

This is a printer friendly version of an article from www.peninsuladailynews.com
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Article published Feb 3, 2012

Crane removes blast debris from Sequim marina **[**Video**]**

By Jeff Chew

Peninsula Daily News

SEQUIM — A Sequim man injured in the Tuesday night explosion that destroyed his boat at John Wayne Marina remained in critical condition Thursday as a Port of Port Angeles-hired dive-and-salvage crew brought in a crane barge to lift large pieces of the shattered deck and hull from the bottom of the bay.

Keith Bryant, 78, who received burns, shrapnel wounds and bone injuries, was recovering at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

He was installing a new 15-gallon propane tank when the blast occurred aboard his 38-foot William Garden-design wood diesel yacht *Escale*, sending debris around the marina and damaging adjacent boats, port and Clallam County fire district officials said.

“With any luck, they’ll pick up the big pieces with the crane today,” said marina Harbormaster Ron Amundson, who oversaw the cleanup under way Thursday morning.

Port crewmen were hauling boat debris from the C Dock disaster scene, piling it up in a section of the marina’s parking lot where it will be picked up today and disposed of at the landfill.

A diver with Ballard Dive & Salvage of Seattle was seen attaching the crane’s lift chain to large pieces of the boat and lifting them onto the barge.

Amundson said two boats would be taken to Platypus Marine in Port Angeles for repairs.

The boat nearest the blast, the *Mia Amori*, a 38-foot Bayliner with blown-out side windows, was to be towed today to Platypus Marine.

Ten other boats suffered minor damage from the debris that flew as far as 75 yards from the site of the explosion. Boaters said they heard the blast as far away as East Sequim Bay and Blyn, about 5 miles east of John Wayne Marina on West Sequim Bay.

Still unanswered were questions about who would pay for the cleanup, which includes containment of about 20 gallons of diesel fuel released in the blast.

“We hope that the boat owner has insurance,” Amundson said. The U.S. Coast Guard, he said, would be expected to contribute to the fuel spill cleanup.

The bill for the cleanup effort — which involved a four-man dive crew and salvage boat, a crane barge and tug boat, about 11 hired crew plus at least three port workers handling the debris — should be a large one.

Department of Ecology officials were monitoring the spill containment, and the Coast Guard was investigated the explosion scene. Representatives of both agencies praised the port and Clallam County Fire District No. 3's response in containing the spill when they arrived at about 5:48 p.m. Tuesday.

Boat owner Bryant was pulled from the blast site by adjacent live-aboard boat owners Cliff and Julie Houser.

There were no visible signs of any fire in the vicinity of the blast, the reason being, said District No. 3 spokesman and fire safety inspector Patrick Young, that it was likely the force of the blast immediately extinguished any fire.

Young described the event as a "catastrophic" explosion and a "flash fire," saying he had never seen such a large debris field from a "non-disaster" explosion in his 27 years of experience with fires.

Retired physician Robert Ormsby, who sat aboard his yacht just 30 yards from the cleanup scene Thursday morning, said that though his boat wasn't damaged, he and his wife, Carol, certainly heard the blast.

"It sounded like a 747 crashed into the marina jetty," he said.

He rushed over to the neighboring boat and found Bryant to be lucid and talking, though "his face was a mess." Ormsby added that he believed both of Bryant's legs and at least one arm was fractured.

Sequim-Dungeness Valley Editor Jeff Chew can be reached at 360-681-2391 or at jeff.chew@peninsuladailynews.com.

All materials Copyright © 2012 Black Press Ltd./Sound Publishing Inc.