

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

Dept. of Aeronautics
April 20, 1994

Robert C. Schuh, Col. USAF (ret.)
1198 Atwater Ave.
Riverside, CA 92506

Sample of Smithsonian Correspondence

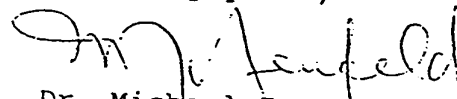
Dear Mr. Schuh:

Thank you for your recent letter to Dr. Harwit about the Air Force Association's response to our exhibit. Unfortunately, that response has been rather unfair. I want to make it absolutely clear that the "Enola Gay" exhibit in no way apologizes to Japan for dropping the atomic bomb. The Museum takes no position on the morality of the atomic bombings of Japan; in fact, the exhibit does not even discuss the question. It will attempt only to give a balanced and factually accurate historical account of the Pacific War and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It will include a major introductory section on the last months of the Pacific War that will include the origins of the war at Pearl Harbor, the treatment of POW's, and the sacrifice of American soldiers, sailors and airmen in the battles with Japan. We will also discuss the invasion plans for Japan, the likely casualties, and whether the bomb was the only alternative to the invasion. Since these matters are controversial, we can only give a balanced presentation of the evidence based on the latest scholarship and allow visitors to draw their own conclusions.

The preliminary exhibition script has been reviewed by a distinguished advisory board that includes the Dr. Richard Hallion, the Historian of the Air Force, Mr. Edwin Bearss, Chief Historian of the Parks Service and a wounded Guadalcanal veteran, Mr. Richard Rhodes, Pulitzer-prize-winning author of The Making of the Atomic Bomb, plus leading historians from Harvard, Stanford and Dartmouth. In addition, we recently met with historians of the Army, Navy, Marines and Joint Chiefs of Staff in order to gather their reaction. We are making certain modifications to the script in response to comments from the military services.

Thank you again for your interest in the National Air and Space Museum.

Sincerely yours,


Dr. Michael J. Neufeld
Curator

ENCLOSURE:

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MAY 20 1991

Colonel Frank Easley, USAF (Ret.)
4568 Shetland Green Road
The Pinecrest
Alexandria, VA 22312

Sample of Smithsonian Correspondence

Dear Colonel Easley:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the National Air and Space Museum's planned exhibition, which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. After having read the article in Air Force magazine myself, I can certainly understand your concerns. I welcome this opportunity to set the record straight and to provide you with the latest and most accurate information available regarding the Crossroads exhibition and an explanation of the process through which it will be created.

The National Air and Space Museum is visited by eight to ten million people a year. It is the most popular museum not only in the United States but all over the world. The President, Members of Congress and other high ranking officials bring leaders from all over the world here to see our exhibits. The Museum's reputation as a first-rate institution dedicated to the historical study of aviation and space flight and to the material conservation of airplanes, spacecraft and aerospace memorabilia has never been called into question.

All of our exhibitions receive the most incisive scrutiny before the public ever sees them. The process behind each new offering is arduous and requires several years from conception to public presentation. One feature of the process is that the exhibition must be subject to a thorough critique by a wide range of experts, representing a range of disciplinary areas and constituencies. The Crossroads exhibition about which you wrote has, for the past few months been undergoing that process. A first draft of the exhibition script, which runs to several hundred pages was finished in January and distributed to a committee of experts which included Dr. Richard Hallion, the Air Force Historian who heads the Center for Air Force History; Edwin Bearss, Chief Historian for the National Park Service, under whose direction the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor was organized in 1991; Richard Rhodes, the

Pulitzer Prize winning writer on the atomic bomb, as well as other distinguished scholars from Harvard, Dartmouth, Stanford and the University of Wisconsin. All of these experts provided us with extremely useful comments and suggestions for improving on the script, many of which we agreed with and incorporated.

Some months before this first draft was completed, the Air Force Association volunteered to also provide us with their comments and suggestions, and the Museum gladly provided a copy of the script to the Association at the same time copies were distributed to members of the advisory committee. The exhibition curators and I believed that the feedback from the Association would give us an opportunity to make sure that the views of veterans were properly reflected. Unfortunately we never did receive the Association's advice or comments as we had from all the others whom we had asked. Rather they chose to use the media as the vehicle to convey their criticism of the draft.

Please understand that we are talking about a first draft some fifteen months before the opening of an exhibition. This would normally give us a year to cull out any inaccuracies, perceived imbalance, or phrases that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued in unintended ways: It should not come as a surprise to anyone, that the Air Force Association, whom we had asked for advice precisely because we wanted to identify any weaknesses or inaccuracies, was able to find clumsy or unrefined label text among the several hundred pages which comprise the total script.

The Museum staff has since met and had long discussions with historians from the Army, Navy, Marines, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and again have received welcome commentary that we have used in strengthening the script.

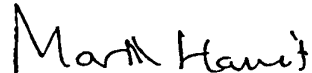
During the past year, we have also been in touch with many of the crew members of the Enola Gay, The Great Artiste, and Bockscar, and many crews who flew the B-29s in the Pacific during World War II. They have been wonderful in promising us their memorabilia and photographs to display in the exhibition.

We are confident that when the exhibition opens next year, it will be a display of which all Veterans will be proud. In addition to honoring the memories of those who risked and sometimes sacrificed their lives, in a just cause, the exhibition will also recall the atrocities of the Japanese; we will chronicle the naked aggression of Japan before and during the War; recount the scientific breakthroughs of the Manhattan project;

and quote from Truman's diaries where he recorded his thoughts on the prospects of using atomic weapons. This will be a broad history, intended to inform the generations that have come of age since 1945 about the conditions that faced the United States before and after Pearl Harbor, and the events that finally led to the end of that War which had claimed so many casualties in its final months.

Thank you for taking the time to write and I hope I have been successful in allaying your concerns by providing you with an explanation of the thorough process that will result in the Crossroads exhibition.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martin Harwit". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Martin Harwit
Director

NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20560

June 1, 1994

Robert C. Schuh, Col. USAF (ret.)
1198 Atwater Ave.
Riverside, CA 92506

Sample of Smithsonian Correspondence

Dear Mr. Schuh:

Thanks for your latest registered letter about our exhibit, which arrived one day after I mailed my reply to your second letter. I found the piece about the bombing of Kobe very interesting. Regarding its relevance to the "decision to drop the bomb," however, I must point out that the heavy death toll of the first phase of the fire raids (March-April), especially that of the Tokyo raid, was not repeated later on. Civilian deaths in summer 1945 raids declined to a few thousand per raid, for the most part, for two reasons: 1) Japanese civilians evacuated the cities voluntarily because of the raids and food shortages, whatever the government was saying; and 2) in the summer, 20th Air Force began to leaflet the cities, warning of further attacks. In addition, by the time of the atomic bombings, there were very few cities left to attack. In June or July, Gen. LeMay told his superiors that he was going to run out of targets by early September and said "I don't see much war after that."

Regarding the invasion of Japan, some historians have also argued that there were third, fourth and further alternatives to an invasion and dropping atomic bombs without warning: for example, trying a non-lethal demonstration drop of the bomb, such as over Tokyo Bay at night, or modifying unconditional surrender terms to guarantee the Emperor's remaining on the throne, or waiting for the impact of the Soviet declaration of war on Japan. I enclose a copy of a scholarly article which summarizes the recent debates. (I apologize for the underlining, but I only have my copy.) These matters are controversial, however, and this exhibit can take no position on them. It will only attempt to give the most fair, scholarly and balanced account of all the arguments of all sides and leave it up to visitor to decide.

Thank you again for your interest in the National Air and Space Museum.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. J. Neufeld".

Dr. Michael J. Neufeld
Curator
Dept. of Aeronautics

PS: I am only one of a number of curators in the Museum, so do not be misled by the title.

ENCLOSURE I



June 17, 1994

Mr. Nathan Mazer
5483 S 2375 W
Roy, UT 84067

Sample of Smithsonian Correspondence

Dear Mr. Mazer:

Thank you for your letter regarding our exhibition, The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II. I can assure you that the exhibition, which is scheduled to open in the spring of 1995, will most certainly honor the brave Americans who fought and suffered for their nation during World War II. Moreover, it will identify Japan as the aggressor nation in the Pacific War, and outline the nature of the atrocities committed by the Japanese.

At the same time, it will present the reality of the atomic bomb as experienced by the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In short, the presentation will be an honest, balanced treatment that encourages our visitors to think about a crucial turning point in the history of the 20th century.

Our effort to ensure that the script receives the broadest possible reading by knowledgeable experts is proof of the care with which this exhibition has been developed. Initially, we created a special advisory committee to assist in guiding the project. The members of that group included: Richard Rhodes, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Making of the Atomic Bomb; Dr. Richard P. Hallion, Chief Historian of the USAF; Dr. Martin Sherwin and Dr. Barton Bernstein, authorities on U.S. nuclear policy during and immediately after World War II; Dr. Stanley Goldberg, a leading scholar of the history of the Manhattan Project; Dr. Akira Iriye, a Harvard authority on U.S.-Japan relations; Dr. Victor Bond, a medical doctor with long experience in radiation effects; Dr. Edward Linenthal, who has studied American attitudes toward war memorials; and Dr. Edwin C. Bearss, Chief Historian of the National Park Service.

The members of the advisory committee were very generous in their praise of the document. Dr. Hallion congratulated the curators on an "impressive job" and "a great script." Dr. Bearss, himself a wounded Marine

veteran of the Pacific War, commended the NASM staff for having: ". . . dared to go that extra mile to address an emotionally charged and internationally significant event in an exhibit that, besides being enlightening, will challenge its visitors."

The Air Force Association, which was also provided a script, reacted negatively. Rather than communicating specific comments on the document to the museum, however, the editor of Air Force, the Association magazine, chose to publish an article attacking the project.

At our request, staff members of the Pentagon-based World War II Commemorative Committee helped us to arrange a second script review by representatives of the military service history programs. In addition, we created an internal review panel including both veterans and experts, chaired by a retired USAF Brigadier General. A new draft of the script incorporating the comments of the military historians, the internal review panel, and the Air Force Association, is now complete.

It should be apparent that we are developing this exhibition with extraordinary care. Our ultimate goal is produce an account of the atomic bombing of Japan that is accurate, fair, and balanced. The process is difficult, but I am confident that it will result in an exhibition in the best traditions of the Smithsonian Institution.

Sincerely,



Tom D. Crouch
Chairman
Aeronautics Department



August 8, 1994

Ms. Annette L. McEvoy
5618 S. Elmira Avenue
Springfield, MO 65810-2708

Sample of Smithsonian Correspondence

Dear Ms. McEvoy:

Thank you for your letter regarding our exhibition, The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II. I can assure you that the exhibition, which is scheduled to open in the spring of 1995, will most certainly honor the brave Americans who fought and suffered for their nation during World War II. Moreover, it will identify Japan as the aggressor nation in the Pacific War, and outline the nature of the atrocities committed by the Japanese.

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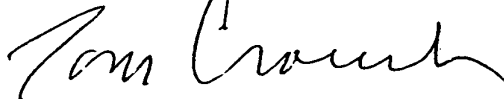
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Sincerely,



Tom D. Crouch
Chairman
Aeronautics Department

08-05-94 AUG 05 '94 09:52 AM

04:20 PM TROA PAUL SARBANES
FROM SEN PAUL SARBANES

TO 97038388173

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NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20560

Sample of Smithsonian Correspondence

JUL 28 1994

The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2002

Dear Senator Sarbanes:

Thank you for your letter regarding the National Air and Space Museum's planned exhibition on the fiftieth anniversary of the atomic bomb and the end of World War II. In view of the critical articles on the project that have appeared in recent weeks, I certainly understand your concerns. I welcome this opportunity to set the record straight and to provide you with the latest and most accurate information on the exhibition, and an explanation of the process through which it will be created.

All of our exhibitions receive the most careful scrutiny during the planning stages, including a detailed review of the script by experts representing a range of disciplinary areas and constituencies. A first draft of the script for the exhibition in question, which runs to several hundred pages, was finished in January and distributed to a committee that included Dr. Richard Hallion, Chief Air Force Historian; Edwin Bearss, Chief Historian for the National Park Service; Richard Rhodes, the Pulitzer Prize winning writer on the atomic bomb, and several other distinguished scholars from Harvard, Dartmouth, Stanford and the University of Wisconsin.

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Throughout the process, we have been careful to involve those veterans closest to the story. Many of the crew members of the Enola Gay, The Great Artiste, and Bockscar, as well as other veterans of the B-29 campaign, will appear on film in the new exhibition, and have provided memorabilia and photographs to display in the exhibition.

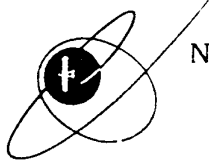
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Thank you for taking the time to write. I hope I have been successful in allaying your concerns by explaining the thorough process that will result in this exhibition.

Sincerely,



Martin Harwit
Director



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

September 3, 1993

Mr. William A. Rooney
517 1/2 Ridge Road
Wilmette, Illinois
60091

Sample of Smithsonian Correspondence

Dear Mr. Rooney,

I am writing you in response to correspondence that Ben Nicks forwarded to me. I appreciate his doing that, because it may provide me an opportunity to respond.

First, let me say that I fully understand and appreciate your frustration and anger.

When I came to the National Air and Space Museum six years ago, one of my first acts was to instruct our staff to complete restoration of the *Enola Gay* by 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This our staff has loyally done. We are on schedule to have the aircraft fully refurbished by that time, and to have the sixty-foot-long forward fuselage on display in the Museum by May 1995.

I had expected that we would, by 1995, have enough of the Museum's planned extension at Washington's Dulles airport completed, so that the *Enola Gay* could be displayed there, in its entirety, that year. But in 1990, the Congress ordered the Museum to stop all planning for the extension, pending an investigation of other potential sites. That investigation ultimately took three years, and thereby set all our plans back by a corresponding amount. The only alternative we now have for displaying the aircraft in 1995, for as many millions of visitors as possible, is in the Museum on the Mall.

If the Museum had a suitable building that would enable us to display the entire aircraft indoors, we would have chosen to do that instead. But we don't. And we will not place the *Enola Gay* outdoors once again, having already experienced the deterioration this would produce.

In the early years after World War II, the aircraft was kept outdoors for 16 years at the Andrews Air Force base. As I understand it, that was the only place the Smithsonian had available at the time. The deterioration there became so bad that the aircraft was dismantled and brought to our restoration facility in subsections small enough to be transported along the highways. There, further deterioration was stopped by placing the aircraft under roof. It is now taking us well over twenty man years, at an estimated cost of roughly a million dollars, to fully restore the aircraft. To help us in this effort, we have called not only on our own staff, but on skilled and knowledgeable volunteers both at the National Air and Space

knowledgeable volunteers both at the National Air and Space Museum and at the San Diego Aerospace Museum, where many old hands who had spent their working lives in the aircraft industry pitched in. It has been a long and painstaking haul, and has taken all the resources available to the Museum.

As we were restoring the aircraft, we also received financial contributions from around seven hundred B-29 veterans, who among them raised close to thirty thousand dollars to help us. It was heart warming to see such a genuine outpouring of support.

The Enola Gay symbolizes a pivotal turning point in the history of our nation. I understand how strongly the B-29 veterans feel that the Museum must emphasize their story. But, through the nuclear legacy it ushered in, the Enola Gay also represents the start of a story that gripped all Americans in a Cold War that lasted more than four decades. Our exhibition must represent this impact on all our citizens, though, of course, we also must and will honor the bravery of the veterans, who so clearly risked their lives for our country and sometimes made the ultimate sacrifice.

In the form of video tapes, we expect to have veterans present their own recollections and beliefs, which will be shown along with others to cover a wide spectrum of perspectives that may permit visitors to come away appreciating a broader range of views.

I am saddened that veterans have seen it necessary to circulate a petition asking the Museum to display the Enola Gay "in a patriotic manner that will instill pride in the viewer....". Do veterans really suspect that the National Air and Space Museum is an unpatriotic institution or would opt for an apologetic exhibition? Eight to ten million people continue to enthusiastically throng into the Museum each year, and no such criticism has ever been levelled against us.

I would be pleased to send you the document that details the plans for our exhibition. I sent Ben Nicks a copy some time ago and told to him that he was free to share it; I believe he may have done that already. But if you are interested, I certainly will be glad to send you a personal copy, because I would very much like to clear the air on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Harwit

Martin Harwit
Director

cc: Ben Nicks