

THE HAMBURG AND EMDEN RAIDS

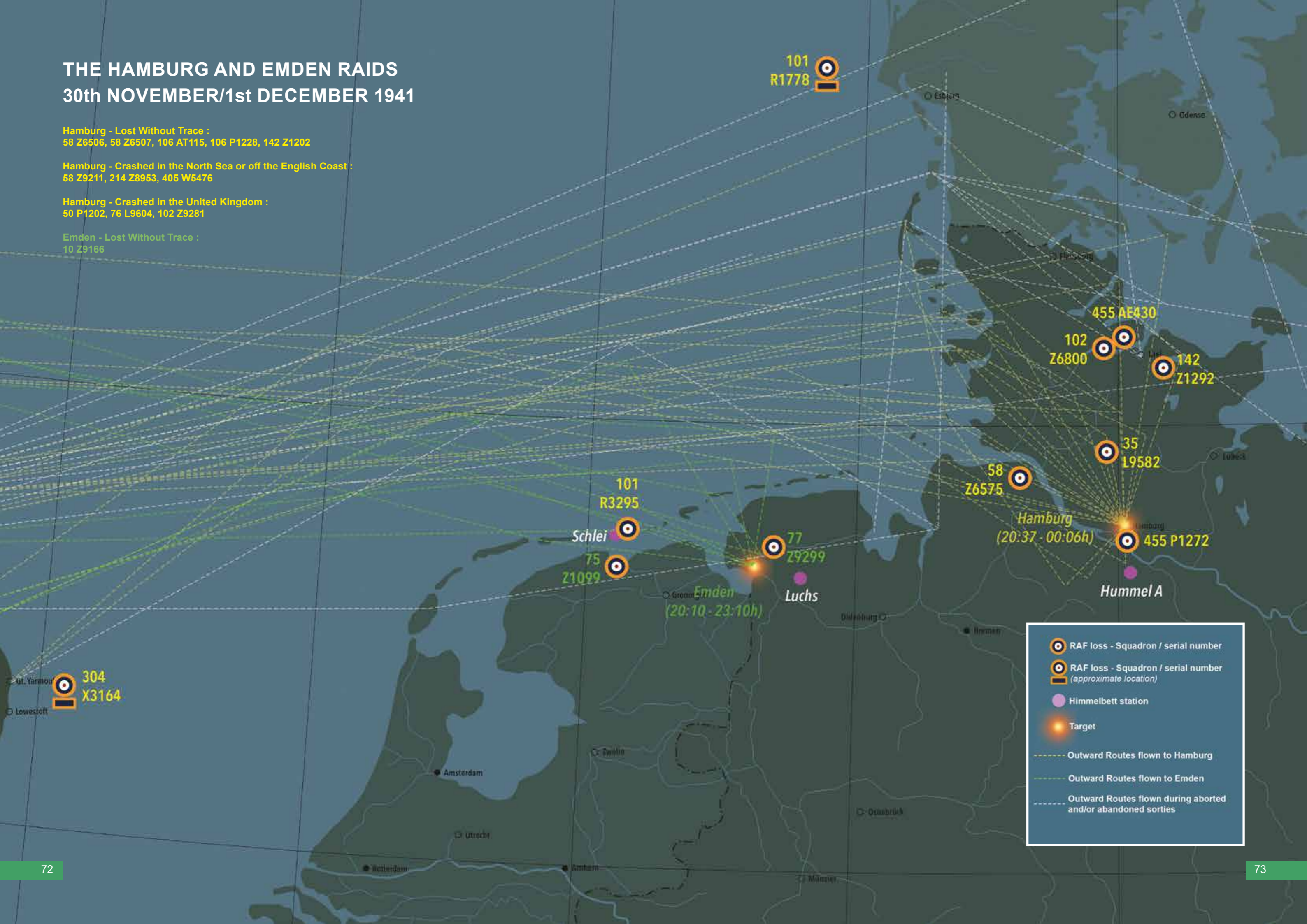
30th NOVEMBER/1st DECEMBER 1941

Hamburg - Lost Without Trace :
58 Z6506, 58 Z6507, 106 AT115, 106 P1228, 142 Z1202

Hamburg - Crashed in the North Sea or off the English Coast :
58 Z9211, 214 Z8953, 405 W5476

Hamburg - Crashed in the United Kingdom :
50 P1202, 76 L9604, 102 Z9281

Emden - Lost Without Trace :
10 Z9166



- RAF loss - Squadron / serial number
- RAF loss - Squadron / serial number (approximate location)
- Himmelbett station
- Target
- Outward Routes flown to Hamburg
- Outward Routes flown to Emden
- Outward Routes flown during aborted and/or abandoned sorties

304 X3164

101 R3295
Schlei
75 Z1099

Emden (20:10 - 23:10h)
Luchs
77 Z9299

58 Z6575
Hamburg (20:37 - 00:06h)
Hummel A
455 P1272

455 AE430
102 Z6800
142 Z1292
35 L9582

101 R1778

port-inner engine was burning with reddish-yellow flames. At 22.21 I made a third attack, overtaking from astern. I took no more fire from the rear gunner, he'd probably been put out of action in my second attack. After this attack I pulled alongside the Halifax and saw that apart from the port inner engine, the port outer and starboard inner were trailing thick smoke and the Halifax was making its way eastward in a shallow dive so that it emerged from the searchlight belt and was lost. Because I was flying higher, I lost the hostile aircraft against the dark background of the earth". On 10 December, Hptm. Ehle added in his *Stellungnahme*: "Since the crew saw neither the Halifax's crash nor its impact, the combat report of this engagement recorded only a probable *Abschuss*. The following day, the Gruppe learned after investigation that a Halifax (author's note: L9582 of 35 Squadron, six of crew PoW) had crashed near Lentförden, south of Neumünster and that the 3. Flak Division had put in a claim for it. Since the Halifax's crew had been taken prisoner, the Gruppe requested their interrogation reports from the Luftwaffe's Prisoner Transit Camp in Oberursel, to attach to the combat report as witness statements. It was absolutely clear from what the crew of the Halifax had said that its crash was attributable to the attacks by Lt. Meister's night fighter and that accordingly the *Abschuss* was unconditionally his". Lt. Meister continues with his Combat Report: "A few minutes after the attacks on the Halifax, at 22.24 hrs. I was once again vectored on to a contact, coming towards me from slightly above. With a right turn I got behind the hostile aircraft. Because at first I took the target I'd picked up for a Bf110, I approached to within about 30 m, in spite of the still very strong Flak. When the bogey suddenly turned steeply to starboard, I saw the roundels clearly and recognised it as a Whitley. I turned with it and was able to get in a lengthy, accurate burst at the same time". Again, the Gruppenkommandeur Hptm. Ehle added in his *Stellungnahme*: "The Gruppe only reported this attack on the Whitley as a 'Feindberührung' (contact with the enemy). Next day the Gruppe learned from its enquiries that a Whitley had made an emergency landing at 23.14 hrs. at Moorstrich (south of Freiburg at the mouth of the Elbe). Marine Flak-Abteilung 294 had already put in a claim for it. The wreck of the Whitley (Z6575 of 58 Squadron, author's note) was recovered by Stade aerodrome and minutely examined after its arrival on the base. Numerous machine gun and 2 cm cannon hits were identified in the tail turret, fuselage and wings that could only have come from the fire of a night fighter. Since prisoners had been taken as well, the Whitley crew's interrogation report was requested from Oberursel and used as a witness statement for the combat report. This definitely established that the Whitley's forced landing had been brought about by Lt. Meister's attack and should be accredited to him alone".

Oblt. Rudolf Schoenert: 10	5./NJG2	Whitley	Georgsheil, near Aurich (Luchs): 3.600 m.	20.52	77 Sqn Whitley Z9299
Lt. Ludwig Meister: 1	5./NJG1	Halifax	Lentförden, 5 km S. Bad Bramstedt (Hummel A): 4.000 m.	22.21	35 Sqn Halifax L9582.
<i>Note: coned by searchlight batteries of 1. Mar. Flak Rgt. and claimed by Marine Flak of 1. Mar. Flak Rgt. ('Halifax near Lentförden 22.24 hrs'), also claimed by Luftwaffe Flak of 1./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 267 ('Halifax near Lentförden 22.15 hrs, in co-operation with Nachtjagd'), Flak claims confirmed by OKL on 29.4.1943, confirmation date claim Lt. Meister unknown</i>					
Lt. Ludwig Meister: 2	5./NJG1	Whitley	near Moorstrich, 30 km NW Stade (Hummel A): 5.000 m.	22.25	58 Sqn Whitley Z6575.
<i>Note: coned by 8. (Scheinw.)/M. Flak Abt. 294 ('Whitley V near Moorstrich 23.14 hrs'), also claimed by Marine Flak of 1./M. Flak Abt. 294 ('Whitley V near Moorstrich 23.14 hrs') and by Luftwaffe Flak of Lu.K. 3 ('Whitley V near Moorstrich 23.00 hrs'), Flak claims confirmed by OKL on 27.6.44, confirmation date claim Lt. Meister unknown</i>					
Ofw. Paul Gildner: 22	5./NJG2	Wellington	Lauwerssea, W. Zoutkamp (Schlei)	23.05	75 Sqn Wellington Z1099

Sometime in the winter of 1941-42, aircrew of 9./NJG1 are preparing for a practice sortie in daylight at snow-covered Twente airfield. The aircraft in the photo, Bf110 D-3 G9+CT Wrk.Nr. 4228, was lost in an air combat on 23-24 July 1942, with the loss of Uffz's Worch and Boenisch (Coll. Dr. Dieter Schmidt-Barbo).



Venlo airfield, late 1941, from left: Hptm. Werner Streib (*Kommandeur* I./NJG1); Ofw. Steckemetz (*Bordfunke*r to Hptm. Thimmig); Hptm. Wolfgang Thimmig, *Staffelkapitän* of 2./NJG1. Streib achieved his 22nd and 23rd confirmed victories on 27-28 December 1941 (Coll. Max Thimmig).

7-8 December 1941

During the course of the night, Bomber Command dispatched 251 sorties. Five failed to return. The main effort for the night was directed to Aachen, which was attacked by 130 aircraft between 04.24 and 06.00 hrs (CET). Two Aachen raiders were lost. *Nachtjagd* operations were rendered almost impossible due to the prevailing atrocious weather conditions (10/10th cloud with a lower ceiling of 1000-2000 metres, rain, snow and icing). Crews of NJG1 and NJG2 flew an estimated five patrols over the Low Countries. Fw. Zech and his *Bordfunke*r Ogefr. Braun of 1./NJG1 were the only *Nachtjagd* crew to score a success, shooting down a 144 Squadron Hampden at Oteppe-Marneffe.

Fw. Hans Zech: 1	1./NJG1	Hampden	1200 m. N. Oteppe, 10 km NE Huy	05.15	144 Sqn Hampden AD791
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A force of 23 Blenheims was detailed to bomb Oostende between 00.50 and 02.50 hrs (CET). One was lost, the victim of Flak: -82 Sqn Blenheim V5876: hit by 3./I. Flak Abt. 993 and 11. & 12./Flak Rgt. 4, crashing 2 km SE of Oostende at 01.39 hrs.

15-16 December 1941

25 aircraft attacked Oostende between 19.35 and 21.18 hrs (CET). Half a dozen *Nachtjäger* were active against the raid, including a patrol that was flown in box *Hamster* from 19.00 hrs, without achieving *Feindberührung*. Flak in the target area destroyed one aircraft: -50 Sqn Hampden AE380: hit by 11. & 12./III./Flak Rgt. 4, crashed in sea off Oostende at 20.39 hrs.

27-28 December 1941

132 bombers attacked Düsseldorf between 19.50 and 22.30 hrs (CET), for the loss of five Whitleys and two Wellingtons. The destruction of one Whitley was credited to the 4. Flak Division:

-58 Sqn Whitley Z9210: coned by 11.-13./III./Flak Rgt. 26 and 1. & 2./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 250, hit by 1.-3./Res. Flak Abt. 447 and 2./schw. Flak Abt. 401, crashed Repelerstraße in Moers, time unknown.

At least 21 night fighter patrols (of I. and III./NJG1, II. and III./NJG2 and II./NJG3) were sent up over the Netherlands, Western and NW Germany in reaction to the Düsseldorf raid. Returning bomber crews reported 12 combats. *Nachtjäger* of NJG1 and NJG2 destroyed six Main Force bombers, including three Whitleys from 77 Squadron. Three out of five crews of I./NJG1 that were scrambled

from Venlo to combat the Düsseldorf raid (Hptm. Streib/Fw. Ruscher, Oblt. Knacke/Lt. Konarske and Oblt. Frank/Ogefr. Urban) were credited with four victories. Three of the Gruppe's victories were achieved in *Raum Drossel*, Oblt. Knacke bagging the Gruppe's fourth Abschuss for the night in *Helle Nachtjagd* fashion in *Raum 8 C*, under control of Oblt. Knickmeier. It was Knickmeier's 23rd and final *Helle Nachtjagd Abschussbeteiligung*. At 21.05 hrs, Knacke got locked in combat with a second adversary, but received several hits in one of his engines which forced him to belly in at Venlo.

Oblt. Simon and his BS Uffz. Riemer of the *Einsatzstaffel E./NJG2* took off from Gilze-Rijen in Ju88 C6 R4+GR at 19.05 hrs for a *Dunkelnachtjagd* sortie in box *Hamster*, based at Haamstede. Just over an hour later, they engaged a Wellington, as recorded in the *Leistungsbuch* of Uffz. Riemer: "Target seen at 400 metres. Attacked with a long burst into the port wing and engine. Went down on fire". The crew landed at Gilze again at 21.58 hrs. Their adversary has been identified as a 150 Squadron Wellington that was coned by searchlights and then attacked by a Ju88, causing severe damage to the port engine, tailplane and rear fuselage and killing the second pilot. At 22.00 hrs, the *Wimpey* belly-landed at West Raynham.

Ofw. Paul Gildner: 23	5./NJG2	Whitley	Sint Jacobiparochie, NW Leeuwarden (Tiger)	19.57	77 Sqn Whitley Z9306
Hptm. Werner Streib: 22	Stab I./NJG1	Wellington	near Wegberg, SW Mönchengladbach (Drossel)	20.15	101 Sqn Wellington Z1115.
<i>Note: coned by 11. & 12./III./Flak Rgt. 611 ('enemy aircraft Wegberg')</i>					
Oblt. Erich Simon: 1	E./NJG2	Wellington	Raum Hamster (Haamstede area)	20.16	150 Sqn Wellington X9816 (damaged)
Oblt. Reinhold Knacke: 12	2./NJG1	Wellington	street Someren-Heeze, SW Helmond (8 C)	20.28	57 Sqn Wellington Z1097.
<i>Note: coned for 5 mins by searchlight nr. 911 of III./Flak Rgt. 12</i>					
Hptm. Werner Streib: 23	Stab I./NJG1	Whitley	Viersen (Drossel)	20.45	77 Sqn Whitley Z9226.
<i>Note: coned by 1.-3./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 250, 12. & 13./III./Flak Rgt. 26 and 11./III./Flak Rgt. 611 ('Whitley V Viersen')</i>					
Oblt. Hans-Dieter Frank: 6	Stab I./NJG1	Whitley	3 km SE Kempen (Drossel)	21.25	77 Sqn Whitley Z6956.
<i>Note: coned by 1.-3./Flakscheinw. Abt. 250 and 12./III./Flak Rgt. 26 ('Whitley V Kempen')</i>					
Oblt. Egmont Prinz zur Lippe-Weissenfeld: 15	5./NJG2	Whitley V	sea 1½ km SW Petten (Salzhering): 2.300 m.	21.46	58 Sqn Whitley Z6841

Ofw. Paul Gildner (centre) of 5./NJG2 posing with the wreckage of 77 Squadron Whitley Z9306, which he shot down on the evening of 27 December 1941 at Zwarte Haan, NW of Leeuwarden (Coll. Lieuwe Boonstra).



The tail section of 77 Squadron Whitley Z9306 at Zwarte Haan, NW of Leeuwarden, photographed the day after it was shot down by Paul Gildner. (Coll. Lieuwe Boonstra).

28-29 December 1941

86 Wellingtons bombed Wilhelmshaven between 20.30 and 22.45 hrs (CET, one lost), 81 Hampdens bombed Hüls between 21.09 and 22.20 hrs (CET, four lost), and 40 aircraft attacked Emden between 19.35 and 21.13 hrs (CET, two lost). In reaction, approximately 30-35 ground-controlled Nachtjäger of I. and III./NJG1, II. and III./NJG2 and I./NJG3 patrolled over the Low Countries, which made at least eight *Feindberührungen*. These resulted in the shooting down of three bombers from the Hüls and Emden raids. A fourth claim for a Hampden shot down, which was submitted by Fw. Säwert of 3./NJG3 was subsequently rejected by the RLM.

Ofw. Siegfried Ney: 9	5./NJG2	Whitley	sea 10 km W. Texel (Salzhering)	21.04	51 Sqn Whitley Z9202
Oblt. Helmut Woltersdorf: 14	7./NJG1	Hampden	2 km W. Winterswijk (4 B)	22.42	408 Sqn Hampden P1165
Lt. Kurt Loos: 4	2./NJG1	Wellington	Doetinchem	23.10	144 Sqn Hampden AD804

Flak destroyed two Wellingtons from the Emden and Wilhelmshaven forces:

-405 Sqn Wellington W5561: hit by Flak of 1. & 5./M. Flak Abt. 236 and crashed in flames at Engerhufe, W. Aurich at 20.12 hrs.

-311 Sqn Wellington T2553: hit by Flak over Wilhelmshaven, port engine caught fire on return flight, propeller broke off and severed control links, crashed in sea 50 miles W. of Petten, time unknown.

Note: two survivors washed ashore near Petten after spending six days in their dinghy. The loss of T2553 can be tied to either of the following two confirmed victories that were credited to the II. Marine Flak Brigade at Wilhelmshaven: 'Flakgruko II. Marine Flak Brigade in Innenjade at 21.19 hrs', and 'heavy Flak battery III Einfahrt over Wilhelmshaven' (no time quoted). Both these claims were confirmed by the Marinestation der Nordsee.

The three Abschüsse on 28-29 December 1941 brought the total of Nachtjagd Abschüsse to approximately 415 victory claims at night in the west during 1941, or some 56% of all Bomber Command losses in 1941. This was more than nine times as many as in 1940, when 46 Nachtjagd Abschüsse were recorded. 20 of the Nachtjagd claims were either contested by, or shared with Flak. Luftwaffe and Marine Flak filed an estimated 246 night-time Abschüsse against RAF Bomber Command during 1941 almost two and a half times as many as in the period of March-December 1940. By the end of 1941, the Nachtjagd had a total strength of 302 fighter aircraft, 150 of which were combat ready.

REICHsverTEIDIGUNG NACHTJAGD ABSCHÜSSE AND FLAK ABSCHÜSSE BY NIGHT FILED WITH OKL/RLM FOR 1941

Month	Abschüsse			
	Nachtjagd	Nachtjagd, shared with or contested by Flak	Flak	Total Flak
January 1941	8	0	3	3
February 1941	16	0	6	6
March 1941	20	1	10	11
April 1941	39	0	29	29
May 1941	40	3	11	14
June 1941	64	3	18	21
July 1941	64	1	24	25
August 1941	65	1	31	32
September 1941	39	2	27	29
October 1941	26	4	32	36
November 1941	23	5	30	35
December 1941	11	0	5	5
1941 TOTAL	415	20	226	246

NOTES

These statistics show the totals of Abschüsse by night (Nachtjagd and Flak) as filed with the OKL/RLM for 1941. The figures are only for submitted Abschüsse. Following subsequent adjudication the individual Abschüsse that make up these totals would have been either officially anerkannt (credited), set aside for further investigation, or abgelehnt (denied).

The columns represent:

Nachtjagd:

Estimated number of Nachtjagd Abschüsse achieved at night. Note: excluding 3 daylight claims on 30 June 1941.

Nachtjagd, shared with or contested by Flak:

Estimated number of night-time Nachtjagd Abschüsse either shared with or contested by Flak (Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine). Note: these claims are also counted in the Nachtjagd Abschüsse totals.

Flak:

Estimated number of Flak Abschüsse achieved at night.

Total Flak:

Estimated total number of Flak Abschüsse achieved at night, being the sum of the Abschüsse shared with or contested by the Nachtjagd and the Abschüsse achieved solely by Flak.

(Main sources: BArch MFB 6/C 2025 - C 2027, C 2031 - C 2037, and C 2039 - C 2041, 35 mm. microfilms of Chef Abteilung für Ausbildung und Disziplin, of the Luftwaffen-Personalamt L.P.(A) 5 (V). BArch RL 3 III/1527 GL/Ch.d.St. Tätigkeits- und Erfahrungsbericht der Nachtjagd-Division, mit Tabellen Jagdeinsatz/Abschüsse, 1940-1944. BArch RL 8/90-93, Generalkommando XII. Fliegerkorps und I. Jagdkorps Abschüsse, Abschlussbeteiligungliste und Korpstagesbefehle, 1942-March 1944 (including Kriegsgeschichte des I. Jagdkorps, 14./15.9.1943 - 30.3.1944). BArch RL 19/33, 533-534, KTB Luftgaukommando VI. BArch RL 19/424-472, KTB Luftgaukommando XI.)

1942

The *Helle Nachtjagd* technique, which was perfected during 1940 and early 1941 had one great limitation: it was entirely dependent on the prevalent weather conditions. Searchlights simply could not penetrate thick layers of cloud, nor the industrial haze over the Ruhr and other industrial centres in the Reich. General Kammhuber realised that *Helle Nachtjagd* was not a satisfactory long-term solution and therefore soon concentrated all his energies on the development of an efficient Ground-Controlled Interception (GCI) technique, based on the use of ground and airborne radar.

The equipment necessary for this purpose were produced in the form of the long-range *Freya* radar; the precision *Würzburg Riese* ('Giant Würzburg') radar, with a range of 40 kms; the *Seeburg Tisch* (an accurate plotting table with a radius of 36 kms); and, finally, the *Lichtenstein* BC AI radar, which was given industrial priority No. 1 in July 1941.

With these cornerstones of GCI, Kammhuber built a completely radar-controlled air defence of the Reich, which much resembled the British GCI-system, and which took full advantage of the Bomber Command tactic to send out a force of bombers to the Reich singly and along a broad front, and not in concentrated streams. To counter the British raids, all approaches to Germany and its main industrial centres were divided into 96 *Dunkelnachtjagd Gebiete* (dark night fighting areas), which were officially named *Himmelbett Räume* ('four poster bed boxes') in 1943. These were circular and partly overlapping areas in which one (and later two or three) fighters orbited a central radio beacon. Once approaching bombers were located by the long-range *Freya* radar of the *Dunkelnachtjagd* station, its *Jägerleitoffizier* (JLO), or Fighter Control Officer, would vector one individual Nachtjagd crew towards an individual bomber with one of the two short-range *Würzburg* precision radars at his disposal, the bomber simultaneously being plotted on the *Seeburg* table by the second *Würzburg* of the station. Night fighters were restricted to activity within the area of their boxes.

An early Bf110 B-1 W.Nr. 922, coded G9+ZK, was in use at Venlo with 2./NJG1 during 1941 for liaison and postal duties, hence the postal horn painted on the nose of the aircraft (Coll. Max Thimmig).



Lt. Dieter Schmidt of 8./NJG1 comments on the introduction of radar in Nachtjagd, and the development of ground-controlled night fighting tactics in 1941-42:

“In the spring of 1942, the searchlights disappeared from our area and the new tactics took over. Our final officially listed illuminated Abschuss occurred on 13 April 1942; from 13 March 1941 to 13 March 1942, the total of illuminated night fighting successes were a mere 23 Abschüsse. While the fighter control post on the hill to the east of our airfield had the modest codeword ‘4 Berta’, the new control stations along the coast had pretty ones such as Hering (Herring), Salzhering (Salted Herring) and such like, to quote a couple which I remember.

Apart from radar, other equipment was necessary at the control posts for the ‘dark night fighting’ tactics. One in particular was the Seeburg Table, a large circular frosted glass screen about two metres in diameter and illuminated from below, showing a map covering the range of the Würzburg Riese on a scale of about 1:50,000. It was placed over a hole in the floor and from the floor below it female

Luftwaffe auxiliaries projected spots of light according to instructions passed to them from the Würzburg operators. The controller was thus able to follow the progress of the indicated targets, red for the enemy bomber and green for the fighter.

The pilot received precise instructions from his controller by radio, guiding him from the radio beacon at his holding area to his target: Direction, height, faster, slower, range to the enemy etc. Not of course in clear language but with appropriate codewords: tampen (direction), Kirchturm (own height), Kapelle (enemy’s height), Kurier (enemy), express (faster), halten (slower), Lisa-Lisa (2 x 10° left), Rolf-Rolf (2 x 10° right), Marie (distance), Victor (understood) etc. A chase had only a chance of success if the controller succeeded in putting us onto a head-on parallel approach, then after a suitably timed turn place us directly behind the enemy machine. On a dark night, even an object the size of a four-engined bomber can only be discerned as a dark shadow against the somewhat lighter sky at up to 400 metres, provided one is at a slightly lower level. In order not to lose the enemy again at the great speeds involved, his course would have to be matched as accurately as possible.

Major Edler von Graeve, Kommandeur of III./NJG1 revving up his Do215 B-5 G9+AD in the snow at Twente airfield, winter 1941/42. (Coll. Dr. Dietrich Schmidt-Barbo).

