

INTRODUCTION SEQUENCE.

On September 5th a huge force of 4-engined bombers took off on a clear night and set out for Germany to carry out the 50th attack on the twin towns of Mannheim Ludwigshafen, the second largest inland port in Europe with miles of large docks and widespread industrial installations, making machinery and electrical plants and producing vast quantities of chemicals. This is a vital cog in the Nazi war machine and lies high in the list of A/C/M Harris' list of towns scheduled for destruction by Bomber Command. This attack was covered by film cameras and you will see it later in the film, but first let's learn something about the target.

MAP OF EUROPE

Here is a map of Europe showing Germany in black and the position of Mannheim Ludwigshafen in Germany at the junction of the rivers Rhine and Neckar. Note the position of this town relative to Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne.

MAP OF MANNHEIM AREA + A.

Now let's take a closer look at the area on a map with North at the top of the screen and you will see that Mannheim and Ludwigshafen make up a compact built-up area intercepted by a number of important and distinctive waterways, connecting with the rivers Rhine and Neckar. Note the important Luitpoldhafen in the Ludwigshafen port area; the Mannheim docks on the east bank of the Rhine to the North of the town and this important bridge across the Rhine linking Mannheim and Ludwigshafen. Remember particularly the arc shape of this area at the East end of the bridge just South of the docks with the main Post Office right in the centre.

B

And here, marked by a black line, is the path of the aircraft which is carrying the film cameras. It flew over the target on a heading of 070.

MAP OF WATERWAYS

Now let's look at the distinctive waterways which stand out very clearly and are easily discernible at night. Remember how the town lies in relation to these.

INDUSTRIAL TARGETS

Mannheim Ludwigshafen contains three principle industrial areas and in these areas are many plants of vital importance to the German war machine. The Mannheim docks at the Northern extremity of the town with 12½ miles of loading quays, the Ludwigshafen goods yards which can handle more than 2,000 trucks every 24 hours; the Heinrich Lanz engineering plant which makes tank components and artillery tractors and covers an area of 112 acres; the large gasworks which not only supply this town but seven others as well in the surrounding districts, the famous Sulzer works which make diesel engines for warships and submarines, the large warehouses along the Luitpoldhafen in the Ludwigshafen port, the largest on the left bank of the Rhine; the Mannheim goods yards and main railway station which can handle up to 7,000 trucks every 24 hours and the oil storage installation with 92 storage tanks. Memorise the position of these targets in relation to the waterways for they are in the area covered by the film cameras as they pass over the target.

TRACK OF TARGETS

Now once again take a look at the path of the aircraft remembering that North is still at the top of the screen.

REPEAT OF WATERWAYS

And here once more are the important waterways, their lay-out will

MAP WITH 070° AT THE TOP OF THE SCREEN.

But remember the target will look like this for you will be travelling on a heading of 070° which will be at the top of the screen - the Rhine will lie like this, the Luitpoldhafen like this and the aircraft will travel in this direction.

RUN UP TO TARGET

Now we start the run-up - already Target Indicators dropped by the Pathfinder Force are cascading down to mark the target for the main force of bombers.

FIRST MAP

A huge explosion lights up the area around the South bank of the Luitpoldhafen at its junction with the Rhine. Now you can see that the Pathfinder Force are doing their work with deadly accuracy, as the main force of bombers begin to arrive and the attack starts to build up.

FLASHES

There are several kinds of flashes you will see during the run over the target. The most common are short sharp ones like this... and this... which are heavy bombs bursting on the target, and more sustained brighter ones like this.... and this... which are the photo flashes dropped by other aircraft for taking still photographs and the continuous bursting of sticks of incendiaries on the ground which can be seen glowing and fluctuating throughout the run over the target as they take a hold on buildings.

PARACHUTE FLARES

Watch the round parachute flares on the right of the screen and the Target Indicators cascading in the centre. You will see them disappear into the pall of smoke above three fires. You will be able to position these later on and so see that they are burning in that arc shape area just South of the docks, with the Post Office in the centre.

STATIC LINES.

Take no notice of the flickering white lines on the right of the screen. These are caused by a static discharge due to the intense cold experienced at the height the aircraft is flying.

2ND MAP.

Now fires are beginning to build up around the Mannheim goods yards and main Station: the Lanz engineering works and amongst the buildings around these works. Fires are starting in the Luitpoldhafen warehouses. Note too the three fires in the arc shape area near the spot where the Target indicators fall.

3RD MAP.

Take another look at this early stage of the attack where we stop the film once more during the split second that the scene is lit by the Photo flashes dropped by other aircraft.

4TH MAP.

Here you can clearly see smoke rising from fires in the built-up area on the West bank of the Rhine to the North of the bridge. Fires are burning around the bridge and the gasworks: in the Ludwigshafen goods yards and along the Luitpoldhafen.

EXPLOSION IN MANNHEIM GOODS YARDS - MAP 5.

and here is a big explosion near the Mannheim main station and goods yard.

DRIFTING PARACHUTE FLARE.

Watch the parachute flare on the left of the screen drifting across the target below the aircraft.

6TH MAP.

Now look at the flares blazing in the gas works and along the Rhine bank to the North of them, in the Mannheim goods yard and main station, the Luitpoldhafen warehouses and the Lanz engineering works.

PARACHUTE FLARE.

Watch that parachute flare still drifting over the target and you will see it die out.

FIRES.

Through the heavy clouds of smoke rising from the burning town three or four large fires are now taking a hold on the East bank of the Rhine, and stocks of incendiaries spread over the whole area.

OUT OF TARGET AREA.

We are now passing over the centre of Mannheim out towards the river Necker and you can still see explosions from block busters and huge fires raging above the large pall of smoke and dust.

CAMERA. NO. 2. INTRODUCTION.

Now lets take another look at the target from the point of view of a camera photographing back from the aircraft to think of the town like this with 020 at the bottom of the screen. This is how the Rhine will look - the Luitpoldhafen - and this is the direction the aircraft will be travelling.

RUN UP.

Now we start the same run up again - remember we are looking back from the aircraft this time.

7th MAP.

Here is the West bank of the Rhine coming in at the bottom of the picture bombs are bursting almost continually now as more and more bombers unload their load and the attack nears its climax.

8th MAP.

Flare in the lens of the camera from a photo flash has interfered with this glimpse of the target, but you can see clearly that fires are now raging all over the target area, especially around the Luitpoldhafen and its warehouses. The Sultzer engineering plant is well ablaze as are whole blocks of buildings in the district to the North of the bridge. Large fires are also burning in the Lanz engineering plant and the Mannheim goods yards, in fact there is no part of this German town, which has not felt the weight of the attack.

RUN OFF TARGET.

And now as we run out of the target area and set course for home, we leave behind the flaming battlefield of yet another victory for Bomber command in the great night offensive to cripple the Nazi war machine at its course.

Paramount

MANNHEIM FILM.

Night films taken by the R.A.F. Film Unit and shown publicly on the news-reels, show large masses of fires and flames but probably do not give the public the impression that they are capable of providing detailed information regarding the attack. However, it is possible to obtain a great deal of valuable information from these films when they are carefully analysed, and this made up film, based on the material taken during the attack on Mannheim on 5/6.9.43., is an example of the intelligence results that can be extracted.

Normally speaking, the night film shows only illumination—that is to say fires, flares, explosions and gun flashes. However, occasionally illumination is great enough to show a certain amount of ground detail. This is likely to happen particularly when a photo-flash explodes and the millions of candle-power released provides enough light to show landmarks below. Also rivers and other waterways show up clearly by night to aircrew, and sometimes conditions are good enough for these to show on the film; this is the case in this Mannheim film, in which the course of the River Rhine can be clearly seen as a dark winding shape between the burning sections of the cities.

The original film of the night attack has been carefully studied, and a map of the actual area on the same scale as the film has been "faded in" in certain parts, for example, where ground detail is shown by the light of an exploding photoflash. This means that the "faded in" map indicates almost precisely the view that would be obtained by the cameras if they had been operating in daylight and thus the position and areas of the fires on the ground below are accurately plotted.

ATTACK ON GNOME AND RHONE AEROWORKS, LIMOGES. (8.2.44.).

The short section of film illustrating this was taken from a Lancaster flying only a few hundred feet. The film shows a Marker bomb exploding in the middle of the target. Only a small force of Lancasters was employed on this operation, but they accurately placed their bombs on the target illuminated by the Marker. This type of attack is rather unusual for the heavy aircraft of Bomber Command, which normally operates in great strength on industrial targets in Germany itself. In this case the target was in France, 200 miles S.W. of Paris and since the factories presented a well defined target it was possible to launch a damaging night attack upon it by the employment of precision methods by a few aircraft. The Lancasters attacked in bright moonlight and through clear sky, and since there was no opposition from ground defences in the immediate neighbourhood of Limoges Bomber Command aircraft were able to launch their accurate attack without hindrance - conditions which are impossible in Germany itself. When attacks have to be launched on targets in occupied territory the R.A.F. employs only precision methods - no risks are taken of inflicting unnecessary damage on our friends.

It is requested that the Newsreels will underline the difference between these two types of attack and NOT use the shot of the bursting target indicators in such a way as to suggest that it was part of the Mannheim attack.