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**NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO EXHIBITION
FEATURING THE ENOLA GAY AND THE END OF WWII**

The Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum has announced that an exhibition focusing on World War II in the Pacific Theater from 1937 to 1945 has been added to the upcoming exhibition "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II."

The new exhibition, tentatively titled "The War in the Pacific: An American Perspective," is being added in response to complaints from veterans' organizations and military historians that "The Last Act" was unbalanced in that it did not provide sufficient context about the origins of World War II.

"After reviewing the original exhibition script many times," National Air and Space Museum Director Martin Harwit said, "we felt that their concerns were valid, and we think this new exhibit--coupled with changes within the original exhibition--addresses those concerns."

"American Perspective" will focus on the ways that Americans experienced the Pacific War, both on the battlefield and on the home front. The background for the exhibition will be the major military engagements of the Pacific, beginning in 1937 when Japan embarked on the conquest of China and continuing with the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and the major carrier battles and costly assaults on Pacific islands that followed. The photo exhibition will end with the capture of Okinawa by American forces, in June 1945. Against that setting, photographic images will show views of the war as seen by individual soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen.

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The exhibition will occupy an area of approximately 4,000 square feet and will consist of approximately 50 photographs. "American Perspective" will also include a Grumman F6F-3 Hellcat, the most successful carrier-based fighter in World War II. The exhibition will be located in the "Special Aircraft Exhibitions" gallery space in the museum, directly adjacent to "The Last Act." Each visitor to "The Last Act" will first pass through "American Perspective."

"Every major exhibition or film undergoes a very thorough review process," Harwit said. "As 'The Last Act' went through this process, a number of military historians and representatives of veterans' organizations expressed their concerns that the exhibition did not include enough information about the origins of World War II and Japanese expansionism and aggression in the late 1930s and early war years. Because the focus of the exhibition was the final months of the conflict, they were concerned that an uninformed visitor would leave the exhibition with the false impression that Japan was the victim and the United States the aggressor."

A central feature of "The Last Act" will be the forward fuselage of the B-29 Enola Gay, the aircraft that dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, on Aug. 6, 1945. The restoration of the Enola Gay is the largest such project in the museum's history, costing the museum nearly \$1 million and requiring more than 35,000 hours of labor since the restoration effort began in 1984.

"The Last Act" will focus on five areas: the Pacific War in the summer of 1945, the decision to develop and use atomic bombs, the two missions, the effects of the bombings on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the legacy of the bombings.

"American Perspective" will be curated and designed by a team of National Air and Space Museum staff members. The exhibition team includes Col. Tom Alison, USAF (Ret.), curator of military aircraft; Lt. Col. Donald Lopez, USAF (Ret.), former deputy director of the National Air and Space Museum; Capt. E.T. Wooldridge, USN (Ret.), former chairman of the department of aeronautics and current Ramsey Fellow (naval aviation historian); and Nadya Makovenyi, assistant director for exhibits and public spaces.

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