Hardly more than fifty of the veterans started for the White House, but the moment their approach was reported President Hoover issued orders to the police to close the gates of the grounds and to clear Pennsylvania Avenue-and adjacent streets of all pedestrian and vehicular traffic. More than four hundred policemen were summoned to surround the Executive Mansion, all available police reserves were called to stations nearby, and officers who had just been relieved from duty were commanded to return to their posts. The demonstrators were quickly dispersed, three of their leaders being arrested. According to Inspector O.T. Davis of the metropolitan force, President Hoover had said that if the police could not clear the streets within a few minutes he would call out regular army troops. It would have been a rare spectacle indeed to see troops patrolling Pennsylvania Avenue to protect the life of the President of the United States against a possible attack by a handful of weary, footsore, and bedraggled war veterans. Perhaps there was some danger of minor disorders in front of the White House, but in my judgement there was not the slightest possibility of any really serious trouble developing, for there is in these bonus-seekers no revolt, no fire, not even smoldering resentment; at most they are but an inchoate aggregation of frustrated men nursing a common grievance. However, the anxiety of the White House accurately reflected the increasing alarm with which high officials of the government have been viewing the presence of the bonus army -- a feeling, it must be added, that a vast majority of the residents of Washington do not share.

On Saturday (July 16) a column of about a thousand veterans sought to break through a police line on the capitol plaza but were quickly pacified by the officers on hand and by the persuasive tongue of Brigadier-General Pelham D. Glassford, superintendent of police. However, the veterans somehow felt that their last opportunity to frighten Congress into approving the bonus was rapidly slipping away from them, and they remained in an angry mood for a few minutes. But further oratory from Glassford and from the self-appointed leaders of the Bonus Expeditional Forces quickly changed the attitude of the veterans and converted the atmosphere of protest into that of a college football rally. So superficial, one might say, is their apparent revolt. Out in their camps, they show even less spirit. Squalid miserable, and unhealthful as these camps certainly are, life there offers more security and comforts than many of these men have known for months.

Who are the bonus-seekers and where have they come from? They are mostly farm workers, fruit pickers, itinerant factory workers, and other unskilled or semi-skilled laborers, and they come from every section of the country. I do not believe that a single State or a single industry is unrepresented here. However, a large minority of the men are skilled mechanics, white-collar workers, and even professional people. I have met an office manager, a factory foreman, two real estate dealers, a dentist, and three newspapermen in the bonus army. These men I encountered only by chance. I was shown the rosters of some of the camps and there were the names of many other representatives of the middle class, an
editor, a grocer, a trucking contractor, a traffic engineer, several lawyers. It is these people who have taken charge of the Washington show and who have given the bonus army what discipline it has. Thus the movement is essentially bourgeois and not proletarian, at least in outward form. This explains in large measure the patriotism, and flag-waving of the bonus-seekers. These middle-class representative have become the leaders of the movement and in that capacity, although they have been most outspoken in their profession of loyalty to American institutions, they have had their past records painstakingly investigated by the Department of Justice and other government agencies. Such seems to be the inevitable fate of all rebels in this country, however mild or law-abiding they may be. Nevertheless, these leaders have had a profound effect upon the rank and file of the army. Uninspiring as the man is, Walter W. Waters, commander-in-chief of the B.E.F., has a large and devoted following among the Anacostia men. During the demonstration on the capitol plaza Saturday, although he talked the most hollow nonsense, the veterans greeted him with tremendous applause, cheered his every word as though he alone had the power to bring them the bonus.

These veterans appear to sense the inadequacy of their demands both actually and in principle. A few hundred dollars will not in any case go very far. Moreover, the veterans seem to know by instinct rather than by any process of ratiocination, that there is no promise of future economic security in the bonus. They feel that the goal they are seeking is a false one, but in their confusion of mind they can think of no other goal. Lastly, the veterans are all in or beyond middle age; every one of them has been thoroughly whipped by his individual economic circumstances. There is about the lot of them an atmosphere of hopelessness, of utter despair, though not of desperation. They have come to Washington for reasons beyond their understanding; they have no enthusiasms whatever, and no stomach for fighting. People who see in the bonus army the beginning of a fascist movement or the nucleus for a successful fascist "march on Washington" are in error. Such a movement may develop among the younger unemployed, but it will not, I am certain, start with the bonus army.

There is no doubt that Washington, officialdom from Mr. Hoover down is badly frightened by the presence of these former soldiers. The President revealed his feelings last midnight. Vice-President Curtis earlier in-the week called for a company of sixty marines to guard the Senate. They were dispatched to the capitol only to be ordered back to their barracks as soon as General Glassford, the chief of police, learned of their arrival. A few weeks ago the District of Columbia commissioners sought to maneuver Glassford into the position of having to oust the veterans from the city and to assume responsibility for that action, but the orders were withdrawn when Glassford demanded that the orders be given to him in writing.

Document #2: A secret Army intelligence report issued by Conrad H. Lanza, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, to the intelligence Officer of the second Corps Area. The report was dated July 5, 1932

Word has been passed around in Syracuse (New York) that the first blood shed by the Bonus Army at Washington, is to be a signal for a communist uprising in all large cities thus initiating a revolution. The entire movement is stated to be under communist control, with branches being rapidly developed in
Document #3: Letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Ferry K. Heath, to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, dated July 26, 1932.

Under the date of July 23, 1932 this department served notice to W.W. Waters and Camp Commanders of the various areas ... to vacate on or before midnight of Monday, July 25, 1932, all land and premises belonging to the United States and under the jurisdiction and control of the U.S. Treasury Department.

On Monday, July 25, 1932, counsel for the B.E.F. besought a 24 hour stay of the above order of vacation, in order to afford the B.E.F. an opportunity to offer a definite proposal for the Vacation of the buildings occupied by the veterans This department has granted this stay, and nothing developed at the conference which warranted the order of vacation, and the contractors are under orders to proceed with the work.

It is planned to begin work on this area at 7:30 am sharp, Wednesday, July 27, 1932, and it is requested that a sufficient detail of police be on hand to prevent any interference with the contractor or his workmen . . .


It is planned at 10:00. am tomorrow to send to this area [the partly demolished buildings occupied by the veterans] agents of the Treasury Department to repossess at the hour, on behalf of the United States, all the remaining portion of the old National Guard armory. . . It is further proposed, after repossing the building . . . to extend the repossession in different directions to include the entire block.

It is requested that police protection be afforded the Treasury Department agents in their efforts to repossess the property . . .

It is further requested that after repossession of the property the Police Department prevent its reoccupancy.

Document #5: An article in the New York Times, July 29, 1932, described the incident on the morning of the 28th between police and bonus marchers during which Glassford got a bit roughed up. In recounting the events of that afternoon surrounding the fatal shooting of two veterans the article continued:

(Glassford) took turns talking to his men and to the veterans. He conferred three times with W. W. Waters, who until today was virtual dictator of the "bonus army." Through Waters he had been able to obtain order, but when Waters lost control trouble broke out.

General Glassford saw the shooting today. About it he said:

"I was about twenty yards away from the building when I heard a commotion. I went to the second floor.
One officer had started up the steps, and near the rear I heard someone say,

'Let's get him.'

The officer had attempted to stop a commotion between two veterans. As he started up the steps bricks started falling on him, and as I leaned over the railing above I saw him fall and draw his gun, firing two shots. Two other policemen rushed up with their guns in hand.

I leaned over and shouted, 'Stop that shooting.' When I did that one of my men who apparently was dazed (sic) by the bricks and thought I was a veteran about to throw at him, turned his revolver straight at me. I ducked behind a pillar, for fear he might shoot before he realized who it was."

Earlier General Glassford had expressed the belief that the shooting was justified.

**Document #6: Statement to the press by Attorney General William Mitchell shortly after the police started evicting the bonus marchers from the buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue, July 28, 1932.**

During the time that Congress was in session and the members of the "bonus Army" were justifying their presence on the grounds that they desired to petition Congress for a redress of alleged grievances there was a natural disposition to show extreme consideration to these men. That time has gone by.

Many of them are violating the laws of the District by holding unlawful assemblies in the streets, obstructing traffic, disorderly conduct, begging and other acts. Their refusal to leave government property and resisting removal is an offense against the law, punishable by fine and imprisonment.

It is high time this conduct should end. There is no reason why these men should not obey the laws of the District just as every resident of the District is expected to.

**Document #7: Letter from the Board of Commissioners to President Hoover, July 28.**

The President:

The Commissioners of the District of Columbia regret to inform you that during the past few hours, circumstances of a serious character have arisen in the District of Columbia which have been the cause of unlawful acts of large numbers of so-called "bonus marchers" who have been in Washington for some time past.

This morning, officials of the Treasury Department, seeking to clear certain areas within the Government triangle in which there were numbers of these bonus marchers, met with resistance. They called upon the Metropolitan Police Force for assistance and a serious riot occurred. Several members of the Metropolitan Police were injured, one reported seriously. The total number of bonus marchers greatly outnumbered the police; the situation is made more difficult by the fact that this area contains thousands of brickbats and these were used by the rioters in their attack upon the police.

In view of the above, it is the opinion of the Major and Superintendent of Police, in which the Commissioners concur, that it will be impossible for the Police Department to maintain law and order
except by the free use of firearms which will make the situation a dangerous one; it is believed, however, that the presence of Federal troops in some number will obviate the seriousness of the situation and result in far less violence and bloodshed.

The Commissioners of the District of Columbia, therefore, request that they be given the assistance of Federal troops, in maintaining law and order in the District of Columbia.

Very sincerely yours,

L. H. Reichelderfer

President, Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia

Document #8: Orders issued by Secretary of War Hurley to General MacArthur at about 3:00 p.m. on July 23, 1932.

TO: General Douglas MacArthur

Chief of Staff, U.S., Army

The President has just now informed me that the civil government of the District of Columbia has reported to him that it is unable to maintain law and order in the District.

You, will have United States troops proceed immediately to the scene of the disorder. Cooperate fully with the District of Columbia police force which is now in charge. Surround the affected area and clear it without delay.

Turn over all prisoners to the civil authorities.

In your orders insist that any women or children who may be in the affected area be accorded every consideration and kindness. Use all humanity consistent with the due execution of the order.

Patrick J. Hurley,

Secretary of War


For some days police authorities and Treasury officials have been endeavoring to persuade the so-called bonus marchers to evacuate certain buildings which they are occupying without permission. These buildings are on sites where Government construction is in progress and their demolition was necessary in order to extend employment in the District and to carry forward the Government's construction program.

This morning the occupants of these buildings were notified to evacuate and at the request of the police did evacuate the buildings concerned. Thereafter, however, several thousand men from different camps marched in and attacked the police with brickbats and otherwise injured
several policemen, one probably, fatally.

I have received the attached letter from the Commissioners of the District of Columbia stating that they can no longer preserve law and order, in the District.

In order to put an end to this rioting and defiance of civil authority, I have asked the Army to assist the District authorities to restore order.

Congress made provision for the return home of the so-called bonus marchers who have for many weeks been given every opportunity of free assembly, free speech and free petition to the Congress. Some 5,000 took advantage of this arrangement and have returned to their homes. An examination of a large number of names discloses the fact that a considerable part of those remaining are not veterans; many are communists and persons with criminal records.

The veterans amongst these numbers are no doubt unaware of the character of their companions and are being led into violence which no government can tolerate.

I have asked the Attorney General to investigate the whole incident and to cooperate with the District civil authorities in such measures against leaders and rioters as may be necessary.

**Document #10: The New York Times, July 29, 1932, contains the following comments by W. W. Waters made just before federal troops entered the city.**

The men got completely out of control, There was nothing and is nothing I can do to control them. (Later on the same day Waters issued the following statement to the press)

Every drop of blood shed today or that may be shed in days to come as the result of today's events can be laid directly on the threshold of the White House.

They (the B. E. F.) were under the strictest orders to conduct themselves in an orderly manner in the event of attempted forcible evacuation and to offer nothing but passive resistance, but the administration saw fit to issue orders for forcible evacuation of the Pennysvannia Avenue billigt, making no provision for other billits nor allowing us time to make such provision: nor were we allowed the time to prepare the minds of the men for what was to occur despite the previous semi-concilliatory attitude on the part of the authorities.

I have devoted these recent weeks to organization work that could prevent such an occurance and the men of the B.E.F. were entirely in accord with the ideals that had been laid down.

But all this has been offset and a life sacrificed to serve the political interests of the administration.

**Document #11: In At Ease: Stories I Tell To Friends (1967) Dwight D. Eisenhower describes some of the events of July 28, 1932 as follows:**

As quickly as the order was announced to us, General MacArthur decided that he should go into active
command in the field. . . I told him that the matter could easily become a riot and I thought it highly inappropriate for the Chief of Staff of the Army to be involved in anything like a local or street-corner embroilment. (Of course, this was no "street-corner" matter -- but it still did not require the presence of the Chief of Staff in the streets)* General MacArthur disagreed, saying that it was a question of Federal authority in the District of Columbia, and because of his belief that there was "incipient revolution in the air," as he called it, he paid no attention to my dissent.

* This parenthetical statement is Eisenhower's.

[When the federal troops pushed the Bonus Marchers across the Anacostia River, Eisenhower comments further on MacArthur's conduct].

Instructions were received from the Secretary of War, who said he was speaking for the President, which forbade any troops to cross the bridge into the largest encampment of veterans, on the open ground beyond the bridge.

These instructions were brought to the troop by Colonel Wright, Secretary of the General Staff, and then by General Mosely of the Assistant Secretary's office. In neither instance did General MacArthur hear these instructions. He said he was too busy and did not want either himself or his staff bothered by people coming down and pretending to bring orders.

Document #12: Excerpt from General George Van Horn Moseley's unpublished autobiography, One Soldier's Journey. Gen. Moseley was Deputy Chief of Staff in 1932. The selection below was probably written between the years 1936 and 1938.

Sometime after the troops had completed their mission on Pennsylvania Avenue, and before they crossed the Anacostia Bridge with the view of cleaning out the camp on the other side, Mr. Hurley, the Secretary of War, directed me to inform General MacArthur that the President did not wish the troops to cross the bridge that night, to force the evacuation of the Anacostia Camp. I left my office, contacted General MacArthur, and as we walked away, alone, from the others, I delivered that message to him and discussed it with him. He was very much annoyed in having his plans interfered with in any way until they were executed completely. After assuring myself that he understood the message, I left him. As I told him, I was only instructed to deliver the message to him, and having done that I returned to my office. Later I was asked from the White House if I had delivered the message, and assured that I had. Still later, I was instructed to repeat the message and assure myself that General MacArthur received it before he crossed the Anacostia Bridge. I sent Colonel Clement B. Wright, then Secretary to the General Staff, to repeat: the message to MacArthur, and explain the situation as I had it from the White House. Colonel Wright contacted General MacArthur immediately, and explained the situation to him fully. As I now recall, Colonel Wright reported to me that the troops had not crossed the Anacostia Bridge, but were advancing
on, the bridge. In any event, General MacArthur went on with his plan, carrying it through, compelling the complete evacuation of the large Anacostia Camp, which held most of the veterans. A mission of this kind is a very disagreeable one for the Army, but it was executed with precision and efficiency, and entirely without bloodshed.


At 10:00 this evening infantrymen with drawn bayonets advanced into the camp [on Anacostia Flats], driving the crowd before them with tear gas bombs. Then they applied the torch to the shacks in which the veterans lived.

Troops shortly afterwards halted at the main bonus camp in response to what General Perry L. Miles, then commanding the soldiers, said was a Presidential order. Theodore G. Joslin, the President's secretary, later denied positively that the President had issued any such order, and word came from the camp that the troops would resume operations within an hour.


...It is my opinion that had the President not acted today, had he permitted this thing to go on for twenty-four hours more, we would have been faced with a grave situation which would have caused a real battle. Had he let it go on another week I believe that the institutions of our Government would have been very severely threatened. I think it can be safely said that he had not only reached the end of an extraordinary patience but that he had gone to the very limit of his desire to avoid friction and trouble before he used force. Had he not used it all that time, I believe he would have been very derelict indeed in the judgement in which he was handling the safety of the country. This was the focus of the world today; and had he not acted with the force and vigor that he did, it would have been a very sad day for the country tomorrow.

I have never seen greater relief on the part of the distressed populace than I saw today. I have released in my day more than one community.

...At least a dozen people told me, especially in the Negro section, that a regular system of tribute was being levied on them by this insurrectionist group. . . .

. . . I have been in many riots but I think this is the first riot I ever was in or ever saw in which there was no real bloodshed. So far as I know there is no man on either side who has been seriously injured.


The army did show force (on July 28th, 1932). The force was intended to show the radical leaders that a government by all the people was still functioning and could not be overcome by an organized minority. But force was never used. The soldiers were always halted in time to give the marchers an opportunity to retire. The Army used no weapon other than a few tear-gas bombs. After having thrown a volley of brickbats at the troops at the first camp, the marchers broke and ran.

Document #16: An excerpt from Benjamin Gitlow’s The Whole of Their Lives, a book describing
the author's experiences as a Communist published in 1948.

Walter W.) Waters charged that the communist gang led by (John T.) Pace which seized the Illinois contingent were drunkards guilty of misusing veterans funds. The communists, now in the driver's seat, kicked Waters out of command, put Thomas Kelly in command for a few hours and then took complete charge of the Bonus March movement.

...The communists had succeeded in keeping the veterans in Washington almost a month. The mood of the veterans got uglier from day to day. The communists' leaders were then firmly in the saddle. On July 5 Earl Browder (Chairman of the American Communist Party) declared that the veterans were shock troops of the unemployed. Said he, "The Bonus revolutionary force in Washington is the most significant beginning of the mass struggle against the consequences of the crisis." . . .

On July 28 the government went into action. General Douglas MacArthur . . . stepped in to prevent bloodshed after a fight between communist led veterans and police resulted in the death of one veteran and the shooting of an innocent bystander. It was just what the Communists wanted. Now they could brand Hoover as a murderer of hungry unemployed veterans. They could charge that the U.S. Army was Wall Street's tool with which to crush the unemployed, and that the government and Congress of the U.S. were bloody Fascist butchers of unarmed American workers.


For two fruitless months the (bonus marchers) lived in abject squalor making their daily marches to the Capitol, to the White House, and to all of the sacrosanct federal buildings where they hoped to loosen the pursestrings of government. In the end, their frustration, combined with careful needling by the Communists, turned them in a sullen, riotous mob.

Through the month of June the tension mounted. . . . At night, morose men squatted by burning campfires listening silently to the endless speeches, always tinged with the increasing violence of Communist propaganda.

The (bonus march) was actually far deeper and more dangerous than an effort to secure funds from a nearly depleated federal treasury. The American Communist Party planned a riot of such proportions that it was hoped the United-States Army, in its efforts to maintain peace, would have to fire on the marchers. In this way, the Communists hoped to incite revolutionary action. Red organizers infiltrated the veteran groups and presently took command from their unwitting leaders.

As the violence increased, Pelham Glassford . . . twice consulted with me about calling on the Army for assistance. Both times I advised against it. But on July 28th the crisis was reached. A mob of 5,000 strong began to move up Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Treasury Building and the White House. The
police were outnumbered five to one. Glassford was mauled and stripped of his police superintendent’s gold badge, gunfire broke out, two men were killed, and a score or more badly injured. It was evident that the situation had gotten beyond the control of the local authorities.

Not a shot was fired, (by the federal troops). The sticks, clubs, and stones of the rioters were met only by tear gas and steady pressure. By 9:30 p.m. the area was cleared as far as the Anacostia Flats. The show of force, the excellent discipline of the troops, and the proper use of tear gas had turned the trick without serious bloodshed. At Anacostia Flats I received word from the Secretary of War, as we were in the midst of crossing the river, to suspend the operation at my discretion. I halted the command as soon as we had cleared the bridge, but at that moment the rioters set fire to their own camp. This concluded the proceedings for the night.


My dear Mr. Commissioner:

In response to your information that the police of the District were overwhelmed by an organized attack by several thousand men, and were unable to maintain law and order, I complied with your request for aid from the Army to the police. It is a matter of satisfaction that, after the arrival of this assistance, the mobs which were defying the municipal government were dissolved without the firing of a shot or the loss of a life.

I wish to call attention of the District Commissioners to the fact that martial law has not been declared; that responsibility for order still rests upon your commission and the police. The civil government of Washington must function uninterrupted. The Commissioners, through their own powers, should now deal with this question decisively.

It is the duty of the authorities of the District to at once find the instigators of this attack on the police and bring them to justice. It is obvious that, after the departure of the majority of the veterans, subversive influences obtained control of the men remaining in the District, a large part of whom were not veterans, secured repudiation of their elected leaders and inaugurated and organized this attack.

They were undoubtedly led to believe that the civil authorities could be intimidated with impunity because of attempts to conciliate by lax enforcement of city ordinances and laws in many directions. I shall expect the police to strictly enforce every ordinance of the District in every part of the city. I wish every violator of the law to be instantly arrested and prosecuted under due process of law.

I have requested the law enforcement agencies of the Federal Government to cooperate with the District authorities to this end.

There is no group, no matter what its origins, that can be allowed either to violate the laws of this city or to
A challenge to the authority of the United States Government has been met, swiftly and firmly.

After months of patient indulgence, the Government met overt lawlessness as it always must be met if the cherished processes of self-government are to be preserved. We cannot tolerate the abuse of Constitutional rights by those who would destroy all government, no matter who they may be. Government cannot be coerced by mob rule.

The Department of Justice is pressing its investigation into the violence which forced the call for Army detachments, and it is my sincere hope that those agitators who inspired yesterday’s attack upon the Federal authority may be brought speedily to trial in the civil courts. There can be no safe harbor in the United States of America for violence.

Order and civil tranquility are the first requisites in the great task of economic reconstruction to which our whole people now are devoting their heroic and noble energies. This national effort must not be retarded in even the slightest degree by organized lawlessness. The first obligation of my office is to uphold and defend the Constitution and the authority of the law. This I propose always to do.

Document #20: Article by Paul Y. Anderson in The Nation, August 17, 1932. The dateline of the article was August 6, 1932.

Excepting a small unit of Communists, which the main body promptly outlawed, the behavior of the men was characterized by extraordinary discipline and restraint. To one who visited their camps many times and talked to scores of them, any suggestion that they constituted a threat against the government is preposterous.

Even the Communist gestures were confirmed mainly to two futile attempts to parade before the White House, which got them nothing but broken heads, jail sentences, and fines. The attitude of the great majority was one of good-humored and patient fortitude under incredibly primitive conditions of existence. In a thousand ways they exhibited the instinct to make comedy out of their own vicissitudes -- an instinct as characteristic now as it was in France...

Save for the feeble gestures of the isolated Communist group there was no trouble until that fatal Thursday, due in part to the remarkable tact and common sense of General Glassford, the chief of police, in part to the discipline enforced by the leaders of the camps, and in part to the essentially law-abiding instincts of the men themselves. The worthy Hurley mouths indignant phrases about “panhandling” and “forced tribute from citizens,” but in all my visits to the camps I was never asked for anything more valuable than a cigarette -- and I am a fairly prosperous looking citizen. As soon as Congress adjourned
there was a steady exodus of the campers, as attested by the daily statements of the Veterans' Bureau, dutifully reported by the Associated Press and Administration newspapers. Responsible officials repeatedly declared it was only a matter of day's until all would be gone.

But suddenly someone high in authority decided the government must have immediate possession of the partially razed block bounded by Third and Fourth Streets and Pennsylvania and Missouri Avenues, where about 1,500 were existing in abandoned buildings and makeshift buts. Instructions went from the Treasury to the District commissioners to have the police evict the squatters. On two occasions Glassford convinced the commissioners that the police had no authority to conduct such evictions, and pointed out that the procedure for eviction is definitely prescribed by law. On Wednesday there was a conference at the White House attended by Hurley, Attorney-General Mitchell, and General Douglas MacArthur, chief of staff of the army. On Thursday morning Glassford was informed that Treasury agents would begin evacuation of a part of the block, and that if anyone resisted eviction he was to be arrested for disorderly conduct. This meant that the actual eviction would be done by the police, and so it worked out. Someone had devised a technicality for getting around the law. Glassford's protests were unavailing. It was obvious that irresistible pressure had been applied to the commissioners.

One building was emptied with little difficulty of all but one occupant -- a legless veteran whom Glassford permitted to remain until the Veterans’ Bureau could take care of him. An hour later, at noon, three men, one carrying a large American flag, started a march across the block, followed by several hundred. When the leaders encountered a policeman he grabbed the flag. There was a scuffle, and one of the marchers was hit on the head with a nightstick. He wrested it from the officer and struck back. Other policemen rushed toward the spot, and there was a shower of bricks from the marchers in the rear. I was standing about forty feet away, and it looked like an ugly mess, but the cops kept their heads and no shots were fired. Glassford dashed into the heart of the melee, smiled when a brickbat hit him in the chest, and stopped the fighting in a few seconds. Within two minutes the veterans were cheering him lustily. Two policemen had been badly hurt by thrown bricks, and several veterans were bleeding from the clubbing they had received and from accidental hits from within their own ranks.

The trouble was resumed with more serious consequences two hours later when a policeman attempted to bar several veterans from a building which, in fact, had not been prohibited to them. They rushed him and he shot. A fellow officer coming to his assistance was hit with a missile and likewise opened fire. Still others joined in. Glassford on the second floor of the same building, commanded his men to stop shooting, and the policeman who had fired the first shot and who apparently was hysterical, whirled and aimed his revolver at the chief. In this encounter two veterans were fatally wounded, another received a flesh wound, and a bystander got a policeman's bullet in the shoulder.

It was soon afterward that Glassford made an illuminating statement to reporters. He said: “The trouble began when I was compelled to enforce an order which I considered unnecessary. In a few more hours this area could have been evacuated peacefully.”
According to Messrs. Hoover and Hurley, it was necessary to evacuate this block in order to "give way to new buildings to be built under the construction program authorized by Congress. This new construction was designed to give employment to the unemployed of Washington and vicinity." As a matter of fact, inquiry at the Treasury discloses that the plans call for no buildings on this block. It will be used for a park and parkway. Its part in relieving unemployment consists in this: that forty Negro laborers and a crane will be used in razing the remaining buildings. Moreover, it develops that an undertaker, whose place of business still stands on the site, has appealed from the judgement in a condemnation suit, and the labor of leveling the block may not be completed for weeks.

...I am only one of numerous reporters who stood by while the soldiers set fire to many such shelters. In the official apologia, the Secretary asserts that "the shacks and tents at Anacostia were set on fire by the bonus marchers before the troops crossed the Anacostia Bridge." I was there when the troops crossed. They celebrated their arrival at the Anacostia terminus of the bridge by tossing gas bombs into a throng of spectators who booed and refused to get back as soon as ordered. About fifteen minutes after their arrival in the camp the troops set fire to two improvised barracks. These were the first fires. Prior to this General MacArthur had summoned all available reporters and told them that "operations are completely suspended," that "our objective has been accomplished," that "the camp is virtually abandoned," and that it would "not be burned." Soon after making that statement he departed for the White House. When the two barracks ignited by the soldiers had been burning fiercely for at least thirty minutes, the veterans began firing their own shelters as they abandoned them.


The veterans were so orderly, so quiet, so well-governed without government that the city was amazed by it as by a strange phenomenon.

The small group of Communist veterans (they at no time mustered more than 210 men for their demonstrations), segregated from the beginning but always making speeches, scoffed at their comrades for their docility. They shouted "Program! Action!" And the loyal veterans, determined that they would be guilty of no overt act, determined to offer only passive resistance to the still more passive foe with whom they could not come to grips, expended all their latent energy against these Reds. Their own "military police," armed with sticks instead of guns, were constantly on the watch. They ran out the Reds. They took radical speechmakers to the District line, and beat them up. The radicals came back.

Glassford ordered the veterans to desist from these violations of civil law, warned them against "taking the law into their own hands," and advised complaining radicals to place their charges with the proper authorities.

The Bonus Army leaders muttered their resentment at this strict hewing to the line. Commander Waters, stung to bravado, said, "To hell with Glassford!" and proceeded to try to starve out the Reds by refusing radical groups food. This move Glassford also blocked. Food, he said, coming in to the general
commissary was to be distributed to all groups alike, except such food as came in marked for delivery to specific units.

John Pace, the leader of the Communists, applied for a permit to hold a meeting in the ball park adjoining the big Anacostia camp. Glassford granted them permit over Waters protest that his men “would tear Pace limb from limb.” Glassford was on hand. A fist fight started. Glassford waded in and stopped it, cooled them down. “We’re all veterans together, and I did not want to see any veterans fighting veterans. That man has a right to speak and express his views. Any one of you who doesn’t want to listen to him had better go back to camp and play baseball.”

(In the early afternoon of July 23)

General Glassford returned to the “riot area.” All was quiet, and in control of the police. Half an hour later Commissioners Reichelderfer and Crosby appeared, and General Glassford informed them that all was quiet and that plans were being formulated to get all the veterans visiting in the area to return to their own camps. Nothing was said by the Commissioners at this time to indicate that they had reached a decision to call for Federal aid. It was not until more than an hour later that he had any intimation that the troops had been called out. Information came to him first from a newspaper reporter and was confirmed a few minutes later by a message from Attorney General Mitchell. “I was,” said Glassford, “in command at the scene of a difficult situation vitally affected by the call for Federal troops. I have never been informed why the Commissioners did not notify me instantly when the troops were called.”


When it was evident that no legislation on the bonus would be passed by the Congress, I asked the chairman of the Congressional committees to appropriated funds to buy tickets home for the legitimate veterans. This was done and some 6,000 availed themselves of its aid, leaving about 5,000 mixed hoodlums, ex-convicts, Communists and a minority of veterans in Washington. Through government agencies we obtained the names of upwards of 2,000 of those remaining and found that fewer than a third of them had ever served in the armies, and that over 900 on the basis of the sampling were ex-convicts and Communists.

Some old buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue had been occupied by about 50 marchers. These buildings stood in the way of construction work going on as an aid to employment in Washington. On July 28th the Treasury officials, through the police, requested these marchers to move to other quarters. Whereupon more than 11,000 of the disturbers marched from camps outside of the city armed with clubs and made an organized attack upon the police. In the melee Police Commissioner Glassford failed to organize his men. Several were surrounded by the mob and beaten up; two policemen, beaten to the ground, fired to protect their lives and killed two marchers. Many policemen were injured.

In the midst of this riot the District Commissioners, upon Glassford’s urging appealed to me. They declared that they could not preserve order in the Capital, that the police were greatly outnumbered, and
were being overwhelmed.

Without firing a shot or injuring a single person, they (the Army) cleaned up the situation. Certain of my directions to the Secretary of War, however, were not carried out. Those directions limited action to seeing to it the disturbing factions returned to their camps outside the business district. I did not wish them driven from their camps, as I proposed that the next day we would surround the camps and determine more accurately the number of Communists and ex-convicts among the marchers. Our military officers, however, having them on the move, pushed them outside the District of Columbia.


But whatever justification there may have been for clearing our the ex-soldiers from Pennsylvania Avenue, there is absolutely none for what followed at Anacostia. The land where the main body of the B.E.F. was encamped was not needed for any other purpose; the veterans were harming no one by staying there. The orders which sent the soldiers to Anacostia, routing men, women and children out of bed, drenching them with tear gas, ruthlessly burning their poor shelters and whatever personal property they could not carry on their backs, then driving all of them, cripples, babies, pregnant women, up a steep hill at the point of a bayonet—these were the orders of a furious child who has been thwarted and is raging for revenge. It is profoundly humiliating to every decent American that he must see his government thus persecuting and stealing from these hungry and ragged men whom, fourteen years ago, it did not hesitate to send into the trenches at the risk of death.

Mr. Hoover's tin-hatted soldiers burned the homes of the veterans, but they did not in any sense solve the problem. Today the remnants of the B.E.F. are strung along many miles of highway, in even more desperate plight than before the dispersal. As we write, physical violence is threatened at Johnstown, Pennsylvania: and is possible at several other places. Meanwhile, the sinister and concealed motives in the minds of some, at least, of the "respectable" leaders of the veterans are shown by the announcement of a plan for the remnants of the B.E.F. to be made: the nucleus for an American Fascist organization, the "Khaki Shirts..." There are just enough wealthy Americans who favor Fascism, and are willing to, spend money to aid its cause here, to make such a movement extremely dangerous. Hardly less dangerous is the peril that thousands of veterans will become permanently pauperized, will drift along the highways begging for food and shelter.

The federal government has abdicated its responsibility in the case. Mr. Hoover's petulance and rage have first made the problem far worse, and then dumped it upon the states and cities. The way in which they carry their burden will be, in a very real sense, the answer to the charge that the old American spirit of pioneer neighborliness and response in emergency has rotted away with the years.


From the very beginning General Pelham D. Glassford, a retired regular officer who is the superintendent of police, has shown courage, intelligence, and sound common sense in handling the bonus army, and has been actuated also by commiseration for the desperate plight of the men who assembled in
Washington in the exercise of their constitutional right to assemble and to petition for a redress of their grievances. If General Glassford had been given a free hand we should never have witnessed such incredible scenes as took place in Washington -- seven hundred and fifty regulars, with tanks, tear-gas, and all the paraphernalia of war, brutally and ruthlessly running some 10,000 veterans out of town burning their pitiful shacks and incidentally gassing innocent civilians, newspapermen, detectives, without the slightest consideration for the plight of these destitute thousands after their eviction.

Obviously somebody blundered badly. Given a weak and timid man in a difficulty of this kind, and he is bound to be the first to turn to ruthless use of power, the first to do the wrong thing -- and Mr. Hoover is both weak and timid. What was it that brought about the bloodshed on the day it happened? There had been weeks of tolerance; then great vacillation on the part of the commissioners of the District of Columbia who issued orders to evacuate the veterans and then revoked them and rode roughshod over General Glassford. On the day before the trouble, Wednesday, July 27, there was a sudden consultation in the White House with Secretary Hurley and Secretary Mills present, and action was decided upon. The troops were all in readiness about the sacred White House and the eviction began, with the results known. Even before that the White House had announced that it was considering the declaration of martial law and of calling out the army, but no one believed that this would be done until General Glassford had been allowed to try to move the men out.

Instead the President, using as his excuse that the presence of the men was delaying the demolition of this property "necessary in order to extend employment in the District," issued his orders. At the very moment when, after consultation with the police, the commander of the veterans was trying to induce his men to go quietly, the White House turned a simple evacuation of a few half-demolished buildings into what the Baltimore Sun editorially describes as a "pitiful and brutal conflict between desperate homeless men and saber-swinging cavalry, with tanks in reserve"; as "a movement for the complete and ruthless clearing out of the whole 'army' from the District, the mild 'conservatives' and the 'radicals' alike.

**Document #25: Excerpts from The Bonus March and The New Deal, 1937.**

*John Henry Bartlett was a retired newspaper publisher and former governor of New Hampshire. He owned a large lot on the outskirts of Washington, and in June 1932 he allowed a camp to be set up on this land for the bonus marchers. He became quite involved with the veterans before and after their eviction from Washington. In 1937 he published The Bonus March and The New Deal recounting his experiences of that eventful summer of 1932. Below are some excerpts from the book.*

If someone should contend that veterans should have abandoned this particular area (where the eviction began) when ordered to do so, the answer is, they would have complied; but where could they go? They were not shown. None of them were harming anybody where they were. They were absolutely penniless, ragged, hungry, and sick.

Those who were hesitating to go, confused and bewildered, simply did not know where to go or what to do. At that moment (when the police came to forcibly evict them from the buildings on Pennsylvania
Avenue) they were all "nerves."

(In late July Bartlett devised a plan to bring into "Camp Bartlett" all the bonus marchers who were left in Washington. Semi-permanent barracks were to be set up to accommodate the veterans until Spring, of 1933 or later if necessary.)

On the morning of Thursday, July 23th, I called Glassford on the phone about nine o'clock and told him of my conversation with Doak Carter, and that he had permission to carry out this plan if he desired...

(Glassford replied that) it was his idea to do so and the men seemed willing. He expected there would be lumber for barracks left on the premises, that day, and he hoped to have all the men over to Camp Bartlett by Monday. . . He gave me to understand that he had given the men until Monday to vacate the other billits and remove themselves to Camp Bartlett. He did not at that moment know of the Army arrangement for that very day, I feel sure.

It came to my ears, a few minutes later that day that Waters was addressing the men at the different billits, urging them all to transfer to Camp Bartlett and giving them until Monday to do so. Some of them did go over to Camp Bartlett that afternoon. The peaceful solution was assured.

Police on the second day (July 29th) also staged an unprecedented round-up of park sitters. Many who had not been identified with the bonus army were caught in the drive. Police patrols and commandeered taxis ran, in a steady stream, to Judiciary Square, which a police cordon had transformed into a human corral. There all who could not establish definite means of support were reloaded into cars and taken to the district line where they were again transferred into trucks and whisked away and dumped. A police count showed 502 poor people, none criminals, had been evicted in this second campaign.

I asked (Glassford) then if the District Commissioners or the President were opposed to what he was doing (helping to get food, shelter, etc. for the bonus marchers from various charities), and he said, "No they were not opposed, but they do not want to set a precedent." He did say, however, that the District Commissioners intimated to him when the veterans began to come in the first place that he should not have permitted them to come. He told me that his answer to the Commissioners to this suggestion was that if they gave him a written order, being a good soldier, he would obey that order and keep them out, if possible but if they did not give him written orders he would use his own judgement in handling them, and that was what he was doing.

Neither the city nor the government, as such, furnished any money, any food, any medicine, or anything whatsoever. Glassford, by his wonderful ability and activity, begged all these things from charity.

The fact is that leader Waters would not permit anyone in his camps who did not bring with him his bonus
certificate and his honorable discharge.

I saw a Secretary sitting at a table at the entrance of the camps, checking each new man who came in and registered. The police took those names and checked them daily and were on the watch for imposters. So were secret service.

**Document #26: In an article in The Survey August 1, 1932, Gardner Jackson observed the following about the Bonus Marchers:**

A paradox of the bonus army is the virulence of their curses at both the bankers and the Communists. They treat the latter roughly whenever they can lay hands on them. . . . These veterans denounce Hoover, insist it is the right of every citizen to have a job and that the government should take over the industries of the country to make that possible and then, in the next breath, they swear vengeance on "the reds who came in here trying to stir trouble with their Marxism, Leninism, and Bolshevism."

It is apparent that these men still have a hangover from their red-baiting jag of war -- and immediate post-war days. It is further evident that they have not recovered from the concurrent jag of 100% patriotism.

**Document #27: Article by Benjamin Gitlow entitled "A Labor Party for America" in Modern Monthly, September, 1933.**

We have had four years of the worst economic crisis in the history of the country, bring with it unprecedented poverty, unemployment, misery, starvation and general discontent. Yet the Socialist and Communist Parties were unable to capitalize these conditions for their respective movements. They have failed to organize the unemployed. . . . They were unable to direct and organize the discontent of the masses into some positive action. The rebellious actions that did take place, as for example the farmers' strikes, the Veterans' Bonus March on Washington, etc., were of a spontaneous character and took place in spite of these two parties. They did not organize them. They had no leadership in these movements. When the Communist Party tried to inject itself into the Veterans' Bonus March, the mass of the veterans resented it as interference and looked upon the Communists as a foreign, hostile force.

**Document #28: Excerpt from John T. Pace's testimony given before the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives, July 13, 1951**

In 1932 John T. Pace was a member of the Communist Party of the U.S., and organized and led a group of veterans from Detroit that joined the other veterans in Washington in June. The following is an excerpt from his testimony given before the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives, July 13, 1951.

Well, we were using Almen [a bonus march leader who was challenging Waters for leadership] to get control of the rank and file. It was the plan of the party to use Almen as a front for gaining control of the entire bonus expeditionary forces. The rapid momentum with which the Communist Party, through its central rank and file committee, was gaining influence resulted in more militant and more direct action, which we hoped would bring us into sharper clashes with the government and the law enforcement
agencies and which, in my opinion, resulted in the Government being placed in a position of having to call out the Army.

I do not believe that the Government had any alternative because of the rapid pace being made. It is my candid opinion that had this thing gone on for another week, the Communists would have gained the leadership of the bonus expeditionary forces, thereby resulting in forcing the Government to take the action they did take, at a time when the results would have been much more disastrous.

(Representative) Mandel: Are you acquainted, Mr. Pace, with the events that took place on July 29, 1932?

Pace: No I was in jail at the time.

Mandel: Did you learn from party leaders what happened?

Pace: No, the only discussion that I had came probably 2 or 3 weeks after that date when I was called to New York City.

Mandel: Will you describe what happened at this meeting (in New York)?

Pace: Well, there was quite a hot argument over the policies that had been pursued by the party in connection with the bonus march. The Communist Party of the U.S. was severely criticized by the representative of the Comintern, Alpi, for, as Alpi put it, the bonus march was like an alarm clock waking up somebody out of a dead sleep.

He (Alpi) centered his attack on Weinstone (the chief representative for the Communist Party on the question of the veterans). He told him that he slept while the masses rolled by and called him a swivel chair organizer. In fact he called the whole party, approximately, a swivel chair organization.

**Document #29: From the New York Times, July 29, 1932.**

Washington, July 29

James W. Ford, a Negro of New York, Communist candidate for Vice-President, was arrested with thirty-five others today in a police raid upon a meeting of alleged radicals among the bonus marchers.

**Document #30: Also from the New York Times, July 29.**

The story of the bonus riots in brief facts and figures...

Killed, 1 veteran

Injured, 55, 5 seriously

Tear gas victims, 20

Arrests, 135

Still held, 55, mostly veterans, including 36 radicals for immigration authorities, 10 for technical
investigation, 9 for disorderly conduct and 1 for inciting a riot.


The police today ejected from the District (of Columbia) twenty-eight of the forty-three radicals arrested yesterday in a raid on a meeting.

The released men, against whom no charges could be placed, were escorted to the Maryland line, where State troopers loaded them in trucks for Pennsylvania.


The Communist Party, at its Headquarters here, accepted responsibility yesterday for the demonstration that resulted in the bonus army riots in Washington.

"We agitated for the bonus and led the demonstrations of the veterans in Washington," a spokesman for the party said at the headquarters . . . "We stand ready to go to Washington again and fight for the workingmen. We started the march from here for Washington and we will lead the way again in December."

Document #33: Helen Glenn Tyson's report of her observations, part of which was reprinted in The Nation, September 23, 1932

After being routed from Washington, D.C., several thousand bonus marchers poured into Pennsylvania. This state's Secretary of Welfare ordered an investigation into the problem of caring for these unemployed men. Assistant Deputy Secretary of the State Department of Welfare, Helen Glenn Tyson, issued a report of her observations, part of which was reprinted in The Nation, September 23, 1932.

...They represented a cross-section of America, as had the army in 1918. They were highly conservative - indeed, had a middle-class psychology in their attitude toward the whole situation. Service badges, even distinguished service medals, were in evidence. The men treasured their army papers. There can be no question whatever that almost all of them were war veterans.

While the men had adopted the bonus as a symbol of their needs, they seemed entirely realistic about the limitations of a few hundred dollars to meet them. Their real demand was for security, and in their bewilderment and confusion they seem to have reverted to the old army ways, to the earlier institutional situation where shelter and food are provided and where leadership is given. American flags were everywhere, repudiation of the "reds" was violent; though the speakers often added that "that night in Washington was enough to make anyone a Bolshie."


Indictments charging three "bonus marchers" with assault to kill and assault with a dangerous weapon were reported by the District of Columbia grand jury today at the end of a two week's investigation into the rioting of July 28 . . .
No official notice was taken by the grand jury of the killing of William J. Hushka, a Chicago bonus marcher (and a veteran who served overseas). . . . Nor did the grand jury make a general report on the underlying causes of the rioting.

. . . Justice James N. Procter, in charging the grand jury, admonished the panel to confine its investigation to criminal offenses in the District of Columbia

**Document #35: Statement to the press by President Hoover, September 10, 1932.**

On the 28th of July last I announced that I had directed the Department of Justice to exhaustively investigate and report in full upon the incidents of the so-called bonus riots of that day in Washington and to present the facts, through sworn witnesses, to the Grand Jury. I further stated that I should make the Attorney General's report public when received by me.

The investigation has been completed. In giving out the report which shows the character of many of the persons assembled, the incidents and Character of the instigators of the riots, I wish to state emphatically that the extraordinary proportion of criminal, communist and non-veteran elements amongst the marchers as shown by this report, should not be taken to reflect upon the many thousands of honest, law-abiding men who came to Washington with full right of presentation of their views to the Congress. This better element and their leaders acted at all times to restrain crime and violence but after the adjournment of Congress a large portion of them returned to their homes and gradually these better elements lost control. This report should correct the many misstatements of fact as to this incident with which the country has been flooded.

**Document #36: Summary of the Attorney General's Report on the investigation of causes of the bonus marchers' "riot."**


Sir: Immediately following the riot by the so-called Bonus Army on July 28th, you directed an investigation and report thereon be made in this Department. We have completed it, and I submit herewith a summary of the result. A vast amount of material in the form of reports, affidavits, and documentary evidence has been accumulated. It is only possible here briefly to summarize the conclusions.

1. **The entry of the Bonus Army into the District of Columbia.**

The first contingent of the Bonus Army arrived about May 27th.

On June 3rd, information reached the Department that a contingent from Cleveland led by C. B. Cowan and another from Detroit led by John T. Pace, comprising about 1300 men, gathered at the Pennsylvania Railroad yards at Cleveland and had held up a mail train and attempted to commande transportation to Washington. Cowan, one of these leaders, has a long police record, he has been convicted and sentenced twice for forgery in Ohio and was sentenced to 13 months, for robbing the mails, to the United States Penitentiary at Atlanta in 1928. Pace, a well known Communist leader has an
extended police record. By one means and another these groups and others obtained transportation to Washington. By the middle of June they had congregated here in large numbers. They entered into possession of various tracts of Government property, on some of which were old buildings. In some instances permission to do so was given by the police authorities with the acquiescence of the Treasury, with the understanding that the occupancy would be temporary and would be discontinued at request and when Congress adjourned. Other government tracts were seized without permission and occupied by members of the Bonus Army. The number of Bonus Army marchers in Washington at the time of the adjournment of Congress on July 16th has been variously estimated at from 80000 to 15,000. Several thousand left shortly after Congress adjourned, but other groups came in, and at the time of the riot the best estimates are that there were from 6000 to 8000 bonus marchers in the city.

2. The quality of the Bonus Army.

To understand the conditions causing the riot it is necessary to know something of the character of the men in the Bonus Army.

(a) Number of marchers who were not ex-service men. A considerable number of the marchers were not in military service during the World War. An approximation of the number is impossible, but two items of reliable information throw some light on this question.

Prior to the riot of July 28th, 341 members of the Bonus Army had been arrested at various dates for a variety of offenses, including disorderly conduct, parading without a permit, assault with a dangerous weapon, destruction of private property, trespass on private property, and soliciting alms. Seventeen were arrested by the police on July 28th, and 4 on July 29th, making a total of 362. Unfortunately the police did not fingerprint all of these persons for identification, but 51 of them, including those arrested for disturbing the peace near the White House, were fingerprinted. Of these, 16, or approx. one-third, had no World War service record.

Prior to June 12th, 3,656 of the marchers who were arriving at Washington registered on the muster rolls of the Bonus Army, giving their names, Army numbers, and other data respecting, their World War service. These muster rolls came into the hands of the police and ultimately to the Veterans' Bureau, which commenced to check the names to ascertain whether the marchers were ex-servicemen. Learning what use was being made of the muster rolls, after June 12th the marchers discontinued the practice of registering. These first 3,656 registered arrivals had been checked by the War Department and the Veterans' Bureau against, their records of World War service men, with the result that of the total of 3,656,877, or a little more than one-fourth, could not be identified in either department as having had World War service. It is possible that some of the 877 were, ex-service men and could not be identified because of meagre information, but the bulk of them were evidently imposters. It has been reported in the press that Director Hines of the Veterans' Bureau has said that over 90% of the Bonus Army were ex-service men. General Hines made no such statement. He did matte the statement on July 23rd that he believed not more than 8,000 veterans had ever been present at any one time, but the 377 men not
identified as veterans were part of the 3,656 registered to which I have referred.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM D. MITCHELL
Attorney-General


Total number of bonus marchers (ex-service men) upon whom fingerprints were obtained, 4,723.

Number of bonus marchers with police records as found from fingerprints, 1,069 (22.6%).

Total number of bonus marchers found to have one or more convictions, 829 (17.6% of the 4,723 number).

Major Glassford . . . went to the office of the District commissioners at 1 p.m., (July 28). In response to questions by the District commissioners he stated that the situation was out of his control and that police could no longer hold the bonus marchers in check. He was asked the direct question whether he thought it was necessary to secure the assistance of Federal troops, to which he replied in the affirmative.


At the conference held at the commissioners office within half an hour after the brick battle, I stated that if the police could hold the area which had been repossessed during the morning. I stated that if further efforts towards evicting the veterans by the police were insisted upon that afternoon there doubtlessly would be more rioting and bloodshed. I recommended that should further eviction be required that day the Federal troops should be called upon to do it. Nothing was said by the commissioners at this conference to indicate they had reached a decision to call for Federal aid.

This second attack (upon the police who were trying to evict veterans) occurred about 1:45 p.m. more than an hour and a half after the brick battle. It was a short spontaneous affair, involving seven police officers who were isolated from the main body of police holding the repossessed area.

It is true that there was I a certain amount of hostility, but A very large proportion of the unemployed veterans remained loyal to law and order. Without this mass of loyal men it would not have been possible for me to have stopped the brick battle before it had been in progress five minutes, nor to have stopped the second outbreak, in which two veterans were shot, almost as soon as it had commenced.

There was no trouble of any kind between 2 p.m. and the time the troops arrived, which was after 5.

The Metropolitan Police force numbers more than 1,300 officers. There were at no time more than 450 in the disaffected area.
Document #39: Press statement released by the Board of Commissioners of Washington, D.C., September 13, 1932.

With reference to the statements appearing in the press and purporting to be made by the Chief of Police concerning the presence of troops on July 28, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia assert positively that Major Glassford stated to them the situation in the affected area was beyond the control of the police: that in response to a direct question as to whether the presence of troops was necessary, Major Glassford stated positively that the presence of troops was necessary.


My dear Mr. Secretary,

Some time ago I was surprised by General McArthur's (sic) published statements that the Bonus Expeditionary Force, under command of Walter W. Waters, was a national menace; that it was composed of men a majority of whom were not veterans, but were in fact Communists; that the Hoover declaration of war averted a national catastrophe, and that Camp Marks (on Anacostia Flats) was fired by the (B.E.F.) and not by the soldiers under his command.

Later, I was staggered to see that you had also repeated these statements; and now that Assistant Secretary Davidson has had the temerity to use them in his campaign, in an attempt to vilify the (B.E.F.), I feel fully justified in recalling to you the following from our interview of Tuesday, July 26, preceding the battle of Pennsylvania Avenue, in order that you may, for the benefit of all concerned, square these facts with the published statements emanating from your Department.

You will recall, Mr. Secretary, that this interview took place in your office and extended over a period of more than three hours; that there were present yourself, Major General Douglas McArthur (sic), B.E.F. Commander Walter W. Waters, Captain Doak E. Carter, Lieutenant Johnson and myself; that during this interview the (John T.) Pace Communist group of about two hundred men was constantly referred to as entirely separate from the B.E.F. -- that Commander Waters stated he would evacuate the three congested areas in Washington as soon as he could find shelter for some 250 women and children; that Waters had advised all veterans with homes to return to them and that the men still in Washington had no homes; except the temporary quarters which they occupied, many with their families and all their worldly goods; that Waters was at the time working on a Florida colonization scheme and had other projects for dispersing these men into productive industries; that temporary shelters were planned at Camp Bartlett, on the extreme outskirts of the District of Columbia, which would clear the congested area within a week; and lastly, that Captain Carter tendered to you the loyal support and cooperation of every man in the B.E.F. to carry our any order or wish which you might, official, or otherwise, express.

I do not forget, Mr. Secretary, that you called General Frank T. Hines of the Veterans' Administration and urged him to allow these women and children to be moved to Fort Hunt for a few days. Also that you asked General McArthur if he would supply the necessary tentage for a temporary period. I admired and
commended this cooperative spirit on your part. I clearly recall, however, your reply to Captain Carter’s tender of the loyal cooperation of the B.E.F. to the effect that there was no condition which would lead you to call upon the B. E. F., or any of its members for any service, as well as Captain Carter’s rejoinder that you did not feel that way about it in 1917. I also clearly recall your observation that the B. E. F. had been a problem the administration because these men had been absolutely law abiding and orderly; that had they violated the law, or been disorderly, they could have been evicted from the District of Columbia by the civil or military authorities and that the President of the United States, by a scratch of his pen, could declare martial law and use the entire military forces of the United States for that purpose...

HERBERT S. WARD