



NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

April 7, 1994

Gen. Monroe Hatch, USAF Retired
Executive Director
Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway
Arlington VA 22209-1198

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Dear Monroe,

I am glad we had an opportunity to talk on the telephone last night.

I fully understand your feeling that the Museum's planned exhibition does not reflect your personal views, and that we will most likely continue to differ. When the Museum undertook this project, we knew it would be difficult and perhaps controversial even among our strongest friends and supporters. But we felt that if we took care to remain objective and presented the history as honestly as possible, we would be providing a service to the public. We continue along that road and hope that we will have your support, if not your endorsement.

As I said on the phone, I think both your Association and our Museum are interested in basically the same things, though we may appear to be far apart. We all wish to honor the achievements of aviation, the men and women who took part in those developments, and the historic changes that flight through the atmosphere brought about in this century. Some of the stories are simple, others more complex. We try to bring them to the public as best we can.

I do not believe that either the Air Force Association or the National Air and Space Museum can benefit from airing our differences through the columns of the Washington Times, or any other newspaper. Because of that I was somewhat puzzled by today's report that you had delivered a copy of our script to the Times with a challenge for them to see for themselves. I would like to think it went to them before you and I had a chance to talk on the phone. I don't particularly mind having the Times see the script, since it has been distributed quite widely by now, but it wasn't clear why you should wish to pursue the matter that far. More than likely it will reflect badly on the Museum, the Air Force Association and the U.S. Air Force which the Association represents.

Let me propose that we agree to disagree, but do so with dignity. We at the Museum would certainly be pleased with that.

Sincerely yours,


Martin Harwit
Director