Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

BOMBER COMMAND
Australians in World War II
Introduction

*Bomber Command* is the second book in the *Australians in World War II* series, published by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA). Written by historian Dr Richard Reid, this book focuses on the Australians who flew with the Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in Bomber Command and tells the story of their training, their operational lives and their unique experiences following the German surrender.

This educational resource features a brief introductory activity called ‘Getting Started’, followed by six separate activities which use inquiry-based questions to encourage student exploration of Bomber Command during World War II.

Teachers using these materials are encouraged to select specific activities, parts of activities or the broad selection of primary and secondary materials within this learning resource to suit their own purposes.

Many of the visual and written sources included in this resource are taken from *Bomber Command*. Page numbers are provided for these, to allow students to view larger digital versions in an online photo gallery.

Viewing the Resource Online


This location will link you to the DVA Commemorations webpage dedicated to Bomber Command and provide PDF and Microsoft Word versions of these educational materials.

Australian Curriculum links

Year 10
Historical knowledge and understanding: Depth Study 1 – World War II (1939–1945)

Students investigate wartime experiences through a study of World War II in depth. This includes a study of the causes, events, outcome and broader impact of the conflict as an episode in world history, and the nature of Australia’s involvement:

1. An overview of the causes and course of World War II
2. An examination of significant events of World War II, including the Holocaust and use of the atomic bomb
3. The experiences of Australians during World War II, such as prisoners of war (POWs), the Battle of Britain, Kokoda, and the fall of Singapore
4. The impact of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the Australian home front, including the changing roles of women and use of wartime government controls (conscription, manpower controls, rationing and censorship)
5. The significance of World War II to Australia’s international relationships in the twentieth century, with particular reference to the United Nations, Britain, Asia and the USA
Historical skills

- Use chronological sequencing to demonstrate the relationship between events and developments in different periods and places
- Use historical terms and concepts
- Identify and select different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources
- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
- Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources
- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past
- Develop texts, particularly descriptions and discussions, which use evidence from a range of sources that are referenced

Disclaimer

This resource encourages students to explore and interpret a range of historical sources. The Department of Veterans’ Affairs cannot be assumed to agree with or endorse any content or opinions expressed in websites or other publications quoted or referred to in this source.

Primary Reference

Dr Richard Reid, *Bomber Command*, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Canberra Paragon printers, 2012.

Other References

Avro Lancaster, online at [upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d0/Avro_Lancaster.png](upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d0/Avro_Lancaster.png)

Australian Department of Defence, 20120628ad8262658_688, Bomber Command Memorial, online at [images.defence.gov.au/](images.defence.gov.au/)


David Crossland, ‘Germans Grudgingly Accept Bomber Memorial’, Spiegel Online, 6 June 2012, online at [spiegel.de/international/europe/controversial-memorial-to-british-wwii-bombers-to-open-a-840858.html](spiegel.de/international/europe/controversial-memorial-to-british-wwii-bombers-to-open-a-840858.html)

Schräge Musik, UK Ministry of Defence, online at [raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/images/ju88guns2.jpg](raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/images/ju88guns2.jpg)


Lancaster drops bundles of ‘Window’ over the target during a special daylight raid on Duisburg, c. 1944 (Imperial War Museum Image IWM CL 1405), online at [http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205022390](http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205022390)

Naxos Radar, UK Ministry of Defence online at [raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/images/ju88radar.jpg](raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/images/ju88radar.jpg)

*Whirlwind: Bombing Germany (September 1939 – April 1944)* in *The World at War* (1973), directed by Jeremy Isaacs, United Kingdom, Thames Television. [Documentary]
Peter Jackson, ‘Bomber Command fliers in their own words’, BBC News, 27 June 2012, online at bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18501658


Harry Mount, ‘The Bomber Command Memorial is a noble, handsome thing’, The Telegraph (London), 26 June 2012, online at blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/harrymount/100647111/the-bomber-command-memorial-is-a-noble-handsome-thing/

‘Dresden May “Blesses” Memorial’, The Daily Express (London), 27 June 2012, online at express.co.uk/posts/view/329135/Dresden-s-mayor-blesses-memorial


H2S Radar, online at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H2S_radar

Activities

GETTING STARTED
A poem written by an air gunner during World War II introduces students to Bomber Command.

ACTIVITY 1 Why did men volunteer for air crews within Bomber Command and how were they trained?
Students examine primary and secondary source evidence to explore the men’s motivation for joining the Royal Australian Air Force and their training to become Bomber Command air crews.

ACTIVITY 2 What role did Bomber Command play in World War II?
Students identify the different roles of Bomber Command. They develop their numeracy skills as they organise and interpret historical events and developments using a scaled timeline and statistical data. They also explore terms and concepts as well as develop their critical thinking skills in order to identify the crew positions of a Lancaster bomber.

ACTIVITY 3 How did technological advances impact on Bomber Command’s war?
Students investigate some of the major advances in technology that affected Bomber Command’s war and the ways in which they favoured first one side and then the other.

ACTIVITY 4 What can primary and secondary sources tell us about the experiences of Bomber Command air crews?
Students process and synthesise information from primary and secondary sources and use it as evidence to answer inquiry questions about the experiences of Bomber Command air crews. Students examine the usefulness of visual and document sources, taking into account their origin, purpose, context, and reliability. Students are also encouraged to develop empathy for the airmen and an understanding of the conditions they faced.

ACTIVITY 5 How important was the support apparatus for air crews and their bombers?
Students use primary sources to investigate how ground crews and the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force supported the air crews of Bomber Command during the war.

ACTIVITY 6 How has Bomber Command been remembered?
Students investigate the way Bomber Command air crews have been remembered since the end of World War II and critically analyse different perspectives on commemorating their service. They also examine the significance of major design features of the new memorial in London.
Getting Started

Read the poem silently. Your teacher will then divide the poem into seven verses. Students will be chosen to read these sections aloud for the class and then complete the questions on page 8.

The Bombing Run

Bomb doors open, I hear this call
Soon our load of bombs will fall
Onto our target down there below
Then we’ll turn and homeward go
But now starting on a bombing run
The most dangerous period has begun
Any evasive action we cannot take
As a steady bombing run we must make

Puffs of black smoke fill the air
From shells a-bursting everywhere
That they have missed us brings relief
A feeling that will be far too brief

Left, left, steady, I now do hear
While my heart beats fast in fear
Sitting in my turret in awful dread
Frightening visions are in my head

Steady, steady, that voice so cool
He must be fearless, or else a fool
And then I hear bombing, bombing, go
We now drop the bombs upon our foe

Bombs away, we now start to weave
We turn around and our target leave
Homeward bound our bomber now flies
Through the black puffs in the skies

For the guns below send up more flak
But we’re going home and heading back
Yet before we reach our distant base
There are still perils we must face

Anti-aircraft guns and a fighter plane
To shoot us down they will try again
Luck is with us and we do survive
Back safe on our base we do arrive
Surviving perils through which we flew
Another safe return for a bomber’s crew.

Written 15 September 1944 by George Olson, Bomber Command air gunner

Source: www.bomber-command.info/bombrun.htm
1. Is this a primary or secondary source? Explain your answer:

2. What imagery (sights, sounds, smells, feelings etc) is used in the poem and what emotions does it elicit?

3. Describe the tone of the poem and what specific language is used to create this:

4. What dangers did Bomber Command air crews face during missions?

5. What is the most dangerous part of a bombing mission? Why?

6. List four questions that you now have about Bomber Command:
ACTIVITY 1: Why did men volunteer for service in air crews with Bomber Command, and how were they trained?

A. The Empire Air Training Scheme and the road to Bomber Command

Examine the following eight sources and read page 12 to 15 of Bomber Command to complete the questions on page 11.

Source 1

You can have a go at joining the Air Force if you like. If anything happens there it will be quick and sudden and you won’t have to suffer at length.

William George Pearce recalling his father’s comments before enlisting in the RAAF. Bomber Command, p. 12

Source 2

‘Coming? – then hurry!’, RAAF Recruiting Poster, c. 1940. This poster reflects the drive to recruit potential Australian air crew for the war against Germany in 1940.

Bomber Command, p. 129 (AWM ARTV04297).

Source 3

The exploits of the airmen of World War I, in chivalrous combat above the mud, futile bayonet charges and pounding artillery, had been kept alive by the barnstormers, extended by the pioneer aviators such as Parer, Kingsford Smith and Hinkler, and exaggerated by writers of fiction for boys. Rockfist Rogan fought his way through daring exploits in The Champion and Biggles (James Bigglesworth), ex-Royal Flying Corps, flew his first book-length mission in 1932.

Hank Nelson, Chased by the sun, courageous Australians in Bomber Command, ABC Books, Sydney, 2002, pp. 5-6

Source 4

It is so hard to say that you joined up for this reason or that reason – when so many things come into it. Some people join up because it is the thing to do, or because they are hard up, or because they want to get away from domestic unhappiness, or because they simply want to get at the enemy. It’s all those things. Perhaps it was a stirring R.A.A.F poster that shouted: ‘It’s a man’s job!’

Roberts Dunstan DSO, The Sand and the Sky, Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1945, p. 40
Source 5

Mental Attributes of Pilot  (Guide for selection panels, March 1941)

A combination of alertness with steadiness – dependability, promptness in decision – imagination – sense of humour – punctuality, attention to detail – power of observation – good education – all-round interests, with mechanical bent – a leaning towards swift forms of locomotion and a love of flying – strong personality – popular type, inspiring liking and respect in his fellows, and a gift for leadership.


Source 6

A ‘Wings’ Presentation parade at an Empire Air Training School in Canada, c. May 1943.

Bomber Command, page 142 (AC0182).

Source 7

In the first year of recruiting for the Empire Air Training Scheme 92 per cent of graduating aircrews had four years or more of secondary education. For pilots the figure was 96 per cent and for navigators it was 99 per cent … The clerk who had a good school record, played football at the weekend … was likely to impress the selection panel.


Source 8

RAAF Trainees study aircraft recognition drawings at an EATS flying school in Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe), c. 1941.

Bomber Command, p. 140 (AWM SUK14939).
1. Why did men volunteer for Bomber Command? Use evidence from two sources you have analysed:

2. Describe the composition (background) of men training to become air crews in Bomber Command?

3. Source 6 refers to a guide for pilot training selection panels. Why might these qualities be considered desirable in bomber pilots?

4. What was the purpose of the Empire Air Training Scheme and why was it a success?

5. What were some advantages and disadvantages of training in countries not directly affected by the war?
### Activity 2: What role did Bomber Command play in World War II?

#### A. Bomber Command timeline and statistics on the bombing campaign

Using *Bomber Command*, the timeline, map & tables to complete questions on page 14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENTS &amp; TECHNOLOGY</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>BOMBER COMMAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 July 1936</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bomber Command established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937 – 1938</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fairey Battle, Whitley, Blenheim, Hampden and Wellington bombers in service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1939</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attacks on German shipping and propaganda leaflets dropped but RAF not permitted to bomb German ground targets for fear of reprisals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 May 1940</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rotterdam Blitz: city bombed as Holland sues for peace on the same day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 September 1940 – 16 May 1941</td>
<td></td>
<td>Halifax bomber in service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stirling &amp; Mosquito bombers in service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td></td>
<td>Butt Report (18 August 1941) finds that only 1 in 3 bombs dropped on Germany gets within 8 km of the target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-31 May 1942</td>
<td></td>
<td>First 1000 bomber raid on Cologne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td></td>
<td>Battle of the Ruhr (5 March – 31 July)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17 May 1943</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Dambusters’ Raid on Ruhr Dams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-31 July 1943</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Window’ used by Bomber Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1943 – March 1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>Battle of Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18 August 1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peenemünde raid on German rocket facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April – July 1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supported Allied invasion of Normandy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15 February 1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bombing of Dresden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 April – 8 May 1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Manna delivers nearly 7000 tons of food to starving Dutch civilians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Exodus flies more than 70,000 Allied POWs home to Britain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Allied Bombing Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Bomber Command (UK, Commonwealth &amp; Allies)</th>
<th>US Eighth Army Air Force (United States of America)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Aircrew</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>210,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killed/Missing</td>
<td>55,573</td>
<td>26,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>8403</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoner of War</td>
<td>9838</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Active</td>
<td>1939–1945</td>
<td>1942–1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of crew killed</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night or Day</td>
<td>Night (Predominately)</td>
<td>Day (Predominately)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### For every 100 airmen who joined Bomber Command:

- 45 would be killed in action
- 6 would be seriously wounded
- 8 would become prisoners of war (POW)
- 41 would escape physically unscathed

### Australians of Bomber Command

- Of 55,573 who died, 3486 were Australian (7%)
- A further 650 died in training accidents in Britain
- 20% of all Australian service personnel killed in action in all theatres of war during World War II were Bomber Command

- Average age of aircrews: 22 years
- Average age of those killed in action: 24 years

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1. On the map highlight the major raid and operations areas from the timeline.
2. Use the timeline to explain the significance of 1942 as a major turning point for Bomber Command in terms of leadership, strategy and aircraft.

3. What might the large concentration of targeted cities in the Ruhr region of Germany indicate about its strategic importance?

4. What difficulties would there be in bombing at night?

5. Compare and contrast the statistical data of the bombing campaign from Bomber Command and the US 8th Air Force.

6. Using the statistics in the tables, describe the likelihood of air crews surviving a 30-mission ‘tour’:
B. Know Your Terms

Using the text *Bomber Command*, complete the table below by linking the term to its definition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>HINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A nickname for ground crews</td>
<td>The code name for small strips of foil, that when dropped confused the signals on German radar screens and concealed the position of bombers</td>
<td>p. 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘gentle’ way of saying that an aviator has been killed in operation</td>
<td>Illuminated flares that would burn in bright colours at a predetermined height or on the ground to guide bomber aircraft to a target</td>
<td>p. 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-aircraft gun</td>
<td>One of the most destructive weapons was the small 1.8 kg bomb that was used in large numbers to create ground fires over a wide area</td>
<td>p. 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
<td>p. 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombing mission</td>
<td>p. 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire Air Training Scheme</td>
<td>p. 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending a small number of bombers to attack a target in order confuse German radar and draw fighters away from a major raid</td>
<td>Pathfinder squadrons who dropped indicator flares for bombers to identify targets at night</td>
<td>p. 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having completed their thirty missions, aircrews were given the choice to volunteer for more operations or be trained as instructors</td>
<td>Aircraft</td>
<td>p. 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft</td>
<td>To have failed at some point of pilot training</td>
<td>p. 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
<td>Four-engine bombers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic bombing of German industrial targets within major cities, designed to decrease morale and war production</td>
<td>1814 kg bomb which relied on maximum blast effect</td>
<td>p. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF strategy with a common route to a target with each aircraft being allotted a height band and a time slot to minimize the risk of collision</td>
<td>The female auxiliary of the Royal Air Force, who filled a variety of jobs from mechanics and engineers to kitchen orderlies and wireless operators</td>
<td>p. 49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ‘Cookie’ Area Bombing Flak (Fliegerabwehrkanone) | RAAF Bomber Stream Incendiary bomb Women’s Auxiliary Air Force Scrubbed RAF | ‘Op/Sortie’ ‘Spoof raid’ ‘Kite’ ‘Window’ |
| ‘Erk’ ‘Gone for a Burton’ Pathfinder Force ‘Heavies’ |

| ‘Screened’ Target Indicators | ‘Screened’  |

Educational Activities
C. Crew positions in the Avro Lancaster bomber

Read pages 158 to 163 of *Bomber Command* and use the visual sources and their captions to label the seven crew positions in the boxes below.

Choose one crew position in the Lancaster and complete the task below.

Describe their role and why it was important:
D. Exploring Bomber Command’s roles with primary sources

Use the eight primary sources to complete the table below on the different roles of Bomber Command.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Who created the source?</th>
<th>What is its purpose and intended audience?</th>
<th>What factors may influence its reliability (context, propaganda value etc.)?</th>
<th>What role does the source indicate Bomber Command had?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Source 1

The Nazis entered this war under the rather childish delusion that they were going to bomb everybody else and nobody was going to bomb them. At Rotterdam, London, Warsaw and half a hundred other places they put that rather naïve theory into operation. They sowed the wind and now they are going to reap the whirlwind.

Air Chief Marshal Arthur ‘Bomber’ Harris
Chief of Bomber Command (1942–1945)

Source 2

There were thousands of heavy anti-aircraft guns, millions of rounds of ammunition fired and hundreds of thousands of soldiers which were drawn away from our fight in the Eastern Front. So I should say, these air attacks on Germany you had in an early stage from ‘43 on [were] really a so called second front.

Albert Speer
Former Nazi Minister of Armaments and War Production
World at War Documentary Series (1973)

Source 3

The fighters are our salvation but the bombers alone provide the means of victory.

Winston Churchill
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1940)
Source 4

The Möhne Dam, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, photographed on 17 May 1943, the day after the operation by No. 617 Squadron RAF which breached the dam wall.

Bomber Command, page 217
(AWM 128223)

Source 5

Liberated prisoners of war aboard the Lancaster that will take them to England, c. May 1945.

Bomber Command, page 250
(AWM UK2857)

Source 6

In April and May 1945 Lancaster bomb bays of many Bomber Command aircraft were filled with provisions instead of bombs, and shown here is a typical load for dropping into Holland.

Bomber Command, page 251 (AWM SUK 14311)
Source 7
An unidentified Lancaster bomber attacks a railway bridge in Germany (perhaps near Hamburg), 1945.
*Bomber Command*, page 239 (AWM P00611.035)

Source 8
The original Australian War Memorial caption to this photograph, probably written when the image was taken in May 1945, reads ‘Weight of Bomber Command attacks on Hamburg. A grey, grimly-wrecked and deserted city’.
*Bomber Command*, page 255 (AWM UK2865)
ACTIVITY 3: How did technological advances impact on Bomber Command’s war?

A. Technological advances of the Bombing Campaign

Analyse the visual sources and text from Bomber Command. Assess the technological advances below in terms and complete the questions on page 24.

H2S Navigational Device (1943–1945)

Other developments of great significance were navigational aids such as ‘Gee’, ‘Oboe’ and the H2S radar, which allowed the bombers to approach and then find the target with varying degrees of accuracy.

In the early stages of the war, instruments and ground observation alone were the means of navigation. Eventually navigators were assisted by radio instruments like H2S radar, which allowed for a position check through cloud on ground features below.

Adapted from Bomber Command, pp. 48–9 & 160

‘Window’ (1943–1945)

Large amounts of ‘window’, clouds of thin strips of foil, were also dropped, a device which confused the German ground radar operators trying to locate approaching bomber streams.

Adapted from Bomber Command, page 54.
Schräge Musik (1943–1945)

The night fighter pilot would find his bomber either visually or by radar, then fly up from underneath, often unseen by the gunners, and synchronise his flight path with his target. The Schräge Musik, colloquial German for jazz music, poured from a cannon slanted upwards behind the pilot’s seat – schräge meaning oblique or slanted – into the fuselage or wings of the bomber.

Adapted from Bomber Command, page 67

Ju-88 German night fighter fitted with Schräge Musik
Schräge Musik, UK Ministry of Defence, online at raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/images/ju88guns2.jpg

Target Indicators (1942–1945)

Pathfinder aircraft, including Mosquitoes, flew ahead of the main force and dropped illuminated flares, known as target indicators, at the aiming point, while other Pathfinders – the ‘backers up’ – refreshed these initial flares as the raid developed.

Adapted from Bomber Command, page 67

Target indicators fall over Plauen during a raid on 11 April 1945. (AWM P00811.036) Bomber Command, page 183.

Naxos Radar (1943–1945)

A new German radar system developed to locate bombers at night.

The Naxos radar was fitted to night fighters, allowing them to home in on a bomber aircraft’s H2S signal.

Adapted from Bomber Command, page 67

Ju-88 with Naxos Radar finder fitted on its nose
Naxos Radar, UK Ministry of Defence online at raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/images/ju88radar.jpg

Educational Activities

BOMBER COMMAND • AUSTRALIANS IN WORLD WAR II

PAGE 23
In pairs, use the ten sources and the text *Bomber Command* to complete the following questions:

1. How did Bomber Command’s preference for flying at night lead to some of these advances in technology?

2. Describe the role and significance of one advance in technology:

3. Choose one technology. Describe one positive and one negative impact it had on Bomber Command:

4. Using the timeline on page 12 and the ten sources on pages 22 and 23, describe how advances in technology favoured one side between 1939–1942 and the other between 1943–1945:
ACTIVITY 4: What can primary and secondary sources tell us about the experiences of Bomber Command air crews?

A. Jigsaw Activity

Students will be divided up into groups of four.

Your teacher will allocate one visual and one document source for each group to critically analyse.

You will then complete the relevant sections of the visual and document source analysis table on pages 29–30.

Your teacher will then create new groups, with each member having analysed a different set of sources.

You will explain your findings to your new group and complete the remainder of the table by listening to your other team members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to consider when analysing a document source: (diary, letter, newspaper, book, speech, official record)</th>
<th>Questions to consider when analysing a visual source: (maps, photographs, political cartoons, and paintings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Author – is the writer’s point of view influenced by their nationality, political persuasion, historical role, experience or objectivity?</td>
<td>• What do you first notice about this visual source?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time – historical context of the document</td>
<td>• What people, actions, objects or symbols can you see?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Type – primary or secondary source?</td>
<td>• What is the relationship between these different aspects?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intended Audience – e.g. diary (self), letter (friend/relative), newspaper/book (public), speech (public/world) or official record (government).</td>
<td>• What is the message?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tone – e.g. emotive, clinical, cynical or positive?</td>
<td>• Who is the intended audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Message</td>
<td>• What is the historical context of the source?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Authenticity, accuracy, bias</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Source 1
Aware of the stress on aircrew, Bomber Command allowed generous leave. In London a man on leave could take in a West End show, savour the many pubs, go sightseeing and relax at the Boomerang Club in Australia House. The club, opened in early 1942, boasted the facilities of a ‘West End hotel’ where you could snooze in an easy chair, enjoy a game of billiards, write a letter home, take in a movie, have a haircut, take a shower, and even get your uniform mended.

Adapted from Bomber Command, page 61

Source 2
It was a hellish but wildly beautiful sight. I felt like some earthbound giant was down there, lashing at the wasps above him. Searchlights swept everywhere and sometimes silhouetted struggling aircraft. Flak burst below, above and all around us. And on the ground were the constant flashes of the guns. Huge fires glowed through their own smoke. As I looked, it swept over me, ‘We have done that!’

Chartwood, Journeys into night, p. 203

Source 3
When we landed and turned into dispersal and the engines were turned off, I never left my seat until the pilot, Clive, came past and climbed over the main spar and down the fuselage. He said many a time, ‘Cobber, why do you stay there. My answer was the same, to thank him for bringing me back. To show the respect that I had for him, the confidence I had in him.

Corbett, quoted in Mark Rowe, The luckiest man alive, p. 47

Source 4
While we were in the spin, everyone was quite calm, no one screamed, no whinging or whimpering, no one cried ‘save us’, we just shut up and waited for the end. That was the way it happened in those days. You were going and that was it. It wasn’t like on one of those American shows.

Pat Dwyer, Bomber Command wireless air gunner, quoted in Michael Veitch, Flak, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 2006, p. 172

Source 5
Dunstan had an unusual wartime career. Barely 18 years old, he joined the 2/8th Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Imperial Force, and served in north Africa, where a wound at the siege of Tobruk in 1941 cost him his leg. Back in Australia in February 1942 he was invalided out of the army, but was eventually accepted by the RAAF for aircrew training in June 1943. Dunstan was posted to No. 460 Squadron in May 1943, and when this photograph was taken he had just completed his twenty-second operation. On completing his tour in November 1943, Dunstan was awarded the DSO, a rare distinction for a rear gunner, for ‘great courage and devotion to duty’. The medal citation spoke of how he would crawl to his turret on one leg.

Adapted from Bomber Command, page 163

Source 6
F/Sgt Roberts Dunstan
‘One Leg In The Sky’, 2006, online at theoddbods.org/2006_04/oddsnends13.htm
Source 7
Aircrew of No. 466 Squadron RAAF being driven to their Halifax bomber for an operation against Berlin, RAF Leconfield, Yorkshire, England, 20 January 1943.
*Bomber Command*, page 174 (AWM UK0952)

Source 8
Bomber’s Moon, by Alan Moore, 1962
*Bomber Command*, page 181 (AWM ART27553, oil on canvas, 152.2 x 274cm)

Source 9
Leading Aircraftsman William Ferniss of Melbourne lifts his English bride, Betty Sitters, after their wartime wedding in Devon.
*Bomber Command*, page 208 (SLV an000277; Argus newspaper collection)

Source 10
*In addition to the personal aspect, there are the squadron losses to consider. Good friends here this evening, tomorrow – gone! ‘Bet you two bob we’re back before you, Jim’ – and Jim does not return. You lose your cobbers. You appear callous about it. But underneath it cuts deep sometimes. ‘Dave bought it last night.’ ‘Did he? Hard luck.’ That’s all.*

*…*

*The element of luck seems of much higher percentage than skill, experience and diligence together. Do your job as best you can and just hope your number isn’t on any flak, cannon shell or bullets. It will get you if it is so why worry?*

Roberts Dunstan DSO, *The Sand and the Sky*; Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1945, p. 59

Educational Activities
Source 11
A Halifax bomber crew of No. 466 Squadron RAAF relax at breakfast after a night operation, RAF, Leconfield, Lincolnshire, England, c. December 1943.

Bomber Command, page 201 (AWM SUK11668)

Source 12
A night operation over Hamburg viewed from a Lancaster bomber, date unknown. Another Lancaster can be seen flying at a lower level.

Bomber Command, page 182 (AWM 044855)
## Visual Sources

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<th>Primary or secondary source? (circle)</th>
<th>What people, actions, objects or symbols can you see?</th>
<th>What is the relationship between these aspects?</th>
<th>What is the message and who is the audience?</th>
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## Document Sources

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<th>Who is the author and what is the tone?</th>
<th>What is the message and who is the audience?</th>
<th>Can you identify any issues with authenticity, accuracy, or bias?</th>
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B. Going Further

Choose one primary and one secondary source from your tables and complete the following questions.

**Primary Source:**

1. What prior knowledge did you have that helped you better understand this source?

2. How did this source help you better understand the wartime experiences of Bomber Command air crews?

3. What questions did it raise in your mind about the experiences of Bomber Command air crews?
Secondary Source:

1. What prior knowledge did you have that helped you better understand this source?

2. How did this source help you better understand the wartime experiences of Bomber Command air crews?

3. What questions did it raise in your mind about the experiences of Bomber Command air crews?
C. Empathy Exercise

RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire
United Kingdom
23 August, 1943

A 22-year-old RAAF pilot from No. 467 Squadron has just arrived back at his quarters from a debriefing on his first op over Germany and a quick breakfast.

Using what you have learned from your analysis of primary and secondary sources on Bomber Command, what kinds of emotions, attitudes, expectations and beliefs do you think he may have had as he thought about the further twenty-nine missions needed to finish his tour?
ACTIVITY 5: How important was the support apparatus for air crews and their bombers?

A. The ground crews and the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force

Examine the four sources and complete the questions on pages 35–36.

Source 1

WAAC wireless operator Corporal V Carter calls No. 467 Squadron RAAF Lancaster ‘S for Sugar’ in to land from the RAAF Waddington control tower, 14 May 1944.

*Bomber Command*, page 196 (AWM SUK12334)

Source 2

A returned Halifax bomber crew of No. 466 Squadron RAAF is served breakfast by women of the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force (WAAC) c. December 1943.

Adapted from *Bomber Command*, page 201 (AWM SUK11668)

Source 3

Ground crews had emerged like Eskimos from small huts near their planes ... the heaped snow on the wings was being swept off, engine covers removed, de-icing compound being spread upon the leading edge of the wings, and engines started up; in some cases the backfiring of the engine starting fires amid the snow on the ground.

Thomas W White, ‘An RAAF bomber station in Britain, A Letter from Wing Commander T W White DFC VD MP’, Box 15, Folder 9148-8-2, Brighton, Sir Thomas White papers, MS9148, National Library of Australia
Source 4

Each small group of fitters and riggers, supported by instrument bashers, radio techs, armourers, and gas crews, owned the bomber. It was their aircraft and they had a fierce pride of ownership. If, as aircrew, you understood that the bomber belonged to them, and that you only borrowed it for flying purposes, the trust between the ground and air sides developed beautifully.

It was the ground crew who wept for the missing aircrew as they waited through the long, cold nights for their bomber to return. For the ground crew it was a sad time when most of the bombers had returned and their dispersal stood empty … A pilot gets to love a particular aircraft, for, like a car, it has its own idiosyncrasies; but a ground technician gets to revere it and to give it human qualities.

They would get cold and wet, clambering up the metal scaffolding, changing props or guns or aerials. The two hangars on the base were only used for major overhauls, all other work was done in the open, day or night, rain or shine.

Bomber Command pilot Douglas Harvey.

Douglas Harvey, Boys, Bombs, and Brussels Sprouts, Goodread Biographies, 1983, p. 86

1. Using evidence from the sources provided, describe the significance of the role played by either ground crews or WAAF personnel and how air crews relied on their support:
2. The captions in sources 1 & 2 are secondary sources. How do they add to your understanding and the way you feel about these two images?

3. Despite not serving in a combat role, how were the support crews affected by the bombing campaign?
ACTIVITY 6: How has Bomber Command been remembered?

A. Remembering Bomber Command

Read the section ‘remembrance’ in the text Bomber Command from pages 93 to 101 and complete the questions below.

1. What aspects of the bombing campaign have made it difficult to honour the men of Bomber Command?

2. In what ways were the sacrifices of Bomber Command air crews ignored after World War II?

3. How has the legacy of Bomber Command been remembered publicly and privately prior to the newly opened memorial in London this year?
B. Commemorating the air crews of Bomber Command

Examine the six sources addressing the commemoration of Bomber Command air crews and complete the table and question on pages 40–41.

**Source 1**

_Historian and author of Bomber Boys, Patrick Bishop, says the controversial nature of the raids delayed recognition for the young airmen. ‘The bombing of Germany was an embarrassment post-war which didn’t fit the wartime narrative the allies constructed,’ he says. ‘Although the population very much admired the bomber crews, when the war was over there wasn’t a huge appetite for celebrating them.’_

… Mr Bishop says the controversy today is a ‘bit contrived’, arguing that people understand moral considerations were put aside for the wartime situation. ‘Most people accept these men were asked to do terrible things and endure terrible things, it’s a national shame their sacrifices weren’t commemorated earlier,’ he says.

‘Bomber Command fliers in their own words’, BBC News, 27 June 2012, online at bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18501658

**Source 2**

_Professor Rolf-Dieter Müller, a German military historian … said: ‘Germans have a contradictory and difficult relationship with the bombing campaign because the civilian losses were so great and one has the impression that Bomber Command wasn’t just bent on destroying Hitler’s war machine but on terrorizing the civilian population and crushing morale.’_

…

‘Without the Allied raids, Hitler would have been able to carry on the war longer and more terribly, possibly with the use of poison gas and even nuclear weapons. In my opinion, the bombing was not just legitimate but even a necessary instrument to help end the war.’

‘Is it justified in war to factor in civilian losses and collateral damage? We judge by different standards today than in the 1940s. One overlooks the fact that the bombing crews suffered immense losses themselves, it wasn’t a cakewalk for the RAF or the United States Air Force. Germany must respect the fact that the British see the need to honor the bombing crews with a memorial.”

‘Germans Grudgingly Accept Bomber Memorial’, Spiegel Online, 6 June 2012, online at spiegel.de/international/europe/controversial-memorial-to-british-wwii-bombers-to-open-a-840858.html
Source 3

It is a hard subject to memorialise – to recognise at once the courage and loss of airmen, and the awfulness of the thing they were told to do – the more so as the debate will never end as to whether bombing civilian targets was then the best or only available way of speeding the defeat of the Nazis.


Source 4

However much you may or may not condemn Bomber Harris’s tactics during the War, it is right that those airmen should be remembered. That, in the very essence of the word, is the point of a memorial.

‘The Bomber Command Memorial is a noble, handsome thing’, The Telegraph (London), 26 June 2012, online at blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/harrymount/100064711/the-bomber-command-memorial-is-a-noble-handsome-thing/

Source 5

The mayor of Dresden [sic] Helma Oros said her views changed after learning the monument would include an inscription remembering 500,000 Germans killed in the bombing raids. Initially, she tried to persuade London Mayor Boris Johnson to abandon the £7.5 million project.

... ‘I am pleased the monument is now featuring an inscription commemorating the victims of the bombing war. It’s a further gesture of reconciliation between Britain and Germany.’

‘Dresden May “Blesses” Memorial’, The Daily Express (London), 27 June 2012, online at express.co.uk/posts/view/329135/Dresden-s-mayor-blesses-memorial

Source 6

Had Churchill, a hero to many of them, abandoned them to save his own reputation? Was the Dresden raid, so close to the end of the war, unnecessary? ... And insistently, were the Nazis themselves not responsible for the civilian deaths by their own action in the Luftwaffe’s bombing of London and other British cities, and by pitching Britain and its allies into a ‘total war’?

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>What does the source tell you about the complexities surrounding the commemoration of Bomber Command air crews? Does the source take a position?</th>
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1. What did German historian Professor Rolf-Dieter Müller mean when he said ‘Is it justified in war to factor in civilian losses and collateral damage? We judge by different standards today than in the 1940s?’

2. Why is it important to recognise the impact of our own values and beliefs when we assess the actions and events of the past?
C. Formal Recognition – The Bomber Command Memorial

Bomber Command Memorial in London, unveiled on 28 June 2012 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

A Royal Air Force Lancaster Bomber flies over the Bomber Command memorial in Green Park, London. Poppies were dropped to commemorate the lives of those who served and died in Bomber Command. (Dept of Defence 20120628adf8262658_689; photographer CPL Chris Moore)
Eight major design features of the London Bomber Command Memorial are listed below.

Choose two and explain the significance of their inclusion:

**Inscription 1**
- This memorial is dedicated to the 55,573 volunteers from the United Kingdom British Commonwealth and Allied nations who served in RAF Bomber Command & lost their lives over the course of the Second World War.

**Inscription 2**
- This memorial commemorates those of all nations who lost their lives in the bombing of 1939–45.

**Inscription 3**
- ‘The fighters are our salvation but bombers alone provide the means of victory.’
  Winston Churchill

**Inscription 4**
- ‘Freedom is the sure possession of those who have the courage to defend.’
  Ancient Greek philosopher Pericles

**Inscription 5**
- ‘Strike Hard, Strike Sure’ – Bomber Command motto & badge

**Inscription 6**
- *Per Ardua ad Astra* – ‘Through Adversity to the Stars’ – RAF motto

**Roof of London Bomber Command Memorial**
- Made from aluminum reclaimed from a Handley Page Halifax III bomber shot down over Belgium in May 1944. The Halifax had been removed from a swamp in 1997 with three of the crew found still at their posts.

**Sculpture within London Bomber Command Memorial (Philip Jackson)**
- 9ft-high bronze sculpture of seven aircrew who have just returned from a bombing mission and are anxiously scanning the skies for their returning comrades.

**Feature 1:**
Feature 2: