

# Reviews

## REVIEWS RATING

★★★★★ Outstanding

★★★★☆ Excellent

★★★☆☆ Good

★★☆☆☆ Flawed

★☆☆☆☆ Mediocre

👉 Enough said

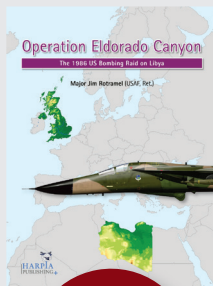
## The latest books for the discerning aviation enthusiast

### Operation Eldorado Canyon

by Maj Jim Rotramel (USAF, Ret)  
published by Harpia Publishing

The April 1986 American air strikes against Libya, mounted in retaliation for the La Belle disco bombing in West Berlin which killed two US servicemen, have not been especially well documented in print. In part, this can be put down to the US Air Force's edict that the names of all its crew members who took part in Operation 'Eldorado Canyon' — or 'El Dorado Canyon', as it's also routinely styled — must remain forever classified to avoid potential retaliations. Gradually, some have decided to emerge into the open, while their US Navy counterparts were subject to no such restrictions.

The author here is well-placed to lift the lid further, having been a weapons systems officer with the Lakenheath-based 48th Tactical Fighter Wing at the time. He did not fly in any of its F-111Fs that took part in the raid, being engaged instead in mission planning. Rotramel's recollections of that aspect are among the fascinating features of the book, while he has spoken to aircrew who did participate, continuing to obey the USAF edict about not identifying them — call signs are used instead. This is in no way detrimental to the text, which is hugely interesting. For instance, nowhere else has so much been written about the preparation carried out for sorties



BOOK of the MONTH

against Libya even before the La Belle atrocity, while the detail on the immediate lead-up is also unprecedented. Throughout these sections and the description of the strikes themselves, a very good balance is struck between personal accounts and discussion of the technical, tactical and strategic issues.

Paper and image reproduction quality are high, as they should be for the price, and the diagrams and artworks complete the feeling of a quality product. Issues are few:

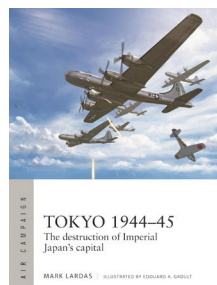
there's inevitably the odd small typo here and there, the photo captions can be rather repetitive, and the image of an EF-111A captioned as landing at Fairford in 1985 surely shows it taking off, while the International Air Tattoo had not at that time received its 'Royal' prefix. One unreferenced point in the text also jumped out at me: it is asserted that a British member of parliament was "having a party" at a residence near the Murat Sidi Bilala terrorist training camp when it was attacked by the Americans, something this reviewer has never heard before and considers extremely unlikely. But this is, without doubt, the best and most in-depth book on the Libyan strikes ever to have appeared. **Ben Dunnell**

ISBN 978-1-95039-412-8; 11 x 8.25in  
hardback; 256 pages, illustrated; **£43.50**  
from [harpia-publishing.com](http://harpia-publishing.com)

★★★★★

and attacked secondary targets; the bomb-aiming was inaccurate and little damage was caused, but this was the precursor to a campaign that would build up through 1945 and lead to LeMay's incendiary raid of Operation 'Meetinghouse' on 9-10 March, in which some 100,000 people on the ground died.

The author details the bombing campaign raid-by-raid, with maps showing the routes flown and a number of double-page colour illustrations depicting the action. The section 'Ways to attack unescorted B-29s'



### Tokyo 1944-45: The Destruction of Imperial Japan's Capital

by Mark Lardas  
published by Osprey

Apart from the Doolittle B-29 raid in April 1942, Japan's capital Tokyo had not been attacked from the air until 24 November 1944, when 111 B-29s launched and headed for Nakajima's aero engine factory at Musashino. The raid was not a success. With the target covered by cloud, much of the force dispersed

makes for fascinating reading; few Japanese anti-aircraft guns could reach Superfortresses flying above 30,000ft, while the lightly built Japanese fighters had to face the massed guns of the bomber formation. Drawings illustrate methods of fighter attack, and the advantages and disadvantages of each are discussed. The text is genuinely instructive, and the photos well-reproduced. **Denis J. Calvert**

ISBN 978-1-4728-6035-4; 9.8 x 7.3in  
softback; 96 pages, illustrated; **£16.99**

★★★★★

### Scotland's Wartime Aircraft Crashes

by Keith S. Bryers  
published by  
Aviation Books

Here are two volumes which do exactly what they say on the tin. The main body of both gives details of each and every aircraft crash that occurred during the Second World War in Scotland, the first volume covering the period 1939-42 and the second 1943-45. A sobering statistic is that there were more than 4,500 of them, involving 6,700 fatalities. Each entry provides the basic 'which aircraft, when, where' information, a brief summary of the circumstances and the crew where known. Volume 1 gives over its first 61 pages to background information such as a list of Scottish airfields, sections on 'Causes of Aircraft Crashes' and 'Death Registration and Burials', a few maps and much more, all of which make for better understanding of the following hundreds of pages of crash entries.

This is as comprehensive a record as you'll find anywhere and represents the results of the author's 50 years of research. I checked for details of a certain 1942 crash which has a family connection; it was all there and checked out well. This is a niche subject, but these two print-on-demand volumes come highly recommended. **DJC**

ISBN 978-1-9153-3532-6 (volume 1) and  
978-1-9153-3533-3 (volume 2); 11.0 x 8.5in  
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and selected booksellers

★★★★★





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