

Attachment 1

Letter from Flight 93 Advisory Commission Chairman to Mr. Alec Rawls

FINAL SENT BY HARD COPY

August 6, 2007

Mr. Alec Rawls
2494 Tasso St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Mr. Rawls:

This letter is in response to your electronic mail correspondence that you sent to Flight 93 Federal Advisory Commission members Mr. John Reynolds, Mr. Patrick White, and Mr. Edward T. Linenthal in regard to the Flight 93 Memorial Design and your purported “crescent of betrayal”. The Flight 93 Memorial International Design Competition was a transparent and open process involving the Families of Flight 93, the Flight 93 Federal Advisory Commission, the Flight 93 Memorial Task Force, and the National Park Service. However, since the winning design was announced on September 7, 2005, you have continued to bring up specific concerns you have with elements of the winning design.

The National Park Service (NPS) has gone to great lengths to dialogue with you and understand your theory. The NPS contacted religious scholars to assist in verifying and understanding your report. The scholars have doctorates in religious studies and Islamic architecture from leading United States universities. Based on the information provided, the religious scholars consulted do not believe that the National Memorial design points to Mecca.

In addition, the NPS reviewed your report from a GIS and construction perspective. There is not currently enough available data, or even articulation of the site design, to determine whether the proposed site features coincide, or almost coincide, with the Qibla direction, as you maintain, because none of the data or imagery used to develop the site plan has been geo-referenced. Until a ground survey of the site has taken place, or is made available to the National Park Service from another source, it is impossible to determine with any confidence or precision whether these proposed features will be designed or installed to coincide with the Qibla direction. The design for the Memorial is still in the planning stage. Because the federal government does not own the property where the Memorial will be located the design has not been laid out onsite nor do we have construction drawings for the Memorial project. Therefore, your claim of Mecca orientation is premature at best.

When you began your claims, you were insistent that the family members did not know of your claims. As the NPS was reviewing your “theory”, the Commission ensured that your “report” was available to the family members, the Advisory Commission and Task Force members. No one agrees with your claims. And as one religious scholar reported, your “theory” is based on inaccurate facts of Islam. We have no intention of debating your recent e-mail word for word. In fact, we have no intention of debating this issue any longer with you. The democratic process has worked, will continue to work – all this despite your efforts to keep this memorial from being built.

You claim that you are saving us by stating “all this time that you have been kicking me in the teeth I have been trying to drag you out of a burning building”. We have not been kicking you in the teeth; we do not agree with your theory and you have had the opportunity to provide your comments as required by public law. However, when you move beyond your harassment of public officials to harassing family members, we must act. Your emails are threatening and will not be tolerated.

Mr. Rawls, the National Park Service, Families of Flight 93, Flight 93 Federal Advisory Commission, and the Flight 93 Memorial Task Force have spent considerable time and effort to address your concerns with the Flight 93 Memorial Design. We do not agree with your claims (as researched above). You continue to harass, intimidate, and slander our members and family members. This will not be tolerated. You have had the opportunity to speak and to provide comments in every public comment period involving this design. The families do not wish to hear your rhetoric any longer.

The Flight 93 Advisory Commission has acted, approving the design and recommending approval of the General Management Plan, which has been completed. We have done so with full consideration of your theories. The Commission considers the matter complete. Any further communication that you have with the Commission should be made through Jill Hawk of the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

John J. Reynolds, Chair
Flight 93 National Memorial Advisory Commission

Cc: Jill Hawk
Joanne Hanley