  
Complete

Decision noted.

At the conclusion of general business the Chairman, on behalf of members, congratulated [redacted] on being awarded the Bertrand Stewart Prize for an essay on "How To Achieve Administrative Flexibility In A Nuclear War". In addition, the Secretary was asked to convey on behalf of Board members, sincere congratulations to Colonel Durand as the recipient of the Order of the British Empire.

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The meeting closed at 11.10 a.m.

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NEXT MEETING:     At the call of the Chairman.

Approved



Chairman



Secretary  
Board of Management - Atomic Weapons Tests

