

2014

Prime Minister



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~3307822~~ 218 2111/3

for information.
The press accounts were garbled and the longer term issue is still being considered.

MO 4/4

12th December 1984

It seems to me
absurd to 'down band'
this group
me

FERB
12.12

Dear Robin

In your letter of 26th November, you mentioned that the Prime Minister had asked for urgent advice on the recent press articles about cuts in pay for bomb disposal experts. We subsequently agreed that I should delay my reply until Ministers in this department had considered the matter. However, it has become apparent that the need to consult HM Treasury will lengthen this process and you might therefore find it useful to receive earlier advice.

As part of the system of pay comparability for the Armed Forces, jobs across the board in all three Services are regularly reviewed, to determine whether their content continues to justify their existing pay banding. This can lead to rebanding, in either direction. A Joint Services Job Evaluation Team carries out this evaluation and notifies the service management authorities concerned of the results and the recommended pay bands. Where, on management grounds, it is considered that any of its recommendations should not be implemented, the Treasury is consulted.

In April of this year, one of the Team's recommendations was to downband Warrant Officers (Ammunition Technician); a group which includes, as a small proportion, bomb disposal experts.

Normally, when downbanding is to occur, it does so in the year following the review and in this case the relevant date would be 1st April 1985. An individual's pay is not cut, but marks time until pay awards, promotion or increments overtake the original frozen pay level. There was accordingly no question of cutting, or in any way affecting, a Christmas pay rise. Indeed, there is no such rise. It is possible that the second stage of this year's pay award, which came into effect on 1st November, has been misinterpreted as such but in any case it was not affected.

F E R Butler Esq



The delay in implementation also allows management to consider carefully all such proposals. In this case the manager concerned (the Director General Ordnance Services) appealed against the downbanding proposal and this was about to be put to the Treasury for their consideration when the press took up the case.

Ministers here continue to take an interest in this matter and have directed that a submission is to be made to them before any decision to downband this group is taken.

I am copying this letter to David Peretz (HM Treasury).

Yours ever

Simon Lowe

(S H LOWE)
Private Secretary



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

26 November 1984

The Prime Minister has seen a report in tonight's Evening Standard that bomb disposal men are to be put on a "mark time" basis which will have the effect of removing a pay rise which normally comes to them around Christmas. It is argued that this will damage their morale during the customary IRA bomb season in the West End.

BF The Prime Minister would be grateful if you could let her know the facts urgently. I understand from the line which you have provided for Parliamentary Questions tomorrow that no decision has in fact yet been taken by Ministers. If the effect were to be on the lines described in the Evening Standard, the Prime Minister would share the view that a move of this sort at this time would be an error.

I am copying this letter to David Peretz (HM Treasury).

FRB

Richard Mottram Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

7 February 1985

Thank you for your letter of 5 February (MO 4/4) about the pay of bomb disposal experts. The Prime Minister has noted the outcome with satisfaction.

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S.H. Lowe, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

Prime Minister 2
Good news.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~930 7022~~ 218 2111/3

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L. S. M. M.
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MO 4/4

5th February 1985

Dear Robin

In my letter to you of 12th December, I set out the background to press articles on alleged cuts in pay for bomb disposal experts. I mentioned that no decision to downband this group would be taken without reference to Ministers here.

The Prime Minister may wish to be aware that HM Treasury has now agreed that, on management grounds, Warrant Officer Ammunition Technicians should retain their present pay banding. The proposal to downband them will accordingly not now proceed.

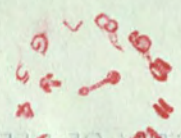
Yours ever

[Handwritten signature: Simon Lowe]

(S H LOWE)
Private Secretary

Robin Butler Esq
10 Downing Street

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1



F-6 FEB 1985



DEFENCE: Armed Forces pay:

Pt 2.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

17 December, 1984

Thank you for your letter of 12 December (MO 4/4) about the pay of bomb disposal experts. The Prime Minister has noted that a submission is to be made to your Ministers before any decision to downband this group is taken and has commented that, her present view is that it is absurd to downband this group.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Peretz (HM Treasury).

RB.

S.H. Lowe, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE