

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

Multiplayer Campaign 4 Mission 3 Total Campaign Missions 63
1944 Mission 3
Bingen, Germany - night of October 10, morning of October 11, 1944

The Phantom of the Ruhr's 6th 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

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 target for tonight is the city of Bingen in Germany. We are to wipe the city off of the map. We weren't told why – we were just ordered to bomb them.

As we form up the bomber stream, The Phantom is plane number 8 in the middle formation taken up by the 104th. Weather is good and clear for take off. It'll be a 12 hour mission tonight. Hopefully back to base by 7 am.

A few hours later near Bruges, we reach our operational altitude of 20,000 feet. Below us is 10/10 cloud cover.

Near Liege, the bombers begin leaving contrails. Cloud cover is 5/10.

Now as we approach Bingen, we see fires burning throughout the city. Searchlights and flak pierce the sky. Unfortunately, we are all still leaving contrails. That makes us stand out more in the night sky.

As we line up for the bomb run, another Lancaster wanders too close to our aircraft. Rueben initiates a side slip to starboard and narrowly avoids the collision. The other Lanc regains its position in the bomber stream. Sometimes accidents are more dangerous than the Luftwaffe.

Archie, our bomb aimer, has control and opens the bomb doors. 20% of the bombs are on target. We close the bomb doors and turn to our return course.

Then the harsh blue light of a searchlight illuminates our bomber. Rueben takes evasive action.

Those searchlight crews are good but even though flak bursts all around us, none hits The Phantom.

We land back at base around 7:15 am. We debrief and have some breakfast then off to bed.