

introduction of Pathfinder squadrons - but most experts insist that an adequate capability was only achieved in late 1944. Even then, it was far from perfect and remained problematic against heavily-defended industrial targets.<sup>(18)</sup>

## THE DELIBERATE ANNIHILATION OF CIVILIANS?

There was considerable debate before the Sub-Committee over *Death by Moonlight's* description of area bombing as a deliberate attempt to massacre civilians. While Doug Harvey, a participant in the film, informed the Sub-Committee that "our job, we figured, (was) to kill Germans,"<sup>(19)</sup> another Bomber Command veteran stated that "area bombing was not directed solely to homicide."<sup>(20)</sup> John Bates of the Aerospace Heritage Foundation added that "a policy that sets out to deliberately kill civilians - and there was no such policy - is quite different from a policy of area bombing which may, as part of it, kill civilians. Those are two different moral structures entirely."<sup>(21)</sup>

The evidence would suggest that the film-makers' argument is far from convincing, keeping in mind that the bomber offensive was a complex strategy that defies simple definition. The killing of civilians was never "official" government policy. The aim of the bomber offensive after 1942, as Professor Carter explained, was

to destroy the major urban industrial centres of Germany and thereby destroy all the amenities of life that made the cities habitable and made production possible. Another goal was to 'dehouse' - in the terminology of the age - the civilian workers...The key for Bomber Command, whether it was by way of attacking industrial plant directly or breaking civilian morale, was to stop German war production, so Bomber Command would have continued to attack the major industrial centres even if large segments of the populations of these centres had fled.<sup>(22)</sup>

Clearly, semantics play a part in this debate. In attacking the industrial centres, the main objective was to bring the German war machine to a halt while at the same time cracking civilian

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(18) See the testimony of Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Chester Hull, CMM, DFC, CD, Proceedings 4:9-10; John Bates, 4:25; Honourable J.R. Barr, 7:67-68; and Walter Thompson, 7:87.

(19) Proceedings, 4:57.

(20) Walter Thompson, Proceedings, 7:79.

(21) Proceedings, 4:24.

(22) Proceedings, 3:14-15.