

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

August 17, 1994

General Monroe Hatch
Executive Director
Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway
Arlington, VA 22209-1198

REC'D AUG 22 1994

Dear Monroe:

I would like to thank you once more for attending the meeting the National Air and Space Museum had arranged to brief veterans organizations on the script for the exhibition *The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II*.

The responses the Museum received from the different organizations were uniformly helpful and I thought I should send all of the organizations represented at that meeting a summary update of the impact the changes you recommended have had on the script. In addition to the changes listed, a further set has also been undertaken in response to many more detailed comments we received from historians attached to the military services and the DOD. A fully revised script is now being assembled and will be sent out to you on September 1. ~~Any comments you might have~~ in response to this new script would again be appreciated.

I would like to emphasize one aspect of the update mentioned at its very end. A number of organizations have asked for a heavier emphasis on the context of the War leading up to *The Last Act*. In response we have assembled a team of our curators, all military aviators, one a World War II veteran. They will assemble a large-format photo-exhibition that will precede the exhibition described in our current script. It will concentrate on the roots of the war, the prehistory of Japanese expansionism in the 1930s, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the early days of the war and the years of bitter fighting that led up to the spring of 1945. This photo-exhibit will provide the backdrop and set the mood for the exhibition described in the present script. I do not expect that we will be in a position to give you further information on this new addition by September 1, because we are only just getting started on it, but it should be taking shape during September and we will be glad to answer questions about it in a few weeks.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Harwit
Martin Harwit
Director

Attachment

Script Update

The National Air and Space Museum is currently engaged in assembling an exhibition to open in May 1995, *The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II*. This exhibition originally grew out of the many requests we had from World War II veterans to exhibit the *Enola Gay*, while they were still alive and able to come to see the plane whose mission may well have saved their lives.

Plans for that exhibition are now quite advanced, but have been widely debated, most recently among the veterans who had asked us to put the aircraft on display. In response to their concerns, the Museum invited representatives from a number of veterans organizations to meet with us on July 13. At that meeting we provided an overview of the exhibition, conducted a question-and-answer session and gave those participants who had not yet seen it, a copy of the revised exhibition script, with a request to let us have their detailed comments. We have now received itemized written responses from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, The Retired Officers Association, the Military Order of the World Wars and the Disabled American Veterans. In addition, I have a letter from Gen. Monroe Hatch from the Air Force Association, and the Museum has also had discussions with the American Legion.

The letters from the DAV and MOWW requested changes that have been readily accommodated, through changes in wording or deletions to the script.

The letter from TROA, while acknowledging that "There is no question that there should be a display of the significant damage and tragic loss of life resulting from the use of the first nuclear weapon", feels that the exhibition portrays the Japanese as victims rather than aggressor -- a perception we certainly have no wish to convey. We have carefully re-examined the script and have eliminated extraneous material, in order to draw closer attention to just those differences that arise on the ground, after nuclear rather than conventional bombing. We have also eliminated wording, images or objects that might be misconstrued as portraying the Japanese as victims.

Specific other comments from the VFW and TROA have largely also found accommodation in the script, though there are two general areas in which I believe we feel we need to retain material recommended for deletion. One such theme is President Truman's decision to drop the bomb, and the alternatives that were open to him. The comments we received judged these sections to be speculative. We have, therefore, eliminated a great deal of the discussion, and instead are adding copies of archival documents from 1945 to show that deliberations on the various options did take place at the highest levels of the government before President Truman arrived at a final decision. As part of their recommendations on this topic, the VFW also asked for an

elimination of a series of side-bars that focussed on Historical Controversies. We agree that these served no urgent purpose and have taken them out.

A second set of items that were suggested for deletion were the post-war nuclear arms race, questions of nuclear proliferation, arms control, and mutually assured destruction. The question was raised whether these were suitable themes for an exhibition that deals with the *Enola Gay*. Like so many other matters, this is a question of judgement. But I note that Gen. Tibbetts's book *Flight of the Enola Gay* does discuss these issues, indicating that the officer most closely associated with the *Enola Gay* considered them important. I realize that our treatment here is not complete. But leaving the topics unmentioned altogether, would probably be criticized even more than including them.

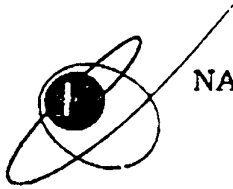
The aspect of the exhibition that has come under most consistent attack and is the most difficult to handle is the matter of 'balance'. In my mind it may be best expressed in Monroe Hatch's sentences, "You can't give visitors to the museum and students of history a balanced perspective of World War II if you only show the 'last act'.....Four years of heavy fighting and massive casualties had taken a heavy toll. Those years should form the backdrop of the "Last Act", but the current script treats the overall context of the war in the most cursory way". This is echoed in Bob Currie's letter for the VFW, which suggests the inclusion of added material on such matters as the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, President Roosevelt's Day of Infamy speech, an explanation of the meaning of 'unconditional surrender', and "General Tojo's early overriding political control of Japan as differentiated from the Emperor". Quite independently, the Museum had been conducting man-on-the-street interviews in Georgetown, last month, and similarly became convinced that most visitors would need additional information on the origins of World War II and the early years of bitter fighting, in order to fully understand events that led up to the summer of 1945 and *The Last Act*.

To date, we have concentrated on just *The Last Act*, precisely because our original intention was to focus on a display surrounding the mission of the *Enola Gay*. But in response to these AFA and the VFW requests we are now planning a major photo exhibition that visitors to the *Last Act* would have to walk through before entering the gallery. These images and their labels would concentrate on the roots of the War, Japanese expansionism and aggression, and others topics that were left out in the initially conceived exhibition more narrowly focused on just the *Enola Gay* aircraft and mission.

The Museum is assigning three curators to this added exhibition which will precede but seamlessly blend into the current gallery. All have been military officers. They are Col. Thomas Alison (USAF Ret.), Col. Don Lopez (USAF Ret.), and Capt.

Tim Wooldridge (USN Ret.). Tom Alison is our curator of military aviation. Before retiring from the USAF he was the first pilot to log over 1000 hours in the SR-71. Don Lopez is a World War II fighter pilot ace who flew against the Japanese in China. Tim Wooldridge was a naval aviator with extensive service aboard aircraft carriers.

Distribution: Gen. Hatch,
Vice Adm. Kilcline,
Maj. Gen. Guthrie,
Colonel Charles Cooper
Commander Luanne Smith
Phil Budahn
Mr. Currieo
Mr. Gilmer
Mr. Greenspan



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

August 23, 1994

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

Dear Monroe,

When you and I talked on the phone, ten days ago, I asked you whether you could let me have a list of recommendations for changes in the script for the exhibition *The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II*, which the National Air and Space Museum is currently planning. As I said at the time, you and *Air Force* magazine have criticized the Museum in broad terms. But you have never indicated specifically what changes you would need to see in order to stop your opposition to it.

On Monday, August 15, I asked John Correll the same question, in a phone conversation in which some of our curators also participated. He said that he would speak with you and let us have your joint list by late last week, August 19.

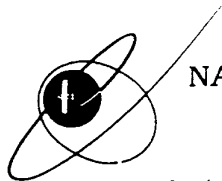
I would be greatly interested in seeing that listing. As you know, we have continued to seek advice from anyone who has a strong interest in and opinion about the planned exhibition. We have had a large number of specific recommendations from many different sources. These have been very helpful, and in our opinion have greatly improved the script. We do not guarantee any respondent that we will follow all the recommendations, but unless we hear them, we cannot do anything about them.

Could you please let me know by when we may expect your list. The sooner it arrives, the easier it will be to incorporate your recommendations in the next revised script, now promised for release on September 1. If you could telefax me the list by tomorrow, or at latest Thursday, we would still be able to include at least some changes before the script has to be sent out for duplication.

Sincerely yours,

Martin
Martin Harwit
Director

cc: John Correll



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

August 26, 1994

JA
Gen. Monroe Hatch, USAF (Ret)
Executive Director
Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway
Arlington VA 22209-1198

REC'D AUG 30 1994

Action
info Correll
Aubin

Dear Monroe,

I appreciate your quick response to my letter of August 23. It has given us an opportunity to study your full list of objections to the Museum's planned exhibition. I think you will find, when a revised script is issued next week, that many of the concerns listed in your letter and in the forthcoming September issue of *Air Force* magazine have been addressed.


One item that will not appear in the script needs to be mentioned. Several times you have referred, with concern, to the special lighting effects in unit 400 of the gallery, which deals with the destruction at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

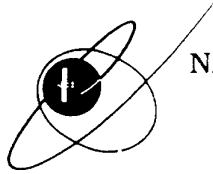
While our planning document of July 1993 referred to marked changes in lighting between unit 300 and 400, we expect approximately identical lighting levels in units 400, 100 and 200. All three of those levels will be set by the nature of the materials we are borrowing from other museums and archives, and will be dictated only by those. The conditions for those loans specify low light levels to minimize bleaching and other destructive effects. We will adhere to those conditions but set the lighting levels no lower. Section 300 is a special case. With the help of life-size cut-outs we plan to recreate the scene at the *Enola Gay* on the morning of August 6, 1945, when Col. Tibbetts and his crew were photographed under the glare of spot lights, before embarking on their historic mission. In this part of the exhibit, the high light levels are no concern, since the aircraft, being all-metal, will not be affected by bright light.

Let me end with a request: The responsibility for this exhibition rests with the Director of the Museum. If anyone is to be singled out for blame, it must be I. I would appreciate, as a personal favor, your asking John Correll to direct any criticism of the exhibition at me rather than our curators.

The Museum looks forward to continuing cordial relations with you as we progress on this exhibition.

Sincerely yours,


Martin Harwit
Director



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

September 21, 1994

REC'D SEP 23 1994

Action: Correll
Info: Aubin

General Monroe Hatch
Executive Director
Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway
Arlington, VA 22209-1198

FAX (703) 247-5830

Dear Monroe,

The National Air and Space Museum by now has received detailed comments on the most recent draft of the script of *The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* from a number of the other veterans organizations and from historians attached to the military services. We are very much concerned to have all the recommendations and suggestions in hand at the earliest possible date.

Could I ask you whether you might be able to let me have your detailed list by close of business next Tuesday, September 27. Your comments would help us a great deal as we seek to proceed toward a script that has any factual errors weeded out and is well balanced.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Harwit
Director

JOHN T. CORRELL
Editor in Chief

October 2, 1994

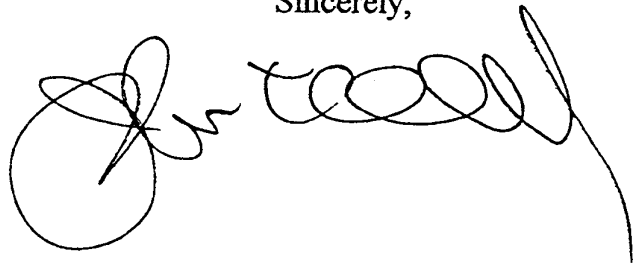
Mark W. Rodgers
Director of Government Relations
Smithsonian Institution
1000 Jefferson Drive SW, Room 220
Washington DC 20560

FAX (202) 357-4604

Dear Mr. Rodgers:

At our meeting last month, you and Ms Newman said there was no deliberate strategy to slow roll us and other critics on script revisions for "The Last Act." I notice from press reports over the weekend that the National Air and Space Museum will send a new revision to the American Legion early this week. Will the Air Force Association, the Retired Officers Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other groups get our review copies at the same time the Legion gets its copy? The answer will speak louder than words about good faith and intentions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Correll". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.



Air Force Association

1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22209-1198 (703) 247-5800
An Independent Non Profit Aerospace Organization

MONROE W. HATCH, JR.
Executive Director

October 17, 1994

Undersecretary Constance Newman
The Smithsonian Institution
Washington DC 20560

Dear Connie:

Here, as requested, is the Air Force Association's review of your interim script revision for the "Last Act"/*Enola Gay* exhibit. We were encouraged to see some balancing material added, the "political manifesto" dropped from the last section, and a reduction in emotion-laden "Ground Zero" graphic images.

Unfortunately, this is not yet an exhibit plan that we can support. The attached analysis explains, in some detail, what we think the continuing deficiencies are. The problems, basically, are of two kinds:

- Ideological bias, which has persisted now through three concept plans and four script revisions. If, as indicated by news reports over the weekend, the curators had agreed to the criteria stated by the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum as a condition for lending artifacts, that would explain the problem we see -- and open up another one.
- Structural bias, the inherent tilt that results from having built the program around the atomic bomb, with the intention of eliciting shock. We are not exhibit experts, but it does not seem likely that you will correct this bias without some reorganizing.

This revision shows some definite improvements. The time has come, however, for us to have a full understanding of how you intend to proceed. If it is the Smithsonian's intention to correct the structural and ideological bias, it is not difficult to find, and the changes required should not be insurmountable. If, on the other hand, the Smithsonian is not ready to eliminate these biases from the exhibit plan, it is time for us to know that, too.

Sincerely,

Monroe W. Hatch, Jr.