

2 hurt as gangway to London tourist ship collapses

LONDON, England (AP) — Two men were injured when the gangway to a historic warship moored on London’s River Thames collapsed, police said yesterday.

Metropolitan Police said that the men were taken to hospital with minor injuries.

HMS Belfast — a large light cruiser which saw action in World War II and the Korean War — is permanently docked on the south bank of the river near Tower Bridge as a tourist attraction.

Director Phil Reed said the men, both contractors, suffered abrasions when one of the walkway’s sections sheared off and fell into the water.

He said he was “flabbergasted” by the incident and that the walkway — which had been undergoing work — had passed a safety test.

“It was quite safe for people to walk across,” Reed said, adding that the Health and Safety Executive will now investigate what caused the walkway to collapse.

He said around 90 people were visiting the warship when the “extremely unfortunate” accident occurred and that those on-board had been safely evacuated.

The Imperial War Museum — which HMS Belfast is a part of — said the tourist attraction is currently closed and it is not yet known when it will reopen.

The London Fire Brigade said on Twitter that “ironically” it was due to carry out a training exercise on the HMS Belfast yesterday but instead helped with the evacuation.



People are loaded onto a boat (right) after the gangway leading to HMS Belfast(left) collapsed into the river Thames yesterday. (Photo: AP)