

Military Resistance 8/12

**NOT ANOTHER DAY NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



U.S. Marines carry a comrade wounded by an improvised explosive device (IED) to a waiting medevac helicopter, near the town of Marjah in Helmand Province, August 21, 2010. REUTERS/Bob Strong

**“Where The Fighting Is
Most Intense, The
Population Is Primarily
On The Side Of The
Insurgents”**

**“A Quagmire In The South And
The Taliban Are Winning In The
North, Consolidating Their Grip In
The East, And Slowly Encircling
Kabul”**

**“The Taliban’s Control Of The South
Is Apparent In The Inability Of U.S.
Troops To Extend Any Control
Beyond Their Bases”**

**“It Takes Them Hours Just To Move
Hundreds Of Meters Outside Of The
Perimeters On Patrol”**

September 14, 2010 By GILLES DORRONSORO, New York Times [Excerpts]

The final brigades of the troop surge in Afghanistan arrived this month, signaling the height of American involvement in the country. Nearly half of the U.S. troops in the country are deployed to Helmand and Kandahar to implement the new counterinsurgency strategy and success is supposed to show that the American surge can win the war.

But the Western coalition is in a quagmire in the south and the Taliban are winning in the north, consolidating their grip in the east, and slowly encircling Kabul.

The United States has expended a great deal of resources in the south.

American troops planned to showcase the potential for their new counterinsurgency strategy with an early success in Marja. Instead, the area remains unstable and insecure months after the long offensive began. This delayed plans to move aggressively on Kandahar, Afghanistan’s second largest city.

Having concentrated the bulk of its forces in the south, the coalition is not able to contain the Taliban in other parts of the country.

When I was traveling across Afghanistan in the spring, the Taliban’s momentum was already clear. And safety conditions continue to deteriorate.

This summer, when I returned only a few months later, the situation was even worse.

The Taliban's control of the south is apparent in the inability of U.S. troops to extend any control beyond their bases.

It takes them hours just to move hundreds of meters outside of the perimeters on patrol.

This means that they have no contact with the population and have been unable to build strong ties with local groups.

While it is still safe in Kabul, you can feel the Taliban tightening its hold around the capital.

Leaving the city by car is becoming dangerous. The Taliban have set up roadblocks that increase the likelihood foreigners will be captured — and worse fates are likely for Afghan officials.

In the districts where the fighting is most intense, the population is primarily on the side of the insurgents.

The Taliban are more aggressive than ever; they are systematically killing Afghans working with the coalition.

Worse, the lack of local reform and a toothless anti-corruption policy leaves the coalition fighting for a corrupt government with no popular support.

The Taliban have a great deal of influence, but even where they haven't established control, the Afghan government doesn't enjoy any support.

At this point, 80 percent of Afghanistan has no state structure left.

This means that there is no credible Afghan partner for the United States to work with.

And where the government has lost its grip and the American-led coalition is losing, the Taliban are filling the void.

As the only effective force in many areas, the Taliban are beginning to build a shadow state. The services are limited but efficient, and the Kabul government is often nowhere to be seen.

A telling example is that international nongovernmental organizations are increasingly working directly with the Taliban.

The NGOs negotiate directly with Taliban leaders to ensure access to the Afghan people and carry out their programs.

The process has become so formalized that international groups can now expect to receive a paper that is stamped and sealed by the Taliban outlining the permissions granted.

The coalition will not defeat this increasingly national insurgency.

Instead of beginning a slow drawdown of troops next summer, the United States would need to add more forces to just hold on to the areas it currently controls.

As the United States struggles — and fails — to implement a successful counterinsurgency strategy in just a few parts of the country, the rest of Afghanistan is being lost.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THE TROOPS
HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



The remains of Army Sgt. Phillip C. Jenkins Sept. 9, 2010 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Jenkins, 26, of Decatur, Ind., died Sept. 7 in Balad, Iraq of wounds sustained from small arms fire. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Washington County Family Mourns Death Of Marine



09/08/2010 By Mark Mulholland, WNYT

CAMBRIDGE - He was a small, muscular man with a big smile and an even bigger heart. That's what friends and family say about Cpl. Philip Charte, the 22-year old Marine Corps rifleman who was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday.

Charte attended Cambridge Central schools through his freshman year. It was here that he began a wrestling career that saw him blossom into a New Hampshire state champ.

Charte's father wears a New Hampshire state wrestling championship T-shirt proudly. He took time from his grieving Wednesday afternoon to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with his family to remember the son who was struck down too soon. Reading a brief statement, the elder Charte said, "My son Philip served his country with courage, honor and distinction. He was a great son, brother, nephew, uncle and friend. He will be sorely missed."

The Chartes live in Salem now, where the village flag flies at half-staff. It was here where the family held a party for the newly promoted corporal before he deployed to Afghanistan in June.

Older sister Alicia says her easy going brother was a terrific uncle to her four-year-old son.

"He was a great uncle. Always there, always teaching him and yet still having fun," she said.

The Charte family says they receive some consolation from knowing that Philip died doing something he loved.

"Everything he did, he gave his all at it. That's what we always taught him. If you're going to do it, go full out," said Phil Charte. "We'll miss him. He will be sorely missed."

The Charte family says it will hold memorial services in New Hampshire and in Cambridge, possibly as early as next week.

Tormenting “Suspicious” Afghans: U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



“A suspicious Afghan man has his eye scanned by a U.S. Soldier from Delta Company, part of Task Force 1-66, during a patrol in the village of Gul Kalacheh, Arghandab River valley, Kandahar province, September 19, 2010.” [Reuters caption.] REUTERS/Oleg Popov

Afghani citizens have no right to resist body touching by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA make a daily practice of publicly humiliating elderly Afghan citizens after stopping them on public roads at gunpoint.

This encourages self-respecting honorable Afghans to kill them.

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 94,000 Afghan troops over here to the USA.

[They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, bomb and butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in a military prison endlessly without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.

[Those Afghans are sure a bunch of backward primitives.

[They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship killing them wholesale, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country.

[What a bunch of silly people.

[How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by Barrack Obama.

[Why, how could anybody not love that?

[You'd want that in your home town, right?]

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

What's Inside A Taliban Gun Locker?

“The Longer Range Of Bolt-Action Rifles Compared With Assault Rifles, And Their Relative Abundance In Helmand Province, Is A Reason This Particular Acreage Of Afghanistan Has A Reputation As Being Plagued By A More Dangerous Set Of Afghan Marksmen”

[Thanks to Felicity Arbuthnot, who sent this in.]

Together the technical qualities of these rifles and the thinking behind them, along with the quality of their manufacture and the relative simplicity of their ammunition resupply, have helped a largely illiterate insurgent movement not just to exert its will on its own country, but also to stand up to the most sophisticated military in the world.

September 15, 2010, By C.J. CHIVERS, New York Times

Since last year, The New York Times and At War have taken several different looks at insurgent arms and munitions in Afghanistan, which can yield information about how insurgents equip themselves and fight, and how the Taliban has been able to maintain itself as a viable force for more than 15 years.

Today the blog will turn back to this pursuit with another sampling of data from Marja, the area in Helmand Province that has seen some of the most sustained insurgent fighting of 2010.

In this case, early this summer, the civilian law enforcement liaison working with the Marines of Third Battalion, Sixth Marines, along with the battalion's gunner, had in their custody 26 firearms and an RPG-7 launcher captured from Taliban fighters or collected from caches.

Of these weapons, 12 were variants of the Kalashnikov assault rifle, 8 were bolt-action rifles from World War II or earlier, 4 were variants of the PK machine gun, and 2 were small semiautomatic pistols.

This was in some ways a typical mix for Afghanistan, although the ratio of bolt-action rifles was higher than what many units outside of Helmand Province have seen.

The ratio is interesting and aligns with the experience of patrolling in and near Marja and other contested areas nearby.

Insurgents in Helmand Province seem to have used bolt-action rifles more than in many regions of Afghanistan.

Whether this indicates a pressure on the supply of assault rifles and their ammunition or a preference for the longer effective ranges of Lee-Enfield and Mosin-Nagant rifles is not clear.

But the longer range of bolt-action rifles compared with assault rifles, and their relative abundance in Helmand Province, is a reason this particular acreage of Afghanistan has a reputation as being plagued by a more dangerous set of Afghan marksmen, and even a few snipers

For those who have been under fire in Helmand, finding that a large fraction of captured rifles are Lee-Enfields or Mosin-Nagants is not surprising.

This battalion's battlefield collections fit its Marines' experiences on patrol.

Moving past these ratios, the characteristics of individual weapons also provided clues to the Taliban's behavior and state of equipment and supply, and to the nature of the infantry arms loose in the Afghan countryside.

Note the stock of one of the machine guns, below.



A machine gun with a cracked stock and a jury-rigged repair. C.J. Chivers for The New York Times

As was typical of many older PK-variant machine guns, the stock was made of laminated wood — plywood, essentially. And some time ago it had been snapped.

But whoever was responsible for it had cobbled it back in place with the help of two strips of sheet metal and a handful of light nails. There was still play in the stock, and this would undermine its accuracy. But the weapon could be used.

Does this say something of the insurgents' resourcefulness?

Or of the insurgency's limited means?

Maybe both.

Now look at this assault rifle, below, an original AK-47 with a solid steel receiver. Its date and factory stampings reveal that it had been manufactured in 1954 in the Soviet Union's main Kalashnikov plant at the mammoth gunworks at Izhevsk.



An AK-47 assault rifle; pitted, weathered, stock removed, but still functional. C.J. Chivers for The New York Times

Look at it closely. Its exterior is heavily pitted and corroded. I disassembled this rifle, and inside, where it most counts, its operating system — the integrated gas piston and bolt carrier, the trigger assembly, etc. — had been oiled and were only lightly pitted. Someone had been tending to its guts, if not its skin.

In Marja, which is a populated patch of steppe astride a huge irrigation works built decades ago by the United States, the Marines sometimes find weapons hidden in canals. This weapon could have been submerged for some time before being retrieved for use, and considering what it seems to have been through, that 1954 manufacturing stamp impresses. The weapon, a rifle that came off assembly lines a year after Stalin died, was fully functional at age 56 and was still in service this year in war against the West.

Does that seem old? Now look at the date stamps on one of the bolt-action Lee-Enfields, below.



The factory stampings on a Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifle. Made by the Crown, in Taliban service now. C.J. Chivers for The New York Times

You read that right: 1915.

This rifle was made while Kitchener's New Army was being drilled and sent to the Western Front. It was 95 years old when it changed hands once again, and ended up in the custody of the Marines.

The paired Lee-Enfields and Kalashnikovs in Marja say as much about the nature of these weapons, and their ammunition, as they do about the Taliban. The Lee-Enfield and Kalashnikov lines were made by the millions, and both are noted for reliability and durability. These two facts have made them, in the eyes of people who carry or face them in war after war, either remarkable tools or a scourge.

And along with the Mosin-Nagant rifles that also turn up in Taliban caches, they and their ammunition are markers of old empires and the standardization of cartridges that accompanied war in the 20th century. That leads to the next point: Cartridge standardization between units and among allies — meaning, fielding many weapons that all fire the same ammunition — was intended to make logistics less complicated for conventional armies and their nations.

It has been a boon for insurgents, too.

For the 24 rifles and machine guns in the locker, produced in multiple nations over many decades, only three types of cartridges are required to feed them — the Lee-Enfields fire the .303, the Kalashnikovs fire the 7.62×39-millimeter round, and the PK machine guns

and Mosin-Nagant fire the 7.62x54R round that has been issued to Slavic forces since the 1890s in Imperial Russia.

All of these facts and factors might seem arcane. They are not. Together the technical qualities of these rifles and the thinking behind them, along with the quality of their manufacture and the relative simplicity of their ammunition resupply, have helped a largely illiterate insurgent movement not just to exert its will on its own country, but also to stand up to the most sophisticated military in the world.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier runs to help other soldiers struck down by a road side bomb explosion in Kandahar province, August 30, 2010. REUTERS/Oleg Popov



U.S. Marines in the background provide security as a Marine and a U.S. Army Task Force Shadow flight medic, right, rush a Marine wounded in an explosive attack to a medevac helicopter, west of Lashkar Gah, in southern Afghanistan Sept. 2, 2010. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)



A U.S. soldier from Task Force 1-66 returns fire as his unit is attacked by Taliban militants during a patrol on the banks of Arghandab River, Kandahar province, September 9, 2010. REUTERS/Oleg Popov



A U.S. soldier from Task Force 1-66 takes cover as his unit is attacked by the Taliban, while patrolling on the bank of Arghandab River in Kandahar province September 9, 2010. REUTERS/Oleg Popov

**NEED SOME TRUTH?
CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

September 1880 In Afghanistan: “Things Are Not Going So Well” “We Have No Contemptible Foe To Deal With, And It Is Feared That We Shall Have No Small Difficulty In Getting Out Of The Country”

[Thanks to Felicity Arbuthnot, who sent this in. She writes: “History repeats ...”.]

September 14, 2010 By STEPHEN FARRELL, New York Times

It is September in Afghanistan, and things are not going so well.

Everyone is waiting for news of progress in Kandahar.

The enemy is, in the assessment of one New York Times correspondent, “no contemptible foe.”

There is one general who is considered able and experienced from previous campaigns, but he is, reportedly, persona non grata with his commander in chief.

The general, for all his undoubted talents, is apparently “apt to give offense unnecessarily.”

It is September in Afghanistan.

September 1880:

The New York Times. Page 5. Sept. 7, 1880:

THE AFGHANISTAN WAR.

Matters are progressing slowly but steadily in Afghanistan, and it is hoped that in the course of a very few days we shall hear of the relief of Kandahar. Our losses in the recent sortie, including a Brigadier-General killed and several other officers, show that we have no contemptible foe to deal with, and it is feared that we shall have no small difficulty in getting out of the country with flying colors. Whether Roberts or Phayre will achieve the desired result remains to be seen, but many people are of opinion that our position would have been very different from what it is had our most experienced and able General, Sir Garnet Wolseley, been sent out to take charge of affairs. And why is Sir Garnet not employed? The answer is to be found at the Horse Guards. For some reason or other the General, who so ably conducted the Ashantee campaign, who reorganized the Administration of Cyprus, and who settled affairs in Zululand, is by no means a *persona grata* with our highest military authorities. It is said that the Duke of Cambridge hates him, and will never allow him to be employed again in any important service if he can help it. The fact is, Sir Garnet Wolseley, though an admirable manager in the camp and the field, is somewhat impulsive in the ordinary relations of life, and is apt to give offense unnecessarily. Faults of manner of this sort, however, ought not to deprive the country of the services of its ablest General when those services are most needed.

MILITARY NEWS

V. A. Made Secret Deal With Giant Insurance Company To Withhold Death Benefits From Families Of KIA:

“Every Veteran I’ve Spoken With Is Appalled At The Brazen War Profiteering By Prudential”
“The VA Really Seems To Have Had The Best Interests Of The Insurance Company At Heart, Instead Of Those Of The Soldiers And Their Families”

[Thanks to Don Bacon, Smedley Butler Society & Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

“When grieving families check the box that they want a lump sum, they should get it. We remain disappointed and irate at the VA’s failure to provide advocacy for veterans,” he says.

Nine of every 10 survivors ask Prudential for lump-sum payments, the VA says. Prudential sends those families “checkbooks” instead of checks.

Sep 14, 2010 By David Evans, Bloomberg [Excerpts]

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs failed to inform 6 million soldiers and their families of an agreement enabling Prudential Financial Inc. to withhold lump-sum payments of life insurance benefits for survivors of fallen service members, according to records made public through a Freedom of Information request.

The amendment to Prudential’s contract is the first document to show how VA officials sanctioned a payment practice that has spurred investigations by lawmakers and regulators.

Since 1999, Prudential has used so-called retained-asset accounts, which allow the company to withhold lump-sum payments due to survivors and earn investment income on the money for itself.

The Sept. 1, 2009, amendment to Prudential's contract with the VA ratified another unpublicized deal that had been struck between the insurer and the government 10 years earlier -- one that was never put into writing, Bloomberg Markets magazine reports in its November issue.

This verbal agreement in 1999 provoked concern among top insurance officials of the agency, the documents released in the FOIA request show.

For a decade, until the contract was formally changed, Prudential wasn't fulfilling its obligations to survivors of fallen service members, says Brendan Bridgeland, an insurance lawyer who runs the non-profit Center for Insurance Research in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

'Violated Terms'

"It's very clear they violated the original terms of the contract," says Bridgeland, who is retained by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to represent consumers.

"Every veteran I've spoken with is appalled at the brazen war profiteering by Prudential," says Paul Sullivan, who served in the 1991 Gulf War as an Army cavalry scout and is now executive director of Veterans for Common Sense, a nonprofit advocacy group based in Washington.

"Now vets are upset at the VA's inability to stop Prudential's bad behavior."

That the VA allowed Prudential to issue retained-asset accounts for 10 years while the contract required lump-sum payouts is "more evidence that the VA was asleep at the wheel for a decade," says Sullivan, who was a project manager and analyst at the VA from 2000 to 2006.

"When grieving families check the box that they want a lump sum, they should get it. We remain disappointed and irate at the VA's failure to provide advocacy for veterans," he says.

Since July 28, when Bloomberg Markets first reported that Prudential sent checkbooks instead of checks to survivors requesting lump-sum payouts, state and federal officials have demanded the retained-asset system be investigated and reformed.

The VA itself launched a probe of its life insurance program the day the first story was published.

The next day, New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo launched what he called a "major fraud investigation" of Prudential and other life insurers over their use of retained-asset accounts. Since then, Cuomo's office has issued subpoenas to Prudential and at least 12 more insurance companies.

Under Prudential's original 1965 contract with the VA and a 2007 revised contract - both of which were released as part of the FOIA response -- the insurer is required to send lump-sum payouts to survivors requesting them.

The contract covers 6 million active service members, their families and veterans.

The checkbooks Prudential sends to survivors are tied to what the insurer calls its Alliance Account.

The checkbooks are made up of drafts, or IOUs, and aren't insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

Prudential invests the survivors' money in its general corporate account, where it can earn the insurer as much as eight times as much as it currently pays in interest to beneficiaries.

Prudential held \$662 million of survivors' money in its corporate general account as of June 30, according to information provided by the VA. Prudential's general account earned 4.2 percent in 2009, mostly from bond investments, according to regulatory filings.

The company has paid survivors holding Alliance Accounts 0.5 percent in 2010.

Families that were supposed to receive lump-sum payments under the terms of the contract before it was amended in 2009 may be able to successfully sue Prudential for lost interest, insurance lawyer Bridgeland says.

"Survivors would have a very strong claim for interest earned by Prudential on their money," he says.

Prudential spokesman Bob DeFillippo says his company is following the terms of its agreement with the VA.

DeFillippo declined to comment on whether Prudential was in compliance with its contract between 1999 and September 2009 or to answer any other questions.

Prudential chairman and Chief Executive Officer John Strangfeld declined to comment for this story.

The VA official who verbally agreed in 1999 to allow Prudential to change the terms of the 1965 contract and begin offering retained-asset accounts was Thomas Lastowka, the VA's director for insurance, according to Dennis Foley, a VA attorney. Prudential began sending Alliance Account kits to soldiers' beneficiaries in June 1999.

Foley says the VA and Prudential would have been better off if they had put their 1999 agreement in writing.

"Could that have been done better?" Foley asks. "Probably. Best practice would have been to legally memorialize it at the time."

Foley says the 1999 changes to the 1965 contract were valid, even if they weren't in writing, because they were made by mutual agreement by people empowered to make such decisions.

"It was changed by somebody who was authorized to change it," he says.

The language of both the 1965 contract and the 2009 amendment make clear that Newark, New Jersey-based Prudential was required to adhere to the original terms until 2009, regardless of any handshake agreements in 1999, insurance lawyer Bridgeland says.

The 1965 contract says any alterations must be made in writing.

"No change in the Group Policy shall be valid unless evidenced by an amendment thereto," it says. "No Agent is authorized to alter or amend the Group Policy."

The VA and Prudential signed a revised contract in 2007, saying it was "amended in its entirety."

That contract, with the exact same words as the 1965 agreement, required that Prudential pay survivors with lump sums.

The 2007 revision included the same procedures in the 1965 agreement requiring any changes be made in writing. It contained no mention of the retained-asset system, or of the verbal agreement struck in 1999.

It wasn't until Sept. 24, 2009, that the changes agreed to by VA official Lastowka and Prudential in 1999 were put into writing. The 2009 amendment allowing Prudential to hold onto death benefit payouts was made retroactive to Sept. 1, 2009, not back to 1999.

By putting in writing a change that was verbally adopted 10 years earlier, the VA is effectively trying to backdate the amendment, says Jeffrey Stempel, an insurance law professor at the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who wrote 'Stempel on Insurance Contracts' (Aspen Publishers, 2009).

"They're trying to reinvent history," Stempel says. "You really can't do that. This is a blatant giveaway by the VA with nothing for the agency or the people in uniform."

Nine of every 10 survivors ask Prudential for lump-sum payments, the VA says. Prudential sends those families "checkbooks" instead of checks.

'Disasters Do Happen'

Documents released in the FOIA request show some signs of concern within the VA after Prudential proposed the retained-asset accounts in 1998. Lastowka, the official who allowed Prudential to introduce the Alliance Accounts, said that the insurer's "checkbook" system wasn't protected by the FDIC.

“Disasters do happen,” wrote Lastowka, in an e-mail dated June 9, 1999, to Stephen Wurtz, the agency’s deputy assistant director for insurance.

Lastowka said in his e-mail that the lack of FDIC coverage could backfire on survivors.

“Who is responsible if Alliance goes belly up?” Lastowka asked. “I think we have to also be prepared to defend the use of the Alliance Account.”

Lastowka also asked whether Prudential had adequately disclosed to survivors that the Alliance Accounts weren’t covered by FDIC insurance.

“Did Pru alert us to the non-FDIC fact?” he wrote to Wurtz. “Or was it in small print as the notice to beneficiaries?”

Documents turned over by the VA didn’t include a response from Wurtz.

The FOIA documents show that on June 10, 1998, Prudential gave a presentation to the VA. It included 10 pages of key points, saying the Alliance Accounts would benefit survivors because they would provide safety, flexibility in how and when to use their money, competitive interest rates and customer service.

In fine print, at the bottom of one of the pages, was this caveat: “Funds in the Alliance Account are direct obligations of The Prudential Insurance Company of America and are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.”

Twelve years later, the issue of the lack of FDIC protection in retained-asset accounts flared anew.

FDIC Chairman Sheila Bair said in August that consumers could incorrectly conclude that retained-asset accounts were insured by the FDIC.

“The insurance company must take care to avoid implying in any way that these accounts are in fact FDIC-insured,” she wrote in an Aug. 5 letter to state insurance regulators.

Some families of veterans have taken their complaints to court. Five survivors filed a federal fraud lawsuit in Boston on Aug. 30 against Prudential claiming the insurer has earned as much as \$500 million in profits by improperly keeping beneficiaries’ money instead of paying it out in a lump sum.

The suit, Lucey vs. Prudential Insurance Co. of America, says the insurer fraudulently claims to beneficiaries that the Alliance Account is a lump sum.

“Initiation of this ruse does not constitute payment of anything to anyone,” the suit says. “The Alliance Account is merely a bookkeeping device used by Prudential to hold on to beneficiaries’ money.”

Insurance contract professor Stempel says that regardless of the outcome of that lawsuit, it’s clear that Prudential and the VA wrongly manipulated a federal contract at the expense of military members and their relatives.

“At a minimum, survivors ought to be made whole with their missed interest,” he says.
“The VA really seems to have had the best interests of the insurance company at heart,
instead of those of the soldiers and their families.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Hope for change doesn't cut it when you're still losing buddies.
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War

I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
-- Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787**

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

**The Social-Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”
-- V. I. Lenin; What Is To Be Done**

**A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners.
-- Leon Trotsky, History Of The Russian Revolution**

**“The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy”
-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt**

**It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it.
-- Larry Christensen, Soldiers Of Solidarity & United Auto Workers**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

A Highly Intelligent Population: “Only One In Four Americans Say They Trust The Government”

September 14th CNN

A new poll indicates that only one in four Americans say they trust the government to do what is right always or most of the time, one explanation for the anti-incumbent sentiment in the country today.

According to CNN/Opinion Research Corporation national survey released Tuesday, 25 percent of the public indicates that they trust the government in Washington to do what's is right most or all of the time, with 66 percent saying they trust the government to do what's right only some of the time and eight percent saying they never trust the government.

"That lack of trust in government is not a recent phenomenon - except for a brief spike fueled by patriotism immediately after 9/11, a majority have not trusted the government since the early 1970s," says CNN Polling Director Keating Holland.

But the recession appears to have made matters worse.

"Ten years ago, roughly four in ten said they trusted the government always or most of the time; that number dropped to the mid-to-low 30's in the middle part of the decade, but then dropped to the 20s in 2008, where it has stayed ever since.

**Niccolo Machiavelli On
Afghanistan, And More:
“The Greatest Sign Of Loss Is When
One Does Not Believe One Can Win”
“When One Marches Through Enemy
Country, One Bears More And Greater
Dangers Than In Doing Battle”**

Excerpts from: The Art Of War, By Niccolo Machiavelli, Florence, 1521.

[Translated and edited with commentary by Christopher Lynch; University Of Chicago Press, 2003]

And above all you ought to guard against leading an army to fight that is afraid or that is not confident of victory.

For the greatest sign of loss is when one does not believe one can win.

In this case you ought therefore to flee battle, either by acting like Fabius Maximus who by encamping in strong places did not give Hannibal the spirit to go to find him, or -- when you believe that the enemy may come to find you even in strong places -- leaving the country and dividing your troops throughout your own towns, so that the tedium of storming them tires (out the enemy).

And you have to understand that when one marches through enemy country, one bears more and greater dangers than in doing battle.

Therefore, while marching, the captain must redouble his diligence.

The first thing he must do is to have the whole country through which he is marching described and depicted, so that he knows the places, the number, the distances, the roads, the rivers, the marshes, and all of their qualities.

To get to know this, he must have with him, diversely and in diverse modes, those who know the places and question them with diligence, and compare what they say and, according to the comparison take note.

He ought to send cavalymen ahead, and with them prudent heads, not so much to discover the enemy as to contemplate the country, to see whether it compares with the design and with the notes that he has made of it.

To persuade or dissuade a few of a thing is very easy. For if words are not enough, you can then use authority or force.

But the difficulty is in removing from the multitude a sinister opinion that is also contrary either to the common good or to your opinion.

There one can use only words that are heard by all, wishing to persuade all of them together.

For this, excellent captains needed to be orators, because without knowing how to speak to the whole army, (only) with difficulty can one do anything good. This is cast off altogether in these times of ours.

Read the life of Alexander the Great, and see how many times it was necessary for him to harangue and to speak publicly to the army. Otherwise, since it had become rich and

full of prey, he would never have led it through the deserts of Arabia and into India to its own hardship and annoyance.

For infinite times things arise by means of which an army falls to ruin, when the captain either does not know how or is not used to speaking to it.

For this speaking takes away fear, inflames spirits, increases obstinacy, uncovers deceptions, promises rewards, shows dangers and the way to flee them, fills with hope, praises, vituperates, and does all of those things by which the human passions are extinguished or inflamed.

Hence that prince or republic which designs to make a new military and give reputation to this training ought to accustom its own soldiers to hear the captain speaking and the captain to know how to speak to them.

September 20, 1830: Honorable Anniversary



Richard Allen

Carl Bunin Peace History September 17-23

The National Negro Convention, a group of 38 free black Americans from eight states, met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with the express purpose of abolishing slavery and improving the social status of African Americans.

They elected Richard Allen president and agreed to boycott slave-produced goods and encourage free-produce organizations. The most active would be the Colored Female Free Produce Society, which urged the boycott of all slave-produced goods.

The Encyclopedia of African-American Heritage, by Susan Altman, Copyright 1997, Facts on File, Inc. New York [Excerpt]

September 20, 1830

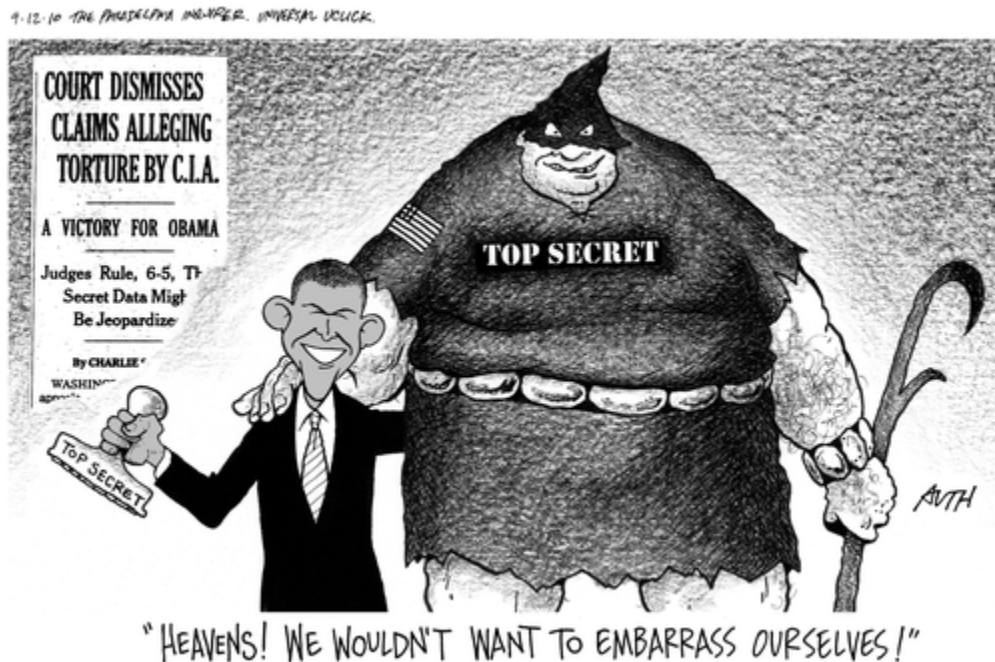
On this date in 1830, the National Negro Convention met in Philadelphia, PA. This group gathered for the express purpose of abolishing slavery and improving the status of African Americans.

This first meeting of the National Negro Convention would initiate a trend that would continue for the next three decades.

The formation of another organization had been recommended one which would be called the "American Society of Free Persons of Labor." This group would branch out to several states and hold their own conventions.

These, in turn, would lead to the formation of other organizations. The number of conventions, held at local, state, and national levels, blossomed to such a level that, in 1859, one paper would report that "colored conventions are almost as frequent as church meetings."

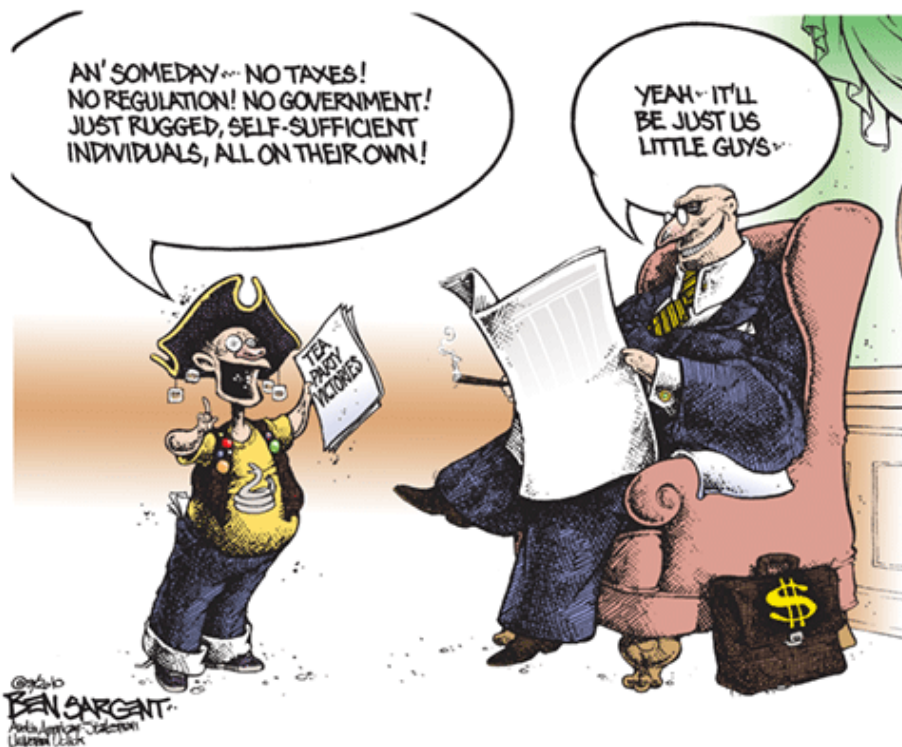
DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War



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