

The Job to Be Done: A Son's Journey into the Story of a WW2 Bomber Command Aircrew

Clint L. Coffey

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Telling the story of World War II bombers through the personal lens of family experiences, The Job to Be Done is a compelling slice of military history.

Inspired by an inheritance of air force memorabilia, Clint L. Coffey's *The Job to Be Done* recounts his father's command of a Canadian bomber plane in the fight against Nazi Germany.

Jesse Ray Coffey was a pilot during World War II, serving on a crew with six other airmen. This book follows him from his training into his missions on the European front, where he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross by the Royal Canadian Air Force. It recounts his crew's tours, bombing runs in enemy territory, and courage under fire. It also shows that after the conflict ended, Coffey was diffident about the war, and his children and wife asked few questions.

Drawing on aircrew log books, cigarette cards, postcards, receipts, and other primary sources that are explained at length, this daily account of Coffey's service covers much ground. It also pulls from the younger Coffey's memories of his father recounting war facts, interviews with his fellow service members, and personal visits to central sites. Nonetheless, blanks remained to be filled in: the book speculates on details like what the weather was like, what missions were embarked upon on particular days, and what was going through the minds of the airmen after a friendly-fire accident. However, the younger Coffey is scrupulous about distinguishing known facts from conjecture.

In an effort to contextualize Coffey's military career, the book also discusses the greater war effort, with details as of how "the V-1 and V-2 programs were a pale shadow of what Hitler had envisioned." It discusses military particulars, as of planes, the strength of forces, and the significance of particular battles. Some of this work is perspective driven: the younger Coffey takes exception to those who minimize the bombing campaigns or frame them only in terms of civilian casualties. Indeed, he credits bombers with helping to debilitate Nazi Germany: they destroyed U-boats, V-1 rockets, Panzers, and the infrastructure of the war machine, paving the way for foot soldiers, who it says are more often the celebrated ones.

Working toward Coffey's crew's final mission and following this with an account of what happened to each crew member after, this is a structured text that is purposeful about seeing its crew's stories through to their ends. It is a loving tribute that culminates with a heartfelt but quite personal paean to Jesse Coffey and the man he was after his service ended.

Digging through inherited memorabilia with a meticulous eye, *The Job to Be Done* is a son's tribute to his father, a World War II pilot.

JOSEPH S. PETE (December 1, 2022)

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