

Report on the first exercise of control in a United Kingdom depot on the mainland of Europe, 20 November 1956 (4 December 1956)

Caption: On 4 December 1956, the Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA) issues a report on the first control exercise at a United Kingdom depot on the European mainland, which was carried out on 20 November 1956 to gain useful experience of control measures and enable the ACA to make a constructive report to the Council of Western European Union. The inspectors conclude that, except for two discrepancies in the figures, no special remarks are called for concerning this visit, as the British authorities were very cooperative.

Source: Western European Union. Agency for the Control of Armaments. Report on the first exercise of control in a United Kingdom depot on the mainland of Europe, 20th November, 1956. [Paris]: 04.12.1956. WEU II 411 R.U. Copy N°2. pp.1-2;7-8. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://anlux.lu/>. Western European Union Archives. Armament Bodies. ACA. Agency for the Control of Armaments. Year: 1956, 01/01/1956-20/01/1967. File ACA-012. Volume 1/1.

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R E P O R T
ON THE
FIRST EXERCISE OF CONTROL IN
A UNITED KINGDOM DEPOT
ON THE MAINLAND OF EUROPE
20th NOVEMBER, 1956

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1. Object

This was to gain useful experience of control measures and to enable the Agency to make a constructive report to the Council.

2. Introduction

The Agency has no right, under the Treaty of Paris, to be allowed to make an inspection of U.K. depots on the mainland of Europe if the material held in these depots is only for the use of Forces under N.A.T.O. Command. However, the U.K. Ministry of Defence agreed that in order to assist the Agency to gain experience a team should be permitted to visit a U.K. depot on the mainland of Europe during 1956 only.

Some difficulty arose because it was understood from the British delegation that all British depots were in the vicinity of Antwerp and the ammunition depot at BRECHT near Antwerp was proposed by the Delegation for the inspection. It was only five days before the

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visit that N°3 Base Ammunition Depot was found to be at BRACHT near München-Gladbach in Germany . The U.K. Ministry of Defence requested that the Agency team should first contact the Headquarters of the British Army of the Rhine at München-Gladbach.

3. The Team

The Agency team was :

Air Vice Marshal PIDCOCK, Head of Mission,
Ingénieur-Général COMBES
Colonel MASSARINI.

Mr METCALFE accompanied the team as interpreter.

Colonel WARFIELD accompanied the team as the
S.H.A.P.E. representative.

The team was met at Düsseldorf by Colonel CROWDY and were accommodated at N°1 Visitors Mess.

4. Preliminary meeting at B.A.O.R. H.Q., München-Gladbach 20.11.56.

At this meeting with Colonel Eastman (A.D.O.S.) in the absence of the Director, and with Colonel Crowdy (General Staff), A.V.M. Pidcock explained the object of the visit, the controls the Agency wished to carry out and the methods to be employed. He said that the control exercises would only extend to 5.5 inch and 155mm ammunition.

5. General remarks on ammunition depots and supply

Colonel Eastman gave a general explanation of the ammunition supply of the Rhine Army in which he pointed out that there are two major depots :

A. Number 5 B.A.D. in the Antwerp region in Belgium, which can hold approximately 45.000 tons of ammunition of all types (between 43.000 and 44.000 tons are held at the present time).

B. Number 3 B.A.D. in Germany at BRACHT; this depot has two satellite depots at Kevelaer and Bonnighardt and there will shortly be a third satellite. These depots are 50 to 60 Km apart. No staff is employed in the satellite depots. The

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Control

Control was carried out on the ammunition held in SD N° 2 at Brecht :

A. - 5.5" without fuze V/T : 2.683 + 2.113 = 4.796
with fuze V/T : 1.201 + 1.302 = 2.503

held in Road no. 6, Bay J, Shelters 4 to 6 and Bay L, Shelters 1 to 6.

The total figure does not correspond to the figure we were given for all ammunition in the SD N° 2, namely 7.299; it seems probable that not all magazines for 5.5" ammunition were reported to the team. | 2

The physical check by counting was done in Shelter N° 2 : 516 rounds. Probably because there were several "lots", the shelter contained more than one pile, the biggest one being 11 rows high.

B. - 155mm ammunition with V/T fuze : 8.930
held in Road N° 3, Bay P, Shelters 1 - 9.

The physical check by counting was done in shelter n° 7 : 1.000 rounds. The shells are stored in piles of 100, 9 rows high.

The result of this check showed no discrepancies.

The team then toured the SD n° 1 where ammunition is being classified and counted and a final visit was made to the workshop for repairing ammunition.

9. Conclusion:

Except for two discrepancies in the figures, which have been referred to in this report and which, in any case, seem to be due, at least the second one, to incomplete information (1), no special remarks are called for concerning this visit

(1) The necessary additional information could doubtless have been provided by the control office in the sub-depot if the team had noticed this discrepancy at the time.

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The U.K. authorities were extremely co-operative, the team obtained all the information which it asked for, and, in addition to the magazines containing ammunition subject to control, they were given free access on demand to all parts of the depot.

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