

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

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 4 Total Campaign Missions 64  
1944 Mission 4

Kaiserlautern, Germany - night of November 1st, morning of November 2nd, 1944

The Phantom of the Ruhr's 7th Combat Mission.

Full 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	Archie Smothers	WO
Engineer	Harvey Lewis	WO

The Lancaster, Phantom of the Ruhr, revs its engines and when the green flare is shot up into the clear October night sky, the huge 4 engine bomber rolls down the runway and raises slowly into the air. Its belly is loaded with nearly 14,000 lbs of bombs. The time is 9 pm on the dot. The target for tonight is the city of Kaiserlautern in Germany. With the rail and road network running through the city, we are to perform an area bombing of the whole city to make it an obstacle to German ground troops and panzers trying to head North.

As we form up the bomber stream, The Phantom is plane number 6 in the first formation taken up by the 104<sup>th</sup>. The weather soon sees ground fog and low level clouds.

As we leave our coast behind and head out over the sea, Engineer Lewis reports a light showing a landing gear hydraulic malfunction. We note this in our log and set Harry Goodyear as the designated hand cranker for when we return to base.

At 10 pm, we arrive to Europe just South of Antwerp. Our operational altitude is 23,000 feet. This area is still under German control. We see our old friends the searchlights and flak in the distance. Archie begins dropping window down the poop chute of the bomber. Cloud cover is 5/10.

By 11 pm, we are over Belgium which is now friendly territory. The huge engines hum on as we continue to travel through the night sky.

Soon clouds are 10/10 and we are now in Germany. At 11:45 we are near Kaiserlautern. We see 10/10 cloud cover and searchlights lighting up the clouds from below. A favorite tactic of the night fighter crews is called “The Corpse Blanket”. The night fighters stay well above the cloud layer and see the silhouettes of our bombers as the clouds are lit from below. This is the most dangerous time for our bomber crews. Plus the damned full moon isn't helping us either.

Archie gets back to his position in the nose of our Lanc. He reports that the target city is completely obscured by clouds. Our Navigator tells him that according to our H25 ground scanning radar, we are within 1 mile of the city so he recommends bombing in 30 seconds. Bombs dropped using the radar as our guide. Later, a bomb damage assessment shows that none of our bombs hit the target owing to the target being obscured. A few other bombers did manage to get lucky and hit the target though so it wasn't a wasted trip. So much for the accuracy of this fancy new radar system.

We turn to our return course.

By 3 am, we are back on the landing approach. Harry takes his position and begins cranking the landing gear down. It takes a good 15 minutes, but the gear is down and locked. We land without incident. Soon its debrief, then bacon and eggs, then sleep through the day.