



Man in court over VIP sex abuse claims

BY KAREN ROCKETT

THE man whose claims sparked a £2.5million VIP sex abuse probe appeared in court yesterday charged with lying to cops and fraudulently receiving £22,000 compensation.

Known only as Nick for legal reasons, the 50-year-old faces 12 counts of perverting the course of justice and one of fraud.

Claims of a Westminster paedophile ring led to raids on ex-army chief Lord Bramall, 94, and late ex-Home Secretary Lord Brittan, 75, before Operation Midland was dropped.

The bearded defendant, in beige trousers and navy sweatshirt, confirmed his name, address, nationality and date of birth in a 13-minute hearing.

Newcastle JPs remanded him in custody until a November 19 court hearing.



Race rap on five-deaths probe delay

BY KAREN ROCKETT

RELATIVES of five African men killed at a scrap metal plant in Birmingham in 2016 have slammed a delay in probing the deaths.

The workers were crushed when a 15ft concrete wall collapsed at Shredmet Ltd, in Nechells. Family claim they would have answers if they had been white and British.

The victims were Ousmane Diabi, 39, from Senegal, and Gambian workers Alimamo Jammeh, 45, Bangally Dukureh, 55, Saibo Sillah, 42, and Muhamadou Jagana, 49.

Lamin Yaffa, chairman of the Gambian Islamic Centre, said: "How long will it take to come to a conclusion, to tell the families how loved ones died? It has taken a toll."

An inquest is due to be held next month.

AWARD-WINNING PLOT HELPS SOLDIERS DEAL WITH PTSD

EXCLUSIVE
BY VIKKI WHITE

OVERGROWN scrubland converted to an award-winning garden has provided salvation for the men who tend the plot... literally an army of them.

Veteran soldiers from across the generations toil side by side and find an inner peace that helps them heal the painful wounds of war.

The Shoulder to Soldier Community Garden in Glazebury, Cheshire, has eight raised beds where flowers, herbs and vegetables are abundant.

The transformation won recognition in the Cultivation Street competition supported by the Sunday Mirror. But for ex-soldiers like Tom Houston, 41, it's not just a garden.

It's a place where he can escape his troubles and find camaraderie.

Tom, who did two difficult tours in Northern Ireland and also served in Iraq, suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and tried to take his own life four years ago.

PEACE

He said: "I'll often sit here at eight o'clock at night, on my own. I get peace from it. I volunteered to water the garden at night time in the summer."

"Then at other times, being around the lads and the team, there's that army banter. I find it hard to walk into a café on my own, but these people know me."

"I'm undergoing counselling but they don't have the military background. When I'm talking about IEDs, casualties and weapons, these guys understand."

This is exactly what garden founder Linda Fisher was hoping for when she came up with the idea two years ago.

The former local government CEO, who set up charity Shoulder to Soldier, hopes it will be the first of many such spaces around the country.

She said: "I was helping veterans for years and decided to set the charity up in June last year, to give people a purpose while they were waiting for professional services. We take veterans off the streets and put them in a hotel while we secure accommodation. We get them jobs."

"A lot of them are getting professional help and medication but it's not enough - they need a purpose."

"At the community garden, we've brought people together. The key part is a lot of the guys support each other now."

The allotment was gifted to the group by garden centre giant Bents, which had used the land for growing stock. The firm also donated bedding plants, and materials came from Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Network Rail.

Volunteer and qualified landscape gardener Dave Round, 33 - discharged from the infantry in 2009 with a hand injury - drew up the plans.

Then a 40-strong team, including volunteer case worker Graham Young, set to work, with Sunday wedding sessions and bacon butties a weekly highlight.

Tom, of Leigh, Gtr Manchester, said his life has turned a corner thanks to Shoulder to Soldier and the gardening is as vital as counselling and medication.

He studies maths and English at college with the hope of entering an



“These guys can offer each other support, we bring them together...”
LINDA FISHER CHARITY CHIEF ON UNIQUE GARDEN

BANTER John (and inset) loves meeting buddies

SHED SALUTE Tom (also inset), David and image of injured soldier



“If it wasn't for places like this I'd be in a box, it helps you smile again”
PETER DELUCE GARDEN HELPS COMBAT HIS PTSD

CALMING Peter (inset in Army) is able to relax

BOND Former marine Ken (and inset) has made friends



GARDEN FORCE Veterans get cheque for £1,000 from Mirror man David



ON TOUR Linda shows our David the garden

for 50 years - uses a wheelchair and suffers from tinnitus and PTSD.

He said: "PTSD is a nightmare. I've been suicidal. It's very hard to explain to people what's

going on in your mind and a trigger point can bring it all back. My bad memories are from Yemen in 1967 - the things I saw and what happened."

"I lost some mates there. I see a psychologist once a week. I've not socialised for many years but I've been coming here about six weeks and the team are so helpful. We have good banter, it's like

being off-duty in the desert in the Army." Sunday Mirror gardening columnist David Domoney presented the garden, one of five regional winners, with a £1,000 cheque and 100 geranium plants from sponsor Calliope Flowers.

David said: "Some of the guys have been in quite dark places and through supporting each other they have lifted themselves up."

"There's a friendship born through gardening. It's the positive power of plants that has put it together."

"They've created an active garden with a natural, rustic feel. They are passionate about what they grow - a mix of fruit,

vegetables, herbs and flower colour." With no dedicated funding, crops are sold to a local pub to raise money so that veterans like Peter Deluce, 55, have the support they need.

The Gulf War veteran said: "I don't like talking about it much but I was in the Queen's Lancashire Regiment. I joined back in 1985, aged 22, and served until 2003. Then you're just tossed to one side as if you're nothing."

The dad of two from Westhoughton, Gtr Manchester, broke his neck and back in the Army and later lost a leg after a mountain accident. He has severe nerve damage and PTSD and is prescribed ketamine and morphine for the pain, meaning he is unable to work.

Peter added: "I get a lot of peace in the

garden. I don't have to take medication some days, I can just come and sit here and relax."

"It means the world to know people care because you spend years thinking people don't."

"If it wasn't for places like this I know I'd be in a box. They make you feel you can be part of society, that you can smile again."

HAUNTED

Peter has bonded with World War II vet and amputee Kenneth Preter, 94. Former Royal Marine Ken is haunted by six months serving in Hong Kong. "The Chinese were starving," he recalled. "All these little kids roaming about begging. The Japanese had killed their parents and just left them. At night they slept in the

gutter. If you landed anywhere, for weeks and weeks it was drummed into us, kill everything in front of you... not to hesitate, because they would shoot you."

"It affected me for years. When I was having my leg off in 2007, I woke up one morning and thought I was in a Japanese prison camp."

But now Ken relishes each day. He said: "I look forward to coming here. I've never met people so kind and friendly."

A scene on one shed depicts a soldier helping a wounded pal. A poignant image as Remembrance Day nears - and an everlasting symbol of the camaraderie shared by these gardeners.

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See shouldertosoldier.org.uk for more info

What's it worth?

JAMIE BREESE
On Antiques & Collectables



RELIC War mask

Q I would be very grateful for some advice on the World War One gas mask I have. Also known as a PH helmet, it has been on display at Bristol Museum as part of an exhibition. It is in perfect condition and has been framed by the museum to protect it. Can you give me an idea on its value?
John Forster, via email

A My grandfather served in the British Army and was in the trenches of France in WWI - when gas attacks were a constant and terrifying threat. The PH stands for Phenate Hexamine and came into use in 1915. It is understood that four million were made - mass production by any standards. However, I imagine finding original examples of museum standard, in great condition, must be quite hard. So I believe you are talking about several hundred pounds, maybe even more.

Q I have a collection of Pendelfin pot figurines - Father Rabbit, Mother and Baby Rabbit, plus 12 baby rabbits. Do you know how much they are worth?
Eric Taylor, Preston



POT LUCK Rabbit

A The Pendelfin collection was first produced from a garden shed in Pendle, Lancs - not that far from Preston. It all started in 1953 when founders Jean Walmsley Heap and Jeannie Todd planned to make Christmas presents for their friends. By 1956 they were a genuine cottage industry producing these hugely popular figurines. Hundreds of characters and buildings were created and it is difficult to put a value on yours without knowing exactly which ones you have. They will certainly be worth a few pounds each. However, some of the rarest characters sell for hundreds of pounds and they are eagerly traded at auction and on internet sales sites. If you have the earlier pieces, you could be sitting on a small fortune. Especially sought after are the rare horn-playing rabbit Cha Cha, produced from 1959 to 1961. Other favourites are the early versions of the Father Rabbits.

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