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AUSTRALIA'S AIR WAR OVER EUROPE



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Reflections on Australia's part in the Air War over Europe

Professor Peter Stanley

Good morning colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you Andrew Kilsby and Military History and Heritage Victoria for your invitation to speak today. It's a great privilege to share the lectern with Prof. Weston Bate, and to meet him and other Bomber Command survivors. I haven't done much work in the area of the air war over Europe for about a decade, so I'm glad of the opportunity to refresh my acquaintance with one of the most compelling aspects of the Second World War, and of Australia's part in it. I want especially to acknowledge former members of the wartime air force here today, and to dedicate this address to the memory of my late ex-father-in-law, Dan Capel DFC, RAAF, XV Squadron RAF, and the late Don Charlwood (who Prof. Bate mentioned in his remarks), whom I was privileged to know and admired as a writer and a person.

Like a lot of us, my first contact with the air war, and especially with the bomber offensive, came as a child. I'm old enough to remember playing on bomb sites in Liverpool nearly twenty years after the war, and remember the reminders of the bombing of the city in 1941 – the shell of the Anglican church of St Luke's, left as a memorial in the city centre (though there was a time in Liverpool's sorry post-war past when it was hard to tell the damage inflicted by the Luftwaffe from that perpetrated by the city's own people).

As a child of the Airfix generation I grew up reading the comics like *The Victor* and Commando comics, which between them constituted a sort of graphic history of the Second World War, and of course made Airfix models as a boy. Hands up, who did the same thing, come on...? The result of this boyhood obsession was a chronically stunted emotional life as a teen-ager. Some people here might recall the first time they got into a pub or got drunk, but the highlight of my sixteenth year was getting the camouflage pattern on an SM79 just right – you know that dark green over sand wiggle pattern ... and here it is for those nostalgic tragedies

But a long-standing benefit of this sad adolescent obsession is that even today I have a working knowledge of allied and axis aircraft types – as long as Airfix made a model of it. My point is that like a lot of people here, I suspect, the air war over Europe has been a part of our lives for longer than just our careers as historians. In due course, I went off to university and put off childish things – and then in 1980 joined the staff of the Australian War Memorial and found that I was being paid to actually use some of this esoteric knowledge. It soon enough paid off.

In 1984 one of the clutch of books I did as a young historian was *Bomber Command*.¹ This has always made my CV look better at the start than it merited. Because *Bomber Command* was not, as it turns out, a deep examination of the development of British strategic air power,

¹ Peter Stanley, *Bomber Command*, Hodder & Stoughton, Sydney, 1985

but was in fact a book for children in Hodder & Stoughton’s ‘Australians at war’ series, of some 32 pages. You’ll see that the book was illustrated by ‘Colin Archer’. It turned out that that was the pen name – or brush name – of the Second World War official war artist Dennis Adams – and so we had no trouble using one of his works from 1945 to put on the cover. While I can claim to have collaborated with one of Australia’s great aviation artists, I can’t truthfully claim to have worked with him because we never actually met. The reason why I mention this juvenile production, though, is that this demanded that I understand the bomber offensive in order to explain it to the 10-12 year-olds for whom the book was intended. In preparation for today I re-read this little book, and find that it gives me a text on which to reflect.

It wasn’t the only thing I produced about the bomber offensive. In 1987 Time-Life published my *Air Battle Europe 1939-1945* in its Australians at War series. (In passing, the title was the publisher’s idea – I wanted to call it *Flying Battle* – the words most commonly found on RAAF Roll of Honour cards at the Australian War Memorial, and I still might, so hands off.)

At the Memorial I worked on successive displays explaining the Lancaster G for George – then displayed in what was called Aircraft Hall, and in 1999 the permanent Second World War gallery including its ‘air war’ section. This included conceiving and scripting the immersive display in the gallery that takes visitors on a simulated raid on Germany, in which they look down through an open bomb bay at a burning German city below and hear the Lancaster’s crew talk to each other at take-off, over the target and on returning home.

I haven’t done much on the bomber offensive or the air war since running a conference on the subject at the Australian War Memorial in 2002, so I’m grateful I’ll draw on this experience in reflecting on what has changed, and on what needs to change, in considering the bomber offensive especially and Australia’s part in it.

It’s axiomatic, I think, that our understanding of history is shaped by our experience. The past may not change, but our understanding and interpretation of it certainly does. For example, my little *Bomber Command* book was a product of its time. It was published in 1985 – the year of the Geneva summit between Ronald Regan and Mikhail Gorbachev – the Cold War was not only not yet over, but we feared that it could end in nuclear holocaust. The film *The Day After* (depicting the destruction of Lawrence, Kansas, in a nuclear war) was broadcast while I was writing the book. That’s why the book’s final paragraph reads:

Today the world is threatened by the most destructive kind of “area” bombing – nuclear war. A nuclear war would be unimaginably worse than the firestorms of Hamburg and Dresden. If we allow another war to destroy the world’s cities we will not have learned the lessons of the bomber offensive.

In the meantime, Kosovo, Baghdad, Libya and Afghanistan have given us new ways in which to understand the exercise of air power, though it might be rash to presume that we’ve seen the last of area bombing on cities. Our interpretations of the past change, and, as I’ll suggest, we need to change at least one of the ways we think about the air war. I was struck by some

of the things in my 1985 book that still demand a response. I want to talk through some of those aspects presently.

First, though, I want to look briefly at what’s happened in this field since I first did some serious research in the mid-1980s. At that time, the official and private records in the Memorial’s collection – the squadron record books and the letters, diaries and memoirs of aircrew – and a pretty extensive secondary literature gave us what seemed to be a pretty solid basis to understand what Australian airmen had done in Bomber Command and beyond, and the context of the European air war as a whole. I don’t want to list books, but I do want to remind us that even twenty-odd years ago, this was far from a neglected field. Australians have an unjustifiably easy reaction to label something ‘forgotten’ if there hasn’t been an Australian book on a subject for less than a year or so, but in the case of the air war, and Australia’s part in it, it can’t be seriously argued that it has been forgotten, not by anyone who can be bothered spending half an hour clicking through an on-line library catalogue.

So I think that the view that the air war or Bomber Command has been neglected or forgotten or ignored as an embarrassment is grossly misleading. I’d argue that over the past twenty-odd years there has been a decent flow of books dealing with the subject. We’ve seen a number of books in recent years that have kept the Australian aircrew of Bomber Command (though perhaps not Coastal or Fighter Commands) in our memories. In 2002 the late and very much missed Hank Nelson published *Chased by the Sun*.² Last year Robert Brokenmouth restored John Bede Cusack’s classic (but problematic) memoir *They Hosed Them Out*.³ We should mention Kathryn Spurling’s *A Grave Too Far Away* and Kristen Alexander’s recent and forthcoming books on Australians and the battle of Britain. Earlier this year Peter Rees published a good book, *Lancaster Men*, albeit with the embarrassing sub-title ‘The Aussie Heroes of Bomber Command’, both titles chosen by his publisher about which Peter rightly remains uncomfortable.⁴

There’s a developing line that aircrew are, as the blurb to Peter Rees’s book puts it ‘forgotten Australian heroes’. Publishers’ blurbs are easy targets, but there is a tendency to portray bomber crews especially as victims. The claim usually hinges on reference to guilt over the supposedly needless destruction of Dresden in February 1945 and the supposed denial of a campaign medal for the bomber offensive, topped off by the fact that specific memorials to air crew were not unveiled in Australia until 2008 and in Britain until last year.

I’m not convinced that air crew were side-lined or disregarded as inconvenient. The whole argument that air crew should have been awarded a campaign medal specific to the bomber offensive is, I think, a massive and recurrent red herring. Air crew qualified for the Defence Medal, the 1939-45 Star, and more particularly the Aircrew Europe and France and Germany stars. I can’t see that this in any way discriminates against them. Specific memorials don’t just happen: they have to be conceived and lobbied for and funded. They are not an entitlement, the absence of which somehow proves decades of neglect. I would also point out

² Hank Nelson, *Chased by the Sun: Courageous Australians in Bomber Command*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2002

³ Robert Brokenmouth, (ed.), *They Hosed Them Out*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2012

⁴ Peter Rees, *Lancaster Men: the Aussie Heroes of Bomber Command*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2013

that for about fifty years G for George stood at the very centre of the Australian War Memorial: making arguing that Australian air crew were somehow disdained difficult, I would think. And memorials exist now – surely it’s less tenable than ever to call air crew forgotten? The ‘forgotten’ line is a ploy by publishers to boost sales: I would urge everyone to resist the easy recourse to it.

I want to strongly contest this idea that the aircrew are at all forgotten. It seems particularly specious with a ‘memory boom’ still in full spate. The very existence of groups such as Military History and Heritage Victoria and conference like this demonstrates that the air war is the subject of vigorous remembering. It’s even less likely or possible that aircrew can be forgotten. On the plane down to this conference I read Ian Moffitt’s 1988 novel *Blue Angels*, the plot of which hinges on an Australian pilot misleading his daughter (an infant in 1944) into believing that he had been killed in the war. Whether he died or not is a fact that today could be checked in a few minutes on an iPad or even iPhone. The idea that the air war and those who served in it are ‘forgotten’ is highly contestable.

One of the developments in this field mirrors the broader field of Australian military historiography, and that is that Australian writers interested in the bomber offensive tend to be interested *only* in the Australian part in it. That’s a regrettable parochialism, and it’s even more regrettable that it’s growing. Australians – and I’m as guilty as anyone, having written that Time-Life book on *Australians* in the air war – have increasingly tended to focus on the Australian aspect of the experience rather than looking at the experience of the air war as a whole. (This, it has to be said, has tended to run counter to the trend in Great War studies, where among academic historians the impulse is now to seek to see the Australian contribution in a broader context.) The result is to entrench the parochialism of Australia’s understanding of the air war. It’s easy to find photographs of Lancasters in Australian squadrons, for example – like this one, demonstrating the supposedly distinct Australian contribution to the offensive. But it’s actually very difficult – and I’d argue impossible and pointless – to try to discern the Australian contribution when Australians served in such an integrated force. Who’s the Australian in this crew, for example?

Prof. Bate spoke about the formation of crews, in hangars like this. As many people here today know, the reality was that Australian aircrew served effectively as part of an imperial air force, usually in mixed crews in mixed squadrons. (Both Prof. Bate and Peter Isaacson served in mixed crews and squadrons.) It took me about three minutes to find on the web an example that confounds the easy assumption that there was such a thing as an ‘Australian’ air war over Europe. For example, look at virtually any black-and-white photograph of a group of Bomber Command aircrew. Spot the Australians: of course you can’t. Aircrew did not usually see themselves as Australian, but thought of themselves as belonging to what Laurie Field called ‘one big unit’. Laurie survived two tours with Bomber Command to write the first general account of Australia in the Boer War, but sadly did not live to complete a history of 460 Squadron. Included in the collection of papers he compiled for the squadron history are his own letters to his mother in Bedgerebong, near Forbes in the central west of New South Wales. In December 1943 he had written describing the awesome sight of Berlin burning during the great RAF offensive which was to cost the lives of so many aircrew. “I

consider it a privilege”, he wrote, “to have seen those sights ... and to have flown alongside the best lads in the world – the Boys of the R.A.F., R.A.A.F., R.C.A.F., and R.N.Z.A.F.”⁵ Again, this echoes a sentiment voiced earlier by Prof. Bate.

It’s significant that in 1993 my Litt. B. Thesis supervisor the late Eric Fry published a very powerful book, *An Airman Far Away*, about Charlie Williams, a Queensland-born dambuster. Twenty years later Kathryn Spurling, who’s here today, published a tribute to Australian Bomber Command aircrew, *A Grave Too Far Away* (my emphasis). Two things seem significant about this comparison. Eric’s book clearly acknowledged that his airman died ‘far away’. Kath’s book adds the intensifier ‘too’. Of course there is the important qualification that for the families of Australian Bomber Command aircrew their loved one’s graves were ‘too far away’ to visit. But this, I suggest, is also a manifestation of the recent Australian tendency to regard the European war as a distraction from the ‘real’ war – the real but exaggerated threat of invasion. Just as at the time some Australian aircrew in Britain supposedly received white feathers, implying that they were dodging the war they should have been fighting, so in retrospect Australians have effectively deprecated the importance of the European war for Australia.

Of course it’s too easy, in an independent Australia in the 21st century to forget how strong were that Australia’s ties to Britain and to empire. Let me remind you of Robert Menzies’s words in 1939 when he announced that Australia would join the Empire Air Training Scheme. He said that the scheme could become ‘the most decisive joint effort ... made by the British nations in this war’, and he spoke to Britain words that virtually all Australians would have endorsed: ‘we are with you. Your danger is our danger. Your effort is our effort; your success will be our success’.⁶ That is not a sentiment popular, or even comprehensible to a nation that now celebrates an invented ‘battle for Australia’ but no longer the actual battle of Britain’.

Let me explain that contrast. One development we have seen over the past twenty-odd years is an intensification in the idea that the Second World War for Australia is all about the Japanese threat and the supposed danger of invasion, which for the record was not planned and did not occur. We’ve seen the invention of the idea of a ‘Battle for Australia’ – a battle that did not exist until the late 1990s, though now it is the subject of a national day of remembrance each September. The effect of this bogus revisionist history – because there was no actual ‘battle for Australia’ – has been to skew Australia’s understanding of the Second World War. Once, the war was regarded as a struggle against Nazism in Europe and militarism in the Pacific. Australia was threatened and in minor ways attacked, and the balance of its war effort swung after 1942 to the Pacific. But no one quibbled about the service of Australian troops, ships and aircrew in the Mediterranean and Europe. In Gavin Long’s *Six Years War*, for example, he devoted substantial chapters to the service of

⁵ Flight Sergeant Laurie Field to Mrs O. Field, 14 Dec 1943, AWM MS 1489, quoted in Peter Stanley, ‘The roundel: concentric identities among Australian airmen in Bomber Command’, Australian War Memorial History Conference, 2003, http://www.awm.gov.au/events/conference/2003/stanley.asp#_ftn39

⁶ Prime Minister’s Press Statement, 11 October 1919, AWM 138, item 5

Australian aircrew over Europe, following the lead of the official history of which he was the general editor.

Today, Australians regard that Australian contribution to the air war in Europe much more ambivalently. They question the ‘surrender’ of the air crew, as John McCarthy memorably put it about thirty years ago, to an Allied war effort in the air that they could neither control nor influence.⁷

At the same time, paradoxically, there has been a tendency to present Australia’s losses in the air war over Europe as proportionally greater than they seem to have been. I’ve always been bothered by the figures for Australia’s part in the air war, ever since I had a hand in editing John McCarthy’s *Last Call of Empire* at the Australian War Memorial in the mid-1980s. How many Australians served in the air war, and specifically in Bomber Command? The strict answer is that we don’t know. Before I left the Memorial in 2007 I tried to work this out but became stymied by the contradictions and gaps in the primary evidence. Peter Rees tells me that he found documents suggesting that the figure could be 12,000, or higher. Both Peter Rees and Hank Nelson (following John McCarthy) give a figure of 10,000 going to Bomber Command.⁸ But can that be accurate? I think it’s greater. In fact I find that in 2003 I wrote that it was 25,000, though I can’t see the reasoning for that figure.

I now think that the only thing to do is to work it out from the individual files. The figures for those killed are equally rubbery – Hank Nelson gives 4050; Peter Rees says 3,486.⁹ You would think that with a Roll of Honour listing every single death that the figures would be firm, but not a bit of it. It doesn’t alter the quantum of individual tragedy, but it does affect our perception that these men suffered apparently the second greatest loss among Australian servicemen in the Second World War, excepting, of course, prisoners of the Japanese.

Why do I think that more than 10,000 Australians served in Bomber Command? First, because the figures don’t seem to be anchored to any authoritative primary source, but to some figures quoted in passing, and such is the state of RAAF personnel files that no one (as far as I know) has undertaken the immense labour of counting them. Second, I notice Patrick Bishop’s figures in his *Bomber Boys*. He says that 15,000-odd of Bomber Command’s 55,000 dead were from the dominions – basically Australia, Canada and New Zealand.¹⁰ Canada’s total was almost 10,000, which makes Australia’s share – around 4000 – about proportional. But if 130,000 Canadians, New Zealanders and Australians served in Bomber Command, as he says, then there surely *must* have been more than 10,000 Australians, perhaps up to 25,000 as I wrote ten years ago. I’m not being dogmatic here: I’m saying that we need to check. If we find that Australia’s Bomber Command losses are one in about 10 rather than one in three, that will change the emotional balance of the story as it has been told. It will bring it

⁷ John McCarthy, “The ‘surrender’ of aircrew to Britain 1939–45” , *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No. 5, October 1984, pp. 3-8

⁸ John McCarthy, *Last Call of Empire: Australian aircrew, Britain and the Empire Air Training Scheme*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1986

⁹ Hank Nelson, *Chased by the Sun*, p. 2; Peter Rees, *Lancaster Men*, p. xiii

¹⁰ Patrick Bishop, *Bomber Boys: Fighting Back 1940-1945*, Harper, London, 2007, p. 44

closer to the experience and losses of, say, the infantry of the Australian Imperial Force who served in Tobruk and especially El Alamein.

But there is a moral dimension to this subject, and I do not want to diminish its importance. I’m not intending to deprecate the Australian contribution to Bomber Command here – far from it. But I do want to put it in perspective. I am president of a newish coalition concerned about the presentation of Australian history, called ‘Honest History’. One of Honest History’s aims is to resist the emotional and nationalistic pull of so much of Australian military history, which has a regrettable tendency to fall for easy answers and to fail to ask questions uncomfortable questions. I don’t have a definitive answer for you, but I wonder whether we have reinforced the pathos of the Australian experience in Bomber Command by accepting a lower figure for those who served. We have certainly done the parochial thing by focusing largely on the Article XV squadrons at the expense of the ‘odd bods’, like Prof. Bate. I suspect that the ‘odd bods’ out-numbered men in RAAF squadrons.

I want to now come back to the idea of what’s been forgotten. In the final section of this paper, I want to argue that if anyone has been forgotten in Australia’s remembrance of the air war it is in fact the victims of the bomber offensive. Germany’s civilian dead from bombing – around half a million – rarely get a mention in Australia’s treatment of the air war, or indeed anyone’s. Jörg Friedrich, the author of the massive best-seller *Der Brand* (The Fire) writes that ‘a lot has been written about the air war, but for a long time that included nothing about the suffering on the ground’.¹¹ The victims of bombing certainly had a very minor presence in the four successive depictions of the bomber offensive at the Australian War Memorial that I was involved with between about 1985 and 2000. The best that I could get was a few small photographs of civilian bombing victims, and I struck no responsive chord when I suggested that we do more. And I’m not alone in ignoring the bombed. The late Hank Nelson, an historian I revere, devoted little space to the men he traced so powerfully in *Chased by the Sun*. Richard Reid’s 264-page *Bomber Command: Australians in World War II*, contains not a single photograph of the victims of bombing, and only a handful of photos of deserted ruins.¹² I understand the constraints under which public historians work, but this, I think, is not good enough: and I criticise my own failure in this. We need to do better: we need to be more honest about what the Second World War cost humanity, and resist the parochial tendency to see it only from the Australian perspective.

You might argue that recognition of the victims of bombing has no place in a treatment devoted primarily to commemorating Australia’s dead. I disagree. If we’re to understand our history fully we need to face the truth. Avoiding the inconvenient fact that Australian airmen had a hand in destroying Germany’s cities and killing half a million people is simply dishonest, and as a group, Australian historians of the Second World War have been culpable. We need to face up to this. Bomber Command’s aircrew were without doubt the victims of a strategy that however necessary and effective, imposed immense costs in prosecuting it – not

¹¹ Jörg Friedrich, *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany, 1940-1945*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, p. 481

¹² Richard Reid, *Bomber Command: Australians in World War II*, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Canberra, 2012

least in the lives of 55,000 airmen. But they were not the only or even the most numerous victims. Ten times as many German civilians (and civilians in occupied Europe) died under the bombing, and they all need to be remembered.

There’s an irony here. Germany, as we are generally dimly aware, has gone through decades of reflection upon that nation’s part in European history and the terrible consequences its twelve-years of Nazi rule brought upon all affected. The Germans have a word for this – *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – meaning ‘the working through and coming to terms with the past’. German, defeated and disgraced in 1945, felt it had to do this (though a defeated Japan seems not to have embraced this imperative so fully). The victorious west, including Australia, has felt no need to engage in any such reflection, unfortunately. I believe that the nature of the bomber offensive – sustained and deliberate attacks upon civilians – demands that we too engage in our own *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

We heard Prof. Bate lament what Bomber Command was required to do, rightly recognising the fact of the offensive. The Melbourne philosopher Igor Primoratz argues, in a forceful essay in his book *Terror from the Sky*, that the Allied bomber offensive was ‘an unmitigated moral atrocity that seriously compromised the just cause for which the Allies were fighting’. He argues that it was ‘mass murder’; that while knowingly bombing civilians might have been justified by the extremity Britain faced in 1940, by the time Germany’s cities had been largely destroyed area bombing had become a moral offence – he describes it as ‘state terrorism’.¹³ Primoratz’s arguments are worth hearing, even if they make uncomfortable reading.

I don’t go as far as him, though I note that those responsible for the bombing strategy – ‘Bomber’ Harris and his staff officers – did write about the application of ‘terror’. (There’s no doubt that the correct word is ‘terror’. Even John Terraine, who agrees that bombing to destroy German morale was ‘a cosmetic word for massacre’.¹⁴) German civilians called aircrew ‘terror fliers’, and not just in official propaganda like this. I think we need to recognise the essential truth of that term. I clearly disagree with Peter Isaacson, who I think is factually wrong to claim that Bomber Command only targeted military facilities. Not only could it not hit only military targets, but it did not attempt to aim for them, but aimed to raze huge areas of German cities, including factories and homes; deliberately.

Let me be clear here. I don’t regard Churchill, Harris, Portal or any other senior officer, as war criminals, and certainly not air crew. I would argue that the defeat of Nazi Germany (encompassing the liberation of occupied Europe) involved making many morally questionable decisions and actions; as Michael Walzer writes in his *Just and Unjust Wars*, defeating the Nazis essentially presented the Allies with choice between a morally questionable options. Defeating Nazism entailed being allied to Stalin’s Soviet Union, a totalitarian state morally almost as bad as Hitler’s. It involved the terror bombing of

¹³ Igor Primoratz, *Terror from the Skies: The Bombing of German Cities in World War II*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010, p. 10

¹⁴ John Terraine, *The Right of the Line: The Role of the RAF in World War Two*, Pen & Sword, Barnsley, 2010, p. 677

Germany's cities and knowingly and deliberately (and not inadvertently and incidentally) killing civilians who included non-combatants – children, women and old people who had no direct part in sustaining the German war effort, people like these:

So finally, I want to make a couple of points about the morality of the bomber offensive. First, the strategy of bombing Germany entailed making choices; admittedly not choices that any Australian had a voice in. Allied leaders decided to bomb civilians, essentially completing the repudiation of the long-established principle that civilians should be protected in war (an inviolability severely compromised by the British naval blockade in the Great War, which apparently cost the lives of about 800,000 civilians). They could have abstained. Not bombing Germany's cities (or attempting to target only military installations) would probably have killed more air crew, and would have prolonged the war, and possibly have forestalled or qualified Allied victory. But it was a choice, and deciding to bomb and kill civilians knowingly and deliberately was to make a choice that was both pragmatically justified and morally unjustified. I'm not arguing that bombing wasn't a sensible pragmatic choice; just that we should acknowledge it and not try to pretend (for example) that it only targeted 'military' installations.

Second, because Allied leaders made that choice (to bomb civilians) Allied aircrew and indeed all who contributed to the bomber offensive, including Australians, are implicated in a morally questionable act. Yes, it was justified by the extremity that Britain faced, but it was still wrong. I'm just saying that we should face up to its immorality rather than evading the judgment. Bombing did not just strike military targets. Bombers aimed to destroy whole cities, inflicting damage indiscriminately: unavoidable in the circumstances, but still immoral. I'm just saying let's acknowledge that contrary to the thrust of Australian writing, the aircrew were not the only or even the main victims of the bomber offensive.

I am not diminishing the courage and dedication of the air crew, but I say very clearly we can't look at the bomber offensive just as an epic of heroic aircrew, and we certainly can't look at Australia's part in it in isolation. It's about bombers and bombed, and Australians were doing the bombing. I'm arguing that we need to accept that the air war was a complex phenomenon, historically and morally, and we need to pay regard to its profundity, to accept the moral ambiguity of what air crew were called on to do, and to weigh up the strategic value of bombing against its morality, coming to an honest appreciation of it.

Thank you