

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

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 12 Total Campaign Missions 72
1945 Mission 12
Osnabruck, Germany - night of February 1 morning of February 2, 1945

The Phantom of the Ruhr’s 15th Combat Mission.

FullMoon – 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	Archie Smothers	WO
Engineer	Harvey Lewis	WO

Once again, our squadron has been sacked in by furious snowstorms over the last few weeks but things are beginning to clear so we can fly again. The German counterattack in the Ardennes is over. The German loss of troops and panzers is simply stunning. We all hope the war will be over soon. Our target for tonight is Osnabruck, Germany. We are to area bomb the city ..and destroy as much of it as possible but we are to avoid bombing the prisoner of war camps which are in the area.

At 6:30 pm, we roll out and take off. The bomber stream cruises up to 20,000 feet in the frozen night sky under a full moon.

The Phantom is aircraft number 8 in the middle bomber stream.

Soon we are north of Amsterdam and Archie takes up his auxiliary position as Window dumper. These packets of metal ribbons are doing a great job confusing the enemy’s long range radar systems.

At 10:40, we arrive in the target zone. The city ahead of us is in flames. The 103rd squadron gave it a good pasting. We’ll follow up. Archie moves back to his bomb aimer position.

There is a notable lack of searchlights and flak over Osnabruck. This could also be a sign that night fighters are in the area. The gunners are on the alert. On our bomb run, 40% of the bombs hit the target area. There is negligible thermal turbulence. We set our return course and Archie moves back to his Window dropping position.

As we head north of Munster we see searchlight beams and one of them locks onto us! The harsh blue white light floods our cockpit nearly blinding the crew. Rueben takes the plane into a corkscrew and the beam’s lock is broken. We lost altitude but are back in our element – the night sky.

The rest of the trip is uneventful and we land back at base at 3 am. Mission successful.