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From: Dave ***** [mailto:Dave@bighammer.net]

Sent: Monday, August 8, 2005 02:51 PM

To: em@vcdl.org

Subject: As if NPS doesn't already have a big enough black eye...

<http://www.washtimes.com/metro/20050806-103121-9779r.htm>

Park Service thwarts plan for mock Yorktown battle

By Sue Lindsey
ASSOCIATED PRESS
August 7, 2005

NORFOLK -- If the Battle of Yorktown were held today, it would have to be moved.

The National Park Service doesn't permit even mock battles on its land, so an organizer of a re-enactment for the 225th anniversary says the group has to look for another site.

Jeff Lambert of the 1st Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line said his group had been working with the Park Service for two years on a program involving 3,000 re-enactors for October 2006.

The group wanted to stage something similar to its 1981 bicentennial celebration on the battlefield, which included three battle re-enactments, an encampment and living-history interpretations.

However, Park Service rules changed in 1986, spokesman Mike Litterst said.

Encampments are allowed, along with weapons-firing demonstrations. But mock battles involving exchange of fire, hand-to-hand combat and casualties being carried off the field are not permitted, he said.

Mr. Litterst cited philosophical issues, beyond safety concerns.

"We're preserving battlefields to honor the memory of men who died there," he said. "Is it disrespectful to have somebody pretend to die, then get up and go home at the end of the day?"

Mr. Lambert said he understood the Park Service was in a difficult position.

"Rules are there for a reason, but there's also room for reason," he said. "I think the 225th [anniversary] is a pretty good reason to have a celebration."

Mr. Lambert found it ironic that the battleground was open for a rally by members of an American Nazi party under the First Amendment less than two weeks ago but would not be available to re-enact the battle that led to the nation's independence from Britain.

"Without winning the war, we wouldn't have free speech," he said.