

Target for Tonight  
“The Phantom of the Ruhr” - Lancaster Mk 1

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 17 Total Campaign Missions 77  
1945 Mission 17  
Plauen, Germany - night of March 17th morning of March 18th, 1945

The Phantom of the Ruhr’s 20th Combat Mission.

New Moon – weather on takeoff 'good'.

The Phantom is crewed by:

Pilot	Rueben Woodyear	P/O
Wireless	Harvey Rumble	F/SGT
Tail Gunner	Roman Castevet	SGT
Navigator	Owen Hanks	WO
Mid-Upper	Harry Goodyear	F/SGT
Bomb Aimer	Peter Alderman	WO
Engineer	Harvey Lewis	WO

The target for tonight is Plauen, Germany. The mission is an area bombing but we are to avoid the concentration camps in the area – they are strictly off target as we want to avoid killing innocent political and religious prisoners of the Nazi regime. This will be a long mission. We are to take off at 6:30 pm and won’t be back to the base until around 8 am. Thank goodness there will be no moonshine tonight.

The Phantom is in position 10 in the last bomber stream. Take off is normal and soon we are gaining altitude towards our operational altitude of 20,000 feet.

By 11:30 pm, we are due north of Luxembourg. Searchlights and flak pierce the sky in various locations ahead of us. Bomb Aimer Alderman is in his secondary position dropping Window to hopefully confuse the German long range radar.

By 2:30 am, we are on the approach to Plauen. Ahead of us we see fires burning in the city. Suddenly searchlights illuminate our plane with a harsh blue blinding light. Since we are already on the bomb run, Woodyear uses some gentle evasive maneuvers but can’t corkscrew the plan at this time. Amazingly this breaks the beam but flak still bursts around the plane. The starboard wings is hit twice by flak. The first hit deals superficial damage to the flap but the second burst hits engine # 3. That engine’s coolant tank causes superficial damage as well.

Because of the flak hits our accuracy is affected and only 20% of the bombs fall on the targeted area. There is serious thermal turbulence, but it only shakes up the plane a bit. We turn to our return course but we begin leaving contrails.

We say farewell to our contrails by 3:30 am. By 8:30 am we land back at base. Time for toast and debriefing.

