

Brian McKenna's response to this argument was telling: "How Bomber Command worked into the strategic alliance and the role it played is really the subject of a much more esoteric film."⁽³⁷⁾

But Bomber Command not only opened a second front; it also performed a multitude of other tasks which contributed greatly to the Allied war effort. Precision strikes against such crucial targets as the rocket sites at Peenemunde and transportation and communication facilities in Normandy are curiously missing from *Death by Moonlight*. There is also no mention of mine-laying operations or the bombing of German invasion barges in 1940.

Clearly, there is another side to the debate over Bomber Command's effectiveness. It was the opinion of many witnesses who appeared before the Sub-Committee that *Death by Moonlight* deliberately chose to ignore any evidence which might suggest that the bomber offensive made an important contribution to Allied victory.

"BOMBER" HARRIS: AN HONEST PORTRAYAL?

Any account of the bomber offensive must ultimately come to terms with the figure of Air Marshal Arthur Harris. Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command from 1942 to 1945, Harris remains one of the most controversial military leaders of the war. Loved by some, hated by others, he carried out Bomber Command's war against Germany with a single-mindedness and ruthlessness that few would deny.⁽³⁸⁾ His supporters argue that such qualities were nothing less than essential in a campaign of this nature. Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Chester Hull stated that Harris was "tough but... honest."⁽³⁹⁾ Mr. Gifford described him as an "aggressive, tough, blunt, single-minded chief with a great capacity for inspiring loyalty in his associates."⁽⁴⁰⁾ But some would argue that these strengths were also his weaknesses. His stubborn nature perhaps blinded his judgement at times. As Mr. Gifford lamented: "Our youth and willingness to sacrifice was expended in that period more for Harris' obsession than for ending the war."⁽⁴¹⁾

Many of the witnesses who appeared before the Sub-Committee complained vociferously that, once again, none of the complexity of this debate emerges in *Death by Moonlight*. Instead, the viewer is treated to a caricature of Arthur Harris, portrayed by an actor (who incidentally

(37) Proceedings, 9:78.

(38) Several witnesses pointed out that Harris was merely carrying out orders; he did not, as the film implies on occasion, formulate the policy of area bombing. See the testimony of John Bates, Proceedings, 4:20-21.

(39) Proceedings, 4:13.

(40) Proceedings, 9:109.

(41) Proceedings, 9:110.