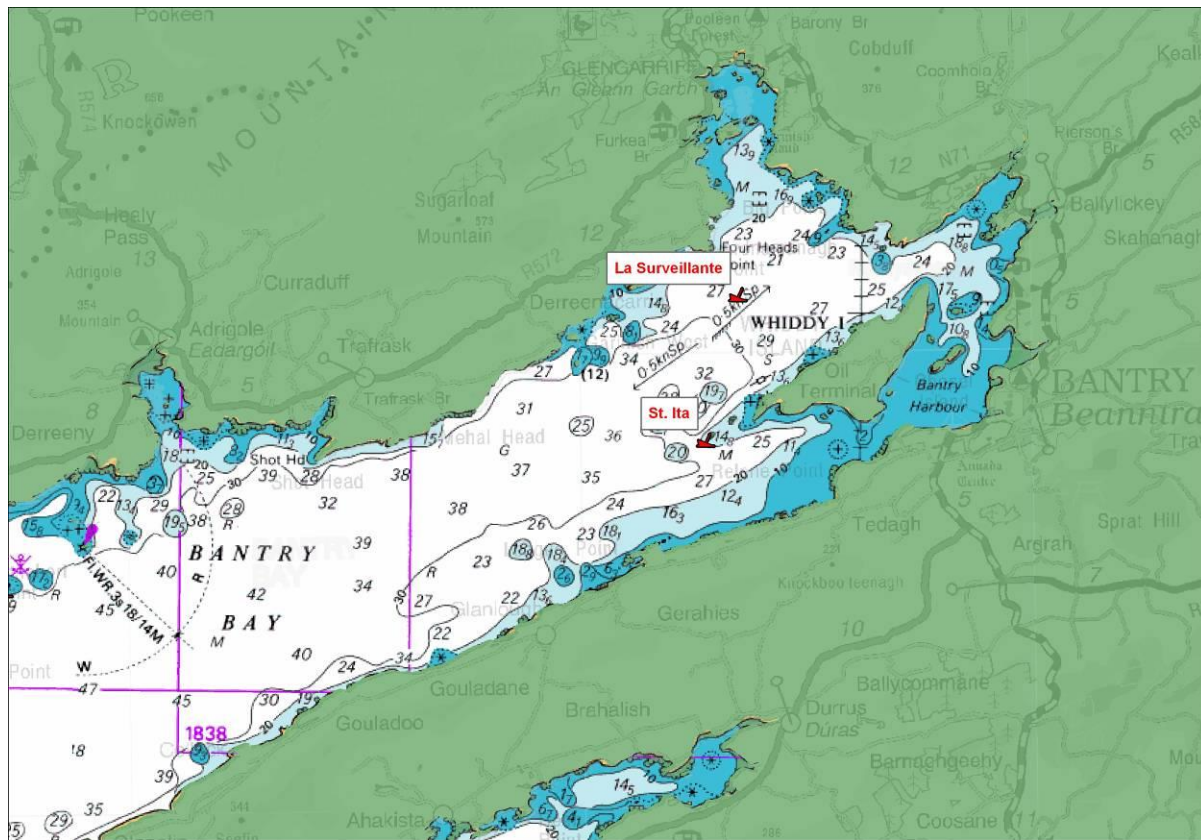
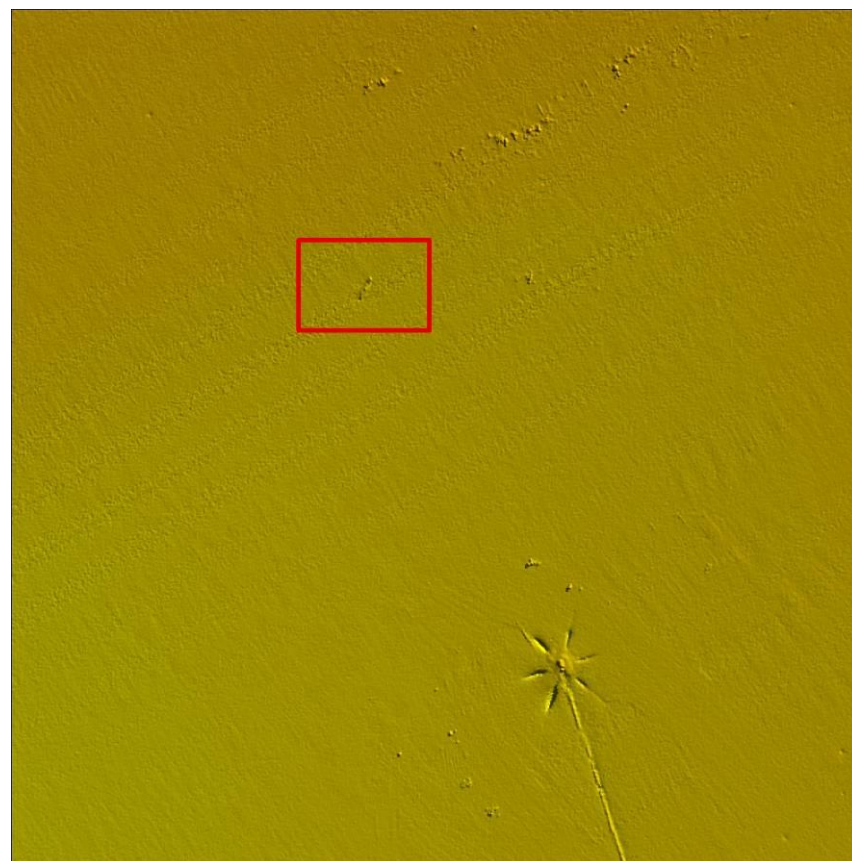


WRECK IMAGERY



Above the location of the *La Surveillante* in Bantry Bay and below an image of the *La Surveillante* just to the NW of the remains of the oil storage terminal at Whiddy Island from the shaded relief acquired during the INFOMAR survey CV07_02



LOCATION

Location 1.2 miles NW of Whiddy Island, 4.5 miles from Bantry Harbour

Coordinates -9° 32' 28.03" W
51° 42' 13.77" N

Depth of Water 30 m

VESSEL INFORMATION

Vessel type French 32 gun frigate

Flag French

Vessel Dimensions 43.55 m (l),
11.21 m (b), 5.68 m (d)

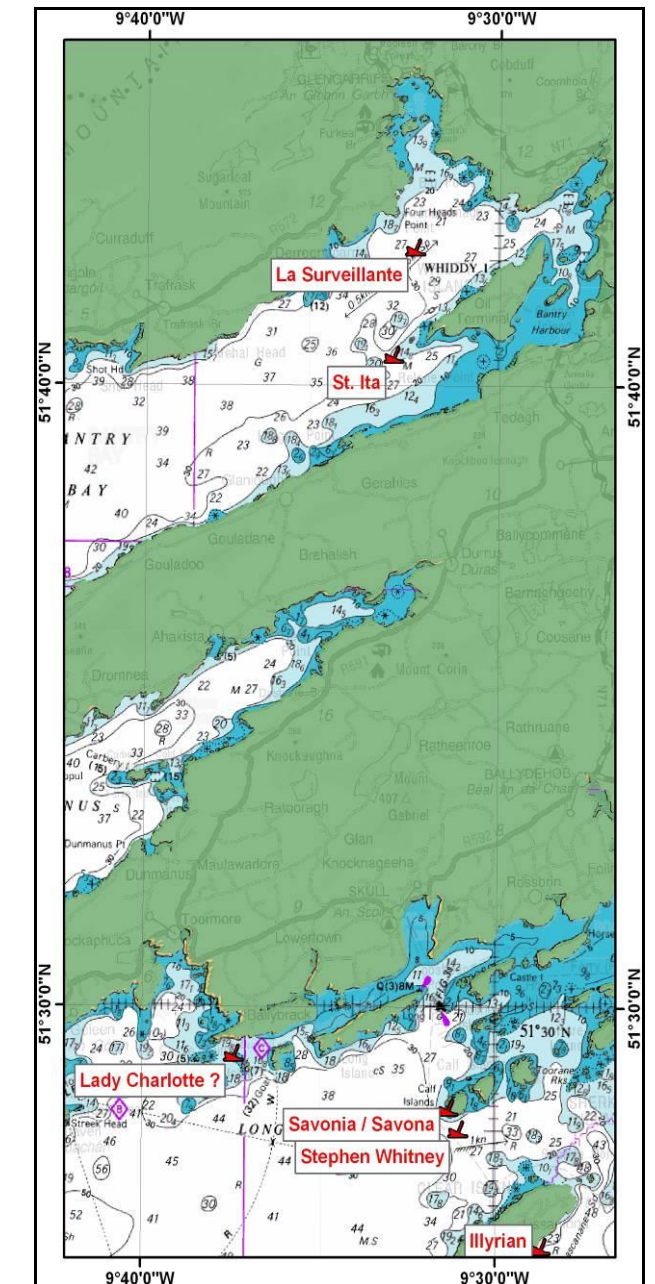
Date of building 1778

DETAILS OF SINKING

La Surveillante was part of a 48 strong French fleet with 15,000 troops sent to invade Ireland in 1796 under the leadership of General Lazarre Hoche. Severely storm damaged and leaky, *La Surveillante* was scuttled by its crew on the 2 January 1797 as it was not seaworthy enough to make the return journey to France.



LA SURVEILLANTE



INFOMAR WRECK INFORMATION SHEET 4

VESSEL HISTORY

La Surveillante was a 620-ton, French frigate built in Lorient in 1778. It measured 43m long, carried 32 guns and had three masts and was copper sheathed to protect the hull from damage by marine organisms. *La Surveillante* was involved in a number of successful naval engagements with British warships during the American War of Independence. In 1796, *La Surveillante* took part in the unsuccessful attempt by France to invade Ireland. From the beginning, bad weather and poor leadership resulted in the 48-strong French invasion fleet being scattered and dispersed. Although most of the storm battered fleet arrived off Bantry on the 19th December, continued bad weather, poor leadership and further loss of ships forced the fleet to return to France without setting foot on Ireland. *La Surveillante* was considered unseaworthy for the return journey home and was scuttled by its crew in Bantry Bay. Its crew and all troops on board were transferred to other French ships. Of the 48 ships that left Brest on 16th December 1796, only 36 returned to France, the rest were either captured by the English or wrecked.

DIVE INFORMATION

The wreck is orientated NE-SW with her bow to the NE. The water depth is approx. 30m. Copper sheathing is visible along the length of the wreck with the highest point of the ship standing 4.3m high at the sternpost. The galley area, cannon, cannon balls and an anchor are also visible on the wreck.

Wrecks over 100 years old and archaeological objects found underwater are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Acts 1987 and 1994. Significant wrecks less than 100 years old can be designated by Underwater Heritage Order (UHO) on account of their historical, archaeological or artistic importance.

As *La Surveillante* is over 100 years old, it is protected and a license is required to dive the site which can be obtained from:

<https://www.archaeology.ie/licences/dive-survey-licence>

ABOUT INFOMAR

Covering some 125,000 square kilometres of underwater territory, INFOMAR (the **IN**tegrated Mapping **FO**r the Sustainable Development of Ireland's **MAR**ine Resource) project will produce integrated mapping products covering the physical, chemical and biological features of the seabed. INFOMAR will initially focus on 26 priority bays and three priority areas around the coast delivering: hydrographic maps, illustrating everything from sandbars to underwater canyons and cliffs; seabed classification maps showing the type of sediment on the seabed. INFOMAR provides key baseline data to support coastal and inshore development. Making this information available to the world aims to stimulate research and development of Ireland's 220 million acres under the sea. The data will be of interest to fisheries managers, aquaculture operators, coastal zone managers and engineers, offshore engineering interests, licensing authorities and those carrying out environmental impact assessments. Indeed this unique dataset is of interest in its own right because of the sheer volume of data collected

FURTHER READING/REFERENCES

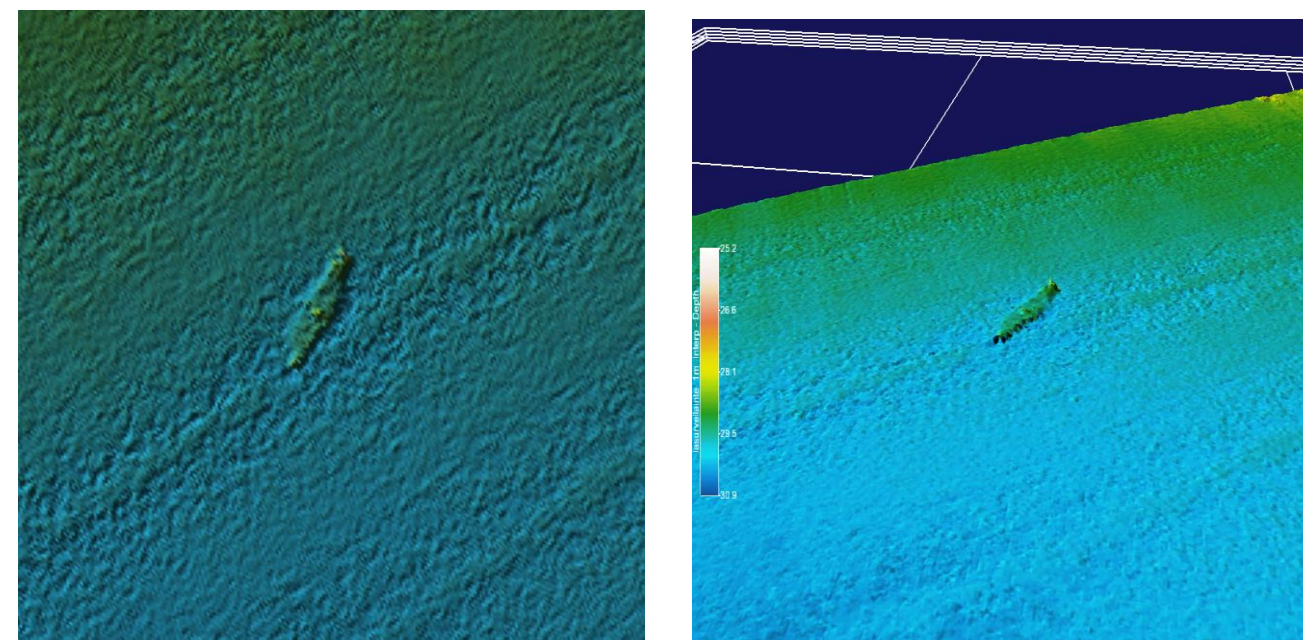
Quinn R., Breen C., Forsythe W., (2002), Integrated Geophysical Surveys of The French Frigate *La Surveillante* (1797), Bantry Bay, Co. Cork, Ireland, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Vol. 29, pp 413 -422

www.infomar.ie

www.irishwrecksonline.net

<https://www.archaeology.ie/underwater-archaeology>

WRECK IMAGERY



Above, 3D and plan view multibeam images of *La Surveillante* using Caris software. Below, an artists impression of an engagement between *La Surveillante* and the 32-gun frigate HMS *Quebec* off Ushant in 1779. (National Maritime Museum)

