

The American Legion

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1808 "K" STREET, N. W. ★ WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 ★



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

January 19, 1995

Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

After months of research and direct negotiations with officials of the National Air and Space Museum, The American Legion has reluctantly concluded that further efforts to correct the politically charged Enola Gay exhibit are futile. On behalf of all World War II veterans, I am asking your help to see this tragic episode in the life of the nation's most revered museum brought to a speedy conclusion.

National Air and Space Museum officials, despite an accord reached with our representatives in September 1994, and in defiance of their Smithsonian Institution superiors, have restored to the exhibit highly debatable information which calls into question the morality and motives of President Truman's decision to end World War II quickly and decisively by using the atomic bomb. The hundreds of thousands of American boys whose lives were thus spared and who lived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their historic achievement are, by this exhibit, now to be told their lives were purchased at the price of treachery and revenge. This is an affront to all Americans.

We have informed the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, I. Michael Heyman, of our decision. We ask that the exhibit be canceled, that Congress investigate the process by which it was developed, and that the historic B-29 be displayed outside any political or philosophical context by an institution willing and able to do so. We believe the National Air and Space Museum is the most appropriate museum to do so, but only if and when officials there will do so in conformity to our request for a neutral display of the aircraft.

We are pressing our position with all who are concerned about this issue, including Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives. We need your support, and America's veterans need your support. Please help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William M. Detweiler".

WILLIAM M. DETWEILER
National Commander