

Gorillas... 98.6% Human (Minus the Aggression)

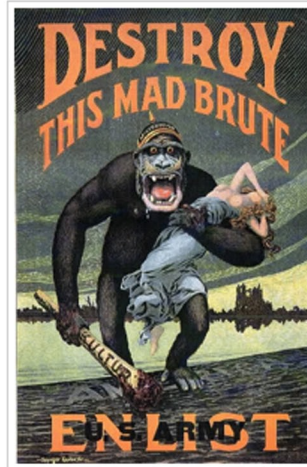
Category: Environment • Great Apes • Primatology

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"It seems really very unfair that man should have chosen the gorilla to symbolize everything that is aggressive and violent, when that is one thing that gorillas are not, and that we are."

- Sir Richard Attenborough

This quote sets the tone for a new award winning short film (see below) from the non-profit organization Explore. Primates, and great apes in particular, have long fascinated and repulsed us based on their uncanny resemblance. In order to deflect this repulsion they have frequently been portrayed as monstrous, violent and expressing a host of bestial attributes. A case in point is the WWI propaganda poster from 1917 depicting a violent gorilla storming towards American shores bearing a German pickelhaube helmet, a menacing club and an abducted young woman (representing liberty?). The reality is that gorillas spend the vast majority of their time peacefully munching the local flora and minding their own business.



The new film, *Gorillas... 98.6% Human*, presents a beautiful portrait of these gentle giants in the mountains of Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda.

[Video below the fold.]

Led by African Wildlife Foundation's Craig Sholley, the Explore team follows four gorilla families and highlights the courageous work that Sholley and the AWF are doing to protect this highly endangered species. Previously I spoke with Jef Dupain who works with the AWF on the protection of bonobo populations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (see that [article here](#)). Thanks to their commitment and dedication our closest living ancestors may have a fighting chance to survive.

