

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF VETERAN ASSOCIATIONS IN CANADA

1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Association
Armed Forces Pensioners' /Annuitants'
Association of Canada
Canadian Corps Association
Canadian Fighter Pilots Association
Canadian Naval Air Group
Dieppe Veterans and Prisoners of War
Association
Eighth Army Veterans' Association
Bomber Command Association

First Special Service Force Association
Hong Kong Veterans Association of Canada
Merchant Navy Association
National Prisoner of War Association
(European Theatre)
Nursing Sisters' Association of Canada
R.C.A.F. P.O.W. Association
Royal Canadian Air Force Association
The Korea Veterans Association of Canada

The Polish Combatants' Association in
Canada
The Royal Canadian Army Service Corps
Association
The Royal Canadian Naval Association
The Sir Arthur Pearson Association of War
Blinded
The War Amputations of Canada
War Pensioners of Canada
Aircrew Association

FINAL SUBMISSION TO:

OMBUDSMAN

Canadian Broadcastion Corporation

Subject:

CBC SERIES - *THE VALOUR AND THE HORROR*

Produced by:

GALA FILM INCORPORATED in conjunction with
THE CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION
THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD and *TELEFILM CANADA*

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Foreword

The series, in Part II (BOMBER COMMAND) and Part III (NORMANDY), makes a number of assumptions which are of some significance. The following list is not all inclusive but provides a rough outline:

- The so-called area bombing of German cities was neither justified nor necessary.
- The bombing of Hamburg, in such a manner as to create a firestorm, was described as “cruel and inhumane.”
- The raid of the German dams, though costly in terms of lives of bomber crews and Germans, was a “public relations effort”, and the resulting damage to the German war effort questionable.
- The raid on Nuremburg, late in the War, was depicted as a deliberate attempt to destroy a historically significant target which had no strategic focus.
- Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, was a heartless commander who needlessly sacrificed his air crews and who took perverse satisfaction in the killing of German civilians.
- The official policy of the “area bombings” of German cities was not tactically sound and the objectives of the Allies could have been achieved by precision bombing of industrial and military targets.
- The American “daylight” bombing policy was adopted, at least in part, because the United States was opposed to area bombings.
- The crews of Bomber Command were not aware of their targets.
- Air Marshal Harris had, at first, objected to giving up his bombing of German cities to engage his forces in pre-invasion targets of tactical importance.
- Sir Winston Churchill, towards the end of the War, had been critical of the bombing of German cities.
- “Lack of moral fibre” indicated some degree of cowardice on the part of bomber crews.
- In the Normandy Landing, an element of enforcement (shooting in the back) had to be put into effect to ensure that assault troops would disembark from

their landing craft.

- Canadian infantry troops were ill-trained and badly led.
- The bombing of the ancient city of Caen was unnecessary to the Normandy Campaign. Destroying the city and killing of its inhabitants did not provide any advantage to the Allies.
- The tragedy which befell on Regiment (The Black Watch) was used to depict that the German SS troops were superior; the emphasis on this particular attack, is presumably intended to portray the manner in which Canadian troops (including The Black Watch) were “manhandled” by the Germans in the Normandy Campaign.
- The murder of prisoners of war was described as a “black mark” on both sides, implying that Canadian troops shot prisoners to the same extent that the war trials indicated the murder of unarmed Canadian Troops by the German SS.
- Because of the manner in which the Allies conducted the War (primarily the bombing offensive against German cities), they relinquished the “moral high ground” (the CBC term) which obviously was intended as a comparison with the criminal behaviour of Nazi Germany.

All of these assertions in the film are challenged in this submission and are seen as false and/or flawed, based on a study of 28 well-accepted books on World War Two.

Introduction

This submission concerns primarily Parts II and III (“Death by Moonlight” and “In Desperate Battle - Normandy 1944”) of the series: *The Valour and the Horror*. It makes reference, as well, to statements by CBC spokespersons, relevant to the programs.

Following the broadcasts of the above-named parts, an unusually-large number of complaints were received at the National Headquarters of The War Amputations of Canada, which provides the Secretariat for the National Council of Veteran Associations (NCVA). In addition, most of the member-associations of NCVA have registered complaints with the author, in his position as Chairman.

A brief summation of the criticisms as sent to the author is set out in Appendix I.

Purpose

The purpose of this submission is to request that:

- (1) The CRTC review this submission and provide comment thereupon, such comment to be in a form that could be communicated to the media and the public.
- (2) If the criticisms in this submission are upheld, no further exposure to Parts II and III be permitted.

In making the latter request, it seems possible that the question of “*censorship*” will be raised. It is desired to meet this possibility head-on. Censorship, in our view, deals with areas of public concern such as politics and religion. It should not, however, be used as a means of justifying the dissemination of intellectual property, where it can be proved that such contains gross errors of historical accuracy, or bias.

It seems that both of these do, in fact, exist in Parts II and III of the series.

We shall, of necessity, make a distribution of this submission to the media, and to a number of interested parties who have sent comments to us and/or have asked us to make some intervention in an attempt to correct or remedy the objectionable perception caused by:

- (1) The broadcasts of these programs
- (2) The availability of the program through video cassettes; and
- (3) The sale of the written publication *The Valour and the Horror*, based on the series.

This submission contains a detailed commentary on the series. As a preliminary focus, an attempt is made hereunder to summarize the major complaints or criticisms.

We have seen, in public print, the comments of persons who are credited with co-writing and co-direction of the film, to the effect that the reaction from the general public was favourable. This is understandable, if it is accepted that such comments would be based on several assumptions, as follows:

- (1) In that the series was co-produced by two respected Government agencies, there would be a tendency to consider that the series has a “*legitimacy*” which would not be accorded if produced by the private sector; and
- (2) The general public would have no basis upon which to judge the accuracy, such as would be the case for persons who were either participants in the events, or who have a sound grasp of the history thereof.

We note the suggestion from the CBC officials that the reaction from the general public was favourable, and that the complaints were coming primarily from veterans. The media reaction we have noted has, however, been mostly negative. In this regard, we cite:

- The MacKenzie Newsletter, April 1992, Issue #10 (Article by Maurice Tugwell);
- A letter to the editor of the *Kingston Whig Standard* (March 30th) from Terry Lyons, proprietor of the Armchair General Bookstore;
- A column by Charles Lynch, *Ottawa Citizen*, (February 2, 1992);
- A column by Peter Worthington in the *Toronto Sun* (April 9, 1992);
- A column in *The World Today* by Derek Nelson (Thompson News Service, widely published);
- An article in the *Kingston Whig Standard* by Lyndon Jones (January 18, 1992);
- An article in the *Owen Sound Sun Times* (Distributed by Southern Star Network), quoting Leslie Greer;
- A column by Fred Cleverley, *Winnipeg Free Press* (March 16, 1992);
- An article in the *Ottawa Citizen* by James McDonnell (concerning the book based on the series written by Merrily Weisbord and Marilyn Simonds);
- And also many letters to the editor in several Canadian newspapers. (See

Appendix II)

The use of participants in these events as an integral part of the programs might be misleading. The statements of these participants cannot be criticized on grounds of lack of authenticity. Most of the difficulties with the series, however, concern statements made by the narrator, together with the impression left by the portrayals given by actors. The actors may very well have been using actual words uttered by participants, but not with the intonation or emphasis which may have been implied by the manner in which these words were uttered by professionals in the roles they were asked to play.

In preparing this commentary upon Part II and III of *The Valour and The Horror* ("Death by Moonlight" and "In Desperate Battle - Normandy 1944"), the role of film critic is attempted.

In doing so, it seems logical to answer the question: How did you like the film? The current controversy over the film *JFK* may be relevant. Some people liked it; some did not! The bottom line on *JFK*, however, is whether the film is an accurate portrayal of events.

If we apply the same yardstick to "Death By Moonlight" and "In Desperate Battle - Normandy 1944", some observations are possible. Both were exciting to watch. In the CBC film, the wartime footage was excellent. The dialogue involving actual participants was valuable. This series served, as well, to remind the Canadian public of historical events which took place nearly half a century ago.

We cannot, however, critique this series (particularly Parts II and III) as if it were just another documentary or docu-drama. This series has been promoted by the CBC as an important new look at these events, produced at considerable expense and after years of research and production.

Moreover, this series has spawned a book and a "video package", and is thus given a "shelf life" far beyond the two exposures on the CBC Network.

The involvement of the National Film Board may well mean also, that this series could be used in the NFB's "FOCUS" program, which offers the use of films to schools, together with discussion notes.

(This technique has kept the NFB film on Billy Bishop, *The Kid Who Couldn't Miss*, in use in schools in Canada, despite the controversy that arose from it and a statement by an NFB official (in the presence of his associate) made to the author of this submission that he would "LET IT DIE."

Accordingly, it is not sufficient to look at "Death by Moonlight" and "In Desperate Battle - Normandy 1944" from the point of view of what might be termed the "normal approach" in critiquing films.

Two questions arise:

Firstly, are the assumptions made in the film historically accurate?

Secondly, in making use of docu-drama techniques, such as the preparation of dialogue for actors and off-camera narration, did the producers introduce personal prejudices, including the moral issues involved?

If so, *four areas* must be explored:

- (1) Is such treatment, particularly concerning an event as important as our participation in World War II, within the mandate of the CBC? In asking this question, one must take into consideration that many who have or in the future may view the film would be entitled to the assumption, that because it was co-produced by government agencies such as the CBC and NFB, a stronger sense of legitimacy would be accorded to it than a film produced through private sources.
- (2) Secondly, given the powerful medium of film and television combined, plus the book (which presumably has wide public appeal), is there cause for concern as to whether any personal prejudices which may have found their way into the production can have influence in a number of areas, including the Canadian public's perception of those events, and even future government policy in respect of National Defence?
- (3) Thirdly, if inaccuracies and personal prejudices are involved, do the producers have the right to interfere, on speculative grounds, with the personal memories of the family members of the participants?

Canada can be proud of the manner in which it has kept alive the memory of the sacrifices of those who serve this country in time of war. It is entirely possible, however, that with such a powerful semi-documentary look through the film, and by people with recognizable credentials, government agencies are interfering with those memories.

It is of particular significance that the producers do not indicate their resources or, of even more concern, have, through the acceptance of modern television techniques, implied accuracy where it may not exist.

- (4) One final comment is necessary. The author of this submission was a member of a Canadian Infantry Regiment (The Royal Winnipeg Rifles) and was a participant in most of the events portrayed in Part III.

It should be made clear, however, that the interpretation of these event is by no means the private preserve of those who were involved – whether at the close end or from afar. It is relevant, however, that whether from the immediacy of the moment or through hindsight, such participants can add to

the knowledge of these events.

Those participants who are still alive, and whose memories are relatively intact, must be accorded the decency of having their views listened to, and it must be made apparent that even though the participants themselves may have their own colouration of events, they are at least in a position to make a judgement. On the other hand, the general public, who were not involved, have no “frame of reference” through which to judge the veracity of what the program is attempting to tell them.

In the preparation of this document, the author has had no professional advice. The submission may contain some errors due to the short time which could be devoted to its preparation (one week). Also the available facilities for research (mostly his own library) were limited. Notwithstanding, the author stands behind all that is set out here.

PART I

The Savage Christmas: Hong Kong 1941

The overall reaction of those who contacted us, and/or of the organizations comprising NCVA, was positive. There were few, if any, complaints of bias or historical inaccuracy. The only serious objection was raised in connection with the portrayal of one nursing sister, and in particular, of the nursing sisters generally. In particular, one of the nursing sisters whose story was prominently featured in Part I stated in a letter (April 11th, 1992) that:

“At that time I still was pretty angry (no temper fits!) at the very mention of the thing – in fact, so upset that the outcome had been another minor stroke, the main effect of which had been a speech impediment... How could the McKenna brothers possibly write what they did?”

“On seeing the preview, I made it abundantly clear to Brian McKenna, one of the editors, that the portrayal of the Nursing Sister would not do: her appearance was a disgrace and an offense to every WWII Nursing Sister. He refused to accept my criticism or to make any change, and in that case, I stated that the entire portion involving the Nursing Sister should be deleted since much of it was so distorted and left entirely incorrect impressions.

“I may say that our Nursing Sisters were not too pleased with the portrayal of the nursing sisters, but there will be an opportunity for me to explain and apologize to them at our Biennial Meeting/Reunion later this month in Victoria, BC.

“D’Arcy O’Connor of Gala Films called me and was very surprised at my displeasure. He, too, was so ignorant about the situation and, for one example, argued with me that Nursing Sisters and VADs ‘were all the same’.”

In all three parts of *The Valour and The Horror*, the producers filmed participants on the locale of their participation, and recorded actual dialogue.

PART II

Death by Moonlight

General Comment

The program focuses on four bombing operations – Hamburg, Berlin, the Dams and Nuremberg.

Bomber Command flew nearly 1,500 night operations and more than 1,000 day operations - 2,500 in all.

In their recently published story of Canada's bomber force – *Reap The Whirlwind* (1991), Spencer Dunsmore and William Carter state:

“Bomber Command sank more enemy shipping than the Royal Navy and preoccupied one million German soldiers, sailors and airmen who might have been employed to deadly effect elsewhere. It also paved the way for the cross channel invasion with a highly accurate and destructive railway campaign in the spring of 1944.”

To give the general public the impression that the story can be summed up in four battles is questionable.

The Hamburg Raids

Narrator: On the night of July 24, 1943, the aircrews of Bomber Command were sent out in force with orders to destroy an entire city. The target was Hamburg, the mission was named for the Biblical city destroyed by the wrath of God, "Operation Gomorrah."

The Hamburg raid is made to look like an act of evil intent. Through the words of an actor portraying Canadian Wing Commander Marvin Fleming, interjected by a comment from the narrator, and further with words put into the mouth of Harris, we quote from the film:

Harris: "The battle of Hamburg cannot be won in a single night. Ten thousand tons of bombs will have to be dropped to complete the process of elimination. On the first wave, a large number of incendiaries are to be carried to saturate the fire service."

It is suggested that the intent of the producers was to emphasize bombing of German civilians "using" Harris as what might be termed an evil spokesman.

Fleming: "It is an old city, mostly wooden buildings. We try and set fire to it. Go in with high explosives at first to blow-up all the gas lines to get the thing going, and then put in the incendiaries in the second wave. Some of the incendiaries, the little four-pounders, well, you can kick those out of the way, but we carry 250 of those per can, as we call them, and they carry maybe six cans, so you have over a thousand of these per aircraft."

The depiction by the actor is one of a gloating, sinister character. The real Fleming was Wing Commander Mervyn Fleming, DSO, DFC (not Marvin as identified in the film). He is now deceased. The use of comments, supposedly made by this man, are questionable, to say the least.

S. N. E. Beauchamp of Vancouver states concerning Fleming:

"Wing Commander Mervyn Fleming DSO, DFC was my squadron commander from June 1943 to the 11th of October 1943, at which time he had completed his second tour of operations with Bomber Command.

"He was a mild mannered, quiet spoken man. A highly skilled pilot, a leader whose only concerns were the well being of his men and the operational efficiency of 419 Squadron."

The actor's bombastic interpretation of the role and the dialogue were completely out of character.

Next, the narrator deals with the losses, stating that the bombing of Hamburg increased the German intent to exact a higher toll of casualties from Bomber Crews. The narrator states: "In the end, Harris got his way. His campaign to destroy German cities would continue, with a devastating cost to his own aircrews."

The program then contains a melodramatic description of the bombing of Hamburg, including figures:

42,000 people killed in the fire storm; 35,000 in one night. The narrator speaks of the high winds which tore a baby from its mother's arms.

The producers did not emphasize, for balance, that Hamburg was a highly-industrialized city, producing armaments and other materials of war, including submarines.

Air Marshal Harris admits that his own views were influenced by the Blitz. He stated in *Bomber Offensive*:

"If the Germans had gone on using the same force for several nights against London, and if the majority of aircraft had got to the target, they would have got the whole of London in flames. The fire tornado they would have raised would have been worse than anything that happened later in Hamburg, and the whole of London would have gone as Hamburg went."

The actor has Air Marshal Harris stating: **"In spite of all that happened to Hamburg, bombing proved a relatively humane method."**

The narrator then states: "The Germans kept very careful figures. For every 100 men killed in Hamburg, 160 women died. Of 42,000 killed here, 8,400 were children!"

In fact there is no proof that most casualties were women and children.

Even if this were the case, it is not safe to assume that many of the women were employed in the war plants? Also, would it not have been possible to move the children to safer areas, as was done in Great Britain? The program depicts the Hamburg bombing as a heartless slaughter of helpless civilians. Historians state that it was a military target. Such decisions have to be made in wartime – on both sides.

Did the producers, however, envisage the effect today of those scenes from Hamburg upon the widows and children of Canadian airmen; and, indeed, upon these Canadian airmen

who survived and are still alive?

This portrayal is hardly in keeping with the announced intention at the start of the program which stated: **“to pay homage to the courage and patriotism of those young Canadian airmen....”**

The scenes in which the former fire Chief of Hamburg showed the aftermath of a bombing were touchingly familiar: London, Coventry, Warsaw, Rotterdam. The difference is clear. Who started the war? Who supported the Nazi dreams of world conquest? Why should the guilt now be visited upon the families of the Canadian Air Crews who dropped the bombs in an attempt to shorten a war when it is known that Germany was building rockets to annihilate English cities and was developing an atomic bomb?

From *Closing The Ring Volume IV* by Winston Churchill (p. 460) the following is noted:

“The four attacks against Hamburg from July 24 to August 3 caused greater destruction than had ever been suffered by so large a city in so short a time xxx the air battle of Hamburg has been described by many Germans as ‘the great catastrophe.’ Speer (the German Munitions Minister) himself admitted after the war that he had calculated that if similar attacks had been delivered in quick succession against six other major German cities, it would have lead to a breakdown of war production.”

Dudley Sayward says in *Bomber Harris* at page 208, concerning this raid:

“Hamburg was a major seaport of great military and industrial importance. The Bismark was built in Hamburg and almost one-half of all U boats, 400 submarines in total, were built by Hamburg’s larger shipyard, Blohmn Voss.”

The Berlin Raids

The program deals with Berlin from two viewpoints:

- (1) The question of whether the bombing of Berlin was for psychological vs. strategic reasons;
- (2) whether the loss of life of bomber crews justified the bombing of a target which required the covering of long distances over dangerous terrain.

Martin Middlebrook, in *The Berlin Raids* (Page 324) states:

“The Battle of Berlin obviously reduced Germany’s war effort and made a contribution to victory. Every anti-aircraft gun or fighter aircraft kept back to defend Berlin was one less which might otherwise be serving at the fighting fronts. Berlin was itself a front. Every pane of glass broken in Berlin was a tiny drain on Germany’s economy; every bomb that hit a small workshop or armaments factory was a direct blow against the war effort; and every workman killed or prevented from coming to work because his family had been bombed out was one less man producing war material.”

The Dam Raids

The narrator, in introducing the segment on the bombing of the dams, states that the RAF had a reputation to uphold.

Narrator: “The dropping of bombs from high altitudes was not very glamorous, nor effective. Most bombs missed their targets by miles, landing in city streets and killing civilians.”

Surely, the producers should be required to produce proof to support such a devastating criticism.

Narrator continues: “Bomber Command wanted to focus public attention on something that would create a much better impression than the haphazard bombing of cities.”

The implication here is that the bombing attacks on the Mohne, Eder and Sorpe dams were a public relations effort. The producers have taken one of the most glorious chapters in the history of Allied bombing in World War II and treated it as a disgrace. This could be acceptable, if it were true.

The actor playing the role of Air Marshal Harris states that he was against OPERATION CHASTISE, which was the bombing of the dams, but gave in due to the need of a propaganda victory.

Harris' own account, published in *Bomber Offensive*, makes no mention of this.

The narrator states that the damage was nowhere near the estimate predicted, “and steel production actually rose that year in the Ruhr Valley.”

Are we expected to believe that the loss of 130 million gallons of water had no effect?

Presumably the producers have some source (German figures?) for the statement that industrial production rose. Simple logic would tell us, in any event, that if the Mohne dam had not been breached, production may have risen even further.

Concerning this blatant statement regarding increase in production, we refer to statements later in this submission by Albert Speer, (responsible for the German munitions industry), which do not appear to be consistent with the flat statement in the program that industrial production rose in 1943.

Sir Winston Churchill, in *Closing The Ring Volume IV* (p. 465) casts some doubt upon

reports of German armament production generally. He states:

“In the reports submitted to Hitler, which must of course be taken with reserve, it was claimed that German armament production was doubled in 1942. Remembering our own loss output under much less severe bombing, this assertion is difficult to credit. The Germans admitted that production was almost stationary in 1943, and this is evidence of the increasing power of Bomber Command.”

We can suggest now why the producers failed to make even a passing reference to the successful attack on the Eder dam. Presumably they were unable to find even a questionable source which would indicate that the breaching of this dam was a failure.

The narrator goes to great lengths to emphasize that almost 1,300 people were killed in the flood which followed the breaching of the Mohne dam (surely not a large figure when contrasted with German bombing attacks on cities such as Rotterdam and Coventry).

The most flagrant coloration, however, is the statement that: **“most of them, inmates of a prisoner of war camp just below the dam – Ukrainian women who had been enslaved by the Nazis.”**

Missing from the description, however, are two facts:

- (a) the Germans obviously expected the dam to be raided, and had gone to the trouble of installing heavy anti-aircraft defenses; and
- (b) should Bomber Command, or the young bomber crews, bear the guilt if the Germans decided to place a prisoner of war camp, as the narrator says, **“just below the dam?”**

The next statement of the narrator shows, surely, an appalling lack of logic. He states:

“The real lesson that could have been taken from the dam’s raid is that the precise bombing of industrial targets was possible.”

This statement appears after the extreme difficulties in the Dambusters’ raid had been explained in considerable detail.

Are we expected to believe that similar low-level attacks would have been practical against specific industrial targets in Germany?

The narrator does state that the appropriate bomb for the job (precise bombing) was the so-called “Tallboy.” It may be that the so-called “Tallboy” was the 12,000-pound bomb

developed by Barnes Wallis (the developer of the special bomb used in the Dambusters' raids). If so, Harris indicates in *Bomber Offensive* that this bomb did not become available until 1944, and was "in very short supply."

If he was referring to the 12,000-pound high capacity blast bomb, Harris states that it was "less effective than three 4,000 lb. blast bombs, "although he does state that "it was useful in precision attacks on single factories, where the object was to concentrate the destruction into a very small area..."

Concerning the use of the "Tallboy" bomb, which the narrator indicates could have saved German lives, Group Captain James Tait of London England was consulted. He commanded 617 Squadron which used the Tallboys Bombs. He stated:

"...that less than 500 Tallboys were ever built. Tallboys were a machine-casing bomb requiring much effort to construct. They were a special bomb to be carried by a special Lancaster, flown by above average crews for action against special targets only."

Air Marshal Harris also explains, in his book, the strategic purposes:

"...the Mohne dam, which was designed to supply water for the Ruhr..."

"...the Eder dam was primarily intended not to provide water for industry, but to prevent flooding of agricultural land, to make the river Weiser more navigable, and to supply some of the water for the Mittelland Canal."

All of them, of course, strategic military objectives.

As Air Marshal Harris states:

"The breach of the Mohne Dam released a flood of 130 million gallons, but the destruction caused by flooding was not, and was never expected to be, as serious as the subsequent shortage of water for industrial purposes."

Concerning the Sorpe dam, the attack upon which was unsuccessful, Harris admitted in his 1946 book:

"It was of earth with a watertight concrete blade as core, and could not be breached outright as the other two dams were, but it was hoped that the concrete core might be cracked and water eventually seep down through the earth."

Much is made of the fact that the bombers failed to breach the Sorpe Dam. As indicated in Harris' book, it was known that it:

“could not be breached outright as the other two dams were, but it was hoped that the concrete core might be cracked and the water eventually seep through the earth.”

Freeman Dyson, a member of Harris’ Operational Research team, played by an actor, states:

“The bombing was more costly to England than to Germany but, like many other such follies, it was a public relations triumph.”

The producers failed to use any reliable source for this damaging statement, except Dyson himself.

Freeman Dyson is the author of a book entitled *Disturbing The Universe*.

Quote from pages 29-30 give some indication of his views on the morality issue. Such quotes are seen as:

“...the evil at Bomber Command.”

“...Root of the Evil was in strategic bombing.”

It would appear that Freeman Dyson, who was a statistician and who admits in his book that he was unable to speak to Bomber crews because of the combatant/non-combatant gulf between them, is hardly seen as an expert on warfare, of any type.

As mentioned, Harris states that the break of the Mohne Dam, “released a flood of 130 million gallons but the destruction caused by flooding was not, and was never expected to be, as serious as the subsequent shortage of water for industrial purposes.”

Concerning the Eder, he stated:

“The dam held back 202 million tons of water and the release of this flooded considerable areas in Kassel. Such a disaster, brought about by only 19 aircraft, must undoubtedly have caused great alarm and despondency in Germany.”

The book *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (page 386) states regarding The Dam Raids of May 16/17, 1943:

“The breaching of the Mohne and Eder Dams were major achievements. The Mohne Reservoir contained nearly 100 million tons of water and was the major source of supply for the industrial rural area 20 miles away. The water released caused widespread flooding and disruption of rail, road and canal

communications and of the supply of electricity and water. The water-supply network was particularly affected by the silting up of pumping stations by the flood water. It is not possible to state the effect of all this upon industrial production in precise terms but there was certainly some disruption and water rationing was enforced until the winter rains came and filled the reservoirs again.”

“The Eder was even larger than the Mohne, containing 210 millions tons of water...and the waterway system in the Kassel area, was more affected by the attack on the Eder than was the Ruhr area.”

We are aware that John Terraine in his book *The Right Of The Line* (page 538) belittles the damage from the raid on the dams in the following words:

“It is with a sense of sickness that one considers the high endeavour in every aspect, and the inexpressible degrees of skill and courage called for to bring it to fruition, that one learns that the effects produced were not, in themselves, of fundamental importance nor even seriously damaging.”

John Terraine has expressed one opinion. It is obviously the one seized upon by the producers of *Death By Moonlight*. As we have indicated in this Submission, however, there are a number of other opinions (and we would note particularly those from German sources) which indicate that there was extensive disruption from the raids in regard to Germany economy and production.

John Terraine goes on to suggest:

“...in effect, 617 Squadron was attacking the wrong targets. The object of the whole exercise was to wreck the Ruhr economy at a blow by cutting off the water supplies. For this purpose, there was no need to attack the Eder Dam at all - its function was almost entirely agricultural.”

While, as has been stated, the attack on the Eder Dam was diversionary in nature, it did have a serious effect upon canals and transportation, as well as agriculture.

The CBC should now have to consider the effect of their negative treatment when future generations, reading the history of World War II, get to that chapter known as “The Dambusters”, for which Wing Command Guy Gibson earned one of the very few Victoria Crosses awarded to airmen in World War II.

It is appalling that, in attempting to produce a program the purpose of which the narrator states at the outset is to pay tribute to those who served, the “Dam Busters” should be demeaned.

One of the most successful and daring raids by Bomber Command is portrayed as a fiasco. Admittedly, there was a costly loss of lives, but our research has failed to indicate that the raid on the dams was a failure.

This is just one more example in the series of twisting the facts to suit whatever purposes the producers may have had in mind.

The Nuremberg Raid

Narrator: Harris liked to pick targets of symbolic importance. Nuremberg was one of those.

Winston Churchill claimed, however, that there was an important strategic aspect to the bombing of Nuremberg. In *Closing The Ring Volume V* (Page 523), Churchill said:

“On March 30-31, 1944, of our 795 aircraft dispatched by British Bomber Command against Nuremberg, 94 did not return. This was our heaviest loss in one raid, and caused Bomber Command to re-examine its tactics before launching further deep-penetration attacks by night into Germany” xxx But by forcing the enemy to concentrate his strength on defending inner Germany, the Western Allies gained the complete air superiority which they needed for the approaching cross-Channel invasion.”

The program makes reference to the bombing of Nuremberg and the narrator says that:

“So anxious was Harris to destroy Nuremberg that he scheduled a bombing mission there on a night with clear moonlight when crews would normally have been allowed to stand down.”

The losses at Nuremberg were a combination of bad planning and ill luck. The book *The Bomber Command War Diaries* by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt (p. 487) states:

“A meteorological flight Mosquito carried out a reconnaissance and reported that the protective cloud was unlikely to be present and that there could be cloud over the target, but the raid was not cancelled.”

The report does indicate, however, that “the city was covered by thick cloud...”

Undoubtedly, when the early forecast of protective high cloud did not hold up, there were grounds to cancel the raid. The bright moonlight was responsible for many additional casualties than might normally have been expected.

A factor, as reported in *The Bomber Command War Diaries*, was that:

“The German controller ignored all the diversions and assembled his fighters and two radio beacons which happened to be astride the route to Nuremberg.”

Another factor which increased the proportion of the disaster is reported in the same volume:

“His mistake was a result of badly forecast winds causing navigational difficulties.”

Harris was criticized in the film for making no reference to Nuremberg in his memoirs, *Bomber Offensive*. As the Nuremberg raid resulted in the heaviest loss for Bomber Command during the war, Harris undoubtedly should have mentioned it. To be fair, however, Bomber command carried raids on hundreds of targets, in fact nearly 1,500 night raids and 1,000 day raids. In his memoirs, Air Marshal Harris makes specific mention of only Cologne, Essen, Berlin, the Dams; Hamburg; Peenemunde; Berlin; Dortmund and Dresden!

Bombing Policy

The policy emanated from an initiative of Lord Cherwell, scientific advisor to the Prime Minister and War Cabinet. A report was carried out by Mr. Donald Michael Butt, a civil servant in the War Cabinet secretariat. In essence, the report indicated that, thus far, bombing attacks on targets in Germany had been grossly ineffective. The report was delivered on August 18, 1941.

As a direct result, the British Air Ministry undertook a study of bombing practices, and concluded that attempts to hit specific targets, through precision bombing, were impractical. The new policy, quoted from *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (p. 238) was as follows:

“The only way to win the war was to defeat Germany. The bombing of Germany on a scale sufficiently great to cause a German domestic collapse was the only alternative to a costly invasion and prolonged continental land campaign.”

As a basis of a new policy the Chiefs of Staff has declared, as stated in *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (p. 239):

“We must first destroy the foundation upon which the German War Machine runs - the economy which feeds it, the morale which sustains it, the supplies which nourish it, and the hopes of victory which inspire it. Only the shall we be able to return to the Continent and occupy and control portions of this territory and impose our will upon the enemy... It is in bombing, on a scale undreamt of in the last war, that we find the new weapon on which we must principally depend for the destruction of German economic life and morale.”

The new policy is further explained in the book *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (p. 239) as follows:

“The Air Ministry could now devote itself to the means by which the reprieved Bomber Command was to continue its campaign. The next decision was a momentous one. There had always been a body of opinion which believed that the general bombing of German cities, if on large-enough scale, would produce such general dislocation and break-down in civilian morale in the target areas that the German homefront would collapse. With their cities and their own homes in ruins, the German civilians would be neither able or willing to continue the war; so went the argument. The Butt Report had showed that accurate bombing of specific industrial premises could only rarely be achieved. The Air Ministry decided that such bombing should virtually be abandoned, that most of Bomber Command’s effort should all be devoted to the general bombing of the most densely built-up areas of German’s cities.”

In defence of the Allied bombing strategy generally, a review of Directives going back to 1940 indicates quite clearly that the decision to bomb German cities was made only after other alternatives, which would have spared civilians, were affected.

We quote from *Volume IV of The Official History, The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany 1939-1945*:

“June 4, 1940: In no circumstances should night bombing be allowed to degenerate into mere indiscriminate action, which is contrary to the policy of His Majesty’s government.”

“January 15, 1941: ... the sole primary aim of your Bomber offensive, until further orders, should be the destruction of the German synthetic oil plants.”

“March 9, 1941: The Prime Minister has ruled that for the next four months we should devote our energies to defeating the attempt of the enemy to strangle our food supplies and our connection with the United States xxx Operations should, therefore, be directed against submarine and long-range aircraft activities when the circumstances permit, until the menace has been dealt with...”

“August 18, 1941: The Butt Analysis of Bomber Command’s results indicated that its efforts had been hopelessly inadequate.”

It is generally conceded that the Butt Report dictated the necessity of concentrating on the bombing of German industrial cities.

Mr. Gerard Veilleux, President of the CBC, has made reference in a letter dated March 26, 1992, that the producers had ‘evidence of the existence of a memorandum of February 14th, 1942 from Lord Portal, Chief of the Air Staff’ which stated that:

“It is clear that the new aiming points are to be built-up areas not, for instance, dockyards or aircraft factories.”

The directive, in full, reads:

“It has been decided that the primary objective of your operation should now be focused on the morale of the enemy civilian population and, in particular, of the industrial workers.”

This was superseded by a Directive from the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, which warned Germany that an all-out bomber offensive against German cities would be taken unless Germany agreed to an unconditional surrender.

The Directive specifies that the bombing was designed to “accomplish the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial and economic system, and the undermining of the morals of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance is fatally weakened...”

This policy was endorsed not only by Prime Minister Churchill, but by President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States.

The effectiveness of the policy announced at the Casablanca Conference was admitted by German Propaganda Minister Goebbels (see *The Turn Of The Tide* by Arthur Bryant). Following a description of a raid on Essen, the Capital of the Ruhr, May 5, 1943, he stated as follows (p. 485):

“Things simply cannot go on like this. The damage is colossal and indeed ghastly. Nobody can tell how Krupps is to go on.”

The *Turn Of The Tide* states further that other cities of the Reich were similarly visited. Goebbels wrote:

“It drives one mad to think that any old Canadian boor, who probably can’t even find Europe on the globe, flies to Europe from his super-rich country which his people don’t know how to exploit, and here bombards a continent with a crowded population. We are completely at the mercy of the English. One need only think six months ahead, then we would face ruin in many cities. Until then the English can lay a large part of the Reich in ruins if they go about it the right way.”

It is a historical fact, for which there are many sources, that Lord Portal’s memorandum arose out of the aforementioned Butt Report which indicated that there was a large measure of ineffectiveness arising from the attempts to make specific bomb hits on dockyards, aircraft factories or other specific targets and that, in order to increase effectiveness, fewer bombs should be wasted by dropping them on open ground or in the sea when the precision targets were missed (as they often were). The spin which the producers are obviously attempting to put on the directive is that the intent was to kill civilians, without any relevance to three factors:

- (1) The cities of the Ruhr, in particular, were in themselves military targets producing war goods.
- (2) Many of the civilians were employed in these plants.
- (3) Rather than waste the bombs, an attempt should be made to destroy German morale (as the Germans had done even in the Zeppelin Raids on London in World War I and certainly during the Blitz on British cities in World War II).

Albert Speer, the German Armourments Minister, is quoted in his book *Inside The Third Reich* as follows:

“My takeover of the Air Armourments Industry was a minor matter compared with the havoc being wrought in Germany by the enemy air forces. After a pause of only two weeks, during which their air strength was mostly used for supporting the invasion, the Allies staged a new series of attacks which put many fuel plants out of action. On June 22nd (1944), nine tenths of the production of airplane fuel was knocked out; only 632 metric tons were produced daily...”

In the book *The Bombing Offensive Against Germany*, by Noble Frankland (p. 102) there is further justification for the necessity of adopting area attacks. The author states:

“Throughout the war, the greater part of Bomber Command’s efforts, about three-quarters of it was devoted to area bombing in which the aiming points lay at the centres of the major German cities. The reasons for which particular cities were chosen varied. Sometimes, as in the case of Lubeck, they were chosen because it was considered that they were operationally vulnerable. Sometimes they were chosen on grounds of general size and importance. Such was the case of Hamburg and Berlin. Sometimes they were chosen because of association with particular industries, (such was the case of Schweinfurt) and sometimes they were chosen because of special situations connected with other aspects of the war. Such was the case of Dresden. But essentially, and until the middle of 1944, which excludes Dresden and includes the others mentioned, they were chosen because Bomber Command could not effectively hit anything smaller than a sizable town.”

Noble Frankland in *The Bombing Offensive Against Germany* gives further emphasis to the requirement for strategic bombing. He states on page 108:

“The aim of strategic bombing, as was repeatedly stressed in the directives, was to undermine Germany to a point at which her capacity to fight would be fatally weakened. In other words, it was to open the way for military victory.”

Two points emerge: Firstly, the decision to bomb civilians was made by the British Cabinet, with approval of President Roosevelt of the United States. Secondly, the bombing of industrial targets inevitably caused civilian casualties, but the objective was not necessarily that of affecting morale, but of reducing the German civilian workforce engaged in war production.

In the book, *The Bombing Offensive Against Germany*, by Noble Frankland, the results of the decisions and the Casablanca Conference are set out as follows page 92:

“The result of the Anglo-American strategic air offensive was, in the end, the decisive destruction of Germany’s capacity to continue the war through the destruction of her oil production and lines of communication and the dislocation of her means of repair and recovery. The resulting weakness opened her to naval and military defeat. The fundamental factor in all this was the achievement of command of the air to which strategic bombing made an essential contribution.

“The Bomber Command’s casualties were, absolutely, grievously high. Bomber Command lost more air crews in the Second World War than the British Army did officers in the First. As a proportion of the men engaged, they were also very high but, in proportion to the results achieved in a massive campaign of more than five years’ duration, they were surely very low indeed. In relation to the casualties incurred in three years of trench warfare between 1915 and 1918, they were almost negligible.”

In a discussion period broadcast on CBC Newsworld (March 28, 1992) between Brian McKenna, the co-producer of *The Valour and the Horror*, and Mr. Donald Elliot and Mr. Lionel Hastings, Mr. McKenna stated (quoting the *U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey*, Garland Publishing, 1976) that it had been established that Allied bombing did not lower German morale, but in fact stiffened it.

This statement is refuted, totally, by the information in the aforementioned *United States Strategic Bombing Survey*. We find the following conclusions:

- (1) Strategic bombing was the major means by which the Allies were able to strike a direct blow at the morale of German civilians. Every German, whether or not he experienced these direct effects of bombing, suffered such indirect results as shortage of food and supplies, and the disruption of transportation.
- (2) Bombing seriously depressed the morale of German civilians. Its main psychological effects were defeatism, fear, hopelessness, fatalism and apathy.
- (3) Bombing did not stiffen morale. The hate and anger it aroused tended to be directed against the Nazi Regime which was blamed for beginning air warfare and being unable to ward off Allied air attacks. There is some evidence that under heavy bombing, the hate and anger was dulled by apathy.

A letter from Gerard Veilleux, President of the CBC, dated March 26, 1992 mentions the “questionable strategy” of the new policy governing bombing operations. The success of that strategy may be open to conjecture, but the producers failed to give any reliable source for their assumption.

The further suggestion that this strategy “unnecessarily contributed to the deaths of thousands of Allied airmen and half a million German civilians” is a serious allegation – but one for which the producers have failed to indicate any reliable source.

The U.S. Air Force and Area Bombing

In the course of a discussion on CBC Newsworld (March 28, 1992) Brian McKenna, co-producer of the program, stated that the Americans repeatedly refused to participate in area bombing.

It is pointed out by Murray Peden, author of *A Thousand Shall Fall*, that, in fact, area bombing was necessary for the U.S. Air Force on many occasions, in that the American crews would find their targets wholly or partially covered by clouds.

Mr. Peden states:

“...the weather conditions over Northwest Europe were frequently so atrocious that on roughly half the operations (daylight), British and American, the crews would find their targets wholly or partially covered by clouds. The Germans frequently supplemented this cover with smoke generators, and did their best to blanket the area. Heavy industrial haze in some areas was a chronic problem. The result was that, on many occasions, the Americans were forced to resort to blind bombing, using the British radar devise known as H2S. The net result was area bombing, pure and simple, and there is no way of disguising the fact that it had to be resorted to frequently, at least until our (British) Oboe range was extended after D-Day.”

Terence McKenna, co-writer of *The Valour and The Horror*, stated in a CBC Radio interview (April 22, 1992), presumably in an attempt to indicate that precision bombing was possible:

“...but, there was a conscious effort to try and cover up that new approach that was taken later in the war, when, incidently, they were developing targets, you know, methods of hitting the targets much more effectively, as the American Air Force was showing that they had a much more effective campaign against military and industrial targets.”

If Mr. McKenna was indicating that the U.S. Eighth Air Force restricted itself to bombing “military and industrial” targets, this does not seem to be the case.

In the book, *The Bomber Offensive*, by Anthony Verrier, (p. 304) the assertion is made:

“...apart from the fact that really accurate bombing cannot be carried out repeatedly, the pattern of the Eighth Air Force’s bombing in the closing stages of the War was such as to preclude single industries being selected for the destruction.”

“Increasingly in the last month, attention was turned toward area and selective bombing. It is surely undeniable that this conglomerate of towns can never be, and could never have been, separated into sectors suitable for isolated attack on particular industries xxxx. Harris had grasped this point much earlier than any of his confrères and his argument that the Ruhr was the great target for destruction and fatally weakened Germany was based on this understanding of its overall importance, not on the significance of individual industries.”

Further on the subject of U.S. Air Force bombing tactics, we quote from the book *Reap The Whirlwind*, by Spencer Dunsmore and William Carter (p. 88):

“Indeed, except for the famous ‘dams’ raid in mid May, there were no attempts at precision bombing during this period. Webster and Frankland, authors of *The Strategic Air Offense Against Germany, 1939-1945*, concluded that a precision bombing campaign would have been a waste of effort.”

The book *The Army Air Forces In World War II*, (p. 371) indicates, clearly that the United States Air Force policy of precision bombing was *not* taken to avoid civilian casualties, but was, instead, part of what was known as the Joint Command Bombing Operation (CBO). This is explained on page 371 as follows:

“For the integration of RAF and USAAF operation in the combined offensive, the CBO plan made only a surprising informal provision. Fortunately, it said ‘the capabilities of the two forces were ‘entirely complimentary.’” It argued that the most effective results from strategic bombing would be obtained by directing the combined day and night efforts of the U.S. and British bomber force to all-out attacks against targets which were mutually complimentary, in a campaign to undermine decisively a limited number of selected target systems. The American bomber would thus, in general, bomb specific industrial objectives by day, and the RAF would ordinarily attack by night the cities associated with these objectives, the timing to depend on the tactical situation.”

Further clarification of the divided policy, under which the British would undertake area bombing at night and the American precision bombing in the day time is found in the Marshall Cavendish *Illustrated Encyclopedia of World War II*, page 1575:

“And so that task was divided round the clock equally between the British and Americans, the former taking off at nightfall and the latter by day, each sticking to his task with ruthless obstinacy and without complaining of his

losses.”

“This division of labour meant that the two air forces came to use totally different methods of action.”

“By day the 8th Air Force performed what it called precision bombing. Well-defined objectives were thus allotted: a particular factory, construction-yard, assembly-shop in Germany or in an occupied country, in the latter of which only where civilian casualties could be spared as far as was compatible with the successful completion of the mission.”

Further clarification of the difference between British and American bombers is found in *The Second World War* by Winston Churchill and the Editors of *LIFE*, *Volume II*, page 410, as follows:

“Thus we come to the year 1943, when the Americans joined in the bombing of Axis Europe. They had different ideas about method. Whereas we had adopted and were now bringing to efficiency our night-bombing technique, they were convinced that their heavily armed Fortress bombers in close formation could penetrate deeply into Germany by daylight without fighter escort. The Casablanca directive, issued to the British and American Bomber Commands in the United Kingdom on February 4, 1943, gave them their task in the following general terms...” Your primary objectives ...will be in the following priority: (a) German submarine yards; (b) the German aircraft industry; (c) transportation; (d) oil plants; (e) other targets in enemy war industry.”

“In a directive know as “Point-blank”, issued on June 10, 1943, they amended the Casablanca decisions to as to give first emphasis to the attack on the German fighter forces and the German aircraft industry.”

Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris

The producer's work is a devastating portrayal of Harris, delivered in a sneering manner, which undoubtedly places the bombing of civilians out of context. Historically, the decision to bomb German cities was an essential factor in the strategy for Germany's defeat. Harris' words make it seem like a despicable act of terror for terror's own sake. Here are the words of the narrator, followed by the words of Harris, spoken by an actor:

Narrator: "Harris has received new orders. From now on he was free to deliberately target German civilians."

Harris: "We shall destroy Germany's will to fight, now that we have the planes and crews..."

The authors of *The Bomber Command War Diaries* state that Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris was appointed on 22 February, 1942. In regard to responsibility for the policy, the author state further:

"However enthusiastically Harris prosecuted that new policy, it should be stated that he was not responsible for the formulation of it. Area bombing was the creation of Sir Charles Portal and the staff officers of the Air Ministry, with the enthusiastic support being given by people such as Churchill and (Bomber) Trenchard, the veteran RAF Leader of the old school. There is no evidence that there had been any canvassing of the area bombing policy by the staff of Bomber Command headquarters."

In defence of Harris, *The Bomber Command War Diaries* states (p. 242):

"...but Harris did not rush blindly into sending the bombers out too often. His first few months were characterized by long periods of steady development, interrupted by bursts of dramatic activity xxx Harris was not prepared to waste effort in conditions which experience had shown to be almost without any hope of success."

The reference, in the letter from Gerard Veilleux, President of the CBC (dated March 26, 1992), to the February 14, 1942 memorandum from Lord Portal, which in fact was directed to Air Marshal Harris' predecessor, indicated, quite clearly, that the producers of the program failed entirely to understand the basis of the decision to carry the war to Germany through Bomber Command.

In its presumably misguided attempt to criticize Air Marshal Harris and to stress the policy of bombing civilians, the producers obviously lost sight of (or never knew) the reasons for

the adoptions of the policy to bomb German cities.

It should be clear that if the CBC decided to attack the strategy of bombing industrial cities, that attack should have been aimed at the Allied Governments – not at Air Marshal Harris. Instead he was unquestionably portrayed as a culprit.

In addition, if the producers saw fit to attack the policy of bombing of German cities, would it not have been incumbent upon them to present both sides of the issue?

Regarding the portrayal of Harris as a villain, some credence should be given to his statement quoted in the Seward biography:

“I take little delight in the work, and none whatever in risking my crews unavoidably.”

Anthony Verrier, in *The Bomber Offensive*, supports Harris:

“Harris has grasped this point much earlier than any of his confrères and his argument that the Ruhr was the great target for destruction and fatally weakened Germany was based on his understanding of its overall importance, not on the significance of individual industries.”

It is clear, historically, that the decision to bomb German cities was not made by Harris. He was simply the instrument through which the policy was carried out. The program admitted this, but viewers would certainly associate Harris with the policy.

Concerning precision bombing, Harris indicates in his memoir, *Bomber Offensive*, that it was simply not practical. He states:

“This search for a visual fix (over a target) almost always took half an hour or so, and sometimes lasted for more than an hour; to spend so much time in the target area was just possible when the German defenses against night attack were in their first and rudimentary stage, but it would have been fatal from 1942 onwards.”

In explaining the justification for bombing cities, Harris states in *Bomber Offensive*:

“...before I took command, it had already been decided (it was a decision with which I had nothing to do) that all our main attacks should be against large industrial areas, which meant, of course, large industrial cities as a whole.”

The following excerpts are quoted from Harris' memoirs:

“...at the beginning of 1942, the German war potential would increase far

more rapidly than our capacity to damage it.”

“The general idea at this time on what civil servants always call ‘a high level,’ (obviously the British Cabinet or even Prime Minister Churchill) was that the main and almost the only purpose of bombing was to attack the morale of the industrial workers xxx The idea of attacking morale might be described as a counsel of despair based on the previous failure of night bombing, and the breakdown of the theory of precision attacks on key factories...”

“The decision to concentrate on the complete destruction of four Ruhr cities with a view to breaking German morale, was conveyed to the Command just before I took over, but attacks on whole cities and an offensive primarily against morale were under discussion in the Summer of 1941, when I was in America. At least by the early Summer of 1941, everyone who had anything to do with staff policy knew that the great majority of our attacks on Germany were in fact, though not in intention, area attacks...”

“The aiming points in a large number of towns were then chosen at the Air Ministry, and the theory was that they should be in themselves well-worth destruction, as well as being in such a position that damage all around them would have the maximum effect upon the economic life of an industrial city.”

“There was also the fact that after the policy of attacking key factories had broken down, no obvious alternative except an attack on morale presented itself at once; it was only after careful study of the Blitz in England that it was observed how immediate and serious was the effect on war production itself of the destruction of large town areas.”

The narrator expounds one of the main themes of the production as follows:

“Precision bombing didn’t really interest the head of Bomber Command. He wanted to win the war single-handedly by destroying every city in Germany - and the people in them. Killing civilians didn’t bother Harris.”

Harris, portrayed by an actor, says:

“A policeman stopped me speeding. ‘Sir, you could have killed someone.’ I said, ‘Young man, I’ve killed thousands of people every night’.”

The depiction of a sinister-looking character, playing the role of Arthur Harris, complete with the Union Jack as a backdrop, is compelling – but may not be true.

Presumably, there is no historical record of Harris ever saying to a policeman that he killed “thousands of people every night.” It does serve, however, as an introduction into surely the most controversial aspect of the film - the killing of civilians.

It is a matter of some question as to why the producers did not mention the so-called “1,000 Bomber” raids in May to August of 1942. The definitive *The Bomber Command War Diaries* states, concerning this phase, as follows:

“Sir Arthur Harris xxx approached both Winston Churchill and Sir Charles Portal with the bold idea of assembling a force of 1,000 bombers and sending them out in one massive raid on a German city. Churchill and Portal were both impressed and they agreed.”

“The 1,000-bomber raids certainly made their mark on history and were another great turning-point in Bomber Command’s war. The new tactics were mainly successful; there were never any serious casualties through collision and the ‘Time Over Targets’ would progressively be shortened until seven or eight hundred aircraft regularly passed over the city they were bombing in less than twenty minutes! The morale of Bomber Command was certainly uplifted by this great demonstration of air power and by the wide publicity which followed. That same publicity also confirmed Bomber Command’s future as a major force and it can be said that, although there were bad as well as good times to come, Bomber Command never looked back after the 1,000-bomber raids. These events also placed Sir Arthur Harris firmly in the public eye where, as “Bomber” Harris, he would remain for the rest of his life.”

In *Reap The Whirlwind*, the authors admit that the Canadian Squadron suffered much heavier casualties than other groups. They do not blame Bomber Harris. He was against RCAF Squadron, as they would lose the experience of the Brits. He blames MacKenzie King for insisting that, as a sovereign nation, we should have our own bomber squadrons. The book states:

“The more King thought about it, the more he liked the idea of focusing most of Canada’s war effort on the air force. As he saw it, the RCAF would remain a volunteer force principally involved in training aircrew in Canada, with a relatively small contingent serving overseas. Casualties would surely be light. So there would be no pressure to introduce conscription, with all its nightmarish political implications. It seemed to be a politically astute solution to a complex problem.”

“Thus the conflict between King’s patriotism and his fiscal caution set the stage for 6 Group’s problems three years later.”

“They had lost almost every vestige of control over their own squadrons.”

“There is no doubt that Canadianization took a major step forward with the Ottawa Air Training Conference. But it left the RCAF far short of the autonomy envisioned early in September 1939 when the two governments agreed in principle to the formation of a Canadian-funded RCAF contingent overseas.”

“Harris objected to the proposed addition of as many as ten new Canadian squadrons by year-end.”

The producers indicated that Harris was known as “Butcher Harris.” The only source we have been able to find for this appellation is in the book *Boys, Bombs And Brussels Sprouts* by Doug Harvey, who as a participant in the BOMBER COMMAND segment.

There is evidence, however, to indicate not only that the crews of Bomber Command admired and respected Harris (as quoted elsewhere in this submission) but there is a strong indication that, contrary to the portrayal in the program, Harris felt keenly about the loss of his crews.

In Seward’s biography on Harris (p. 294) Harris is quoted as saying: I take little delight in the work, and none whatever in risking my crews unavoidably.” It is of interest that the Bomber Command Association will be unveiling a statue of Sir Arthur Harris next month in London.

The program included a quotation from Sir Arthur Harris which indicated that he had a poor opinion of “colonials.” In an interview on CBC Newsworld on March 28, 1992, Mr. Brian McKenna, co-producer of the program, admitted that this quotation had been made by Sir Arthur Harris in World War I.

In a letter to Mr. Murray Peden (author of *A Thousand Shall Fall*) dated May 20, 1980, Sir Arthur Harris made it clear that he intended no disparagement “of the magnificent Canadian crews who rendered such wonderful service in Bomber Command.”

For verification of the views of RCAF personnel regarding Sir Arthur Harris we refer to *Reap The Whirlwind*, subtitled “The Untold Story of Six Group, Canada’s Bomber Force of World War II,” by Spencer Dunsmore and William Carter. The following is stated: page 373)

“The veterans of 6 Group who contributed their memories and their views to this book are, almost to a man, unanimous in their admiration, and respect for the late Sir Arthur Harris, who drove them all hard.”

Harris is quoted:

“We shall destroy Germany’s will to fight. Now that we have the planes and crew, in 1943 and 1944 we shall drop one and one-quarter tons of bombs; render 25,000,000 Germans homeless; kill 900,000 and seriously injure 1,000,000.”

The tone and demeanour of the actor might be described as vicious. The producers have indicated no proof that Harris ever issued these words; and they are not in character if one is to interpret the words in Harris’ own account – *Bomber Offensive*.

The actual statistics, as quoted in *Bomber Harris* by Dudley Sayward page 177, were from an estimate of Chief of Air Staff Sir Charles Portal, page 177.

The implication that these were, in fact, the words of Sir Arthur Harris are misleading.

The narrator then states:

“Air Chief Sir Charles Portal originated the real policy to intentionally kill civilians. Portal wrote in his secret memo of October 1942 that it should be quite clear the aiming point should be built up neighbourhoods, not – he emphasized – aircraft factories and dockyards.”

It is believed that the narrator may have been mistaken in the date. He said October 1942. There is a memorandum of February 14, 1942 which contains the same words. This memo is quoted from *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (page 240):

“It has been decided that the primary objective of your operations should now be focused on the morale of the enemy civil population and in particular of the industrial workers.” Portal wrote a note the next day to Air Vice-Marshal Bottomley who had drafted the directive to Bomber command:

“Ref the new bombing directive: I suppose it is clear that the aiming points are to be the built-up areas, not, for instance, the dockyards or aircraft factories where these are mentioned in Appendix A. This must be made quite clear if it is not already understood.”

According to the book *Bomber Offensive* by Sir Arthur Harris, Chief of Bomber Command, the decision to bomb cities was neither secret nor conceived by himself. He stated (page 89):

“The decision to build a great force of bombers for strategic attack on industries and communications was made long before the war xxxxx. The decision to attack large industrial areas instead of key factories was made before I became Commander-in-Chief.”

No reference was made in the CBC documentary to the Butt Report of six months earlier which was intended to ensure that fewer bombs would be wasted on open land or sea. The Portal Memorandum does, however, exonerate Air Marshal Harris, as it indicates that the decision to bomb civilian targets was not his. The CBC film confirms this but Harris is still portrayed as the “villain of the piece.”

Harris states in *Bomber Offensive* (page 76):

“The general idea at this time on what civil servants always called a “high level” was that the main and the almost only purpose of bombing was to attack the morale of the industrial workers. This was to be achieved by destroying, mainly by incendiary bombs, the whole of the four largest cities in the Ruhr and, thereafter, 14 industrial cities elsewhere in Germany.”

He states further (page 77):

“The switchover from precision to area bombing from attacking key factories or even individual sections of key factories, to attacking large industrial towns as a whole, had been made sometime before I took over command.

“The decision to concentrate on the complete destruction of four Ruhr cities with a view to breaking German morale was conveyed to the Command just before I took over, but attacks on whole cities and an offensive primarily against morale were under discussion in the summer of 1941, when I was in America. At least by the early summer of 1941 everyone who had anything to do with policy, knew what the great majority of our attacks Germany were, in fact, though in intention, area attacks.”

Air Marshal Harris gives four reasons for the attacks on German cities:

- (1) “.... the Germans were preparing all sorts of secret weapons against England, and that these would give us a very bad time indeed unless we could get the enemy down first and destroy his industries.”
- (2) In order to ensure that there was no indiscriminate bombing, the Air Ministry laid down specific instructions that aiming points should, in many cases, be large towns, on the theory that such should be well worth it in that, as Harris states: “they should be in themselves well worth destruction as well as being

in a position that damage all around them would have the maximum effect on the economic life of an industrial city.”

- (3) The bombing of Germany assumed great political importance as a means of persuading the Russians that we were doing all we could to come to their help.
- (4) The need to damage the German economy in preparation for the invasion of Europe, which was originally planned for 1943 - a year earlier than it actually took place.

The Portal Memorandum of 1942 was, in any event, superseded by the policy formulated at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, which called for a total bomber offensive by both the British and the Americans.

The Portal Memorandum may well have been secret. Certainly, after the declaration from the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, all air crew were aware of the Allied policy.

Harris And Invasion Targets

One portion of the film, in an obvious defamation of Harris, states that he flatly refused to carry out direct orders from the Chief of Air Staff and the Air Ministry to switch temporarily from the strategic target signed as his primary objectives, and concentrate instead on the destruction of targets essential to the successful launching of the D-Day invasion.

The narrator stated: “Air Marshal Harris was determined to press home his attack against German cities. The Supreme Allied Command ordered Harris to redirect his attacks to precise military targets in preparation for OVERLORD, the planned Allied invasion of Europe, but Arthur Harris would have none of it.”

Harris is quoted, through an actor, as stating: “It is clear that the best, and indeed only, support we can give to OVERLORD is an intensification of attacks in Germany. If we attempt to substitute attacks on gun emplacements, beach defences, communications or supply dumps, this would be an irremedial error and would lead directly to disaster.”

The book, *The Bomber Command War Diaries* by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt (p. 489), states:

“The invasion of Normandy by Allied ground forces would commence in less than ten weeks’ time. Most of Bomber Command’s efforts in recent years had been weakening the general capacity of Germany to resist an invasion of Europe, but now the efforts of Sir Arthur’s squadron were to be directed in a far more precise manner against targets in the hinterland of the invasion coast. Despite his reservations about the new role, mainly over the ability of his force to hit the many small targets allocated to it without killing too many friendly civilians, Harris gave full and loyal support to the directions he received, both in the preparation for the invasion and support of the first weeks of the land battle.

“The official date for the transference of the main Bomber Command effort to pre-invasion targets was 14 April (1944), but that date was almost meaningless. Harris had already made a modest start on the new list of targets in March.”

This seeming attempt to further blacken Harris' reputation by suggesting that his policies had the effect of denying Bomber Command's assistance with the bombing of targets proposed by the Invasion planners is refuted in *Bomber Command* (p. 309) by Max Hastings. He stated:

“The transfer of Bomber Command to tactical operations in support of the Invasion, which Harris resisted so bitterly, saved him from confronting his own defeat.”

N.B. Hastings confirms that Harris did register some opposition to tactical operations, but as noted in *The Bomber Command War Diaries*, he changed his opinion.

Were Bomber Crews Aware of Their Targets?

The narrator, in what seems to be a sinister remark, states that the Canadian Government was never advised of the secret directive¹ to “target civilians.”

The fact seems to be that there never was a specific directive to “target civilians.” The policy, which was changed after the Butt Report, was to target German cities, but the intent was to destroy Germany’s war potential – not kill civilians.

The narrator states that bomber crews had no idea that a decision had been taken to bomb civilian targets.

Murray Peden, author of a number of *A Thousand Shall Fall*, and himself a bomber pilot during the war, stated in a letter addressed to the Honourable Gerald Merrithew, Minister of Veterans Affairs, (March 28, 1992):

“The McKennas (who wrote and directed the film) also assure the more gullible members of the public that we poor airmen were systematically deceived, not being told what our real charges were. XX The Pathfinders’ so called ‘primary visual markers’ had to be briefed on large-scale maps and diagrams to ensure recognition of the aiming point they were to mark. By the time the combined bomber offensive was in full swing, every bomber was equipped with a camera linked to the bomb-release and the flare-release mechanisms. When the bomb doors were opened and the bomb-release mechanism activated, a million-candle power photo flash fell with the bombs and the camera automatically ran off a sequence of half a dozen exposures for later plotting of the point of impact of the bomb load. XXX The film magazines went to the photo section for development immediately after the aircraft landed, and the photos were transmitted to the Intelligence Sections locally, then to Group H.Q. and on to Bomber Command Headquarters. As soon after the raid as smoke or cloud permitted, photo reconnaissance aircraft took daylight pictures of the target damage to supplement crews’ night photos.

Not only were these groups of target photos collated and put on display for

¹All such directives were forwarded to Canadian Military Headquarters, London, which was under the command, at that time of Lt.-Gen. Ken Stuart, Chief of Staff.

the operational crews in each stations' Intelligence Section, they were often set up beside the photos-recce shots when those came in to show the crews more graphically what had been accomplished in a given strike. Air crews were encouraged to visit the Intelligence Section to study the data.

Since those of us who flew in the great bombing offensives of 1943 and 1944 saw huge areas of German cities ablaze at times, we were under no illusions that civilians were not being killed on attacks primarily aimed at German production facilities. But we were also aware that to get the frequently small targets we were most concerned with, civilians necessarily had to be exposed to that hazard, just as the Germans continued to expose our civilians to it."

The Veilleux letter states: "It is also known that the bomber crews were not told that the War Cabinet had decided to take the fight beyond military installations and into Germany's civilian population."

It is obvious that the bomber crews were well aware, not only of their targets, but of the risks involved. If they failed to grasp this information from the official briefing, and from the photographs and reconnaissance reports, they had only to be exposed to the media. The targets and losses were published in the daily newspapers and reported over the BBC. Any suggestion that there was an effort to deceive the bomber crews regarding the new bombing policy, and its tragic effect upon the German civilian population, was a practical impossibility.

Incidentally, that the Portal Memorandum was highlighted by the narrator as "secret" overlooks the obvious fact that all memoranda, in time of war, are marked "secret." The intonation of the narrator, however, would have one believe that the secrecy was required to hide the intent of bombing industrial targets from bomber crews.

Churchill and the Bombing of Cities

In a letter from the President of the CBC (dated March 26, 1992), reference is made to a memorandum from Prime Minister Churchill of March 28, 1945, in which he questions the bombing of German cities, “simply for the sake of increasing the terror, though under other pretext...”

According to the book *Bomber Harris* by Dudley Saward (p. 294), Winston Churchill withdrew his memorandum two days later, after hearing Sir Charles Portal read Air Marshal Harris’ comment:

“to suggest that we have bombed German cities simply for the sake of increasing the terror though under other pretexts and to speak of our offensive as including mere acts of terror and wanton destruction is an insult, both to the bombing policy of the Air Ministry and to the manner in which that policy has been executed by Bomber Command. xxx we have never gone in for terror bombing and the attacks we have made in accordance with my directive have in fact produced the strategic consequences for which they were designed and from which the armies now profit.”

Re: Winston Churchill’s comments on bombing:

CBC spokespersons have referred, on a number of occasions, to the suggestion that Winston Churchill, late in the war, questioned the bombing of civilian targets. Noble Frankland, in *The Bombing Offensive Against Germany*, (page 118), gives a totally different view. At the start of 1945, Churchill’s policy was expressed by Frankland as follows, (page 118):

“Secondly, the advance of the Russian armies in January 1945 led the Prime Minister to think of ways in which the Western Allies might give assistance. On 26th of January, Sir Winston Churchill asked the Secretary of State for Air ‘whether Berlin and no doubt other large cities in East Germany should now be considered especially attractive targets’. The Air staff quickly concluded that Dresden was an excellent target under this heading, for it appeared that its destruction would hamper evacuation from the East and the transfer of troops from the West. Sir Arthur Harris was instructed accordingly.

“The Commander-in-Chief had just suggested the same target himself, for Dresden was, after all, a city of 600,000 inhabitants which had long been on the list for the general area offensive.”

Regarding the withdrawal by Churchill of his memorandum concerning Allied bombing of civilian targets, we quote John Terraine in *The Right of The Line*, (page 677), as follows:

“The recoil of the destruction of Dresden began early, long before the details of it were known. Churchill, on March 28, 1945, told Portal that it ‘remains a serious query against the conduct of Allied bombing’. The official historians call this ‘perhaps the least felicitous’ of Churchill’s wartime minutes, and he did in fact withdraw it, substituting another on April 1st, which simply called for a review of area bombing ‘from the point of view of our own interests’.”

Terraine continued:

“The argument sometimes heard, that it was ‘unnecessary’ to bomb Dresden because the war was nearly over anyway is absurd. That was a thought that could only have reality after May 7th; in February it was an unfact, and what mattered above all else to most people was to end the war as soon as possible by any and every means.”

Lack of Moral Fibre

The producers devoted a significant segment of this film to 'lack of moral fibre.' To do so introduced the suggestion of cowardice. Firstly, these airmen had volunteered for air crew – an act of courage in itself. Secondly, the program omitted to mention that many of them had already put in as many as 10 or 20 missions – sometimes, more. Thirdly, some re-mustered to infantry, preferring to fight on the ground.

In the program, Doug Harvey talks about his wireless operator who bailed out. This man had already completed five missions. Also, the impression was left that he went to his death. Doug Harvey says in his book, *Boys, Bombs And Brussel Sprouts*, that the man preferred prisoner of war confinement to the known horrors of flying operations.

Doug Harvey talks also about his flight engineer, a married man with three children, who had put in seven trips then asked to be taken off flying duty. No criticism of his request was noted.

If the producers wanted to deal with moral fibre, they could have done no better than to go more deeply into Doug Harvey's experiences.

As he states in his book:

"All of our crew were concerned, but no one was critical or anything but sympathetic and understanding. Nothing difficult to understand. Nothing dishonourable in my eyes. They certainly tried. The mistake, if one was made, lay with the initial aircrew standards board that had selected them for flying duties."

Harvey goes on to state:

"The harsh treatment they received sickened me. Had our commanders shown any compassion or tried in any way to rehabilitate them, they could have continued flying. Professional medical advice was ignored and psychiatric help scorned."

In the book *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (pp. 449-451), the following comments are noted:

"Much had been written about the morale of the bomber crews and the degree by which it fell during the Battle of Berlin (November '43 to March '44).

"But these comments must be kept in perspective. Most crews did not abort

unnecessarily, did not drop bombs in the sea and did their utmost to reach the centre of the target. What Bomber Command suffered from in the Battle of Berlin was not a widespread drop in morale, but a deterioration of efficiency caused by adverse weather, the longer routes which had to be employed and which forced more fuel to be carried at the expense of bomb tonnage, and the steadily increasing casualties which lead to an even greater reliance on inexperienced crews.”

Concerning morale, we cite another reference from *The Bomber Command War Diaries*, written in connection with the description of the Battle of the Ruhr, March to July 1943, (page 363):

“To all this should be added the degree of perseverance and courage shown by the men of the Main Force Squadrons who fought this battle, sustaining heavy losses over a long period. Their morale never wavered and the old dictum was proved that heavy casualties can be sustained by a force as long as successful results are being visibly achieved.”

The question of morale is dealt with further in *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (page 300), as follows:

“Morale in Bomber Command usually held up at amazingly high level, much of this being due to the leadership of Harris himself, but twice in the war it is recognized that morale sagged, and this period, the middle and later months of 1942, was the first of those occasions.

“Bomber Command eventually settled down to a system by which a man selected for air crew duty in the Command was expected to complete the first tour of 30 operations and then, after a rest, a second tour of 20 operations. He could not be forced to fly again in Bomber Command after those fifty raids, though some men did volunteer to continue.”

The second morale crisis came toward the end of the Battle of Berlin (November '43 to March 1944) referred to on the previous page *The Bomber Command War Diaries*, (page 449):

In their book, *Reap The Whirlwind*, Dunsmore and Carter deal with the lack of moral fibre concept in a sympathetic manner. They state (page 254):

“L.M.F. was the much-hated term used by the RAF and RCAF throughout the war. It tended to be used far more frequently in reference to NCO's than to Officers. XXX There runs through the history of this unhappy subject a

marked bias in favour of commissioned air crew. If an officer refused to fly, there was a strong possibility that he would be posted to some quiet job with a note in his records about nervous strain and exhaustion. It's hard to find any record of any NCOs being so treated.

"In some cases, station commanders made abject examples of them.....LMF cases usually went to transit camps or disciplinary units to be remustered to the army or to spend the rest of their service lives washing dishes or cleaning latrines.

"The vast majority of air crew condemned such practices XXX. The Americans and Australians seemed to have been most enlightened when it came to dealing with these cases, with extensive use of psychiatric service camps. But in the RAF and RCAF the belief apparently existed that if a single air crew member managed to get himself taken off flying, without suitable disciplinary action being taken, then pilots and navigators, and indeed all air crew trades, would be quitting in the thousands.

"It was an inexplicable attitude, for, from the grisly slaughter of the daylight raids in 1939, to the wholesale destruction of hundreds of four-engine bombers and their crews over Germany in 1943 and 1944, the *only* thing the authorities didn't have to worry about was the willingness of their young air crews to set off for whatever target they were told to bomb, night after night, no matter what the conditions."

The “Morality” Issue

In the letter from Gerard Veilleux, President of the CBC, dated (March 26, 1992), reference is made to the issue of morality. Mr. Veilleux’s views were expressed as follows:

“But the film questions whether he (Air Marshal Harris) and his War Cabinet superiors had a clear title to the moral high ground.

“This documentary never intended to question the courage or make light of the fear and hardships that you and your fellow crewmen experienced. It does, however, examine the argument that even in war there must be some acceptance of humanitarian values, most especially by any nation that considers itself to be morally superior in that conflict. The producers set out to honestly document the story of area bombing against Germany, and to tell it as it happened, warts and all.”

Concerning the issue of morality, Noble Frankland states in *The Bombing Offensive Against Germany* (page 94):

“This refers not to the uniformed air crews killed on the inroads made by Bomber Command upon the other branches of the armed forces, but to the un-uniformed German civilians killed, to the German towns devastated and to the works of art destroyed and so on. Even this, the moral issue, must be to some extent be governed by what the bombing achieved in terms of the defeat of Hitler’s Germany, for clearly there is a difference between destruction for the sake of destruction and destruction for the sake of victory.”

Frankland states further, page 94:

“The real question which surely remains when all these academic points are done with is whether or not the methods by which victory in war is sought are morally permissible or not. The answer may to some extent be qualified by the amount of incidental damage likely to be done but it seems that the two most important considerations are: first, the causes for which the war is being fought and the nature of the enemy, for the means adopted must be in the scale with the ends sought, and secondly, the range of available alternatives, for the amount of destruction must be the minimum compatible with the achievement of the aim.

“In the light of such desiderata it may now be asked if the strategic air offensive of the Second World War, which inevitably meant widespread death and destruction far beyond the lines, was morally permissible and, in particular, if this was so in view of the fact that much of the British effort

consisted of area bombing in which the deliberate intention was the destruction of town centres.

“Until 1944, strategic bombing was the only means by which offensive pressure of any significant kind could be exerted by Britain against Germany. Her armies had triumphed in the field to such an extent that no threat to her frontiers from the Allied armies existed and, in addition, she was largely immunized from the effects of such blockade as could be imposed by the Allied navies. If the strategic air offensive had not been initiated and sustained, the strategic prospects of Hitler’s being defeated would have been gravely jeopardized. The apparent prospects of his defeat would have virtually disappeared, for who could forecast how the Russians would absorb and then destroy the military might of Germany? It is difficult to see how Britain could have carried on the War from 1940 to 1944.”

In the CBC interview of April 22nd, 1992 Terence McKenna suggested that aircrews were now questioning the morality issue. He stated that RCAF aircrews were “stunned” when he showed them the April 1942 Portal memorandum. The implication is that they were expressing doubts about the morality of bombing civilians.

In *Reap The Whirlwind* (page 34), (a recent 1991 publication), the authors state, in this regard:

“Most of the 6 Group veterans see the bombing war as a nasty, dangerous job that had to be done. “I am of the firm opinion that the war could not have been won without it,” declares Jim Emmerson. Roger Coulombe says: “We had no choice. Someone had to protect and defend civilization.” Ted Radford adds: “Bomber Command dished out the dirt when no one else on our side could.”

“Many 6 Group veterans feel that if Harris had been given the 4000 heavy bombers he asked for, Bomber Command could have won the War, and the invasion would never have been necessary.”

In *Death by Moonlight* the narrator speaks about the German night fighters, stating:

“They ended the war morally undefeated.” They had the advantage of knowing what they were fighting for.”

Advantage over whom? The implication is that our own air crews did not know what they were fighting for! The further implication is that because of the Allies bombed German homes and families we had, as one of the producers stated after the program, abandoned the moral high ground to Germany.

Are we, then, to judge the war efforts of Allies, and in so doing, balance it against the

criminal behaviour of the Germans who initiated terror bombing of cities, the activities of the SS who shot prisoners and indiscriminately eliminated innocent civilians in retaliation for acts of sabotage? (The list can go on).

There are many sources which could have been used to justify what the Allies had to do. In this Submission, the views of Air Marshal Harris have been chosen, in particular, because he is certainly painted as the executer of the bombing of German cities, which, according to the producers, was a reprehensible act which resulted in us giving the moral advantage to Germany.

To review from Harris' book *Bomber Offensive* they (the German civilians):

"...had been promised they would never be bombed; what, then, must be the effect of English bombers 4,000 pounders night after night?"

"...the race for the atom bomb was on, and we knew that the Germans had just as much chance of getting it, and just as good facilities for making it, as anyone else. In no circumstances whatsoever did there seem to be any means of preventing Germany from making progress with the atom bomb except by bombing industry generally in the hope that this would hit where it was most likely to hurt the production of the atom bomb."

"A bomber offensive was the only means that I could see, and the results eventually bore out this conclusion, of preventing the Allied armies from suffering enormous casualties when they eventually invaded the continent. And it was then, under consideration to invade Europe, not in two, but in one year's time, in 1943."

"...the bombing of Germany assumed great political importance as a means of persuading the Russians that we were doing all we could to come to their help."

As the narrator suggests, German fighter pilots, towards the end of the war, may have at last found a justification to support Hitler's aggression which was responsible for deaths and untold damage. Some of these were undoubtedly, the same pilots who flew cover in the bombing of Warsaw, in their Stuka dive bombers, machine-gunned helpless civilians trying to escape from the Blitzkrieg of 1940 and who again assisted in the "coventryizing" (Goerring's word presumably) of a peaceful English city.

One cannot escape the conclusion that the producers have failed to give an even-handed presentation; and have succeeded in tarnishing not only the reputation of Canadians who participated in the bombing raids, but have cast callous and unfair allegations against those who had the responsibility to direct these bombing raids.

The series was promoted, originally, as one which would pay homage to the courage and patriotism of those young Canadians who served in World War II.

Instead, as stated in a letter from the President of CBC, dated March 26, 1992, the film was “an examination of particular bombing operations where official policies and questionable strategy, it is now known, unnecessarily contributed to the deaths of thousands of Allied airmen and half a million German civilians.”

The letter states further:

“The series was intended neither as a complete chronology nor a nostalgic look at Canada in the Second World War. It was, instead, a documentary which depicted the pain, anguish and horror of war while focusing on only three specific elements of the war - those three all being situations in which young Canadians were particularly affected by decisions, policies or strategies which, in retrospect, many now question on both logical and moral grounds.”

The letter from the President of the CBC, on the question of morality states:

“It is also now known that the bomber crews were not told that the War Cabinet had decided to take the fight beyond military installations and into Germany’s civilian population. Many of those crewmen, some of who you saw in the series, seemed to have given that a lot of thought since then.”

The implication here is that air crews are now questioning the decisions, policies or strategies, on moral grounds. “Many” should not be used unless the producers can produce evidence to support it. The statement, however, flies in the face of wide reaction from former members of Bomber Command.

PART III
In Desperate Battle - Normandy 1944
Opening Comment Re Approach Taken in the Film

This segment purports to deal with the Normandy Campaign which commenced with the landing at Juno Beach on the Normandy Coast on June 6, 1944 and ended with the closing of Falaise Gap in a difficult battle with fanatical German troops attempting to keep open the escape route for some 135,000 Germans caught in the “pocket.” In their book, *Maple Leaf Route: Falaise*, Terry Copp and Robert Vogel state (page 138):

“...The second Canadian Corps became, by strategic default, the main instrument for the attempt to trap the German army in Normandy.

“The Canadians had played a major role in the Battle of Normandy, a role quite out of proportion to the number of Canadian troops involved. In the last stages of the battle there had been much confusion, and some hesitation. There had also been incredible heroism, dedication and the courage to endure.”

In addition to the assault landing on Juno Beach, (centered on the French coastal villages of St. Aubin, Bernieres and Courseulles), the First Canadian Parachute Battalion landed behind the German defences, as part of the Sixth British Airborne Division, with the objective of capturing bridges across the Orne River.

Any balanced account of the Normandy Campaign would have to include reference to battles at:

Puto-en-Bessin, Villons-les-Buissons, Outhie, Cairon, Carpiquet, Buron, The Abbey D'Ardenne, Caen, Ifs Cormelles, Giberville, Hubert Folie, Beauvoir Farm, Tilly-La-Campagne, Verrieres¹, St. Andre-Sur-Orne, May-Sur-Orne, Fontenay le Marmion, Rocquancourt, Bretteville-sur-Laize, Bretteville le Rabet, Quesnay Wood, Potigny, Cramenil, Point 195, Soulangy, Louviers-en-Auge, Trun, St. Lambert-sur-Dives²

These battles are listed for a reason. If the program wished to tell an effective story of the Battle of Normandy, it would have been necessary to indicate that the Canadian Second, Third and Fourth Divisions engaged a strong, well-armed, well-trained enemy over a period

¹Captured by the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, commanded by Lieut. Colonel Rocky Rockingham and called a “text book operation” *Maple Leaf Route: Falaise* (page 68).

²Major David Currie, South Alberta Regiment, won a Victoria Cross.

of two and one-half months.

The Canadians had not been previously “blooded” in battle (except for the survivors of the Dieppe Raid of Second Division). That they gave a good account of themselves would seem to be worthy of mention.

Instead, the producers spent an inordinate amount of time dealing with a very difficult battle, which they called “Verrieres Ridge”. It might have been considered a failure from a tactical viewpoint, but the battle further enhanced the tradition of the Regiment (The Black Watch) which took part.

The producers stated that it was their intention, in part, to tell “little known” or “newly uncovered” stories of the war.

Information regarding the disaster which befell The Black Watch at the Battle of Fontenay is certainly not new; and in fact, was written about in field dispatches at the time. The battle certainly has been recounted, although not in any great detail (possibly because no author desired to give undue prominence in relation to other battles), going back to 1946. The Black Watch battle will be dealt with in greater detail later.

D-Day To Caen

Actor's Portrayal: Corporal Joseph Le Boutilier of the North Shore Regiment is portrayed by an actor with a rifle, supposedly standing at the back of a landing craft. He states that he received an order from his officer that "if anyone refuses to leave the craft, you shoot him."

The description of the North Shore Regiment landing from the book *The North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment* is relevant.

"At long last the hour had come, and every man of the North Shore was eager to reach the beach and get into action. The long waiting in cramped quarters aboard ship and the nauseating roll of the troop carriers made everyone anxious to put feet on solid ground and get on with the job.

"Lt. "Bones" McCann commanded No. 6 platoon. 'Our run-in was not bad,' he said, 'except for a few of the lads suffering from mal de mer. Jerry, apparently, was aiming for bigger targets and apart from small arms fire, and shelling, we landed as per schedule and intact. Some of my fellow officers were not so fortunate, and because of this things really began to happen.

"No. 4 platoon was commanded by Lt. C.F. Richardson. 'Tracer bullets from German anti-aircraft seemed to fill the air as we came in'. he said, 'but everyone in our boat was never higher and the platoon was merrily singing Roll Me over, Lay Me Down' as we approached the shore."

This account is surely at odds with the implied suggestion that troops would balk; and that Corporals were given orders to shoot anyone who refused to leave the landing craft.

Is this description in the North Shore Regiment history consistent with the word image of Le Boutilier stating that he had orders to shoot any man who would not get off the landing craft?

This is surely a hideous condemnation of those Canadians who stormed the beaches in Normandy, and of whom Ross Munro wrote in *Gauntlet to Overlord* (p. 92):

"I walked through the dunes down in the direction of Bernières over the Reginas Beach. It was a ghastly sight with its dead and its ruin. The pillboxes were chipped and blasted by grenades and shellfire. Some of the casements had received direct hits from heavy artillery but had withstood them.

"It had been the Reginas themselves who had battled their way into them

with grenades, Sten guns, Bren guns and the bare, gleaming bayonet before they were captured.

“I looked at these defence positions and tried to picture the hell that broke loose in that terrible fight, but it was impossible to envision. ‘How did those troops ever get through?’, I asked myself again and again and found no answer.”

Narrator: “In the First World War, soldiers who refused to go over the top were executed on the spot by battle police.”

This contrary to KING’S REGULATIONS and the Manual of Military Law. A soldier charged with cowardice was given a court martial, and the whole concept of justice was involved.

Narrator: Many Canadians joined the army due to the Depression when there was “no work and no food.”

This statement cannot be substantiated. Most of those who volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces were employed. In fact, the government passed the *Reinstatement In Civil Employment Act* to protect their jobs.

Narrator: “The men often weren’t required to take it (their training) seriously.”

This is not factual, as any person who served in the Canadian Army from 1939 until 1945 would attest. The damage that might be done, however, from a statement of this nature to generations who do not know of preparations for World War II, is enormous.

Narrator: “The Canadian Army was poorly trained and badly led.”

Several moments before this (in the film) the narrator made reference to a quotation from *Time Magazine* that the Canadian Army was a “dagger pointed at the heart of Berlin.” There seems to be some inconsistency here.

In the official history of the Canadian Army *Six Years Of War* by C.P. Stacey, there is a section dealing with TRAINING THE ARMY OVERSEAS.

References from that section would appear to indicate that the training state of the Canadian Army, going into the Battle of Normandy, was as well advanced as could have been accomplished, short of actual battle experience – and there was some of this for the officers. The references are set out hereunder:

“During 1941 the Canadian Training School began work in earnest.” (Page 240)

“The year 1941 saw the inception of a new and much more realistic type of training. This was known as ‘Battle Drill’ and ‘Battle Drill Training’. The Battle Drill was the reduction of military tactics to bare essentials which were taught to a platoon as a team drill, with clear explanations regarding the objects to be achieved, the principles involved and the individual task of each member of the team. Battle Drill Training, on the other hand, was more comprehensive. It comprised special physical training, fieldcraft, battle drill proper, battle discipline and “battle inoculation.”

“The German invasion of Russia in the summer of 1941, followed by the entrance of the United States into the war at the end of the year, opened the prospect of offensive action against Germany and led naturally to a new emphasis on offensive training during 1942.” (Page 243)

“The last important development of 1942 was the decision, after the Allied landings in North Africa in November, to send Canadian officers and N.C.Os to serve three-month attachments to the First British Army in Tunisia. This resulted from the desire to provide battle experience for as many Canadians as possible before the main body of the army was committed to action.” (Page 248)

“During 1943 the training programme took the Canadian divisions into areas of England - notably Hampshire and East Anglia - of which they had hitherto seen little. The 2nd Division, it is true, spent most of the year in Sussex, mainly in exercising in the breakout battle for a bridgehead. The 5th Armoured Division moved to Norfolk in July and spent six weeks there engaged in a series of large-scale exercises.” (Page 252)

“There is no doubt that training can do just so much and no more; there is no umpire and no instructor like the bullet. Other things being equal, in an encounter between an army with battle experience and one without it the former will win. The Canadians did well in Normandy; they would have done better had they not been fighting their first battle and learning as they fought.” (Page 253)

Narrator: “As the date approached for the greatest military confrontation in history, the infighting of the Canadian Generals, added to the lack of proper training for Canadian troops, did not augur well.”

This statement is not factual, and is proved by the results of the D-Day landing by the Canadians on Juno Beach. It has gone down in history as a great success.

The film quotes Major General Harry Foster (then Brigadier commanding the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade) as stating:

“Simmons sets high standards – impossible standards. I tried to talk to him after he ran roughshod over two of my senior officers. He said, ‘somebody had to talk to them, Harry. I did, because you didn’t.’”

It is presumed that the narrators are quoting from the book *Meeting of Generals* by Tony Foster, General Foster’s son, (page 340).

The inference from the quote is that General Foster had a poor opinion of General Simmons, of whom the film was critical in the extreme. If the producers had, however, used the *entire* quote, the indication would have been given that Simmons was held in very high regard by Foster. The relevant quote is:

“Guy Simmons, in Harry’s view, was ‘the brightest tactical army commander Canada had produced in any war.’ Where others fell asleep after two or three days on their feet, Guy could keep going, his brain still working at top speed. He had that amazing ability of being able to analyze any given situation swiftly and accurately, cutting through irrelevancies to the heart of the problem, then making up his mind. His orders were always clear, concise - straight to the point.”

The book then goes on to give the quotation, paraphrased by the producers, about Simmons setting high standards. The actual quote, however, contains a further indication of the good relationship between General Foster and General Simmons. Obviously, the producers left it out, as they were attempting to “assassinate” the character of General Simmons.

Specifically, Foster is quoted, by his son in the book, as follows:

“Later after he had promoted me, I tried talking to him privately as a friend...”

In the book *Meeting Of Generals*, Harry Foster is quoted further as saying:

“He, (General Simmons) mistrusted and detested Foulkes (Commander, Canadian Army 2ND Division) but then we all detested Foulkes, so that was to this credit ... but no one could ever replace him. Guy (Simmons) was the best we had.”

Also, those who knew Harry Foster personally (including myself) would surely attest that he did not speak in the manner as portrayed by the actor. The portrayal appears to be a gross misrepresentation.

The narrator states that, once the beaches were penetrated, “the opposition was light. Their job was to get down this road and help the British capture the road to Paris.”

This statement is incorrect. The film makers obviously knew nothing about the battles for Putot, Authie, Gruchy, Franqueville, Carpiquet or Cairon – all guarding the northern outskirts of Caen; battles in which units of the Canadian 3rd Division distinguished themselves.

Later, the film makers do deal with a battle which was obviously before Caen, but not identified, showing German nebelwerfers and artillery, and there is a description of tank battles, before Caen.

The program deals with the high standards of fighting capability of the 12th S.S. This is somewhat inconsistent with the film's suggestion that the Canadians were ill-trained, and that their standards were low. If the Canadians were so inept, one must question how it was that the Canadians won the battles from D-Day through to Falaise, thus engaging the 12th SS (arguably Germany's most skilled soldiers) and other German divisions, which otherwise would have swung to the West to stop the advancing American armies.

An impartial account of the Canadians from D-Day to Caen is found in *The Canadians at War 1939-1945* (page 357-362). Some excerpts follow:

“D-Day had been a brilliant success. Now on D-plus-1, the Germans counter-attacked with the 12th SS and other divisions; the Allies tried to push inland in accordance with the 90-day master plan for the Battle of Normandy.

“We would fight inland,’ said Gen. Sir Bernard Montgomery, the overall ground commander, ‘then draw all the German strength we could – particularly armored strength – onto the British-Canadian front. British and Canadians would hold the main German strength there and I would use the American armies to break out on the western flank and sweep south and then east up to the Seine.’ Here the Allies hoped to trap the Germans.

“As things turned out, it took not 90 days but 75. The Canadians’ task was tough, thankless and unspectacular, but it contributed mightily to making the plan work. As anticipated, the Germans expected a breakout not from the American sector but from the eastern flank, the one nearer Paris, so they did concentrate their armour on the British-Canadian front around Caen.

“Maj. Gen. R.F.L. Keller, 3rd Division commander, reported: ‘Two days spent repelling violent counterattacks. Losses approximately 1400-1500 all ranks, 7th Brigade restored situation in heroic manner. All of us still fighting like mad. Am very proud of them’.”

“The 12th SS now was little more than a remnant; its infantry strength was cut to that of a battalion and 65 of its 150 tanks were gone. It would withdraw to refit and it would return, but it would never be the same again.

“Nor would the Normandy battle. With the fall of Caen, it was ready for a bigger, more decisive stage.”

The Bombing of Caen

The narrator states that General Montgomery was under pressure and had to provide a “public relations victory at Caen,” and thus the orders were given to bomb the city.

The British General Staff were of the opinion that the Germans had fortified the city and would defend it. In fact, units of the 7th Brigade had been given orders to prepare for an attack. These orders were cancelled.

As Ross Munro stated, in *“Gauntlet to Overlord”* (P. 151, etc.)

“This raid was in the nature of an experiment to determine whether heavy night bombers of Bomber Command could be satisfactorily employed in the direct support of ground troops, and the results proved so good that the heavies were subsequently used on every attack in France, where a strong defence line had to be shattered.

“Six or seven hundred heavies plied methodically over Caen that evening...”

“For the troops opposing the British and Canadians – the 12th SS Hitler Youth Division; the 16th German Air Force Division, an infantry formation formed from air force personnel; and the 21st Panzer Division, it was a devastating surprise and shock.

“Before dawn, at 4:30 a.m, two British Infantry Divisions began their attack. They made good progress from the start, with an unusually heavy artillery barrage helping them on their way. At 7:30 a.m., the Canadian Brigade crossed its starline, heading for its three village targets northwest of Caen. Caen had suffered more heavily from our bombing than any other place we had seen in Normandy.”

The narrator states: “Despite the fact that German defence was centred outside the old Norman city, the Allies decided to boost Allied morale by levelling the place.” (Caen).

He goes on to say that 967 Allied aircraft:

“came to destroy the city.”

Caen was a military target, and Allied Intelligence indicated that it was heavily defended by the Germans. The narrator makes it seem as if the bombing of Caen was carried out primarily as a public relations exercise; was intended to destroy the city and kill civilians.

The narrator states: “The truth is that a search of the rubble failed to turn up a single German casualty, or any German equipment. A thousand years in the making and the medieval city was destroyed in 40 minutes.”

Matthew Halton, the senior CBC correspondent, as reported in Reader’s Digest, *The Canadians at War 1939-1945* (page 362):

“To the CBC’s Matthew Halton, the city looked like the end of the world. But ‘to our astonishment’, he said in a broadcast, ‘we saw a great church, the famous Abbye-aux-Hommes, 1,000 years old, which not one bomb or shell had touched. Inside were 2,000 people who’d lived there for several weeks. Babies had been born at the foot of the sanctuary and wounded people had to be tended above the tomb of William the Conqueror. Hundreds of people shook our hands. All were calm and dignified but their enthusiasm was deep and touching. There was a ceremony in the square outside. The flag of France was raised and they sang ‘La Marseillaise,’ weeping, the broken and tortured voices of unbroken people.”

The producers challenge the statement of the CBC senior correspondent, Matthew Halton. Where is their proof?

The narrator states that an investigation of the ruins of Caen failed to turn up a single German body or any German equipment.

This may well be true, as we now know that the Germans had evacuated the city; but this information was not known, either to the Canadian soldiers who were waiting to attack Caen, or to the Allied military strategist who decided, in an effort to save Canadian lives, to bomb the city.

The program quotes Donald Pearce of the North Nova Scotia Regiment, whose part is played by an actor, as stating: “...ironically, if this is what they meant by liberating the town, surely they must mean liquidating.”

Does this statement add anything to our knowledge of the incident?

There is some conflict in regard to the reports – official or otherwise – concerning the bombing of Caen. *Bomber Command War Diaries*, page 539, notes:

“The Canadian First and British Second Armies were held up by a series of four to five village strong points north of Caen. The first plan was for Bomber Command to bomb these villages but, because of the proximity of friendly troops and the possibility of bombing error, the bombing area was moved back nearer to Caen, covering a stretch of open ground and the northern edge of the city.”

If this report is accurate, there is no intention of bombing Caen itself, but the aiming point

was moved closer to the city, to minimize the possibility of dropping bombs on our own troops.

The report continues: “Few Germans were killed in the area actually bombed, although units nearby were considerably shaken. The northern suburbs of Caen were ruined.”

It seems evident that the assessment in *The Bomber Command War Diaries* is much more positive than the account given in “The Valour and the Horror”.

Caen to Falaise

The program commences with a commentary about the Battle for Verrières Ridge.

Narrator: “The tragedy that unfolded in these fields is only one of the cataclysms that befell the Canadian Army in Normandy in the summer of 1944.”

The program does not follow through by detailing any significant number of other “cataclysms.”

The narration suggests Verrières Ridge was a single objective.

In fact, it was only part of a major attack to be carried out by units of the Second Division and the Third Division.

The narrator says the true story of the battles has never been told.

The first description was given by the respected war correspondent, Ross Munro, in his book *Gauntlet To Overlord*.

Munro, correspondent for The Canadian Press, had established a reputation for integrity, and his definitive work, first published in 1945 would hardly fit him into the category of a “cheer-leader”¹. This now-famous statement by fellow war correspondent Charles Lynch referred to the day-to-day reporting of the war, which was subject to censorship. Munro’s book, written after the war, was not. The attempt of the producers to re-write the history of the battle of Verrières Ridge, flies in the face of all reasonable accounts.

Ross Munro put the tragic loss of The Black Watch in perspective. He stated (p. 164):

“The Black Watch tried to go forward to Fontenay, and nearly the whole battalion was lost. Like the Calgarys, there they ran into far stronger German defenses than they had anticipated. Nobody knew exactly what happened to The Black Watch. They went over a slope in the night and very little was heard from them. Reports that did come back over the field wireless before it went dead, and what the few survivors were able to tell, indicated that the battalion fought a mad, tumultuous battle against fearful odds and under merciless fire, particularly from the German tanks.”

It would appear that the producers have seized upon The Black Watch episode and have

¹A term used in the film.

attempted to convey the picture that, as the narrator suggests, there were other similar “cataclysms”.

Disastrous as it was, there is no justification that the Battle at Fontenay should have been singled out. The book *Canada's Black Watch* by Paul T. Hutchison (page 222) gives a graphic description, but places the battle in perspective, to the contribution of this famous regiment to the entire North West European campaign. The author states:

“Major F.P. Griffin then took charge and decided to clear St. Martin and St. André of the enemy before proceeding further.

“This attack was fairly successful, the Battalion capturing many prisoners of the Hitler Division and pushing a patrol forward to May which was found to be still in the hands of the enemy. It was obvious that the second phase of the advance had failed and that the Battalion's starline had not been cleared by the troops in front. Nevertheless, Griffin received orders by wireless to move again on May. He was told he would be supported by tank and artillery fire.

“At 09:03 hours the Battalion attacked, two companies up and two in support, moving steadily through the wheat fields up the slope towards the ridge overlooking May but without the promised artillery support and the tanks. XXX The enemy had recently tripled his defence on top with a solid mass of guns and dug-in armour. Whole sections of the Black Watch were wiped out as they advanced up the slope; soon the casualties were extremely heavy.

“Griffin had gone forward to urge on the Battalion and was everywhere along the front encouraging his men, leading the advance and calling out: “Forward men!, we've got to keep going.” Only about a sixth of the attackers who reached the top disappeared over the ridge. XXX All of The Black Watch attacking companies were destroyed. When Fontenay was eventually captured, Griffin's body was found atop the ridge surrounded by those of his gallant comrades.”

In a LETTER TO THE EDITOR by Darcy O'Connor, co-producer of the series, he quarrels with a statement by Terry Lyons, who said, in his letter to the *Kingston Whig Standard*, that the situation had changed after Major Griffin took command of the Regiment.

It seems clear that the situation had indeed changed. *Maple Leaf Route: Falaise*, (page 69), states:

“The Black Watch, under their Acting Commander, Major F.P. Griffin, was ready with a new artillery plan and tank support.”

They had sent a patrol into May-sur-Orne and located a single machine gun which they intended to take out with a fighting patrol. The account goes on to state that, instead of

single machine gun, May-sur-Orne was held “in strength”. The situation had changed for Major Griffin, as well, in that the promised artillery and tank support did not materialize.

Another indication that The Black Watch attack at Fontenay should not have been singled out for particular reference, may be found in the book *Out Of The Shadows* by W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, Director and Senior Historian of the Department of National Defence Historical Section respectively. They do not mention the battle at all, stating only, (page 160):

“Pressure must therefore be maintained on the Germans in the vicinity of Caen, and in mid-July a series of attacks was launched that gained little ground but cost Montgomery’s forces dearly.”

It would appear that the producers seized upon the unfortunate experience of the Black Watch, but failed to mention that the Canadians did capture the Verrières Ridge with the 3rd Division taking Tilly, while 2nd Division units, including the Royal Regiment of Canada, the RHLI, the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders, the Calgary Regiment and the Regiment de Maisonneuve captured the other “strongpoints.”

Fontenay was part of what is know as the “fog of war.” In their book *Maple Leaf Route: Falaise*, Terry Copp and Robert Vogel deal with the situation fairly and accurately.

“The Black Watch, under their acting Commander Major F.P. Griffin, was ready with a new artillery plan and tank support. They had sent a patrol into May-sur-Orne and located a single machine gun which they intended to take out with a fighting patrol. Fontenay was to be attacked directly with the battalion climbing the western slope of the Verrières Ridge and descending on the town. Admittedly, it was a disastrous attack but XXX the Black Watch continued to advance to the top of the Ridge. By midday there were few of them left XXX.”

The next day General Simmons called off the operation, (named Spring).

There is no doubt that Verrières Ridge presented a fearsome obstacle to the advance to Falaise. The producers of the program have, however, dwelt upon the unsuccessful attacks at Tilly by the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, and at Fontenay by The Black Watch, without adding any redeeming comments about the subsequent taking of the Ridge. The program appears to belittle the achievement.

The narrator refers to the reputation that The Black Watch never retreats, suggesting this was the cause of the tragedy.

This same spirit has been responsible for many successful chapters in our military history. The producers make it look as if it commits the common soldier to the roll of a “sacrificial lamb.”

Narrator: The program uses an actual description of the battle by Matthew Halton, first broadcast in 1944. The narrator says that Halton's description is "as far from the truth as you can get." The program then features an "on site" description by staff college historian Roman Jarymowycz.

His recital of what took place is probably correct – but it is, of course, hindsight. During the confusion, and the pressure to take the Ridge in 1944, mistakes in judgement were made.

This is an indication of extenuating circumstances.

The treatment of Major Phil Griffin who was killed in the battle victimizes him. Many feel he should have been commended for heroism, and devotion beyond the call of duty. The treatment of The Black Watch attack on Verrières Ridge (actually Fontenay La Marmion) is "overkill." Words are mouthed by an actor in a German uniform who actually stated that the Germans were **too "embarrassed" to kill any more Black Watch.**

The use of troops of the present-day Canadian Army to represent the Battle is a ridiculous sight to any soldier who served in that area. The camera shots of supposedly dead soldiers, to the tune of "Amazing Grace" on the Pipes, and the background is seen as being in poor taste.

The Reader's Digest account deals with the Black Watch Battle in one paragraph. This is quoted herein, not to belittle what the black Watch did, but to put that battle into perspective as part of the victory of the Canadians enclosing the Falaise's Gap. It read (page 365):

"On July 25, the Canadians attacked south of Caen. They made small gains and suffered their greatest casualties – 1,500 men – for any single day of the war except Dieppe. One battalion alone, The Black Watch, suffered 300 casualties on the Ridge of Verrieres."

If the producers desired to tell the full story of that part of the Normandy Battle from Caen to Falaise, they might well have used, as a guide, the description in the Reader's Digest *Canadians At War 1939 to 1945* (page 362). It states:

"It is roughly 20 miles from Caen to Falaise. The hard, black road runs south through quiet, rustic country dotted with villages and small towns and clumps of forest and gentle ridges. That summer of 1944, it became the axis of Canadian advance – and a scarlet memory in Canadian military lore.

"For the 2nd Infantry and 4th Armored Divisions, it became a place of learning, a much more brutal place than Sicily had been for the 1st Division a year before. Here they were thrown into one of the great battles of history. They were green, and it showed, but they were braved and that showed too.

"The entire Canadian corps played a decisive role in the final stages of the

Battle for the Gap...

“The Germans had lost a great battle and suffered tremendous losses since June 6th.

“The victory in Normandy did not end the campaign. But Hitler had lost the armies that were his best hope of staving off ultimate disaster. This, said Montgomery, was the beginning of the end ...”

The narrator, in a condemnation of Maj.-Gen. Rod Keller, GOC 3rd Canadian Division, states that recommendation was made that Keller be removed from his command as he was “temperamentally and perhaps physically” unfit. The film then shows General Simmons, speaking through an actor, stating that he decided to leave Keller in command as his removal would “sink the morale of his troops even lower.”

There is no evidence that the morale of the 3rd Canadian Division was in any way impaired at this or any other stage of the Battle for Normandy. Incidentally, General Keller was severely wounded in a bombing attack by the U.S. Air Force on August 7th while still in command of the Division.

The narrator states that the attack on Tilly-La-Campagne (by the Canadian 3rd Division) was to be done under “artificial moonlight” created by searchlights. According to the narrator “this was to be done without rehearsal, or even properly briefing the men.”

No rehearsal was possible. The men of the 3rd Canadian Division, however, were fully briefed. (The author of this submission was one of them.)

The narrator states: “The improvised searchlight plan would result in sudden death for dozens of soldiers.”

Certainly there were battle casualties but the use of “artificial moonlight” was accepted by historians, and by the commanders of the day, as a successful tactic. There is no evidence to imply that the “artificial moonlight” created additional casualties. Unfortunately this is the inference which must be taken from the narrator’s comments.

The narrator states that during the attack someone bungled and the searchlights were dropped to ground level, silhouetting the attackers.

If the producers are to make such statement, they should produce the evidence.

The implication is that Keller was responsible for the failed attack at Tilly-La-Campagne.

He had his orders from General Simonds. If he had refused he would have been replaced on the spot probably, and the attack would have gone on in any event.

The producers of the program were obviously using the Tilly Battle to play up the incompetence of Canadian Generals. Errors in military strategy are not new. The emphasis given to this particular incident, however, seriously detracts from the overall success of the Canadians in the Normandy Campaign.

General (then Major) Radley Walters is quoted directly in speaking of an incident where he was required to take a machete and cut a dead Canadian in half in order to get the body out of a tank.

Presumably this was one episode in a great number which would have been related by General Radley Walters on his visit to Normandy with the CBC crew. It conjures up a dreadful image, unless put in context. The dismemberment and blowing up of bodies is not new to war. There are many thousands of graves of World War I Canadians in France with the inscription: "KNOWN ONLY TO GOD." In Normandy, many of our own troops were blown apart. The remains were buried, sometimes unidentified. The producers have not done General Radley Walters any sense of justice in depicting a courageous act on his part as something almost inhumane.

The narrator states: "At this point in Normandy, psychiatric collapse was skyrocketing – responsible for almost one of every three casualties."

It was called "battle fatigue." The standard procedure was to send the soldier to "B. Echelon" (that is the rear) where he was seen by a Medical Officer. He was then L.O.B.'d (left out of battle); given a chance to recover, and to be sent back to his Company. In four months of combat, the author never saw more than five or six of his own battalion in what we called the L.O.B. quarters. If there is evidence that psychological problems caused one-third of the non-fatal casualties, the statistics of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps should be produced before such a damaging statement is made regarding the fighting qualities of the Canadian soldier in Normandy.

The program portrays, through an actor, General Simmons stating that "malingering is a disgraceful offence."

Cases of true battle fatigue were not treated in this way; instead they were treated with sympathy, kindness and understanding, except in cases of outright cowardice.

The narrator compounds the error of this portrayal by stating: "In the Canadian Army, malingering was an offence punishable by five years of hard labour in prison. Other armies recognized shell shock for what it was – acute psychiatric collapse."

Regarding battle exhaustion and the role of the infantrymen in Normandy, the book *Maple Leaf Route: Falaise* (page 32) provides an interesting insight, as follows:

“For the riflemen, the fighting in Normandy was every bit as brutal and costly as the battles on the Western Front in World War I. Because overall casualty rates were much higher in the First War, we have not always recognized that casualties, as a percentage of troops actually engaged in direct combat, were very similar. In the Second World War, the western allies had developed such a complex military organization that less than one quarter of the men in France fought as combat troops and only one in five as infantry riflemen. These men bore an incredibly disproportionate share of the casualties, at least 70% of the total XXXX. Riflemen also carried most of the burden of psychoneurotic breakdown, usually called “battle exhaustion” in World War II. Canadian army psychiatrists who began their work convinced that the careful screening could identify those predisposed to neurosis soon learned that *each moment of combat imposes a strain so great that men will break down in direct relation to the intensity and duration of exposure. Psychiatric casualties are as inevitable as gunshot and shrapnel wounds...*

“Psychiatry, like the other branches of medicine, underwent rapid development in World War II and despite occasional resistance from some senior medical and military officers, battle exhaustion was treated sensibly and quickly with rest, sedation and, where necessary, reassignment away from the front line.”

This recital of the manner in which battle fatigue casualties were handled in the Canadian Army in World War II would appear to be at complete odds with the comment from the narrator, to the effect that malingering was an offense punishable by five years of hard labour and that the Canadian Army did not recognize shell-shock in the same humane manner as was done in other countries.

Research fails to indicate that battle fatigue or, as the CBC program calls it, “malingering” was a problem with the Canadian soldier in Normandy.

Concerning battle casualties in the fighting south of Caen, the narrator states that wounded men were often sent back into battle before they had a chance to recover from their wounds.

This is a condemnation of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps – and a most unfair one. Also, in many instances, the wounded volunteered to go back to their units, if the wounds were not severe enough to keep them out of action.

The narrator speaks about the reinforcements being ill-trained.

This was true. It would have been more accurate, and would have failed to do the injustice it did to these men, if the truth were told. Although trained only for administrative duties, they performed magnificently against the battle-hardened Germans.

Concerning the competence of Canadian soldiers, Kurt Meyer stated during his trial:

“This Division (12th S.S.) fought in these months against four well-trained, well-equipped Divisions; the 3rd and 34th Canadian Divisions etc.”

POWS

The film makers dwell at length, on the “Prisoners of War” aspect of warfare, in the Normandy segment.

The narrator states that some of the Canadian soldiers buried at Beny-sur-Mer “died mysteriously.”

There is no mystery. The No. 1 Canadian Field Investigation Unit found undeniable evidence that they had been murdered by the Germans. One wonders why the film makers used the word “mysteriously,” when the evidence regarding their deaths is readily available?

In fact, regimental monuments at the Ancienne Abbey d’Ardennes and at the Chateau D’Audrieu, erected by the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, are stark reminders of the wilful shooting of these prisoners by the German SS.

The narrator states, after showing a shot of Canadians being held prisoners, that:

“The story of what happened to prisoners of war on both sides of this battle is one of the darkest chapters in the Second World War.”

The rules of war are very clear. The statement that the handling of prisoners of war, is “one of the darkest chapters in the Second World War,” is seen as an attempt to indicate that Canadians, as well as Germans, shot prisoners. This statement should not be allowed to stand unless there is proof. There is none.

The film may have been more acceptable, in regard to prisoners of war, if it had in the first instance stated that every Canadian soldier was subject to lectures on the Geneva Convention. Secondly, in that it is not the nature of Canadians to shoot other in cold blood (as contrasted with the brutality of the SS portrayed in the film), it goes against common wisdom that Canadians would shoot prisoners. The implication should not have been made in the film without proof; there is none.

Concerning the shooting of prisoners at the Abbey d’Ardennes, the narrator states:

“There is still bitter controversy about who issued the orders to shoot the (Canadian) prisoners.”

There is no controversy. The evidence was uncovered by the No. 1 Field Investigation Unit, and Kurt Meyer was found guilty by a court martial and sentenced to death – a sentence later commuted by the late Maj. Gen. Chris Vokes, G.O.C. of the Canadian Army

of Occupation.

From the book *The Trial of Kurt Meyer* by Lt. Bruce MacDonald, the charges of which Kurt Meyer was found guilty were as follows (page 90):

“FIRST CHARGE: COMMITTING A WAR CRIME, in that he in the Kingdom of Belgium and Republic of France during the year 1943 and prior to the 7th day of June 1944, when Commander of 25 SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, in violation of the laws and usages of war, incited and counselled troops under his command to deny quarter to Allied troops.

“FOURTH CHARGE: COMMITTING A WAR CRIME, in that he in the Province of Normandy and Republic of France on or about the 8th day of June 1944, as Commander of 25 SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, was responsible for the killing of prisoners of war in violation of the laws and usages of war, when troops under his command shot and killed seven Canadian prisoners of war at his Headquarters at L’Ancienne Abbaye Ardenne.

“FIFTH CHARGE: COMMITTING A WAR CRIME, in that he in the Province of Normandy and Republic of France on or about the 7th day of June 1944, as Commander of 25 SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, was responsible for the killing of prisoners of war in violation of the laws and usages of war, when troops under his command killed eleven Canadian prisoners of war (other than those referred to in the Third and Fourth Charges) at his Headquarters at l’Ancienne Abbaye Ardenne.”

The book states (page 187):

“...that the Court had found Meyer guilty of inciting and counselling his troops to deny quarter, and of responsibility for the killing of 18 prisoners at his headquarters on June 7th and 8th, as charged in the First, Fourth and Fifth charges.”

General Harry Foster, as President of the Court, pronounced judgement and sentence as follows (*The Trial of Kurt Meyer* page 194):

“Brigadefuhrer Kurt Meyer, the Court has found you guilty, of the First, Fourth and Fifth Charges in the First Charge Sheet.

“The sentence of the Court is that you suffer death by being shot.

“The findings of Guilty and the sentence are subject to confirmation.

“The proceedings are now closed.”

In that there has been some public confusion as to whether the sentence was confirmed, we refer, *The Trial of Kurt Meyer* (page 199) as follows:

“A Government spokesman is reported to have said that the original sentence had never been confirmed by General Vokes as Convening Officer. This is, of course, quite wrong.

Such confirmation could only have been made by the Convening Officer, General Vokes, who, as the record shows, did confirm it, as Convening Officer.”

The sentence of death was later commuted, by General Vokes, to life imprisonment. Lt. Colonel MacDonald provides an insight into General Foster’s views on the connotation, (page 206), as follows:

“...I can only repeat what General Foster, perhaps in a different context, is reported to have said of the reduction in Meyer’s sentence: ‘I suppose they know what they are doing’.”

It would appear justifiable to examine the hypothesis which seems to be put forward in the CBC film, (that what happened to prisoners on both sides is a dark chapter in Normandy). To quote further from Lt. Colonel MacDonald’s book, (page 211):

“What individual soldiers may do in the heat of battle or immediately after is one thing. The cold-blooded shooting of prisoners of war at a rear headquarters after interrogation is quite another, especially if ordered, authorized or encouraged by a general officer. That was the principle established in the Meyer case. There can be no question that the Court found that Meyer had authorized or encouraged the shootings at his Headquarters.”

Lt. Colonel MacDonald concludes with the following:

“Who, if anyone, emerges as a hero from these proceedings? It was the Canadian soldiers, such as Lieutenants Windsor and Williams and those with them. They died bravely as prisoners of war in the best traditions of the service, because they would not betray their comrades or their country by giving information to the enemy. The hero was not Kurt Meyer.”

There may be some confusion in the minds of persons who have not experienced battle conditions at first hand regarding the shooting of unarmed prisoners of war (which was the basis of the charges against Kurt Meyer) and the question of giving “no quarter.” The latter refers to conditions in the heat of battle. It does *not* mean that prisoners, once disarmed and interrogated, are shot. It certainly does not mean that, in close combat conditions, the Canadian troops may well have continued to attack a position, even when the Germans gave an indication that they might want to surrender. There are many instances on record, particularly the German SS, where a feigned surrender was merely to provide an opportunity for the fanatical Hitler youth to respond, when the Canadian troops got closer,

by killing them with machine guns or hidden grenades.

This aspect of the war in Normandy is covered by the British historian, Alexander McKee in his book *Caen: Anvil of Victory* and reported in the Reader's Digest (page 361), *The Canadians at War 1939-1945*, in the following terms:

"Alexander McKee said in *Caen: Anvil of Victory* that, in individual narratives and regimental division histories, there are frequent reports of 'no quarter given on either side from late June on.'

"Other witnesses, wrote McKee, were 'equally emphatic' in declaring the opposite: they have never witnessed the deliberate execution of prisoners - deliberate, as opposed to accidental shootings or misunderstandings. But even here there were sometimes borderline cases, open to misinterpretation by any enemy who witnessed them. The men responsible were under extraordinary strain and tension, knowing that they had to shoot first to stand any chance of staying alive."

Any such instances, if they did occur, would have to be regarded in a much different light than the cold blooded shooting of unarmed prisoners of war – the type of war crime of which the film suggests the Canadians were guilty.

In further comments, the narrator suggests that certain Canadian generals gave orders that the Canadians were to "take no prisoners." There is, however, a difference between "giving no quarter" and "taking no prisoners." The former refers to the conditions of battle. The latter refers to a specific order given by a commander which would result in unarmed enemy being shot. The term "give no quarter" would normally occur *before* the enemy surrendered and/or threw down his arms.

This may seem to be a subtle distinction, but for those who have experienced combat, particularly as was fought by the German SS, the difference is clear indeed.

There is ample evidence that the German SS in Normandy went far beyond the circumstance which would be described as "giving no quarter" and, indeed, did murder Canadians who had already been given the status of prisoners of war, had been removed from the field of battle, and had been interrogated.

The references to the shootings at the Abbey d'Ardennes are puzzling.

The narrator states that the German side of the story is different; and that the Germans were retaliating because the Canadians did not respect the Geneva Convention.

No such statement should be accepted without evidence.

The film goes on, through the words of an actor portraying Kurt Meyer, to refer to “evidence” where Meyer is reading from what we are supposed to presume is a notebook of a Canadian officer, from which he states:

“No prisoners were to be taken.”

There is no evidence of any such orders being given to Canadian officers. It is possible that Meyer was reading from a notebook, and misinterpreted the words.

Certainly, at every ORDERS GROUP, before an infantry attack the question of how to deal with prisoners was covered. In some instances, Infantry Commanders were ordered to detail some of their own men to take prisoners back. In other instances, where it was essential to press forward, the orders were to disarm the prisoners and either leave them or send them to the rear rather than to detail troops needed for the advance to look after them.

Certainly the words in the notebook, which the film suggest Kurt Meyer had, would not be considered as evidence of orders to shoot prisoners. No combat officer in the Canadian Army, has ever been reported giving or receiving such an order.

Meyer is quoted as stating that some Canadian prisoners were asked to verify these orders; and they stated that they were under instructions to the effect that if the taking of prisoners would impede the advance, no prisoners would be taken.

Is the Canadian public expected to accept the word of Kurt Meyer, a convicted criminal, on this question?

The narrator goes on to state: “Some Canadian Generals did give orders to take no prisoners, and there are many reports of such instances occurring. One story comes from the day of the landings on the Normandy Beach. A British sailor claims he watched Canadians march some of their German prisoners behind a sand dune, hoping to get a helmet as a souvenir. Edward Ashworth followed them. He is quoted as saying: ‘the man’s throat was cut. Everyone of them had his throat cut. I turned away sick as a parrot. I didn’t get my tin hat’.”

The producers of the program should produce evidence before making such serious statements. This is one of a number of innuendos where the writers appear to have taken liberties.

The reference to the British Navy veteran will require further investigation. Incidentally, Edward Ashworth’s statement does not indicate that the Germans he said he saw with their throats cut were, in fact, the same German prisoners he said he saw taken behind the wall by Canadian soldiers. As Ross Munro states, the assault troops were armed with knives.

The Germans may have suffered the fatal wounds in the assault. Ashworth may well have

seen the Germans with their throats cut, but he has no evidence that this was done in cold blood – as he expects us to believe.

The other circumstance which makes Ashworth's statement suspect is that the landing beaches were swarming with Provost who would immediately have apprehended Canadian soldiers who killed German prisoners. The actor portraying Ashworth gave an emotional performance. Was this intended to influence the audience against Canadian troops?

The episode where the British sailors supposedly found German PoWs with their throats cut, is not new. It was mentioned in the book *Out Of The Shadows*, by W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous (page 151), in the following terms:

“A certain ruthlessness was exhibited by both sides. On “D” Day, a British seaman, on a landing craft, loading at Courseulles, watched Canadian soldiers march six Germans behind a sand dune some distance away. Bent on getting a souvenir from the prisoners, he ran up the beach, only to find the six ‘all crumpled up....Everyone had his throat cut’.”

It was first written about in a publication by historian C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men And Governments* - 1970, (page 433). It presumably took place in the JUNO BEACH area of the Normandy coast. Two Canadian battalions assaulted in this area. The Regina Rifles landed to the east of the Suelles River; the Royal Winnipeg Rifles to the west of the river mouth. The incident could have only taken south of the beach defence in the area occupied by the Royal Winnipeg Rifles.

When this reference came out in the Stacey book in 1970, the Regimental Historian of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles commenced an exhaustive investigation. None of the survivors who were in the area of the German fortifications, nor immediately behind them, during the “D” Day landing, could ever recall an incident of this nature; neither could they credit that this could have taken place.

The late Lieut. Jim Bulloch, a Platoon Commander in the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, stated in a letter (Regimental Archives):

“There were at least two dozen German PoWs being guarded by a Corporal and two men from the Provost Corps. Also, our Commanding Officer, Lieut. Col. John Meldram, was moving about the area with his TAC Headquarters' staff. As we all know, John was a very kindly gentlemen-soldier. He would never had allowed maltreatment of German prisoners.”

“If, as the report indicates, there were dead Germans with the type of wounds described in the report, the only explanations would be that either they were killed by our own guys in the initial assault – there certainly was some hand-to-hand fighting; or, the other consideration is that they could have been

killed by their own Officers or NCOs. Certainly, some of the German defenders attempted to run away during the initial bombardment or possibly during the assault.”

The inclusion of this unsubstantiated and unlikely depiction of Canadians supposedly shooting or killing German PoWs hardly pays tribute to the Canadians which the film claims to honour.

Kurt Meyer, portrayed by an actor, depicts a scene of horror where his officers, handcuffed, were “horribly slaughtered.”

The narrator does preface this scene by stating that it took place on the *Russian* front, but a one-time viewer, in my opinion, could be entitled to the inference that the scenes were from the Battle of Normandy.

In the book, *The Trial Of Kurt Meyer*, by Lieut. Col. Bruce MacDonald, Commanding Officer of the No. 1 Field Investigation Unit established to gather evidence regarding war crimes (established under SHAEF — page 15), the statement is made:

“During the period from the 7th to 17th of June, 1944, a space of only ten days, it was established that 134 Canadian prisoners of war had been murdered by members of the 12th SS Panzer Division (Hitler Jugend). xxx Indications are that many more than 134 were similarly murdered after capture, but reference here is only to those instances where certain proof exists.”

This was a war crime of enormous magnitude. If similar occurrences had taken place against German soldiers, it is a certainty that they would have been common knowledge.

Reference is made to the narrator’s statement that generals gave orders to shoot prisoners.

In *Meeting Of Generals* by Tony Foster, page 334, two incidents are mentioned where supposedly, Canadian Generals issued orders to the effect that ‘no prisoners were to be taken.’ He refers to a meeting in Brighton, England:

“In 1941, I attended a meeting called by Major General Victor Odlum of all 2nd Division officers of Brighton. He stated categorically that ‘the Canadians will take no prisoners’.”

This was at a time when the Canadian Forces were neither engaged, nor were about to be engaged.

The quotation from the book continues:

“Two officers of the Essex Scottish served under Major-General Vokes in Italy and had read Vokes’s bulletin stating: ‘we will take no prisoners.’ Once the Senior British Commander, General Sir Oliver Leese, got wind of the affair he ordered all bulletins and evidence of them destroyed.”

This is only hearsay evidence and is hardly strong enough to support the contention made by the narrator in the film.

Tony Foster’s book makes a number of other references to supposed incidents, indicating that reports of shooting of German PoWs by Canadians were forwarded to the International Red Cross. The author of this submission made enquiries from the International Red Cross in Geneva in August of 1992, and was advised that, if the Red Cross had knowledge of such incidents, they would have been reported to the Canadian Army. No evidence of such reports having been made by the Red Cross have surfaced.

General Vokes is quoted again in *Meeting of Generals* (page 489) concerning shooting of prisoners. He is quoted as telling Lt. General J.C. Murchie, Chief of Staff at CMHQ and Vincent Massey, the Canadian High Commissioner: “I told them about all sorts of things that had gone on during wartime that were not according to the Rules and Usages of War. Every commanding officer I knew had at one time or another told his troops to “take no prisoners.” In Sicily and Italy, the only way we rid ourselves of Italian camp followers was to shoot the bastards before they robbed us blind...”

Again, this reference may well indicate the views of General Vokes, who first confirmed and then commuted the death sentence for Kurt Meyer. It is not evidence, and there are no reports of prisoners of war being shot as a result of the orders from General Vokes to take no prisoners.

The narrator states: “While the German atrocity in this garden and others like it, were prosecuted, reports of Allied atrocities against Germans were never pursued. The message seems clear. War crimes committed in a good cause are politically acceptable – perhaps regrettable – but such crimes are prosecuted only on the side that loses the war.”

This statement is suspect in several places. Firstly, while the military authorities and the RCMP today have evidence of an atrocity at the Chateau D’Audrieu involving another German SS General, Wilhelm Mohnke, he was not prosecuted.

Secondly, it is blatantly misleading to say that Canadian atrocities were never investigated. In the first place, a search of historical records fail to indicate compelling evidence of any Canadian atrocities. If evidence had been brought forward, the Provost Corps would certainly have investigated and prosecutions would have ensued as a matter of practice.

Although it does not seem to be well-known, the German government, by decree of September 4, 1939, established a “War Crimes Bureau.” The terms of reference are quoted in the book, *The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, 1939-1945*, by Alfred M. de Zayas, an American graduate of the Harvard Law School now employed by the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations in Geneva. The book was originally published in German in 1979, then translated and published in English in 1989.

The establishment of the Bureau is explained at page 109, as follows:

“The decree of 4 September 1939 gave the War Crimes Bureau authority to investigate not only enemy violations of international law but also ‘such accusations as are raised by foreign countries against the Wehrmacht.’”

It is of particular importance, in commenting upon the CBC film, to note that one of the (if not the) major responsibilities of the Bureau was to investigate “...enemy violations of international law...” Mr. de Zayas’ book makes prominent mention of the instances in Normandy involving the shooting of Canadian prisoners of war. No reference was apparently found by Mr. de Zayas, however, of the shooting of German PoWs by Canadians, – even though this is strongly implied in the CBC film.

The reports in the book, *The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, 1939-1945*, concerning the shooting of Canadians is found at page 116, as follows:

“Following the Allied landing in Normandy on 4 June 1944, when numerous British, Canadian, and American units reported that the Germans were taking no prisoners, it did not take long for the governments of Great Britain and the United States to appeal to the Protecting Power. The Swiss legation in Berlin delivered to the German Foreign Office a British note dated 1 August 1944, describing some of the incidents: “Supreme Commander of Allied Expeditionary Force received reports ... that after capture by German armed forces certain Canadian officers and men had been shot ... On or about June 8th one Canadian officer and 18 other ranks met their death in the vicinity of Pavie in the Department of Calvados, Normandy, at or near Chateau Audrieux ... His Majesty’s Government are left in no doubt that they were wilfully murdered by members of the 12th SS Panzer Division (Hitler Jugend) 12th SS Reconnaissance Battalion by order of certain of their officers.”

“The governments of Great Britain, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and India demanded that ‘an immediate searching investigation’ be made and that those German officers and men who were ‘responsible for this flagrant violations of laws and customs of war respecting prisoners of war’ be punished and that the German government ‘promulgate strict orders which will prevent the repetition in future of such an occurrence.’ Another protest

note dated 7 September 1944 described an incident involving the killing of seven Canadian soldiers at or near Mouen, Normandy on or about 17 June 1944.”

De Zayas goes on to state that Germany challenged the conclusions of the British Commission that investigated the killings, “...because neither the content of the witness testimony nor the names of the witnesses were given.” The German response did state, however:

“But the note went on to admit that ‘the investigations of the alleged killings near Chateau Audrieux could not be completed because the majority of the members of the 12th SS Panzer Division had been either killed or captured in the first days of the invasion. With respect to the alleged killings near Mouen, the investigations were similarly negative, since those units of the 12th SS Reconnaissance Battalion had been wiped out in the fighting on 26 July 1944.’”

Germany continued to pursue its investigations of the killing of Canadian PoWs, but the de Zayas book concludes on this subject as follows:

“On 28 February 1945 the German Foreign Office again consulted the Wehrmacht operations staff, but the results are unknown. In view of the impending collapse of the Reich, it is doubtful that the inquiry was actually pursued any further.”

Whether intentional or not, the treatment given to the PoW situation by this program is an insult to Canadian fighting men. It places them in the same category as the German SS in regard to treatment of prisoners – a condemnation for which there is no proof.

To add a personal note (which may not be relevant), in four months of combat, the author never heard of an incident of this nature; neither did he ever serve with one soldier whom he would consider capable of killing another human being in cold blood who had surrendered. It is not in the nature of the Canadian soldier – or Canadians generally, to carry out such brutal acts.

Moreover, is this the impression we wish to leave with future young Canadians regarding those men who believed enough in freedom to volunteer to go overseas and oppose the tyranny that was loose in Hitler’s Germany?

Conclusion

In the previously-mentioned radio interview (April 22, 1992), Terrence McKenna, co-producer of the series, stated:

“I think I’m in favour of any kind of review by independent historians to establish the veracity of everything that was in these films, because I’m absolutely confident, absolutely confident of the accuracy of everything that was said in these films.”

This submission is intended to raise questions concerning the accuracy of some of the statements made in the film. It should be stated, however, that the concerns which have been communicated to the author of this submission have indicated anger, frustration and criticism regarding *other aspects* of the film. In general these include:

- (1) The attempts, through the use of actors, to define character flaws in some of the individuals depicted.
- (2) The over-emphasis on some of the pathos and emotions as indicated by:
 - (a) The air woman who supposedly experienced the loss of her boyfriend on a bombing raid;
 - (b) Comments of the actor portraying a member of The Black Watch prior to the Fontenay Battle when he makes statements suggesting that, in training, they were always assured of artillery support etc.;
 - (c) Sir Arthur Harris, in practically all of his scenes, depicted as an unsympathetic, sinister character.
- (3) The effect of the “tone of voice” of the narrator when he desires to put particular emphasis on a subject; his demeanour could not be considered as impartial.
- (4) The portrayal of Germans, depicted either through actors or in person; such being accorded a “sympathetic” presence. These included:
 - The actor playing the role of Kurt Meyer.
 - The former Luftwaffe members.
 - The former Fire Chief of the city of Hamburg.
 - The two German female survivors.

- (5) The use of the film by the producers, as a vehicle to express their personal philosophies and sentiment.

Since the film, there have been a number of statements made by persons who were involved in the production. Mention has already been made, in this submission, of same.

As further example, we would mention a letter published in the *Kingston Whig Standard* on April 4, 1992, signed by D'Arcy O'Connor, Associate Producer of *The Valour and the Horror* in which he states:

“This series is a serious endeavour to tell little known stories of Canada’s military history to a large, mostly young audience…….The series touched many; people too young to remember the war finally saw what their fathers and grandfathers had lived through.”

“We tried to be as truthful and accurate as we could. It was the least we owed to those who died.”

This has been the objective. In examining the film, however, the CRTC is asked to consider whether the “people too young to remember the war” should be the target for a film which, in the opinion of many veteran participants, does not accurately portray what they “lived through”.

In the comments from those who produced the film we have seen, time and again, the self-serving suggestion is that the public generally approved of the film. The problem, of course, is that the general public would have no way of knowing whether they were viewing an accurate portrayal.

In his letter published in the *Kingston Whig Standard* Mr. O'Connor states that in the research,

“all published histories and a dozen unpublished manuscripts were reviewed. We conferred with prominent Canadian and French military historians and corresponded with German historians.”

The only part of this statement which we could challenge is to what extent the researchers conferred with prominent Canadian historians.

As we point out in this submission, most, if not all, Canadian authors and historians who have written about the Normandy Campaign did not consider that the disaster of The Black Watch at Fontenay deserved special mention. Neither did the publication *The Royal Canadian Air Force At War 1939-1945* (1990) comment on any of the air battles in a controversial manner, as the Bomber Command segment does!

The purpose of this submission is not necessarily to register a complaint about Parts II and

III of the series. It is, instead, to direct the attention of the CBC (and other) to what are perceived to be flaws in the production; to challenge some of the assumptions; and, finally, to promote public debate on a series which the CBC, itself, heralded as an important event in the life of this country.

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Appendix I

Summary of comments:

- (a) Telephone calls (204; that is from the general public). Note: The telephone calls were received through the 1-800 lines of which The War Amputations of Canada which maintains four, and included:
 - (i) Key Tag enquiries at Toronto and;
 - (ii) General enquiries at National Headquarters. Also some calls were received through our 19 Branches across Canada.
- (b) Letters from the general public (227) plus 14 comprehensive submissions from Member-Associations of NCVA.

It was noted that there was a general groundswell of criticism and observations concerning some of the techniques used in the series, notably:

- (1) The opinionated comments by the narrator.
- (2) Selective mention of unidentified sources for statements.
- (3) What was termed “overacting” or “over-emphasis” by actors portraying the number of actual persons. Some specific examples were noted such as: Air Vice Marshal Harris; Major General Foster and Lt. General Guy Simmons; Corporal Boutilier.

Other major complaints were:

- (1) The suggestion that there was widespread shooting by Canadians of German Prisoners of War.
- (2) The scenes from Germany of bombing gave unwarranted emphasis to the death of civilians (including children).
- (3) The actual interviews with the Fire Chief of Hamburg and two survivors (women) created an emphasis of sympathy, without any balance concerning deaths of persons on the Allied side.

Using technique of opinionated commentary, the Germans were given the high moral ground and the Canadians were made to look like despicable and cruel sadists.

Examples:

- (1) The decision of Generals Simmons and Keller to proceed with the attack at Tilly and later at Verrières regardless of cost.
- (2) Shooting of prisoners.
- (3) The indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets.

Combat army personnel were described as ill trained and there was an element of cowardice suggested.

Example:

- a) The North Shore Regiment's Corporal stating that his orders were to shoot any man who refused to get off the landing craft on D-Day.
- b) There was so much "overkill" in the description of lack of moral fibre involving air crew who refused to fly further missions.
- c) Sir Arthur Harris, Commander in Chief, of Bomber Command was caricatured as an evil, sadistic, pompous, ass, with no consideration for his air crews, intent on only killing German civilians.

This, despite the facts that:

- a) Harris was acting under orders.
- b) The bombing of German cities was the only method of crippling the German War effort.
- c) The famous memorandum of April 14, 1942, from Marshal Portal, Chief of the Air Staff was indeed secret – but so were all directives. This did not mean that bomber crews were ignorant of the fact that, in order to carry out the strategic bombing, it would be necessary to kill some civilians.
- d) Unfortunately some children were killed. Germany could have taken the same steps as England did – that is, to remove the children from the danger areas.

The program on Bomber Command suggested, in many ways, that Canadians were morally wrong to have bombed German cities. Nowhere was it stated that this was essential for a number of reasons set out in Harris' own book *Bomber Offensive*, including:

- a) The need to provide an answer to the criticism of the Russians regarding the failure to mount a second front.
- b) The need to destroy Hitler's secret weapons before they could destroy England.
- c) The need to cripple the German war effort so that a successful landing could be made.

There was an implication that Winston Churchill questioned the necessity of bombing civilians. He rescinded this criticism when he realized the strategic and tactical necessity of such bombings.

Harris was depicted as being ruthless about casualties. This view was not shared generally by bomber crews. As proof, one respondent makes reference to the book *Reap The Whirlwind* about Canada's bomber force. The book states that the veterans of 6 Group, "almost to a man, were unanimous in their admiration of and respect for the late Sir Arthur Harris."

Seizing upon the Black Watch tragedy in the Normandy Program at the Battle of Fontenay at Verrières Ridge was seen as questionable tactic. There were six Canadian regiments involved in this battle. One other - the North Nova Scotia Regiment, ran into a disaster at Tilly. General Simmons had the good sense, however, to call off the operation.

The Ridge was eventually taken and the way cleared for the decisive victories in the battle towards Falaise which succeeded in trapping some 60,000 German soldiers.

The treatment in the Normandy segment regarding PoWs is seen as one sided. The program did admit that the German SS murdered Canadian PoWs, but suggested it was in retaliation for the murder of German PoWs by Canadians. No evidence was produced to substantiate this.

The statement in the film that instances of German PoWs being murdered by Canadians were not investigated may be due to the possibility that there were no such instances. Some Canadian Generals did say they had given orders to take no prisoners. There is no proof, however, that these orders resulted in the shooting of German PoWs. Moreover, the order "take no prisoners" was open to misinterpretation. It usually meant that German prisoners would be disarmed and left to be picked up as support troops advanced.