

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

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 5 Total Campaign Missions 65  
1944 Mission 5  
Wanne-Eickel, Germany - night of November 3, morning of November 4, 1944

The Phantom of the Ruhr’s 8th 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	Archie Smothers	WO
Engineer	Harvey Lewis	WO

The Lancaster, Phantom of the Ruhr, fully functional again with working landing gear, takes off into the rain and fog of a wet November evening and gains altitude with the rest of the Lancs in the final third of the bomber stream. The target for tonight is Wanne-Eickel, Germany. This is another area bombing and its aim is to level the city. Many of the bomber crews are beginning to have doubts about the ethics of area bombing but keep a stiff upper lip and carry on with their missions.

The Phantom is aircraft # 10 in the rear of the bomber stream. As the bomber stream gains altitude to 23,000 feet, cloud cover is 10/10. Thank goodness for the wonderful technical marvels of Gee-N and our H25 ground scanning radars, we are on course. The boffins have really come through with some amazing technological innovations. Meanwhile, Archie begins dropping window.

As we approach land, just north of Amsterdam our aircraft begin leaving contrails. Cloud cover is still 10/10. In the distance we see searchlight beams penetrating the clouds.

Suddenly, the harsh electric blue light of two searchlights illuminates our plane. Woodyear takes the Phantom into evasive action which throws off the searchlight crews. We then begin to raise up to operational altitude and regain our course to target. Suddenly the Phantom rocks from a hit from a heavy flak gun but, fortunately, it felt worse than it was and the only damage was superficial.

We make our planned south eastern turn south of Zwolle and the bombers are still leaving contrails, unfortunately, Archie returns to his bomb aimer position as we begin our approach to the target area. Cloud cover is still 10/10. The clouds in the distance are tinged with orange glow from the fires burning below. There are a notable lack of searchlights which means the first two waves of bombers did their job. There are sporadic bursts of lite flak.

Just as the bomber settles into a straight and level course to the target, the Phantom shudders from an attack from underneath the bomber. An Me110 G4 outfitted with Jazz Music and a full set of

multiple radars has blasted her from below. The right-side bomb bay door takes some superficial damage; the nose takes superficial damage but frightens the hell out of Archie; lastly the rear fuselage takes superficial damage. The German night fighter disappears into the night and doesn't return. It's been many weeks since we've seen a night fighter and this one went completely unseen until it fired on us. We got lucky.

The city below is completely obscured by clouds and smoke. We drop our bombs and later it is revealed that we hit 30 % on target. The thermal blast is negligible, and we make our turn to return to Norwich.

The return trip is uneventful and by 4 am, we arrive back at our base to debrief and rest up for our next mission. The rain has cleared and it looks like today will be a beautiful day.