

SitRep

YOUR WORLD THIS WEEK www.armytimes.com

[HERE'S WHY]

Members of certain Army units have worn colored berets since the World War II era to distinguish themselves from other types of soldiers.

Special Forces operators wear green, Rangers wear tan, and soldiers assigned to airborne units wear maroon. Green and tan fall into the Army's general color scheme, but why maroon?

The maroon beret was the first worn by American soldiers. Legend has it that Daphne du Maurier, novelist and wife of British 1st Airborne Division commander Maj. Gen. Frederick Browning, suggested maroon for the British army's airborne berets.

When the British and American armies joined forces to fight in World War II, Browning made the U.S. 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment honorary members of the British Parachute Regiment, presenting them with their own maroon berets.

American airborne forces began wearing the maroon beret unofficially in 1973, and Army headquarters ordered legitimized official wear of all three colored berets in late 1980.

[TRUE STORY]

Surely you recall the infamous 17th-century Bicholim Conflict from your military history classes. No? Maybe that's because the Bicholim Conflict is a hoax, one that lived for five years on Wikipedia, according to a United Press International report.

The 4,500-word article told of the fighting that supposedly took place between Portugal and India's Maratha Empire in 1640-41 that led to Goa becoming an independent Indian state. None of it, a Wikipedia detective who goes by the handle ShelfSkewed determined, was true.

The perpetrator remains unknown, but the stunt ranks as the eighth-longest-running known hoax pulled off on Wikipedia. The fictitious "Gaius Flavius Antoninus" page that proclaimed him Julius Caesar's assassin was posted for more than eight years before being removed last July.

[ONLINE MULTIMEDIA]

See why bath salts — an illegal form of amphetamine — get a bad rep for being dangerous.

militarytimes.com/multimedia

Video keyword search: **Navy, salts**

[FIVE THINGS]

EVERY SOLDIER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

New gear, when you need it

Science fiction is becoming science fact in Afghanistan, as troops are experimenting with 3-D printers, a Star Trek-like technology that fabricates whatever object is needed, on the spot — from replacement vehicle parts to entirely new objects.

"They bring in what they need on a napkin and come out with a prototype meant to solve their issue," said Lt. Col. Shannon Jackson, deputy program manager with the Rapid Equipping Force.

The Rapid Equipping Force is fielding two \$2.8 million laboratories equipped with 3-D printers at forward operating bases in Regional Command-South and East, respectively. A third lab is under construction for deployment to a yet-unnamed combatant command.

Through the labs, scientists are available to collaborate with soldiers at remote outposts.

"You're building an object from scratch, from thin air," said Bill Cohen, principal in the technology development arm of Exponent Inc.

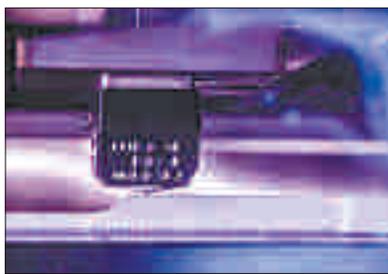
1 What it is. The Expeditionary Lab-Mobile is housed in a 20,000-pound, 20-foot-long shipping container, deployed with jack-of-all-trades engineers and a variety of mechanical and electrical gear — "every power tool and hand tool you could want," Cohen said.

2 Who mans it. Like "Q" from James Bond, the engineers craft anything a soldier needs to make himself safer,



3-D modeling artist Ryan Gilley displays products he designed and printed at the Rapid Technologies Branch, Edgewood Chemical Biological Center. Soldiers can use similar technology downrange.

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Inside a massive 3-D printer, a delicate head moves at lightning speed to precisely deposit heated plastic layer-by-layer to create a hardened part.

more comfortable or more lethal, from search-team robots to mine-probe tools that combat engineers use to pick the ground for IEDs.

The engineers also may take existing technology, alter its form for soldiers to try out, and alter it again. The timeline is trimmed from months to days.

3 How it works. Using 3-D modeling software, the engineers in Afghanistan can design whatever object the soldier asks for, or call upon stateside engineers via video teleconference for help.

Once an object is designed, engineers can use a Fused Deposition Modeling device that layers plastic material to build the object. The plastic is rigid, but the object may

not last long, so it's usually only good for demonstrating a soldier's concept.

For more durable parts, the engineers use a Computer Numerical Control machining system. The CNC uses precise drill bits to carve a piece of aluminum into the final shape. It's a complicated process that can take more than 12 hours.

4 What it has done. Collaboration among soldiers has already been used to help develop technical solutions to battlefield problems. One was an adapter for a hand-held, ground-penetrating radar that connects to the longer-lived military-issue battery. Another was a small item that allowed soldiers to swivel their M249B machine guns on a bipod.

5 How you find it. REF officials want more soldiers to take advantage of the labs and suggest they contact their local REF office.

"The best opportunity for innovation is when we sit down with soldiers and they give us their ideas," said Ali Sanders of the Rapid Equipping Force. "They're the smartest when it comes to what they need because they don't have the option to fail."

— Joe Gould

[BY THE NUMBERS]

A look inside this issue.



18

Months Army infantryman Chuck Hagel spent on active duty during the Vietnam War. He is Obama's nominee for defense secretary. **Page 8**

2,700

Approximate number of sexual assaults reported by service members in 2011. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta estimates the actual number to be more than seven times higher. **Page 13**

50 PERCENT

The budget cut this year for artillery cartridges and nonlethal ammunition, while the money doubled for tank ammo. **Page 20**

5,500

Troops to take part in the events planned for President Obama's second inauguration. **Page 22**



3 1/2

Stars our movie reviewer gives to

the new flick "Zero Dark Thirty." **OFFduty, Page 6**

[ROLLCALL]

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[NEWSMAKER]

'I saw the waste. I saw the folly. ... If it was strategically that important ... why did you just walk away?'

Name: Chuck Hagel, President Obama's nominee to be the next secretary of defense. **Context:** He spoke on his experience as an infantryman in Vietnam, right, in 1968. **Page 8.**

