The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Submarine Hit British Frigate's Sonar in 2020

January 07, 2022



The submarine was from the Russian Navy's Northern Fleet. **Lev Fedoseyev / TASS**

A submarine from the Russian Navy's Northern Fleet collided with a British frigate's underwater listening system in late 2020, the U.K. Defense Ministry has confirmed to the BBC.

The incident was captured by a Channel 5 TV crew filming a documentary onboard the British warship as it was tracking the Russian submarine somewhere in the North Atlantic.

Film footage shows how the crew on watch sound the alarm bell, shouting "what the hell was that", "sh*t", "what the f*ck have I just hit?"

A spokesman with the Ministry of Defense in London confirmed what happened to the BBC.

"In late 2020 a Russian submarine being tracked by 'HMS Northumberland' came into contact with her towed array sonar," the spokesman said. "The Royal Navy regularly tracks foreign ships and submarines in order to ensure the defense of the United Kingdom."

Related article: Navy: New Attack Submarines Will Sail for Northern Fleet

According to the film crew, pilots from the frigate's helicopter had just before the crash spotted a periscope from the Russian submarine. The submarine soon dived and then hit the sonar being towed by "HMS Northumberland."

The sonar is a cable trailed hundreds of meters behind a warship with hydrophone listening devices to capture echo sounds from a submarine.

The Royal Navy on Dec. 4, 2020 posted a news update about the monitoring of several Russian Northern Fleet navy vessels in the English Channel and the Irish Sea to waters west of Scotland.

"HMS Northumberland" was tracking the destroyer Vice-Admiral Kulakov outside Scotland as she was sailing back home to Severomorsk after a long deployment to the Mediterranean Sea.

The exact location of the collision with the sonar is not specified, but the incident happened somewhere in the North Atlantic and the BBC reports that the British frigate at the time was searching for the submarine in the Arctic Circle. According to the Daily Mail, the scramble to search for the Russian submarine happened around 200 miles north of Scotland.

It was also not mentioned if the submarine was sailing together with the Vice-Admiral Kulakov. The Russian destroyer sailed into the Barents Sea on Dec. 8, a press release from the Northern Fleet said at the time.

Russian officials have so far not commented on the incident.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/01/07/russian-submarine-hit-british-frigates-sonar-in-2020-a75990