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# German boat's our only sub!

EXCLUSIVE  
By JOHN KAY

A SINGLE submarine was on duty in British waters yesterday — a German U-BOAT.

The U12 was HIRED at £6,500 an hour because all the Royal Navy's top subs have been tied up for urgent safety checks.

The 22-man boat sailed into Plymouth Sound, flying the German flag and with her officers in the conning tower, for training exercises. Last night The Sun's military adviser Major General Ken Perkins said: "British sailors will

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We're sunk . . . U12 arrives

## Our sub's a U-boat

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think it is a rumour that the best navy afloat cannot provide its own boats for training. Admiral Nelson must be turning in his grave."

The 500-ton U12 arrived on Monday as all of Britain's 12-strong fleet of Trafalgar class nuclear subs were confined to dock.

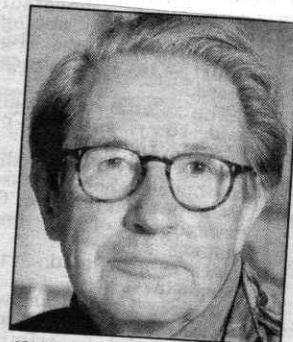
It meant the 32-year-old vessel — one of the first built by Germany after the war — was the ONLY operational submarine in Britain's territorial waters.

One British sub, one of the four Vanguard class carrying the Trident nuclear deterrent, was at sea — but believed to be on the other side of the world.

The role of U12, which can pack up to 21 torpedoes, was to lurk off our coast and act as a "target" for British frigates and destroyers.

A senior Navy officer admitted: "This is an unfortunate combination of circumstances.

"But the Germans are our Nato allies and the submarine we are



'Sickening' . . . Gen Perkins

renting from them will play a vital part in exercises."

Last night it emerged the German sub is only the latest in a series we have rented for deep-sea war games. We have even hired subs from the navies of countries including Portugal, Sweden and Italy.

And to add to the farce Britain has four unused diesel-powered subs, costing £620million, waiting to be leased to Canada.

Military experts blamed defence spending cutbacks for the rent-a-sub system.

Major General Perkins said: "The U-Boats which came within a whisker of bringing this country to its knees in the war now provide training facilities for the Royal Navy.

"It makes me sick and it's bad for morale."

Ex-Navy officer Mike Critchley, editor of Warship World, said: "It is a regrettable state of affairs that the only submarine at sea in UK waters was a German U-boat on hire to the RN — the result of defence cuts from past years."

## WHAT THE MOD SAY

A MINISTRY of Defence spokesman said in a statement to The Sun last night:

There is nothing unusual in German U-Boats participating in Royal Navy Operational Sea Training. They have been doing so for over 30 years.

This is a very cost effective method of providing our forces with a valuable training asset. We also use vessels from the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Turkey, and Sweden in exactly the same way.