

The book had its genesis in an essay being crafted for another work, but it soon outgrew its original purpose to create a monograph of its own. This origin shows through in the unpolished structure of the book, and despite its thematic claim one often feels too often that they're reading a collection of separate essays especially given the number of times the same basic information is repeated throughout. Still, the book has tremendous merit, and is complimented for including a solid bibliographical note, a section too often absent from current scholarly publications.

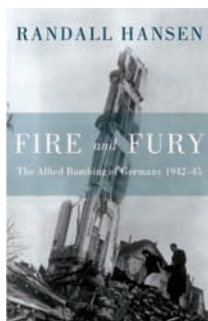
Overall, Knox has delivered a detailed and valuable study of force development and application gone horribly wrong, making this book valuable for soldiers and academics alike.

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## **FIRE AND FURY: THE ALLIED BOMBING OF GERMANY 1942-45**

Hansen, Randall. Toronto: Doubleday, 2008, hardcover, 353 pages, \$34.95, ISBN 978-0385664035

**Lieutenant-Colonel P.J. Williams, CD**



For one who had a relative killed in action in World War II while serving as a member of Bomber Command, the subject matter of this book has always held a particular fascination. Certainly there is no shortage of material on the Allied Bombing Offensive over Germany, and so the reader might be forgiven for asking what another book on this subject has to add.

However, given that in this country, the debate over a display about the Bombing Campaign in the Canadian War Museum elicited strong opinions on all sides of the issue; and, that in contemporary military operations questions concerning interpretation of the higher commanders intent, the use of directive control, the application of assessment methodologies, and a rightful concern over civilian casualties all continue to exist, this book retains its value even in the current operational environment. Finally, the fact that the author is a Canadian and a Professor of politics and holds a Canada Research Chair at the University of Toronto, should appeal to readers in this country in particular.

In order to put this account in context from a Canadian perspective, it is worthwhile to remember that by the war's end 25% of Bomber Command's crews were Canadian, the second largest contribution of any Allied nation. In total, some 40,000 Canadians served in Bomber Command and of these, one quarter lost their lives.

In an attempt to perhaps make the reader understand what it was like to be subject to the bombing campaign, he begins with an account of the RAF raid on Hamburg in July 1943, an event which resulted in a phenomenon which came to be known as "firestorm." Despite contemporary wisdom, the Royal Air Force (RAF) was initially a proponent of precision bombing, a technique which has over time, come to associated solely with the United States bombing effort.

However, the RAF's initial efforts directed in this way proved largely ineffectual, and so by 1941, the idea of targeting German "morale" began to gain ascendancy. Air Chief Marshal Portal, the UK Chief of the Air Staff, wrote to Churchill in late 1941 that, "In highly industrial counties such as Germany and England it is in the thickly populated towns that the moral effect of bombing will be chiefly felt..." This concept then took official manifestation in a Directive issued by the UK Air Ministry in February 1942, which described how the bombing campaign would be conducted. The directive stated that bombing henceforth was to be, "...focused on the morale of the enemy civilian population and in particular of the industrial workers." To ensure that the intent of this directive was fulfilled, Portal sent a separate communication the next day which stated, "Ref the new bombing directive: I suppose it is clear that the aiming points are to be built up areas, not for instance the dockyards or factories..."