

# ABOLISH WAR

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£1

## 'War is organised murder'

Another year gone and another Remembrance Day to record, and for the increasing number of families who are losing people in Afghanistan, another day to endure. But two faces will be missing this year. We have lost the last survivors of WWI, Henry Allingham and Harry Patch - no more living testimony to the horrors of that war. At 113 Henry Allingham was the world's oldest



Henry Allingham 1896-2009

man when he died on 18 July. The last surviving founder member of the RAF, the last man to have witnessed the Battle of Jutland and the last surviving member of the Royal Naval Air Service, it was only in the last few years that he spoke about his experiences in the war. He remembered spending a night in a shellhole in Flanders. 'It stank,' he said. 'So did I when I fell into it. Arms and legs, dead rats, dead everything. Rotten flesh. Human guts. I couldn't get a

bath for three or four months afterwards.' How many other survivors bottled up memories like that?

Just a week later Harry Patch died aged 111. It was Harry that captured the public's attention. Like Henry, he had refused to speak about his experiences for many years because those memories were so terrible. When he finally broke his silence he became an outspoken advocate for peace and diplomacy, particularly in schools, and we shall be quoting his words for many years to come. Under his

**'At the end, the peace was settled round a table, so why the hell couldn't they do that at the start without losing millions of men?'**

Harry Patch

instructions, his funeral service in Wells Cathedral was defiantly anti-war. No weapons, even ceremonial ones, were to be worn, and although his coffin was borne by soldiers, they were chosen to represent the countries who had been enemies in WWI. The establishment did its best to annex Harry in support of our present conflicts. General Dannatt said, 'He was the last of a generation that in youth was steadfast in its duty in the face of cruel sacrifice and we give thanks for his life - as well as those of his comrades - for upholding the same values and freedom that we continue to cherish and fight for



Harry Patch 1898-2009

today.' Fine words, but we don't think so. Harry may have done his duty, but he was conscripted. Never forget that. His life demonstrated that his values differed to those that took us into Iraq and Afghanistan, and the lesson he learnt from his experience of war was that fighting solves nothing - a lesson our leaders continually fail to learn.

But another well known advocate for peace is still here. In August Brian Haw passed a milestone - he has been camped on the pavement opposite the Houses of Parliament for 3000 days. That's over eight years of his life. 3000 days in good weather and bad. 3000 days with no physical comforts. 3000 days with worsening health problems. And, despite all those who support him one way or another, 3000 days alone. But also 3000 days of embarrassment for our politicians, 3000 days of being reminded of the utter failings of their foreign policies. They did their best to get rid of him. They thought it was outrageous that just one man could cause them so much trouble. They complained that they could not properly debate in the chamber because of the noise of his megaphone protest (presumably the traffic noise complete with police and ambulance sirens is conducive to a good debate). But he's still there, and by this time next year many MPs will have disappeared and been forgotten. A whole new generation of politicians will have to get used to this committed man calling them to account.



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All MAW members, please note! Unless you are a life member or joined after March this year, your membership subscription is due in November. Make it easy for you and us and pay by standing order.

Movement for the Abolition of War

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# Editorial

I had been thinking how for some people at least war has become something of a distant activity. For many, war is still bullets and bombs (or even machetes and knives), smashed buildings and broken bodies, pain, blood and guts spilled over the ground. Yet the perpetrators of war are removing themselves further and further away from the actual killing. It used to be the generals standing on the hilltop overlooking the carnage. Now it is a computer geek staring at a screen thousands of miles away<sup>(1)</sup>.

At the same time modern warfare doesn't work in an ancient land with guerrilla fighters. So in July I learn that because modern warfare couldn't cope with the nature of fighting in Afghanistan, the old art of the sniper was being resurrected<sup>(2)</sup>. Mind you, judging from the photos of the camouflage being used there I suspect it won't be long before the insurgents start targeting anything that looks like a small mobile haystack. Worzel Gummidge with a Kalashnikov isn't in it.



*Sniper in camouflage netting, entwined with local vegetation*

Just two days later I see that Lord Bingham is suggesting that drones (the larger hunter-killer models are appropriately called Predators and Reapers), responsible for so many civilian deaths in Afghanistan and Pakistan, are no better than mines and

cluster munitions and should be outlawed. The British are just as enthusiastic over their use as the Americans. Using drones for surveillance is one thing, but, as Capt. Giles O'Sullivan-Wade of the Royal Artillery said, 'There is a danger that, with armed drones, you become judge, jury and executioner'<sup>(3)</sup>. Very true. Except that executioners weren't known for dragging along wives, children, old aunties, wedding guests and any unconnected passers-by to the block as well. Even executioners are more discriminating than that. Yet in August Gen. Stephen R. Lorenz of Air Education and Training Command said that the US Air Force will train more pilots to fly unmanned aerial systems from ground operations centres this year than pilots to fly fighter or bomber aircraft<sup>(4)</sup>. If the people you are targetting are fuzzy images far below, it is easy to distance yourself from blood, torn bodies and spilled guts. And from the guilt.

And now we have a UNAMA Human Rights report on the escalating number of civilian deaths in Afghanistan<sup>(5)</sup>. For the first 6 months of this year there were 1013 deaths, an increase of 24% as compared to the same period last year. And these were only the figures they could verify. Because as Afghanistan is a Muslim country with the practice of burial within 24 hours, and with many targeted villages being difficult to reach, it is almost impossible to verify the true number of people being killed.

While the figures include casualties from air strike attacks by

piloted planes, they do *not* include casualties from unmanned drone attacks. Those of course only ever kill Taliban fighters. Oh yes? How could they tell? Even when they were recording Taliban deaths, which the US is no longer doing<sup>(6)</sup>, insurgents and resistance fighters tend not to wear uniforms (although the wearer of a black turban is assumed to be Taliban). And it is no good saying they are hiding behind human shields. If the insurgents are Afghan, surely they must live in Afghan villages and towns.

But here's the key as to how we count the dead. Three years ago US officials reported that over 600 Taliban fighters had been

killed that month<sup>(7)</sup>. The Guardian article went on, 'It is also estimated that more than 1,700 people have been killed since the start of the year. They include civilians, aid workers, Afghan forces and more than 70 foreign troops.' The Taliban are obviously not 'people'.

Our soldiers are people. They get killed, they bleed, suffer pain and injury, have families, wives and children. All this applies to the Taliban. As much as I abhor their ideology, each death and injury affects their loved ones, and out of respect to their families, their deaths should be properly recorded and acknowledged. Because, as John Donne wrote, 'Any man's death diminishes me'.

No one knows, no one will ever know, the true figures for the human cost of our wars, particularly when we choose to fight them at arm's length.

1. *A War of Drones: "disrupt, dismantle and defeat"*, International Environmental Law 23 April 2009
2. *Return of the Sniper*, Independent 4 July 2009
3. *Drones: silent killers, or a vital source of information against the Taliban?* Independent, 15 August 2009
4. *Air Force Training More Pilots for Drones Than for Manned Planes*, Washington Post 11 August 2009
5. *UNAMA Human Rights – Civilian Casualties*, published 31 July 2009
6. *US Stops Giving Militant Death Tolls in Afghanistan*, Common Dreams, 25 July 2009
7. *600 Taliban killed in bloodiest month for 5 years*, Guardian, 26 July 2006

## Own Goals No. 1

About a quarter of all the British Forces personnel to have died in Afghanistan have done so while travelling in poorly protected vehicles, and not just the infamous Snatch Land Rovers at that. A replacement for the Snatch was the Jackal, the design of which, according to defence expert Dr Richard North, is fundamentally flawed. 'The driver sits over the front wheel, the most vulnerable part of the vehicle which is also the most likely to trigger, and so take the full force of, a mine. The bottom of the Jackal is flat, meaning the blast is not dissipated. Reinforcing the bottom with more armour – as with the Jackal II – means that the vehicle will flip over with the force of a blast and crush its passengers.' Now convoys are having to travel at 4 mph with a man and minesweeper walking in front.

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## Our Aims and Goals

To spread the belief that the abolition of war is both desirable and possible

To raise awareness of the alternatives to war for resolving national and international disputes

To develop materials and strategies to educate us all from school children to those in government

# Chair's Report

## The times demand change, not just more of the same

This must surely be an extraordinarily critical time in world politics. Decisions taken over the next year on climate change and nuclear proliferation may well determine whether humanity has a future or is destined for mass creative destruction. The danger is that political leaders, trying to satisfy short-term interests, will give us more of the same – marginal adjustments – when a radical rebalancing of the way resources are used is necessary for a secure planet. They could use the \$1.4 trillion spent on the military each year to fund the effort needed to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels by 2050 which is a similar amount.

**It's getting dark, but not dark enough to see  
An exit wound as an exit strategy.**

**Afghanistan**  
by Paul Muldoon

The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan sour international relations and are a waste of resources. President Obama has made the right noises about reducing military involvement but increased troop levels in Afghanistan and delayed Iraq withdrawal. The language of the

last eight years has changed – yet the old logic persists because of other political pressures.

But, it is now crunch time. General McChrystal, advising the president, has bluntly stated there are only two military options: major escalation or evacuation. Deepening disagreement and scepticism both in the US and Europe about Afghan policy suggests Obama has a very small window of opportunity, politically and militarily, to retrieve the situation. Now is the moment to admit defeat and come home. But will he do it?

An end to the Afghanistan conflict would also be the final unravelling of a grand narrative – 'the war on terror'. Militarily, strategically, politically and diplomatically it has been an abject failure on its own terms, not to say counterproductive. Having retired the term 'war on terror' – it is now 'overseas contingency operations' – Obama should now retire the war itself.



*Chairing the discussion with Armed Forces Minister, Bill Rammell at the "Law and accountability" conference when questions focused on Afghanistan and Britain's nuclear weapons.*

## Iran and nuclear proliferation

A serious consequence of President Ahmadinejad's re-election is the loss of the best-case scenario for dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions - a reformist victory and a new Iranian government willing to stop short of turning into the world's 10th nuclear state. The scale of opposition protests suggests that change will come, but it may arrive later than sooner. In the meantime, we have an insecure conservative regime that hopes to shore up its fragile

position by making national security the defining issue of domestic politics.

Waiting in the wings is a hardline Israeli government, unwilling to tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran and ready to bomb Iran's nuclear installations if it believed it necessary (possibly without USA support). This could be disastrous. It is time, therefore, for western leaders to consider if such an outcome would really be preferable to the alternative of adjusting to the prospect of an Iranian bomb, at least in the short term. This judgment would depend on whether Iran is viewed as a collective suicide bomber, or simply as a country with the rather traditional aim of trying to increase its regional influence in the Middle East.

**There are some good signs among the difficulties.** Obama is scrapping plans for the missile shield in Poland and Czechoslovakia which may ease relations with Russia, although it must be said the US is looking for somewhere else to put a system that is potentially very dangerous as it takes humans out of the loop, relying heavily upon computers with all that entails.

It is also good to hear that Obama has rejected the Pentagon's first draft of the nuclear 'posture review' as being too timid, calling for a range of more far-reaching options consistent with his goal of reducing the US nuclear arsenal. This action shames past leaders who have ignored calls for such cuts, particularly as the knock on effects at next year's NPT conference could be crucial. The move is aimed at winning consensus on a new grand bargain, exchanging more radical disarmament by nuclear powers for wider global efforts to prevent further proliferation. It is also related to the attitude of different countries to Iran's possible development of nuclear weapons, particular the action to be taken by Russia.

So now is the time for the UK to scrap Trident. With one decision in line with my opening paragraph, the UK could provide a welcome boost to both the multilateral disarmament process and the international effort to avert climate catastrophe.

**MAW has an ambitious programme of events in November** (see pages 4, 5 & 6) and I hope you can join us for at least one of them.

We are mounting an exhibition of quilts and arpilleras, curated by Roberta Bacic, in the Imperial War Museum (London) on Remembrance Sunday and then at other venues, following our policy of using different forms of art in our campaigning. You may remember our second CD, *Call back the fire* was launched on Remembrance Sunday last year. We believe the arts are important in encouraging people to look anew at difficult subjects and so transform their view of the world.

And our Remembrance Sunday lecture, *Weapons of the strong: what will western states do in response to climate change?* will be given by Dr Mark Levene, Reader at Southampton University and a co-founder of Crisis Forum. The speaker and subject were chosen because of MAW's increasing focus on the link between climate change and conflict, the subject of a film we are producing for use in our work in schools. At the September conference of the Council for Christian Approaches to Defence and Disarmament held in Slovakia and attended by military and political figures, I gave a paper *Greening the road to hell: Christian responses to climate change*. If anyone would like a copy please let me know.

Climate change has become the issue of our age and the world's fate hangs on the Copenhagen conference in December. Let us hope that people in 2050 will not be looking back at the next few years as 'the age of stupid' as in Fanny Armstrong's film (see page 12).

**Tony Kempster**

# As The Women Sew\*

1. When the times are hard and the going's tough,  
when you work all day and it's not enough,  
when there is no bread, and the children cry,  
and the menfolk curse, and the women sigh,  
then the women sew,  
and their stitches speak  
of a spirit strong  
though the body's weak;  
with a grip on love  
that they won't let go,  
see their fingers care  
as the women sew.



2. When you live your life in the grip of fear  
of the bomb and gun that are always near,  
when they come at night to disturb your sleep,  
when they take the men, and the women weep,  
then the women sew,  
and their stitches shout  
against violent power  
shutting justice out;  
with a grip on rage  
that they won't let go,  
see their fingers fight  
as the women sew.

3. When you live aware of a bloodstained past,  
when suspicions lurk, on which hatreds feed,  
when the children doubt, and the women plead,  
then the women sew,  
and their stitches sing  
of the fairer world  
only peace can bring;  
with a grip on hope  
that they won't let go,  
see their fingers build  
as the women sew.



4. Yes, the women sew, and their stitches hold,  
and a fragile quilt is worth more than gold;  
with a grip on life that they won't let go,  
see their fingers heal as the women sew.  
Yes, the women sew,  
and their stitches hold,  
and a fragile quilt  
is worth more than gold;  
with a grip on life  
that they won't let go,  
see their fingers care,  
see their fingers fight,  
see their fingers build,  
see their fingers heal  
as the women sew.

## Arpilleras & Quilts

1. The Lost Children of War - N. Ireland 2009, by Irene MacWilliam
2. Rape is a Crime - Peru 1985, by M.H (from Mujeres Creativas)
3. Homage to the Fallen Ones - Chile late 1970's, by anon.
4. Peace Justice Freedom - Chile late 1970's by anon.

\* **As The Women Sew** - a new song written by Sue Gilmurray, especially for The Human Cost of War exhibition. Sue will perform her song for the first time at the Imperial War Museum on Remembrance Sunday

# The Human Cost of War

**In our campaign to abolish war, art takes many forms and can be a powerful tool for education.**

MAW is proud to host an exhibition of quilts and arpilleras (South American appliqué textile pictures) from different countries, created by women in response to violence and conflict. All over the world in situations of conflict and repression women fight to protect their families and work to find them when their fathers, husbands and children are 'disappeared'. In these circumstances, how do women find a voice of protest when to speak out can endanger their lives and the lives and safety of their families? How do they say what they feel when rape, imprisonment and torture are used to silence them? They resort to a traditional skill with traditional tools – needle and thread. The exhibition will be both the centre of and backdrop to a series of debates and events, and will take place in three different venues. Starting at the Imperial War Museum (London) on Remembrance Sunday, it will be on show to the public in the Cinema, where MAW's annual Remembrance Lecture, this year being given by Dr Mark Levene (see next page) takes place in the afternoon. At our AGM in the morning the curator of the exhibition, Roberta Bacic, will give a talk about the quilts and arpilleras.

One of the quilts, *Executed at Dawn*, commemorates the soldiers who were shot for cowardice in WWI. Janet Booth, the granddaughter of Harry Farr, one of those soldiers, and who led the successful campaign to obtain a pardon for the 306 soldiers involved, will be with us at the Museum, and will be speaking. From 18 to 21 November the exhibition will be at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, where one day will focus on the Troubles in Northern Ireland. There will also be an evening concert featuring Chilean music. On 21 November, while the exhibition remains at St Ethelburga's, the Spanish quilts will be at the Whitechapel Gallery, forming the base for an illustrated seminar on the Spanish Civil War. This will take place in the gallery in which the Guernica tapestry is displayed. Curated by Roberta, exhibitions of quilts and arpilleras are being shown in more and more countries as people respond to their message. Below, Roberta explains how she became involved in this work:

## How did I become involved in curating arpilleras and quilts exhibitions?



Roberta Bacic

It is both easy and complex to respond briefly to this question. The curatorial work at this stage of my life has meant a synthesis of all I have done before.

First, I have never made quilts or arpilleras, so my closeness and connection to these powerful textiles comes from a different source. It relates to the power of the messages and feelings they evoke and bring out.

Having worked for over 25 years in my country, Chile, with people affected by gross human rights violations, I was always aware that words were not enough to transmit the experiences that brought people, specially women, to the limit of what is bearable. I say women

because it was mostly men who were made to disappear or were executed. So the women stayed alone and had to completely change their lives. They used a resource women have had at hand for thousands of years, sewing.

I had come across arpilleras since 1975 and had given some as presents to friends living overseas. When I came to live in Northern Ireland in 2004 I was asked by Quaker House Belfast if I would have any idea on how we could explore in a different way 'dealing with the past'. My comment was that I thought that people from both sides of the divide needed to be confronted with the pain of the other as well as giving the people space to tell their stories. As an example and starting point I brought a big arpillera, called *Ayer/Hoy* (Yesterday/Today), made by Peruvian women affected by both sides of their conflict as their testimony to the Peruvian Truth Commission. The impact of this piece was immense. From there all the rest flows.

This arpillera was brought to many workshops including the West Belfast Festival, and was also used to trigger discussions. The then Mayor of Derry, taken by this piece of artwork, invited me to bring a festival of arpilleras and quilts to the city to mark International Women's Day in 2008.

In conjunction with other organisations the exhibition was made possible. As the curator, I got to meet many women and groups that quilted and collected pieces made during 'The Troubles' to display on that occasion. An international collection was also brought. The collection of Chilean arpilleras I arranged for this exhibition, *The Politics of Chilean Arpilleras*, was especially well attended and received and I was invited to exhibit it in different venues and countries.

It is the directness and clear message that seems to attract many people. It is also the colour, the capacity they have to bring out feelings and opinions in the person who looks at them and the use of simple household materials that strike.

They are a living testimony of painful memories that are brought to our present as part of today and proclaim a universal language by way of a universal means: textile, thread and needle.

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## *The Human Cost of War*

(full details will be on our website)

### Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London

Sunday, 8 November 11 am – 5 pm The quilts and arpilleras will be on display in the Cinema. 2 pm in the Cinema - Roberta Bacic and Janet Booth will speak, and Sue Gilmurray will sing *As The Women Sew*.

### St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, 78 Bishopgate, London

Wednesday 18 November 12.30 pm  
Launch of *The Human Cost of War* (exhibition open 12.30 – 9 pm)  
Talks by MAW President Professor Robert Hinde (1 pm) and Roberta Bacic (3 pm)  
4.30 pm Wine, music & poetry followed by discussion

Thursday 19 November Schools Day  
Exhibition open 10 am – 6 pm (visits by arrangement)

Friday 20 November Exhibition open 10 am – 9 pm (events being planned)

Saturday 21 November Exhibition open 11 am – 9 pm  
7.30 pm Music with Sofia Buchock (Chile) and the Andean Band KILLARAYMI.  
Admission £12. Refreshments. Advance booking [www.stethelburgas.org](http://www.stethelburgas.org)

### Whitechapel Gallery, 77-82 Whitechapel High Street, London

Saturday 21 November 11.30 am – 12.30 pm Welcome to guests by Bruce Kent  
2.30 - 4.30 pm Places must be booked.  
Illustrated seminar on the Spanish Civil War, using quilts from Spain. This event will be part of *The Nature of the Beast* exhibition by Goshka Macuga ([www.whitechapelgallery.org](http://www.whitechapelgallery.org))

# Remembrance Sunday at the Imperial War Museum

*The Human Cost of War*: quilt and arpillera exhibition (see previous page)

11 am - 1 pm The AGM will take place in the Conference Room

Speaker: Roberta Basic on *The Human Cost of War*

Presentation of the *Arthur Hewlett Award*

2 pm in the Cinema - introduced by Sue Gilmurray, who will

perform her song *As The Women Sew*

Roberta will speak about the exhibition and Janet Booth, leader of the successful campaign to obtain a pardon for the soldiers shot for cowardice in WW1, will also say a few words.

2.30 pm MAW Remembrance Day Lecture - *Weapons of the Strong* - given by Dr Mark Levene from Southampton University, an expert on genocide. He also heads Crisis Forum. Of particular interest to MAW is the series of Crisis Forum workshops which look at the links between climate change and conflict/violence.



Mark Levene

## The Morality of Nuclear Deterrence Flowchart – a tool for abolition



'Someone's written a rude word on our missile!'

Many people can see that the progress of social evolution, which will one day render war obsolete, is itself inhibited by wars and the preparation for them. The two processes - of opposing war and building peace - must go hand in hand. When the results of war constitute a global threat to our environment and to the whole fabric of civilization, the coupling of these different but complementary approaches becomes even more urgent. Nuclear weapons are still capable of destroying the Earth. The dangers have receded since the Cold War but there are still some 27,000 warheads extant with enough deployed to cause irrecoverable damage. We see increased risks of proliferation and a frightening lack of awareness of the dangers.

But there are also many constructive initiatives for nuclear disarmament: senior politicians seemingly repenting of their warlike ways; Obama and Medvedev talking about a new START treaty; continuing preparations for the renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; the promise of the draft Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Important among these initiatives is the moral debate. If there is a deep moral inconsistency in the minds of all who accept the use of nuclear weapons in defence of their country, then this is a critical point at which to approach the problem. But how can we deal with a 60-year mindset embedded in history since World War II, and cut through years of fruitless, circular arguments? People have to change their minds for themselves. This is the basis for the Decision Flowchart on the Morality of Nuclear Deterrence. It brings all the essential questions, in a logical order, onto one sheet of paper. The lines of the flowchart lead one to the next relevant question so that both disarmers and the defenders of deterrence have to face the consequences of their decisions and take responsibility for them.

The flowchart is an algorithm, a process where, if you put in the right data (in this case your answers to the moral questions) then you will come to the right answer for you. Presented in this way the logic is accessible and inescapable. For individuals it is a way to resolve the issue for themselves, and can be a revelation for

them. For groups and workshops it is an agenda for discussion and research. For dealing with national decision and policy makers it is a tool for accountability. As individuals, politicians need as much help as anyone to unravel a complex moral problem. And there can be no hiding in rhetoric - they just have to demonstrate their decision path. With this level of transparency, a national defence that depends on the possibility of incinerating countless innocent people is unlikely to remain acceptable. This can be the starting point for real change.

**Martin Birdseye, MAW Executive member**

The flowchart is available for free download at [www.nuclearmorality.com](http://www.nuclearmorality.com). Printed copies also available. For more information on this global project, contact [martin@nuclearmorality.com](mailto:martin@nuclearmorality.com) 077 6274 6895, consult the website, or write to Nuclear Morality Flowcharts, PO Box 509, Hounslow, TW3 9HU UK.

## Own Goals No. 2



*Anyone for more beansprouts?'*

The longer our military actions in Afghanistan go on, the more ridiculous it gets. On 19 June Operation Panther's Claw started, aimed at clearing the Taliban from one of their main strongholds prior to the Afghan elections in August. On 22 June, as the Black Watch moved in, they found 1.3 tonnes of poppy seed and a number of improvised explosive devices and anti-personnel mines before they could be laid. The MoD issued a jubilant press release, stating how this proved the link between the Taliban and the opium trade. However, the poppy seeds looked a little on the large side, so General Khodaidad, Afghanistan's minister of counter-narcotics, said they were a strain of 'super poppy'. Perhaps the Taliban were into genetic modification. So the poppy seeds were sent for analysis and on 1 July the MoD finally had to admit the Army had captured 1.3 tonnes of - mung beans, something Afghans put into their curries.

# Armed Forces Day

In response to the government's introduction of an Armed Forces Day on Saturday 27 June, MAW organised an evening discussion meeting on the 'Limits of military obedience' at the Imperial War Museum (London) on 26 June, with the aim of examining how far the soldier's obedience to government and military commanders should go, the legal restraints on military action and when servicemen and women have to say 'No'.

Doubts about the legality of the invasion of Iraq have presented many serving personnel with difficult moral and ethical questions. For military families this has also been a painful problem, and for the public at large there is a moral dilemma – how can they support the Armed Forces while strongly disagreeing with certain military actions? Furthermore, few people, including some in the Forces, realise that serving personnel have the right to say 'No' when asked to perform an action they genuinely believe to be illegal and/or morally wrong. This applies as much to the Chiefs of Staff as to the new recruit.

The speakers were Bruce Kent, George Farebrother (Institute for Law Accountability and Peace) and retired General Sir Hugh Beach. The meeting was chaired by Kat Barton (Quaker Peace and Social Witness).

Bruce looked at some actual cases, British, Austrian, Israeli and Russian, where individual soldiers had refused to obey orders and emphasised how impressive their actions were considering the heavy punishments as well as the public and official hostility they suffered. For a much fuller account of the whole issue of refusals by serving members of the military, which includes examples from Russia, Romania, Finland and Uruguay, Bruce recommended *The right to refuse to military orders* published by IPB and IALANA (1994).



*George Farebrother and Kat Barton (Chair) in foreground*

George gave an overview of international law obligations from the Hague Conventions to the Rome Statute which set up the International Criminal Court. His key point was that 'The Rule of Law' applies to states as well as to citizens. He ended by setting out what ordinary citizens can do to create a climate of opinion in which it is no longer acceptable for a soldier to be forced to choose between conscientious objection and blind obedience.

Hugh Beach took a different approach. While acknowledging the legal situation, he said that in practice it was the leadership of the officers that was crucially important in avoiding situations where soldiers would have to questions orders.

Perhaps where the leadership of the Armed Forces is concerned, they need to be more aware of our obligations under international law, as do the politicians who send them to war - which is where the conference on Law and Accountability (see page 8) could be useful.

**Tony Kempster**

## The Inquiry on Iraq: who's accountable?

This meeting at Friends House, London on 18 August, organised by Vijay Mehta (MAW Executive member) for Action for UN Renewal, featured some good speakers. General Sir Hugh Beach spoke of the events that led up to the invasion of Iraq; Professor Nick Grief's presentation on the legal background to the invasion, and the difficulties of prosecuting those responsible for the invasion and the resulting tragedy was very informative; and both Robert Fox (Evening Standard) and Nicholas Jones (ex-BBC correspondent) were critical of the role the media played in supporting Blair's push for war. Jones in particular felt that this was something the Iraq Inquiry, chaired by Sir John Chilcot, should look at.

In his presentation Vijay suggested that we should institute a 'reconciliation' process in Iraq, as they had in South Africa. But then who are 'we' to impose one more thing on this poor country? In thinking that, for me the most affecting part of the evening came during questions, when two Iraqis got up to speak, and refused to be silenced, one of them making the valid point that there are never any Iraqi speakers on the panel at these meetings. What this country did has caused bitter pain and anger. It is something we *must* take responsibility for and in all humility, do what *Iraqis* want in order to try to heal the damage we caused.

**Lesley Docksey**

## Whose Responsibilities?

At the end of June the Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) published *Shared Responsibilities – a national security strategy for the UK*, the final report of the ippr Commission on national security in the 21st Century. Like all such reports, it makes for interesting, if disconnected, reading.

Under the principles that the Commission believes should 'underpin UK national security strategy' we find 'In playing our role on the international stage, British sovereignty must be exercised responsibly'. It states 'Demonstrating and establishing legitimacy of state (UK) action is a strategic imperative'. In addressing the challenges the UK faces in Afghanistan, the focus should be to support the 'democratically elected government' and 'It should not be on trying to implant our own cultural norms in a country that is not ours'. Fine words; one awaits the action.

The disconnection is in the section on Trident. While the Commission believes 'the Government should vigorously pursue the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world', it also believes that a 'minimum UK deterrent is still needed', whether this is Trident or another form of nuclear weapon. It advises that the UK should continue the 'crucial ongoing preparatory concept, design and assessment phases of the Trident refresh'. But elsewhere, discussing the Defence budget, it advises that some major defence projects should be considered for cancellation. The purchase of Astute submarines 'should be in the frame'. It appears to have escaped the Commission's notice that the Astute submarines are being built to replace the current Trident-carrying submarines.

As an insight into the minds of those who either govern us or who help to shape government policy, reports like this are invaluable for those who campaign for peace, especially so when we can make ourselves heard by quoting their words back at them.

Shared Responsibilities available from [www.ippr.org.uk](http://www.ippr.org.uk) at £15.99  
A pdf of the Summary can be downloaded from the ippr website.

# And Still They Don't Listen!

This was the title of a two-day conference on Law and Accountability, held at Friends House, London at the beginning of September. It was organised by the Institute for Law & Peace (INLAP) with the support of MAW and other organisations. The aim was 1) to explore ways of approaching politicians and decision makers, getting them to genuinely listen and achieving a



*MAW Chair Tony Kempster with Claire Short MP*

dialogue rather than the standard reply letter which *doesn't* answer the question/point you raised; 2) getting those same politicians and decision makers to both understand law, particularly international law, and have due regard for it; and 3) how do we combine our knowledge and experience for future campaigning?

The first day was given over to presentations from a broad range of speakers, laying out some of the problems we face as campaigners, but also informing us of some of the resources already available. From the review of international and domestic law given by Prof. Nick Grief and Rob Manson through to hearing from people at the sharp end (such as Angie Zelter on the Trident campaign, and the solicitor Gareth Pierce whose clients included the Tipton 3 and Moazzam Begg) the 90 plus delegates were given a wealth of information to work on.

MPs Norman Baker and Claire Short also added to the debate. Norman who, like Nick Grief, has an interest in the legality of US bases in Britain, warned us that MPs are 'not the answer to everything', but encouraged our use of letters, surgery visits and, most importantly, the Freedom of Information Act. Claire spoke of the need to change people's perception of Britain's role in the world. Hanging on to our nuclear weapons and our 'special relationship' with the US is like a little boy in the playground saying 'my best friend is the school bully' – a humiliating and ridiculous position. We must raise the debate on what this

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## **If I say nothing, I have failed.**

*If I say nothing, I have failed.*

*If I do nothing, I am guilty.*

*If I live by these ideals of democracy I can see that war is failure.*

*A war of opportunity rather than necessity is unjust.*

*War is the antithesis of peace, prosperity, democracy and freedom.*

*Let us hear the stories of these young men and women.*

*Let us see through the eyes of the Iraqis and the minds of the soldiers what has occurred under the auspices of freedom and democracy.*

*Let us then ask ourselves if conflict has brought peace.*

*Let us be challenged by the horrific atrocities that no one should have to bear,*

*and then ask ourselves if they were worth it.*

**US Iraq veteran Drew Cameron**

country is for, what our foreign policy aims are and find a better, more meaningful role for the UK.

The second day was broken up into discussion groups looking at the following questions:

- How best to approach MPs and decision makers
- How can we develop a bank of useful responses based on the advice of lawyers
- What can we learn from related work carried out by other organisations
- What systems can we set up for developing and monitoring our future work

This was where the event really took off, with lots of useful ideas being put forward and experiences exchanged. The in-depth discussions that followed led to a better understanding of the problems we face and what we can do to address them. There were 16 sessions in all, giving participants the chance to explore all four questions, and each session had a recorder to note down the conclusions. These were all collated and reported on at the end of the day. As a break during the afternoon sessions Martin Birdseye spoke about his Morality of Nuclear Weapons flowchart (see page 6).

The Armed Forces Minister Bill Rammell appeared after the sessions ended to address the conference, and devoted most of his talk to how law-abiding the government is, something we would and do argue with. One useful outcome of this is that we may be able to engage in a real dialogue with the Ministry of Defence rather than being issued the standard letters that never answer our questions. And as a result of the discussions and the ideas they produced, a small group will be meeting to start the process of seeing how we can put these ideas into practice. *Abolish War* will keep you all informed of any future developments.

This event would not have been so successful without the huge effort put in by George Farebrother, for which we can only say a heartfelt Thank You!

**Lesley Docksey**



*MAW Vice-chair Christine Titmus questioning the Minister*

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## **American Own Goal**

On 14 August this year Lockheed Martin assembled local news reporters in upstate New York to test drive the company's entry for the Pentagon Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) contract, assuring the reporters beforehand that the vehicle is 'very hard' to tip over. What could possibly go wrong? Neil St. Clair, a cable TV news reporter for News 10 Now escaped serious injury when he flipped the vehicle over while driving it on a cross-country track. Neil walked away from the crash with only minor injuries. A photographer in the passenger seat and a Lockheed Martin test driver in the back also suffered only minor injuries. The vehicle was damaged too.

# Images of War

**Afghanistan:**  
an unwinnable war



**1. Roadside bomb at work.**  
The vehicle has flipped onto its roof with the blast (see p2).



**2. Mine clearance team at work.**  
The white flag in the background is Taliban, and it does not mean surrender.



**3. Medical team at work.**  
25% of British soldiers have died in Afghanistan because of poorly armoured vehicles.

**4. Unmanned and armed - Predator drone at work**



**5. Ruined houses**



**6. And ruined lives - the result of strikes by drones**

## Facts and Figures

218 plus British soldiers killed.

Unknown number of Afghans dead.

Taliban reported to now have some form of control over 80% of the country.

Operation Panthers Claw was to remove the Taliban and enable the people of Helmand to vote. 220 polling stations were planned for Helmand Province. 107 actually opened on the day.

In the Bariz area all 45 were forcibly shut and the ballot boxes removed and stuffed with votes for Karzai. Tribal leaders reckon they lost over 29,000 votes.

It is now officially stated that, with a 25% turnout, at least 10% of the total votes were fraudulent.

**7. And all for this - a barricaded polling station in Helmand Province**



# SIR WILLIAM RANDAL CREMER

On a recent August afternoon I spent two hours in Hampstead cemetery hunting for the monument to a man I had only just heard of - William Randal Cremer. Why? Because Cremer, the first British person to be so honoured, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1903. It was only because a keen MAW member sent in the details for the Peace Map, that I heard about him. There is a plaque to Cremer in Fareham, Hants, where he was born, but otherwise he is not remembered either in the peace movement or the wider world.



*The Cremer Memorial,  
Hampstead Cemetery*

Who was he? He started life as a child of a poor family and began work as a carpenter. Later he became a trade union organiser and then the MP for Haggerston in east London from 1885 until his death in 1908. His lifetime cause was arbitration which he enthusiastically promoted as the way to resolve international conflict.

That Gladstone agreed to arbitration over the Alabama case (a dispute with the United States after the civil war) was an early success. Cremer founded the Workman's Peace Association

which later became the International Arbitration Society. To this society he gave his Nobel prize money. Later in 1888 he set up the Inter-Parliamentary Union, whose object is the abolition of war.

He was a friend and colleague of Henry Richard, secretary of the British Peace Society for many years and also an MP. Their work must have had an effect on Tsar Nicholas II's Peace Conference of 1899. From that meeting came an international arbitration structure which developed into what is now the International Court of Justice.

After much wandering through the vast cemetery I was lucky. The monument, where his ashes were placed, must be six feet high but it was entirely covered in brambles. I managed to remove most of them and to collect the blackberries at the same time. Delicious they were too.

**Bruce Kent MAW Vice-president**

## MAW's Annual Arthur Hewlett Award

There are peace groups all over the UK doing valuable work arranging events or undertaking projects that encourage people to become involved in working for peace. Many of these groups are very active despite tiny budgets, and a boost to their funds would help them to continue with existing projects, set up new projects or arrange public events.

Each year MAW will give a sum of £300 to one of these groups. The first award will be presented at this year's AGM at the Imperial War Museum, on Sunday 8 November.

Remember, this is an annual award. Do you know of a Peace or Peace & Justice group or are you a member of such a group that you would like to nominate? Tell us why you think the group qualifies, giving us some idea of the range of its activities. The group must be supportive of MAW's work, but does not have to be affiliated to us. Bear in mind this is not a rescue package for groups that are struggling, but a well-earned reward for those who manage to be active with few resources. Send your nominations

for next year's award by emailing us via the Contact Us button on our website (heading your message Arthur Hewlett Award) or write to the editor (contact details on Page 2).

And if you want to know who has won the first Arthur Hewlett Award, then come to the Imperial War Museum on Remembrance Sunday!

## Own Goals No. 3

In August, while British soldiers die in poorly protected vehicles, a supply of Ridgeback Armoured vehicles, which do give reasonable protection against mines and roadside bombs, are held up in Dubai because there aren't the planes to transport them to Afghanistan.

## Searching for Peace

On Sunday 20 September 40 children or more (with attached adults) enjoyed themselves by taking part in the increasingly popular Children's Mystery Walk along the London Peace Trail, helped as always by Sherlock Holmes.



*'So you want to sign in, Dr Watson?'*

Children in other parts of the world are also searching for peace, with far less success. As always, they are the innocent victims of our endless wars. In Afghanistan, caught between war lords, the Taliban, Afghan and NATO forces all fighting over what turned out to be very flawed elections, the threat of injury and death is always close. The West's attempts fight 'terrorism' and force democracy upon a people means yet another generation's childhood will be damaged. For their sake we *must* abolish war.



**Put this in your diary now:  
16-17 April at the Imperial War Museum –  
MAW's Peace History Conference. Preparations are  
well under way. More details in the next issue**

# Events Diary - from Network for Peace

**14 October LONDON.** MAW event: Myth, Truth and Nation-State; How do our 'histories' help create our wars? Speaker: Professor Stefan Berger 6.30-8.30pm, Portcullis House, Westminster. All welcome. [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

## 24 October

**WORLDWIDE.** United Nations Day

**LONDON.** Scientists for Global Responsibility Conference and AGM. [info@sgr.org.uk](mailto:info@sgr.org.uk) [www.sgr.org.uk](http://www.sgr.org.uk)

**25 October LONDON.** Merchants of Death Walking Tour. London CAAT will take you on a tour of arms companies in London. 2pm at the Clock Tower outside Victoria station. Info: [londoncaat@riseup.net](mailto:londoncaat@riseup.net) or 07535 992123

**30 October CARDIFF.** Weekend Course: War & the Media. Temple of Peace, 10.am – 5.00pm. Info: [hkh@aber.ac.uk](mailto:hkh@aber.ac.uk) 01970621580 [www.aber.ac.uk/sell/courses/llearn](http://www.aber.ac.uk/sell/courses/llearn)

**31 October LONDON.** CAAT National Gathering 2009. Toynbee Studios, London, E1 6AB Info and booking: [www.caat.org.uk/events/](http://www.caat.org.uk/events/) or contact Julia on [julia@caat.org.uk](mailto:julia@caat.org.uk) or 020 7281 0297.

**6-8 November STOCKHOLM.** Conference on nuclear disarmament arranged by the Swedish Network for Nuclear Disarmament. Fee \$25 / €20. Register online (<http://nucleardisarmament.se/club/page/public/index/12049>)

**7 November COVENTRY.** The Annual Conference of the Peace Education Network at the University of Coventry. - *Creative approaches to conflict: teaching peace, human rights and reconciliation.* [www.peaceeducation.org.uk](http://www.peaceeducation.org.uk) or contact the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies, The Enterprise Centre ECG.2, Coventry

**8 November LONDON.** MAW Annual Remembrance Lecture and AGM. Followed by *The Human Cost of War* quilts and arpilleras exhibition in various venues. See pages 4, 5 & 6

**11 November COUNTRYWIDE.** Remembrance Day.

**13 – 15 November WASHINGTON D.C.** International Peace Bureau Annual Conference. *Rolling back militarism: a task for the global movement.* Info: Kevin Martin, [kmartin@peace-action.org](mailto:kmartin@peace-action.org) [www.peace-action.org](http://www.peace-action.org)

**21 November LEEDS.** The Leeds Summat. All-day gathering for people to address the big issues of our time, local and global. [www.t4p.org.uk/summat](http://www.t4p.org.uk/summat) or [hello@t4p.org.uk](mailto:hello@t4p.org.uk) 0113 350 8085.

**29 November WORLDWIDE.** International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

**5 December LONDON.** National Climate March.

Info: [www.campaigncc.org](http://www.campaigncc.org)

**10 December WORLDWIDE.** Human Rights Day.

**15 February ALDERMASTON.** Trident Ploughshares blockade.

**Don't miss it!** [www.tridentploughshares.org](http://www.tridentploughshares.org)

**27 February** Network for Peace Annual General Meeting. Venue/ theme/speakers to be announced.

**2-7 April Flame of Hope World March from Hiroshima to New York** Feeder march from Dover to Southampton.

Contact: [geowcpuk@gn.apc.org](mailto:geowcpuk@gn.apc.org)

**16-17 April LONDON** MAW Peace History Conference.

Imperial War Museum. [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

**3 - 28 May NEW YORK.** Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (RevCon) in New York.



## Own Goals No.4

At the beginning of August a leaked Army memo revealed that Britain's war effort in Afghanistan is being hindered by a number of frontline troops too fat to fight. The memo from Major Brian Dupree, of the Army physical training corps in Wiltshire, said basic fitness policy 'is not being carried out'. Units were routinely failing to fulfil the Army's basic fitness regime of two hours of physical exercise a week, he added. *Two hours a week?* What on earth do they do for the other 166 hours a week, apart from eat?

## Own Goals No. 5

And finally, it has been explained why we can't send more helicopters out to Afghanistan. The latest story to surface is that Air Commodore Simon Falla, deputy commander of Britain's joint helicopter command, had suggested Britain could only send a limited number of helicopters to Afghanistan because of a shortage of parking spaces. Tell that to the Marines!

## Why should you join MAW!

**Our aim:** to create a world where war is no longer seen as a way to solve a problem; where it has ceased to be an option; where conflict resolution means resolution, not more conflict. We have the tools, the skills and the laws that we need. We also need you. We work through education and dialogue, both nationally and in our own local communities; ordinary people taking action to realise our goal - **THE ABOLITION OF WAR.**

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

TOWN .....

COUNTY .....

POST CODE .....

TEL .....

E MAIL .....

I would like to make a regular standing order payment .....

I enclose a cheque for £.....

Yearly rates .... £20 Individual £10 Unwaged £20 Household (2 persons)

£25 Group/organisation £100 Life membership

Please make cheque payable to MAW and send to

Movement for the Abolition of War, 11 Venetia Rd., LONDON N4 1EJ

Or join online: - [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

# Reviews

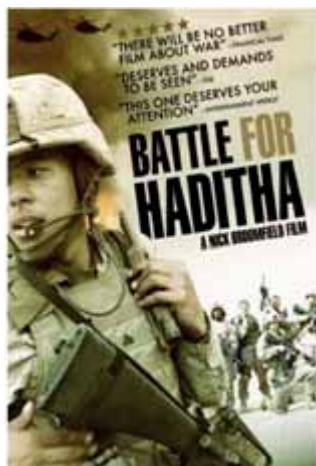
## *Battle for Haditha*

Directed by Nick Broomfield 2007

With only a handful of our troops left in Iraq, we should remind ourselves of some of the horrors that occurred during the 2003-09 occupation. This drama documentary looks at one incident, when a roadside bomb in Haditha killed a US Marine and injured two others. With the approval of their commander back at base, the Marines went on the rampage, leaving 24 innocent civilians dead. Beautifully written and shot, the film takes no sides but tells the story from the points of view of the Marines, the massacred families and the men who planted and detonated the bomb. A haunting musical theme only makes the frenetic scenes of violence with bullets spraying everywhere even more insane.

Moments stand out: one of the bombers crying as he realises their action has resulted in their own people being killed; a woman clasp her husband's body then standing up to slap and punch the platoon leader Corporal Ramiraz as a herd of goats trot past; and Ramiraz himself, breaking down with the weight of guilt at what he had done. Immediately after the event he was promoted. Months later he was charged with thirteen counts of murder.

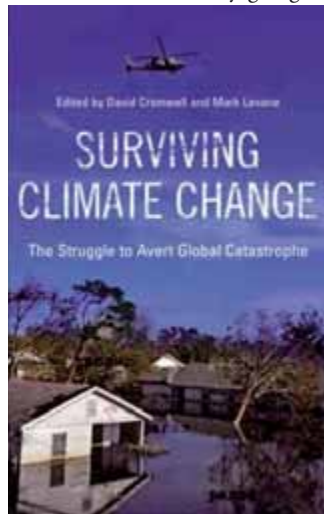
We should never forget what was done in our name in Iraq, and with directors like Nick Broomfield to make films like this, we will not.



## *Surviving Climate Change: the struggle to avert global catastrophe*

Editors David Cromwell and Mark Levene 2007 Pluto Press

This, the first multi-authored book from Crisis Forum, set up for the study of crises in the C21st ([www.crisis-forum.org.uk](http://www.crisis-forum.org.uk)), is for those who want to read about what is really going on around the politics of climate change.



Governments and business keep reassuring the public they are going to fix the problem. This book brings together some leading activists who disagree. They expose the inertia, denial, deception - even threats to our civil liberties - which comprise mainstream responses from civil and military policy makers, and from opinion formers in the media, corporations and academia.

Climate change is a pressing reality. From hurricane Katrina to melting polar ice, and from mass extinctions to increased threats to food and water security, the link between corporate globalization and planetary blowback is becoming all too evident.

An epochal change is called for in the way we all engage with the climate crisis. Key to that change is Aubrey Meyer's proposed 'Contraction and Convergence' framework for limiting global carbon emissions. This book, which also includes contributions by Mayer Hillman and George Marshall, is a powerful guide to how mass mobilisation can avert the looming catastrophe.

**Dr Mark Levene is Reader in Comparative History at Southampton University, Crisis Forum co-founder and Director of the "Climate change and violence" project. He will be giving MAW's Remembrance Sunday lecture at the Imperial War Museum (see page 6).**

# ABOLISH WAR

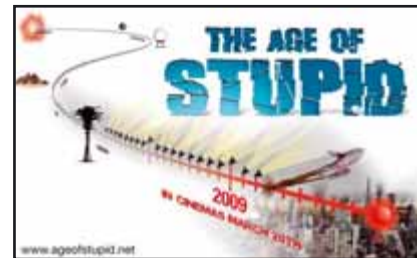
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## *The Age of Stupid*

Directed by Franny Armstrong 2009

This film, set in 2055, has a semi-fictional framework. Most of London is under water; Sydney is in flames; Las Vegas is being swallowed by the desert. The archivist (Peter Postlethwaite) lives alone in a concrete tower in the middle of the oily ocean with a museum collection of stuffed animals and priceless works of art. He sits in front of a screen watching newsreel clips, wondering why we failed to fight the 2 degrees of global warming that pushed the planet beyond the critical point in 2015.



As a documentary it is probably the most imaginative and dramatic assault on the institutional complacency shrouding the issue. Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* was quietly persuasive on global warming and probably made many converts. *The Age of Stupid*, starting with its in-your-face title, is more a hectoring lecture on the same subject.

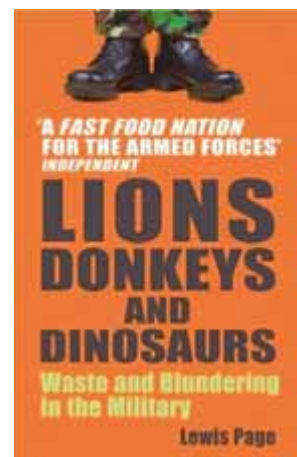
The director's aim was to give facts and figures with no exaggeration and, besides the one celebrity, it involves seven real people from seven climate change hotspots. Hindsight is a wonderful thing; *The Age of Stupid* tries to provide that hindsight while there is still time to act. It may not make for blockbuster viewing but the idea is good and several NGOs are promoting it.

The power of this film is that it gives dates and deadlines, explores options and ideas and names culprits, such as the businessman with dreams of providing dirt-cheap air travel to every man, woman, and child in India. And it is witheringly sharp about rural England's great and good who would rather shoot their neighbours than allow them to erect a wind turbine.

## *Lions, Donkeys & Dinosaurs – Waste and Blundering in the Military*

Lewis Page 2007 Arrow Books

Lewis Page had experience of all three arms of the Services, ending up in the Navy, leaving in 2004. He clearly cares about our Armed Forces, and writes with a great deal of affection, not to say in-house banter. He gives a breakdown of the Army, the Air Force and the Navy, their personnel, equipment and weapons, describing how each works – or rather, doesn't work. He's withering, sarcastic and very, very funny. He is also absolutely furious about the appalling waste of money and resources, the unnecessary procurement of expensive equipment, whether tanks, ships or planes, which look good but are not needed, when basic equipment is missing. He is angry about the cosy deals between Government and British Aerospace, deals which mean we the taxpayers always pay through the nose to get useless equipment which doesn't do what it is supposed to and which is delivered years too late. He is angry about the feather-bedding of the brass hats, the 'army' of well paid generals, admirals and air marshals sitting behind desks.



It's a riveting, infuriating, hilarious read, and stuffed full of facts and figures – the sort of facts that every campaigner against war can make use of.

**MAW news  
please!**

**You** want to read about events that are not all London-based. **We** want to hear from members around the country, and we want your actions to inspire others. So if you have organised events/actions, or are planning some, and would like to have them reported in the newsletter, then send your news to the editor (see page 2 for contact details)

