

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

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 8 Total Campaign Missions 68  
1944 Mission 8  
Neuss, Germany - night of December 14th morning of December 15th, 1944

The Phantom of the Ruhr’s 10th Combat Mission.

NewMoon – 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

We have taken 12 days away from combat in order to participate in some public relation tours and ran into the crew of Notorious Nan which were assigned the same task after flying 30 combat missions. Nice to see that surviving the war is possible.

But tonight will be back to the battle as there will be no moonlight tonight with little cloud cover expected over the target. The target for tonight is the German city of Neuss which is south of Dusseldorf. Some of us are amazed that there are any targets left to strike with the Yanks bombing during the day and our night time raids. The situation in Germany appears to be dire. Night fighters are few and far between. Ground troops report a lack of presence of German tanks. Either most are destroyed or incapacitated due to lack of fuel or ball bearings but, that being said, some of us are thinking that the Germans have pulled their panzers back from one huge counter-attack. Hopefully, those of us who believe that are wrong and this war will be over soon.

At 6:30 pm, on a snowy airfield, we meet up and take our positions in the huge bomber. Then its time to get moving and within 30 minutes we are in the air. The Phantom of the Ruhr is plane # 11 in the rear formation.

As we fly just north of Rotterdam we level off at 23,500 feet below us is the 10/10 cloud layer our weather men told us we would find. They said it is expected to clear as we leave the Netherlands’ air space and penetrate into Germany.

Around an hour ago, Archie left his nose compartment and has been dumping packets of chaff or Window to help disrupt German long-range radar. But now, as we approach Neuss, Archie takes his position as bomb aimer. Before us lies a burning city. The flames reflect off the snow and the scene is a palpable view of hell. The flak seems extremely sparce as if most of the guns have been evacuated by their crews.

As we line up on our bomb approach, we open the bomb bay doors when suddenly a Me110 G-4 with Lichenstein Radar and Naxos H25 Detection System attacks from 3 o'clock low! His tracers fly under our bomber and but his attack angle made it impossible for our gunners to react. The Me110's rear gunner takes a parting shot at us but there is no discernable damage. That was his only pass so he must have been either low on ammo or petrol or both. His presence could be why the flak was almost nonexistent. They didn't want to accidentally shoot down their own aircraft.

"Bombs dropped." Reports Archie. 78 % of the bombs are on target. "Good work, Archie!" exclaims our pilot as he closes the bomb doors and turns to our return course.

The rest of the trip is uneventful and we land at 4:12 am. Time for debrief, tea and toast and off to bed.