

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

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 18 Total Campaign Missions 78
1945 Mission 18
Leuna, Germany - night of March 21st morning of March 22nd, 1945

The Phantom of the Ruhr's 21st Combat Mission.

Crescent 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

Only a few days between mission now as our operational tempo keeps increasing. How long until we are totally exhausted? The Germans have to be feeling the heat as well. Our target for tonight is the town of Leuna, Germany – a town on the Saale River near Leipzig. There are extremely large chemical plants in that area so this deep strike mission is necessary. We will take off at 6:30 pm and hit the target around 3 am. We expect to be back at our base by noon tomorrow. We have brought lots of coffee, hot chocolate and sandwiches to get us through this plus we have been given pills to keep us sharp. The weather is awful with ground fog, 5/10 clouds as well as thunderstorms.

At 6:30 pm, we get the green flare to take off and rise into the night. By 11:30, we are southeast of Liege, Belgium. Peter leaves his bomb aimer position and begins dropping Window to help confuse German long range radar systems. The operational altitude is 23,550 feet.

By 2:40, we see the city of Jena in the distance. That means we are less than an hour away from Leuna. We see searchlight beams slicing through the night sky.

As we are on the approach to Leuna, Peter leaves his Window position and moves to the nose of the aircraft to take up his bomb aimer position. “Bomb doors open. Bombs dropped.” 30% land on target. There is negligible thermal turbulence. The bomb doors close and our aircraft makes its turn to the return course.

Suddenly around Erfurt, Germany, several searchlights illuminate our plane. Woodyear takes us into a series of dramatic evasive actions but to no avail. Then the flak starts hitting around the plane. None of the flak hits the Phantom. After 10 minutes of hell, we leave the searchlight zone and disappear back into the night. Around 4 am, we begin leaving contrails.

The rest of the return trip is uneventful. We land back at base around 2:40 am. Time for debriefing, bacon and sleep.