

from or referred to by those who appeared before the Committee. On the basis of our hearings, it appears that Mr. Cowan was responsible for doing all or almost all of the research.

Mr. Cowan's professional training was in the field of film and broadcast journalism, rather than historical research. At the time he researched, wrote, produced, directed and co-edited "The Kid Who Couldn't Miss", he was not experienced in making documentaries about historical subjects although he was well-versed in all aspects of filmmaking. When he came to write the script for the film he seems to have relied very heavily on "interviews" for information, as might be expected of someone with a background in journalism. Almost all of those who were actual participants in or witnesses to the events of World War I are now dead. Whether Mr. Cowan interviewed survivors himself, relied on existing taped interviews or on interviews with those who have communicated with 60 Squadron veterans, the result is the same: those interviewed are being asked to recall details of events that had taken place 40-60 years earlier — the condition of an aircraft when it returned from a sensational sortie, when and if rumours of inflated official credit for "kills" began to circulate through the personnel of a squadron, etc.

One can believe in the personal integrity of those conducting the interviews and of those being interviewed, and still be completely skeptical about the relative reliability of at least the details of the information thus received. Material from these interviews may add colour to a narrative and information about what veterans think about events long afterward, but is as likely to confuse as to assist attempts to reconstruct the events of long ago.

Mr. Cowan also relied very heavily on interviews with a few selected individuals who had done research into Billy Bishop's record, and into his attack on a German airport in particular. These individuals do not appear on camera to express their reservations and doubts about Bishop's exploits, nor do their names appear on the credits of the film as an important source of information. Nevertheless, their unpublished musings or conclusions are inserted into the film as authoritative evidence.

On the basis of the film credits, it does not seem that Mr. Cowan consulted important collections of documents relating to the air war and to Bishop's participation in it. The British Public Records Office which contains important documentation is not listed, nor is the Directorate of History, Department of National Defence in Canada, which holds the most voluminous records on Bishop and other