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2/888/CPT/7001

10th July 1985

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SPECIAL WEAPONS INCIDENT AT HELENSBURGH ON 20 JUNE 1985

1. The sequence of events as revealed to the CSB and RNAD Coulport immediately following the incident at Helensburgh at 1415 on 20th June was:
 - a. COMCLYDE.
 - (i). The Convoy Commander (ConCom) requested permission through the 1st Lt. (his normal contact in the event of a problem) to bring the damaged vehicle into the Base "to sort out the problem". This was given by the 1st Lt. who confirmed the action with the BXO at the time that the convoy proceeded, with MOD Police escort, through the S. gate to the Helicopter Landing Pad within the Secure Area.
Time approx 1430-45
 - (ii). BXO informed the Commodore (who was conducting "Rounds") and introduced the ConCom.
 - (iii). ConCom was provided with an office with telephone to make the necessary arrangements and to inform his HQ.
 - (iv). ConCom initiated a [REDACTED] signal through the COMCLYDE COMCEN with Cdr. Ops signing release to avoid delay.
 - (v). All subsequent arrangements were initiated by ConCom through his own lines of communication.
 - b. Superintendent RNAD(C)
 - (i). ConCom advised SAD(C) by phone from CSB that delivery would be delayed. SAD(C) offered any assistance necessary from RNAD resources.
 - (ii). ConCom reported back asking for assistance to transfer the load to the spare transporter.
 - (iii). A Stores Party under SOG'B' control was sent to CSB with the depot spare equipment for offloading (including crane). A depot Engineer (FE1) accompanied them to provide support for any non-standard requirements.
Time approx 1530
 - (iv). FE1 and the RAF Safety Officer(?) discussed the method for transfer which was agreed to be virtually i.a.w. the approved Stores COI's. The depot Safety Officer was made available to carry out the usual "on release" check of containers/vehicles.
 - (v). ConCom obtained approval to transfer the load using depot procedures with minor modifications as agreed between FE1 and the Stores Officer to maintain correct earthing.
 - (vi). The convoy completed it's journey to the depot, parked overnight in the Secure Area and the stores were offloaded on 21st.
 - (vii). AWRE 201932ZJUN85 was not received on 21st, thus RNAD had no formal authorisation for receipt or for quarantine. The signal was retransmitted but without a SIC and with an incorrect reference and has thus been impossible to trace.
 - (viii). Arrangements were made on 21st through SNavRep AWRE/SDE for AWRE attendance at the depot on Mon 24th June.
 - (ix). On Sun 23rd HIFE/Chev(Nuc)4/CE talked on phone regarding the extent to which the depot should proceed prior to arrival of AWRE reps. Chev(Nuc)4 was not aware of the problem but arranged a further call from SDE who restated the need to delay any work until their arrival on Monday.
 - (x). Inspection of the stores was conducted by the depot, with AWRE in attendance, on Mon 24th, as reported in SDE/KG/104/26 of 1st July '85.
(Note: errors in this report are contained in:
 - a. Para 1.4. - the signal was originated by ConCom.
 - b. Para 1.5. - the stores arrived in the depot late 20th.)

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2. The following signal history has been reconstructed from depot records:
- a. AWRE 201923ZJUN85 was not received at RNAD(C). A copy to CE with an incorrect reference and no SIC has also not been traced.
 - b. AWRE 271430ZJUN85 repeated 201923 to RNAD(C) and was received on 28 June
 - c. RNAD 271042ZJUN85 reported the inspections carried out i.a.w. AWRE instructions and sought further requirements, if any.
 - d. AWRE 281136ZJUN85 replied to c. above but was not received until 1st July (p.m. with CE).
 - e. RNAD 011148ZJUL85 replied to a/b above in ignorance of new instructions, d. above.
 - f. POLEXBATH 020830ZJUL85 underwrote AWRE ref d. above.
 - g. AWRE 051558ZJUL85 lists the above signals and their confusions and summarises the present position.

Note: no copy of the [REDACTED] signal originated by ConCom was passed to the depot.

3. Comment.

- a. The "incident" was judged by the Convoy Commander to be such as did not affect the safety of the stores for further movement. This appears to have been underwritten by AWRE in communication with ConCom, and hence his advice to SAD(C) that he would complete delivery after the load transfer to a serviceable vehicle.
- b. In the light of the above, no emergency teams were alerted in the depot or CSB, nor was NOIO informed of any problem.
- c. The initial chain of communication with HQ departments can only be traced through RAF networks and no records exist in COMCLYDE of this area.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

NOIO Coulpport.

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