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The Enola Gay Controversy 1994-1995

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Georgia Southern University

Game book for
students

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The Enola Gay Controversy, 1994-95

Version 2.1



The restored fuselage of the *Enola Gay*, 1995
<https://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/enola-gay>

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Introduction

With the fiftieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (August 6, 1945) approaching, the director of the National Air & Space Museum (NASM) at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC has put together a committee to create an exhibit about the end of World War II. The centerpiece will be the restored fuselage of the *Enola Gay*, the B-29 bomber aircraft that dropped the first nuclear weapon ever used in combat - nicknamed *Little Boy*. The **Curators** have designed a groundbreaking review of the event that many see as the turning point for ending the fighting in the Pacific Theater and ushering in the Cold War. They rely on recent work by **Historians** to contextualize the bombing. Meanwhile, **Veterans** of World War II, including the pilot of the *Enola Gay*, and their families are making plans to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the war's ending. For many, this moment feels like a last chance to tell their personal stories and to remember and honor their fallen comrades. When the two sides start debating how to exhibit the *Enola Gay*, some **Politicians** jump into the fray to ally themselves with public opinion and exert control over the museum.

Students will be assigned characters whose roles they will assume during the game. Students will conduct primary source research and use information gathered to convey their ideas and feelings about the direction of the exhibit to the group in speeches, exhibit proposals, and writing assignments. These characters are figures contemporary to the conflict surrounding the exhibit and are assigned to specific **factions**: groups of stakeholders with special interests in the exhibit.

Students will deliver speeches per the guidelines specified by their instructor and create mock museum exhibits of specific artifacts from the World War II era that they hope to display in the National Air and Space Museum.

The game only works when participants in the game have reviewed the provided information and materials ahead of time. This is a roleplaying game, and it is hard to play your role when you do not know your role. Character sheets will contain information about a player's specific character, such as their background and worldview. This information, coupled with primary source documents, will inform and shape the decisions participants make in character. A "successful" playthrough need not result in the historically accurate result, but rather creates a journey that deepens participants' understanding of the conflict at hand.

This *Reacting to the Past*-style game will focus on the turmoil surrounding the exhibit, the debate over who controls history, and the role museums and/or the government should play in shaping culture and identity. Careers may be won or lost. How will you ensure that the exhibit showcases your character's version of history?

In this game, four factions - **Curators**, **Historians**, **Politicians**, and **Veterans** - are vying for control over the exhibit process. In real life, these four "factions" were not clearly defined, and the characters never sat in the same room. For this game, we gather all the stakeholders in one room to convince the **Curators** to put on an exhibit that appeals to everyone. Complaints and demands will fly from all sides. Factions can lodge protests and the national media is broadcasting the squabble to the entire world. Welcome to April 1994.



Basic Features of Role-Playing Games

This historical role-playing game is modeled after Reacting to the Past-style projects. Set in moments of historical tension, it places you in the role of a person from the period. By reading the gamebook and your individual role sheet, you will find out more about your objectives, worldview, allies, and opponents. You must then attempt to achieve victory through formal speeches, informal debate, negotiations, and conspiracy. Outcomes sometimes differ from actual history; a debriefing session sets the record straight. What follows is an outline of what you will encounter and what you will be expected to do.

Game Setup

Your instructor will spend some time before the beginning of the game helping you to understand the historical context for the game. During the setup period, you will use several different kinds of material:

- The Gamebook (from which you are reading now) and LibGuide, which include historical information, rules and elements of the game, and essential historical documents.
- A Role Sheet and Faction Advisory (except for Indeterminates), which provide a short biography of the historical person you will model in the game as well as that person's ideology, objectives, responsibilities, and resources. You will receive your role sheet from your instructor.

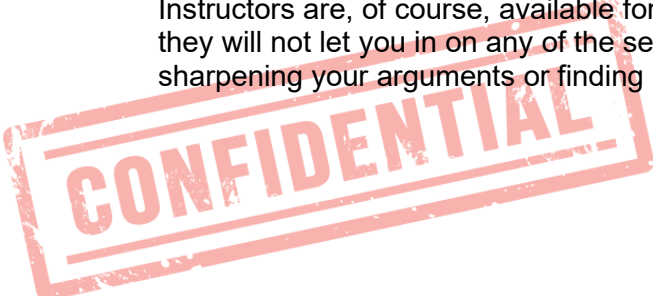
Familiarize yourself with the documents before the game begins and return to them once you are in character. They contain information and arguments that will be useful as the game unfolds. A second reading while *in character* will deepen your understanding and alter your perspective. Once the game is in motion, your perspectives may change. Some ideas may begin to look quite different. Those who have carefully read the materials and who know the rules of the game will invariably do better than those who rely on general impressions and uncertain memories.

Game Play

Once the game begins, class sessions are presided over by students. In most cases, a single student serves as some sort of presiding officer. The instructor then becomes the GM (the "game master" or "game manager") and takes a seat in the back of the room. Though they do not lead the class sessions, GMs may do any of the following:

- Pass notes
- Announce important events
- Redirect proceedings that have gone off track

Instructors are, of course, available for consultations before and after game sessions. Although they will not let you in on any of the secrets of the game, they can be invaluable in terms of sharpening your arguments or finding key historical resources.



The presiding officer is expected to observe basic standards of fairness, but as a fail-safe device, most games employ the “Podium Rule,” which allows a student who has not been recognized to approach the podium and wait for a chance to speak. Once at the podium, the student has the floor and must be heard.

Role sheets contain private, secret information that you must guard. Exercise caution when discussing your role with others. Your role sheet probably identifies likely allies, but even they may not always be trustworthy. However, keeping your own counsel and saying nothing to anyone is not an option. In order to achieve your objectives, you *must* speak with others. You will never muster the strength to prevail without allies. Collaboration and coalition building are at the heart of every game.

Some games feature strong alliances called *factions*. As a counter-balance, these games include roles called *indeterminates*. They operate outside of the established factions, and while some are entirely neutral, most possess their own idiosyncratic objectives. If you are in a faction, cultivating indeterminates is in your interest, since they can be persuaded to support your position. If you are lucky enough to have drawn the role of an Indeterminate you should be pleased; you will likely play a pivotal role in the outcome of the game.

Game Requirements

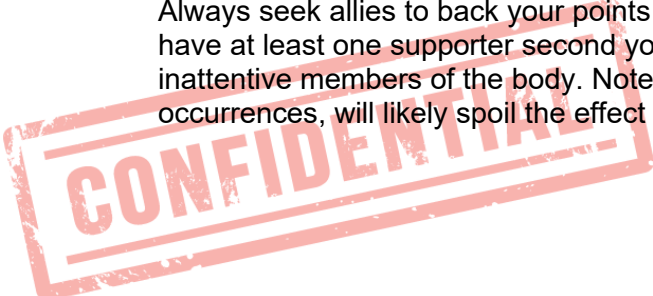
Students playing Reacting games practice persuasive writing, public speaking, critical thinking, teamwork, negotiation, problem solving, collaboration, adapting to changing circumstances, and working under pressure to meet deadlines. Your instructor will explain the specific requirements for your class. In general, though, these games ask you to perform three distinct activities:

Reading and Writing. What you read can often be put to immediate use, and what you write is meant to persuade others to act the way you want them to. The reading load may have slight variations from role to role; the writing requirement depends on your particular course. Papers are often policy statements, but they can also be autobiographies, battle plans, newspapers, poems, or after-game reflections. Papers often provide the foundation for the speeches delivered in class. They also help to familiarize you with the issues, which should allow you to ask good questions.

Public Speaking and Debate. In the course of a game, almost everyone is expected to deliver at least one formal speech from the podium (the length of the game and the size of the class will determine the number of speeches). Debate follows. It can be impromptu, raucous, and fast paced. At some point, discussions must lead to action, which often means proposing, debating, and passing a variety of resolutions. GMs may stipulate that students must deliver their papers from memory when at the podium, or may insist that students begin to wean themselves from dependency on written notes.

Wherever the game imaginatively puts you, it will surely not put you in the present. Accordingly, the colloquialisms and familiarities of today’s college life are out of place. Never open your speech with a salutation like *Hi, guys* when something like, *Greetings, fellow citizens* would be more appropriate.

Always seek allies to back your points when you are speaking at the podium. Do your best to have at least one supporter second your proposal, come to your defense, or admonish inattentive members of the body. Note-passing and side conversations, while common occurrences, will likely spoil the effect of your speech; so you and your supporters should insist



upon order before such behavior becomes too disruptive. Ask the presiding officer to assist you. Appeal to the GM as a last resort.

Strategizing. Communication among students is an essential feature of Reacting games. You will likely find yourself writing emails, texting, attending out-of-class meetings, or gathering for meals. The purpose of frequent communication is to lay out a strategy for achieving your objectives, thwarting your opponents, and hatching plots. When communicating with fellow students in or out of class, always assume that they are speaking to you *in role*. If you want to talk about the “real world,” make that clear.

Controversy

Most Reacting-style role-playing games take place at moments of conflict in the past and therefore are likely to address difficult, even painful, issues that we continue to grapple with today. Consequently, this game may contain controversial subject matter. You may need to represent ideas with which you personally disagree or that you even find repugnant. When speaking about these ideas, make it clear that you are speaking *in role*. Furthermore, if other people say things that offend you, recognize that they, too, are playing roles. If you decide to respond to them, do so using the voice of your role and make this clear. If these efforts are insufficient, or the ideas associated with your particular role seem potentially overwhelming, talk to your GM.

When playing your role, rely upon your role sheet and the other game materials rather than drawing upon caricature or stereotype. Do not use racial and ethnic slurs even if they are historically appropriate. If you are concerned about the potential for cultural appropriation or the use of demeaning language in your game, talk to your GM.

Amid the plotting, debating, and voting, always remember that this is an immersive role-playing game. Other players may resist your efforts, attack your ideas, and even betray your confidence. They take these actions because they are playing their roles. If you become concerned about the potential for game-based conflict to bleed out into the real world, take a step back and reflect on the situation. If your concerns persist, talk to your GM.

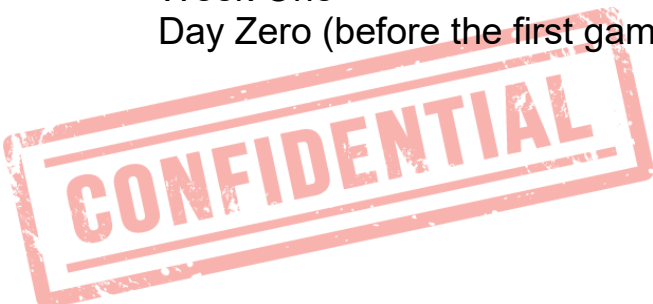
Suggested Schedule of Classes

Short Game (2-3 weeks)

- Day 1 – Historical Background & Role Distribution
- Day 2 – Faction Meetings & Debate
- Day 3 – Negotiations & Final Exhibit Presentation
- Day 4 – Debrief & What Really Happened
- Day 5 – Assessment Due

Week One

Day Zero (before the first game session)



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- Read *Hiroshima Debate 1981* between World War II veteran Paul Fussell and Just War philosopher Michael Walzer to see the conflicting views that existed in the decade before the exhibit regarding the necessity of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.
- Read Samuel A. Batzli's public history analysis from 1990 of the National Air and Space Museum's approach to exhibits, *From Heroes to Hiroshima*.

Day One – Background

- In Class
 - Discuss the historical background of the decision to drop a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima and the creation of the contested “culture war” atmosphere of the 1990s
 - Assign roles
 - Players receive their individual roles and faction information
- Assignments need be completed in advance of the next meeting
 - Read your character's *Role Sheet* and *Faction Advisory* as well as the *Crossroads Exhibition Planning Document*
 - Highlight, in the latter, portions of the exhibit that your character wants to see included in the final exhibit as well as portions of the exhibit that your character finds objectionable.
 - Draft a speech that expresses your character's views, referencing at least two sources.

Day Two - Spring, 1994: Game Session 1

- In Class
 - Sit together by faction to discuss responses to “Crossroads Exhibit” plan & draft a list of exhibit goals and objections
 - “Travel” to VFW Post 331 (Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Post) - Washington, DC to hear Veterans & Politician share their demands for the exhibit via speeches with responses from Historians & Curators
- Assignments need to be completed in advance of the next meeting
 - Prepare an exhibit panel about a specific artifact/argument you want to be included in the final draft of the exhibit
 - Consult the *Exhibit Panel worksheet*, *Exhibit Panel Examples*, as well as research resources provided
 - Read *News Bulletin* to understand the current attitude surrounding the exhibit

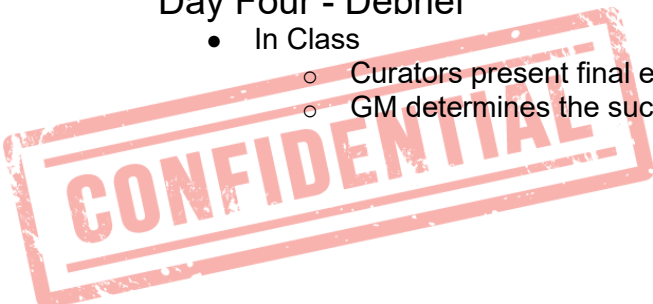
Week Two

Day Three - Fall, 1994: Game Session 2

- In Class
 - Factions present exhibit proposals
 - Debates among factions about what to include
- Assignments need to be completed in advance of the next meeting
 - Curators select which proposals they'll include in the final exhibit
 - Individuals complete necessary components for Victory Objectives

Day Four - Debrief

- In Class
 - Curators present final exhibit
 - GM determines the successes of exhibit



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- Debrief/Postmortem
- Review the 1995 final exhibit and 2004 installation of the *Enola Gay* at Udvar-Hazy Center at the National Air and Space Museum
- Assignments
 - Reflection/Assessment per instructor's specifications

Day Five - Assessment Reflection Essay due

Full Game (5 weeks)

Full game play takes nine 75-minute class sessions plus a Final Assessment. Your instructor may modify the content to fit your course goals.

Pre-Game Background Sessions

Day 1 Discuss World War II & Hiroshima Bombing

- Students read Prologue, WWII Background, & Hiroshima Debate 1981

Day 2 Discuss Cold War & Culture Wars

- Students read USA Cold War & Cultural Wars Background & Batzli article From Heroes to Hiroshima
- Instructor leads discussion of Cold War & Culture Wars
- Class creates Rules of Engagement
- GM distributes Roles

Game Sessions in Character - Washington, DC

Day 3 Mixer at National Cherry Blossom Festival, April 1994

- Students read *Crossroads* Exhibit Planning Document
- Faction meetings to discuss which objects/documents they want included in Exhibit Panels & create list of Exhibit Demands (EDs)

Day 4 Veterans host Town Hall at VFW Post 341

- Veterans present speeches on Pacific Theater and take questions from audience
- Veterans speeches due
- Curators, Historians, Indeterminates: Exhibit Panels due

Day 5 Politicians hold Senate Hearings at US Capitol

- Politicians vote to increase, decrease, or maintain funding to Smithsonian
- Politicians speeches due

Day 6 Affecting Public Opinion: Exhibit Ads

- Each Faction produces a public service video announcement explaining their views on the *Enola Gay* exhibit; Indeterminates vote on best ad for POPs
- Indeterminates speeches due

Day 7 Historians deliver Lecture Series at American University

- Historians speak on atomic bombing of Hiroshima and take questions from audience
- Historians speeches due
- Veterans Exhibit Panels due
- Purchase EDs with Public Opinion Points - POPs

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Day 8 Curators present final Enola Gay Exhibit at National Air & Space Museum

Debrief

Day 9 Debrief/What Really Happened

- Students read *Debrief* pdf

Day 10 Final Assessment due

Historical Background

World War II in the Pacific

The U.S.-Japanese relationship, strained since the 1850s, disintegrated in the decades before the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Nothing in history is inevitable but Japan's actions in the 1930s pushed the country towards war. The leaders were hungry for more territory and believed their existence as an independent nation was on the line. They overstepped in July 1941 when they annexed Indochina (territory including present day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) that had been controlled by France but was vulnerable now that Hitler had conquered most of France. Because most of Europe was currently under German control, the main threats to Japanese expansion would be the US, Canada, and Britain. The Japanese leaders hoped to scare the U.S. away from a protracted fight, one Japan could not hope to win because they were so outnumbered with so many fewer resources.

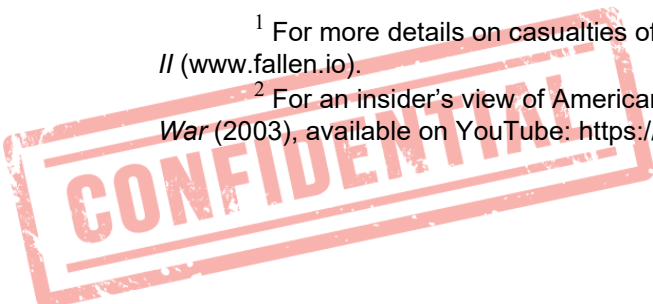
The decision to bomb Pearl Harbor, a military base on the colony Hawaii, seems downright stupid – it enraged Americans and drew the U.S. immediately into the war. But to some Japanese leaders, it was a bold move that might destroy both the U.S. navy's ability to enforce the embargo and the American people's will to fight. The other options—to backtrack the plan for imperial expansion or crumble economically—were unsatisfactory. Attacking the American and British bases provided a chance at victory.

It may be hard to imagine, but in 1941 the U.S. had a tiny, inexperienced, and ill-equipped military. It took a few months to rev up for war, but once the American military fully engaged in fighting, it was winning battles. The strategy of island hopping towards mainland Japan involved brutal fighting. Allied victories were costly.¹ Echoing the strategy used by the Allies against Germany and other occupied areas, the U.S. military began area bombing in Japan as soon as it established bases close enough to reach the mainland. Wartime policy focused on maximizing the efficiency of attacks. In total, American planes bombed 67 Japanese cities. The most devastating raid occurred against Tokyo when incendiary bombs lit the entire city on fire and killed almost 100,000 people, with another 41,000 wounded.²

While bombing raids continued, U.S. military leaders were also making plans for a full-scale ground assault on mainland Japan that would begin, if necessary, on November 1, 1945. At a

¹ For more details on casualties of WWII, see the excellent short video: *The Fallen of World War II* (www.fallen.io).

² For an insider's view of American policy, watch the interview with Robert MacNamara in *Fog of War* (2003), available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/gekdt0QwFQw>.



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meeting with the Joint Chiefs on June 18, President Truman discussed the details of the plan with military leaders who agreed on planning an invasion at Kyushu. The group discussed projected casualties; the number 31,000 seemed to correspond with the rates in comparable battles but no one provided exact numbers. They also discussed other options to end the war. The US already was inflicting severe damage with a naval blockade and air strikes. And there was optimism that the Soviet Union would declare war against Japan, an act that they felt would further demoralize the Japanese. The chief of staff, Admiral Leahy, also mentioned that the issue of demanding an “unconditional surrender” might be spurring the Japanese people to continue their fight. President Harry Truman demurred, saying he did not control public opinion. In the end, Truman agreed to put in motion the plans for invasion of the Japanese mainland.

The Manhattan Project & the Potsdam Declaration

Meanwhile, a secret program had begun back at home: the Manhattan Project. In 1939, Albert Einstein had sent a letter to inform President Roosevelt that research was already underway on nuclear energy. Fearing that the Germans were working to make nuclear weapons, Roosevelt authorized funding for Americans to ramp up research. Two types of bombs were being developed – one fueled by uranium, the other plutonium – with prototypes projected to be ready by August 1, 1945.

When Roosevelt died in April 1945, Truman, shockingly, knew nothing about the Manhattan Project. He was only two weeks on the job when Henry Stimson, the Secretary of War, told him about the project. An “Interim Committee” was formed to consider the effects of the new technology in the postwar era. The group discussed the use of nuclear weapons. They did not discuss if the weapon should be used; they were interested in deciding which cities would be the targets, how to use bombs most advantageously, and whether to share the technology with other nations, especially the Soviet Union. Diplomatic and political concerns dominated these discussions as the participants were not military leaders.

On July 26, the US, Britain, and China issued the Potsdam Declaration, calling on the Japanese people to overthrow the military leaders and demand peace. It demanded an “unconditional surrender” along with a promise that the Japanese would not “be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation.” Failure to do so, it warned, would result in “prompt and utter destruction.” Such strong but vague language did not tempt Japan’s hardline leaders. Paralyzed by divisions, the leaders did not respond to the forceful declaration, giving the Americans the impression that they were uninterested in negotiating a surrender.

Hiroshima & Nagasaki

Hiroshima was a large city with about 350,000 inhabitants, and though it had some military presence, it was not a vital military target (as its status as the sixty-eighth place to be attacked reveals). Colonel Paul Tibbets commanded the mission that dropped the uranium 235 bomb nicknamed “Little Boy” on the city on August 6, 1945. He was twenty-nine years old and had named the plane after his mother, Enola Gay. His crew consisted of 12 men. Maj. Thomas Ferebee served as the bombardier. The crew did not know the details of their mission until after take-off. Two other B-29s flew alongside them to document the blast. Such a small fleet provoked no warning sirens from the Japanese. The bomb exploded at about 8:15am, sending shock waves 11 miles into the air. The scale of damage was immediately obvious to the airmen, one of whom described being “struck dumb at the sight.”³ On the ground, the city was in ruins.

³ Copilot Robert Lewis quoted in Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the Use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan* (UNC Press, 2004), 76.

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The blast killed between 70,000 and 80,000 people immediately, but by November the count was up to 130,000. People who were far enough from ground zero to survive suffered from burns and radiation. Unlike previous aerial attacks, the damage at Hiroshima was long-term and caused by only one bomb.

The American military wanted “to reinforce the shock value of the bomb.”⁴ News traveled slowly from the destroyed city, so the military printed 6 million leaflets to inform other Japanese about what had happened to Hiroshima, to encourage them to ask leaders for peace, and to evacuate cities to avoid further attack.

Only three days passed before the U.S. military dropped a second atomic bomb. A plane called Bock’s Car, piloted by Maj. Charles S. Sweeney, dropped the “Fat Man” plutonium bomb on Nagasaki on August 9. The primary target had been Kokura, but bad weather caused the plane to head for the secondary target. The densely populated port city had about 270,000 inhabitants. Between 60,000-70,000 people died in the three months after the bombing. The leaflets calling for people to leave were not dropped until the day after the second bombing.⁵

The Japanese government had been slow to react to Hiroshima’s destruction. But the second nuclear attack against Nagasaki and the declaration of war by the Soviet Union on August 8 convinced Emperor Hirohito that it was finally time to come to terms with defeat. On August 10 Japan offered to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, as long as the emperor remained in power. Some of Truman’s advisors recognized that the transition to peace would be much smoother if the emperor stayed in power, at least as a figurehead. In effect, the Americans ended up declaring they had received an “unconditional surrender” from Japan even as they accepted the condition of keeping Hirohito in office.

At the end of the war, 3 million Japanese people had died and the rest of the population was near starvation. Japan’s industrial capacity was at ten percent of the prewar level. Japan lost the war and all the colonies it had acquired. The U.S. military occupied the nation until 1952.

World War II and Public Memory

Historical memory, like scholarly history, changes over time. What people remember about something in the past and what meaning they associate with it is shaped by their experiences.

The American people’s interpretation of the civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam, anti-war protests, U.S. intervention, and the Cold War all shape the way they remembered World War II. For example, the reason World War II is often referred to as “The Good War” is a response to the war in Vietnam quietly being known as “The Bad War.” This is important to know as you begin to engage with the conflict over the Enola Gay’s exhibit in 1994. But first, let’s review how the meaning and memory of World War II has changed since the war.

1940s Motives for War

World War II was not always seen as “The Good War,” even by those who fought for the Allies. With memories of World War I still fresh in the minds of many, the American people were cautious about joining the new war. President Franklin Roosevelt understood this apprehension

⁴ Walker, 78.

⁵ Walker, 80.

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and began a campaign to move the American people's vision of the war away from the memories of the last great conflict and towards ideological sentiments of freedom and human rights.

In a 1941 speech Roosevelt described World War II as a battle for the four freedoms: freedoms of speech and religion and the freedoms from fear and want. When the US entered the war, the Office for War Information (OWI) developed propaganda/content that spoke nostalgically about small-town America and the need to protect, not just freedom, but whatever aspects of life Americans personally felt dear. In this way, serving in the war was framed as a sentimental and emotionally significant service. There was a purity to the idea of the American soldier: he was young, vibrant, brave, and above all else good.

The experience of war, of course, differed. The draft and war industry expansion added upheaval to the economic depression at home, at times making the simple American small town more of a memory than a reality. For many non-white Americans, racism within the US military compounded questions of what or rather whose freedoms they were fighting for. Once overseas the chaos and suffering of warfare brought on waves of questions, answers, and delusions.

With their numbers reaching around 16 million, the American soldier was not a monolith. Soldiers came from diverse racial and class backgrounds and entered the war willingly and unwillingly. Some volunteered to fight to protect the four freedoms or a notion of home, others wanted to punish the Japanese or felt pressured by their community to join. Some did not want to go to war at all. Whatever reason they went into the military, their attitudes were surely changed by warfare. Surveys at the time illustrated that while serving, few soldiers held any greater motivation for fighting beyond survival.

Immediate Post-War Memory

After the war ended in 1945 and soldiers returned home, they began to refine their interpretations of the war. Some wanted to leave the war in the past, and remake their lives in the postwar world, others wanted to find meaning out of what they had experienced between 1941-45. Those who fashioned their ideas into books shortly after the war broadcasted a critical, if not disillusioned vision of their experiences. President Roosevelt and the OWI's vision no longer rang true to them after experiencing the war. Their accounts often stressed the cost of the war and the human carnage. Historian John Bodnar wrote that their works "centered more on the critical effort to insist that the war be recalled less as an American victory and more as a warning that hopes for a more democratic America and for a better world, for all men and women everywhere were fragile at best."

True to that sentiment, the war was not immediately celebrated after it ended. Soldiers were happy to be home but did not return with a sense of accomplishment beyond survival. It would take time before memories of war transformed into stories of friendship, brotherhood, and heroics, largely because the battle against extremist ideas was not over. The quick development of the Cold War and fears of nuclear war kept the danger of war close at hand. World War II was over, but a new world conflict and a new threat quickly took its place.

President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan became a controversial choice early on and continued to collect added meaning and severity as the 1940s and 1950s wore on. Almost immediately after the war the Soviet Union turned on the United States and began to develop plans to foment insurrection within the United States to take down its capitalist democracy. The Soviet plans claims presented in George Kennan's Long Telegram (1946) were threatening and worrisome, but the Soviet Union's successful detonation of an atomic bomb in

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1949 significantly changed the postwar world and Americans' read of WWII. Now armed with nuclear weapons the Soviet Union and the United States threw the world back into a tense global conflict. Americans found themselves once again being asked to defend the nation against ideological attacks, and potential subterfuge.

WWII veterans responded, of course, differently to the Cold War. Some were happy to leave the military and quietly returned to civilian life, wary of Soviet threats, but with an understanding that their contribution to the fight had been fulfilled. Others found power and activism in their veteran status and took to protesting what they felt were pro-communist politicians and speakers in the postwar US. For them the war had shifted from one against fascism to one against fascism and communism, signaling that their service was not over.

It was within this context that the American Legion began to publish heroic accounts of the war that highlighted the innocence of the American GIs and their selfless acts in war. Their stories promoted the idea that it was the American GIs' moral superiority and religious faith that helped secure the nation's victory. The fight against the Soviet Union and its anti-religious communism put a greater emphasis on the United States' religious freedom and transformed the nation's success in World War II into a blessing and its soldiers into saints.

While the memory of the war shifted, the fact that many veterans were still alive made it clear that there remained no singular way to interpret the war.

1990's WWII Memory, "The Good War"

Americans' memory of WWII began to shift in the 1980s and 1990s. Forty and fifty years after the war, those who experienced it firsthand were beginning to die, and in their place came a more mythic and aggressively celebratory vision of the war. Even some of those who experienced the war embraced the unproblematic vision of the "Good War."

This recasting of World War II happened in a broader time of nostalgia. Americans were consuming visions of the past like never before; 1950s-style diners, nineteenth-century-style dresses, and eighteenth-century-style wallpaper were all the rage. White American men eagerly participated in Civil War reenacting, while Americans of all kinds watched historical films and visited historical sites. In fact, with the stabilizing US economy in the 1990s the American family road trip returned, ushering in the most popular era for the National Park Service.

In this context of nostalgia and remembering, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall was installed in the US amidst great controversy about the official meaning of the war. The war's negative association gave Americans further reason to attach to and celebrate World War II, which had a much more triumphant ending. While the end of that war ushered in the Cold War, the end of the Nazi regime and the death of Hitler made for an attractive and clean ending that Americans embraced in face of the failure of the war in Vietnam. As historian John Bodnar explained, the American people were "ready to entertain highly laudable stories of national honor and bravery as it began to erase the more troubling legacy of Vietnam and bask in the afterglow of a Cold War victory."

Early in the 1990s the United States began its fiftieth anniversary celebration of World War II. One of the first events took place in Hawaii, at the site of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. A series of informal discussions between American and Japanese people began around the appropriateness of issuing governmental apologies. Americans wanted Japan to apologize for bombing Pearl Harbor; Japanese people wanted the US to apologize for bombing Hiroshima

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and Nagasaki. While tensions were different from what they were in the 1940s, this two-sided resentment shaped how Americans understood the eastern theater of the conflict. European Theater celebrations came later in the decade and focused on the heroism and character of individual soldiers. The popular vision of the war argued that the G.I. experience had made American men better able to succeed at home, suggesting that righteous wartime service helped to create postwar economic stability, while at the same time casting a glaring judgment against the Vietnam veterans who returned home in the 1970s to stagflation-tough economic times. The specter of Vietnam loomed large in the World War II celebrations and further pushed memory of the war into a realm of mythic, and simplistic, goodness.⁶

Timeline

1853 - 1945: World War II in the Pacific

July 8, 1853 – Commodore Matthew Perry arrives in Tokyo harbor, forcing Japan to open trade with the western world.

September 1905 – Treaty of Portsmouth is signed and effectively ends the Russo-Japanese War. President Theodore Roosevelt is credited with helping broker negotiations, earning him the Nobel Peace Prize.

December 1937 – January 1938 – Japan invades Nanjing, China, killing and ravaging 100,000-300,000 Chinese citizens. This was a pivotal event in both the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II.

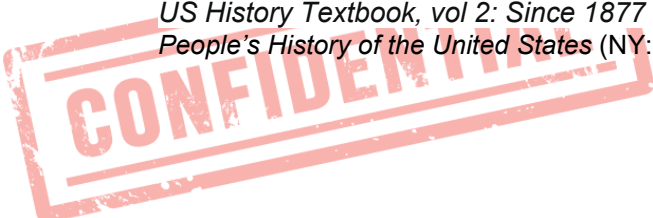
October 1941 – President Roosevelt authorizes a major effort to explore the possibility of developing a nuclear bomb, partially influenced by a letter from Albert Einstein expressing fear that Nazi Germany might develop one first.

December 7, 1941 – Japanese planes attack Pearl Harbor, destroying US warships and aircraft and killing over 2,400 US servicemen. The attack officially brought the United States into the Second World War.

February 1942 – President Roosevelt signs executive order 9066, paving the way for the internment of over 110,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans justified by military necessity

June 4 – 7, 1942 – the US wins a decisive naval victory at the Battle of Midway, a turning point in the Pacific, allowing the US to begin a long campaign of island-hopping towards the Japanese mainland.

⁶ For more on this era, see John Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010); Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History* (NY: Norton, 2020); Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright, eds., *The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open US History Textbook, vol 2: Since 1877* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019); Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (NY: Harper Collins, 1980).



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March 9 – 10, 1945 – US conducts a firebombing raid over Tokyo, killing 80,000-100,000 in a single night and leveling 16 square miles of the city. Similar raids over 66 other Japanese cities follow.

April 12, 1945 – President Franklin D. Roosevelt dies, and Harry Truman is sworn in as the 33rd President of the United States.

July 16, 1945 – The first successful test of the Atomic Bomb takes place 200 miles from Los Alamos, New Mexico.

July 17, 1945 – Potsdam Conference begins. Pres. Truman meets with Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin to discuss, among other things, how to end the war in the Pacific. News of the successful nuclear test reaches Truman.

July 26, 1945 – Harry Truman gives the Potsdam Declaration, informing Japan that it must either agree to unconditional surrender or face “prompt and utter destruction.”

August 6, 1945 – The *Enola Gay*, piloted by Colonel Paul Tibbets, drops the “Little Boy” atomic bomb on Hiroshima, killing 70,000-80,000 initially and about 130,000 due to acute exposure to radiation by the beginning of November 1945.

August 9, 1945 – A B-29 named *Bock's Car* drops a second atomic bomb, named “Fat Man,” on Nagasaki, killing 60,000-70,000 people.

August 15, 1945 – Emperor Hirohito announces Japan's surrender via radio broadcast.

1987 - 1994: The *Enola Gay* Controversy

Spring, 1987 - Curator Tom Crouch mounts an exhibit for the National Museum of American History on the internment of Japanese Americans, provoking protests by veterans.

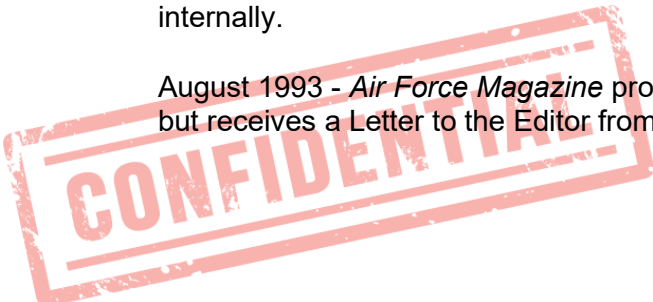
1988 - Adams and Martin Harwit (director of NASM) begin planning the exhibit of the refurbished *Enola Gay* fuselage.

1989 - NASM begins a series of public events (lectures and exhibits) focused on “Strategic Bombing in World War II” to make contacts for the *Enola Gay* exhibit

1991 - The new World War I exhibit at NASM, “Legend, Memory and the Great War in the Air” opens and immediately is the subject of controversy because it presents the destructive side of air power.

July 1993 - The curators propose a concept for the *Enola Gay* exhibit - “Crossroads: The End of World War II, the Atomic Bomb, and the Onset of the Cold War” - and begin discussing details internally.

August 1993 - *Air Force Magazine* promotes the display of the *Enola Gay* with a cover article but receives a Letter to the Editor from veteran Burr Bennett who is gathering signatures for a



The Enola Gay Controversy, 1994-95

petition expressing concern that the NASM will not exhibit the *Enola Gay* “proudly.” A dialogue begins between the Air Force Association (AFA) and NASM officials.

Jan 1994 - The curators complete the “Crossroads” draft and Director Harwit confidentially sends a copy to AFA director Monroe Hatch

Feb 1994 - The external advisory committee approves the draft; the curators begin planning exhibit-related events; the AFA plans to mobilize public opinion against the “Crossroads” exhibit.



The Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, Washington DC
Photo by Allison Scardino Belzer, 2023

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Game Mechanics

Factions & Characters

Curators

These professionals claim they want to give the public a chance to revisit the event informed by recent scholarship. They intend to create a balanced exhibit that will be suitable for visitors of all ages to the National Air & Space Museum (NASM) in Washington, DC. In 1994 the Cold War has just ended, and curators are especially mindful of the expensive nuclear arms race that began with the creation of the atomic bomb during the Manhattan Project.

1. **Martin Harwit, PhD** – Director of the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum since 1987. He is responsible for approving what goes on display. He holds a PhD in physics from MIT and did postdoctoral research at Cambridge.
2. **Michael J. Neufeld, PhD** – Lead curator of the Aeronautics Department at the National Air & Space Museum. He has worked there since 1988 and has spent years gathering information and artifacts for the *Enola Gay* exhibit.
3. **Robert McCormick Adams, PhD** - Secretary of the Smithsonian. He is accountable for the goings-on at all the different Smithsonian museums and therefore is Harwit's boss.
4. **Tom Crouch, PhD** – A curator of the Aeronautics Department at NASM & the person in charge of overseeing the exhibition script. He put together a groundbreaking show on air power in World War I that inspired his idea for what the *Enola Gay* exhibit could be.
5. **Richard Hallion, PhD** – Chief of the Air Force historical programming, served on the first Advisory Committee to consult with Smithsonian curators about the exhibit of the *Enola Gay*. He has worked as a curator and visiting professor of aerospace history at NASM.
6. **Edward T. Linenthal, PhD** – Served on the first Advisory Board for the *Enola Gay* exhibit at the NASM Smithsonian. He has a PhD in Religious Studies and years of experience working with the National Park Service to develop and improve public history programs.

Historians

A group of individuals used to practicing their profession in isolation, the Historians want the exhibit to be as accurate as possible. In the fifty years since the war ended, two generations of scholars have examined the motives and effects of the atomic bombing. They want to share their ideas with the wider public.

1. **Martin Sherwin, PhD** – Renowned historian of nuclear strategy, professor at Tufts University. He published *A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and Its Legacies* in 1975.
2. **Priscilla Johnson McMillan** – An expert in Russian studies, she is currently a Fellow at Russian Research Center at Harvard.



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3. **William Manchester** – Famous author of historical biographies, a veteran of World War II. Currently working part-time as a professor of European studies at Wesleyan University.
4. **Barton J. Bernstein, PhD** - Professor of history at Stanford University and one of the leading scholars re-examining President Truman's decision to use atomic bombs in Japan.
5. **Akira Iriye, PhD** – Professor of History at Harvard specializing in interactions between the United States and Asia. He served on the first Advisory Committee for the *Enola Gay* Exhibit. He was president of the American Historical Association in 1988.
6. **Barbara Brooks, PhD** – Professor of Japanese and Chinese History, City College of New York.
7. **Gar Alperovitz, PhD** – Historian and author of *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*. He is also president of the National Center for Economic Alternatives.
8. **Kai Bird** - Award-winning journalist, author, and biographer covering subjects related to peace and international relations.

Veterans

Veterans feel those who lived through the war have the authority to interpret the events. They expect the Enola Gay exhibit to commemorate the American victory in World War II. They look to the taxpayer-funded National Air and Space Museum to honor their service and that of their fallen comrades in what may be their last major anniversary of the war.

1. **Col. Paul Tibbets** – The pilot who flew the *Enola Gay* (named for his mother) on the mission over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. In his published memoirs and interviews he continues to support the decision to use atomic weapons against Japan.
2. **Paul Fussell, PhD** – Veteran of World War II, awarded the Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts. He is a professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of a vigorous defense of Truman's decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima.
3. **Adm. Noel Gayler** – A highly decorated pilot who, as a fighter pilot, flew over Hiroshima six days after the first atomic bomb was dropped. He served as Director of the National Security Agency from 1969 to 1972 and was ninth Commander of Pacific Command from 1972-1976.
4. **Gen. Monroe W. Hatch, Jr.** – Executive director of the Air Force Association of Veterans, which publishes *Air Force Magazine* and lobbies for Air Force interests. A graduate of the US Naval Academy, he served as a pilot in the Vietnam War. From 1987-1990 he was the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force.
5. **Col. Donald Lopez** – US Air Force, retired. Lopez was a pilot in World War II and is a former deputy director of the NASM. He serves on the second Exhibit Advisory Committee ("Tiger Team") that is working with the Smithsonian curators to revise the original exhibit plan.

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6. **Lt. Col. John T. Correll** – Editor of *Air Force Magazine*, the mouthpiece of the Air Force Association, and the prime critic of the original plans for the *Enola Gay* exhibit at the National Air and Space Museum. Served for 20 years in the Air Force.
7. **Lt. Gen. Claude M. Kicklighter** – He commanded the U.S. Army Pacific from July 1989 to July 1991 when he became the Chair of the Department of Defense's 50th Anniversary Commemoration Committee.
8. **W. Burr Bennett, Jr.** – Veteran of World War II where he served combat missions in the Pacific as a pilot in B-29 aircraft. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal. He served on the Committee for the Restoration and Proper Display of the *Enola Gay*, a veterans' group. He helped organize Air Force veterans' efforts to change the Smithsonian exhibit.

Politicians

Politicians, some of whom are also military veterans, want to exert control of taxpayer-funded institutions like the Smithsonian. They follow the winds of public opinion and do not want to be seen as working against the interests of the American people. Like the Veterans, they expect the Enola Gay exhibit to commemorate the American victory in World War II.

1. **Sen. Bob Dole** – The senior senator from Kansas, Dole wants to secure the Republican nomination for president in the 1996 election year. He served in the Army's 10th Mountain Division in World War II in Europe, where he was gravely wounded and received, for heroic achievement, two Purple Hearts.
2. **Rep. Newt Gingrich, PhD** – Republican from Georgia who is in line to become Speaker of the House of Representatives if Republicans take control of the house in November 1994. Has a PhD in European history from Tulane.
3. **Sen. Mark Hatfield** – Veteran of World War II, Republican from Oregon, sponsor of exhibit in 1980 of objects from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial at the Old Senate Office Building.
4. **Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum** – Junior senator from Kansas and daughter of a beloved governor, Alf Landon. Currently the only Republican woman serving in the Senate.
5. **Rep. Sam Johnson** – Representing Texas's 3rd district in the House of Representatives, Congressman Johnson is a retired United States Air Force officer and fighter pilot.
6. **Rep. C. V. "Sonny" Montgomery** – Republican from Mississippi who serves as chair of the Committee of Veterans Affairs in the House of Representatives. He served with the 12th Armored Division in Europe during World War II.
7. **Sen. Dianne Feinstein** – Democrat from California, a history major from Stanford University.

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Indeterminates

These individuals are not a faction; each has a unique background and point of view. To varying degrees, each could make an excellent ally for the factions. Most are actual people, but some are fictional characters, created for the purposes of the game.

1. **Barbara Walters** – Journalist and co-host of ABC's 20/20, known for interviewing elusive political and pop culture figures
2. **Takashi Hiraoka** – Current Mayor of Hiroshima
3. **Elizabeth "Liz" McAlister** – Leader of Christian pacifist group, known for staging anti-nuclear protests
4. **Lynne Cheney, PhD** – Current chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities and author of numerous publications on American history
5. **Carol Roberts** – Daughter of a Manhattan Project Veteran
6. **Randall Forsberg** – Founder of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies and advocate for nuclear freeze movement
7. **Brandy Trotter** – History student at American University and daughter of two generations of African American Veterans (fictional)
8. **Kathleen Vale** – Politically active Riot Grrrl and aspiring iconoclast (fictional)
9. **Dan Skinner** – A New York Times reporter who is a neutral observer with no scholarly knowledge of the history of the Pacific Theater of World War II (fictional)
10. **Giulio Fermi, PhD** – Son of Enrico and Laura Fermi, refugees from Fascist Italy; Enrico was a scientist with the Manhattan Project and Giulio earned his doctorate in biophysics
11. **Yuri Agawa** – Japanese-American young woman who spent time as a child in an internment camp in the US during World War II (fictional)



Public Opinion Points (POPs)

Public Opinion Points indicate how well known a certain character is and measure the character's ability to influence the exhibit through the support they're getting from the general public.

How to Get Them

- Engage with the public through delivering strong speeches and preparing extra work: letters to the editor, other publications, videos/ads, posters, etc
- Organize petitions, protests, and other public demonstrations
- Role Sheets and Faction Advisories reveal other methods for gaining POPs.

How to Lose Them

- Fall out of character during gameplay
- Do something that is anachronistic or offensive to other characters
- Disengage with the game by being unprepared

How to Use Them

- POPs can be pooled by characters with similar goals.
- On the last day of debate, characters can use POPs to purchase Exhibit Demands (EDs) which require the Curators to include a particular Exhibit Panel in the final exhibit
- Certain Role Sheets and Faction Advisories reveal other methods for using POP

How to Keep Track of POPs

- Students are responsible for keeping track of POPs
- The GM will announce (in class or via Slack) who has gained or lost points

What is an "Exhibit Demand" (ED)?

- Something that Curators must include in the final *Enola Gay* exhibit - modeled on Exhibit Panels
- EDs can include objects, documents, images, or blurbs that represent some historically accurate (widely defined) aspect of the *Enola Gay* story that your character is invested in
- Any character with enough POPs can purchase an "Exhibit Demand" to present to the Curators near the end of the game

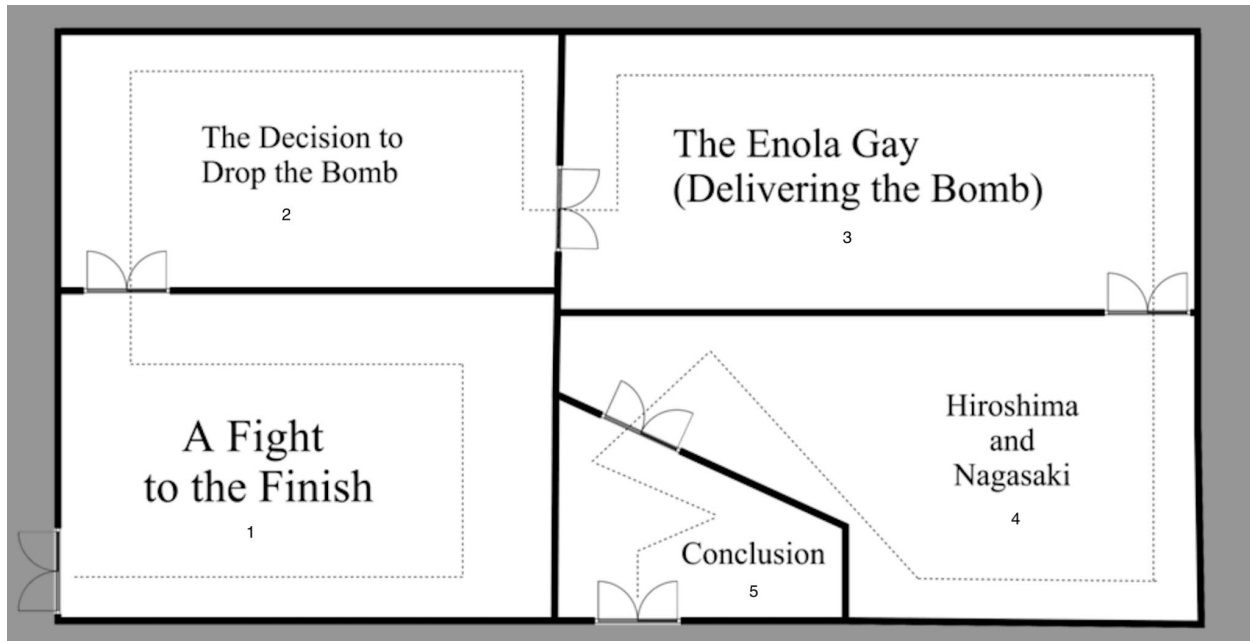
How much do "Exhibit Demands" cost?

- For a game with 8-15 players: 50 Public Opinion Points per ED
- For a game with 16-25 players: 75 Public Opinion Points per ED
- For a game with 26-40 players: 100 Public Opinion Points per ED
- Note that Curators can veto an ED if they have 1.5x POPs

Crossroads Exhibit Floor Plan

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Written Assignments

Your role sheets ask you to prepare three formal assignments. Your instructor may adapt assignments to the needs of your course:

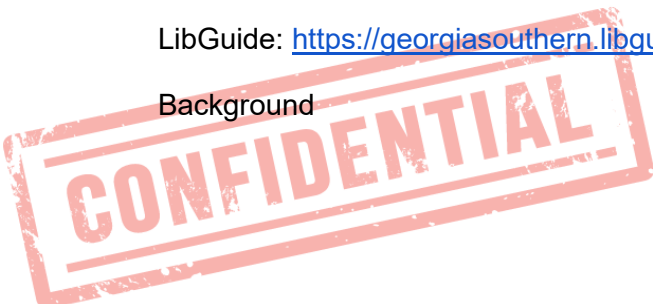
- read and annotate Crossroads Exhibition Planning Document
- draft a speech with quotes from at least two primary sources (graded writing assignment) using the wide selection of primary sources available on the LibGuide
- design an Exhibit Panel* (graded writing assignment - can be assigned to each player or require a team of players to produce a certain number)

*Exhibit Panel: Each student (or team of students, if preferred) prepares an Exhibit Panel featuring an object/document they would like included in the final exhibit. Templates and guidelines available on LibGuide. Each Faction Advisory includes a chart to divide up responsibility for the rooms so faction members don't all focus on the same area. Indeterminates are free to choose a room for their Exhibit Panel. Ideally, these Exhibit Panels should be shared with everyone (they can be posted before class in Slack or an electronic classroom bulletin board or displayed via PowerPoint). Curators can choose among the submissions as they assemble the final exhibit of the Enola Gay.

Available Documents

LibGuide: <https://georgiasouthern.libguides.com/enola>

Background



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- Batzli, Samuel A. *From Heroes to Hiroshima: The National Air and Space Museum Adjusts Its Point of View. Technology and Culture*, 31.4 (Oct 1990): 830-837.
- Fussell, Paul and Michael Walzer. "Defense of the Atomic Bomb and a Dissent." Reprinted in *Major Problems in American Military History*, 368-373.

Exhibit

- NASM, *Crossroads Exhibition Planning Document*, July 1993. Available from <https://web.archive.org/web/20120804023716/http://www.afa.org/media/enolagay/07-93.html>
- *Images & Documents Archive*, created for the game.

Debrief

- Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Englehardt, eds. Selections from "Introduction" and "Conclusion." *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*. NY: Holt, 1996.



Suggestions for Further Reading

Accounts of the Pacific Theater & Debates over Atomic Bombs

- National Security Archive: "The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II" collection of political and military accounts: <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/nuclear-vault/2020-08-04/atomic-bomb-end-world-war-ii>
- Samuel Walker. *Prompt & Utter Destruction: Truman & The Use of Atomic Bombs against Japan*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1997.
- *Debate* 1981 [Paul Fussell vs. Michael Walzer] (Folio)
- *Debate* 2015 [Walker vs. Alperovitz] (Folio)
- Interpreting the Manhattan Project <http://www.atomicheritage.org>

Sources from the 1990s

- Search *New York Times* for articles about the controversy & obituaries of the key players.
- Overview - <https://siarchives.si.edu/blog/exhibiting-enola-gay> for Archives of the Smithsonian Institution
- Historians protest letters to the Secretary of the Smithsonian & Director of NASM (Nov 1994): <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/enola/files/round3/historiansletters1.pdf> and <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/enola/files/round3/historiansletters2.pdf>
- Historians Committee for Open Debate on Hiroshima, July 1995 Letter to Heyman: <http://web.archive.org/web/20031024092525/http://www.historians.org/directory/committees/heymanletter.html>
- Primary sources regarding the controversy: <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/enola/>

Videos from the 1990s

- ABC News: *Peter Jennings, Hiroshima: Why the Bomb was Dropped* <https://youtu.be/9-WnLNLe3sk>
- *Firestorm over Enola Gay Exhibit: Nightline with Aaron Brown* (10/25/1994): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyQnK-dyyvg>

Accounts of *Enola Gay* Controversy

- Overview with multiple voices: *The Journal of American History*, Dec 1995, 82.3 (available on JStor). Articles by David Thelen, Richard H. Kohn, Martin Harwit, Martin Sherwin, Edward Linenthal, Neil Harris, Thomas Woods, and John Rumm.
- Clear Overview of Controversy with links to documents: <https://sites.google.com/site/theenolagaycontroversy/home>
- Boyer, Paul. "Whose History is it Anyway? Memory, Politics, and Historical Scholarship." *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*. Ed. by Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt. NY: Holt, 1996, pp 115-39.
- Capaccio, Tony, and Uday Mohan. "Missing the Target: How the Media Mishandled the *Enola Gay* Controversy." *American Journalism Review* 17.6 (July/August 1995): pp 18-26.
- Engelhardt, Tom and Edward Linenthal, eds. *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*. NY: Holt, 1996.
- Smith, Jim B., and Malcolm McConnell. *The Last Mission: The Secret Story of World War II's Final Battle*. New York: Broadway Books, 2002.
- Wallace, Mike. *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997, Ch. 13.

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