

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

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 19 Total Campaign Missions 79
1945 Mission 18

Potsdam, Germany - night of April 3rd morning of April 4th, 1945

The Phantom of the Ruhr's 22nd Combat Mission.

Full Moon – weather on takeoff 'poor'.

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

Tonight's mission is a deep strike into Potsdam, Germany near Berlin. Take off is at 6:30 pm with time on target being approximated at 4:30 am and a return time at approximately 1 pm. This will be a long mission. Extra coffee, coco and sandwiches have been packed and loaded aboard our Lanc.

Take off is normal and soon we are in the bomber stream as we gain altitude over Norwich. Rain lashes the planes as we slowly lumber towards the heavens.

Soon we are north of Amsterdam and Peter Alderman begins to drop Window aluminum strips to help confuse Axis ground based radar systems. The Phantom is the 6th aircraft in the lead bomber stream. The flight to target is long and monotonous. There is a lack of searchlights and flak for our stream. This perhaps signifies a general degradation of the German air defense system.

The crew is on their 3rd cup of coffee by the time we hit Potsdam at 4:15 am. Over Potsdam we see searchlights and flak bursts. We see the flares dropped by the pathfinders and fires started by the first few planes ahead of us. Peter leaves his Window position and takes over his bomb aimer nose station.

“Bomb doors open. Bombs dropping.” We later learn that 51% of our bombs were on target. Soon we change course to return home.

Near Hamburg our mid upper gunner, Harry Goodyear, exclaims “income unknown 2 engine night fighter – 3 high – firing!” The bullets tear into the unknown night fighter's cockpit just as the night fighter shoots. Its shots go wide. It streaks over the bomber and vanishes into the night. “Probable kill, Harry. Good shooting.” (The night fighter was a Ta154 – a rarely seen mostly wooden night fighter comparable to the British Mosquito. Only a handful went into production because of problems with the wooden parts failing in flight. Unknown to the Phantom of the Ruhr's crew, Harry's bullets seriously wounded the night fighter's pilot.)

The rest of the return flight is uneventful and the Phantom lands back at base at 12:55 pm. The crew is exhausted.

The Ta 154 “kill” is credited to the Phantom. It’s her first kill of the war and intel is very interested in this new type of night fighter.