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THE WEEKLY NEWS

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says 60s pop star Mike Pender



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I want my art to help others cope

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Invasion of the parateddies

A BORDER guard has been jailed for failing to stop an invasion — by teddy bears.

The Belorussian guard didn't report sighting a plane flown by two Swedes who dropped the cuddly toys over his country's capital, Minsk, last July.

Apparently, the parachuting teddies, bearing pro-democracy messages, incensed Belarus dictator Alexander Lukashenko, and the guard bore the brunt of his wrath.

Anne's story for today's children



Her diary lives on.

THE famous diary written by Nazi victim Anne Frank has been upgraded for the 21st century in the form of an app.

A new generation of schoolchildren can read her story in a modern way, with a wealth of additional material such as videos, maps, and a 3D model of the Secret Annexe, carefully integrated into the text.

A new teachers' pack has been developed to use in conjunction with the digital version.

Secret of piping hot coffee!

PLUMBERS at British airports could be reminded to maintain high standards — after people were served radiator water at a Swedish airbase!

Workers in the town of Blekinge found they'd been drinking coffee made with water from a radiator, due to pipes being wrongly connected.

A squadron captain pointed out that, as coffee is brown or

AS a former soldier in the British Army, I know that art can help people through terrible situations — after all, that's what happened to me.

Last year, I was part of the Diamond Jubilee 20 Artists, a commission by the BBC to interpret the pageant on the River Thames.

I've come a long way through art!

I'm 34 now, and was born in Cameroon but moved to England and joined the Adjutant General's Corps, going on to serve in Kuwait and the Middle East.

During that time, a fly got in my eye, and though I went for medical help, they couldn't find anything.

It wasn't until I got home, and was going to the birth of my daughter, that the problem really got worse, and I was in so much pain that I had to be rushed to A&E and missed the birth.

They found a worm in my eye, which sounds horrible, of course, and it was.

My sight is OK now but while I was recovering, I felt very nostalgic and homesick,

His OWN story

by Adjani Okpu-Egbe

and I remembered how I used to draw and sketch as a young boy.

I tried it again, and people told me it was very good.

In my childhood in Cameroon, my businessman father would tell me to study mathematics and become a businessman, too.

But I would secretly paint or draw — quickly



Former soldier Adjani wants his strikingly-colourful art to help highlight people's problems.

putting the maths papers over the drawing, if Dad came into the room!

My next exhibition is this month in Yaounde, Cameroon, where I've been invited by the British High Commissioner to show my work during the celebration of the Commonwealth week.

But it's not so important to me that I have exhibitions now, in New York or London, or that they sell for a lot of money — what I really want with my art

is to highlight people's problems.

I want people to think about anorexia, bulimia, depression, mental health, and I'm trying to do this through my art.

I've gone through problems and in my work, I hope that I can be a bridge between people and bring them together to help each other.

I also think that art can be great for all ex-soldiers who have been through trauma, both on the battlefield and in their lives.

Anti-depressants can be very addictive and, though I know not everyone can become an artist, there are things that can help soldiers.

It's a shame that centres are being closed because of the general trouble with money just now. For combat stress, art can be a big help.

When I didn't have

anywhere to stay after leaving the Army, the British Foreign Legion gave me a place in London, and I owe people a lot.

I have my own place in London now, and I'm very grateful. My art is being recognised and I hope I can use it to help spread awareness about people's problems.

As told to Craig Campbell

● Learn more about Adjani and his work at <http://www.adjaniokpuegbe.com/>



This painting by Adjani was commissioned by the BBC as part of the

Soldiers' shock at what they paint

YOU don't have to be as gifted a painter as Adjani to benefit from art therapy — he's far from the only soldier who's been helped by it, writes Craig Campbell.

It's reckoned that painting, drawing and other art forms help break down the destructive chain of thought that troops get stuck in after battle.

Traumatised, or what we used to call shellshocked, many of our heroes return home and struggle

getting to the root of the soldiers' troubles. Feeling "disconnected" wearing a mask in public and bottling up feelings of panic, or rage, is the last thing these men and women should do.

For some people, putting your deepest, darkest feelings onto paper or canvas is almost like lying on a couch being analysed by a psychiatrist.

Many soldiers report they're shocked to see what they paint — soon followed by relief to have it out in the open.

For their carers, it helps them

get to the root of the soldiers' troubles. Feeling "disconnected" wearing a mask in public and bottling up feelings of panic, or rage, is the last thing these men and women should do.

It's a fact that traumatic memories are stored in the right brain hemisphere. Armed with that knowledge, the experts feel art therapy is a "way in" to soldiers' feelings.

It has worked, with some extremely positive results.