



The White House Versus Some World War II Vets

We're finding out just how petty the Administration of President Barack Obama can be when it comes to making the government shutdown as painful as possible for as many people as possible. Just as we predicted, the answer is very petty indeed.

It seems the White House lackeys made a serious mistake, however, when they tried to keep some World War II veterans from visiting a memorial in their honor. Have you ever been to the National World War II Memorial? It's an open plaza on the National Mall in Washington. And like most other monuments in the open air, it's available to the public 24 hours a day. Or at least it used to be. Now, someone in the Obama Administration has decided to make it off limits.



The whole incredible saga began on Tuesday morning, when three busloads of World War II veterans showed up at the site. The trip had been arranged by Honor Flight Network, a wonderful charity that brings World War II vets to Washington to see the monument that was erected in their honor.

But when 91 veterans (ranging in age from 84 to 99) got off their bus, they found that barricades had been erected around the monument. Signs were posted that declared: "Because of the Federal Government SHUTDOWN, All National Parks Are CLOSED."

In other words, someone ordered the National Park Service to work harder and spend more money to shut the memorial than it would have taken to simply leave it open. In the past, it was mostly unattended, but not now.

The barriers didn't stop the veterans or the Congressmen who were there to welcome them. Representative Steve Palazzo (R-Miss.), who helped push aside the barricades, later said, "These men and women didn't cower to the Japanese and Germans. I don't think they're about to let a few National Park Police stand in their way."

The group was led into the memorial by a man playing bagpipes. A crowd of people who witnessed the event burst into applause.

The park police didn't try to stop the veterans — at least not that time. One officer, who said he had to remain anonymous, told *The Washington Post*, "I'm not going to enforce the 'no stopping or standing' sign for a group of World War II veterans. I'm a veteran myself."



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The next day, park workers were ordered to erect additional fencing and station more patrolmen around the memorial. And guess what? Another group of elderly veterans moved the barricades and entered the memorial anyway.

There's a photograph of one of them holding up a piece of the tape park police had placed around the barricades. The stern warning on the black and yellow tape, "POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS," didn't stop these vets from paying tribute to their fallen brothers, who paid the ultimate price to defeat the armies of Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. That time, the veterans were applauded by a group of demonstrators waving flags and holding up signs supporting them.

The Honor Flight visits to Washington are arranged many months ahead of time. And they're expensive, costing an estimated \$80,000 to \$100,000 per group. Since Honor Flight of Northwest Ohio was scheduled to bring a group of World War II veterans to Washington next week, Lee Armstrong, the group's president, called the National Park Service to ask about visiting the memorial. He was told that anyone crossing the barricades could face arrest.

Armstrong was dumbfounded. "I said, are you kidding me? You're going to arrest a 90/91-year-old veteran from seeing his memorial? If it wasn't for them, it wouldn't be there." The park service rep replied, "That's correct, sir."

So you see what happens when the White House decides to play hard ball. It's probably going to get worse, the longer this contrived crisis continues. This is the first government shutdown in 17 years. The last one, back in 1995-1996, occurred when Bill Clinton was President and Newt Gingrich was Speaker of the House. It was the longest government shutdown this country had seen until then, lasting 21 days. I don't think this one will last as long, but so far neither side is willing to blink.

In fact, they're barely willing to talk. Obama did ask Congressional leaders to meet with him in the White House two days ago. According to reports, he made it clear there wouldn't be any negotiations until the Republicans agreed to fund the government without any conditions. Oh, yeah, and they've also got to agree to raise the debt limit, again without conditions. Only after doing that will the Democrats agree to negotiate.

For "negotiate," read "total Republican capitulation."

Hey, that's pretty much what the Democrats got back in 1996. Why should they expect anything different this time? After all, they control the Senate and the White House. And a compliant media is only too willing to echo Obama's rhetoric, as he continues to refer to what's happening as "the Republican shutdown." Even *TIME* magazine's Mark Halperin acknowledged that the Democrats' strategy depends on the mainstream media blaming Republicans for the government shutdown.

Lost in all of the partisan rhetoric is the fact that the Republicans in the House have passed five resolutions to fund the government, and the Democrats in the Senate have rejected them all.

So what happens now? It looks like our dysfunctional government will continue to play chicken, at least for a while. Here's how *RedState* editor Erick Erickson puts it:

Democrats keep talking about our refusal to compromise. They don't realize our compromise is defunding Obamacare. We actually want to repeal it.

This is it. Our endgame is to leave the whole thing shut down until the President defunds Obamacare. And if he does not defund Obamacare, we leave the whole thing shut down.

So who's going to blink first? Sad to say, I'm afraid it will once again be the Republicans. But maybe,



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just maybe, that will make a lot more Americans angry enough to bust some barricades themselves.

This shutdown is showing just how “non-essential” a lot of government really is. Especially if you’re a 91-year-old veteran trying to visit a memorial honoring your fallen comrades.

Will we actually learn anything from this latest confrontation? I’m not very optimistic. But what do you think?

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

***Chip Wood** was the first news editor of The Review of the News and also wrote for American Opinion, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of Personal Liberty Digest, where his Straight Talk column appears weekly. This article first appeared in [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.*



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