



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

Office of the Director

February 26, 1999

Suzanne Blair Thorndike
4136 Black Point Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

Dear Suzanne:

Thank you for your letter of February 5. Your recollections are cogent and appreciated. I am forwarding your letter to the curator in our Aeronautics Division, because you add value to the history of Excalibur III.

For years we have been space constrained at the National Air and Space Museum. The coming of our Dulles Center will offer opportunities to do so much more. We understand the importance of your father and Excalibur to you, to your family, and to the development of aviation.

I cannot give you a commitment for a time that Excalibur III will be displayed either at our Dulles Center or the Museum on the Mall. But Excalibur III is an integral part of the national collection and deserves to be exhibited and appreciated, as it is today in Los Angeles. It is my desire to return Excalibur to be seen in the nation's capitol, but it may be a few years before that could possibly come to pass. In the meantime, we feel that Excalibur has had an excellent temporary home at the California Science Center, a fine museum, where significant numbers of visitors have been able to see it.

Thank you again for your thoughts and interest. I understand with greater clarity the importance of your father's airplane.

Sincerely,

Donald D. Engen
Director