

<p>Institution: University of Reading</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 28 Modern Languages and Linguistics</p>
<p>Title of case study: Raising critical awareness among French people of the ambiguities and effects of the Allied bombing of France, 1940-1945</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Through exploring, articulating and reflecting on the largely unexplored lived experience of the Allied bombing of occupied France between 1940 and 1945, which resulted in at least 56,000 French civilian deaths, University of Reading research has had wide-ranging and significant impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the French media, where it has been used for two television documentaries to date • the US military, where it has been used as teaching material in the US Army Staff College and cited to officers as an object lesson in how poor planning can lead to civilian deaths • survivors of bombing, for whom it has opened up discussion about a marginalised aspect of the Occupation of France.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research was undertaken as part of a major AHRC project, ‘Bombing, States and Peoples in Western Europe, 1940-1945’ (project duration: 2007-2010; PI Professor Richard Overy, University of Exeter). Knapp, Lecturer (1990-1995); Senior Lecturer (1995-2005); Professor of French Politics and Contemporary History (since 2005) at Reading, joined the project after writing (in 2006-7) an article on the destruction of Le Havre by Allied bombing in September 1944.</p> <p>The project as a whole presented three main original features. First, although it was partly concerned with the strategies of the belligerent powers undertaking the bombing, its chief focus was on how the states and the peoples on the receiving end coped. Thus although some archival research was done at the National Archives, Kew, most was undertaken in Paris, and (above all) in French provincial towns. In addition, a doctoral student working on the project under Knapp’s supervision (Lindsey Dodd) conducted interviews with survivors of bombing. Second, the research broadened the coverage from the (relatively) familiar stories of the Blitz and of the Allied offensive against Germany, to include the less well-known cases of France and Italy. Third, the project took a comparative approach throughout. It found that many of the experiences of European peoples under air attack were very similar, as were the challenges faced by governments, in terms of protecting civilian populations and providing relief for bombed-out households. However, their success in meeting these challenges depended on the solidity and legitimacy of the state machinery.</p> <p>Knapp’s major contribution to the project was a comparative study, undertaken with the other co-investigator Claudia Baldoli (University of Newcastle) and based on archival research, of the French and Italian cases. The major findings of the research were as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Allies dropped a quantity of bombs on France and Italy greatly exceeding the tonnage dropped by the Luftwaffe on the UK, and amounting, altogether, to over one-third of the total Allied bombing effort on Europe in World War 2. • The civilian death toll, amounting to nearly 60,000 in each country, was comparable to that sustained in the UK as a result of German bombing. The material damage was considerably greater, with some localities suffering in excess of 80% destruction. • The historiography of the war years in each country, dominated by a narrative in which liberation by the Allies in partnership with national resistance forces is a climax, tends to marginalise the cross-cutting story of bombing, which inevitably presents the Allies in a less favourable light. • The Allies did show concern to avoid civilian casualties and unnecessary damage, but military necessity – real or perceived – usually trumped these concerns. In addition, senior Allied

military figures admitted privately that some raids had been unnecessary.

- Of the two states, Vichy France responded more effectively than Fascist Italy. In France, though often hampered by scarce resources, efforts to provide shelters, to maintain basic services, and to look after bombed-out families continued almost to the fall of Vichy. In Italy, the state apparatus often fell apart after really major raids and proved incapable of implementing consistent policies towards, for example, evacuation.
- French civil society, like the French state, proved the more resistant, demonstrating rather greater cohesion and solidarity than the Italians, and without necessarily supporting the Vichy regime.
- In both countries, the bombing generated contradictory reactions, including hopes for a speedy end to the war, but also fierce resentment of the Allies after the heavier raids, which the Resistance movements in France and Italy found increasingly hard to justify. In neither case, however, did Allied bombing significantly increase support either for the German occupiers or for the Vichy or Fascist authorities.
- In present-day international law, at least some raids on France and Italy would be considered as war crimes because, while directed against military targets, they caused disproportionate and foreseeable destruction to civilian lives and property.

Dodd (now a lecturer at the University of Huddersfield) completed her thesis in 2011 on the topic of 'Children under the Allied Bombs: France 1940-1945'. Based chiefly on oral interviews with survivors, her research captures French children's varied experiences of bombing and of evacuation, and their relative marginalisation from dominant narratives of the Occupation.

3. References to the research

Funding

- AHRC grant reference: 'Bombing, States and Peoples in Western Europe, 1940-1945' (project duration: 2007-2010: amount £497,995, of which £112,171 to Reading): PI Richard Overy, University of Exeter; Co-I's Claudia Baldoli (University of Newcastle) and Andrew Knapp: see <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funded-Research/Browse-Case-Studies/Pages/Bombing-States-and-Peoples.aspx>). The AHRC research project was rated as 'outstanding'. 'A really important contribution to the historiography of the war' (Sir Michael Howard on *Forgotten Blitzes*).

Published outputs

- Claudia Baldoli and Andrew Knapp, *Forgotten Blitzes; France and Italy under Allied Air Attack*, London, Continuum, 2012, pp.xvi + 296 (submitted to the REF 2014: <http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/forgotten-blitzes-9781441185815/>).
Evidence of quality: the endorsements supplied on the publisher's website.
- Claudia Baldoli, Andrew Knapp, and Richard Overy (eds.), *Bombing, States and Peoples in Western Europe, 1940-1945*, London, Continuum, 2011, pp. viii + 365 (<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/bombing-states-and-peoples-in-western-europe-1940-1945-9781441185686/>).
- Knapp, A. (2007) 'The Destruction and Liberation of Le Havre in Modern Memory', *War in History*, 14(4), 2007, pp. 476-499. DOI: 10.1177/0968344507081551
Evidence of quality: this work was chosen for publication (in translation) in a French volume on Allied bombing in World War 2 (see publication reference below), and included in teaching at the US Army Staff College (see Bourque statement under (4) below).
- Knapp, A. 'Nous vous attendions dans la joie, nous vous accueillons dans le deuil': la libération dans la mémoire des Havrais', in Michèle Battesti and Patrick Facon (eds.), *Les Bombardements Alliés sur la France durant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale: Stratégies, Bilans Matériaux et Humains* (Paris: Ministère de la Défense (Cahiers du Centre d'Etudes d'Histoire de la Défense, no. 37), 2009), 77-101 (French version of *War in History* article cited above: can be supplied by the University of Reading).
- Lindsey Dodd and Andrew Knapp, "'How Many Frenchmen did you Kill?' British Bombing Policy Towards France (1940-1945)", *French History*, 22(4), 2008, 469-492 DOI:

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10.1093/fh/crn042 (Knapp's contribution represented 70%: can be supplied by the University of Reading).

- Knapp, A. 'Des bombardements alliés sur la France en général et Le Havre en particulier' (1940-1944), *Cahiers Havrais de Recherche Historique* D69, December 2011, 121-153 (can be supplied by the University of Reading).
- Knapp, A. 'La Francia sotto le bombe degli Alleati (1940-1945)', in Nicola Labanca (ed.), *I Bombardamenti Aerei Sull'Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012), 37-56 (can be supplied by the University of Reading).

DVD

- François Gauducheau (director), *Nantes sous les bombes alliées*, Brest, Aber Images, 2011.

Web exhibition

- Web exhibition, 'France under Allied Air Attack, 1940-1945': <http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/france-under-allied-air-attack/>

4. Details of the impact

Prior to this research, the Allied bombing of France had received little formal discussion within France. The research has therefore raised critical awareness among French people of the ambiguities and effects of the Allied bombing of their country. This has happened at a time when memories of World War II have been gaining in salience as the generation that lived through it approach the end of their lives. Equally, the effects of Allied bombing on France had been marginalised from most military histories of the war.

Within this general perspective, the main impact of this research has been threefold.

(a) Among French television producers

Firstly, the growing public interest in these events in France stimulated French television documentary makers to invest in documentaries on the subject. The first, Dominique Monteiro, contacted Knapp after finding the Le Havre article on the internet; the second, Catherine Monfajon, did the same after similarly finding the Dodd/Knapp article. The first programme was broadcast on FR3's regional and national networks (September/November 2012 – audience of over 300,000), and the second on prime time national TV (to be broadcast in May 2014). Knapp's research was key to the successful production of these documentaries: 'He has brought to the film the knowledge of a historian, distancing the story from the emotions it carries and placing it within a wider context' (Producer, October 2012); 'I think that without him, it would have been extremely difficult to move forward with any confidence in this ambitious film in which it was vital to have a robust historical framework ... in order to tell the public this extremely important but delicate history with the greatest possible accuracy' (Director, October 2012). In both cases, the research performed an empowering function, ensuring that the producer and director could rely on a firm and impartial basis of historical knowledge. The Producer is currently in discussion with a second documentary maker with a view to preparing a film on Le Havre, again with Knapp's close involvement.

(b) Among the US military

The second major impact of this research has been on the teachers of military officers at the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The analysis of the bombing of 'friendly' populations, victims of collateral damage as enemy military objectives are targeted, has relevance for twenty-first century conflicts such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan: liberal democracies typically claim to fight wars to further the well-being of foreign peoples – whom they nevertheless bomb and kill in the course of military operations. A Professor of the US Army Command and General Staff College first contacted Knapp after the publication of the article on Le Havre; since then his pupils have been stimulated by it to integrate the perspectives of civilians into their courses on planning for military operations. 'I routinely assign (Knapp's) narrative of the bombing of Le Havre to illustrate the effects of poor planning to my mid-grade officers, all who will serve as planners at senior headquarters following graduation' (October 2012). As one of these students reported, the research 'has made a difference in my life in the way that I think of war and more importantly, how to think about the effects of war' (US Air Force Major, May 2010).

(c) Among 'live' French audiences, including survivors of bombing

Pre-publication circulation of Knapp's article 'The Destruction and Liberation of Le Havre in Modern Memory' led to an invitation to speak at a French Defence Ministry conference in June 2007, which included academics and survivors of bombing, and thence to a publication of a French version of the piece. Subsequent public lectures and talks (the Le Havre Historical Research Centre, June 2010; the Mémorial de Caen, March 2012, Marseille municipal archives, October 2013) brought together those interested in the Second World War French bombing experience, giving members of the French public – often survivors of the events, or second-generation relatives of these survivors – an exceptional opportunity to place their own personal and local memories in a broader historical framework. Le Havre's local paper (*Presse Havraise*, 30 June 2010) reported on a lecture given by Knapp attended by over 150 people, mostly in their fifties or older, noting the strong participation of survivors in the discussions. The head of the Le Havre Historical Research Centre noted that Knapp's 'methodical and quantitative history, founded on both French and British archives', impressed an audience which was also 'moved by this sensitive subject' (Wuthrick, October 2012). Similarly, and given the continuing political sensitivities of the subject, the Director of the Mémorial de Caen pointed out how vital it had been to demonstrate publicly that a British historian was undertaking this work, 'so that at last the public in Normandy, who suffered so much as a result of Anglo-American bombing, can talk freely with a British historian' (Simonnet, October 2012). For these groups, the research was an acknowledgement of their suffering from a citizen of one of the nations that inflicted it: not an apology, but a statement that if the Allies had had their reasons, those did not justify each and every raid. This impact continues today with the use of the web exhibition by classes in a Le Havre lycée, and Knapp's invited participation in preparing commemorations of the bombing, to be held in September 2014 (Municipal Councillor and school teacher, Le Havre, April 2013).

In 2010, by decree of Prime Minister François Fillon, Knapp was made Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques 'in recognition of your eminent academic career devoted to French contemporary politics and historical studies.'

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Letter from Producer, Aber Images (<http://www.aber-images.com/accueil.html>) (quoted in Section 4(a) to show Knapp's contribution to documentary making in France) (†)
2. Independent documentary director working with Phares et Balises (quoted in Section 4(a) to show Knapp's contribution to documentary making in France.) (†)
3. President of the Centre Havrais de Recherche Historique (<http://chrh.pagesperso-orange.fr/>) (cited in section 4(c) to indicate Knapp's contribution to the local memory of the bombing of Le Havre among the city's older generation, and particularly among survivors.) (†)
4. Professor of Military History, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, USA (<http://www.cgsc.edu/>) (quoted in Section 4(b) to illustrate Knapp's contribution to war studies in the US military). (†)
5. Municipal councillor and schoolteacher, Le Havre (cited in 4(c) to indicate the use of Knapp's website in education in Le Havre's schools, and may also be contacted in reference to Knapp's contribution to preparing the commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Le Havre in 2014.) (*)

(†) Letters available upon request

(*) Contact details provided separately