



## Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News April 30, 2013

### Wednesday Lunches

Lunches in the 15<sup>th</sup> Field Officers Mess continue with Mrs Lum cooking at home and bringing the food in. The decision has been made to renovate the upstairs (Mess) kitchen at an estimated cost of \$30-35,000. Fundraising efforts have started; watch this newsletter for events and campaigns.

Remember to drop your lunch ticket in the bowl when you pick up your soup/salad.

And finally, PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE VEHICLE COMPOUND!!

### 2013 Vancouver Strategic Studies Conference

We had a great turn out at the conference. Close to 160 people attended and everyone enjoyed the event.

The keynote event of the weekend was a talk on "Syria, Security and the Middle East" by Robert Fisk, Middle East correspondent for "The Independent" of London, who lives full time in the Middle East and had many interesting stories and observations. He followed that up on Saturday with a further discussion of the situation in Syria.

The presentations on Saturday also included talks by Stewart Muir, Former Deputy Editor, Vancouver Sun, on *The Soldier and The Journalist: An untold World War II story of the press, public opinion, politics and war planning on the west coast of Canada* and by Col(r) Pat Dennis, Wilfrid Laurier University, on *Slackers, Shirkers & Malingerers and other great myths about Canadian Conscripts in the First World War*.

I hope to be able to print all or parts of the later presentations in the near future, in this newsletter so, watch this space.

### Government Improving Benefits for Veterans

Ottawa - The Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister for La Francophonie, today announced that Veterans Affairs Canada is making changes to deliver increased benefits to traditional Veterans. Once in effect, disability benefits paid under the Pension Act will no longer be deducted from War Veterans Allowance (WVA) benefits.

"We are making changes to Veterans' benefits to put more money in the pockets of Veterans and their families, including some who have not been receiving these benefits until now," said Minister Blaney. "These changes demonstrate our Government's ongoing commitment to meet the needs of Veterans and their families."

The change in how the War Veterans Allowance is calculated is expected to help:

- approximately 3,000 Veterans and survivors who may now qualify for monthly WVA benefit payments for the first time, including 700 who are expected to gain access to related benefits (treatment and Veterans Independence Program services) for the first time;
- more than 2,000 Veterans in long-term care who will receive a higher subsidy toward their accommodation and meals fees; and
- 200 Veterans and survivors who will receive increased payments.

“Today’s announcement will deliver an additional \$95.4 million to Veterans above the \$177.7 million we announced in October to end the deduction of Veterans’ disability pensions when calculating their Earnings Loss and Canadian Forces Income Support benefits. Together, this amounts to an unprecedented \$273.1 million investment in Canada’s Veterans,” added Minister Blaney. “These changes will help aging Veterans and survivors get access to more financial help, services and benefits that will make a real difference in their lives.”

“The Canadian Veterans Advocacy is pleased to note Veterans Affairs Minister Blaney has fulfilled his promise to bring forward legislation that will harmonize the War Veterans Allowance with the recent SISIP court ruling eliminating the claw back on VAC pain and suffering awards,” said Michael L. Blais, CD, President and Founder of the Canadian Veterans Advocacy. “These Veterans are, by definition, Canada’s most economically vulnerable Veterans and this decision will undoubtedly have a positive impact on their quality of life.”

The changes are expected to come into effect in 2013.

## **A Short History of Chechnya and Chechen Terrorism**

*By Ben H. English*

*"A time will come when the whole world will go mad. And to anyone who is not mad they will say: 'You are mad, for you are not like us.'" - St. Anthony*

Some three years ago, I taught a high school Criminal Justice class entitled “Crime in America”. This course covered the types and trends of crime in our nation, and illustrated what someone working in our criminal justice system would most likely encounter in a future career.



In this course I also identified future trends in crime, including terrorism and mass killings. Examples of the Chechen experience were utilized to explain how monstrous this could be, and was chosen due to the high likelihood of it coming to our nation. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013, that calculation was proven true in Boston.

Authorities have learned those involved in this hideous act supposedly originated from Chechnya. I say “supposedly”, as much of the Northern Caucasus Mountains serve as a fertile breeding ground for violent Islamic extremist groups. Whether they be Chechen, Ingush, or Dagestani; all three of these lands have been heavily involved in recent bloody separatist movements, have large Sunni Muslim populations, and share common borders.

The Chechens are the best known, due to their numerous brutal terrorist attacks in Russia over the past fifteen years. Chechen fighters have been very active in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and are respected for their tradecraft by our military forces. They consistently exhibit the best martial and technical abilities encountered there, and on several occasions have taken on the

best we have in stand-up gunfights. They are also well known for providing an expert instructor corps to other Islamofascist groups seeking more lethal capabilities.

To better understand your enemy, you need to be able to crawl inside his head and see the world through his eyes. Three major factors in this is to have a working knowledge of his past, what his goals are at present, and a basic understanding of human nature. With that in mind, consider the following: What is now known as “Chechnya” is an area in the Northern Caucasus which had been in almost constant conflict since the Fifteenth Century. This strife has been mostly directed to rid the region of foreign occupiers, usually Russian. The beginning of this most recent series of conflicts began during the reign of Catherine the Great in the late 1700s.



Since then, whenever the Kremlin has experienced societal strife, these people have sought to remove themselves from the Russian yoke. Since strife has been often a way of life for the Russians, those opportunities have presented themselves on a fairly often basis.

Just as often, the Great Russian Bear has used a jackbooted heel to grind the Chechens back into the ground. We Americans cannot even begin to imagine the institutionalized brutality, cruelty, and unrepentant viciousness practiced by both sides

during these episodes. Their recent history is littered with bloody anecdotes. During World War II, the Chechens immediately declared their support for Hitler when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union. It is said that during the Siege of Stalingrad, all of the Soviet bombers in the Caucasian theater of operations were unable to lend their support, as they were too busy trying to bomb the Chechens back into the Stone Age. Their capitol city of Grozny was turned into a smoking pile of ruins.

In 1944, Josef Stalin ordered the entire populations of Ingushetia and Chechnya deported to Siberia and what is present day Kazakhstan. An entire quarter of those populations *died* during this time, and they were not allowed to return to their homelands until 1956. In 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed, bringing about yet another attempt for Chechen independence. In the preceding decades its Sunni Muslim majority had developed a strong streak of Wahhabism, which had been mostly forced underground during Soviet occupation. This added a new element to state of affairs. Briefly, Wahhabism is a militant extremist branch of the Sunnis which first made its appearance some 200 years ago. In the 1920s, it was popularized by the House of Saud to bring factionalized tribes together and create the country now known as Saudi Arabia. From there Wahhabism was exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and other countries. The most infamous Wahhabist known to the average American was Osama bin Ladin.

From 1994-1996, the Chechens and Russians fought what is usually called “The First Chechen War”. Bloody, chaotic and completely without quarter taken or given, it was also when Wahhabism rose to real prominence in this unhappy land. In the end, the Chechens managed to

win against an emasculated and poorly motivated Russian military. But it was a “win” mostly in word only. Once more, Grozny lay in crumbled heaps. Chechnya’s economy was nonexistent and there was no real infrastructure remaining. Kidnappings for ransom became rampant, reaching epidemic proportions. In turn, the Chechens turned upon each other and began fighting amongst themselves. The line was formed basically between what was loosely referred to as the Chechen government, and the Islamic extremists. This line has ebbed and flowed ever since, with each side gaining the upper hand at different times.

In September of 1999, the situation changed drastically for the worse. A series of apartment buildings were bombed in the Russian cities of Buynaksk, Vologdonsk, and Moscow; resulting in 293 people killed and 651 injured. Almost all of these were civilian casualties. The blame for these catastrophic attacks was placed at the feet of Islamic extremists from Chechnya.

Swift Russian retribution followed. A former counterintelligence specialist in the old KGB and recent head of the FSB (Federal Security Service) had been appointed as prime minister just the month before, and he went after the Chechens with a calculated vengeance. His name was Vladimir Putin. Coincidentally during this same time frame, an army of Chechen extremists launched an invasion on neighbouring Dagestan. This was the beginning of the Second Chechen War, and a massive Russian air campaign was launched against those invaders as well as Chechnya itself. These air attacks included the first reported use of Fuel Air Explosives (FAE), a particularly ugly way of air-to-ground support. By December of that same year Boris Yeltsin resigned as the Russian president, and Putin was placed in that office. In this war, things did not go near as well for the Chechens. In short order they were losing, and losing badly as the enraged Russian Bear savaged then from one corner of their country to another. Completely outclassed in every way on the conventional battlefield they turned to what they knew best; asymmetrical warfare. This choice would result in acts which would chill the heart of civilized man.

In late October of 2002, a group of some 40 to 50 Chechen terrorists took nearly 900 hostages in a large theater in Moscow. Known as the “Nord Ost Siege”, it began with the terrorists streaming up the corridors firing fully automatic weapons into the ceiling. Many of these terrorists were women, an unusual element for Islamic extremists but a trademark of the Chechens. By the third day of the stand-off, several hostages had been murdered and action was deemed necessary by the Russian authorities. An incapacitating agent, believed to be Fentanyl, was pumped into the theater. It should be noted that Fentanyl is 100 times more powerful than Morphine and is often the first choice for the pain suffered by some cancer patients. It is also known to have major side effects such as respiratory depression, and has an attendant high risk of overdose. Once the Fentanyl was fully employed, assault units made up of the FSB, the MVD and Spetsnaz moved in. Unconscious and semi-conscious terrorists, many wearing suicide vests, were dispatched of quickly with a minimum of two rounds to the head. But some of the terrorists had access to gas masks, and a fire fight erupted in the theater which lasted for over an hour. In the end, 39 terrorists were killed as well as 129 hostages. The injured count was far more than that. Most of the hostages were found to have succumbed to gas inhalation, not gunshot wounds. Recriminations, conspiracy theories, and intrigues from this tragedy continue to reverberate even today.

But the worst was yet to come. After a series of smaller terrorist attacks, along with a constant dose of assassinations, suicide bombings, rape, plunder and simple cold-blooded murder, another headline grabbing atrocity occurred. It began on September 1, 2004, in the North Ossetian town of Beslan. For Russians, September 1 marks the first day of return to school for their children. Known as the “Day of Knowledge”; students, parents, teachers and the community itself gathers in a holiday mood to usher in the new school year. Such an event was planned at Comintern Street School #1, which was directly situated across from their district police station. But they had unexpected guests. Dozens of heavily armed Chechen and Ingush terrorists announced their presence by firing automatic weapons into the air. At first, many attendees mistakenly thought it was a Russian security exercise. Before the terrorists had secured the area, eight people were killed and dozens were injured. The terrorists managed to take some 1200 hostages, and herded them into the school gymnasium. Any sort of resistance was not tolerated, and two fathers of students were quickly executed to make that point clear.

Then the terrorists gathered up some 15-20 other men they thought most likely to cause problems, led them into an adjoining corridor, and set off a bomb. Those who survived the blast were finished off by small arms fire. Only one man managed to survive and later escape. Other hostages were forced to throw the dead bodies out of the windows and wash the blood off the floor.

The terrorists informed authorities that for each terrorist killed, 50 hostages would die. Also, they stated that for each terrorist wounded, 20 hostages would be executed. The hostages were not allowed to either eat or drink and the building itself was enclosed in a myriad of trip wires, IEDS, and high explosives. The captors said they would blow up the building if there was any attempt of rescue. The Russian government promised to not use force. On Day Two of the siege, the terrorists released eleven nursing women and their infants. But the remaining hostages were still refused food and water, and were forced to stand without rest in the hot, tightly packed gym reeking of sweat, urine, blood and death. Many of them began to remove their clothes due to the heat, and several of the children fainted. Some of the hostages became so desperate for water they began drinking their own urine. The Russians continued to try to negotiate, but the terrorists were becoming more and more irrational. Their lack of sleep, surrounding environment, and use of chemical stimulants had combined to make for a wholly paranoid and murderous state of mind. That night, negotiations were cut off by the captors.

Day Three brought a thread of hope; the lines of communication were reopened. An agreement was reached to remove the dead hostage bodies littering the scene, and to deliver the corpse of a dead terrorist.

As the medics approached, a loud explosion was heard inside the gym and the terrorists opened fire, killing two of the EMS personnel. Some 22 seconds later, a strange-sounding detonation occurred inside the building and the roof began to burn. More explosions were heard and portions of the gym’s walls began to crumble. Some of the hostages managed to escape through these breaches, only to be caught in the ensuing crossfire between the terrorists and government forces. These responding forces consisted of an uncoordinated swarm of armed citizens, Ossetian militia, civilian police, MVD special units, the Russian Army, and crack Spetsnaz special purpose troops. So many different entities with widely varying levels of training and

leadership lent to the maddening confusion. Many of the conscripted militia soldiers panicked and actually ran from the scene. Some of the police forces also lost complete control, even firing their weapons in the wrong direction. At the same time, men of sterner stuff were braving the terrorist gunfire and storming the building in an attempt to save whatever innocent lives they could. Wild, clattering firefights broke out on the campus grounds as the terrorists lined up their hostages to use as human shields. Armored personnel carriers, tanks, and even helicopter gunships entered the growing debacle as the burning roof of the gym collapsed, killing yet another 160 people.

Some two hours later the authorities claimed to have control of the area, even as the noise of combat crackled around them. A small band of terrorists barricaded themselves in a two story building nearby, which was quickly obliterated by tank cannon fire and flamethrowers. Another group attempted to escape on foot and was caught out in the open by helicopter gunships, which summarily chopped them to pieces. One suspected terrorist was lynched without hesitation by a hysterical mob. For nearly twelve more hours, gunfire and explosions continued to be heard in the surrounding areas. The final casualty figures from this bloody fiasco were sickening. 334 hostages lost their lives in those three days, and another 728 were injured. Many of them were small children, whose greatest crime was being in the wrong place at the wrong time among those who had lost their collective sense of conscience a long time before.

The Second Chechen War was officially declared over in 2009. But one has to ask themselves if wars such as these are actually ever really “over”, or are they just a brief respite from a searingly barbaric conflict which has lasted for centuries. A barbaric conflict which has spilled over from Chechnya itself to an apartment complex in Vologdosnk, a theater in Moscow, a school in Beslan, the deserts and cities of Iraq, the mountains of Afghanistan, and now a foot race in Boston, Massachusetts.

There is no stamped expiration date on that Pandora’s Box labeled ‘Hatred’, as well as its attendant ingredients of wickedness and depravity. We have had our first, slightest brush with the Chechen style of terrorism on our own soil. With the knowledge of what has occurred in the past, along with the stated goals of our enemies in the present, one must conclude that it will not be the last or the most significant.

## **Nobel Laureate Discusses Improving DOD Decision Making**

*By Jim Garamone American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2013 - Defense Department personnel pride themselves on their decision-making ability, but Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman believes there are ways to systematically improve and help remove biases from the process. Kahneman presented his opinions during the "New Ideas @ OSD" seminar in the Pentagon this morning. Former Navy Secretary Richard Danzig moderated the discussion. Defense leaders literally make life-or-death decisions. They decide how to spend billions of dollars of taxpayer money. They decide how best to approach leaders in other countries and how to best implement programs and policies.

Kahneman received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2002 and wrote the New York Times bestseller "Thinking, Fast and Slow." He said there are three elements in making decisions: options, judgments and evidence. The judgments and evidence feed into providing options, which constitute the crux of decision making. Stressing the need for quality control in the process, Kahneman urged that defense leaders be aware of the role their biases play.

"Institutions in general can be viewed as factories that produce decisions," he said. "When there is a production line, there is a need for something called quality control."

He suggested a quality control checklist for decision making. "This is not a checklist of relevant facts that pertain to the decision," Kahneman said. "It is a checklist of the likely errors that can be made in the process of deciding." The checklist should provide an evaluation of whether the decision is being made well, he said. The list should include the likely biases and mistakes that could be entering into the decision-making process. He suggested this checklist could move along even as a decision is being made. There is no need to await the outcome. The process entails uncertainty, and a decision can be viewed as a gamble, the professor said. "There is no perfect corollary between the quality of decisions and the quality of the outcome," he said. In general, there is a very strong tendency for people to evaluate decision making by outcome and not by process, Kahneman said. "We cannot prevent ourselves from seeing, 'If something ended well, it was done well, and if something ended badly, somebody must have fouled up,'" he said. He called this the "hindsight bias."

"Our model of the world is changed by the outcome," he said. "It is almost impossible to control." The hindsight bias is unkind to decision makers, the professor said. "Their failures tend to look stupid, and their successes tend to look obvious," he said. "We cannot foretell the future, but we can almost always explain the past." This leads to another bias he called the "outcome bias." This means decision makers are rewarded or punished by the outcome of their decisions, and not by the quality of the process. "Knowing about the existence of these biases ... will do absolutely nothing for you," he said. "You will not be able to avoid these errors." But people can correct for these biases, he added. "The only way to control for these biases is to identify the circumstances under which it is likely to occur and to make a conscious effort to correct the judgment," he said. Another bias that Kahneman said is common is for people to exaggerate their chances for success. "Especially if they have a plan, they tend to be really optimistic about the chances of their plan succeeding," he said. "They tend to have an illusion of control. These are very deep-seated illusions." Officials need to control for this by looking at other, similar plans and gauging the similarities from those, he said. "They will find sometimes that their conclusions are not even in the ballpark," he added. Kahneman discussed decision makers holding a "pre-mortem" for their decisions. In this, the leader tells those helping with the decision to imagine the decision went horribly wrong, and that it is now a year later and they have to discuss why it failed. In making a decision, organizations "increasingly get locked into that decision," he said, and dissent becomes very difficult. Organizations love optimists, Kahneman noted, while pessimists are almost seen as disloyal. A pre-mortem helps to find flaws in the plan he said.

"I believe you can improve decision making if you are conscious of errors, and in an organization that does things systematically and does things slowly, there is an opportunity to improve decision making," Kahneman said.

## **NOABC Battle of Atlantic Dinner**



The Naval Officers' Association of British Columbia  
Founded 1919

*The President and Directors of  
The Naval Officers' Association of British Columbia  
request the pleasure of the company of  
you and your guest(s)*

*at the*

### ***Battle of the Atlantic Dinner***

*Guest Speaker: Dr James Boutilier*

*on Saturday, May 4, 2013*

*1830 for 1930*

*Wardroom, HMCS Discovery*

*Cost: \$75.00 per person  
RSVP per reservation form  
by 26 April 2013*

*Black Tie or Mess Dress  
(Optional Business Suit)  
(Ladies Equivalent)*

*An RSVP form is available on the NOABC website at: <http://www.noabc.com/Home/events-3>*

### **From the 'Punitary'**

I knew she was the one when we went on that walk among the evergreen trees. - It was love at first sight.

### **Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations.**

If you survive the extraordinary things, it will often be the little things that will kill you.

### **Quotable Quotes**

Clever people master life; the wise illuminate it and create fresh difficulties. - *Emil Nolde*  
(*German expressionist Painter, 1867-1956*)