



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

SEP 6 1994

Mr. Martin Harwit
Director
National Air and Space Museum
Sixth Street and Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20560

Dear Mr. Harwit:

My position as Secretary of Veterans Affairs compels me to speak out on the Enola Gay exhibit issue. I hope in reading my views you will accept that the nature of my work brings me in contact with a very large cross-section of the veteran community, from grassroots local posts and chapters to officials at the national headquarters of major service organizations. As best I can, I will try to reflect their sentiments, which I have found to be almost universally expressed.

I appreciate what may be a motivation to interpret the dropping of the atomic bomb from the vantage point of a world still threatened by nuclear proliferation and the realities confronted by human beings exposed to weapons of mass destruction. No one, myself included, wishes to deny how profound those questions and issues are for all of civilization. Hiroshima, and then Nagasaki, happen to be the only moments in history when these devices were tactically deployed. Nevertheless, your planned exhibit, as a component of World War II commemorations, cannot and should not adopt a role beyond those events' relationship to the circumstances of the time.

To many veterans the symbolism of the Enola Gay and the use of atomic weapons in 1945 must be expressed in terms that factually represent why President Truman's decision was supported by the overwhelming reality of continued conventional warfare. While the war in Europe had mercifully ended, the Pacific Theater was headed toward an invasion of the Japanese mainland that was certain to bring additional tragic casualties. On an international scale there so far had been over 14 million battle deaths and 38 million civilians who had perished. Japan had captured over 30,000 American service personnel, nearly half of whom had already died or been killed in captivity. How can one allow hindsight 50 years later to question the righteousness of a decision to quickly end this unspeakable chapter in world history?

In memorializing this nation's role in armed conflict, we must properly focus on the personal sacrifice of those who willingly accepted their destiny to defend freedom and democracy at all costs. Many Americans across history have died upholding that principle; there are many veterans alive today who owe their survival to the Enola Gay. In recognizing these fundamental truths, we are not in any way glorifying war. We are, however, honoring the deeply ingrained fortitude and bravery of citizens willing to die serving their nation.



Putting Veterans First

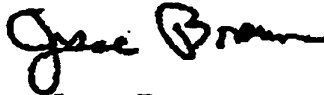
Mr. Martin Harwit

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Most of the many hardened combat veterans I know make peace with their enemies. Some go so far as to meet and embrace their former adversaries as if to say we are all one in the eyes of God. No one is suggesting that we turn our backs on the victims that all war creates. But we cannot allow the Enola Gay exhibit to become judgmental in any way. To do so would impugn the motives of people whose service to this nation, and to the human race for that matter, was honorable in every sense of the word.

I urge you to mount this exhibit with appropriate sensitivity toward the men and women of this nation who returned the world to its quest for morality. There is no other way for your museum to mark this turning point. I hope your decision reflects the same strength of conviction intended by our nation's observance and commemoration of the momentous events of World War II.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jesse Brown". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jesse Brown

IB/drs



AMERICAN DEFENDERS OF BATAAN & CORREGIDOR, INC.

Including any unit of force of the Asiatic Fleet, Philippine Archipelago, Wake Island, Mariana Islands, Midway Island and Dutch East Indies.

COMMANDER William Wells USN Ret.
Honorary Commander

VICE/ADM (SC) Kenneth Wheeler USN Ret.
MAJ/GEN Donald Curtis USMC Ret.
B/GEN Richard Fellows USAF Ret.
LT/COL Benson Guyton USA Ret.
Honorary Vice Commanders

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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Commander
906 N. Broad St.
Brookville, FL 34801

CHARLES L. PRUITT
Sr. Vice Cdr.
Flt. #1 Box 110
Sweetwater, TN 37874

MELVIN L. ROUTT
Jr. Vice Cdr.
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Westminster, CA 92683

ANDREW MILLER PNC
Historian
1805 Cagua Drive NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110

WE, WHO HAVE SIGNED THE ATTACHED PETITION, ARE SURVIVORS OF THE DEATH MARCH ON BATAAN; THE BLOODY BATTLES TO DEFEND CORREGIDOR AND OTHER ISLANDS OF THE PHILIPPINES; HELL SHIPS; FORCED SLAVE LABOR; AND THE MOST ATROCIOUS TREATMENT(S) KNOWN TO MANKIND AS PRISONERS OF WAR OF THE JAPANESE. OTHER SIGNATORS ARE CONCERNED CITIZENS.

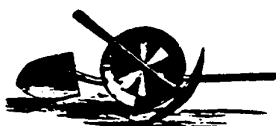
WE ARE OFFENDED AND TOTALLY DISMAYED AT THE PROPOSAL FOR AN EXHIBIT AT THE NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM WHICH WILL DEPICT THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS THE AGGRESSORS AND PERPETRATORS OF THE CRUEL BOMBINGS OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI. THE EXHIBIT INTENDS TO SHOW GRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE HORRORS OF WAR....BUT, DOES NOT EXHIBIT THE TREATMENT OF THE CHINESE, KOREANS, FILIPINOS AND AMERICANS AT THE HANDS OF THE JAPANESE.

WITH EXTREME DISGUST AND ANGER, WE OBJECT TO THIS PROPOSED EXHIBIT.

WE WILL ACCEPT NOTHING LESS THAN COMPLETE CANCELLATION OF THIS PROPOSAL!

FRANK H. BIGELOW
National Commander
American Defenders of Bataan & Corregidor.

American Ex-Prisoners of War



Walt Kendall
7535 Alma Vista Way
Sacramento, CA 95831-4031
916-392-2931

49 ERS CHAPTER

Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway
Arlington, VA 22209-1198

Gentlemen:

I had a vested interest in attending the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, on 7 Dec 91. I have two high school classmates entombed in the Arizona. Prior to the anniversary there was considerable focus in the Honolulu press, advocating that we forget Pearl Harbor, and remember that the 442d/100th Regimental Combat Team brought an end to the holocaust by liberating Dacau. Japanese-American docents employed by the U.S. Park service were spewing the usual propaganda about WWII relocation. The orientation film shown to the tourists was "doctored" Roosevelt's speech was muted, Admiral Yamamoto was eulogized and it was stated that Japan was forced to attack Pearl Harbor etc.

Japan has been able to buy their revisionist history of the Pacific war from politicians, phony academics et al who are selling us down the river. VJ day brought on by Hiroshima was the end of a nightmare, we who survived thanked God that we were spared, and that we prevailed. Ask anyone that has been in combat about the glory of war. I, have suggested to the Smithsonian that they bring the Wright Brothers, and the Spirit of St Louis down to their level. The sad thing about it is, they are making WWII a useless and hollow victory, and we are paying them to do it.

Sincerely,


Walt Kendall

P.S. The 442d/100th wasn't even in Germany on 29 Apr 45, I was in Dacau on 30 Apr 45 there wasn't one Japanese face in evidence.

WK

20TH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
1143 Glenview Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108
July 23, 1994

Senator Sam Nunn
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

EXTRA
COPY

Enola Gay Exhibit at Air & Space Museum

Dear Senator Nunn:

TWENTIETH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION is made-up of war veterans whose bombing of Japan in 1945 prompted its surrender. We vigorously oppose all current plans of National Air & Space Museum (ASM) to exhibit parts of ENOLA GAY, the B-29 from which the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. Our Resolution on this matter explains why and a copy is enclosed.

Forty-one years after ASM acquired this airplane, it still says, "We lack space in which to exhibit it"--and never has--yet, as part of our national observance of the 50th anniversary of World War II's end, ASM intends (in 1995) to show parts of ENOLA GAY in an exhibit of a Japanese suicide plane and an Atomic bomb. As now planned, this exhibit will be a national disgrace. It will slander President Truman and his military advisors (who, in the summer of 1945, desperately sought to end the fighting but found the Japanese intransigent), make victims of the Japanese and racists (if not cowards) of Americans, and leave ENOLA GAY'S crewmen as national outcasts--hardly a message that will make good soldiers of succeeding generations but one that undermines America's continuing effort to establish good relations with other nations (and for which we spend billions). The message makes no sense.

This airplane should be displayed intact, in a manner enhancing American national pride and honoring its crew for performing both a combat mission and an outstanding experimental test-flight under most unusual circumstances. If making room for it necessitates re-arranging or deleting some present ASM exhibits, then we respectfully request that you and your colleagues require it.

Respectfully,

Encl. A/S

James L. Pattillo
Vice President
Colonel, Ret., USAF
Municipal Court Judge, Ret.

National Headquarters

The Military Order of the World Wars



The Association for all Military Officers

1994 NATIONAL CONVENTION
TACOMA, WASHINGTON -- 27-31 JULY 1994

RESOLUTION NO. 3

Display of "Enola Gay" at Smithsonian

WHEREAS the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum is one of the most popular centers of public visitation in the Nation's Capital; and

WHEREAS the museum can be of great value in educating the public regarding specific technological advances in aviation and space systems; and

WHEREAS such aviation and space advancements should be displayed apart from any political implications they might have in any given era; and

WHEREAS the current plan for display of the "Enola Gay" violates such precepts and attempts to predispose visitors to a political point of view;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Military Order of the World Wars, in Convention, Tacoma, Washington, 27-31 July 1994, implore Congress to direct the Smithsonian Board of Regents not to display the "Enola Gay" until the current plan is replaced by one that fairly and accurately describes the historical events that led to assignment of its unique mission, and it has fully satisfied itself that management policies and procedures are in place at the Air and Space Museum to ensure that all displays accurately reflect the technological heritage of the American people.

435 North Lee Street • Alexandria, VA 22314 • Telephone (703) 683-4911

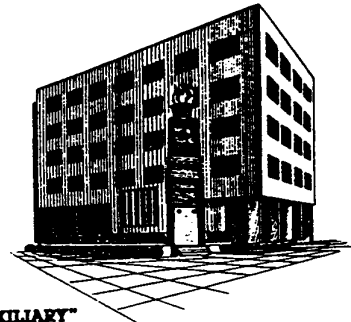
Fax/Answering Machine (703) 683-4501



Telephone
202-543-2239

NEWS Release

Washington Memorial Building
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002



"THE VOICE OF TWO AND ONE HALF MILLION MEN AND WOMEN OF THE VFW AND ITS AUXILIARY"

FOR RELEASE:

SMITHSONIAN SEEKS VFW VIEWS ON ENOLA GAY EXHIBIT

WASHINGTON, D.C., Aug. 10, 1994--The script for a special exhibit set to open next spring at the National Air and Space Museum marking the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II entitled "The Last Act--The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II," has received critical reviews from the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The VFW objected to the exhibit's presentation of the view, not supported by fact, that the atomic bombs should not have been dropped to end the war quickly. The VFW criticism is that such conjecture in a historical exhibit would be viewed as a deliberate ideological twisting of facts that misleads the public. The exhibit, which opens in May 1995 and will run to January 1996, will feature the restored 60-foot forward section of the Enola Gay as the symbolic centerpiece.

To date, the Smithsonian has met with objections from veterans and veterans groups which accuse the Smithsonian script of being biased, calling U.S. military operations "a war of vengeance" and the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces being portrayed as defending Japan's unique cultural heritage against Western imperialism.

At the invitation of the Director of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, Martin Harwit, the Veterans of Foreign Wars was invited to review a revised draft of the exhibit script and comment on its content.

Officials of the VFW have offered to work with Smithsonian representatives to ensure that visitors to the Air and Space Museum understand the rationale, at that point in time, for using weapons which put an end to yet another world war.

The VFW, a 2.2-million-member veterans group which includes more than a million World War II veterans, intends to introduce a resolution at its 95th National Convention in Las Vegas August 19-26 urging Congress to exercise oversight since the Smithsonian Institution receives about 85 percent of its funding from the Congress.



EXCHANGE CLUB OF CAPITOL HILL
462 HERNDON PKWY., SUITE 207
HERNDON, VA 22070

August 12, 1994

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

Dear Dr. Harwit,

After reading your August 7, 1994 Washington Post editorial regarding the Enola Gay exhibit, it appears that you are moving ahead with the exhibit with only cosmetic revisions. We believe the exhibit as currently scripted would leave a viewer with the emotional gnawing that the Americans might have been the aggressors rather than the Japanese.

What is disturbing to us is the fact that Museum curators and exhibit planners are disregarding established legitimate historical authorities who have offered exhibit planners constructive comments and provided recommendations to balance the exhibit's script. It appears that an indefensible historical bias exists rather than a genuine desire to fulfill the spirit and intent of title 20, USC, Section 77a and Section 80a, the Museum's charter. Was it not your intent to provide an exhibit that focuses on "the last months of the war in the Pacific and the role of the Enola Gay in bringing a fierce conflict to a sudden, merciful end for the millions of young servicemen who were poised to sacrifice their lives for their country?" why not match the exhibition script with the description you offered in the issue of the Air & Space magazine that covered the museum's plans? There is no dilemma in this option as your editorial would suggest.

Bluntly speaking, there is no room for bias when an issue of this historical significance is represented to the general public in the most visited and prestigious museum in the world. If you continue to ignore the balance offered in the comments and constructive criticisms of legitimate historians, we the Exchange Club of Capitol Hill will work with our national organization to take the case to the American people and those Members of Congress that are responsible for the 85% of the funding the Institution receives.

This can be resolved. Reject the rigidity of pride of authorship and be the organization that was chartered to "...commemorate and display the contributions made by the military forces..." and whose "...valor and sacrificial service of men and women of the Armed Forces shall be portrayed as an inspiration to the present and future generations of America." Take the balance that is offered.

Americans don't need a guilt trip for responding to a sneak attack
and pursuing the war to a conclusive and speedy end.

Sincerely,

Cornelius W. Heine
Cornelius W. Heine
President



FOUNDED 1963

THE RETIRED ENLISTED ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1111 SOUTH ABILENE COURT
AURORA, COLORADO 80012

(303) 752-0660

August 12, 1994

Mr. Martin Harwit, Ph.D.
Director,
National Air and Space Museum
Smithsonian Institution
7th St. & Independence Ave., S.W.
Room 3506
Washington, DC
20560

Dear Doctor Harwit,

The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA) wishes to record its opposition to the Enola Gay exhibit as currently planned for display in May 1995. My staff has been briefed on the suggested outline for the display and it is their belief, which I share, that it offers a great more postulation than historical fact.

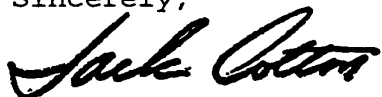
TREA has large numbers of World War II veterans of the Pacific conflict. Many of them participated in the battle for Okinawa and were being readied in the Ryukuys in anticipation of an invasion of the Japanese mainland. Others were victims of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Others were former Prisoners of War captured while defending against Japanese attacks on the Philippines, Wake Island, etc. Yet, others had fought the fanatical Japanese forces on Guadalcanal, Tinian, Saipan, Tarawa, and New Guinea, to name just a few. As their president, I'd be remiss if I failed to register their dissatisfaction with and concern for your planned exhibit.

On behalf of the 73,000 members in TREA, I urge you to respect the wishes of the many United States veterans of the Pacific War, as well as other interested parties, who fully recognize that the dropping of the atom bomb on Japanese soil probably saved the lives of countless Allied Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen.

UNITED WE STAND

To attempt to depict the American and Allied forces as the aggressor in that horrible experience of human misery, as proposed in the exhibit's graphics, is an insult to our World War II veterans and, most of all, to the United States of America. It is one thing to speculate on Who, What, and Why, but another to incorporate those assumptions in a display that should exhibit actual presentations of historical fact. TREA prays that you will follow the recommendations of those organizations (e.g., Air Force Association, The Retired Officers Associations) who are leading the charge to have the exhibit reflect the true history of the Enola Gay.

Sincerely,

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

Jack Cotton
National President, TREA

JC/slm