

Undersea objects baffle U.S. Navy

Veteran officers are puzzled by elusive radar soundings that disappear mysteriously.

FROM OUR WASHINGTON BUREAU

UNITED STATES' defence officials are baffled by recurring reports that unidentified "objects", including one that dived to the bottom and never came up, have been spotted off both Pacific and Atlantic coasts.

The reports have produced an "undersea flying saucer" mystery nearly as puzzling as the one touched off by the strange sightings in the skies.

Sightings, radar and sonar contacts of the "objects," both on and under the surface, have resulted in navy killer teams of planes and ships rushing to the points, sometimes joined by coastguard craft, including helicopters, and by the Air Force.

All manner of explanations for the mystery objects have been advanced including that they are Soviet submarines, American or NATO craft

marines, American or NATO craft not notified by US Intelligence, or merely whales, sunken ship hulls, or even overstimulated imaginations.

Veteran officers of both navy and army admit they are puzzled by the reports.

Two days

One officer asserted, "so far as I know we have not yet photographed nor have we boarded, nor have we definitely established the nationality of any of these undersea contacts."

One such contact was made recently by a US coastguard weather ship far out in the Atlantic which picked up a moving undersea object on her sound gear. The object circled for two days.

The captain radioed headquarters at Boston for information on the whereabouts of US submarines and those of friendly Powers. There seemed no possibility that any friendly craft was in the area.

Whales and schools of smaller fish have not been known to behave in this manner.

The captain said he had few doubts that it was a Russian submarine — but even he was baffled at what the

but even he was baffled at what the prowler was seeking to accomplish.

Still more puzzling have been the contacts made during recent US fleet manoeuvres off Key West, Florida. In this case, listening devices indicated two "objects."

Navy spokesmen say that, while no depth charges were dropped, destroyers and other vessels kept the position of the two strangers constantly tagged.

Periscope up

According to US Navy department spokesmen the two uninvited "guests" at the manoeuvres finally headed eastward. Another version is that one of them dived in what seemed an effort to escape the prying sonar devices but she was ringed by warships. The object, apparently, stayed down for a week or more.

The inference is that something went wrong and she could not surface, and presumably has not to this day.

Another incident occurred five miles off the California coast, 180 miles north of San Francisco.

The fishing vessel Northern Light sighted a submarine off a channel buoy but the craft quickly sub-

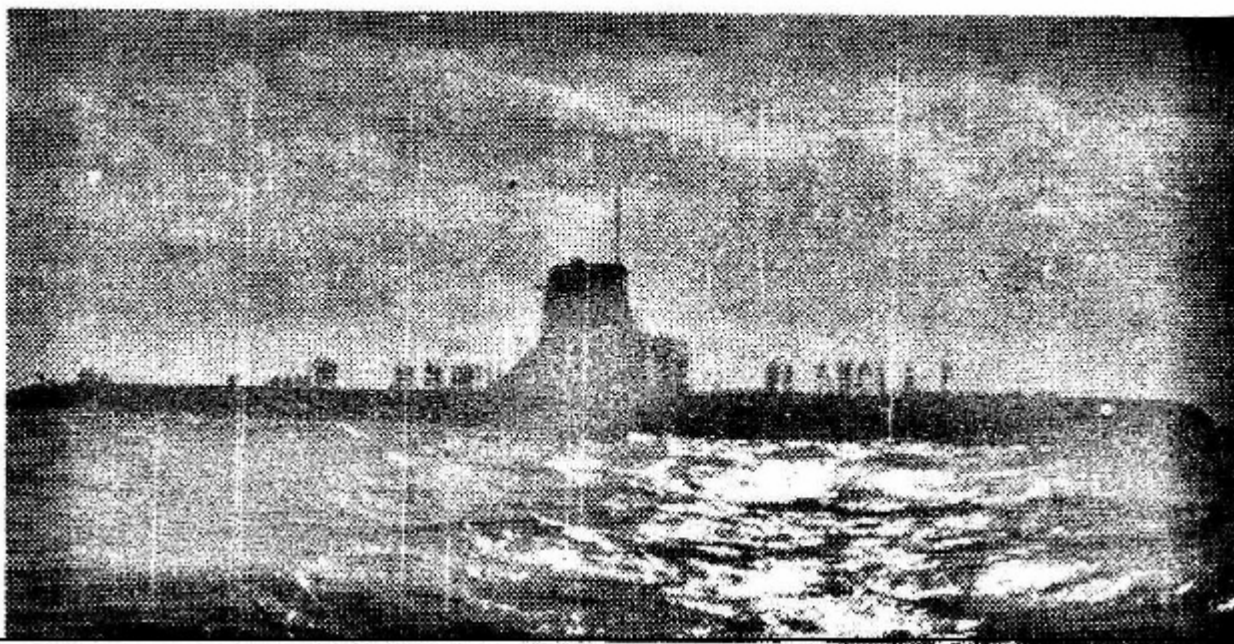
... out the craft quickly submerged.

A few hours later a US navy patrol plane pilot sighted a periscope in the same vicinity. No US submarines were around at that time.

Contact was lost, and no positive identification was ever made.

Similar sightings or suspicious contacts have happened off Maine, off the Panama Canal, and many other coastal areas in both Atlantic and Pacific.

The problem of identifying the objects is one on which the US Navy is working hard. ●



Strange object may be unidentified secret submarine on trials.