

## Bombing the City

Second World War is enshrined in our collective memory as the good war – a victory of good over evil. However, the bombing war has always troubled this narrative as total war transformed civilians into legitimate targets and raised unsettling questions, such as whether it was possible for Allied and Axis alike to be victims of aggression. In *Bombing the City*, an unprecedented comparative history of how ordinary Britons and Japanese experienced bombing, Aaron William Moore offers a major new contribution to these debates. Utilising hundreds of diaries, letters, and memoirs, he recovers the voices of ordinary people on both sides – from builders, doctors, and factory workers to housewives, students, and policemen – and reveals the shared experiences shaped by gender, class, race, and age. He reveals how the British and Japanese public continued to support bombing elsewhere even as they felt first-hand its terrible impact at home.

AARON WILLIAM MOORE is the Handa Chair of Japanese-Chinese Relations at the University of Edinburgh. His research has received support from the British Academy, the Arts & Humanities Research Council, and the Leverhulme Trust. In 2014, he was awarded the prestigious Leverhulme Prize for his work in comparative history.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42825-5 — Bombing the City  
Aaron William Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

*Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare*

*General Editor*

Jay Winter, *Yale University*

*Advisory Editors*

David Blight, *Yale University*

Richard Bosworth, *University of Western Australia*

Peter Fritzsche, *University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

Carol Gluck, *Columbia University*

Benedict Kiernan, *Yale University*

Antoine Prost, *Université de Paris-Sorbonne*

Robert Wohl, *University of California, Los Angeles*

In recent years the field of modern history has been enriched by the exploration of two parallel histories. These are the social and cultural history of armed conflict, and the impact of military events on social and cultural history.

*Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare* presents the fruits of this growing area of research, reflecting both the colonization of military history by cultural historians and the reciprocal interest of military historians in social and cultural history, to the benefit of both. The series offers the latest scholarship in European and non-European events from the 1850s to the present day.

*A full list of titles in the series can be found at:*  
[www.cambridge.org/modernwarfare](http://www.cambridge.org/modernwarfare)

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42825-5 — Bombing the City  
Aaron William Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

# Bombing the City

*Civilian Accounts of the Air War in Britain and  
Japan, 1939–1945*

---

Aaron William Moore  
University of Edinburgh



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42825-5 — Bombing the City  
Aaron William Moore  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108428255](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108428255)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781108552479

© Aaron William Moore 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-108-42825-5 Hardback  
ISBN 978-1-108-44652-5 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <i>List of Figures</i>  | <i>page</i> vi |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>   | vii            |
| <i>Note to the Reader</i>   | viii           |
| <i>Featured Diarists</i>  | ix             |
| Introduction: Attacking the People: Democracy, Populism,<br>and Modern War        | 1              |
| 1 Give unto Moloch: Family and Nation in the Second<br>World War                  | 20             |
| 2 The Muses of War: Terror, Anger, and Faith                                      | 50             |
| 3 Romancing Stone: Human Sacrifice and System Collapse in<br>the City             | 97             |
| 4 Defending Our Way of Life: Gender, Class, Age, and Other<br>Oppressions         | 146            |
| Conclusion: Victory for the People: Pacifism and the Ashes<br>of the Post-War Era | 189            |
| <i>Notes</i>  | 215            |
| <i>Bibliography</i>   | 235            |
| <i>Index</i>  | 252            |

Figures

---

|    |   |                 |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 1  | Conservative Party poster celebrating the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Courtesy of London School of Economics and Political Science. | <i>page</i> 130 |
| 2  | Japanese schoolchildren are evacuated to the countryside in 1944. Courtesy of Asahi News.   | 130             |
| 3  | Evacuated British schoolchildren are treated in a Hull air raid shelter. Courtesy of Hull History Centre.                             | 131             |
| 4  | Bristol volunteers remove the wounded and the dead after an air raid. Courtesy of Bristol Records Office.                             | 131             |
| 5  | Citizens trekking out of the ruins of Osaka. Courtesy of Asahi News.  | 132             |
| 6  | Citizens trekking out of the ruins of Hull. Courtesy of Hull History Centre.  | 132             |
| 7  | Destruction of iconic buildings in the Hull city centre. Courtesy of Hull History Centre.   | 133             |
| 8  | Firefighters try to save the famous Ginza area in Tokyo. Courtesy of Asahi News.  | 133             |
| 9  | Two women pose in front of bomb damage in Hull, 1940. Courtesy of Hull History Centre.  | 134             |
| 10 | Japanese youth directs traffic in firebombed city. Courtesy of US Marine Corps Archives, Quantico.                                    | 134             |

## Acknowledgements

---

The first draft of this book was written during a period of academic research leave funded by the Leverhulme Trust, from whom I have received considerable assistance over the years. While preparing this book for its contract with Cambridge University Press, I received advice from Richard Overy and Keith Lowe. My editor at Cambridge University Press, Michael Watson, has been very patient as I missed multiple deadlines. The book has benefitted from comments by colleagues at every stage, but John Treat and Penny Summerfield gave me excellent critical feedback from the Japanese and British perspective as I was preparing to finally let the book go. Any mistakes in *Bombing the City* are my responsibility alone.

I dedicate the book to Sarah, who was even happier than I was to see it finished.

## Note to the Reader

---

Japanese names appear in the East Asian fashion, with surname first and given name second. Subsequently, the given name will be used for both British and Japanese authors.

This book is based on diaries, letters, and memoirs by citizens of cities in Britain and Japan from 1939 to 1945. *Bombing the City* includes texts such as:

1. commercially published, self-published, and unpublished (manuscript) materials
2. documents from the wartime period, including diaries, letters, and reports
3. single-authored memoirs from the post-war period
4. memoir collections (e.g., *Nagoya kūshūshi*, or *Journal of the Nagoya Air Raids*), although many of these will include reprinted diary accounts as well.

In most cases, I have corrected minor grammatical and spelling errors without indicating this in the book. I will note significant changes with brackets when directly quoting from primary documents. I have replaced the use of ‘&’ and ‘+’ in original documents with ‘and’ for readability.

This book generally avoids using the term ‘blitz’ or ‘the Blitz’, as it is sometimes overly focused on Britain and London, and usually refers to the limited period of 1940–1941, ignoring the longer-term bombing campaigns over cities such as Hull and the V1 and V2 rocket attacks.



## Featured Diarists

---

Each chapter begins and ends with discussions by six featured diarists, which follow their reactions to the events described within by examining their war diaries.

**Kojima Yoshitaka** (M), 12 to 16 years old, Nagoya. Diary, 19 November 1941 to 31 November 1945, *Guriko nikki* (self-published, 1995).

Yoshitaka began the war as a primary school student, where he learned how to write a diary. After graduation, he continued the practice, observing evacuation and the bombing of Nagoya as a middle-school student.

**Kenneth A. Holmes** (M), 15 to 16 years old, London. Diary, 2 August 1944 to April 1945, Imperial War Museum (London).

Kenneth left school at 16 to work as a printer's apprentice in Kensington. The diary captures his growing interest in politics and the first use of rocket technology by the German armed forces against civilians in Britain.

**Inohara Mitsuko** (F), 15 to 16 years old, Osaka. Diary, 8 January 1945 to 18 September 1945, *Tojōryō no shojo-tachi* (self-published, 1991).

Mitsuko was removed from school by the state at age 16 in order to work in a textile factory. The diary records her experience of being fired upon by Allied aircraft, food shortages, and observing the devastation of Osaka by firebombing.

**Dora E. Mockett** (F), 22 to 28 years old, Hull. Diary, 1 January 1939 to 31 December 1945, Hull History Centre.

Dora was a young woman who lived with her friend Mary from 1926 to 1946 in a shared residence on Goddard Avenue, near central Hull. An avid knitter, she worked as a public sector secretary in Britain's most bombed city.

x      Featured Diarists

**Takahashi Aiko** (F), 48 to 51 years old, Tokyo. Diary, 18 February 1942 to 15 August 1945, *Shōwa sensō bungaku zenshū 14: Shimin no nikki* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1965), reprint.

Aiko was a well-educated Tokyo urbanite who had spent time abroad in the United States. She kept the diary for her children, who obtained US citizenship and left Japan after the war, and self-published it in 1955. It records the Tokyo firebombing.

**Dorothy Hughes** (F), 19 to 21 years old, Liverpool. Diary, 24 August 1939 to 4 February 1942, Mass-Observation Archives (Brighton).

Dorothy was a young woman of middle-class background working as a clerk in Liverpool while still living in her parents' home. She witnessed multiple raids on Liverpool and the surrounding coastal areas.

Each diarist was selected for being particularly observant, not only regarding the effects of the war, but also for the moral implications of bombing, and also because they represent a wide geographical spread.