

# A red nose for diving A-sub

## EXCLUSIVE

By ANGUS MACLEOD

**A** NUCLEAR-POWERED submarine has been damaged following a bizarre accident in Scottish waters.

Last night the sub was under repair in Faslane after diving in water that was TOO SHALLOW.

Red-faced Navy bosses were trying to play down the incident.

They even refused to name the sub involved. But the Mail can reveal it's one of Britain's six S-class subs.

They are the Swiftsure, Sovereign, Superb, Sceptre, Spartan and Splendid.

The sub was on exercise off the West Coast when it touched the sea bottom.

The Navy would only say that it received "superficial damage" in the accident nine days ago, on Friday the 13th.

## Secret

But defence sources said it suffered "a very sore nose" and will be out of action for some time.

Defence expert Malcolm Spaven of Edinburgh University commented: "Charts are constantly updated.

"That's what makes this incident so surprising."

The Navy would not reveal where the incident happened, but it's thought to be close to Loch Linnhe where top secret trials are under way.

The latest scrape is the THIRD involving Navy vessels in nine days.

Five days ago HMS Brecon ran aground on Arran.

And on Friday a fleet auxiliary beached itself on a mudbank off Ardrossan.

# A-SUB FLEET KO'D!

**B** BRITAIN'S ageing nuclear deterrent, the Polaris sub fleet, is crippled ... and has been for TWO YEARS.

Top brass in the Ministry of Defence are said to be in a flap over the shock disclosure.

And last night they were moving to play down the crisis to hit the Clyde-based subs after they were accused of a cover-up.

Serious reactor problems are said to exist in THREE of the four subs - which are not due to be replaced by Trident until the mid-nineties.

It's said to have sunk normal operations. One

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Polaris sub is on patrol at sea at all times.

But, crucially, TWO others should also be ready for immediate operation at any time.

Yesterday, nuclear experts and MPs were demanding that the Government give a full explanation.

And there are fears Britain was effectively left without a fully-

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