

[REDACTED]

21 October 1991

PDR 15  
59

59

Members of Nuclear Weapon Safety Review Committee

NUCLEAR WEAPON ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE UK

27 July 1956

[REDACTED]

1973

"Vicinity of RNAD Coulport". Landrover reversed into truck carrying nuclear weapon. Classified as OLDHAM ONE at time (no damage to weapon). Public reports not known.

1974

HMS Tiger. Torpedo end dropped onto nuclear weapon, causing "slight scratching". Classified as OLDHAM ONE. Public reports not known.

1974

HMS Revenge. Diaphragm in missile tube compressed onto a weapon. Classified as OLDHAM ONE. Public reports not known.

\* 1974 or 75?

RAF Laarbruch. As part of normal procedure for a routine logistic flight, a weapon in its container was moved by crane between trolleys. The crane gear failed. The container hit the ground. Damage not known. Believe that part of UK-based HCMF was called out. No known press reports.

\* 1974

Cyprus. RAF base Akrotiri. Reference in December 1980 to a "Cyprus incident". [REDACTED] UK based personnel were deployed in response. Classified as LIABLE incident at time. No one reported contaminated or injured. No known public reports.

[REDACTED]

1977

HMS Renown. Hoist broke while weapon being winched aboard. Classified as OLDHAM ONE. Public reports not known.

1981

Holy Loch. While a US Navy Poseidon missile was being loaded onto a tender, missile descended at a faster than normal rate, but was arrested before hitting the tender. Reported in press.

\* 1982?

"South Atlantic Incidents" - a number of individual events. Some containers damaged - conflicting advice on whether weapon casing(s) were damaged. No known public reports.

1983

RAF Bruggen. UK nuclear weapon being moved in its container when the container slipped from its trolley; as a result of procedural rule on speed of trolley being breached; the weapon moved within its container causing superficial damage due to impact on tool box (stored within container). Container feature has since been modified to prevent recurrence.

20 June 1985

Helensburgh. Two weapon transporters in RAF convoy collided with each other at very low speed in town centre. No other vehicles involved, damage to the transporters was minor did not affect mobility, no damage to weapons, and no hazard to the public. Widely reported - NCND maintained.

10 January 1987

West Dean, Wiltshire. RAF nuclear weapons convoy. One weapon carrier left the road on icy surface and overturned. Another skidded and came to rest partly off the road. The nuclear weapons in their containers were undamaged. Widely reported - NCND maintained.

December 1987

Coulport. A fault developed on a crane while a missile was being loaded on board HMS REPULSE at RNAD Coulport. The missile dropped slightly but was not damaged. No known public reports.

22 August 1988

Hong Kong Harbour. USS Omaha (SSN) and USNS Sioux (ocean going tug) dragged anchor for some 1 km and collided with RFA Fort Grange, despite latter's attempts to warn US vessels. RFA was carrying nuclear weapons (from RN task force on round-the-world

deployment) - which was subsequently hinted at, but not confirmed to US authorities. Superficial damage to all three vessels. No radiological hazard. Local press coverage only.

17 September 1988

Ilminster by-pass. RAF convoy travelling (empty but constituted) to RNAD Bull Point, Plymouth. On single carriageway Ilminster by-pass, a civilian coach was hit by a sports car, which then collided with one of the convoy Mammoth Major transporters, under which it became wedged. The civilian driver of the car was dead on arrival at hospital. Widely reported. NCND maintained (the transporter was empty, of course).

\* Details imprecise because records inconclusive.

  
  
ACSA(N)