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Royal Air Force Historical Society

**THE JOURNAL
OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(Incorporating Proceedings)**

No 14

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Beetham GCB CBE DFC AFC

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KCB CBE AFC

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EDITORIAL

Members will note our change of title from ‘Proceedings’ to ‘RAF Historical Society Journal’. The Committee has decided that the re-naming more adequately reflects the contents, where part of the material is not directly reporting the actual proceedings of the Society. It will also, in future, give us scope to expand the base of a publication which is widely read. We shall, of course, continue to include reports on all Society activities as hitherto.

Derek Wood
Editor

ROYAL AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of the Eighth Annual General Meeting of the Society held in the Royal Air Force Club on Monday 4th July 1994

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from (in alphabetical order): Sqn Ldr Archbold, Air Cdre Bacon, Wg Cdr Brookes, AVM Clark, Rt Hon Sir Frank Cooper, ACM Sir Kenneth Cross, AM Sir Denis Crowley-Milling, Gp Capt Dacre, AM Sir Patrick Dunn, Dr Fopp, Air Cdre Greenhill, Air Cdre Hicks, Mr James, ACM Sir David Lee, Mr Liang, AVM Lyne, Gp Capt Richardson, Miss Rowell and ACM Sir Denis Smallwood.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman said that from the viewpoint of the Committee, which he hoped was echoed by the Members, it had been a good year. Our numbers had stayed up and our finances are satisfactory, though we should need those resources to face the future with equanimity.

During the year the arrangement with Hastings Publishing Co came to an end. They had printed our Proceedings and hardbacks free in exchange for the use of our material in *Air Pictorial*. The break had been amicable, and the arrangement saved the society some £5-6,000. At last year's AGM the Chief of the Air Staff presented a cheque for £2,500 from the RAF Central Fund. This had been doubly welcome, not only for its monetary value but particularly for the gesture of support from the Air Force Board. The Society had been most grateful for this and other donations received during the year.

The Chairman said he would hazard an opinion as to why our Members had given such tremendous support, without which the Society could not have prospered. He thought that John Barraclough had put his finger on it when he said that those who served in the Second World War realised that their experience had been unique in that it was never likely to be repeated; that it did contain lessons relevant today; and that as none of us had solved the problem of immortality we had better get those lessons recorded pretty smartly! This was exactly what had been attempted in the Bracknell series of seminars over the past five years through the coverage of the Battle of Britain, Battle of the Atlantic, Development of Land-Air Co-operation, Strategic Bomber Offensive and, recently, Overlord. All these had been published in hardback as would be next year's on the Air War in the Far East, which would complete the 50th Anniversary series. All these

publications involved a great deal of detailed work in transcribing and editing and Derek Wood, Henry Probert and the rest of the team were looking for historians amongst you who may have editing experience to help out.

The linkage between the Society and the Staff College had been of immense benefit to us and had contributed to the Strategy phase of their course. The Commandant was content that this should continue as long as there was positive advantage to his young men and women from the provision of lessons from the past which made sense today.

This challenge had put us on our mettle and the Committee have proposed that in 1996 we should look at Air Intelligence in the Second World War and After, with considerable emphasis on the latter. This year's seminar at the RAF Museum was on the RAF Regiment; next year's would be on Leadership in War. We hoped that this choice of topics would help to make the transition between the 75% or so of Members whose experience goes back to 1939-45 and the 25% represented by those whose period is from then to the present day. It was this division of the membership which would cause the Society simply to fade away unless something was done. The President and the Committee had faced this unpalatable fact and recognised that we had to appeal to those serving in the Royal Air Force of today as a factor useful in their careers, while maintaining the professional historical approach which was so essential to attract young academics. We needed to go out in a positive way to recruit and also to take the Society into the rest of the country away from the South-East. To carry this policy through needed a new Chairman, one probably leaving the services in the 1990s and who had the necessary standing with the young. Until such a candidate could be found he was prepared to carry on.

The Society needed to spend some money on assuring our future. A new colour brochure was being prepared to help recruiting. The amalgamation of Proceedings 1-10 into a single re-edited and indexed volume was being considered. Philip Saxon was starting a pilot study for a definitive History of Air Navigation which would need some financial support from the Society.

Lastly, the Chairman said that the Committee had changed considerably. Cecil James and Tony Bennell, who had been members since the beginning, had left as had Air Vice-Marshals George Black and David Clark, Peter Montgomery who looked after Membership for three years, and Group Captain Andrew Thompson, who has gone to the civilian world.

They, together with those who have remained, had his unstinted admiration and grateful thanks. This great service of ours had the ability to produce dedicated enthusiasts throughout the Society on whom we would continue to rely for our wellbeing.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

The General Secretary (Gp Capt Joe Ainsworth) reported that the slowly rising membership had reached 590. To help the Committee better understand the make-up of the membership and its interests, the opportunity would be taken of the upgrading of the Society's computer to broaden the database. To this end a questionnaire would be sent out with the Proceedings in the near future. Members could rest assured that this information would be confidential to the Committee and under no circumstances would be released to anyone else.

As the Society became better known the volume of general correspondence was steadily increasing. Much of it was from students and academics seeking help and guidance in their researches, some from schoolboys and girls seeking help in their projects. The aim was to provide a genuinely helpful reply in each case. He was putting together a list of useful organisations who had specialist knowledge or who conducted research on a voluntary basis. He was always on the lookout for work of special interest to the Society and the Air Historical Branch.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer (Desmond Goch) presented the Audited Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1993. They showed a particularly healthy financial situation, with a handsome surplus invested at the end of the year. He warned, however, that our expenses must inevitably rise due to the cost of publishing Proceedings, which we would now have to pay ourselves, together with the purchase of a new computer and new colour brochure. The response of Members to the appeal to covenant their subscriptions had been most gratifying, the recovery of tax being a useful addition to income.

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 1993

The Chairman asked if there were any questions on the Report and Accounts. There being no questions it was Proposed by Sebastian Cox and Seconded by Air Cdre Stockwell that the Report and Accounts for the year

ending 31st December 1993 be approved and adopted. The motion was put to the Meeting and carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE

The Chairman said that as he had reported, there had been a number of changes in the Committee during the year. These had resulted in a smaller, but he hoped no less responsible and energetic body. The Members of the existing Committee shown on the list given to each attendee (repeated below), being eligible, offered themselves for election or re-election. The Chairman asked if there were any other nominations for the Committee. There being none, the Chairman asked for the agreement of the meeting to the re-appointment of the existing committee en bloc. There was no dissent and it was Proposed by Air Chief Marshal Sir Thomas Prickett, Seconded by Group Captain Neubroch, that the members of the existing Committee (other than the ex-officio members) be appointed or re-appointed to hold office until the end of the AGM in 1995. The motion was put to the Meeting and carried unanimously.

The Members of the Committee so appointed were:

Chairman:	Air Marshal Sir Frederick B Sowrey KCB CBE AFC
Vice-Chairman	Air Vice-Marshal A F C Hunter CBE AFC MA LLB
General Secretary:	Group Captain J C Ainsworth CEng MRAS
Membership	Dr Jack Dunham
Secretary:	PhD CPsychol AMRAS
Treasurer:	D Goch Esq FCCA
Members:	Wing Commander A J Brookes BA FRSA RAF Group Captain J P Dacre RAF *Dr M A Fopp MA FMA FIMgt *Group Captain Ian Madelin Air Commodore H A Probert MBE MA A E F Richardson Esq *Group Captain N E Taylor BSc RAF RAF D H Wood Esq CRAES <i>*Ex-Officio Member</i>

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The General Secretary explained that for some time the Committee had felt the need for some means of honouring those individuals who had made a specially outstanding contribution to the work of the Society and the furtherance of its aims. A proposed amendment to the Society's Constitution to permit the appointment of such individuals as Life Vice-Presidents of the Society was before the Meeting. The office of Life Vice-President would be honorary and have no formal responsibilities or duties. The General Secretary then asked the President to take over the Chair. It was Proposed by Gp Capt Madelin, Seconded by AVM Hunter that, subject to the provisions of Clause 10 of the Constitution, the following new clause, to be known as Clause 14, should be adopted forthwith:

‘14. The Society shall have the power in General Meeting and on the recommendation of the Executive Committee to appoint members as Life Vice-Presidents of the Society. Such appointments shall be confined to members whom the Executive Committee considers to have made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Society and/or to the furtherance of its constitutional aims. The title of Life Vice-President shall be honorary and have no executive powers or responsibilities. Such appointments will become effective on the passing of a resolution by a simple majority of the paid-up members present and voting.’

The motion was put to the Meeting and carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF LIFE VICE-PRESIDENT

The President said that it had been expected that Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey would relinquish the office of Chairman at the Meeting. A replacement had not, however, been found and Sir Frederick had agreed to continue to serve for the time being. He could see no reason why Sir Frederick could not combine the office of Chairman with the title of Life Vice-President in recognition of his outstanding services to the Society. He therefore Proposed that Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey be appointed a Life Vice-President of the Society. The Proposal was Seconded by Derek Wood and, when put to the Meeting, was carried by acclamation. The Chairman then resumed the Chair and expressed his grateful thanks to the Meeting for the honour.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

It was Proposed by Desmond Goch, Seconded by Peter Montgomery, that

Messrs Pridie Brewster be appointed Auditors of the Society and that the Committee be empowered to fix their remuneration. The motion was put to the Meeting and carried unanimously.

This concluded the formal business of the Meeting.

The Chairman asked if Members had any questions or observations they would like to put to the Committee. In reply to a question as to why there were no lady members of the Committee the Chairman said he would be delighted if lady members came forward but none had so far done so.

A Member pointed out that parking in the area was very difficult before 6pm and asked if the meeting could in future be held later. The Chairman replied that the timing was a compromise designed to fit in with the majority who came by train. He would pursue again the question of a discount in the Hilton car park.

John Davies asked if there was serious interest in promoting recruitment of new members. More advertising would be necessary. The Chairman replied that the aim was to attract younger members since only they could ensure continuity.

ACM Sir John Barraclough said that there was a need to cover Second World War topics in slower time and greater depth or the field would be exhausted. The Chairman replied that there was still plenty of scope and there was no reason why specific aspects could not be examined in more depth in the future.

AVM Herrington drew the attention of the Meeting to the forthcoming Canadian TV programme on the Bomber Offensive which, he said, was contentious and distorted the truth, The 'Right to Reply' programme could be the way of setting the record straight, The Chairman replied that the point was well made. He had consulted the President, the Bomber Command Association and the Air Historical Branch on the best way of dealing with the factual distortion, The Society would make *Reaping the Whirlwind* available to whoever would undertake the 'Right to Reply', Who this would be had not yet been decided,

Bill Beaumont asked if the Society was supporting PhD research. The Chairman replied that the Society had looked into establishing a Chair of RAF History but had backed off when they discovered that this would require an endowment of a million pounds. Obviously this was not on, but the Society was willing and able to help with the publication of suitable theses.

There being no further questions, the Meeting closed at 6,42pm.



SIR MICHAEL HOWARD

Michael Howard was born in London in 1922. He was awarded his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Modern History at Oxford and served with the British Army in the Italian Campaign, 1943-45, being twice wounded and awarded the Military Cross. He began his teaching career at King's College, University of London, in 1947 as Assistant Lecturer in the History Department, and began to specialise in the History of War. In 1953 he was appointed the first Lecturer in War Studies and spent the next ten years building up an independent department, in 1962 being awarded the title of Professor of War Studies. Simultaneously he helped to found the International Institute for Strategic Studies, of which he is now the President.

In 1968 he moved to the University of Oxford as Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College, and in 1977 became Chichele Professor of the History of War. In the same year he was awarded a DLitt, from Oxford. In 1980 he was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History and held the post until 1989 when he accepted the Robert A Lovett Chair of Military and Naval History at Yale University, from which he retired in 1993. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and a Foreign Corresponding Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was for many years a member of the Council of the Royal Institute for International Affairs, and a regular participant in the conferences of the *Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft*.

Professor Howard's many books and articles include *The Franco-Prussian War* (1961), *The Continental Commitment* (1972), *War and the Liberal Conscience* (1978) and *The Causes of Wars* (1983). He was also responsible, with Professor Peter Paret, for the translation of Clausewitz' *On War* which is now the standard version in English. His most recent publication is *Strategic Deception in the Second World War* (1990) and his latest book of essays, *The Lessons of History*, was published by Yale University Press in 1991. His awards include the NATO Atlantic Award (1989) and the Paul Nitze Award (1994) from the US Centre for Naval Analyses.

ETHICS, DETERRENCE AND STRATEGIC BOMBING

Professor Sir Michael Howard

When I chose this topic a year ago I did not realise how topical it was likely to be, but it does not entirely surprise me because it is a subject of continuing interest and continuing controversy. I am afraid I cannot tell you anything particularly new about it; I am not going to give it a rigorous or scholarly examination, either from the point of view of the historian or that of the moral philosopher. I doubt if I can tell you anything that you do not already know about a great deal better than I do – and in some cases better than anyone else around. So please accept these as some rather broad and random reflections, which are the result of having thought, talked and lectured about this subject for the best part of a quarter of a century – sometimes in Service environments, but more often in university discussions and seminars where the reactions are rather different; sometimes helpful and sometimes distinctly not.

I am going to talk primarily about strategic bombing in the Second World War, because that is what will interest most of you here, and because that is where the whole question of nuclear deterrence was put on the carpet, where it has remained ever since. Let me make it clear that nothing that I say, and nothing that serious critics of the strategic bombing offensive have ever said, calls in question the skill, courage and dedication of the crews of Bomber Command, who obeyed orders and sacrificed themselves under appalling circumstances; any more than discussion and controversy about the strategy and tactics of the Western Front in the First World War calls into question the skill, courage and dedication of the unfortunate troops who went through that equally appalling period.

There are two distinct but overlapping questions that one has to address. One is that of the ethics of the deliberate bombing of civilians as a means of making war, and the other is its effectiveness. To judge both and put them into any kind of historical perspective we have to go behind the Second World War to the period between the wars when the concept of strategic air bombardment was first being formulated. Then the apparent lesson of the First World War was that modern war had become a conflict not just of armed forces but of entire societies, and that the outcome of the struggle depended not on simply victory or defeat of armed forces in the field but on the will and capacity of society as a whole to continue the war, whether its armed forces in the field had been successful or not.

That was a lesson which had been evident to shrewd observers as early as the American Civil War, when it had become clear that, however often the armed forces of the Confederacy might be defeated in the field, so long as they were supported by the determination of the civilian population there was no way in which that war could be won by the Union. Generals Grant and Sherman realised that their target was not Lee's Army but the will and capacity of the people of the Confederacy to continue to provide that Army with the men, the weapons and the morale to carry on. The result was Sherman's march through the South, and his deliberate destruction of its economic resources.

The First World War seemed to bear that lesson out even more strongly. It is still a matter of some controversy between historians whether the war ended because the German Armies were defeated or because the German civil population collapsed owing to a revolution. Nevertheless it was not until the morale of the German people at home was thoroughly destroyed and they were clearly no longer willing to support their military effort for more than a few months that a military victory in the field became possible. With the development of the new weapon of air power there appeared to be a new instrument whereby the will and capacity of society to carry on the war could be directly targeted, rather than influenced indirectly by the long, laborious process of wearing down its manpower in such terrible circumstances as those of the Western Front.

So, the first conclusion drawn in the early 1920s was that if you had the means and capacity directly to target the enemy's civilian population – and were seen to have this capacity – you could deter him from going to war at all. The concept of deterrence which became so dominant in the 1950s and 1960s can be found very clearly set out in some of the documents of the defence authorities in Britain between the wars. It was indeed the concept of deterrence which led the Committee of Imperial Defence and in particular the man who was the leading spirit in the organisation of Britain's defence strategy even before he was Prime Minister – Mr Neville Chamberlain – to believe that the most effective way in which Britain's few resources in the 1930s could be put to immediate use was to build up a bomber force in the RAF which would act as a deterrent for Hitler against going to war. The object was not to be able to fight the war; it was to be able to deter it.

But, as became painfully clear, one cannot deter a war unless one has the evident capacity actually to fight it. And it also became devastatingly

clear in the first months – even days – of the Second World War that Bomber Command had not acquired in the few years of its build-up the capacity to provide the kind of attack on German strategic targets for which it had been planned. Some of the most tragic documents in the history of the RAF are the portrait photographs of the C-in-C of Bomber Command in 1939,. Sir Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt – the haunted, desperate face of a man who knew he was being called on to do things for which he did not have the capacity, and was bearing on his shoulders an intolerable burden which he could share with nobody else.

The doctrine of the RAF had far outrun its technological ability to implement that doctrine. It lacked the range to carry the war to significant areas of Germany; it lacked the capability to defend itself in the kind of daylight raids that would enable it to find and identify its targets; when it switched to night bombing it had not developed the techniques of night navigation necessary to help it find its targets; and it could not carry the bomb loads which would enable it to do any serious damage to its targets once it had found them. It was to take the best part of three years for its technology to catch up with the doctrine on which it had based its claim to strategic primacy.

Even so the targets the RAF was aiming at did not involve the deliberate targeting of civilians. They were choosing specifically economic targets, particularly transportation and oil refineries. The deliberate targeting of civilian populations was still seen as something which was not done by civilised societies. Even the *Luftwaffe* – at least not initially – did not do this; it bombed Warsaw because the city was, in terms of the campaign against Poland, a legitimate military objective – a communications centre and focus for mobilisation and deployment. The attack on Rotterdam resulted from a mix-up of signals, and that on London, which triggered off the tit-for-tat bombing of cities in September 1940 – resulted from navigational error. The constraints which applied to both belligerents in 1939 and 1940 were partly the result – certainly on our side – of humanity, partly the desire not to offend powerful neutrals, by which was meant the USA; and they did, of course, break down fairly rapidly. Even so, Bomber Command still focused so far as it could on economic targets until by the end of 1941 it was clear that it did not have the technology to find them or if it did find them seriously to damage them, and the terrible realisation dawned on the chiefs of Bomber Command and the Air Staff that the attacks delivered up to that point with so much trouble and such great

sacrifices on the part of the crews had been very largely wasted. Only then, as a second best, was the decision taken that centres of cities, large conurbations, should be deliberately targeted since only in that way could one be sure of doing at least some damage. I need hardly tell this audience that this policy was not the invention of Sir Arthur Harris, although he did espouse it and make it his own. It had been resolved by the Air Staff as a whole and approved by the Chiefs of Staff before Harris was himself appointed, and if any single figure was responsible for the policy it was Harris's predecessor as C-in-C Bomber Command, Sir Charles Portal – with the powerful support of the Prime Minister's Scientific Adviser, Lord Cherwell.

The documents make it quite clear that the policy of area bombing was adopted for two reasons. One was that it was bound to do some damage to the German war effort; if one aimed at lot of bombs at the centre of Cologne one was bound to hit something which would make it more difficult for the Germans to carry on the war. The other was the anticipated effect on the morale of the German civilian population. The policy advocated by Cherwell was one of what he called the de-housing of the civilian workers: the destruction of their houses was a legitimate and effective objective because it would discourage them from turning up to work the next day, if indeed they survived. There is little doubt that the morale of the German population was one of the major objectives, and I suspect everyone involved at the time knew that that was so. But what is not so clear – especially to those who were not alive at the time was that another indirect target of Bomber Command was the morale of the British people themselves, who had themselves been subjected to some pretty effective de-housing by the *Luftwaffe* before we ourselves started on that policy. The fact that the Germans were receiving, with as much bonus as could be provided, what they themselves had been dishing out in the *Blitz*, was one of the very few cheerful pieces of news which the British government was able to bring to the British people during those dark years; we were not simply on the defensive, waiting for the Germans to hit us and starve us: we were hitting back. If opinion polls had been taken among the British population as to whether we should be hitting civilian targets or concentrating on economic targets. I doubt if the civilian population could have cared a 'tuppenny damn'. The main point was that the Germans should be hit, and the more damage that was done the better. It was the only way in which we could carry on the war, and conceivably win it.

But there were two problems about area bombing. First, and to my mind very unwisely, official policy continued to maintain that civilians as such were not being targeted, whereas in fact they were. When awkward questions were asked in the House of Commons Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Secretary of State for Air, always maintained that insofar as any damage was being done to civilians it was purely collateral, a by-product of attacks on legitimate economic targets. In fact, civilian casualties were as much an objective of Bomber Command as was the destruction of the economic targets, but the government never quite had the courage to come clean and say so. Had it done so I think it would have received overwhelming popular support. The morale of the Germans was exactly what we were trying to destroy; our adversaries called it ‘terror bombing’, which it was. We were indeed trying to terrify the German population.

This brings me to the second problem, that of effectiveness. In fact civilian morale did not prove to be the soft target that pre-war air-power theorists had believed. Douhet and Mitchell, if not Trenchard, believed that a few days and nights of bombing of cities would cause the civilian population to rise up in a state of panic, hysteria and fury, insist that the government should reverse its policy, and leave the country ungovernable. In fact it did nothing of the kind. So far from stirring up feeling against the government conducting the war, it made that population more dependent than ever upon the government for its very survival. However much German civilians may have disliked the Nazi regime and wished to overthrow it, they became ever more reliant on that regime to feed them, to re-house them, to evacuate them, indeed to enable them to survive at all. Further, it inevitably stirred up a hatred of the bombers, and hatred is always good for morale. Most important of all it created a ‘Home Front’ which involved civilians actively in the war effort, enabled them to do things, gave them jobs which involved them in fighting the war and thus boosted morale still further. This had been the effect of the *Blitz* on the British civilian population. It had strengthened the power of the government and the dependence of the civilians on the authorities; it had aroused hatred of the enemy of a kind which had not been there before the bombing began; and it involved civilians actively in the war effort. Since the *Blitz* had had this effect on the British civilian population I have never been able to understand why we thought it would have any other effect on the German population. After all, the German regime had far more powerful instruments of social control than Churchill did in England. Even

if the Germans did wish to rise up and demand that the war should be brought to an end it was very difficult indeed to do so with the *Gestapo* breathing down their necks. However much you might wish not to turn up at the factory the morning after a raid, nasty questions would be asked if you did not. Further, the Nazis devised the extremely intelligent tactics of ensuring that ration cards were not issued to the workers' homes; they had to be collected with the wage packet issued at the workplace. So German morale did not crack until the very last weeks when the Allied forces overran their territory.

So the belief so forcefully put forward by Sir Arthur Harris that strategic bombing could win the war on its own was, to put it very mildly, a considerable overstatement. It hugely underestimated both German morale and German defensive capabilities – their capacity to defend themselves against the bombers and inflict sometimes almost unacceptable casualties. Nonetheless, by early 1945 bombing had made it physically impossible for Germany to continue the war at all, for they were unable to field armies anywhere outside their own territory and only with difficulty within. That was the result of a subtle interaction between surface and air warfare that nobody had planned and indeed nobody had quite foreseen. The bomber offensive had the effect of driving the *Luftwaffe* on to the defensive, forced them to change their production targets and cut down on the manufacture of long-range and medium bombers in favour of fighter defences for their own territories. It deprived the German armies of the command of the air that had made possible their initial victories in 1939-1941; as a result of the bomber offensive, from El Alamein onwards the Allied armies enjoyed almost complete command of the air over their battlefields. It was only that command of the air that made it possible to get ashore at all – at Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and Normandy. And once the Allied armies were ashore hardly a German aircraft appeared in the skies above Italy and France. I myself served 18 months in Italy, during which time I saw one German aircraft – at Salerno. The fact that we were ashore and able to advance enabled us to seize the airfields in southern Italy from which we could bomb central and eastern Europe. Even more important, in 1944 we were able to overrun the German defensive and early warning systems in north-west Europe which gave us virtual command of the air over Germany itself. As most of you know, four-fifths of the bombs dropped on Germany in the whole of the Second World War were dropped between July 1944 and May 1945. It was only then that we began to do irreparable damage.

By then, however, we had the technology needed for the discriminating bombing of economic targets. The USAAF flying by day, escorted by Mustangs, were able to identify and discriminate bomb such targets, while the RAF now had the numbers to carry out the ‘city busting’, which pre-war theorists had assumed might be done by a few dozen aircraft. The final row between Harris and the Air Staff as to whether the RAF should switch its policy from area bombing to what he called ‘panacea’ bombing – a row which led to his virtual disgrace after the war – was in fact largely irrelevant: whatever we targeted in Germany in the winter of 1944/45, we were bound to do an immense amount of damage. Probably the USA with its so-called precision bombing did just as much collateral damage to German civilian targets as we did by aiming at them.

The fact was that by 1944 the Allies had built up a gigantic machine of destruction and were going to use it to the limit. There was no pressure on us to be moderate; it would be very difficult to argue the case that we should be moderate because until the end of March 1945 the German Army was still fighting desperately on all fronts. We had seen at Arnhem and in the Ardennes offensive the amazing capacity of the German forces under the most unfavourable circumstances to be able to hit back. It was as if we were trying to kill a many-headed monster which just would not die; the only way to destroy it was to go on hitting it as hard as we could with everything we had. There can be very little doubt, with hindsight, that we did much more damage than was strictly necessary, and the reaction of almost everybody who went into Germany in the immediate aftermath of the war was one of utter horror: ‘Did we really do this? Did we have to do it?’ Dresden was the paradigm of that horror. But Dresden was only a climactic blow, just one of the final blows being delivered by this huge machine of destruction. With hindsight we can see that the attack was unnecessary and did nothing to hasten the end of the war, but that was by no means clear at the time. The damage caused was, in fact, no greater than that at Hamburg two years earlier, which nobody has complained about, and it would not have been so great if the total destruction of the German defences and early warning systems had not given the Allies a clear run which they had no reason to expect.

So strategic bombing did not in itself win the war in Europe and probably never could have done so. It did more damage than was strictly necessary, but how could we gauge what was and what was not strictly necessary? It made an absolutely essential contribution, however, to the

victory that was achieved by the armed forces of the Allies fighting in three elements. Whether strategic bombing could have won the war in the Pacific without the use of the atomic bomb does remain a matter of controversy. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, in its post-operative report, maintains that the Japanese were already defeated even before the bombs were dropped, and that conventional bombing had destroyed their capacity to continue to resist. But there is no doubt that it was the dropping of the atomic bomb that compelled the Japanese government to sue for terms. I am one of those who believe that if they had not been forced to admit defeat there would still have to have been a landing with horrendous casualties to both sides, and that the numbers who died at Hiroshima and Nagasaki would have been a fraction of those who would have died even more unpleasantly during a prolonged land campaign in which the Japanese would have fought almost literally to the death. But the atomic weapon made clear that the technology was now available – or would shortly become available – to do what the prophets had foreseen in the 1920s; to inflict such destruction on the enemy society as to make it impossible for them to continue the war at all. With the development of that technology serious deterrence at last became possible.

This brings me finally to nuclear deterrence, which was at least an element in keeping the peace for 40 years; although historians will be able to argue for ever whether it was nuclear deterrence that kept the peace or whether the Russians never intended to attack us at all. Anyhow, the peace was kept and nuclear deterrence played a significant part in doing so. But it was a very uneasy basis for a defence policy and an even more uneasy one for international relations. First, whatever we did to protect ourselves, there was no way in which in a nuclear war we would be able to prevent vast destruction to our own societies if deterrence did break down. It was a great deal to demand of civilians to be told they could not be protected against destruction of their entire community, except by threatening to do the same to other quite inoffensive people. Second, the moral basis of deterrence was really a source of deep and continuing concern to everybody who was connected with such things. It is one thing to kill large numbers of civilians when the capacity of their country to make war depends on their active and continuing support; support which they are on the whole freely and enthusiastically providing. Beyond doubt in the Second World War the civilian population of belligerent societies were inevitably and to my mind legitimate targets, and to the best of my recollections in Britain at the time

civilians did not complain about being bombed. It may have made them angry but they did not say 'it's not fair'. They were part of the war effort. In the two world wars civilians were not 'non-combatants' in the traditional sense of the term and did not think of themselves as such. But it is a very different matter not only to kill civilians in far larger numbers, as nuclear weapons can do, but to damage their society beyond hope of recovery. Moreover this damage would be inflicted, not on a belligerent community carrying on a desperate war, but out of a clear sky against a society still at peace. Civilians were not any longer belligerents; they were hostages. A case could certainly be made for doing this and I myself helped to make it. If necessary I would do so again. But it was not an agreeable situation and in the debates in which I was involved against the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament I was never totally happy.

Have we today reached the point where we can square the circle between the moral conduct of war and the effective conduct of war; two things which are all too often in opposition to one another? It does look to me, as a complete amateur without any technical knowledge at all, as if we are now moving into an era – thanks to the development of 'smart' technology – when we may have a means of making war that can be both effective and ethical; that is a capacity for targeting military objectives with great accuracy, and civilian ones with great discrimination. Clearly the lessons of the Gulf War are still very doubtful; it was a very brief, and probably atypical campaign, and we should not build too many hopes on it, but it did point in a hopeful direction. The mass slaughter of civilians, alas, still goes on at the lower end of the military spectrum, as we learn whenever we open a newspaper. But we ourselves need no longer contemplate the mass slaughter of civilians as a necessary part of our own defence policy.

DISCUSSION

SEBASTIAN COX. You suggested that the achievements of air power in the Second World War were in some sense accidental, ie the driving of the *Luftwaffe* onto the defensive. Trenchard has perhaps been unfairly criticised in this respect; if we look very closely at some of the things he was saying in the 1920s, particularly in the Chiefs of Staff Committee, he stated clearly that one of the reasons why we needed to have an Air Force which was offensively rated was precisely that. He has been to some extent unfairly criticised, his opposition to fighters has been exaggerated, and his attachment to the bomber has been misinterpreted because, in fact, the Second World War proved him very largely right.

PROFESSOR HOWARD. I am certainly prepared to accept that. At that period, of course, the technology for defence had not developed nearly to the extent it did later, and one of the justifications for the emphasis upon the bomber was that equivalent resources put into fighter defences would not be able to produce anything really effective before the invention of the Spitfire. I have never found anything to suggest that it was the objective of Bomber Command, whether of Portal or of Harris, so to conduct a strategic air offensive against Germany so as to force the Germans to strip their armies of their air support, in order to make it easier for us actually to get our armies ashore in Europe. Harris himself was profoundly opposed to the idea of putting any resources into ground support at all. It was a natural but unforeseen consequence of the bomber offensive; it indicated, as we examine the lessons of that war, the inseparability of the activities of the three services, which was fairly clear to those of us who were on the ground at the time – if not to everyone in the RAF.

FRANK DIAMOND. Professor Overy has addressed the question of what, if there had been no bomber offensive, would have been the output of the German factories. He considers that the whole outcome of the war could have been very different, for the thousands of '88s used against us could have been employed in the ground battles, and there would have been far more of them since the factories would have gone on pouring out arms. There was a vast reservoir of forced labour, and – who knows? – they might have won.

PROFESSOR HOWARD. Professor Overy knows more about this than almost anybody in this country and has studied the German documents in far more detail than I can claim. I would certainly not take issue with him

on this point. But we must look at the time spectrum. We were not doing any serious damage to German war production until about 1943; when we started so doing and Speer took over. German war production soared to its highest point in 1944, so we need to look at each particular moment to consider what would have happened without the strategic bombing offensive, I believe that before about 1943 we were not making very much difference to German war production. We only began absolutely to destroy it in 1944/45. Then the question arises – would they then have had time actually to build up serious defences, especially as by then we were destroying their oil resources. Even if they did turn out enormous numbers of aircraft, they lacked the fuel to fly them. It is a complicated matter.

HUMPHREY WYNN. We need to remember, I suggest, the German counter-offensive weapons, the V1s and V2s. The latter were a foretaste of what we would have had to withstand had strategic deterrence broken down. With nuclear warheads the V2s would have caused catastrophic destruction and there was no defence against them.

PROFESSOR HOWARD. That is a very important point. We were able at least to blunt the attack of the V1s – and also of the V2s – by the raids on Peenemunde, which were a very interesting example of Bomber Command being used in the counter-force role, ie the precise targeting of an objective of major importance. The argument of the counter-force protagonists as against the counter-city school was that if we had done that more often we would have been using our forces far more effectively. But it was only when surface forces overran the actual bombing sites that the attacks finally ceased.

MAURICE RIXOM. Would you care to comment on the use of aerial attack as a terror weapon in the First World War? I have in mind the German Zeppelin raids on the civil population of London, against which we had no means of retaliation.

PROFESSOR HOWARD. The use of Zeppelins against London was probably the first example of a deliberate attempt to terrorise a civilian population, and the Germans were quite frank about it: they were not mealie-mouthed. They realised that this was quite ineffective and abandoned it; then they developed the Gothas, which were able to do it much more effectively in the summer of 1917. As a result the RAF was formed.

DENIS RICHARDS. May I make two or three points? First, the effect on morale: there is no doubt that four or five heavy raids simply shattered the morale of the people of northern Italy so that the Italians did not want to resist an invasion in the south. Second, the effect on German production. When Speer got busy German bomber production increased by half; fighter production in 1944 rose by nine times. That says something for the bomber offensive. Third, a point which Portal made when he spoke to schoolboys at Winchester after the war, ‘Why did we try to kill civilians?’ he was asked. He replied that we were not trying to kill civilians; we were trying to drive them away from the industrial towns, to destroy their houses, to destroy their wish to continue fighting. If they moved away we would be all the more glad. We had no intention of slaughtering the German population but rather of discouraging them from continuing the war.

PROFESSOR HOWARD. That, of course, is the policy of de-housing, but it is one of ‘terrorisation’. On the Italians, their hearts were not in the war anyway, and I do not think it took the heavy bombing of Milan and Turin to make them withdraw their support from Mussolini and those few extremists who would have liked to oppose our landings. Your second point bears out what I said about our bombing offensive driving the Germans on to the defensive. When Speer started to increase aircraft production he emphasised fighters, not bombers.

AIR COMMODORE PROBERT. All too often it seems to me that there is a serious gap in the balance sheet relating to Bomber Command’s achievements, namely the effect on the ability of the Soviet forces to carry out that part of the land war which was far more important than anything we in the West were ever able to undertake. Do you think that, when we argue the case for the bomber offensive, we ought to be laying more weight on that aspect of the equation?

PROFESSOR HOWARD. I am glad you said that; I should have made the point myself. When I said that the Allied armies were able to advance without fear of air attack that applied to the Russians just as much as to us, and particularly towards the end. Their massive advances after the Battle of Kursk to the German frontier would have been quite impossible had the Germans deployed the kind of air strength they had in 1941/42. It was precisely for the reasons I have given that they were able to do that. You are right that on the balance sheet this was more important than the fact that we were able to land and advance in NW Europe.



**MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
SIR JOHN THOMSON
GCB CBE AFC RAF**

**THE ADDRESS BY
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR MICHAEL
GRAYDON GCB CBE ADC FRAeS,
CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF**

I was honoured when Jan Thomson asked me to make this address. It seemed right that a serving officer should do it, and, in the face of such a senior and towering talent that the Head of the Service should attempt the task. But how to do justice in this particular tribute to such a man? As I look around the packed pews of this Royal Air Force Church of St, Clement Danes, do I need to say much at all? The presence here of so many people, his beloved family of course, his friends and colleagues from all three Services, and from the Allied Nations, the many friends from civilian life whom he so much valued, all of you are testimony to the respect and affection in which Air Chief Marshal Sir John Thomson was held, and what greater tribute can there be than that.

And yet, of course, there is a great deal to say. Moreover, I have a feeling that John would expect something to be said; not as a eulogy nor in any self-promoting way, that was not his style. But, because there are things that he would want said about the Air Force that he loved. And I can almost see him now, with that slightly quizzical look on his face, delighting in the prospect of the challenge that he has given me.

Charles John Thomson was born on 7 June 1941. He was the eldest son of Charles and Betty Thomson. He was to see little of his father until the end of the War and the young John was brought up in Belfast whilst his father served as a Medical Officer in the Army, primarily in the Middle East. In these war years, his grandfather played a key role; he was a man who would talk to children as equals, capturing their attention, drawing them out. And it was here, no doubt, that the early seeds of maturity and the building of that enquiring mind that so distinguished John were sown. His mother told me that from the earliest stages John was fascinated by aeroplanes. It was a love affair that stayed with him throughout his schooling and, indeed, his life. In parallel, there were the beginnings of the mischievous sense of humour – the gardener left up the apple tree with the

ladder removed, uncles locked in garden sheds and even his grandfather delayed for a meeting ruefully contemplating the flat tyres of his car, a result of nails strewn liberally in its path. The reason, as John said to his mother, 'to see what would happen'.

After the War, the family moved to Norfolk where his father practised as a GP. But when the time came. John was sent to Campbell College in Belfast. It was a school to which his uncles had been and where the family roots lay. And from the start John wanted to join the Air Force section of the Cadet Corps. He was concerned that he would not be allowed to because of the date of his birth but frantic phone calls passed from his aunts in Belfast to Norfolk and back ensured that permission for him to join was gained. A certain amount of determination, charm and gentle manipulation was already evident. Indeed, he had his pilots licence before he gained his driving licence. And many who have driven with him would understand why. Although there was a place for him to read medicine in Dublin, it was Cranwell on which he was bent. And so to Cranwell he went in 1959 and it was there that I first met him. I say that, but he was the junior entry while I was the senior entry, and I doubt if we spoke. After all, the junior entry was to be seen as little as possible, and certainly not heard. At Cranwell he was very successful; he won all the flying prizes and showed, clearly, even at that stage, that he was destined for stardom. His first tour to Aden on No 43 Squadron flying Hunters provided the chance for Pilot Officer Thomson to learn about close air support and reconnaissance. The Radfan Campaign was where John cut his teeth in the series of ground attack sorties in support to land forces and particularly to the SAS. Precision and accuracy were the hallmarks of that operation and it was to stand him in good stead for the future. From there to Germany and to RAF Gutersloh – No 2 Squadron – more good operational flying and the start of friendships that have endured ever since. But John was plucked away to become ADC for a year to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Denis Spotswood, and this was a period which would have taught him a great deal.

Back to No 2 Sqn and from there, as any fighter pilot deserves who has survived an ADC's tour, he was sent to the United States on exchange and on promotion to squadron leader. Bergstrom Air Force Base in Texas flying F-4 Phantoms. It was here that the United States Air Force made one of its rare errors by allowing two RAF officers, his predecessor Peter Rile and John, to take an F-4 away on a familiarisation weekend. This involved landing at virtually every base in America where there was an exchange

officer and, surprise, surprise, with an overnight stay at Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas. Here John distinguished himself as he was to do on many occasions subsequently after a long evening by falling asleep and missing most of the best sights on the Strip. He did the same thing with me in May '93. And it was here at Bergstrom Air Force Base that John made the best decision of his life when he asked a PhD student, then studying Spanish, to marry him. And on 7 October 1972 John married Jan Bishop at Austin, Texas.

Let me talk a little about Jan. First, she is very much her own person but she has a special sort of magic that enables her to be a friend to everyone. Whenever the opportunity has arisen she has pursued her career as a teacher, and a very good and successful one she is too; she has managed to combine this talent with John's career, but always ready to support him and to put him first when needed. Determined, highly intelligent, great fun, and caring, Jan would need all these qualities when she had her first sight of an RAF married quarter in England in Winter. There was Staff College at Bracknell, High Wycombe, their first owned house at Sonning, and the birth of Catherine in April 1974. Those of you who attended John's funeral would have heard the story of Catherine so movingly described by Robin Turner. Let me just add very briefly to that, Catherine was born with leukaemia and Downs Syndrome. It was thought that she would live perhaps only two weeks, yet the love and attention given to her by John and Jan, and their determination to give Catherine a normal life, kept her alive for over three years. Their strength and fortitude touched many lives at Coltishall where by now John was commanding No 41 Squadron. When Catherine died, John decided not to hold the church service on the Station as people might feel some compulsion to attend. Instead it was held away from the station; but on the day, the church was full with people from every walk of Coltishall life – airmen, airwomen and families of people who had grown to love Catherine from the nursery school and who felt a bond with John and Jan. It was the clearest example of the admiration felt by the community for them both and the love that Catherine had engendered.

By then Claire had been born and, despite the sadness of Catherine's loss, Coltishall was a rewarding and happy station. No 41 Sqn was an outstanding squadron, led from the front with great skill and style, with great success in international tactical bombing competitions in the AFNORTH Recce Competition and on tactical evaluation. And it was almost inevitable that with his background, the success of his command,

and the award of an AFC John would be selected to be PSO to the Chief of Air Staff, then Sir Michael Beetham. So, Jan, Claire, and now Annie, born in 1978, moved from Coltishall back to their home now in Caversham and eventually yet another new home in Reading. I was doing a similar job to John for the Chief of the Defence Staff and I saw much of him then. He relished the challenge of the post; it was hard, relentless work, but his clear thinking, his ability to absorb pressure and his sense of humour made him an exceptional PSO and was a formative period in his life. Moreover he managed to continue flying at the weekends with No 6 Air Experience Flight and whenever the opportunity arose on visits. It was not until later I became aware of the great impression that a remark from his civilian colleague had left on him. After working on one particular problem he ventured the thought that what he had done was alright and he did not think he could do better. To which the Private Secretary replied, 'You can always do better.' John was never one to do anything other than well, but I believe he took this commentary to heart. There was evidence in the daunting working hours he set himself, the punishing schedules, and in his selfless dedication to the Service that he loved. It became his personal faith not just to do something well, but to do it to the best of his ability.

From London he went to Brüggen in Germany as Station Commander of one of the biggest and most important stations in the RAF. It was a highly efficient station and a happy one. It was here, during the AOC's inspection, that the neighbouring air defence station had the temerity – accidentally, we must assume – to loose off a Sidewinder which shot down one of John's Jaguars. As the pilot extracted himself from his parachute, a German farmer rushed up to him, helped him to his feet, took him to his house and gave him a large glass of brandy. 'Now you call the station and tell them you are alright,' he said. 'You seem to know a lot about this,' replied the pilot. 'Yes,' said the farmer, 'you're not the first who has fallen on my field.' From Brüggen, he went to the Royal College of Defence Studies. This was a very happy period which included the award of the CBE and, at the end of the year, promotion to air commodore. It was followed by a move to a newly created job as Director of Defence (Concepts) – a challenging role which he greatly relished. And he made a great impression on all those who worked with him. He was promoted from there into No 1 Group as AOC. An enormous job for a 46-year-old air vice-marshal, and once again he carried it out with great distinction and much style.

In 1989, he became the Assistant Chief of Air Staff. In this post, his

penetrating mind, his capacity for work, and his attention to detail made him a formidable ACAS and it came as no surprise that he was appointed to take over on promotion from me as AOCinC Support Command in 1991. He followed me later to Strike Command in a job for which he was tailor-made and to which he devoted immense energy and intellect. It was typical of the man that when I asked him to move from that job at Strike, which he loved so much, to take over a new and prestigious appointment of Commander in Chief Allied Forces Northwest Europe, that having advanced his reasons as to why he should stay, he listened to my reasons why he should take up the appointment and conceded that I was right. And from then on he devoted his prodigious energy to bringing into operation to time and to budget the new headquarters, a task which was achieved against many odds, not just by the international leadership and the staff of AFNORTH and UKAIR, but also, as everyone will recognise, by John's personal drive. He became the first Commander-in-Chief of the new command just one week before he died.

In the meantime, he had added a 'G' to his KCB and those who attended the ceremony for the inauguration of AFNorthwest will recall his wise words as he started out on this new challenge.

'We are a small HQ at AFNW and that means that I and my PSC commanders will need, even more than in the past, to work as an integrated team. This is exactly as it should be, and I believe that these economical arrangements will provide a very good model for NATO for the future.'

I have no doubt that he would have been an outstanding success and it was my wish and my hope that John would have taken over from me as Chief of Air Staff at the end of his tour at AFNorthwest.

So much, then, for the career of Charles John Thomson, which blazed so strongly in our military firmament. A career which in many ways had only just begun and for which we had such high hopes for the future. He left us at the age of 53, abruptly, unbelievably, and even now I find it hard to accept that he will not be there with his support and sage advice, that serious, almost relentless exposition of the facts, and the courage to face the unpalatable.

But what of the man? The eternal fighter pilot, the flying enthusiast. Never happier than when airborne, whether in a fast jet or the small propeller-driven aircraft of the Air Experience Flight at Abingdon. He was a man who revelled in flying, who retained his skills, and indeed

maintained currency on both the Tornado and the Jaguar, and had soloed on the Hurricane and the Spitfire in the last year. A man respected for his abilities as a pilot throughout the whole Air Force.

Also, the sailing man: Commodore of the RAF Sailing Association, a responsibility which had given him great pleasure over the last five years and had seen the launch of *Red Arrow* and *Blue Diamond* and the sponsorship of *Oracle* for the Admiral's Cup. And then skiing – and shooting, indeed, a member of the Upavon Shoot for ten years. From the day when he walked around the estate in Norfolk, with his father's tweed hat on and a gun under his arm. I suspect that young John fancied himself somewhat as a squire.

And the Air Squadron, flying enthusiasts he had met at Brüggem and later had been invited to join as a Squadron Member. The sort of people he liked, successful and interesting people, keen aviators, and he went on a number of visits with them. He was a guiding force in the squadron visit to Russia and only this year he was largely instrumental in setting up a visit to Jordan, which I know from my own very recent visit was enormously successful and typical of the attention which John would pay to the detail and the style. At leisure, he was an avid reader of *The Spectator*, a lover of irreverent pieces, a student of military and political history and a man who enjoyed the Alan Clark Diaries. Didn't we all? Well, most of us. A humorist, prankster, raconteur and mimic. Those who have seen him in full flow have witnessed a major talent. Some who were unfortunate enough to be on the receiving end of a telephone call from Thomson in mimic mood would no doubt have stood to attention as a very senior Canadian voice described their failings with uncanny accuracy and clarity. Only a few weeks before his death, on a private holiday in Czechoslovakia, he persuaded the other members of the party that they had lost their return tickets to Berlin. For three days the thought of the over-crowded train and their lack of tickets drove the party to frenzied contingencies before John put them out of their misery by telling them he had the tickets the whole time in his wallet.

John the friend. John who held the Mafia from Gütersloh days together – who kept in touch with them in all their various exploits, and who never forgot them, despite all his progress, and his advancement. I know how much they will all miss him.

And then there was his handwriting. I graduated about three months ago after six years hard labour attempting to learn the mysteries of the Thomson

scrawl. Only Tina, his PA, could decipher it with accuracy and reliability and I sometimes wonder whether John himself could read it quite so fluently as he would like us to think.

He was not a demonstrative man. Except behind the wheel of a car. The first Alfa Romeo Spyder in Aden, then the flamboyant Pontiac Firebird in Texas and most recently an Alfa Romeo Spyder again. To say that he was an impatient driver would be the understatement of the year. Perhaps not a road hog, but not far off, and when irritated beyond measure by some unfortunate motorist baulking his progress, but no doubt driving safely if not with much adventure. John ventured the theory to Jan that for one week everybody should be encouraged to drive as fast as they could and at the end of it only the good drivers would be left. And Jan's tart responses to criticisms of her navigation, 'I'm not paid to do this thing, damn it.' After all she has put up with on the road, I am delighted that Jan will continue to grind the gears of the Alfa Spyder and, no doubt, with a certain amount of relish.

John the quiet Christian. A faith given emphasis throughout Catherine's life and one which sustained him and Jan so much thereafter. John the man of enormous integrity. John the thoughtful, caring human being whose loyalty to his staff was legendary and elicited such extraordinary loyalty in return. John the traditional Cranwellian imbued with its ethos. A man who loved the Air Force, thought deeply about it and was very proud of its achievements. Not a reactionary, wise enough to know that change was needed, yet not prepared to accede to change for change's sake or to ill-thought-out solutions. He was prepared to defend excellence as he saw it. And he was angered by the attacks that had been made on the RAF over the last year. Never aggressive, always calm, but deeply disappointed by the manner of much of it. John the ally, the colleague and friend whose wise counsel was of great assistance to me and on whose measured response to many of these challenges I could rely.

And John the family man. So proud of his daughters; Claire's three Grade As and a place at Oxford this summer, and Annie's excellent GCSE results would have meant so much to him. So proud of Jan, whose advice and help and love were rocks on which he built. For us who have lost such a bright star, such a good friend and such an inspirational leader, it seems hard. For Jan and Claire and Annie and for all John's family whom he loved so much and who loved him so much, it is a pulsating tragedy. Yet through it all shines the Thomson smile, the humour, the honesty and the

integrity – memories of great happiness, of colossal achievement. In his relatively short life, John Thomson crammed enough living for two or three people and more. What he achieved in his career, the way in which he achieved it, his standing as a leader, an aviator, a man, will remain as a model for young men and women in the Air Force for many years to come. It is a legacy of magnificent proportion. It will be recalled both with admiration and affection; it will be recalled by the naming of a building, the new Air Warfare Centre, after him; but above all, I am confident that, in the force of his example, a truly lasting memorial has been fashioned. In the aftermath of his death, I received tributes to John from all over the world. A number were carried in the newspapers and in one warm and generous tribute, Auberon Waugh wrote, ‘He was a good, kind, clever man – a credit to his service and his country’. There are few people about whom that could be said with total conviction and honesty, but all of us here today, all who were touched in one way or another by the life of Charles John Thomson, will know that each word is true.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Royal Flying Corps in France: from Mons to the Somme. By Ralph Barker. Published by Constable and Company Ltd. Price £18.95.

Ralph Barker is well known for a whole series of aviation books. This latest offering is a timely reminder of that other war when air fighting was born, pilots flew aircraft where the structure was flimsy, the engine was often a rotary, and parachutes were not provided.

The Royal Flying Corps existed to serve the Army and air combat evolved to keep the air clear for the two-seaters to carry out their vital tasks of reconnaissance and photography. Trenchard's rule was, 'No call from the Army must ever find the RFC wanting'. Virtually all the senior commanders of World War 2 learned their trade in this environment.

The author paints in the background, but this is essentially a story of the individuals involved, their attitudes and experiences, from pilots and observers to ground crew, together with their comments. The illustrations are of good quality.

A second volume is promised, presumably taking the story on to the creation of the Royal Air Force in 1918.

DW

TSR2 – Phoenix or Folly. By Frank Barnett-Jones. Published by GNS Enterprises, 67 Pyhill, Bretton, Peterborough, PE3 8QQ. Price £19.95.

April 6th this year marked the 30th anniversary of the cancellation of the great white hope of British post-war military aviation, the BAC TSR2.

Years ahead of its time, it was designed to replace the Canberra and was meant to provide the RAF with a long range tactical strike/reconnaissance aircraft for both nuclear and conventional operations. Capable of low-level under-the-radar approach, supersonic dash at low-level and Mach 2 at altitude, TSR.2 would have been extremely potent – as the Soviet Union well realised at the time.

The disastrous Sandys 1957 White Paper on Defence virtually wiped out advanced aircraft projects, except TSR2. Eight years later this, too, was axed, apparently to gain a recently newly elected Labour Government support from America in obtaining an IMF loan. The RAF was promised the F-111 instead, but technical problems delayed it for years and costs skyrocketed. The RAF order was eventually cancelled.

Frank Barnett-Jones deals with the background of the TSR2, its roles, design systems, flight testing and production – the last mentioned being

well advanced at cancellation. He also goes into the politics of the aircraft, which were very complex.

A most interesting book, well illustrated with photographs and line drawings.

DW

Air Power – A Centennial Appraisal. By Air Vice-Marshal Tony Mason. Published by Brassey's. Price £30.00.

Tony Mason is probably the pre-eminent member of the small but influential group of students of Air Power who may together be described as 'the Royal Air Force School'. His authority is widely recognised and his work is highly prized for its scholarly nature and its scope.

Any book of Mason's will be keenly awaited and none more so than this *magnum opus* which sees its author attempt a huge task. The result both demands and repays careful reading – and it must be said that this is not a casual holiday read, but an extraordinarily competent account of a complex and dynamic phenomenon of the last 100 years. Tony Mason gives substance to the often glib claim that a careful study of history is a necessary prerequisite of successful analysis, besides being an equally essential tool for the avoidance of old errors.

This *Centennial Appraisal* covers much ground, beginning with Mason's deft and highly instructive account of the infancy and adolescence of Air Power. These early chapters offer frequent reminders, were any needed in the aftermath of recent Defence cuts, of the deep-rooted nature of those inter-service divisions which surface so promptly when the parties are confronted by scarcity of resources.

Inevitably, the historian of Air Power will find much to admire and to reflect upon in this book. He will find great stimulation in the way in which historical fact is set to work in the pursuit of analysis and of prediction. For this is a book which leads its reader right to the edges of its historical tapestry – and beyond.

Of its chapters, those which examine the course and legacies of the Cold War and the path down which a post-Soviet Russia now appears to be moving are especially compelling. Mason's analysis of the circumstances and outcomes of the Gulf War is workmanlike and valuable for conclusions which are responsible and soberly stated. His approach to the application of Air Power in Peacekeeping is similarly comprehensive, restrained and competent.

Perhaps inevitably, the most important chapter of this book is its last. The reader should not be deterred by the density of concept and analysis contained in the climax of this work which seeks to bring out logical and closely argued conclusions. Nor should he be put off by what was to this reader a slightly irritating use of the pluperfect where another tense might have sufficed. The chapter's real value, like this excellent book itself, may yet prove to depend on history's view of the relevance and efficacy of the applications of Air Power so boldly suggested.

All in all, this is a remarkable book which underscores the benefits of a thorough grasp of history, not just for its own sake, but as a powerful tool in the hand and mind of the influential analyst. On the evidence of this important work, Tony Mason has just such a grasp. Most of all, he has skilfully avoided the risk of being branded yet another zealot, a condition which history shows has ill-served the cause of Air Power in the past.

AFCH

History of 73 Squadron. By Don Minterne, Part 1, 1917-Nov 1940. ISBN 0 9523157 0 X. Price, incl UK postage, £15.95, direct from Tutor Publications, The Cleve. Bradford Peverell, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 9SA.

Admittedly page 304 is blank but the preceding 303 pages are remarkably well filled with some really interesting stuff. They paint a picture of the Royal Air Force as well as being interspersed with fascinating little 'nuggets' of information and one is hard put to realise that Don Minterne is really a self-admitted amateur completing a labour of love. He has acquitted himself remarkably well and whatever the failings this book has, they are compensated for by the feeling he conveys of a Royal Air Force that I certainly remember.

An irritating book to try and read through, but extremely rewarding to the dipper who suddenly finds that time and a great number of pages have flown by. It is put down only to be picked up again to check one of the innumerable items that has stuck in the mind.

For example, I well remember a celebrated, immediately-post-war murder, and a chap called Neville Heath was hanged for it in 1946. Most interesting to find out that he served in 73 Squadron and was dismissed the service as a Pilot Officer in 1937; his subsequent career was not exactly glorious either. Just one of the many bits and pieces that make this squadron record a truly interesting book, and there are many more that will surely strike a chord with a number of people. It is a book not to be missed.

AEFR

British Piston Aero-Engines and their Aircraft. By Alec Lumsden. Published by Airlife Publishing Ltd. Price £39.95.

Alec Lumsden has produced a major historical work of reference which, for the first time, provides a complete record of 873 types of piston engine built and flown in Britain up to 1955. In addition, 3,116 types of aircraft in which British engines have been installed are listed. After all, what is an aircraft without power!

The first section of the book covers the evolution of the British aero-engine industry, engine development and design and technical aspects such as intakes, compression ratios, propellers, etc. Thereafter, engines are dealt with under their respective manufacturers, with design details, designations and background notes.

This is not a cheap book but it is one that deserves a place on the shelves and can be referred to frequently for both pleasure and research. It is enhanced by lavish good quality illustrations.

DW

RAF Records in the PRO. ISBN 1 873 162 146. Price £8.95.

This volume, Public Record Office Readers' Guide No 8, is written by very knowledgeable people who have been there, seen it, done it and probably bought the 'T'-shirt.

Nit pick first: I can understand why a shelf full of impulse buy articles are priced so many pounds and 95p, but it is beyond my comprehension why a solid, non-fiction work you either need and will buy, or don't need and would not buy, should be so priced. Frankly, at £9.00 it is a very, very good buy.

The other irritating thing is PLUS POSTAGE and PACKING: why this cannot be included for the UK, I fail to see.

Now for the good bits! One of the major problems of an apprenticeship was always that the 'governor' was really loath to part with some of the finer points of his craft; not so the writers of this superb book. Whatever your interest in flying and the Royal Air Force in particular it is certain that at some time you will need to consult documents. Where are they? How do you get to see them?

Most probably they are held by the Public Record Office and, if not, an insight as to where they may be found would be useful. Look no further than this book, and good luck with your researches!

AEFR

Since writing this review, a Canadian member has been over to do some research at the Record Office and before he came had access to a copy of this book for which he was grateful and able to make some advance preparation as a result. He writes: 'I was successful in my research – the advanced preparation saved the day – three files were awaiting my arrival – I understand they are introducing a new computer system – at the moment even some veteran researchers are having difficulties.' He goes on to suggest that until the new system has had time to settle down, extra time should be allowed by researchers.

The Hardest Victory. By Denis Richards. Hodder and Stoughton, 1994. ISBN 0-340-56345-1. Price £20.00.

Few, if any, aspects of the RAF's role in the Second World War have attracted more attention than the Bomber Offensive, and none has generated more controversy. It is a theme that has had a magnetic appeal to journalists and historians, all too many of whom have seized upon it in attempts to prove that the work of Bomber Command was immoral and did not justify either the immense effort entailed or the cost in human life. Such appraisals have caused much anguish among those who survived the campaign, who have seen their contributions – and that of their respected commander Sir Arthur Harris – quite unfairly denigrated. Sadly there have been relatively few attempts to redress the balance.

So when the doyen of RAF historians decides to take up the cudgels on behalf of Bomber Command we need to pay attention. Denis Richards made his name as co-author with Hilary Saunders of the three-volume official history of the RAF in the Second World War, and in more recent years has kept himself in the public eye with his biography of Portal and his Jubilee History of the Battle of Britain. Now in *The Hardest Victory* he offers us his description and assessment of Bomber Command's war. This, as those who took part so clearly remember, was not just about attacking the enemy homeland; it was also about contributing to virtually every other aspect of the war against Germany, and as his narrative unfolds Richards takes us through the multiplicity of different types of operation in which Bomber Command took part, showing just how flexible it was. In less skilled hands the long sequence of individual operations could so easily have become tedious, but Richards' exemplary style of writing, coupled with his ability to remind his audience of the wider significance of what he is recounting keeps the narrative eminently readable and compels our

attention. Essentially, therefore, we have a straightforward, accurate, balanced account of what Bomber Command actually did from the first day of the war to the last, with the contrast between its puny efforts of 1939 and its awesome power of 1945 most strongly brought out.

Richards is at pains too to remind us of what it was actually like. In the main text he uses the stories of the aircrew who won the Victoria Cross to demonstrate the courage and heroism: then in his final chapter, in order to convey how, it felt at the time, he selects extracts from many of the letters sent him by men – and women – who served both in the air and on the ground. Apart from training, however, there is relatively little mention of the vast infrastructure on which the bombers, for example, defended airfield construction – the design and building of the aircraft engines, weapons and a great range of specialist equipment: the control and communications network; the supply, repair and maintenance organisation: specialist roles such as intelligence and operational analysis: the great range of administrative services. Bomber Command was a huge enterprise and the contribution of those who sustained the front line is all too rarely accorded sufficient recognition.

Yet on a subject so enormous no author can possibly cover everything, and even on the great controversies Richards has to be brief. Nevertheless he does not evade the issues. For example he rightly takes the critics to task over the Battle of Berlin, judging that it was certainly not a strategic defeat and arguing that neither was it a tactical defeat. He discusses Dresden, again briefly, but stating clearly the military considerations that led up to it. He firmly dismisses the charges so often levelled at Portal that he failed in his duty in not firing Harris over oil. As for Harris himself Richards has no doubts: his brief tribute fully brings out the C-in-C's great qualities as a commander.

In essence this is an operational history, describing and explaining just what Bomber Command did in the Second World War for its comprehensiveness, its clarity, and above all its positive message about what was achieved it deserves a permanent place in the historiography.

HP

CORRESPONDENCE

I have read with great interest the Royal Air Force Historical Society 'Proceedings 13'. Perhaps I could take this opportunity to observe on one omission.

Your various speakers made detailed reference to the units involved including the detachments which reinforced the resident squadrons. However, no reference is made to units which reinforced No 81 Squadron (PR Canberras) at Tengah for much of the period of confrontation. For the record, No 13 and later No 39 Squadrons, both equipped with the Canberra PR 9, added some 30% to the strength of the Far East reconnaissance force. I know, I served on both!

Air Marshal Sir Michael Simmons

Without wishing in any way to denigrate the part played by the antisubmarine forces engaged in protecting the D-Day landings. I feel obliged to draw attention to a comment attributed to Group Captain Richardson on page 105 of *Overlord 1944*. In the first three days of the operation only six U-boats were destroyed, not sixty five as was claimed. These are listed in *The Last Year of the Kriegsmarine, May 1944-May 1945* by V E Tarrant as: June 7 U955 and U970; June 8 U373 and U629; and June 9 U740 and U821.

According to Gunter Hessler in *The U-Boat War in the Atlantic, 1939-45* (HMSO, 1989), thirty seven boats from St Nazaire, Lorient and La Pallice were directed towards the landing area on 6th June. Instructed to proceed on the surface and to fight their way if necessary, commanders reported fifty attacks from aircraft and in turn claimed four large allied planes shot down. Five of the boats reported they were returning to base because of damage.

I would like also to add a comment about V-weapons (p85). The psychological effect of these should not be over-emphasised. Since 1940 Londoners had experienced periodic bombing campaigns and like front line troops had become battle hardened. Curiously, conventional bombing was more of a trial because the raids lasted longer and one could never be sure from which direction an attack was coming. A manned aircraft whose load of eight bombs could be dropped at the whim of the crew was more nerve wracking than a noisy V1 on a pre-determined course, the engine cut-out giving time to take cover. In practical terms a V2 just arrived. There was a sonic boom, followed seconds later by the impact. Scuds, on the other

hand, were directed against populations not familiar with attack from the air and there was the added uncertainty of a biological warhead. A further factor which would have been common to both British and German populations subjected to area bombing was the complete absence of media hype. Civilians had to rely on their own experiences. Much of the value of Scuds to Saddam Hussein came from the minute by minute reporting by the international news production teams who whipped up concerns, not from the actual damage inflicted.

Norman Hurst

Having served in the FATOC at Brunei and Kuching during 1962/63 and subsequently as CO of 848 Squadron (22 × Wessex Mk 5) at Labuan in 1966 I enjoyed reading the majority of the report on the Indonesian Confrontation Seminar – it brought back many memories.

However, AVM Lamb's remarks about 848 (p48) deserve comment.

It was 845 Squadron (Wessex Mk 1) that first occupied the Nanga Gaat site in November 1963 and over the next 18 months constructed a relatively sophisticated base from scratch concurrently with their operational tasks.

848 (actually a detached Flight, the remainder being split between Sibuluan, HMS *Albion* and Singapore) relieved 845 at Nanga Gaat in June 1965 and were there for four months until relocating to Labuan in September 1965.

To some extent I think that AVM Lamb's concern that 'all was not well' stemmed more from 845's long tenure of Nanga Gaat rather than 848's short occupation.

I cannot question the F540 quotes but, after being at Labuan for six weeks 848's Report of Proceedings states: 'A very close liaison now exists between the Squadron and the FATOC. The weekly visit by the Detachment CO helps enormously with task planning'.

And at Kuching I am surprised that the 'numerous difficulties' had not been sorted out during 845's 18 months at Nanga Gaat prior to being replaced by 848.

In large measure I believe the underlying cause of these difficulties lay in the very remoteness of Nanga Gaat deep in the tropical jungle – the base was some 200 miles from Kuching with operating areas anything up to 50 miles beyond that. Add to this the tasking time gap, unreliable radio communications, variable weather and last minute changes in priorities it was surprising the tasking worked as well as it did.

On the publicity side it was Naval PR in Singapore that seized the

opportunity and one might ask why the RAF PR organisation did not do the same for their own Service.

As far as I am aware the Wessex accident never took place although there was a similar one involving a three seat Hiller 12-E belonging to 845 Squadron in April 1965. The circumstances were much as described but the pilot was an experienced helicopter instructor; he was flying solo and died in the crash caused by the disintegration of the tail rotor. I just cannot accept the implication that accidents and incidents were, somehow, 'covered up'; no CO or Flight Commander would ever consider such a course of action.

It is a pity that no representative of 845 or 848 was invited to the Seminar – one squadron or the other was involved from December 1962 to August 1966.

Finally, the Borneo Campaign will always promote lively discussion amongst those that were there. It presented some genuinely extraordinary challenges – that these were overcome is a lasting tribute to those that played a part all those years ago.

Commander P J Craig RN (Rtd)

I can now write more fully *to acknowledge letter above* on the subject of the Indonesian Confrontation Seminar in which you take issue with some of the comments I made in my presentation at Hendon in October 1993 on RAF Operations in Borneo. I would hope you will not take offence if I reply in a similarly robust vein because, with respect, I do feel you have over-reacted to some aspects of what I said about this complex operation. I say this at an early stage because:-

- (a) In my opening words I made the point that 'memory is a fallible guide'; that these events took place 28 years ago; that I was talking only about one year of the 3+ years the campaign lasted; and that I did not claim everything I said would commend itself to everyone listening to me or indeed that it was 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. None of this would excuse deliberate misrepresentation but, for the record, I did insist on visiting the AHB to check the official RAF versions of events before I wrote my script so none of it is 'hearsay or half truth' as you imply.
- (b) My entire comments about the Royal Naval support comprised only three quarters of a page out of a total of eight pages of typescript – less than one tenth of the total. I used most of this part of my talk to

illustrate the need to conserve resources and to avoid ‘stupidity’ resulting in unnecessary losses. During my time (1965-66) sadly, and whether you like it or not, most of the evidence of such shortcomings came from RN sources, although there were RAF examples (see p46-47 on the loss of an underslung load).

- (c) At the foot of page 48 I stressed the RN helicopters ‘did much good work and their contribution should not be diminished by their *occasional* displays of independence’. Hardly words of denigration.

Let me, if I may, now look at some other facts including (with due modesty I trust) some of the reasons why I might claim to be one of the less likely candidates to be accused of ignoring the tenets of joint warfare as practised at the time. When I was alerted to go to Borneo as DEPCOMAIRBOR I was serving at Cranwell as Assistant Commandant. Here we had a permanent Joint Warfare Studies team comprising officers of all three Services whose mission was to inculcate into the cadets the principles of ‘jointery’. I was closely involved personally with this aspect of the curriculum. We had lectures from senior wartime commanders eg ‘Monty’ and Mountbatten who constantly stressed the need in the future for better inter-service co-operation. We regularly visited Sandhurst and Dartmouth, plus many RN, Army, RAF operational units *inter alia* to discuss joint-warfare and all in all strove to avoid some of the stupid inter-Service rivalries I had seen in my earliest wartime days in the RAF. To get completely up-to-date before leaving the UK I spent two weeks at SLAW Old Sarum where I was exposed to all the latest thinking on the subject of joint warfare.

So, whilst I wasn’t a seasoned expert on arrival in Labuan, I certainly was not bigoted nor was I ill-informed. I went there with an open mind, determined to work closely with principally the Army but also with the RN (when I came across them) to achieve our aims. What may be difficult for you to accept if not to realise, is that it was only at JFHQ or FACHQ that one saw the whole picture ‘warts and all’. This often differed from the picture seen through the eyes of those in the front line and from time immemorial, troops under fire have felt free to wonder if their controlling top brass really knew their ‘arses from their elbows’. Borneo was no different as was often made clear to me when I flew into the front-line which I did often. Indeed in my 13 months in Borneo I flew just over 600 hours in this way so I was no ‘chairborne’ warrior I assure you and I was not unaware of the views you ascribe to some Army CO’s. All that is surely

a far cry from your charge of ‘hearsay and half truths’ which you seem convinced lay at the heart of my presentation when I referred to the RN element. See AVM John Price’s comments on p59 ‘my commanders knew what they were doing.’ At that time he had the floor to himself and could have inferred that we in the RAF were too ‘rigid’ in our approach had he wanted to, for like you, he was an operational Squadron Commander.

I would, after all, have been a strange sort of Commander if I hadn’t tried to improve on whatever I had inherited from my predecessor. All day and every day at JFHQ Labuan, and later when I moved to Kuching, as Forward Air Commander, the cry from the Army was the same – more and more airlift. My job was to consider how to get the proverbial quart out of the pint pot. Force levels of aircraft were not going to increase – so we had no alternative but to make more effective use of those we had in our front line units. This we tried to do in a variety of ways and none of it happened overnight. Some of those on the spot – usually the Battalion Commanders – often fought hard to preserve the status quo, primarily because they were well provided for. Others less well favoured took a different view. See p47 ‘the warmth of my reception was equalled only by the conflicting advice as to how best the RAF should operate to meet their needs’. My job as I came to see it subsequently was to convert doubters to accept the principles and advantages of ‘centralised’ control as opposed to de-centralised ‘penny-packets’ for only in that way could we increase the total lift – see p50.

Thus perhaps were sown the seeds of the difficult and differing options we had to consider as to how best to proceed and to which I refer on p49. The quotations from the F540s of Kuching and Labuan were not my words of course but those of the people actually working with the RN squadrons at the time. Who am I to challenge these views 28 years later, particularly when I can confirm that we on the joint staffs at Labuan and Kuching saw some evidence of it ourselves? What you never saw or heard of at the squadron level were the dissatisfied customers who would say, in effect, to FATOC – ‘How did X Company manage to get Y sorties last week from the RN when we in Z Company got only half as many from the RAF?’ If then one asked Brigade HQ which was the more (operationally) deserving case, X or Z – and was told the latter, then inevitably we just had to use this sort of evidence to review the methods of tasking from time to time. You yourself admit to ‘helping out’ on an ad hoc basis. No one in his right mind would object to ‘helping out’ occasionally, but where these ad hoc methods had become the norm it was then that Army voices were raised in protest

and demanded action at JFHQ/FACHQ level to remedy the situation.

You accuse me of ‘ill-founded’ comment because the operational records of RN squadrons suggest a different picture. I do not find this difference surprising or contradictory. The RN’s ad hoc methods suited some units at the time but not others and surely the helicopter units’ records would reflect the ‘satisfied’ users views and not the ‘have-nots’. Your comment (p4) ‘that by December 1965 a close liaison existed between 848 and FATOC at Brunei’ confirms my impression that the principles I had been expounding for some 6 months in Labuan were by then being accepted – albeit slowly – by all Brigades to the benefit of all. When you took over 848 Sqn in 1966, again, as you say, ‘all was running smoothly. Could this not be because the earlier criticisms from a variety of sources and my ‘centralised’ remedy had been taken to heart by all. Don’t forget the criticisms I made at Hendon applied only to the summer of 1965 when all was not well. Again see AVM John Price (p63) – ‘Larry Lamb brought order out of chaos’. Flattering perhaps, may be a bit strong, but who am I to quarrel with an experienced Squadron Commander who had seen things improve.

I could go on but you may think I am simply wanting to score party points. So let me end with two more comments:

- (a) On PR (b) I couldn’t agree with you more. My comments were made, not in a critical sense, but out of envy. I frequently used the naval example to urge HQFEAF to do more of this type of PR, particularly when ACM Sir ‘Gus’ Walker – an old Rigger friend – told me in Labuan that he had been sent out as RAF Inspector General to find out why, the RAF wasn’t ‘doing more’. Apparently if one read the British press at the time the only people involved in air operations in Borneo were RN!!
- (b) Accidents and Incidents. I travelled on HMS *Albion* to Singapore with Captain John Adams on two occasions to referee some Rigger and for much of the time on these short voyages, he expressed his unease over the numbers of this type of incident and hinted (I put it no more strongly) that he felt that a ‘tightening of the reins’ in terms of operational control (not command) of the deployed RN squadrons would not be unwelcome in senior RN circles in Singapore. I made many visits to Nanga Gaat and flew with RN crews and found them without exception to be highly professional and competent. If you have had recent access to RN records then I bow to your more

intimate knowledge over the Wessex collision and the Hiller ad hoc 'repair'. I clearly have confused the two – and my apologies for this. I relied on my memory because I had never had access to RN records then or since – a point I made on p48. The fact remains, however, that they were both examples of poor airmanship and given the paucity of our resources the loss of both lives and aircraft was all the more regrettable.

Finally let me make one point which surely transcends all others. The campaign was a striking example of a cost-effective use of resources by all three Services. I sought to bring this out in my talk and to denigrate no one Service or any one person. In the limited time available, I believe each speaker in the Seminar tried to give a balanced picture as he saw it at the time. I was no exception. So to have glossed over shortcomings from whatever Service, some of which were well known to many in the audience, would have been as irresponsible as to have over-exaggerated their achievements. As Sir Chris Foxley-Norris said (p14) 'the only thing that may impair their (the speakers') performance is that we have been compelled to restrict them for time'. Had we had more time, perhaps we could have shown the other side of many of the coins on view or developed themes more fully to include some of the points you made. Despite the impression you have clearly been left with, I do believe most of the audience would feel my presentation gave a reasonably fair picture of events as seen, not only through my own eyes, but also through the eyes of others (eg F540). Brigadier Cheyne (West Brigade) and I toured the Staff and Cadet Colleges of all three Services and SLAW together on our return to talk about our experiences. What I said to all those audiences in 1966-67 was not so very different from what I said at Hendon in 1993. At both Greenwich and Dartmouth we met with the same sympathetic understanding as we did at Camberley, Sandhurst, Cranwell and Bracknell, despite keen questioning on some of the issues you raise. I can say no more, I hope this response goes some way to dissipating the 'angst' you clearly felt when writing.

Perhaps, as you say, it was a pity there was no one from the Royal Navy in the audience at Hendon who could have made one or two of the points you made in your paper had they seen things as you did but the speakers had no control over those attending.

Air Vice-Marshal G C Lamb CB AFC FBIM RAF (Rtd)



COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE

Dr Jack Dunham Membership Secretary

After serving in the ATC, Jack Dunham qualified as a PTI in 1946. For the next two years he was a member of No 1 Medical Rehabilitation Unit at RAF Chessington working with 'Early Legs' patients recovering from accidents and illnesses.

On leaving the Service in 1948 he became a teacher in Lancashire. Appointed Head of a Remedial Education Centre in 1956 in Manchester he also became a part-time higher degree student at Manchester University. He played cricket in the Lancashire League with Bacup CC when Everton Weekes was the club professional, and he was a Minor Counties player.

In 1960 he qualified as a psychologist and was appointed as an Educational Psychologist in Bristol. He moved across the city in 1963 to work in The Bristol Aeroplane Company as a Staff Training Officer, gaining his first experience of management training in the aircraft industry. He was a management consultant to Westland Helicopters in the late 1960s and early 1970s and an Employee Development and Training Consultant to the Company from 1986 to 1993.

Appointed as Lecturer in Psychology in Bath University in 1966 he began to publish articles and books on selection interviewing, management training and stress, and completed a PhD thesis on stress. His most recent publication is a book on management development which came out in November 1994.

In 1983 he left the University of Bath and established a consultancy practice. Since then he has become a chartered psychologist, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, and an Associate Member of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

Jack Dunham is married to Vivien who is the Deputy Head of a Bath secondary school. He has two sons, Michael is the Managing Director of the Wotton Motor Centre in Gloucestershire; Alastair is a radiographer in Orange, New South Wales, where he and his wife hope to establish a winery.

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