

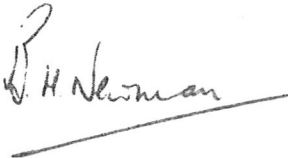
WASC 2044

ROF Reorganisation
PERME Notice 15/82

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ROF REORGANISATION

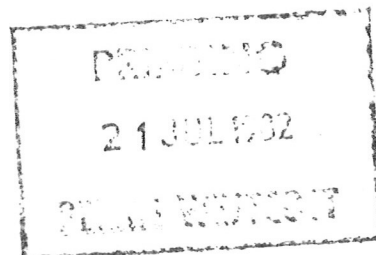
Staff will recall that PERME Notice No. 13/82 covered the circulation of a statement made in Parliament regarding the transfer of Design and Development functions from R and D Establishments (including PERME Waltham Abbey) to the ROFs. The latest proposals for identifying the functions concerned were explained by the Director to the Trade Union representatives at Waltham Abbey at a meeting on 19 July, a note of which is attached for the information of staff.



B H NEWMAN

Director/PERME & Head RME

21 July 1982



Note of the meeting with the Waltham Abbey NITU and TU representatives at 16.00 hours on 19 July 1982 about the latest development in the ROF organisation.

Present were:	Dr B H Newman	Director
	Mr R Heron	Deputy Director
	Dr A J Owen	PS(WA)
	Mr R H Carrington	Secretary
	Mr D R Swadling	SAO
	Mr A Bird)
	Mr A Francis)
	Mr P Jackson)
		NITU Side
	Mr E Morgan)
	Mr D Cole)
		ITU Side

1. BACKGROUND

The Director referred to the previous information circulated and comments made at the last LOWC and LJIC meetings concerning the future of the ROFs in line with the Government's intention, with Parliament approval, to put them in a more commercial environment under the Companies Acts. In anticipation of this objective there would in the meanwhile be changes in the shape of the ROF organisation to provide them with relevant Design and Development and sales capabilities to strengthen their commercial viability.

2. CURRENT PROGRESS

The Director said that action was now underway to identify in the R and D Establishments the facilities and effort necessary to provide the Design and Development capabilities. DOF/AMM had approached the Director on 16 July to initiate action at Waltham Abbey. He had already been in touch with Director RARDE. Although the new Chief Executive of the ROFs had yet to be appointed by the Government it had been decided to proceed on the assumption that all ROF "product-lines" would continue and require appropriate Design and Development support. The R and D Establishments would be visited by representatives of the relevant ROFs (Bishopston, Bridgwater and Chorley) at Assistant Director level with the objective of determining the level of facilities and staffing to be transferred to the control of the respective ROFs. The precise terms of reference for the exercise would be made known at a Headquarter's meeting on 22 July.

3. LIKELY ACTION AT WALTHAM ABBEY

The Director explained that the visits by the ROF ADs would be co-ordinated by PS(WA) and would mainly involve the Superintendents concerned. Reports would be produced detailing the requirements and PERME would have the opportunity to comment on the conclusions.

4. POSSIBLE OUTCOME

The Director said this was difficult to judge, but could range from the transfer of staff and facilities to the ROF sites to the continuation of functions at Waltham Abbey should their transfer prove impracticable or too costly. The areas primarily concerned in the exercise would be P1 and PR. P2 was essentially involved with propellants for rocket motors and would therefore like Westcott, be affected by the moves towards an industrial motor organisation. Some functions at Waltham Abbey such as fundamental research, the provision of advice to the Ordnance Board and Systems Controllers and monitoring the activities of those

on Extra-Mural Research would continue under CER and could become part of the proposed Land Systems Research Establishment, the most likely location for which was Fort Halstead.

5. TIMESCALE

This also was difficult to judge. At this stage what was in prospect was a fact-gathering exercise by the ROFs to form the basis for specific recommendations. Implementation was therefore some way off, but the urgency was there to produce a commercially viable ROF organisation as soon as possible in view of the Government's determination to carry out its objectives ultimately to privatise the organisation. Privatisation would require legislation which would take some time to arrange but the transfer of functions within the MOD from the R and D Establishments to the ROFs could in the meanwhile proceed.

6. DISCUSSION

This was limited to a few points of clarification during which the Director assured those present that he had given them all the available information. He had expected to make an announcement about the proposed exercise following the HQ meeting on 22 July 1982, but this had been pre-empted by the ROFs making earlier contact with RARDE. Thus, to avoid misunderstanding and rumours he had taken steps to advise staff at Waltham Abbey as soon as possible. The Director confirmed that Westcott was not involved in this exercise but with the separate proposals for the privatisation of the rocket motor business which was still under discussion between private industrial interests and the Ministry.

7. CONCLUSION

The Director said he understood and shared the concern about possible loss of jobs and domestic upheavals felt by all those affected by the future of Waltham Abbey. He would do all he could to ensure that staff were kept informed of developments.