

6 June 1944), and though Harris remained committed to the concept of area bombing to the end of the war, his aircrews continued to carry out a large number of strikes against oil refineries and other precision targets into 1945.

In *Death by Moonlight*, Harris' ruthlessness extended even to his own crews. Doug Harvey points out in the film that Harris removed much of the armour plating in aircraft in an effort to increase bomb loads. However, according to most veterans appearing before the Sub-Committee, such protective armour served little purpose and Harris was quite right to remove it.⁽⁵¹⁾ Harris' decision to send his crews out on a clear moonlit night in March 1944 against Nuremburg, resulting in Bomber Command's worst losses of the war, remains controversial. However, to imply that he blithely sent young men to their deaths is almost certainly over-stating the case. There was considerable evidence placed before the Sub-Committee to suggest that Harris agonized over losses.⁽⁵²⁾ It should also be pointed out that Robert Dale, DFC, who carried out weather reconnaissance in a Mosquito aircraft ahead of the Nuremburg Raid, took exception to his portrayal in one of the film's dramatic scenes. He accused the film-makers of "putting words in my mouth" which were "technically inaccurate."⁽⁵³⁾

In short, virtually every witness who appeared before the Sub-Committee denounced the cardboard portrayal of Harris in *Death by Moonlight*. The evidence simply did not support the view that he derived perverse pleasure from killing Germans or that he cared little for his crews. While Harris has been criticised before for his stubborn commitment to area bombing, he "was not the monomaniac portrayed in the film," according to Mr. Halliday.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Indeed, Professor Carter offered a radically different view, calling him "a great wartime commander."⁽⁵⁵⁾

LACK OF MORAL FIBRE: A HORRIBLE SYSTEM?

The portrayal of Lack of Moral Fibre (LMF) in *Death by Moonlight* seems to fit in with the film's general theme of a callous High Command totally indifferent to the welfare of its men. LMF was a term applied to airmen who cracked under the constant strain of battle and were transferred for "mental reasons." In *Death by Moonlight*, it is described as a "horrible system" by Doug Harvey, and the viewer is told that "the harassment and humiliation of such men was

(51) See the testimony of John Turnbull, Proceedings, 7:23.

(52) See, for example, Professor (ret'd) William Rodney, Proceedings, 6:30.

(53) Proceedings, 7A:10. According to the film-makers, the words attributed to Mr. Dale were taken from Martin Middlebrook, *The Nuremburg Raid* (London, 1973) but no such words could be found in the text. See p. 101-2. It might be noted that former nursing sister Kay Christie made similar complaints about her portrayal in *Savage Christmas: Hong Kong 1941*. See Proceedings, 7A:9.

(54) Proceedings, 6:8.

(55) Proceedings, 3:52.