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The American Legion



OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER

★ NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ★ P. O. BOX 1055 ★ INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46206 ★
(317) 535-8411 ★

August 17, 1994

The Honorable William Perry
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
The Pentagon 20301

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
94 AUG 23 AM 8: 04

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Because of your important role in ensuring that the Smithsonian Institution meets its responsibility to the people of the United States, I am forwarding to you a copy of a letter I have written to the President of the United States.

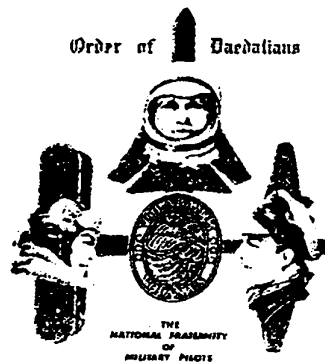
The American Legion remains unequivocally opposed to plans by The Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum to display a portion of the historic aircraft, the Enola Gay, in an exhibit that strikes at the honor and the integrity of our nation and the men and women who fought for her in World War II. I have asked for the President's assistance in seeing this revision of American history corrected. I am asking for your help, as well.

On behalf of the more than three million members of The American Legion, and the countless thousands of unrepresented World War II veterans, we must see that the Enola Gay is properly displayed and that our history as a people is unsullied by subtle suggestions of base motives. A careful reading of the proposed exhibit script, as revised, will show that not to be the case with "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II."

Sincerely,

Bruce Thiesen
National Commander

Enclosure



22 August 1994

Dr. Martin G. Harwit
Director, National Air and Space Museum
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560

Dear Dr. Harwit:

As National Commander of the Order of Daedalians, the national fraternity of commissioned military pilots, I am writing on behalf of our nearly seventeen thousand active duty and retired members worldwide to express my extreme dissatisfaction and deep concern with the thrust of the Museum's planned "Enola Gay Exhibit". The founders of our Order were World War I pilots who first flew our nation's aircraft in time of war. Also, a large percentage of our current membership is made up of World War II pilots. Those who have served, or still serve our country do not desire to glorify any aspect of warfare. We have been involved firsthand in its horrors. Conversely, we whose service has been distinguished by exceptional valor, selflessness, and patriotism in response to our nation's call are equally unwilling to have air power, and our successes and sacrifices as airmen, denigrated.

After an extensive review of relevant information; including draft scripts, commentary and exchanges between critics and your staff, John Correl's critique and comments, and your article in *Air and Space Magazine*; I have concluded that the exhibit is rushing headlong into a series of errors. The body of material which I reviewed has provided you and your staff with an extensive, carefully considered and well documented list of the inaccuracies and imbalance which permeated the original script and which continues to persist even after extensive dialogue. Improvements have only been peripheral because, in my view, your concessions have not acknowledged the fundamental problem. It is two-fold:

First, by attempting to judge past military actions, military, and political objectives, and the validity of political decisions of World War II leaders who accepted those awesome responsibilities, you are reaching well outside the Museum's charter as reflected in the functions prescribed by law. (While the latest available script disclaims such intent, the proposed exhibition represents a concentrated multimedia effort to shape public opinion to the flawed, biased philosophy of the curators).

Second, the thrust of the entire exhibit flows from a flawed thesis. The authors, while claiming an exhaustive research of historical documents, have apparently selectively extracted events and reported statements by senior leaders of the period, (e.g. General LeMay), to support their views.

Since specific issues with the script have been pointed out to you, I will address only a few specific errors which I believe serve to underscore my foregoing remarks.

. The question of morality: The morality issue was settled in December 1941 when the first American died at Pearl Harbor. Japan attacked the United States that Sunday morning. Japan was the aggressor and would remain the aggressor in the Pacific until it no longer had the ability to retain its captured territories. The Enola Gay Exhibition gives very little attention to Japanese morality, but a considerable coverage of the question of morality on America's decision to drop the atomic bomb. Equity requires significantly increased coverage of the Bataan Death March and the Santo Tomas internment camp.

. The "Colonials struggling in Defense of Homeland" hoax: While the script depicts the Japanese motivation as that of a cultured society struggling to protect its native culture against industrialized western nations, history brands the Japanese as rapacious aggressors who ravaged and terrorized conquered territories, even to the extent of attempting to instill Japanese culture and language. As documented by Japanese actions in Korea from 1906 to 1945, the only cultures in danger of extinction were the victims of Japanese militarism.

. The question of national policy: The script is strangely silent on the fact that, with the war in Europe over, the United States concentrated military efforts on ending the war in the Pacific quickly, efficiently, and with the minimum possible casualties within the context of national and allied policy. That policy was identical for the Axis powers in both Europe and the Pacific; unconditional surrender. While military estimates of US/Allied casualties associated with an invasion of mainland Japan were lower, talk on the streets in the US was of up to one million. Many informed observers expected the war to last up to two more years, expressed by the US soldier's slogan, "The Golden Gate in '48". The script is rife with errors and misleading statements, and is still partial to the Japanese. Importantly, by questioning the wisdom, military value and morality of the war-ending decision to drop the atomic bomb, the authors impugn the motives and judgment of President Truman, and place a small price on the lives of all Americans fighting in the Pacific.

In summary, with regard to the Enola Gay, I wholeheartedly agree with Brigadier General Paul Tibbets. The aircraft should be displayed alone, and the script should simply say that this long range bomber delivered the first nuclear weapon employed in war, and which ended the war in the Pacific.

In my opinion and addressing the larger question, I believe that the Air and Space Museum is seriously off course. You owe it to the American people, who own this magnificent

facility and aerospace collection, to review again the functions for which the Museum is chartered and financed with public funds. I urge your consideration of these comments and concerns.

Sincerely,



EVAN W. ROSENCRANS
Lieutenant General, USAF (Ret)
National Commander

EWR/cs



THE RETIRED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

201 North Washington Street, Alexandria, Va. 22314-2539 (703) 549-2311

Admiral George E.R. Kinnear II, USN (Ret)
Chairman of the Board

September 12, 1994

Dr. Martin Harwit
Director
National Air & Space Museum
Smithsonian Institution
Sixth Street and Independence Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20560

Dear Dr. Harwit:

I have watched the machinations concerning the Enola Gay exhibitions and the issues of rewriting history with great interest from a number of perspectives. Having been a member of our Armed Forces during the event in issue, and having served in a number of political/military positions as a senior officer, I was offended by the simplistic and misleading nature of the script.

From a private sector CEO perspective I am concerned about the Air and Space Museum in respect to "who is in charge and who is responsible."

Also as a person who believes in our higher education system and who has run a land grant State University, I appreciate the role of academic and intellectual freedom in research. I also appreciate the responsibility of the institution and the general academic community to expect and demand quality research and reporting from a reasonably objective viewpoint. Otherwise your researchers may devolve into editorializing and slanting their reporting to support their personal viewpoints. As a Ph.D., MS, MA and BA with substantial interest in history, and this issue, I resent the lack of quality in the proposed script even with the later half-hearted effort toward correction.

As the Chairman of The Retired Officers Association I have heard from a substantial number of our 400,000 members who feel that sloppy research and poor writing is not the cause of the inept script. While some Japanese may appreciate this attempt to restructure history, the membership does not.

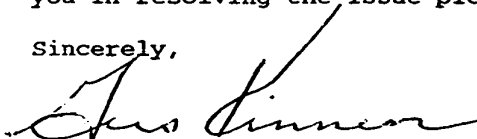
As a taxpayer and someone who has read the charter of the Air and Space Museum I would expect the Congress to hold you and the Board of Regents responsible for this unfortunate travesty. As a member of a number of Boards in the private and public sectors, I am wondering when the Board of Regents will realize and effect their responsibility in this matter.

Page 2
September 12, 1994

On a person to person basis as one executive to another, I feel you have failed to meet your responsibility as an executive, as a United States citizen, and as a human being. You have two choices. Either get your organization and its staff under control and doing that for which it was chartered and funded, or resign.

If you would like to discuss this or consider I may be useful to you in resolving the issue please call.

Sincerely,



G. E. R. KINNEAR II

P.S. I have attached some of the many thoughtful pieces that have been forwarded to me.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
WASHINGTON OFFICE

October 26, 1994

Martin Harwit, Director
National Air and Space Museum
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC 20560

Dear Director Harwit:

Thank you for inviting me to lunch at your museum on Monday, the 24th. I enjoyed your company and the opportunity to frankly express the VFW's concerns regarding the continuing efforts to review the exhibition script for, "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II". As I told you and Mark Rodgers, we would review our copy of script number four dated October 3, 1994. This edition may or may not have the incorporated changes offered by the Air Force Association and The Retired Officers Association, speaking for The Military Coalition. In any case, we know there is another script -- number five -- that should become available for review sometime this week.

In sum, the VFW does not accept script four as the standard for your exhibit. It simply does not fairly commemorate and display the contributions made by American military forces in the Pacific theater of operations nor does it go far enough to cite the valor and sacrifice of individual Americans in combat. It in no way portrays any sense of national pride or inspiration to the present and future generations of Americans who will take the time to see this exhibit. These points should be clearly and unequivocally made by our Air and Space Museum, and this is also part of your charter as we discussed.

Rather than cite page and label number -- which is the way we worked with you before -- we offer the following significantly different philosophical approach to the problem. Accept the premise that World War II was an American political decision based on a grand strategy to fight and win in Europe first and then to win in Asia. This political decision included the unconditional surrender of all the Axis powers. Military force was the primary manner in which America achieved these political goals. Said another way, World War II should not be approached from a sociological viewpoint and certainly not from the enemy's -- Japan's -- point of view. I believe the VFW's approach will finally clean up the continuing structural bias and remove the remaining one-sided or ideological bias that continues to plague the script. Also, the VFW is firmly opposed to the

Smithsonian's attempts to revise the well known political and military history of this period -- commemorating the final military defeat of Japan -- by relying upon revisionist historians such as Gar Alperovitz, who was thoroughly discredited several years ago. While reevaluating new evidence is the proper work of historians, it should be done without the ideological bias displayed by your curators.

I look forward to reviewing script number five. Furthermore, I trust the VFW will continue to be included in any future Smithsonian action to prepare an acceptable patriotic and historically accurate exhibit designed for the American public to see in May 1995.

Sincerely,



James R. Currie
Executive Director

- cc: Undersecretary Constance Newman
The Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC 20560
- cc: Monroc W. Hatch, Jr.
Executive Director
Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway
Arlington, VA 22209
- cc: Vice Admiral T. J. Kilcline, USN
President
The Retired Officers Association
201 N. Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
- cc: Hubert R. Dagley, II
Director, Internal Affairs
The American Legion
P. O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206

CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE, INC.



HEADQUARTERS

Midland International Airport
P.O. Box 62000
Midland, Texas 79711-2000
(915) 563-1000
Fax (915) 563-8046

DISPLAY OF THE ENOLA GAY

WHEREAS, the Confederate Air Force is a patriotic, educational organization dedicated to preserve, in flying condition, a complete collection of combat aircraft which were flown by all military services of the United States during World War II, and to perpetuate in the memory and hearts of all Americans the spirit in which these great airplanes were flown in the defense of our nation.

WHEREAS, the Confederate Air Force operates the only remaining flyable Boeing B-29 Superfortress and displays this historically significant aircraft to the public throughout the nation.

WHEREAS, the Confederate Air Force is in a unique position to know firsthand the tremendous public interest and the value of teaching the history of the B-29.

Be it RESOLVED, that the Confederate Air Force desires that the exhibit provide a factual historical accounting of the military action in which the ENOLA GAY participated and that it not be burdened with subjective interpretation.

And be it further RESOLVED, that in the event the National Air and Space Museum elects to not follow history by displaying the ENOLA GAY properly, that she be removed from the exhibit and be displayed whole and intact, without comment, for the world to see.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned hereby respectfully submits this resolution.

Robert V. Thompson
Chief of Staff
Confederate Air Force

THE CAF IS A PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION
OF THE WORLD'S GREAT COMBAT AIRCRAFT- 1939-1945

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CAF ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE



News Release

Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 2, 1994

Contact: Howard Metzger

Assistant National Director of Communications
(202) 265-6280

JWV CALLS FOR CANCELLATION OF "ENOLA GAY" EXHIBIT; "Desecrating the memories of those who died," JWV leader explains

Washington, D.C.--In a decision announced by National Commander David H. Hymes, the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. (JWV) advocates the immediate cancellation of the controversial exhibition planned by the Smithsonian Institution on the 1945 atomic bombing of Japan, which led to the surrender of Japan and the end of World War II.

"JWV recognizes the animosity and rancor created between our fellow veterans' organizations and the National Air and Space Museum, peace groups and other individuals, resulting from the misguided concepts of the proposed exhibit which desecrates the memories of those who died in World War II," Commander Hymes stated. "Too many wounds have been re-opened at a result of this controversy in which the Smithsonian is applying its own social agenda in disdain to a dramatic decision which saved hundreds of thousands of American lives. The fulfillment of social agendas should be left to opinion or research journals. It is best for all concerned and for this country that the whole exhibit be scrapped in its entirety and laid to rest without any

The exhibit, which had been proposed to feature the Enola Gay, has generated legitimate veteran concerns as to how the National Air and Space Museum characterized the dropping of the atomic bomb, the reasons for the decision, its aftermath and for its failure, initially, to detail the savagery of the Japanese in the war.

As a result of the disagreements, JWV feels the memories of those who died in the Pacific in World War II are being desecrated by this infighting. "We are defiling, rather than revering, the memories of those soldiers, sailors and airmen, who gave their lives to preserve freedom and defeat Japanese imperialism fifty years ago," Commander Hymes said. "We can no longer accept the idea of there being an exhibit dealing with the end of a savage war which is required to appease all groups. Since the Smithsonian, with its preconceptions, is not able to properly honor the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, JWV believes it is best that each group commemorate this event in its own way."



**THE
RETIRED
OFFICERS
ASSOCIATION**

201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2539
(703) 549-2311

9A

Thomas J. Kilcline, Vice Admiral, USN (Ret)
President

REC'D NOV 07 1994

November 4, 1994

The Honorable Constance Newman
Under Secretary Of The Smithsonian Institution
Smithsonian Institution
1000 Jefferson Drive, S.W.
Washington, DC 20560

ACTION:
Info: Rubin
Cocrell
Gass

Dear Secretary Newman:

We truly appreciate the opportunity to review the fourth and fifth scripts of "The Last Act." After our early disappointments and frustrations, it has been impressive to see and read the significant adjustments, eliminations, and modifications that have been made. It is a shame that it took so long to accept the need for changes because the delay allowed the protest to grow to the very real detriment of the entire Institution. This certainly was not the intent of the groups that were communicating their concern over the manuscripts.

The extent of the rewrite of the most recent script is impressive. The changes can be seen in every section. Many changes, though small in size but critical in meaning, have been made. Some of these seem to have been made at the initiative of the curators. Some small changes were the catalysts for rewrites of entire paragraphs, which made significant improvements in the presentation. The script has been fleshed out with more photographs which obviously help the story line. The biggest change was the major reduction and change in focus of the Legend section. This will surely improve the entire presentation and eliminate a major concern for all of us.

While we can express our appreciation for all the progress, we still have concerns and questions that stand in the way of our approval of the exhibition. We have not yet seen the videos nor do we know how many pictures will be added, their size or the display mode. Nor do we know how the script will be implemented. And we hope to see a consistent story line in the publications related to this exhibit.

The Honorable Constance Newman
November 4, 1994
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We feel that balance is still lacking in such entries as the term "in a just cause" on page EG:100, 1, item EG:099 L1 and in the discussion of the "myth" on page EG:300, 75, item EG:360-L13. This "myth" could be handled by combining the last sentence on page 75 with the information on the crew on page EG:300, 1, item EG:300, L2_a-P2_a or some other appropriate place. That would answer the few specific questions you have seen without raising the entire rumor to public scrutiny and possible misinterpretation.

Some questions:

- On page EG:500-21, in a letter commenting on the presentation, there is a phrase "little thought to a demonstration" referring to a warning to the Japanese government on the power of a nuclear weapon. Since the INTERIM COMMITTEE addressed warnings and demonstrations, is it historically correct to say "little thought"? (See pages EG:200-41 and 42.)
- On page EG:300-17 the B-29 is characterized as "often unpredictable." Was this still an accurate assessment in late 1944?
- How significant is the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey of 1946? The comment on Page EG:200-53, item EG:260-L5 that "Japan would have surrendered" is presented in such a way that one would assume it is more credible than Secretary Stimson's comments that only an invasion or the atomic bomb would have resulted in surrender. Is this appropriate?

Other comments:

- We also point out that for accuracy and consistency the name of the base on page EG:300, 37 items EG:331-L46-54b should read Wendover Air Force Base, Utah. Same reference on page 39 is correct.
- Materiel still seems to be a more specific term for use on page EG:100, 12, item EG:112-L4.
- The hand-written FDR note at EG:200, 50, item 280-L36-536 is partially put in type in the text. For those who want to read the entire letter it might be convenient to put it all in type.

The Honorable Constance Newman
November 4, 1994
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In summary, I congratulate the management of the institution for the significant progress made since our first meetings with you in late September. I also remind the Smithsonian that our review is not completed. While impressed, we will not be completely satisfied until we have seen the videos, use of pictures, implementation of the script and related publications..

I wish to be assured that TROA and the other involved groups will continue to be afforded the opportunity to assist the Air and Space Museum through reviews and comment.

Sincerely,



T. J. Kilcline

TJK:aeg

cc: Dr. Martin Harwit, Smithsonian
General Hatch, Air Force Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Association of Naval Aviation