Hate graffiti daubed on memorial to British soldiers who died defending France

ANTI-BRITISH feeling in France reached a new high last week with the desecration of a cemetery for 11,000 British troops who died defending the country in World War I.

Vandals painted slogans on the cenotaph at Etaples, northern France. They included ‘Dig up your rubbish. It’s fouling our soil’, ‘Rosbeef go home’ and ‘Saddam will win and spill your blood’.

The cenotaph was also daubed with a Nazi swastika and the message ‘Death to the Yankees’.

Grubby

Anti-British sentiment has been stoked by extensive coverage in the French media of sensationalist anti-French articles that have been appearing in the UK ‘red top’ tabloids.

The Sun newspaper produced a special Paris edition on March 20 describing President Chirac as Saddam Hussein’s whore and ran a picture of Chirac and Hussein with a headline which screamed ‘Spot the difference’.

But Chirac is shrugging off the grubby headlines. “Insults say far more about the people who say them than those they attack,” was the reply from the president’s office when The Riviera Gazette asked for his reaction to The Sun’s article.

Stories of strong anti-French feelings in the US are not helping popular public sentiment in France, however.

Republican members of Congress called on Friday for French firm Sodexho’s $881 million contract to feed the US Marines to be cancelled, and eateries from the US House of Representatives’ cafeteria downwards now offer ‘freedom fries’ instead of ‘French fries’.

A French anti-war group has responded with BretzeforBush.com, a site allowing protestors to “join our action by sending a pretzel to G W Bush and stop the war.” President Bush famously choked on a pretzel whilst watching a football game on TV in January 2002.

In a survey published by Le Monde on Monday, a quarter of those polled said they were more on the side of Iraq than of the US-led coalition, whilst 34% supported the Brits and Americans.

“It’s quite disgraceful of course. I presume this is the work of young Arabs encouraged by France’s attitude towards the war,” Commander Michael Healy MBE, Chairman of the Nice-Beaulieu branch of the Royal British Legion, told The Gazette.

Shame

“I am anti the war in Iraq and support the stance that President Chirac has taken,” said Eli Plenier of Antibes-based relocation agency ASAP.

“It is a shame that the English have participated in the war, but on the other hand it is ridiculous for people to write this sort of graffiti on graves. I work with English people and certainly don’t have anything against them personally.”

Language school boss Elizabeth Marandet agrees. “I think this graffiti is completely stupid. In fact it is more than stupid. In situations like war, people with low IQs come out of the woodwork,” she said.

The graffiti was discovered last Thursday. “It was swiftly removed, but not before being seen by coachloads of visitors last week,” said Tim Reeves of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
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Cutting Ties, Cutting Taxes

As we approach the UK budget, speculation continues that the government may press ahead with plans to close the ‘non-domicile loophole’. Currently non-UK domiciled individuals are exempt from paying tax on their overseas income – providing it is not brought into the UK. The media focus has been on the 60,000 wealthy UK residents with non-domicile status, but there are many UK expatriates who may find that the proposals affect them too.

What is ‘domicile’?

Under UK law you must have a domicile for tax purposes. This is usually the place with which you have the closest connections – normally where you were born, rather than where you currently live. If you are not intending to return to Britain to live, you may be able to establish an alternative domicile. This means shaking off the UK as your domicile of birth and taking steps to show that your new home abroad is permanent.

Why become UK non-domiciled?

There are considerable tax advantages for UK nationals who are able to lose their UK domicile. If you are not domiciled in the UK, you are only subject to UK Inheritance Tax (IHT) on assets situated within the UK.

In contrast, if you are UK domiciled, IHT is 40% of the total value of your worldwide estate (after allowances). You may also find that you are liable for estate duties in your country of residence and the country in which the assets are physically located. Credit is frequently not given for tax paid in one country against tax due in another. This could mean that the total estate duty payable on your assets could actually amount to more than your assets are worth.

How do I lose my UK domicile?

The Inland Revenue will look for proof that ties with the UK have been cut and permanent ties with a new country established. This could include purchase of a house in the new country, relinquishing of rights to vote in the UK and establishment of financial ties with the new country.

You can find out in advance from the Inland Revenue whether you are classed as non-domiciled. The easiest way to test whether your domicile is by setting up a discretionary trust, making a ‘chargeable transfer’ into it and over and above lifetime exemption and reporting this to the UK Inland Revenue. If there is no tax charge to lifetime, IHT is not liable if you are not non-domiciled. If you receive a charge then you remain domiciled. And now it is too late. Changes to non-domicile status will not benefit UK expatriates or wealthy non-domiciled individuals residing in the UK.

If you would like advice on the chances of obtaining non-domicile, or further information about protecting your assets, please contact us.

The information provided in this article does not constitute advice and no responsibility will be accepted for any loss occasioned directly or indirectly as a result of persons acting, or refraining from acting, wholly or partially in reliance upon it.

Taxing issues

Since the 80s, Sovereign has helped thousands of individuals and companies to protect and maximise their assets and reduce their tax exposure. In a rapidly changing world you need the resources and support of a global organisation to ensure you’re receiving the highest possible service and advice.

There are many legitimate and highly effective ways for individuals and corporations to reduce their tax bills – and we know about most of them.

Contact Sovereign – if there’s a legal way to reduce your tax exposure we’ll find it. View our details on www.SovereignGroup.com

Offshore & Onshore Companies, Offshore Trusts, Personal Tax Planning, Corporate Tax Planning, Asset Management, Investment Services, Venture Capital, Full Administration & Accounting, Offshore Corporation Credit Cards, Trademark Registration & Protection, Trade Services, Transfer & Origination of D/C’s, Ship & Yacht Registration
What a pranker
A MAN accused of making 325 hoax calls to the emergency services in just 26 days was arrested in Marseille last week.

The 27-year-old is said to have made 49 calls in one evening alone and reported fake car blazes, road accidents and burglaries. After one fictitious call – to say he was stuck in a lift – the man stole the radio from the rescue van he had called to the scene.

Take to the sky
LOW COST carriers Globespan and Jet2 start their new services from Nice to the UK this week.
Globespan is offering flights every Monday and Friday to Edinburgh and every Thursday and Sunday to Glasgow. Jet2 will take off for Leeds-Bradford three times a week from Tuesday.

Fungus threatens cave paintings
THE celebrated prehistoric paintings in the Lascaux caves are under threat from a fungus introduced on the boots of workmen during air-conditioning work two years ago.
Experts are trying to save the paintings, dating back over 15,000 years, with fungicide and antibiotics.

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Spot check season
POLICE stopped more than 1,500 drivers in the Var over four days last week as part of their road safety campaign.
Nearly 200 motorists were charged in connection with speeding, drink-driving and using mobile phones whilst at the wheel. More spot checks are planned in the run-up to the summer season.

Mopeds to get plates
MOPEDS are to get number plates and will have to be registered like other vehicles from January 2004.
The new red plates will make 50cc scooters less prone to theft and allow police to trace dangerous moped drivers more easily.

Poverty on the rise
MORE than 7 million people live on or below the poverty line in France, according to new research by the French communist party. The poverty threshold is €740 a month.

Easyjet moves to T2
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Parents to face fines
THE government is considering slapping £750 fines on the parents of school truants.
Families minister Christian Jacob stressed last week that the new proposals are aimed at supporting rather than punishing parents. The fines would be a last resort for parents considered not to be taking all necessary steps to stop their under-16s skiving.

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STARSHIP TROUPERS ...
Pandora Todd shone as Miranda, while James Brooks played robot Ariel (opposite)

PUPILS at the International School of Nice wowed audiences with the polish and pizzazz of their annual school production last weekend.
Described as ‘a rock and roll sci-fi musical loosely based on Shakespeare’s The Tempest’, Return to the Forbidden Planet is set in outer space and features 50’s pop classics including the Beach Boys’ Good Vibrations and Elvis’ classic All Shook Up.

The audience laughed along to lines including “Soft! What light through yonder airlock breaks!” and the cast had them rocking and rolling in the aisles as they belted out the hits whilst dressed as futuristic space travellers, all against the backdrop of a set that could have taught the Doctor Who production team a thing or two about designing a convincing spaceship.

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SPACE AGE TEMPEST WHIPS UP A STORM

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As Mayor Jacques Peyrat started picking up the pieces in the wake of the arrest of Nice city hall’s services chief on corruption charges, a wave of similar scandals has swept across France this week.

Those under investigation include a former prime minister, an ex-mayor of Cannes and one of Marseille’s top city hall bosses.

The long-awaited trial of three bosses of oil giant Elf-Aquitaine has opened in Paris, and the go-ahead has been given for the trial of Sir Alistair Morrant and Andre Bernard, former joint chairmen of Euromontedil, for allegedly misspending investors’ money since 1994.

The case against Edith Cresson, prime minister in 1991 and 1992, has been brought by the Belgian authorities and concerns her stint as EU Research and Education Commissioner in Brussels from 1995 to 1999. Cresson, France’s first ever woman prime minister, is the most senior official in the EU ever to be charged with fraud, forgery and abuse of confidence. Authorities say she and seven staff falsified contracts, forged others’ signatures and siphoned off EU funds for personal gain.

In Marseille, a top aide to Mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin is under investigation for peddling influence, along with three businessmen.

And in Cannes, seven years after disgraced Mayor Michel Mouillot was shangt out of the town hall, investigators say they now have enough evidence to bring him to trial. Mouillot, who was also the vice-president of the Alpes-Maritimes regional council, is suspected of siphoning Fr50,000 from funds into a hidden bank account held under a false name.

He is also accused of setting up two fake town hall jobs for two employees, the Director of Marketing and Commercial Director — and then paying himself the Fr50,000 a month salaries. Mouillot has always maintained innocence and said he went on a hunger strike whilst detained in 1996, but investigators say he was able to bring further charges against him in the near future.

**Corruption wave hits France**

**Expats face new tax facts**

Expats’ living in the EU face new hurdles when trying to minimise their tax liability with the introduction of the Saving Tax Directive.

The new directive is the result of ongoing negotiations between the EU and European low-tax financial centres designed to eliminate tax evasion within Europe.

Centres in British dependencies such as the Channel Islands will now have to either share information on their investors with the tax authorities of other EU countries or apply a withholding tax on all dividends.

“No one of the affected jurisdictions have announced their decision, which will affect thousands of expats with savings in these centres,” Bill Blevins of Blevins Franks International told The Riviera Gazette.

To help local expats find out more about the implications of the Directive, two free seminars are being held by Blevins Franks on April 10 in Cannes and on April 11 in Monaco. Those attending will have the chance to put their questions to an expert guest speaker and find out how expats can continue to legitimately avoid tax under the new rules.

Call Bob Kay on 04 93 00 17 80 to book your place.

**Le Rouret Reduced to €999,000**

A charming stone built villa in a peaceful setting with views across the country side to the sea.

The house of some 230 m² stands in grounds of about 6,700 m² and has accommodation on the ground floor consisting of a reception room, fully equipped kitchen, two bedrooms, a bathroom and a shower room. On the first floor there is the master suite and a further bedroom and bathroom. The large basement of over 100 m² has a double garage, laundry, cellars, and a store room.

Ref. BCB22

Providing access to some of the most powerful names in the industry, Knight Frank is an award-winning family business with a reputation for delivering exceptional results for its worldwide client base. Awaiting agents from Monaco to St Tropez, Peter van der Heijden Real Estate in Monaco, Riviera Realty in Vallonbse and Roger Milliot Properties in Cannes Fl are looking for their next top performers.

New Anti Stress massage centre in Cannes

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Tel: 04 93 38 69 80

The opening film at the Cannes film festival this year will be French language movie Vanjini La Tulipe, starring Spanish actress Penelope Cruz in a role originally made famous by Gina Lollobrigida in 1952.

Both Cruz and boyfriend Tom Cruise are expected to grace the red carpet at Cannes’ Palais des Festivals for the showing on May 14. Fanfan La Tulipe, directed by Gerard Krawczyk, is a swashbuckling drama set in the reign of Louis XV.

First forest fire flares

Flames spread through a forest in the Esteron region last week, destroying a dozen hectares of woodland in the area’s first forest fire of the year.

The recent sunny spell is warning.

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**High class hookers spied on Russian bosses for mafia**

A RUSSIAN spy ring has been at work on the Riviera, using call girls to get confidential business information from their wealthy clients, it was revealed this week.

The ladies of the night were paid to party with rich Russian businessmen in luxury hotels and on flash super-yachts – and then report any commercially sensitive information they picked up back to their mafia bosses.

“It’s a well known fact in the yacht industry locally that charter clients or yacht owners may wish to party with rich Russian businessmen and that prostitution is involved, although further details are expected to be revealed in the coming weeks. ‘We can confirm that two Russian nationals are under investigation by the French authorities suspected of running an illegal prostitution operation’,” Natalya Lebedev of the Russian Embassy in Paris told The Gazette.

Four interpreters listened in to phone calls for four months to collect evidence for the arrests.

The brains behind the operation, brothers identified only as Vladimir and Roman, were arrested in Paris last week after a two year investigation by French and Russian authorities.

The brothers are accused of running two separate but connected rackets. The first involved a ‘standard’ vice ring, supplying call girls in Paris.

The second used high class girls as industrial spies.

Four interpreters listened in to phone calls for four months to collect evidence for the arrests.

The girls, aged between 19 and 25 and with classy model looks were housed in apartments in the Champs Elysees district of Paris and placed on 24 hour call. The most intelligent and prettiest of the girls were then recruited into the second ‘elite’ group. These girls mixed with the Russian jet set, travelling between Paris, Courchevel, Cannes and St Tropez to spy on clients on behalf of their bosses. Neither the Parisian nor the Russian investigators are willing to give further information at this stage of the investigation, beyond the fact that the arrests have taken place and that prostitution is involved.

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The second used high class girls as industrial spies.
Former model Marjan Simmons tells Jenny Paul why she left the US rap music scene for candle making in Biot...

My Riviera
**Jobs offered**

- **SCANDINAVS LOOK HERE!** We are looking for people aged 16-25 to sell advertisements on the internet. No French or German experience required. For more info contact Johan, 01 46 45 65 75.

- **English-speaking speaking person needed for 3 years.** Free hotel pick up & same area transportation available. (00 37 07 95 52 53)


- **WANTED: mother's help for August month in Antibes.** 500 – 700 € paid per week. Phone 06 72 47 30 58.

- **IMPORTANT: Charlie will be away from home for the 1st week of August.** The house sits empty. No pets. No smoking. Contact Claire, 06 09 06 88 38.

- **ENGLISH- speaking helpful babysitter needed for 3 years ending due to house sale.** Live-in position. Current post of 7 years. Chauffeur/housekeeper, married to Franco–USA family. 3 children, school fees refunded. 04 93 42 17 40.

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- **LEARNING**

  - **FRENCH immersion courses for adults at family-run centre, 3km from Cannes.** 04 94 43 19 12. Includes: Housing – meals – wine tastings.

  - **LEARNING French... don't give up – Fabien Tomaselli.** Over 154,000 students in 54 countries. 06 71 96 10 22.

  - **BOOK your classified ad online at www.therivieragazette.com**

  - **ROOKY house cleaning, senior & part-time, housekeeping, cat sitting. 06 71 96 10 22.

- **JEN, 04 93 09 66 43</p>
What's On and Where To Go...

Thursday 3

● The Monte Carlo International Electric & Hybrid Vehicles Show starts tonight at the Principality’s Auditorium Rainer III at 11:00. Tickets from €50 to €80. Tel +377 93 10 85 17.

● The Ensemble Baroque de Nice is performing a concert tonight and tomorrow at the Théâtre Josephine Baker on avenue de Cannes. Tel: 04 93 28 22 32.

● The 5th Rallye de Grasse starts tonight, until Sunday. The first stage, from 16 Cathedral of Vaulx-En-Velin, starts at 20:45. Tomorrow there are six stages: the first four and the last two stages are from Côte d’Azur to Monaco, starting at 07:30 and 14:00 respectively. The fifth and second first and start and finish at Saint Aymon at 10:23 and 15:20, and the third and sixth stages, from Pont de Modène to St Aubin, start at 10:56 and 16:00. Prizewinners are on Sunday at 10:00. Tel: 04 93 80 08 71.

● The Forum, a club for younger people finding their feet on the corner, is putting on a social evening at Hippodrome Irish Pub in Canne tonight from 20:00. Live music, a special drinks promotion and a chance to meet new friends are on offer. All are welcome. E-mail forum for information at ai_forum@hotmail.com.

● Stars in Monaco has a team party for children from 17 to 17 years-old, from 20:00 to 23:00. The evening includes a buffet and a live DJ. Tel +377 97 95 95 95.

● St-Raphaël’s Salon du Bien Étre, an exhibition covering everything to do with health and wellbeing, runs from today until Sunday at the Congress Centre from 10:00 to 19:00 daily Entry free. Tel: 04 94 50 45 10.

● The 11th Festival Musical du Grand Hôtel du Casino, companies from around the world will perform on the violin and piano from 20:00. Tickets are €30, or €120 including dinner. Tel: 04 95 76 50 07.

● Writer and actress Carol Drinkwater is signing copies of ‘The Olive Season’, her latest book about her life in Provence, at Cannes English Bookshop, 11 rue Banon, Néoperon, Cannes today from 14:00 to 16:00. Tel: 04 93 49 04 08.

● LOT Buses to Cannes, Glandon, Praga, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30. Continuing today is the Electric & Hybrid Vehicles Show, the Salon de Auto and Monte Carlo Ice Stars.

Saturday 5

● Vienna’s Film Culture is on today in Place Clemenceau from 10:00 to 22:00. The annual event offers a chance to discover the foods, tastes and cultures of the many nationalities living in Vienna, including contributions from the trendi Czech, Romanians, Israelis and French. Entry free. Tel: 04 95 94 06 38.

● The final event of the PACA winter programme is this weekend at Isola 2000 with a giant downhill and half-pipe snowboarding competition today and tomorrow. The action starts at 08:00 and finishes at 16:30 each day. Tel: 04 93 23 13 13.

● Violinist Laura Corrêa and Véra Elliot on the harp will be performing classical music tonight at the Ensemble Baroque de Nice, 25 rue de la Croix at 20:00. Entry is €6, including a free drink. Tel: 04 93 80 08 71.

● The Nuit des Circus circus show is on tonight at 20:30 at the Gymnase Pierre Sauvaigo, Cagnes-sur-Mer. Entry is €15. Tel: 04 93 20 61 64.

● The 7th International Cat Show is on today and tomorrow at the Hall Gare Maritime, Cannes from 10:00 to 19:00. Entry is €6. Tel: 04 94 35 61 78.

● There’s a big local needle match tonight at the Stade Louis II. Tel: +377 97 95 95 95.

● There are a number of disciplines in the presence of both international champions and grand masters. Tickets start at €6. Tel: 04 92 70 74 07.

● Martial arts fans can head to the Stade Léray, which tonight is holding a film screening of ‘Martial Arts’. There will be demonstrations of a number of disciplines in the presence of both international champions and grand masters. Tickets start at €6. Tel: 04 92 70 74 07.

● LOT Buses to Glandon, Warsaw and Warszaw at 16:30.

● Continuing today is the Electric & Hybrid Vehicles Show, the Rally de Grasse, the Salon du Bien Étre and Where Does Your Fire Come From?

Sunday 6

● Bargain hunters should head for Juan-les-Pins today for a vide grenier – a car boot sale – at 15 avenue des Cannes. Tel: 04 99 81 72 71.

● Villeneuve-Loubet is holding a spring market, Le Marché du Printemps, in today’s village from 10:00 to 20:00. Art, crafts, flowers and food will be on offer. Entry is free. Tel: 04 93 73 18 13.

● Moscow-Santorin is holding a spring fair – Fête du Printemps – with an artisan’s market all day and a spring parade at 15:00. Local produce, art and culture will be on sale. Place Jean Jaures and Place de Gaulle. Tel: 04 93 75 75 74.

● The Cannes PACA Orchestra is playing Rossini and Verdi, and a last visit to the Théâtre Dubay, Cannes, from 16:30. Tickets are €26. Tel: 04 92 68 77 27.

● The Monte Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra presents a Musical Classic today at the Auditorium Rainer III at 11:00. Tickets from €15. Tel: +377 93 93 65 17.

● LOT Buses to Glandon, Glandon, Krakow, Stockholm, Tel Aviv and Warsaw at 16:30. Continuing today in the Electric & Hybrid Vehicles Show, the 7th International Cat Show, the Rally de Grasse, the snowboarding competition at Isola, the Ensemble Baroque de Nice, Monte Carlo Ice Stars.

Monday 7

● LOT Buses to Cannes, Glandon, Krakow, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30.

Tuesday 8

● LOT Buses to Cannes, Glandon, Krakow, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30.

Wednesday 9

● The Monte Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra presents a Musical Mid-Buy concert at 12:30 at the Salle des Vantes, Monaco. Tickets are €8. Tel +377 93 10 85 00.

● LOT Buses to Glandon, Glandon, Krakow and Warsaw at 16:30.

Now booking

● The 11th Festival Musical du Grand Hôtel du Casino, companies from around the world will perform on the violin and piano from 20:00. The annual event offers a chance to discover the foods, tastes and cultures of the many nationalities living in Vienna, including contributions from the trendi Czech, Romanians, Israelis and French. Entry free. Tel: 04 95 94 06 38.

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● There’s a big local needle match tonight at the Stade Louis II. Tel: +377 97 95 95 95.

● There are a number of disciplines in the presence of both international champions and grand masters. Tickets start at €6. Tel: 04 92 70 74 07.

● Martial arts fans can head to the Stade Léray, which tonight is holding a film screening of ‘Martial Arts’. There will be demonstrations of a number of disciplines in the presence of both international champions and grand masters. Tickets start at €6. Tel: 04 92 70 74 07.

● LOT Buses to Glandon, Warsaw and Warszaw at 16:30.

● Continuing today is the Electric & Hybrid Vehicles Show, the Rally de Grasse, the Salon du Bien Étre and Where Does Your Fire Come From?