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Submission to: MR. KEITH SPICER

Chairman
Canadian Radio-Television and
Telecommunications Commission

Copies for: MR. GERARD VEILLEUX

President
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

MS JOAN PENNEFATHER

Commissioner
National Film Board

Subject:

CBC SERIES - THE VALOUR AND THE HORROR

Produced by:

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

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Synopsis

The Broadcasting Act and the Guidelines of Journalistic Policy of the Canadian Broadcasting Commission require a reasonable standard of accuracy in the programming of the Corporation. *The Valour and the Horror* is shown to contain a number of serious inaccuracies. It is our contention, therefore, that the remedies enshrined in the Broadcasting Act and/or CBC policies should be applied to such extent as the CBC and/or the CRTC deem necessary.

We shall, in this submission, outline the legislation and policy statements which we consider applicable.

It would be necessary first, however to show that such inaccuracies do exist, and in the pages following we shall address such matters. (We have set out a considerable number of such inaccuracies in our submission to the CRTC of May 4, 1992 and in our previous submissions to you. Further flaws in the series will be dealt with in this submission.)

Prior to so doing, we shall proceed on the assumption that this submission will be considered in conjunction with the submissions which we have already sent to the Ombudsman under dates of May 22, 1992 and June 11, 1992, respectively.

We also ask for consideration of submissions made to the hearings of the Senate Sub-Committee on June 25 and 26, 1992, and the views as outlined in the report of the proceedings of the hearings.

In addition, we are aware of a number of submissions from historians and other interested parties which have been directed to the Office of Journalistic Policy of the Corporation, and/or to the Corporation itself. Presumably, all such material will be taken under study by the Ombudsman.

It is the intent herein, therefore, to focus on only one thesis in the series; that of "area bombing" and its concomitant - the injury or death of non-combatants. There can be no doubt that it is a major, if not THE major, issue in the current controversy.

It is contended herein that the producers have taken the line of argument that the policy of Bomber Command, in such respect, was neither justified nor necessary; and the effect represents deeds which should not have been permitted on moral grounds.

It seems clear from statements made in Episode Two (Death by Moonlight), and in subsequent statements issued by, or in the name of, the President and/or Chairman of the Corporation, that such hypothesis exists and has been readily admitted to by spokespersons for the producers or the Corporation.

The crux of the issue, in our view, is that there are no reasonable grounds for the scenarios portrayed by, or on behalf of the Corporation in regard to:

- (1) the statements concerning the area bombing policy; or
- (2) the assumptions in the film that, given the circumstances which applied during the “crisis period” of the Second World War, such acts constituted a violation of the principles of humanity; and those charged with the responsibility for carrying out such acts are guilty of immoral conduct.

We shall attempt, therefore, to set out herein an outline of the situation which led to the development of the area bombing policy.

It will be necessary, as well, to cite the literature and findings of historians and authors who have criticized the policy; and, in doing so, raised serious questions concerning strategic tactics which destroyed the lives of a considerable number of the civilian population of Germany and other enemy-occupied countries.

There are, indeed, certain publications which support this contention; they will be cited.

We shall, however, indicate other sources which rebut the findings of those who support the thesis in the CBC film. We believe the arguments against area bombing, and its consequences, have been rebutted COMPLETELY.

In other words, the policy was justified under the circumstances of the time; and has remained so in the light of passing years. Therefore, when a thorough study is made of the reasons for the bombing policy, it is clear that the theories put forward in the Bomber Command episode of *The Valour and the Horror* are flawed.

It seems tragic that the public perception of what was one of the most significant parts of the “war effort” of the Allies has been distorted. The accusations regarding area bombing and its “immorality” have no basis in fact.

The bombing policy of the Commonwealth Air Forces was part of the Combined Bombing Offensive, approved by Churchill and Roosevelt at the Casablanca Conference in January, 1943. This policy included the warning that German cities would be bombed unless Germany agreed to unconditional surrender.

Therefore, the producers are, in actual fact, criticizing the official war policy of the Allied Governments.

It can, and will, be clearly shown that this policy was adopted as the ONLY means of striking back at Germany, at a time when the threat of the Allies losing the war was very real.

This leaves open the question of whether the CBC, under its journalistic policy, is justified in attacking a major decision of the Allied Command?

It is accepted that such condemnation might be warranted if those responsible for the film could produce compelling evidence that the governments of the Commonwealth and the United States were wrong to a substantial degree. No such evidence is brought forth in the film.

If their premise now is that, as journalists, they are free to make judgements, however faulty, we are then led into the exercise of deciding whether such freedom of expression is consistent with responsible broadcasting, as defined in the Broadcasting Act and CBC policy.

As will be shown in the opinions of renowned military historians set out later in this submission, one would have to understand fully the situation, as it existed in the critical years of 1942 and early 1943, to sit in judgement on something so important to history as the decision to attempt to turn the tide of war in favour of the Allies by massive bombing attacks on German cities.

It is our contention that the criticisms in respect of the area bombing issue, and other unsupported hypotheses to which reference is made elsewhere, contravene the principles of the legislation governing broadcasting in Canada, and the journalistic policy of the broadcaster; all of which appears to be beyond the mandate of the CBC.

Broadcast Legislation and CBC Policy

The Statutory Authority of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and the CBC Ombudsman

Parliament has bestowed upon government agencies such as the CRTC and the CBC Ombudsman appropriate powers that can be exercised in proper circumstances should it be found that any program broadcast in Canada fails to satisfy the broadcasting standards of fairness, accuracy, comprehensiveness, balance and integrity as provided under the governing legislation of these particular agencies.

Upon a review of the legislative mandate and authority of the above-cited government agencies, certain powers are granted to these organizations in circumstances where broadcasting standards are contravened.

As an example, it is part of the statutory policy of the CRTC that a significant part of its mandate is to "...require broadcasters to ensure fairness and balance in their programming, which must also be of a high standard..."

Furthermore, it is well-established that the CRTC is authorized to respond promptly to any complaints which are forwarded to the CRTC Secretary-General or Regional Offices. Upon receiving a complaint the Commission may ask the licensee for an explanation, begin an investigation if necessary or in some cases call the licensee to a public hearing. All complaint letters are to be made public; i.e. anyone can have access to them and they are later reviewed by the Commission when it receives an application for license renewal.

With specific reference to the Broadcasting Act itself, Section 3 of the Act sets out the broadcasting policy for Canada as provided by Parliament. The provisions contained under Section 3 are rather all-encompassing. We consider, however, that the matter at issue would involve specifically the following subsections:

Section 3(1)(d)(i) indicates that the Canadian Broadcasting system should serve to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada.

Section (3)(1)(g) provides that the programming originated by broadcasting undertakings should be of high standard.

Section 3(1)(h) provides that all persons who are licensed to carry on broadcasting undertakings have a responsibility for the programs they broadcast, etc.

Under Part II of the Broadcasting Act the objects and powers of the CRTC in relation to broadcasting are outlined. Pursuant to Section 5, the CRTC is directed to:

“...regulate and supervise all aspects of the Canadian broadcasting system with a view to implementing the broadcasting policy set out in Subsection 3(1) and in so doing shall have regard to the regulatory policy set out in Section 5(2).”

In addition, under Section 12, the following is provided:

Section 12(1): Where it appears to the Commission that:

- (a) any person has failed to do any act or thing that the person is required to do pursuant to this Part or to any regulation, licence, decision or order made or issued by the Commission under this Part, or has done or is doing any act or thing in contravention of this Part, or of any such regulation, licence, decision or order...the Commission may enquire into, hear and determine the matter.

Section 12(2) states the Commission may, by order, require any person to do forthwith or within or at any time and in any manner specified by the Commission, any act or thing that the person is or may be required to do pursuant to this Part or to any regulation, licence, decision or order made or issued by the Commission under this Part and may, by order, forbid the doing or continuing of any act or thing that is contrary to this Part or to any such regulation, licence, decision or order.

Section 18 under the caption “Hearings and Procedure” provides:

- (1) Except where otherwise provided, the Commission shall hold a public hearing in connection with:
 - (a) the issue of a licence, other than a licence to carry on a temporary network operation;
 - (b) the suspension or revocation of a licence;
 - (c) the establishing of any performance objectives for the purposes of paragraph 11(2)(b); and
 - (d) the making of an order under subsection 12(2)

Section 18(3) provides that the Commission may hold a public hearing, make a report, issue any decision and give any approval in connection with *any complaint or representation* made to the Commission or in connection with any other matter within its jurisdiction under this Act if it is satisfied that it would be in the public interest to do so.

In relation to the function of the CBC Ombudsman, we have noted that the CBC president, Gérard Veilleux, has made a number of policy statements of late describing the nature of the CBC Ombudsman role in monitoring the journalistic performance of the CBC:

“In order to ensure that the highest standards are maintained and that the CBC’s listeners and viewers are able to direct serious and unresolved complaints about CBC journalism to an impartial and independent body, the CBC has an Ombudsman - Office of Journalistic Policy and Practices.

The Office has a mandate to ensure that journalists, program heads and managers are thoroughly familiar and comply with the CBC’s Journalistic policy.

...Because of the complexities of contemporary life, the matter of trust in the media is of crucial importance. The media must therefore be fair, accurate, thorough, comprehensive and balanced in the presentation of information...”

The CBC policy document then provides for a specific mandate in relation to the office of the Ombudsman and states that the Ombudsman has the power to:

- (i) “...act as a review authority in cases where a complainant who had initially contacted an individual journalist, program unit or department of the Corporation was not satisfied by the response received, and
- (ii) ...to investigate and respond to complaints and comments addressed to the President, the Chairman or the Members of the Board of Directors or to the Office itself.”

The policy statement describes the various roles of the Ombudsman and makes clear that this mandate is considered independent of the CBC’s media management and has been established to ensure the maintenance and revision of the Corporation’s journalistic and related policies.

We would draw attention to the recent observations made by the Chairman of the CBC, Mr. Patrick Watson, in a speech delivered in Saint John, New Brunswick on April 30, 1992:

“...We have learned from long experience how important freedom of the press can be. And we are fortunate to have that right protected on our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

But the next question has to be this: When the press is wrong, should it not be held accountable?

At the CBC we have given a great deal of thought over the years to the accountability of broadcasters.

And we have come out where Milton came out — in favour of a system of accountability where “complaints are freely heard, deeply considered and speedily reformed.”

Furthermore, at page 12 of his speech he underlines the function of the CBC Ombudsman as follows:

“One step in that direction has been the establishment of the CBC Ombudsman. It reports through the President to the Board of Directors. It is independent of the Corporation’s media management lines.

Its basic role is very straightforward. It is to ensure that serious and unsatisfied complaints about CBC journalism are addressed by an impartial and independent body.

In short, if a viewer or listener is not satisfied by the response he or she gets from a journalist or a program unit or a CBC department, there is a direct access to an arbitrator.

The Ombudsman’s office also provides a way for the President and the Board of directors – your representatives, remember – to get an independent view on particularly sensitive, ethical or journalistic issues.

What that means is that there is a dynamic, ongoing process of questioning that is constantly reviewing the performance of the CBC’s journalism. This is not viewed as an imposition by journalists. Far from it, they are often the ones who raise issues and seek after higher standards.”

It is our view that in presenting our briefs to the CBC Ombudsman, we expect a thorough and independent evaluation of *The Valour and the Horror* series will be done, so as to ensure that the journalistic policies vis.a.vis. fairness, accuracy, thoroughness, comprehensiveness, balance, etc. have been achieved in the series.

We would wish to reiterate that it is not the intent of our intervention to seek a censorship of the film, but rather a recognition that these legislative mandates have been provided by Parliament to ensure accuracy, fairness, balance and integrity in the broadcasting field.

It is widely appreciated that the power of the media is substantial and that Parliament has created these statutory bodies with specific powers to ensure that any distortion of fact or misrepresentative works of history are subject to strict scrutiny and monitory.

It remains our view that as representatives of the veterans’ community, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the highest standards are maintained with respect to the historic treatment of Canada’s role in major armed conflicts. In our view, to allow a series such as *The Valour and the Horror* to go unchallenged would have the resultant effect of conveying a message of disrespect and dishonour to Canada’s war effort. Most importantly, in our opinion should this type of series be allowed to carry the stature of credibility that might exist otherwise, it has the potentially dangerous consequence of misleading future generations of Canadians in relation to the contributions made by Canadian Veterans in time of war.

N.B. The author is indebted to Brian N. Forbes, B. Comm., LL.B. Hon Secretary-General, NCVA, for his assistance in the preparation of this chapter.

Hypothesis of the Producers Regarding Area Bombing and Morality

The concept that the area bombing policy exceeds the bounds of “morality” is a central theme in *Death by Moonlight*. This concept was developed in the film in a number of scenarios. Presumably, it is necessary, for the purposes of this submission, to make only brief references. The following examples are cited:

The background is the Lancaster Bomber, mounted at the Toronto waterfront. The narrator states:

Narration: The Lancaster was the main weapon of the bomber war. It was an efficient killing machine. It could fly for nearly nine hours and could carry up to ten tons of bombs. Thousands of Canadian airmen were killed in these aircraft. Hundreds of thousands of Germans were killed by them.

Narration: The real policy, to intentionally kill civilians, originated with Air Chief Sir Charles Portal.

Wing Commander Marvin Fleming, played by an actor states:

They started it. They asked for it, and no, we don't feel very badly.”

Martin Becker, a former German Fighter Pilot, regarding a shooting down of Allied bombers, is quoted as stating:

“Any inhibitions that any of us had disappeared as soon as we saw our cities burning on the ground.”

At a Memorial Ceremony in Germany. In speaking of the German Fighter Squadrons, the Narrator says:

Narration: They believe they have nothing to be ashamed of.

Freeman Dyson, a statistician employed at Bomber Command Headquarters under Air Marshal Harris, is quoted, by an actor, as follows:

“The night fighters and their supporting organization put up an astonishing performance, continuing to fight and cause us serious losses until their last airfield was overrun and Hitler's Germany ceased to exist. They ended the war morally undefeated. They had the advantage of knowing what they were fighting for, not in those last weeks of war for Hitler, but for the preservation of what was left of their homes and families, their cities and their people. We had given them, at the end of the war, the one thing they lacked at the beginning, a clean cause to fight for.”

Narration: A lot of German Fighter Pilots still have very mixed feelings about the

tasks performed by their adversaries in Bomber Command.

Narration: It (a park which at one time was rubble in Berlin from bombings) makes it hard to picture the damage and misery the bombs inflicted on German civilians. In Hamburg, these are the canals that were filled with charred bodies after the firestorm of July 1943.

The next scenes commence with a sculpture commemorating a mass grave in Hamburg and a meeting between two former RCAF bomber crew and two German women who experienced the bombing. Obviously, from the comments of the German civilians, the intent was to portray the bombing of Hamburg, not as a military target, but as an act for which the Allies should feel extreme guilt.

Narration: The German victims of Bomber Command are estimated at 593,000, most of them women and children. After the war was over, many airmen were overcome with doubts about the morality of the area bombing they took part in.

Martin Favreau, a former airman of Bomber Command, states (through an actor):

“We must have killed a lot of people with those big bombs we had there. A lot of people were put away. It hurt us you know. It will hurt me for the rest of my life, because I think I had no right to kill those people.”

Freeman Dyson states (through an actor):

“At the beginning of the war, I was a follower of Ghandi, morally opposed to all violence. After a year of war I retreated and said, ‘Unfortunately it seems bombing is necessary to win the war, but I am morally opposed to bombing cities indiscriminately.’ When I arrived at Bomber Command and discovered we were bombing cities indiscriminately, I said: ‘This morally justified as it’s helping win the war.’ A year later I said, ‘Our bombing is not helping win the war, but at least I’m helping save the lives of bomber crews.’ In the last spring of the war I had no excuses and had no moral position left.”

Narration: They (bomber crews) were treated as an embarrassment — they had been ordered into the skies over Germany to bomb cities, and then they were blamed for the civilian deaths that resulted.

If there was ever any doubt as to the accusations in the film concerning “the thrust” that area bombing was immoral, the statements from CBC spokesman, made, following the controversy which was raised by the film, eliminate any possibility of doubt:

In the letter from Gérard 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.”

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 Portal Memorandum. The implication is that they were expressing doubts about the morality of bombing civilians.

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 whom you saw in the series, seemed to have given that a lot of thought since then.”

Rationale for Area Bombing Policy

Death by Moonlight is an unsubstantiated and insupportable attack upon the British and American peoples and their leaders in regard to the defensive policies when these countries were under siege by the aggression of Nazi Germany.

The major theme of the episode concerns the killing of the citizens of an enemy country through bombing from the air.

This is a charge difficult to challenge unless one is familiar with all the circumstances which applied at that time. Any fair-minded examination of these circumstances requires a complete knowledge of the policies of the political and military leaders of the countries involved.

For the purposes of this submission, it is intended only to deal with the historical bases and statements of the Allies. There is no requirement to outline herein the acts of aggression which preceded the Declarations of War by the United States and Great Britain against Germany. In fact, the producers/directors of *Death by Moonlight* have in the main avoided any such references and it seems safe to suggest that they assumed that the aims of this aggression were so well-known that no reference was required as a prerequisite to the thesis put forward in their production.

If we are to determine the background of the development of the bombing policy attacked in *Death by Moonlight*, it is reasonable to commence, firstly, with some references to Lord Hugh Trenchard. He is known as “the Father of the Royal Air Force” and “the architect, the patron saint of modern air power” throughout the world.

Lord Trenchard’s policies, developed over decades, were enunciated in a memorandum (part of which is quoted hereunder) to the War Cabinet in Great Britain:

We quote from *Trenchard Man of Vision*, by Andrew Boyle (London: Collins, 1962) (p. 727-28)

In August, 1942, Trenchard inveighed against the idea of a Second Front in Europe in a forcefully argued paper which Churchill circulated to the Cabinet. Its tenor can be judged from these extracts:

“If we are to win the war in a reasonable time we must avoid entanglement in land campaigns on the mainland of Europe and instead put everything into air-power (British and American) against the enemy’s vital spots. If we can put such force into attack from the air German morale and ability to continue the war will be broken....At present very considerable air resources are being employed on two-dimensional operations in the Atlantic which are purely defensive....the place to hit the submarines is where they are made and to mine the seas where they emerge instead only of hunting them over the illimitable area...Today air-power decides the issue in every field. Only by means of it was the situation saved in Libya and Egypt.

Malta can only be held if we can hold or defeat the attack from the air on our essential convoys. The raid at Dieppe was only possible by the fullest use of air-power. Its success or otherwise can be judged by what we achieved in the air...

“Air, the new dimension, the new power in military science, has given the Allied nations the great alternative. If we decide to use it with determination and concentration we can not only save millions of lives but we can shorten the war by months, perhaps by years...

“As the enemy conquered Poland and France by their ‘tank blitz,’ so can we smash the German machine by the ‘bomber blitz....”

Lord Trenchard’s views were of global interest and it is germane to this COMMENTARY to quote his remarks concerning the principles of war as they applied to bombing of civilian targets.

We quote from Trenchard Man of Vision, by Andrew Boyle (p. 576-77);

So, in a reply which became the cornerstone of R.A.F. strategic thinking until “Bomber” Harris translated theory into practice between 1942 and 1945, he set down the air doctrine of warfare:

“The object of all three services,” he agreed, “is the same: to defeat the enemy nation, not merely its army, navy or air force. For any army to do this, it is almost always necessary as a preliminary step to defeat the enemy’s army....It is not, however, necessary for an air force, in order to defeat the enemy nation, to defeat its armed forces first....

“This does not mean that air fighting will not take place. On the contrary, intense air fighting will be inevitable, but it will not take the form of a series of battles between the opposing air forces to gain supremacy as a first step....Nor does it mean that attacks on air bases will not take place. It will from time to time certainly be found advantageous to turn to the attack on an enemy air base, but such attacks will not be the main operation...The stronger side, by developing the more powerful offensive, will provoke in his weaker enemy increasingly insistent calls for the protective employment of aircraft. In this way he will throw the enemy on to the defensive; and it will be in this manner that air superiority will be obtained and not by direct destruction of his forces.”

Conscious of the element of frightfulness inherent in bombing as an act of war, Trenchard next posed the question: Is an air offensive contrary to international law or the dictates of humanity? No international law, he noted, yet covered the subject, though a set of rules drafted at the Hague in 1922-3 by a commission of jurists admitted the legality of air attacks on military objectives.

“Such objectives,” said Trenchard, “may be situated in centres of population

in which their destruction from the air will result in casualties also to the neighbouring civilian population, in the same way as the long-range bombardment of a defended coastal town by a naval force results also in the incidental destruction of civilian life and property. The fact that air attacks may have that result is no reason for regarding the bombing as illegitimate, provided all reasonable care is taken to confine the scope of the bombing to the military objective. Otherwise a belligerent would be able to secure complete immunity for his war manufacturers by locating them in a large city which would in effect, become neutral territory — a position which the opposing belligerent would never accept...”

Every kind of war material produced by an enemy, “from battleships to boots,” would be fair game to the bomber, though “I do not wish for a moment to imply that the air by itself can finish the war. It will materially assist, and will be one of the many means of exercising pressure on the enemy, in conjunction with sea-power and blockade and the defeat of his armies.”

Aircraft, operating with the army and navy, would have a necessary role in future land and sea battles, but “the weight of the air forces will be more effectively delivered against the targets above than against the enemy’s armed forces...In the course of a single day’s attack upon the aerodromes of the enemy perhaps fifty aeroplanes could be destroyed — whereas a modern industrial state will produce 100 in a day, and production will far more than replace any destruction we can hope to do in the forward zone....In the same way, instead of attacking the rifle and machine-guns in the trench where they can exact the highest price from us for the smallest gain, we shall attack direct the factory where these are made....and therefore more successfully assist the army in its direct attack on the enemy’s army...”

Another oracle regarding the question of aerial bombardment was Gen. Jan Christiaan Smuts, a greatly respected South African, who had been requested by the British Government to review the question of the use of air power. In the report dated August 17, 1917, he stated that the counter defensive was the best form of defence.

The following is quoted from Maurice Harvey’s book *The Allied Bomber War 1939-45* (U.K.: Spellmount, 1992) (p. 15):

Smuts also strongly advocated the creation of a large strategic bombing force which led directly to the creation of the Independent Air Force in France. But there was insufficient time to prove or disprove Smut’s prophetic view of its potential:

“Air power can be used as an independent means of war operations. Nobody that witnessed the attack on London on 7th July could have any doubt on that point. Unlike artillery, an air fleet can conduct extensive operations far from, and independently of, both Army and Navy. As far as can at present be foreseen there is absolutely no limit to the scale of its future independent war use. And the day may not be far off when aerial operations with their devastation of enemy lands and destruction of industrial

and populous centres on a vast scale may become the principal operation of war, to which the older forms of military operations may become secondary and subordinate.”

Predictably, the Army and the Navy did not see the future in quite the same light, but as the strategic bombing offensive was at the forefront of the principles which brought the RAF into being, it is not surprising that it formed the basis of its strategic thinking throughout the next 20 years.

Before accepting criticism of the Allied bombing policy, it is as well to review the actions at the League of Nations.

An explanation of this is found in Maurice Harvey's book *The Allied Bomber War 1939-45* (p. 18) as follows:

The League of Nations took the lead in exploring the opportunities for a General Disarmament Conference, but was weakened by the absence of both the U.S.A. and Russia from its counsels. The world economic crisis which began in 1929 gave greater impetus to the negotiations and The League of Nations Disarmament Conference at last assembled in Geneva in 1932. Britain was at the forefront in seeking to prohibit bombardment from the air, with some reservations concerning colonial policing, and to impose a maximum size for aircraft of 6,600 lbs weight.

The clouds were already gathering on the horizon in the first years of the new decade. Japan had taken hostile action against China and both France and Germany, for differing reasons, were increasingly stifling progress in the disarmament negotiations. The advent of Hitler as Chancellor of Germany and the resignation of Japan from the League, both in January 1933, began the slow process of disintegration of this first attempt to establish a world forum for cooperation. The Disarmament Conference itself collapsed in May 1934 with no agreement whatsoever. A decade of idealism and retrenchment was laid to rest, to be succeeded, albeit hesitantly, by realism and rearmament.

The catalyst for rearmament was of course the re-emergence of Germany as a military power, and the breakdown of the Disarmament Conference was the immediate spur for the first proposal for the future development of the RAF to counter the threat.

Again before leveling criticism at Allied bombing policies, the authors might well have taken into account the steps which were taken by both British and U.S. air bombardment authorities, to maintain a human aspect.

Area bombing of German targets by Bomber Command in World War II commenced, on a major scale, in mid 1942.

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 Middlebrook and Everitt's *The Bomber Command War Diaries* (England: Penguin Books, 1990) (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 had 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 then shall we be able to return to the continent and occupy and control portions of his 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 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 a 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 nor 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 be virtually abandoned and most of Bomber command's effort should now be devoted to the general bombing of the most densely built up areas of Germany'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 effected.

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.

A new directive, in the form of a Memorandum from Lord Portal, Chief of Air Staff, dated February 14, 1942, reads:

“It has been decided that the primary objective of your operation should now be focused on the morals 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.

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 of *Death by Moonlight* 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).

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.

In the book, *Strike from the Sky: The Story of the Battle of Britain*, by Alexander McKee, a description is given regarding the rationale for the development of long-range bombers by the British government.

We quote (p. 35):

The British and German bomber forces had however been built up on two totally different conceptions. Basically, the British accepted Douhet's proposition that in land warfare defence had overcome offence, that the trench deadlock of the Western Front was unlikely to be broken in a future war, and that the solution was to pass a large force of bombers over the ground defences and destroy the enemy nation's war potential at source; in short, to lay his industrial centres in ruins.

Noble Frankland in *The Bombing Offensive Against Germany* gives further emphasis to the requirement for strategic bombing. He states (p.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 (p. 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 *The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey*, (Garland Publishing, 1976) 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.

Judging the "morality issue", it may be necessary to consider that the RAF did, in fact, attempt daylight bombing attacks early in the War, with tragic results.

As stated in Maurice Harvey's book *The Allied Bomber War 1939-45* (p.88)

The Battles (British Aircraft) were thrown into the fray at noon on the first day of the invasion when four flights of eight aircraft each were tasked with the tactical

bombing of German columns approaching through Luxembourg. Already convinced of the need to operate at low level following their experience of the previous September, they now encountered the formidable light anti-aircraft guns which could seemingly keep pace with even the fastest moving advance. Almost every aircraft on the first operation was damaged and 13 destroyed for no obvious return. Ten more were lost in a similar operation later in the afternoon. Another constraint was also immediately apparent: intelligence was so poor that locating any target, let alone that for which they had been tasked, was often well nigh impossible. Of eight more Battles dispatched to the same area on the following day, only one badly damaged aircraft returned. An added misfortune was the loss of almost all the Blenheims of No. 114 Squadron on ground at Conde-Vraux. At this point Barratt was enjoined by the Air Ministry to conserve his forces for the decisive moment. With 1,500 tanks now rolling nose to tail through the Ardennes, he could be forgiven for thinking that this event had already arrived.

On the 12th, seven of nine Blenheims of No. 139 (Jamaica) Squadron were lost attacking armoured columns near Maastricht and a Belgian Air Force Battle squadron had been virtually eliminated in a fruitless attempt to destroy bridges on the Albert Canal near the same town. No. 12 (Battle) Squadron — the 'Dirty Dozen' — were now asked to make another attempt on the same targets. They could muster only six aircraft, one of which failed to get airborne because of radio failure. The second section led by Flying Officer D. Garland succeeded in damaging the bridge at Veldwezelt in a suicidal low level attack; all died in the attempt, but Garland and his navigator Sergeant Gray were awarded the RAF's first Victoria Crosses of the War. They could with equal justice have gone to almost any of the Battle crews during these fateful first few days of the Battle of France. Out of 15 more Battles launched later that day against General Rundstedt's columns at Sedan, only nine survived. Barratt's bomber force had already been halved. Even worse was to follow in yet another raid against pontoon bridges at Sedan on the 14th — of 70 bombers launched, no less than 40 were lost (35 Battles and the rest Blenheims). It was the highest loss rate suffered in any major bombing operation of the war.

The slaughter could not continue, the remaining Battles were withdrawn from daylight operation, to be used with almost total ineffect at night. Even so another 33 were lost bringing the overall total to 137 before the final withdrawal of the AASF on the 15th June. It was a pathetic loss of so many valuable young lives in an aircraft, which, by 1940, should never have been sent to war against a fighter of the calibre of the Bf 109. But it was a tragedy steeped in glory which has rarely received due recognition. Never before had the courage, fortitude and grim perseverance of the RAF's aircrews been so cruelly exposed. It was an example which would be repeated many times in the next five years.

The United States Air Force encountered difficulties, of a most serious nature, in attempting daylight bombing. We quote from Maurice Harvey's book, *The Allied Bomber War 1939-45* (p. 131):

On the 14th of October the 8th Air Force mounted a major raid upon Schweinfurt with 291 aircraft: it was a disaster, 60 aircraft were shot down and another 138 damaged.

In one week this brought the American losses to no less than 148 aircraft, a rate which could not be sustained. Intelligence estimates at this time also clearly suggested that the Allied strategy was facing a serious crisis.

Maurice Harvey provides a further insight concerning the failure of U.S. daylight bombing, without fighter escort. He states in *The Allied Bomber War 1939-45* (p.139):

Most importantly, the central question which had divided the Americans and the British in 1942 had still not been conclusively answered — could a precision bombing campaign be sustained over central Germany in daylight? In retrospect, we may perhaps conclude that in May 1943 there was sufficient evidence to suggest that a daylight campaign could be sustained only when the bomber force was supported by a strong fighter escort. For those most closely involved at the time, further experience was still required — and obtained — before they were convinced that this was in fact so.

The impracticality of precision night bombing, by Bomber Command, is dealt with in *The Allied Bomber War 1939-45*. We quote (p. 95):

The concept of daylight bombing had been destroyed in just four dark days in December 1939, the policy of precision bombing by night, despite equally clear pointers, took rather longer to die. Despite the revelations of the Spitfire photographs, the next target system to be selected for Bomber Command as 1941 dawned was a return to the first 'panacea' — oil plants. This was a surprising decision in the circumstances, but even more incredible was the belief of the Group Commanders that such pinpoint targets could be successfully attacked even in moonless periods. Fortunately, this doctrinaire anachronism did not survive long, or Bomber Command's prestige would have sunk even lower than it actually did in 1941. Despite the laid down priority, this same three month period saw sizable raids on German cities similar to that on Mannheim of the 16th December. Targets were selected in major city centres which inevitably resulted in the random destruction of surrounding houses and office buildings — this was in practice area bombing in which widespread disruption of the economic life and the morale of the people were the inevitable is unspecified targets.

This period also saw the first hesitant introduction of heavy bombers, the Stirling and the Manchester in February and the Halifax in March. For some time yet, however, the main load continued to be born by the older Whitleys, Hampdens and, particularly, the Wellington. The weight of raids was also growing steadily, on the 8th May 360 aircraft were dispatched to just two locations, Hamburg and Bremen. But there was little co-ordination between stations or even squadrons, bombers still tended to operate as individual units or in small groups and crews often flew to Germany and back without seeing another aircraft.

The grave crisis of the Battle of the Atlantic which erupted in March 1941 dictated yet another shift in priorities. The need to reverse the tide of U boat successes required that the primary effort should now be directed against naval targets, destined to prove one of the least successful of the many target systems imposed

upon Bomber Command in the war. Unsuccessful attempts were made to bomb battleships in harbour, particularly at Kiel, Brest and La Pallice, but the instruction to bomb towns which contained naval installations such as Kiel, Wilhelmshaven and Bremen was of greater significance. Whilst the selection of pinpoint targets was not totally abandoned, there was now formal acknowledgement of the disruptive effect of the bombs which missed their target but fell in a built-up area. The Command continued to attack industrial objectives when conditions were unsuited to the naval strategy, but here too the emphasis moved more formally towards targets in urban areas which would enhance the 'by-product' effect on morale. An Air Ministry paper of April 1941 actually recognized that on the moonless nights 'it is only possible to obtain satisfactory results by the 'Blitz' attack of large working class and industrial areas in the towns'.

This formal recognition of an inevitable change of direction had arisen from yet more damning evidence of the inaccuracy of the navigation and bombing techniques practised in 1941. On a perfect moonlit night, 54 Wellingtons were directed on the 12th March to bomb the Focke-Wulf factory at Bremen: 33 aircraft, each carrying four bombs plus incendiaries, claimed to have attacked the target. The factory was quite large measuring some 800 yards by 500 yards, but photographic reconnaissance disclosed that only 12 bombs hit the target, with the rest scattered over a wide area — far greater than the theoretical average bombing error. It was also of concern that over one third of the force even failed to find the target at all. Indeed, following Mr. Dewdney's calculations in respect of oil plants, a target of this size should have required only about five hundred 500 pound bombs for its complete destruction. Based on the success rate disclosed by the photographs, destruction of this single factory would have required no less than 2,300 Wellington sorties alone. The reconnaissance camera was once again undermining the whole principle of the strategic bombing offensive. By now the average bombing error had been arbitrarily increased to 600 yards: further evidence would show that this was still wildly optimistic.

Summation: From a historical standpoint, taking into account that

- (a) daylight bombing proved unfeasible (until later in the war when long-range fighter escort could be provided); and
- (b) precision night bombing was out of the question

area bombing, at night, was the only option open to Bomber Command.

Citations Supporting Critical Judgements by the Producers Regarding Effectiveness/Morality of Area Bombing

In challenging the morality of area bombing of German cities, as depicted in *Death By Moonlight*, it is necessary to consider, not whether area bombing was justifiable on moral grounds, but whether it was necessary to the successful waging of war against Hitler's Germany.

A simple equation seems possible: Without the area bombing campaign of Bomber Command, supplemented later by the United States Air Forces, could the Allies have, in fact, won the war:

- (1) on the terms that it did; and
- (2) without even greater Allied casualties than were experienced.

If the answer is YES, then serious questions regarding the morality of the bombing of civilian targets should be explored to their fullest.

If the answer is NO, then no useful purpose could possibly be served by questioning the morality of the manner in which the Allies decided to conduct the war.

In this submission, we cite a number of authorities who have questioned the morality of the bombing of civilians in Germany or enemy-occupied countries. In particular, we make note of certain critical comments by:

Anthony Verrier, *The Bomber Offensive* (Batsford, Great Britain, 1968) by Anthony Verrier.

Max Hastings, *Bomber Command* (Penguin Group, Great Britain, 1979).

A debate of sorts commenced in the United Kingdom in late 1945 concerning the morality of area bombing, with the unfortunate but necessary consequences in regard to death and injury for non-combatant personnel in the devastated cities of Germany and other enemy-occupied territories.

Criticism of area bombing surfaced in a book entitled *The Bomber Offensive* by Anthony Verrier.

A condemnation of bombing policy is found (p. 29-30):

We come finally to what for some should be the central issue of the Battle of Germany and certainly of a book which attempts to relate it to contemporary issues. The morality of the battle, specifically the deliberate decision, at the late Lord Cherwell's instigation, to measure success by numbers of Germans 'de-housed', aroused protest then and has been the subject of debate and controversy since.

The Official History of the offensive says oddly and inaccurately that debate about the moral issues enjoyed a 'vogue' for some years after the war. Dr. Frankland has compounded the obtuseness of this remark by choosing to deal with moral issues in his Lees Knowles lectures and then dismissing them with two arguments which other partisans have adopted: the moralists didn't know what they were talking about; killing civilians in fire raids is no worse than killing any 'combatant' — assumed to be us all in total war — or subjecting them to other forms of suffering like blockade. xxx

But the first argument does merit mention here and will receive attention later. For the burden of this argument is that, if the moralists had known what was happening, they would have realized that the strategic air offensive could only have been conducted by means which to many seemed abhorrent and pointless. As already indicated, a strategic air offensive conducted by the Bomber Command of 1939 to 1945 had to be one based on the Trenchard premise, fashioned by a commander like Harris and executed by crews who accepted their death-dealing role with equanimity if rarely with much enthusiasm. But to say this is really to pose the moral issue in its most elemental form. If it was wrong to put Germans to the sword by the methods employed over Hamburg, the Ruhr, Berlin, Dresden and many other cities, it was a wrong which stemmed from the refusal of British governments in the thirties to provide Bomber Command with the weapons and devices to fight a less inhuman campaign. It must be stressed that less reliance on assumption and more belief in analysis by Trenchard and the Air Staff might have remedied this situation. It certainly can be said that there were few in Bomber Command who did not come to feel, if not to say, by 1945 that victory could be bought at too high a price.

But the ultimate responsibility was political — as it is today. In strategy the moral element is that which chooses right before war reduces choice to acts which may produce untoward or untold reactions. If there is a lesson in the strategic air offensive, that surely is the one.

Verrier poses five factors concerning the strategic air offensive. One of these deals with the question of bombing civilians. He states (p. 319-20):

Civilian morale should not be included as an objective. The other part of the Douhet doctrine is that given a kind of strategic measurement by Trenchard in his assertion of the 'morale' factor: this part of the doctrine might well have been openly asserted as the primary aim of the strategic air offensive if the size as well as the hardness of the industrial nut had been appreciated *or* if Hitler had planned or launched indiscriminate aerial attacks on the British people from the outbreak of war. In the event, a combination of ignorance about German industry, plus fear of what Hitler might do, led to a situation where an area offensive was prosecuted once the phoney war ended. But it was not openly stated that the object of the exercise was to make the German people crack. Nobody, not even Cherwell, was prepared to do sums showing how many Germans would have to be killed before that point would be reached.

The moral issue is not being discussed here. All that is being discussed is the fact

that 'the German people remained calmer, more stoical and much more determined than anticipated'. It may be argued that misconceptions about these tough non-combatants flourished in the earlier rather than the later period of the war. That was so; in 1944 nobody spoke of the German morale as 'rotten'; equally, nobody supposed that they were not 'war-weary' – who was not? But it should be remembered that the panacea of an overwhelming blow at the German people was advanced in 1944 and practised rather consciously in 1945.xxx

There was also a fairly widespread belief that the ordinary German loathed Hitler and all his works, and that he would turn and rend the dictator once the cities of the Reich became funeral pyres. Exactly how this rending process was to begin or be carried on was rarely discussed. The supposition was natural perhaps but, again, it was based on assumption rather than analysis. All of Cherwell's calculations, wide of the mark though they were, deliberately distorted though they have been, were not more fallacious than the belief that the German people would crack, either through hatred of Hitler's war or through fear of the Allies' revenge.

Probably the most severe judgement concerning the so-called "immorality" of bombing civilians, present in the writings of post-World War II historians/journalists is Max Hastings, a London, England, reporter and editor.

In his work, entitled *Bomber Command*, he suggests that the politicians did not reveal the true nature of the effect of area bombing. We quote (p. 46):

Trenchard said in 1919 that 'at present, the moral effect of bombing stands undoubtedly to the material effect in a proportion of twenty to one', and ever since it had been the prospect of destroying the enemy's morale, bringing about the collapse of his will to resist by bombing, that lay at the heart of the airmen's vision of a bomber offensive. Most of them understood perfectly well that attack upon an enemy nation and its morale meant the killing of civilians, but they were reluctant to say so, and even at the height of their offensive in the Second World War, their political masters remained persistently deceitful about revealing the nature of what was being done to Germany.

Hastings refers to a paper written by Winston Churchill when he was Minister of Munitions in 1917. He writes (p. 48):

In a fascinating paper which he wrote as Minister of Munitions as far back as 1917, Winston Churchill dismissed the arguments for morale bombing before Trenchard and the airmen had even developed them:

It is improbable that any terrorization of the civil population which could be achieved by air attack would compel the Government of a great nation to surrender. xxx

If Churchill's paper had been made a basic text at the RAF Staff College between the wars, much heartbreak and failure in the first four years of the bomber offensive might have been avoided. The airmen might have addressed themselves

intensively to the problems of ground and naval air support, instead of allowing their obsession with an independent role for the RAF to distort the thinking of a generation. xxx

Instead, their thinking was directed towards means of by-passing the enemy's defences, either by the power of the bomber's guns in daylight, or by using the cover of darkness, in order to attack his allegedly vulnerable heart. The RAF might also have avoided the fatal disparity between their public commitment to precision bombing — which their line aircrew would offer so much devotion and sacrifice to fulfilling when war came — and the half-articulated faith in terror bombing in the higher ranks of the service. The decisive gulf between the alleged function of Bomber Command as a precision-bombing force, and its real nature as an area bombing one, would be revealed at the end of 1941.

Hastings continues his assault on the “immorality” of area bombing and challenges the assertion of British official historians to the effect that there was no alternative. We quote (p. 124-5):

The British official historians have little patience with moral hair-splitting on this issue:

There was, for example, a school of thought which maintained that, although it was morally permissible to attack specific targets such as factories, oil plants and railway centres even at an incidental risk to life and property, it was immoral to attack that life and property. In other words, the implication was that targets in or near towns could be attacked but that towns themselves could not....It was, indeed, an argument which was generally put forward without operational factors in mind or even in sight...

This seems facile, for it is simply to assert that in warfare moral debate is irrelevant when operational requirements are at stake. Civilized nations, including the Western Allies in the Second World War, have customarily waged war by a code which assumes that while all war corrupts, total war corrupts totally. They have sought thus to modify the worst excesses of the slaughter, most especially by avoiding the deliberate killing of non-combatants. The airmen of the Second World War argued that the Royal Navy's blockade in the First World War had killed civilians by starvation as surely as did their own bombs a generation later. Likewise, coastal bombardment by naval squadrons inflicted severe civilian casualties, but had always been an accepted feature of warfare. Extreme apostles of air warfare such as Mr. J. M. Spaight in his book *Bombing Vindicated*, published in 1944, argued that 'The justification for air bombardment is that it is essentially *defensive* in purpose. You kill and destroy to save yourself from being killed or destroyed....It would be suicide, normally, for a bomber formation to approach its target at a height at which precision of aim would be certain.' Yet a significant number of people felt that by embarking on a systematic attack against cities occupied largely by non-combatants in the traditional sense, the Allies Sacrificed something of their own moral case and that they contributed substantially to the widespread moral collapse that took place in the Second World War, most especially in the treatment of prisoners and civilians.

xxx

The official historians dismiss the moral question overhanging area bombing with the simple assertion that by the winter of 1941 the only choice offered to the Royal Air Force was between area bombing and no bombing at all. Yet there was a third choice — to persist, in the face of whatever difficulties, in attempting to hit precision targets, supported by the growing range of radio and radar navigational and bomb-aiming targets that were already in the pipeline. There was also a fourth, and more realistic alternative: faced by the fact that Britain's bombers were incapable of a precision campaign, there was no compulsion upon the Government to authorize the huge bomber programme that was now to be undertaken. Aircraft could have been transferred to the Battle for the Atlantic and the Middle and Far East where they were so urgently needed, and many British strategists would have wholeheartedly defended the decision to move them. There was a genuine moral and strategic dilemma facing the Government in the winter of 1941 about future bombing policy. Thus there were alternatives to the area campaign, albeit at great cost to the *amour propre* of the RAF.

In this chapter THE BALANCE SHEET, Max Hastings sums up his criticism of indiscriminate bombing.

We furnish some quotes (p. 346-7-9):

At the end of the war, Bomber Command received the courtesies of victory.

But beneath a thin layer of perfunctory goodwill, it was soon apparent not only at High Wycombe but throughout Bomber Command, that in the safety of peace the bombers' part in the war was one that many politicians and civilians would prefer to forget. The laurels and the romantic adulation were reserved for Fighter Command, the defenders. The men of the Army of Occupation were first awed, then increasingly dismayed, by the devastation of Germany. As more pictures and descriptions of the effects of area bombing appeared in Britain, especially those detailing the destruction of Dresden, public distaste grew. Among the vanquished, those who had launched air attacks on civilians were prominent in the dock at Nuremberg. 'Was not your purpose in this attack to secure a strategic advantage by terrorization of the people of Rotterdam?' asked Sir David Maxwell Fyfe damningly, as he examined Kesselring about his part in the 1940 offensive. 'I decided on Coventry because there the most targets could be hit within the smallest area,' declared Goering, on trial for his life, with his direction of the Blitz on Britain among the principal prosecution issues. The Reichsmarshal was sentenced to hang. Kesselring went with Milch and Speer to begin a long imprisonment.

Sir Arthur Harris was offered no further employment in the Royal Air Force, and departed for South Africa at the end of 1945. Churchill's proposal for an honour for Bomber Command's C-in-C was rejected by the new Prime Minister, Attlee.

By the last months of the struggle, Churchill the politician was already reasserting

himself over Churchill the director of war. When the Americans began to pour thousands of economists and scientists into captured territory to compile their massive Strategic Bombing Survey, the RAF hoped to do likewise. But Churchill curtly rejected their proposals, on the grounds that they would waste skilled manpower. It is difficult to accept his argument at face value. It is easier to believe that he wished to put the strategic air offensive behind him, with as little resort as possible to further statistical fantasies and noisy claims by the airmen.

The 'de-housing' paper, a document which leaves an ineradicable sense of distaste forever surrounding the name of Lord Cherwell, was itself curiously mealy-mouthed. If moral considerations were to be discarded, the most rational policy for Bomber Command would have been to pursue a campaign overtly directed at killing the largest possible number of Germans, rather than dally with such euphemisms as making them homeless.

Rebuttal of Critics of Area Bombing

It would appear that the critics of area bombings, and its consequences, have followed the easy course in condemning the practice which undoubtedly killed non-combatants. Such critics make no reference, of course, to the fact that many of the civilians who were subjected to area bombing were, in fact, a major component of the German war effort — particularly those employed in the factories producing the material of war, and the communication and administrative support for these arsenals.

Neither do they trouble to point out that, should Hitler have wished to do so, he could have moved the children and the elderly out of the cities. That he chose not to do so represents an act which only he and his government should be held responsible. Instead, as we have seen, there is an element which stands ready to lay the blame at the doorstep of the Allied Governments and, incidentally, those who were required to execute the policy of area bombing.

Even if it is accepted that there is some validity, on grounds of humane principle, to criticize the killing of civilians, it appears to be well-established that any such posture can be nothing more than academic in nature.

In late 1941 the Allies were in grave danger of losing the war as has been stated in this and other submissions by this author (quoting historians, journalists and participants). Bomber Command was the only weapon available to the Allies to strike back at Germany in the early years of the war.

Admittedly, the proponents of area bombing did suggest that it alone could win the war. In their defence it must be stated that any such proposal was based on the force of some 4,000 bombers — an objective which never became a reality! Surely there is no denial, however, that the effect of area bombing was to produce what is known as “Air Superiority” which was a decisive factor in the success of the Normandy invasion and the subsequent land battles which ended in the eventual defeat of Germany.

Thus, the hypothesis of the producers of the DEATH BY MOONLIGHT episode of *The Valour and the Horror* regarding area bombing and morality has not been substantiated; in fact, it has been successfully challenged.

Group Captain Dudley Saward was the radar expert on the staff of Sir Arthur Harris, Chief of Bomber Command, from February 1942 to the end of the war in Europe in May of 1945. He held various posts in industry from 1946 until 1970, including Director of International Air Radio Ltd. He was a member of Great Britain’s Television Advisory Committee from 1962 until 1968 and had authored a definitive study of the use of radar in bombers during World War II, titled *The Bomber’s Eye*.

As is well known, Sir Arthur Harris refused to respond to his critics in any forceful manner. Dudley Saward convinced Harris, however, in the early 1980's regarding the necessity of a response. The result was the authorized biography of “Bomber” Harris (published by Cassel and Buchen and Enright, 1984).

In his preface, Dudley Seward states:

“In the following years (after 1945) I watched, with dismay and profound disgust, not only the official indifference to the immense contributions of Bomber Command to the winning of the war, but to the flood of literature, television programmes and so on decrying its policy and denigrating the name of perhaps the greatest commander to emerge from World War II.”

In the foreword to Seward's biography, there are some important comments regarding the morality issue by Sir Arthur Bryant, a skillful historian and author of *The Turn of Tide* (Richard Clay and Company Ltd., 1957). He stated (p. ix):

At the beginning of World War II, Nazi Germany, regardless of all considerations of humanity and morality, by a ruthless exercise of air power against civilian centres of population, gained total control of the Continent. Her bombers flattened Warsaw and Rotterdam, though, thanks to the Battle of Britain, they failed to flatten London.

But in 1944 we did make good our foothold within striking distance of his heart and, by doing so, cut many years off the length of the War. We were able to do so by virtue of our use of a new weapon — one which Hitler's own moral obliquity had put into our hands, the terrible weapon of air bombardment of industrial centres and communications. Those ceaseless battles fought by Bomber Command over the Rhine, Ruhr and Berlin, beginning in the days of our utter weakness in 1940, and steadily and inexorably mounting in strength — battles attended by greater comparative losses than in any sustained victorious operation in human history — were imperceptibly driving the heart of German war industry eastwards, away from the future D-Day beaches.

Martin Middlebrook is one of the most prolific and acclaimed authors on Bomber Command. His works include *The Peenemunde Raid*, *The Battle of Hamburg*, *The Schweinfurt-Regensburg Mission*, *The Bomber Command War Diaries*, *The Berlin Raids* and *The Nuremburg Raid*. In the latter (The Penguin Group, 1973), he includes an interesting and supportive dissertation on morality. He stated (p. 314):

Close on the heels of the discussion as to whether the bomber campaign had been effective came the questioning of the morality of it. Had it been right to attempt to gain victory by adopting a policy that would result in the deaths of civilians and the destruction of historic buildings and treasures?

The German propagandists labelled the bomber crews as Terrorflieger but Bomber Command never, at any time, descended to the level of pure terrorism. The city attacked had always been of industrial, military or communications importance. The Germans could have evacuated their cities of all but essential workers and then there would have been no 'innocent' casualties. This would have imposed an intolerable strain on Germany, which is what the R.A.F. wanted, but the Germans chose to leave the workers' families in the cities and there they died. The intention of Area Bombing had been to break the morale and will to carry on the war of the

German civilian population; this is not the same as attempting the systematic killing off of those civilians. The methods used were not forbidden by the Geneva Convention and were no worse in their effects than the slow starvation by naval blockade in the previous war which probably killed twice as many civilians as did the bombing.

The bombing of German cities started in 1940, after the German bombing of Warsaw and Rotterdam but before that on London and Coventry. For well over a year the bomber crews were given as their Aiming Points such morally acceptable targets as individual factory buildings. It was only when it was realized that the bombers could not hit such precise targets that the entire industrial city became their objective. By then the Luftwaffe had already 'blitzed' London and Coventry.

I can remember 1940 after the fall of France. Britain did not have an ally in the world other than her own distant Empire. My family prepared to move to the Lake District for we genuinely expected the Germans to land at any time on the East Coast. We would have been refugees. My boyhood nightmare was that I would awake to find a Nazi paratrooper at the window.

As we now know, Fighter Command saved us in 1940 but for the next two years it was only the bombers, flying to Germany several times a week together with a small Commando raid every six months or so, that were capable of any offensive action against the Germans.

It is perhaps significant that in the post-war controversy, the least noise was made by the Germans themselves. Without real provocation, Hitler had gone to war with most of Europe. The Nazis had systematically exterminated the Jewish race, had declared all Slavic peoples to be Untermenschen sub-humans. The Gestapo had tortured and terrified through Occupied Europe and countless thousands of innocent men and women had been dragged off to work in German factories almost as slaves. Post-war German historians realized that it was the Nazis who had sown the wind and the now-dead Hitler, whom they once followed so faithfully, received much of the blame for the retaliation.

The wartime actions of Bomber Command or of any other service should not be judged out of the context of the period. When did the outcry against bombing start - in 1940 or after the war when the dream of a Nazi paratrooper was no longer a cause of terror? There was only a tiny questioning of the morality of bombing later in the war and that by religious leaders not by politicians or historians. A country fighting for its very existence cannot afford to have strict boundaries of morality in the means by which it saves itself. It is sheer humbug to suggest that the use of bombers at this time was wrong when it was touch and go whether Britain survived at all.

It is small wonder that the bomber men felt baffled and hurt when their actions were later declared to be unworthy. They fought with the highest ideals against a ruthless and sometimes barbaric enemy. The memory of those who died should not be tarnished. The survivors should not be made to feel other than proud to have

played the part they did play.

Further support for the decision to commence a “maximum effort” bombing campaign against Germany is explained by John Terraine in his definitive *The Right of the Line — The Royal Air Force European War 1939 – 1945* (Hodder & Stoughton, Great Britain, 1985). He wrote (p. 259-263):

Churchill had no doubts, Just as the Battle of Britain was about to begin, he wrote to Beaverbrook:

...when I look round to see how we can win the war I see that there is only one sure path. We have no Continental army which can defeat the German military power. The blockade is broken and Hitler has Asia and probably Africa to draw from. Should he be repulsed here or not try invasion, he will recoil eastward, and we have nothing to stop him. But there is one thing that will bring back and bring him down, and that is an absolutely devastating, exterminating attack by very heavy bombers from this country upon the Nazi homeland. We must be able to overwhelm them by this means, without which I do not see a way through.

Like so many of Churchill’s wartime pronouncements, this goes to the heart of the matter. The path ahead may not have been as “sure” as he liked to think, but it was, without doubt, the only one. The only means — for several years ahead — by which Britain could carry the war to her main enemy was by Bomber Command, which would thus very shortly have to take its place on the right of the line and stay there, whatever might betide. Some two months later Churchill re-formulated his thoughts for the benefit of his Cabinet colleagues and the Chiefs of Staff:

The Navy can lose us the war, but only the Air Force can win it. Therefore our supreme effort must be to gain overwhelming mastery in the air. The Fights are our salvation, but the Bombers alone provide the means of victory.

Bomber Command could carry the war directly to the German civil population. Bomber Command could seek to realize the premises of the “knock-out blow”. And it could attempt this, as Churchill so early perceived, by the method of “absolutely devastating, exterminating attack.”

“Exterminating”: the prospect of exterminating the civil population of Germany was distinctly remote in July 1940, and in the circumstances, let it be admitted, not unappealing. It was closer acquaintance, when it became a more practical proposition, and uneasy apprehension of what it might be meaning in terms of life and death and pain to a very large number of people who might or might not be Nazis, or pro-Nazis, or privately anti-Nazi in varying degrees, which caused the extermination policy to be viewed askance by a not inconsiderable number of people at the time — and, of course, by many more in later years who have had the advantage of not being under the compulsions and the stresses of the war. The writer can assure them that the shriek of a descending bomb can strip the mind to some very stark essentials, and arouse some implacable sentiments.

It must be understood, too, that the sense of what bombing would actually mean was not confined to Churchill — though characteristically it was he who used the grim word that signifies it. Just over a week after the Prime Minister had written his letter to Beaverbrook, Portal, in his capacity as Bomber Command C-in-C, was writing by the DCAS (in the course of an Air Staff/Bomber Command debate on bombing policy). In his Command, he said,

we have the one directly offensive weapon in the whole of our armoury, the one means by which we can undermine the morale of a large part of the enemy people, shake their faith in the Nazi régime, and at the same time and with the very same bombs, dislocate the major part of their heavy industry and a good part of their oil production.

Air policy, Bomber Command policy, the whole course of the strategic offensive, were drawn inexorably towards the method which not even Churchill now called “extermination”, though “morale” would still be widely used, and even more generally, “area bombing”.

Portal’s draft Directive to Bomber Command on October 25 set the seal upon the new development. It prescribed two primary objectives: oil and morale.

The Directive stressed that “if bombing is to have its full moral effect it must on occasions produce heavy material destruction. Widespread light attacks, if there are never any heavy attacks, are more likely to produce contempt for bombing than fear of it.” In the intervals between the heavy attacks, operations “should be spread over the widest possible area so as to take advantage of the fear induced by the concentrated attacks...”

In this paper, the Chiefs of Staff asserted their reliance on bombing to provide the weapon which would overcome Germany; the bombing offensive, they said, must be on the heaviest possible scale, and

we set no limits to the size of the force required, save those imposed by operational difficulties in the United Kingdom. After meeting the needs of our own security, we give to the heavy bomber first priority in production for only the heavy bomber can produce the conditions under which other offensive force can be employed.

It would difficult to find anywhere a more full-blooded advocacy of the strategic air offensive than this paper bearing the signatures of the professional heads of the Navy and the Army; their support for the attack on German morale is explicit:

As our forces increase, we intend to pass to a planned attack on civilian morale with the intensity and continuity which are essential if a final breakdown is to be produced.

Maurice Harvey, in *The Allied Bombing War 1939-45*, deals with the issue of morality as

follows (p. 197):

The question of the morality of area bombing has tended to focus on Dresden and it was undoubtedly one of the most destructive single raids of the war. Even some of those who accepted the validity of the concept questioned the need to pursue this form of attack at this late period.

Nevertheless, it was less easy to recognise this so clearly at the time. There had been little public disavowal of area bombing until after the event - the newspapers and radio broadcasts revelled in the exploits of Bomber Command, often with grossly exaggerated versions of the destruction caused, and only isolated voices were raised in disquiet. There was undoubtedly a profound sense of retribution among the great mass of the population; after London, Liverpool and Coventry, the Germans were only getting what they deserved, and hadn't they started it in the first place! In any case, London had but recently suffered the indiscriminate assault by the 'V' weapons. There is an element of hypocrisy in many of the voices raised in the aftermath of Dresden; the dreadful destruction of that city was no more than the culmination of a four year old policy which had been vigorously criticised from time to time for its lack of effectiveness, but rarely for its immorality. Indeed, the concept of the nation at war had been assiduously fostered by all combatant countries in the twentieth century and any clear distinction between the men fighting at the front and the women working in the munitions factories was rigorously denied. The advent of the aeroplane had irrevocably changed the face of war; all faced the same risk and all must be responsible for the excesses of their leaders. It is simply impossible to separate the women and the children from the consequences of modern warfare; if nation states cannot live in peaceful co-operation, all must endure the heavy hand of deterrence and retribution. Those responsible for directing the war in January 1945 when the Dresden raid was conceived had only just recovered from the setback of the Ardennes and still faced the potential threat of the V-2, the U boat and the jet fighter. It was believed, with some justification, that many more Allied lives would be lost before success was theirs. The attack on Dresden should be evaluated dispassionately in the light of the situation as it was seen at the time.

Authors/Historians

It is noted that, in supporting the film , former Wing Commander Douglas Harvey, a participant in the DEATH BY MOONLIGHT episode, read into the evidence for the Senate Sub-Committee on Science, Technology and Veterans Affairs a recent letter from Max Hastings, of Great Britain, the Author of *Bomber Command*.

Not unexpectedly, Max Hastings praised the CBC Film. Max Hastings' book is a scathing condemnation of Bomber Command and Sir Arthur Harris.

If, however, the supporters of the film had written to a number of other equally-prominent authors in the United Kingdom, it seems evident that they would have received a diametrically opposite opinion. These authors are listed below.

Dudley Saward, "*Bomber*" *Harris*, 1984

John Terraine, *Right of the Line*, 1985

Maurice Harvey, *The Allied Bomber War – 1939 - 1945*

Martin Middlebrook, *The Nuremburg Raid*, 1973, *The Berlin Raids*, 1988, *The Bomber Command War Diaries: An Operational Reference Book*, 1939, etc.

Arthur Bryant, *Turn of the Tide*, 1957

It seems apparent that the object in obtaining a supporting opinion from Max Hastings, whose bias is clear in his book *Bomber Command*, is a tactic which is open to question.

Remedial Action

It does appear that some remedial action is required in regard to *The Valour and the Horror*. In the various submissions we have made on the subject, we have never suggested what that action might be. It is noted, however, that both the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission have authority in this regard.

We have, however, taken note of statements made by Mr. Patrick Watson, Chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in a letter to the Honourable Barnett J. Danson, a former Minister of National Defence and a combat veteran from the Second World War. In the letter, dated May 11, 1992, Mr. Watson stated:

“Should substantial historical inaccuracies be revealed by any of these processes, we have undertaken to take substantial corrective measures on air.

(But) if the eventual history is wrong, it must be corrected and will be.”

In this submission, we are requesting a review by the CBC Ombudsman of *The Valour and the Horror* and, in so doing, we are requesting that he must necessarily decide whether, in the light of the views expressed herein (and in other submissions made available to him), the programme meets the tests of accountability, accuracy, balance and fairness as required by the Journalistic Policy of the Corporation.

Although this submission deals only with the question of area bombing and morality, there are, in our view, many other flaws in the series. Therefore, remedial action must address these, as well.

In any such examination, the Ombudsman will obviously take into consideration the requirement of the Broadcasting Act — specifically Section 3(1)(d)(i), which suggests that the Canadian Broadcasting System should safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada.

Respectfully submitted:

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