

CODE No. 27-23.

On Her Majesty's Service

W.A.

WASC 1801



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October 15, 1985.

Dear Malcolm,

Talking to (?) Keith (your Waltham Abbey man) on the train back into London, I mentioned the paper by Anderson "The Machinery Used in the Manufacture of Cordite" which has a plan of the layout of a cordite plant. He did not know of this, and thought you might be interested.

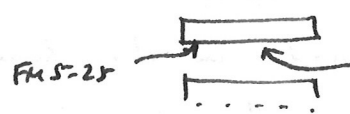
While the plan of the plant does not appear to be of a "real" site, it may bear some similarity to the early layout at Waltham Abbey. The machines illustrated certainly seem to correspond closely with the Waltham Abbey illustrations in the PRO etc. Later built plants often seemed to be somewhat different - i.e. many more "Rifle Screw Presses" in one "cell".

The paper mentioned, by C. F. Jenkin, on the "electric lighting arrangements at the Waltham factory" might be worth seeing - I am afraid I have not looked at it.

The remains of a cordite range here, at National, shows a similar set-up to that illustrated in the paper. Bits of cordite, now completely unstable and smelling of nitric acid, can be still found in those remains!

Incidentally, I have a note that during WW1 the cordite made at Waltham was of the RDB type - soluble nitrocellulose, ether-alcohol solvent. Both cord form and flake,

I think made by chopping ribbon, was produced. Also
gun cotton coated with rubber solution as a track mortar
propellant.

The American publication I should have asked about
while at Waltham is: U.S. War Dept. Field Manual
"Explosives & Demolition (v) FM 5-25". I think there
were copies of this, shoulder high, same tray as "Gorit",
extreme left  If I could
borrow a copy, it would be most useful as it
has some details of various applications. Hope my
"information retrieval" methods (sketch above) help!

Can I bother you with two other requests?
Two other U.S. publications have eluded me so far -
I cannot get them from the States as they are out
of print, and the local library do not seem to be able
to extract them from anywhere. They are:

(a) U.S. War Dept: "Rockets: TM 9-1950"

(b) - - - "German Explosive Ordnance TM 9-1985"
(3 parts).

These do not seem to be Security Classified in any way.

I hope I can make up for all the work I am
putting you to, when you come to Cornwall and see
the remains here. I have earmarked a "flowerpot"
for your museum - A ball nitrating pot, made by Doulton
& Lambeth. If I can find a whole one I will
let you know.

Look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Bryan Earl.