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ON SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 30, 2012 £1.50

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ARMY TO FIRE 8,000 SOLDIERS IN JANUARY

Fury over 'fast-track' redundancies... and plans to sack over-45s

By **Mark Nicol**

DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

EIGHT thousand British soldiers - many serving on the front line in Afghanistan - will be told days after Christmas that they are to lose their jobs.

Redundancy notices will be sent to servicemen and women telling them their careers are over as part of sudden speeded-up cutbacks by the Ministry of Defence.

The Army has already been shaken by the announcement of a swathe of cuts, which included the loss of historic regiments and the prospect of a gradual reduction in personnel over the next eight years. But now The Mail

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Who IS Kate's father walking down the aisle?

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IN THE latest in our occasional series on the world's top hotels and the stars who frequent them, SARAH TURNER checks out the hotel Le Bristol in Paris.

STAR QUALITY: Carla Bruni, Miranda Kerr, George Clooney, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, Anne Hathaway, Christian Bale, Marilyn Monroe, Josephine Baker, Woody Allen.

VITAL STATISTICS: The most discreet luxury hotel in Paris, tucked around the corner from the Elysee Palace. It's still family-owned (currently by the Oetkers who make baking products) and has a number of non-corporate touches, including Fa-raon, the hotel's cat – a pampered blue-eyed Birman who has the run of the ground floor and his own attendants. A top-floor swimming pool has rooftop views of Paris while the spa houses a children's activity room so parents can enjoy spa treatments in peace. Ultimately, this hotel knows what matters though: the food. There are two restaurants – the Epicure, which has three Michelin stars, and the more relaxed 114 Faubourg.

LOCATION REPORT: Since it opened in 1925 in a historic mansion, fashion designers have clustered around the Bristol – including Givenchy, Pierre Cardin and Hermes. Movie stars and musicians have made up a significant proportion of the guests – actress Josephine Baker treated it as an indulgent home from home. It's a stone's throw from home of the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy and Carla Bruni popped in regularly for lunch – and the former president loved it so much that he conferred the Legion d'Honneur on the chef, Eric FRESHON. With the more austerity-



The perfect hideaway for a Dark Knight in Paris

STYLISH ACT: Anne Hathaway has stayed at Le Bristol in Paris

minded President Francois Hollande lacking a supermodel wife, Hollywood has kept the glamour going.

KEY ATTRACTION: Peace and tranquillity in the centre of Paris. The flower-filled garden that lies at the centre of the hotel is one of the largest in Paris, but if you want privacy, some of the suites have spectacular roof terraces – there's one with its own rooftop garden while others have hammams or fitness rooms.

The hotel houses one of the world's most expensive spas – treatments that make use of platinum, gold and caviar are provided by the Swiss firm La Prairie. Most extreme, however, are the Russian-inspired banya treatments which start with being cleansed by vodka-infused towels and end with vodka cocktails and caviar on a private terrace; a four-hour treatment costs €710 (£563).

IN THE NEWS:

Batman stars Anne Hathaway and Christian Bale stayed when promoting *The Dark Knight Rises* – although their press conference was cancelled after the mass shooting at a cinema showing the film in Colorado. Model Miranda Kerr, who is married to Orlando Bloom, stays at the Bristol during Fashion Week. Woody Allen used it as a key location for *Midnight In Paris*.

GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE REST OF US? A new bar opened this month to give the feel of an English gentleman's club. Alas, even popping in for a drink isn't a bargain – a glass of champagne costs €24 (£19) and a club sandwich will set you back €41 (£32).

GETTING THERE: Rooms start at €850 (£674), 00 33 153 434300, lebristolparis.com. Return rail fares to Paris from £69 with Eurostar.com.

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