



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDER
NAVY REGION, MID-ATLANTIC
1510 GILBERT ST.
NORFOLK, VA 23511-2737

IN REPLY REFER TO:

March 24, 2004

To the Editor,

I take great exception to Rachel Brown Hackney's editorial published in the Monday (March 22nd) edition of the Washington Daily News. This piece was inaccurate, irresponsible and adds nothing positive to the discussion on the Washington County OLF issue. While I welcome honest and open debate on any issue, comparing the actions of the Navy to "Nazis," especially when so many of our Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, and Marines are in harms' way defending America, is patently irresponsible and insulting – and journalism at its worst.

Throughout this process, beginning with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and continuing to the present, the Navy has been direct, forthright and open with the people of Washington County. We continue to act accordingly. Our negotiations with landowners are nothing like the process described by Ms. Hackney in her editorial.

The people in the OLF land purchase area of Washington County have significant decisions to make as we move forward with this project. The negotiations are clearly not pleasant for landowners who do not wish to sell their land – we recognize this and work hard to accommodate the unique circumstances of each citizen affected by the land purchase, within the confines allowed by law. It is also not pleasant for the government negotiators who understand the magnitude of what is being asked of their fellow citizens. Clouding the issues with the type of fiction portrayed by Ms. Hackney does a disservice to the landowners, as well as the government negotiators, and only makes the process more difficult.

The Washington Daily News seems to consider objective reporting on the facts of the issue to be secondary to emotional sensationalism and irrelevant to the position being openly advocated, both on the editorial pages and in "news" reports. I have not seen such irresponsible journalism in my 28-year Navy career. The people of Washington and Beaufort Counties deserve better.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. A. Turcotte", is written over a horizontal line.

S. A. TURCOTTE
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy