

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

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 13 Total Campaign Missions 73
1945 Mission 13
Wesel, Germany - night of February 8 morning of February 9, 1945

The Phantom of the Ruhr’s 16th Combat Mission.

Crescent 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

It’s been 7 days since our last mission. Now we take to the skies as the 104th Squadron takes the lead. The Phantom is the 4th aircraft in the bomber stream. The target for tonight is the strategic depot town of Wesel, Germany. The mission is area bombing in advance of a planned ground assault to take the town.

The Phantom’s 4 Rolls-Royce Merlin engines are purring away as we reach the middle of the sea and reach our combat altitude of 23,000 feet. Archie leaves his bomb aimer position and begins dumping Window to confuse German long-range radar. Unfortunately, our bomber stream begins leaving contrails behind us.

As we head over land, north of the Hague, we stop leaving contrails which makes us breathe a sigh of relief. In the distance we see searchlights.

As we approach Wesel, we see red flares and green flares. Luckily, we know that our pathfinders dropped red flares tonight to mark the target area. The green flares were set off by the Germans obviously using incorrect intel regarding what tonight’s color was. Archie, back in his bomb position, sees the three bombers ahead of us drop their bombs. “Bomb doors open” says Archie as he lines up the target area. “Bombs dropped. Bomb doors closed.” 30% on target. Negligible thermal turbulence.

We begin the homeward bound leg of the mission. The return trip is uneventful.

As we begin our approach, we suffer a landing gear failure! The port landing gear won’t drop down. Engineer Lewis moves quickly to the center section of the hull where the landing gear cranks are located. Luckily, the manual system works just fine. It’s either a failure in the hydraulic system or the electrical system to the port gear. We fire a flare off and come around to land again after the landing gear locks into place. Soon we are back on Mother Earth.