

SYNOPSIS

Four people were on board *Lord Trenchard* at her berth in Poole Harbour on the morning of 30 June 1999. When the skipper tried to start the diesel generator at 0710, an accumulation of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) ignited, resulting in an explosion which seriously damaged the vessel. The skipper lost his left leg above the knee.

LPG had leaked from a slack connector on one of the pair of gas bottles in the ready-use locker and migrated into the hold space accommodating the generator, through various non gas-tight penetrations in the locker. The attempt to start the generator ignited the gas in the hold. The leakage was not detected by the vessel's gas alarm system.

Lord Trenchard was a sailing vessel of 13.54m registered length, constructed of glass reinforced plastic (GRP) and operated by the Joint Services Adventure Sail Training Centre (JSASTC), Gosport. She was owned by The Crown.

The vessel was modified during 1995/6 in order to comply with the requirements of *The Safety of Small Commercial Sailing Vessels - The Code of Practice* (the Code). She was then surveyed by the chosen certifying authority, Lloyds Register of Shipping (LR) who issued an interim certificate provisional on 29 October 1997. At the time of her accident, however, *Lord Trenchard's* status under the Code was incomplete.

Several recommendations are directed to JSASTC and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).