A SPLENDID DAY OUT!

CLYDE fishermen and their colleagues from Northern Ireland went to sea aboard HMS Splendid in January as part of the scheme to keep local fishing communities in touch with RN submarine activities.

Since the sinking of FV Antares by HMS Trenchant in 1991, a number of initiatives have been implemented, including the Submarine Code of Practice, daily radio broadcasts about submarine movements (SUBFACTS), regular meetings ashore and Fisherman's Sea Days (FSDs) - all aimed at

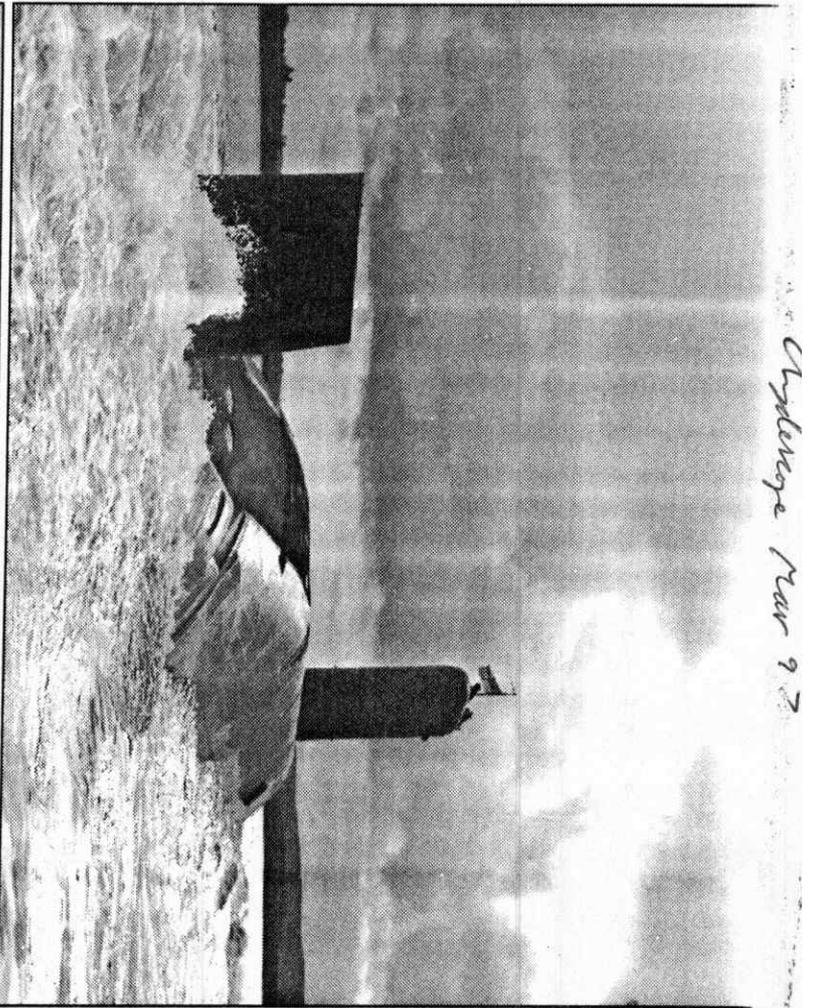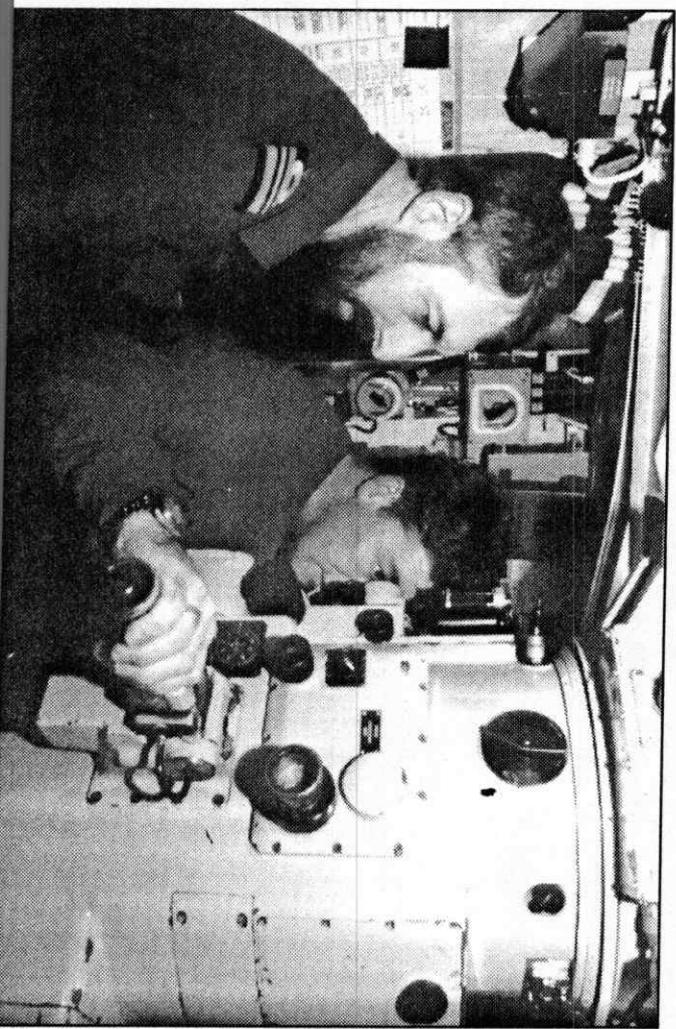deconflicting each others activities and strengthening ties between fishermen and the Royal Navy.

The liaison has been very successful - four FSD's have taken place in the Scottish Exercise Areas since the scheme began. This year 13 fishing representatives from Northern Ireland Groups were represented for the first time, together with 12 from the Clyde Fisherman's Association. Altogether more than 100 fishermen have now been to sea on a submarine off Scotland and the South West.

Over a weekend they embarked at Fairlie for a boat transfer to Splendid waiting off Great Cumbrae. After introductions and safety briefings Splendid's crew explained dive procedures and submerged to 60 metres. Some took the "wheel" while

others were shown around the boat, with equipment relevant to avoidance procedures highlighted. Local media were also in attendance to cover the day's events and exchanges between the two groups.

Said Lt Cdr David Pollitt, Flag Officer Submarines' Fishery Liaison Officer: "It was a highly successful weekend and we hope to build on the attendance of the Northern Irish Fishermen with a further sea day taking place off Northern Ireland in the not too distant future.

"Splendid did us proud again - she has now hosted three out of four FSDs! We take more care than ever before to ensure physical contacts between us are minimised - since Antares there have been no incidents of fishing vessel snaggings involving RN submarines, compared to 12 in the previous 15 years".

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