

AIR BOTTLE EXPLOSION

Posted on 30.09.2012 by Adam Parnell

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Report Title Air Bottle Explosion

Initial Report

Report Text:

Approximately one month after a survey and five-yearly overhaul of Life Saving Appliances, a fully charged air cylinder exploded just above the keel moulding of the TEMPSC (Totally Enclosed Motor Propelled Survival Craft), causing considerable damage. Fortunately, no personnel were injured. Once the vessel arrived in port, an independent lifeboat service company was requested to investigate the incident and assess the damage with a view to carrying out repairs.



Damage to the survival craft, showing the exploded air bottle.

The remaining air cylinders were removed and a close scrutiny was undertaken. From evidence in the form of a date stamped into one of the cylinders, it was ascertained that a hydro-test of cylinders last took place more than five years ago. Further inspection of the remaining cylinders showed quite clearly material wastage through corrosion of approximately 50% of the cylinder walls' original thickness.



The remaining air bottles, showing the corrosion in the area where the retaining strap had been fitted.

As there was no more recent date stamp, it can be assumed that these particular cylinders were not hydro-tested in the recent survey. Indeed, judging from the cylinder wall corrosion that can be observed, it appears possible that they were not removed from the boat during the survey.

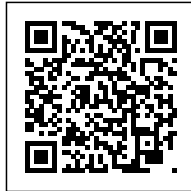
After assessment, the TEMPSC was deemed to be beyond economical repair and was scrapped. A replacement lifeboat had to be obtained.

It is understood that the ship's manager has taken up the matter with the organisation that carried out the LSA survey.

***CHIRP* Comment:**

This report illustrates the importance of regular inspection and survey of all parts, including hidden areas, of bottles containing pressurised gas or air. Fortunately in this case, no-one was nearby or working in the lifeboat, otherwise there could have been serious harm. As it was, the lifeboat was clearly out of action for the remainder of the voyage.

There appears to be serious issues with this case regarding the survey and inspection regime which we understand the ship's manager has taken up.



There are no comments yet.