*Enola Gay* Crew Member’s Letter

As the *Enola Gay* began the long return flight to its base on Tinian, one of the crew members paused to write a letter to his son. This is what he wrote:

August 6, 1945

10 miles off the Jap

Coast at 28,000 feet

Dear Walter,

This is the first grown-up letter I have ever written to you, and it is really for you to read when you are older… Today the lead plane of our little formation dropped a single bomb which probably exploded with the force of 15,000 tons of high explosive. That means that the days of large bombing raids, with several hundred planes, are finished. A single plane disguised as a friendly transport can now wipe out a city. That means to me that nations will have to get along together in a friendly fashion, or suffer the consequences of sudden sneak attacks which can cripple them overnight.

What regrets I have about being a party to killing and maiming thousands of Japanese civilians this morning are tempered with the hope that this terrible weapon we have created may bring the countries of the world together and prevent further wars. Alfred Nobel thought that his invention of high explosives would have this effect by making wars too terrible, but unfortunately it had just the opposite reaction. Our new destructive force is so many thousand’s times worse that it may realize Nobel’s dream…