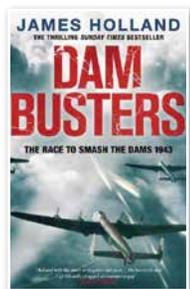


BOOK REVIEWS

DAM BUSTERS: THE RACE TO SMASH THE DAMS, 1943



By James Holland

London, United Kingdom:
Bantam Press, 2012
437 pages
ISBN 978-0-593-06676-8

Review by **Lieutenant-Colonel Doug Moulton, CD, MBA**

As the Canadian Forces Liaison Officer to the United Kingdom Air Warfare Centre at Royal Air Force (RAF) Waddington, I have been privileged and honoured to view the RAF from a unique perspective. Not far from RAF Waddington, one can find The Petwood Hotel, just outside of Woodhall Spa, the mess of 617 Squadron during World War II. The hotel, filled with mementos from that era, can quickly take you back to the days and stories of this special squadron. Mr. James Holland, a historian and

member of the Guild of Battlefield Guides, has recently written a new book detailing the exploits of this squadron in their efforts to cripple the German war machine. His book, *Dam Busters: The Race to Smash the Dams, 1943* is an outstanding read, which I recommend to anyone with an interest in this squadron's exploits.

Interestingly, despite the notoriety of the movie *The Dam Busters*, there have only been two other significant works detailing this operation. Given its 1951 writing and the vagaries of Hollywood, accuracy was not *The Dam Busters* prime concern.¹ With most World War II files declassified, Holland has had an opportunity to get to the real meat of the operation, and he has not disappointed.

The book, written chronologically, interweaves the life experiences of a number of British personalities to tell the story of Operation CHASTISE. Delivered in four parts, the book initially examines the development of the weapon and the man behind it. It then explains the heroic effort required to establish this specialized squadron and the personalities that drove it. The actual raid is

chronicled in exquisite detail, and Holland brings all the pain and triumph of Operation CHASTISE to life. Finally, the book examines the legacy of 617 Squadron and its impact on the RAF.

An extensively researched book, Holland has taken the opportunity to provide a unique insight into the story behind the legend of 617 Squadron. Focusing on the main characters, Holland presents both their personal and professional lives. From Mr. Barnes Wallis—Assistant Chief Designer, Vickers-Armstrong Aviation Department, who created the idea of UPKEEP—to Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command to Wing Commander Guy Gibson, Commanding Officer of 617 Squadron, Holland discusses those who made Operation CHASTISE the success it was and describes the personal toll on those involved.

The appropriate maps, figures and photographs complete Holland's effort in the retelling of Operation CHASTISE, as they allow the reader to contextualize the events. Holland also takes the time to provide a cast of characters at the beginning of the book that identifies the major players from defence and industry as well as the crews of 617 Squadron that were involved in the operation. Additionally, the inclusion of technical drawings of the weapons and the dams allows the reader to really understand the challenge Operation CHASTISE presented.

Dam Busters: The Race to Smash the Dams, 1943 is a well-researched and well-written book that will prove an enjoyable and easy read for the air power enthusiast. 📖

Lieutenant-Colonel Doug Moulton, a Sea King pilot, is currently the Deputy Chair Department of Exercise and Simulation, Canadian Forces College, Toronto.

Abbreviation

RAF Royal Air Force

Note

1. James Holland, *Dam Busters: The Race to Smash the Dams, 1943* (London, United Kingdom: Bantam Press, 2012), Author's Note.

TARGET LONDON: UNDER ATTACK FROM THE V-WEAPONS DURING WORLD WAR II



By Christy Campbell

Little Brown Book Group
Publishers, 2012

544 pages

ISBN 1408702932

Review by **Sean M. Maloney, PhD**

This fascinating book is an object lesson in the personalized politicization of intelligence as well as a study in strategic targeting and air power. Some readers may be familiar with the broad aspects of Nazi Germany's advanced weapons programmes during the Second World War. In addition to rocket and jet-propelled aircraft, the Fieseler F-103 cruise missile, better known as the V-1, and the A-4 ballistic missile, better known as the V-2, became notorious as Hitler's Germany sought a means to retaliate for the Allied combined bomber offensive. What we are not overly familiar with is the internal British intelligence debate over these new threats, the planned use of weapons of mass destruction as one possible Allied response, and how the two issues were connected. *Target London* is really the first work to use primary sources to seriously explore this linkage.