War-machines for love: an exciting avenue

The problem is the players will have to answer the authorities every now and then.

■ by **Wg Cdr (Retd) D.P. Sabharwal**

A recent news-item read: A Russian pizza-chain carried out the first commercial delivery of a pizza using a drone, that was equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) and a video camera, monitored by the restaurant's manager. As the drone reached the delivery-point, the customer was asked, telephonically, to step out of the house and accept the delivery. The pizza was lowered through a cable, while the drone remained positioned about 20 metres above the ground.

This was the first peace-time application of a drone, which is an unmanned aerial vehicle. It is a type of aircraft, that is either controlled remotely from the ground or autonomously, as per a pre-programmed mission.

Till date, the drones have performed two specific military duties: 1) reconnaissance and surveillance; 2) attacking difficult positions with missiles and bombs. The drones have been used extensively in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in the undeclared war in Pakistan. Thus, the news of a drone, a war-machine, being used for a peaceful purpose not only drew the attention, but also became a topic of debate and my son, looking for a career as an entrepreneur, came up with the idea of using drones in the field of 'love'!

"What a lovely idea," was my wife's instant reaction.

"But how can you link the two adversaries – war and love? It would be something as unlikely to happen as trying to join the opposite banks of a river!" was my retort.

"You always think of the impossible and go to extremes. Have an open mind, my dear husband, and just think about the common saying: All is fair in love and war."

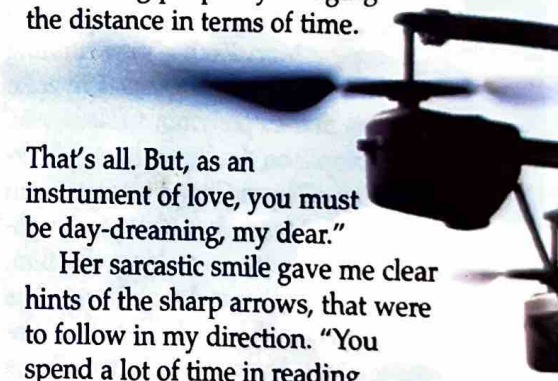
Instantly, I was drawn almost 50 years into the past, and remembered, that 'all is fair in love and war' was taught to me by the high school English teacher. To be honest, I never understood the real meaning at that time. Even later, it kept confusing me, whenever the sentence was used by someone during discussions, though I could see the connections and commonality between the two emotions.

Both love and war bring out the best and the worst in people. They are both battles of the heart and, at times, the battles of the soul. Exceptions apart, both love and war can neither be controlled nor contained. Yet, there is something that does not gel.

Thus, I raised my doubt, "You must understand the dis-connect between the two. Wars follow certain rules. Love, on the other hand, never follows any rules. Moreover, love has been responsible for many battles and wars, that have been fought; but no war has ever been fought to create love."

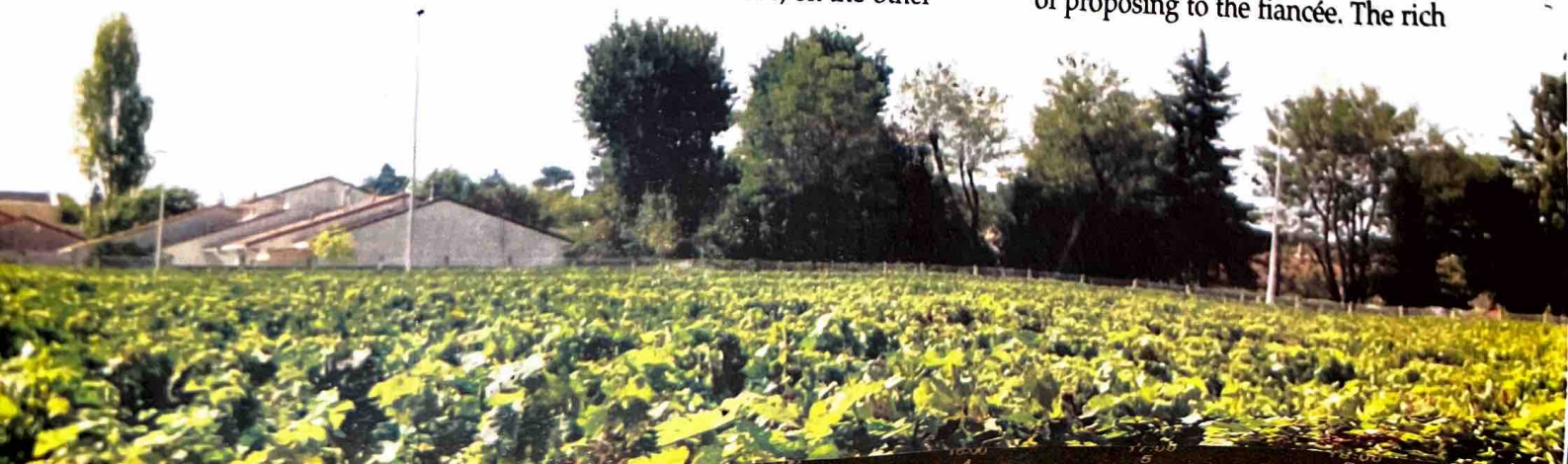
"Come out of your fixation, darling," said my wife sweetly and added, "Do not link war directly with love. Instead, programme an instrument of war to create love."

"If you are referring to an aircraft as a war-machine, all it has done is destruction – be it a fighter-bomber or transport aircraft that dropped atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, during World War II," I said and added, "At best, the aircraft has been an instrument of connecting people by bridging the distance in terms of time.



That's all. But, as an instrument of love, you must be day-dreaming, my dear."

Her sarcastic smile gave me clear hints of the sharp arrows, that were to follow in my direction. "You spend a lot of time in reading newspapers and magazines but, I must say, you waste your time since you do not seem to remember anything. Some time back, from an article in a magazine, you had informed us about the novel method of proposing to the fiancée. The rich



boy had hired a helicopter and as the helicopter kept climbing, the boy kept pouring his heart out to his sweetheart. When the helicopter reached the maximum attainable height and the pilot blew the whistle, the boy uttered the final words with all sweetness at his command and said, 'Will you marry me?'"

"And, papa, it was again you who, just the other day, read out a newspaper report, that a couple had solemnised their wedding and had exchanged the wedding vows 50,000 feet above the ground, while flying in an aircraft," joined the chip of the old block. "Do you still see no connection between these war-machines and love?"he added.

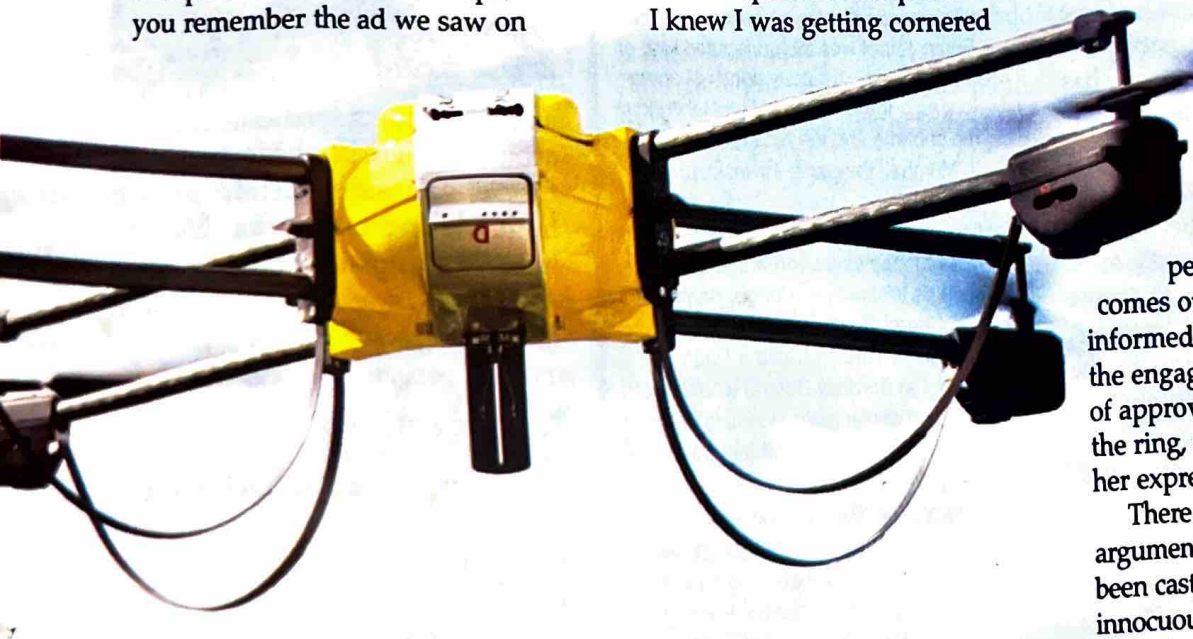
Before I could say anything, my sweet, little girl, who had been enjoying the conversation till now, also pitched-in and said, "Papa, do you remember the ad we saw on television yesterday, where two youngsters jump out of the aircraft and kiss while floating in the air, before their parachutes open.?"

There was not much left for argument or discussion. The die had been cast. The relatively simple and innocuous act of pizza-delivery by a drone had created a stir in my home. In no time, big business-plans were being drafted. I was assigned the "simple" task of arranging finances!

I knew I was getting cornered but, not throwing in the proverbial towel easily, I asked, "Fine, but these are isolated cases and only the neo-rich and the multi-millionaires can indulge in such a display of love. How can a common man be involved in love-related activities with these machines?"

"That's rather simple and easy," said my wife. "Drones are very small and do not require runways or big areas to operate. And, once developed in numbers, a drone would be much cheaper than aircrafts and helicopters. Moreover, these would be better-operated; hence, economical and quieter to operate."

"The romantic acts a drone would be able to execute would be as many as you can think of. It could deliver a love-letter and, in the bargain, revive the almost-extinct but most-loveable practice during the courtship period. It could also deliver bouquets or shower rose-petals once the sweetheart comes out to receive the bouquet," informed my son. "It could deliver the engagement ring for the purpose of approval and, while delivering the ring, a drone camera can record her expression and feelings as well."



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