

# Fears of n-sub mishap ruled out by officer

A SENIOR Plymouth naval officer today dismissed fears of a nuclear submarine accident at Devonport Naval Base and said: "It would take a jumbo jet to hole a nuclear sub".

Captain Charles Pezzey was answering "worst-case scenario" fears that retired nuclear boats could spring a radioactive leak if rammed within the dockyard.

But he said: "A jumbo jet is the only thing large enough and heavy enough to hole a decommissioned nuclear submarine, and I think the chances of a 747 even passing overhead, much less than crashing on Devonport, are highly unlikely.

"Even if this happened, I doubt

by IAIN BALLANTYNE

the jumbo jet would cause enough damage to threaten a release of radioactive material.

"If a jumbo crashed on Devonport, civil authorities would have more to worry about than an old nuclear submarine being sunk. Submarines are, after all, meant to operate underwater and remain safe."

He said aircraft of any type were forbidden from flying below 500 feet over the Naval Base and Dash 7 planes based at Plymouth city airport were not big enough to worry about.

Captain Pezzey is Staff Officer (Nuclear) at Devonport Naval Base and is responsible for all aspects of safety with the RN's seven operational nuclear submarines.

He made his comments following the publication of reports on nuclear submarine decommissioning at Devonport by Plymouth City Council nuclear expert Doctor Robert Wheaton.

Doctor Wheaton said in his report that a fire aboard a decommissioned submarine was a possible danger, although he pointed out it was highly unlikely.

Captain Pezzey said: "The decommissioned subs are dead and sealed off with nothing aboard which could pose a fire risk.

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## Death by asbestos

A FORMER Devonport Dockyard welder died of a disease brought about by her exposure to asbestos on naval ships, an inquest heard.

Eugenia Harding, 69, of Green Park Road, Plymstock, had worked on naval ships through-

out the Second World War and went on to become a shop assistant, her husband Stephen told the hearing in Plymouth in a statement yesterday.

Plymouth coroner David Bishop recorded a verdict of death by industrial disease