

# Fishermen agree to submarine safety plan

By Wendy Scott and Christine Cessford

A PLAN to improve the safety of fishing boats in the Clyde by giving advance notice of submarine operations has been approved by the majority of Clyde Fishermen's Association members.

The agreement means that the threat of a blockade by fishing boats of the Clyde Submarine Base at Faslane on the Gare Loch has been lifted.

Eight out of nine branches of the association yesterday agreed to the scheme which was drawn up after the loss of the Antares and its crew of four.

It means that advance notice of planned submarine operations will be given to fishermen. At the same time, an electronic device which alerts a submarine to a trawler's fishing gear will be tested.

The scheme, which divides the sea area into different sectors, including Loch Long, Loch Fyne and Holy Loch, is due to start on 17 December. The divisions will be known by the various letters of the phonetic alphabet.

Patrick Stewart, association secretary, said: "I'm sure many members will be delighted with the news. I am waiting on word from the ninth branch, but I don't expect any difficulties. This has been a marvellous team effort by all concerned."

He said the agreement could not have been reached without a great deal of willingness on the part of the Ministry of Defence and the Royal Navy, who reached "a workable agreement" with the association.

"I believe the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in Scotland has been working very hard out of the picture to set the scene of this agreement," he said.

But he ruled out talk of a victory. "There is no question of anyone claiming a victory, except for commonsense."

Referring to Christine Russell, wife of Jamie — the skipper of the sunken fishing vessel Antares, whose body was recovered from the wreck

wanted to be sure her husband and the other crew members have not died in vain and I hope she will accept we have reached that decision."

It was also agreed that there would be a common communications radio frequency to let submarines and fishing boats in the same area resolve differences and to pass their respective operating intentions to each other.

The plan was agreed on after talks between the fisherman's representatives and the Royal Navy at Faslane on Friday.

Meanwhile, divers were yesterday continuing the search for the body of the fourth victim of the Antares incident. The Antares is expected to be raised above the surface either today or tomorrow.

Three bodies were recovered from the vessel on Friday. They were believed to be those of Jamie Russell, 33, and Douglas Campbell, 20, both of Carradale, Kintyre, and Stewart Campbell, 29, of Campbeltown, Kintyre. Still missing yesterday was William Martindale, 24, of Carradale.

A Royal Navy spokesman said the Antares had been searched several times. One body had been found outside the vessel, he said.

The Antares sank off Arran on 22 November when the nuclear submarine, HMS Trenchant, is thought to have snagged the vessel's nets and dragged it under.

Bad weather delayed the salvage operation on Saturday and high winds prevented the salvage vessel Wilchief from lifting the Antares, which is lying in 500ft of water.

The Wilchief was expected to raise the vessel to 20 metres below the surface and tow it to shallower water yesterday, before the navy's salvage vessel RMAS Salmoor took over to begin the task of turning the Antares and lifting it above the surface.

The navy has confirmed that trainee submarine commanders will now spend at least a day on a fishing boat