

Crew of Crabbing Vessel Injured by Potential UXO Blast

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Norfolk, United Kingdom The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has launched an investigation into a blast aboard a fishing vessel which injured all seven crewmembers on board. The explosion aboard the crabbing vessel Galwad-Y-Mor is believed to have been caused by submerged UXO on the seabed, which may have been contacted by crab pots as the crew hauled them aboard.

Two British and five Latvian crewmembers were on board at the time of the explosion. All were injured, including some who suffered "life-changing" injuries.

MAIB issued the following statement, "At about 1120, the crew was in the process of hauling in a string of crab pots; the skipper was in the wheelhouse with other crew members below decks working the pots. The hauler was being used to heave in the back rope, and the crew had let the skipper know that there was a lot of tension on the line, when there was an unexpected explosion. Galwad-Y-Mor was thrown up from the sea surface, then landed heavily back down; all propulsion and electrical power was immediately lost. The skipper was injured and dazed, but conscious, and saw that the wheelhouse had been completely wrecked."

The crew was discovered by a lifeboat out of the port of Cromer. Three of the victims were immediately medevaced for treatment due to the extent of their injuries. The remaining four went back to shore aboard the lifeboat and were transferred to a hospital in Norfolk.

The vessel was towed into port at Grimsby and taken out of the water at a boatyard for repairs. The interior of the wheelhouse was substantially destroyed. Upon inspection, the shell plating on the bottom showed extensive damage, but there was no evidence of an internal blast.

Waters in the area frequently turn up WWII-era munitions from the seabed, and Royal Navy salvage divers receive regular calls to dispose of mines, bombs and shells dredged up by fishing nets and anchors.