

DANGER BENEATH THE WAVES

DID SUBMARINES CAUSE THESE INCIDENTS?

THE Irish Sea has become a danger area, not because of its fierce storms but because of a danger from beneath the waves.

Submarines are posing an ever increasing threat to the lives of fishermen many of whom have died in mysterious incidents in which submarines are believed to have been involved.

Numerous incidents have occurred in the Irish Sea in recent years in which fishing vessels have disappeared in calm seas without explanation.

Submarines are known to have been involved several times, the most notable being in 1982 when the 70ft Clogherhead trawler Sberalga was dragged backwards for two miles and eventually overturned by the Royal Navy submarine HMS Porpoise.

The submarine had been anchored off Peel the day before the incident and had been seen sailing in the direction of where the incident occurred.

The Navy denied responsibility for the incident but two weeks later accepted liability for the sinking of the ship and offered compensation of £190,000.

The crew of the ship were left in open seas to drown but were rescued by other fishing vessels in the area who witnessed the incident.

Skipper Raymond McEvoy has asked for £1 million in compensation and is still fighting a legal battle for the money in the courts.

The Ministry of Defence has denied that

reach the required standard.

He was said to have developed a phobia about fishing boats and an 'incident' was mentioned but details not revealed.

The loss of the Mhari L, a Scottish scallop dredger, lost in February last year, again sparked off a controversy about submarine activity in the Irish Sea.

The Celtic League, who have said several times that they suspect that a submarine may have been involved in the sinking in calm seas when three crew were lost.

Another incident in almost the same area where the Mhari L went down involved a submarine surfacing between two fishing boats in November.

The Ministry of Defence, have since denied that they had a submarine in the area and repeated their claims that now submersibles take place in exercises at that position.

The Manx branch of the Celtic League, led by secretary Bernard Moffatt, has said it will continue its inquiries into the Mhari L incident until a satisfactory explanation has been obtained.

The Celtic League has refused to accept Dept of Transport video evidence which claims the boat was lost when it snagged an underwater telephone cable.

submarines were responsible for the sinking of other fishing vessels such as the Brest trawler Cite D'Aléth which disappeared in perfect weather conditions in January 1983.

The crew sent out a distress signal saying: 'Its nets were fouled by an underwater object and all nine men were lost. A cover up has since been alleged by relatives of the crew.'

Submarine activity in the Irish Sea has become more frequent in the last decade. The MoD say that Admiralty charts prepared in 1960 showing 'submarine exercise areas' are out of date.

They say the areas are 'too shallow' for diver submarine operations. However, the massive American nuclear submarine, the Nathaniel Greene, lost her propeller while submerged in the Irish Sea in 1984.

The recent television programme 'Submarine', in which potential skippers are put through their paces in the Irish Sea, highlighted how one officer failed to

APRIL 1968: American nuclear submarine The USS Robert E. Lee, snagged in the nets of a French trawler Lorrain Bretagne in the Irish Sea. Submarine took five hours to free itself from the trawler's nets.

APRIL 1978: Soviet nuclear powered submarine The November sank in the Irish Sea 60 miles south east of the Tuskar lighthouse. Crew rescued by a Soviet Naval vessel.

APRIL 18TH 1982: The Crimson Dawn, a fishing trawler, had its nets snared in a cable being towed by an unidentified submarine. The crew managed to free the trawler by cutting the net with axes.

APRIL 18TH 1982: The 70 ft Clogherhead trawler Sberalga is dragged for two miles and overturned by a Royal Navy submarine HMS Porpoise. Crew left but rescued by other fishing craft. Navy denied responsibility for two weeks but eventually admitted liability and offered skipper Raymond McEvoy £190,000 compensation which he refused, claiming £1 million. The court case is still continuing.

JULY 20TH, 1982: A yacht, The Fyfield Five, was sunk by a submarine believed to have been the HMS Opossum from Portsmouth. Yacht sunk 15 miles north of Lands End.

DECEMBER 1982: English trawler, the Algria, an area the nuclear submarine HMS Spartan in the Celtic Sea. Submarine surfaced and ordered Algria to cut its nets.

JANUARY 15TH, 1983: A 130 ft trawler, the Cite D'Aléth from Brest, sinks six miles south east of Carnarone Point, County Wexford. All nine crew members were lost in perfect weather conditions.

The crew sent a distress signal saying its nets were fouled by an underwater object. Relatives of the Irish and French crew have accused the UK, Irish and French Governments of covering up the incident.

FEBRUARY 1983: French trawler, the Jeanne De Lorraine, loses 1,100 metres of cable and nets, 22 miles east of Rosalere after being towed by an unidentified submarine.

DECEMBER 5TH, 1983: A young west man died when a 35 ft steel trawler, The Irish Ann, capsized suddenly off Dunmore East. Local fishermen believe a submarine was responsible.

MARCH 4TH, 1984: Unidentified submarine dragged Clogherhead trawler The Oriol for 21 miles in the same area as the Sberalga sinking. Skipper Thomas Tallon had to disconnect £1,000 worth of nets and cable to free his vessel.

MAY, 1984: English trawler The South Slack disappeared off Holyhead in calm waters. Crew of three never found. Holyhead coastguards said there was no explanation for the disappearance.

JULY 30TH 1984: The US submarine Nathaniel Greene loses a propeller in the same area as the Mhari L sinking. The sub shot off engines and eventually retrieved by US Navy recovery ship.

AUGUST 1978, 1984: Unidentified submarine dragged a Devon trawler, the Joanne C, for three hours before breaking free. Damage estimated at £1,000.

FEBRUARY 21ST, 1985: Kirkudbright dredger Mhari L lost 17 miles SE of Isle of Man in calm seas. Crew of three lost. Wreckage discovered six days later. Dept of Transport filmed video claiming ship snagged underwater telephone cable. Independent experts say video not conclusive proof of sinking. Arguments continue.

MINISTRY DENIAL

THE Ministry of Defence has flatly denied that submarines were involved in the sinking of a fishing boat in the Irish Sea for submersibles were not in the area at the time.

The Ministry of Defence says that the boat was lost when it snagged an underwater telephone cable. The boat was lost when it snagged an underwater telephone cable.

