

### 23-24 June 1940

Bomber Command operations were mounted to a wide range of targets, in Bremen, the German Bight, the Ruhr and the Rhineland. One aircraft detailed to lay mines off Heligoland was lost.

-144 Sqn Hampden P4363: hit by Flak of M. Flak Abt. 282 heavy Flak battery Schillig and by floating Flak battery 'Arkona' (M. Flak Abt. 282) and crashed in sea near Mellum at 02.08-15 hrs. Note: officially credited by Marinestation der Nordsee as two separate victories (victories number 1 and 2) of II. Marine Flak Brigade.

### 26-27 June 1940

A Gardening 49 Squadron Hampden was shot down by Marine Flak, and from an attack on Langenhagen airfield near Hannover, two 50 Squadron Hampdens failed to return. One of these bombers was destroyed by the 8. Flak Division.

-49 Sqn Hampden P4305: hit by 4./M. Flak Abt. 224, crashed into the Kaiser Wilhelm canal at 01.39 hrs.

-50 Sqn Hampden L4078: hit by 3./Flak Regt. 501, crashed at Rethen (Leine), SSE of Hannover at 02.48 hrs.

The remains of 83 Squadron Hampden P1171 OL-P on the shore of the Schwentine Estuary after being shot down on 1-2 July 1940, all four crew members were killed. (Coll. Carsten Petersen).

### 27-28 June 1940

During a small-scale mine-laying operation, one aircraft was lost to Flak of the Kiel-based 1. Marine Flak Regiment and the 3. Flak Division, the Luftwaffe Flak claim being officially *anerkannt* by the OKL on 17 January 1941.

-61 Sqn Hampden L4112: coned by searchlights of the 1. M. Flak Rgt., hit by 3.-5./Res. Flak Abt. 161 and 2./Res. Flak Abt. 876 and Flak of the 1. M. Flak Rgt., crashed in flames near Gut Dobersdorf twixt Schönhorst and Dobersdorf at 02.07 hrs.

### 29-30 June 1940

83 aircraft were sent out to bomb various targets in Germany and the Netherlands. Three of their number failed to return, all falling foul of Flak:

-61 Sqn Hampden P4356: hit by 3./Res. Flak Abt. 612, crashed 5 km west of Spieka at 02.24 hrs.

-61 Sqn Hampden P4341: coned by 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 649 and hit by Flakgruppe Vlaardingen, crashed near Schipluiden, SSW of Delft ca. 04.00 hrs.

-77 Sqn Whitley P4948: hit by Flak battery Brüseberg (7. Flak Div.) and crashed at Bonn-Lengsdorf, time unknown.

### 1-2 July 1940

Two 'heavies' were lost from a raid on Kiel, both falling foul of Marine Flak in the target area:

-83 Sqn Hampden P1171: hit by light Flak of 6./M. Flak Abt. 271, crashed on shore of Schwentine Estuary near building nr. 97 at 01.37 hrs.

-58 Sqn Whitley N1461: hit by light Flak of 2., 3. & 6./-M. Flak Abt. 217 and by light Flak of Kriegsmarine vessels 'Prinz Eugen', 'Scharnhorst', 'Grille', 'U137', 'Erwin Wassner', 'Strahl' and 'Möwe', crashed in flames and exploded near the mental hospital in the Düsternbrooker Gehölz, Kiel at 01.58 hrs.





This page and opposite: Groundcrew posing with a Do17 Z-7 Kauz I of 5./NJG1, Fliegerhorst Düsseldorf, summer of 1940 (Coll. Piet Bouma)

#### 4-5 July 1940

A force of 73 aircraft was sent out to attack ports in Northern Germany and on mine-laying duties. In reaction, crews of NJG1 flew *Nahnachtjagd* in the Münster area and the Dutch-German border area, one crew reporting a *Feindberührung* at a height of 4,000 metres but losing his quarry in cloud. Fw. Schmid flew a sortie from Köln-Butzweilerhof in Do17 Z 2N+HH of 1./NJG1, but failed to achieve *Feindberührung*. According to entries in his *Flugbuch*, Fw. Schmid flew six sharp *Nahnachtjagd Einsätze* from Düsseldorf and Köln-Butzweilerhof in Dornier 2N+HH, which still bore the code of 1./ZG1. These were made on 28-29 and 29-30 June, and 4-5, 5-6 and 6-7 July (two sorties), all without making enemy contact. One bomber was lost on 4-5 July 1940:

-144 Sqn Hampden P4361: coned by two searchlights of 1. M. Flak Rgt., hit by light Flak of 2., 3., 4. & 6./M. Flak Abt. 271 and 6./M. Flak Abt. 271 and by Flak of Kriegsmarine vessels 'Scharnhorst', 'Prinz Eugen', 'Köln', 'Grille' and 'Frigga', crashed in flames on eastern shore of Vordere Russee near Kiel at 02.44 hrs.

#### 5-6 July 1940

51 aircraft were dispatched to bomb Kiel. There was no *Nachtjagd* activity on this night. One bomber was lost to Flak whilst attacking a target of opportunity.

-99 Sqn Wellington R3170: hit by Flak whilst bombing Schiphol airfield, setting port engine on fire, force-landed near Haarlem at 03.40 hrs.

#### 6-7 July 1940

Bomber Command dispatched 43 aircraft to attack German ports, airfields in Holland, and on mine-laying duties. There was no *Nachtjagd* reaction to any of these raids. From an attack by ten Whitleys against warships in Kiel harbour, one aircraft failed to return, victim of the Kiel-based 1. Marine Flak Regiment. A Wellington was shot down by Marine Flak and Flak of the 8. Flak Division during a raid on Bremen.

-37 Sqn Wellington R3236: hit by Flak of 1. M. Flak Abt. 222 (schw. Flakbatterie Seefeld), by Flak Battr. 30/XI and by the Jever airfield Flak defences, crashed into the 'Jagen 39' near Jever at either 02.06 hrs (as noted in Marine Flak reports) or 02.45 hrs (as noted in Luftwaffe Flak reports).

-102 Sqn Whitley N1523: hit by Flak of 1. M. Flak Rgt. over Kiel and force-landed twixt Gut Hohenhain and Sprengel at 03.20 hrs.

#### 7-8 July 1940

54 Bombers attacked a variety of targets in Germany and the Netherlands. There was no *Nachtjagd* reaction to these raids. One aircraft failed to return:

-61 Sqn Hampden P4390: hit by Flak and crashed on road Bad Bentheim - Nordhorn at 02.17 hrs.

#### 8-9 July 1940

64 aircraft were employed in raids on ports in Northern Germany, airfields in the Netherlands and in mine-laying. *Nachtjäger* reported one *Feindberührung* and one *Abschuss*, for *Nachtjagd*'s first official victory over the Reich. It was credited to Ofw. Hermann Förster of 5./NJG1, for destroying a 10 Squadron Whitley off Heligoland. A seasoned ace with five *Abschüsse* already to his credit, Förster's victory on 8-9 July was achieved purely by coincidence. In late June or early July, a *Schwarm* of 11.(N)/JG2, flying the Bf109 and under command of Oblt. Waldhelm, had been detached to Husum airfield in Schleswig-Holstein for night fighting duties over the German Bight. In early July, 11.(N)/JG2 was officially re-named 5./NJG1 and re-equipped with the Do17. (One primary source, the official *Abschuss* listing of III./NJG1, mentions Ofw. Förster as belonging to the Stab of III./NJG1 in July 1940). Towards 03.00 hrs on 9 July, Oblt. Waldhelm and his wingman Ofw. Förster were on a patrol over the German Bight, when Förster suddenly spotted a 'Handley Page' crossing his line of flight at very close quarters. He immediately gave it a burst of gunfire, before losing sight of his quarry in the darkness of the night only seconds later. After returning to Husum, Ofw. Förster was informed that he had shot down a Whitley near Heligoland. Officially being credited to Förster on 9 July 1940, this was the first victory achieved by NJG1. Probably in late July 1940, Hermann Förster joined 2./JG27, scoring another six daylight victories before he was killed in action on 14 December 1941 in North Africa.

One *Nachtjäger* was lost during the night's operations, as is recorded in the *Flugbuch* of BS/BM Uffz. Hagmeier of 5./NJG1: "Fw. Iburg, Uffz. Hagmeier, Do17 2N+CH, *Nachtjagd*, Düsseldorf 8.7. 21.41, 9.7. 01.30, 229 mins, 1145 kms, 5th operational sortie, baled out by parachute".

Ofw. Hermann Förster: 6      5./NJG1 or Stab III./NJG1      Whitley      sea between Hooze and Heligoland      02.50      10 Sqn Whitley N1496



## 11-12 July 1940

64 aircraft were sent out to attack a variety of targets in the Netherlands and Germany. There was no Nachtjagd activity on this night. Three bombers were lost, all to Flak:

-144 Sqn Hampden P4366: hit by Flak and crashed at Sevenum near Kessel at 01.50 hrs.

-58 Sqn Whitley N1424: hit by Flak of Deurne airfield and crashed in Diksmuidelaan at Berchem near Antwerpen at 02.55 hrs. *Note: mis-identified as 'Avro Anson'.*

-149 Sqn Wellington L7805: hit by Flak and crashed north of Papenburg, time unknown.

## 14-15 July 1940

80 Bomber Command aircraft attacked ten targets in Germany. Although Nachtjäger were employed in small numbers from midnight until dawn, they were unable to achieve *Feindberührung*. One Wellington was lost, victim of the Bremen-based 8. Flak Division:

-37 Sqn Wellington L7792: hit by 1./Res. Flak Abt. 182 and crashed near Beckedorf (Vegesack) at 02.03 hrs.

The creation of a true night air defence of the Third Reich was dramatically accelerated, when on 17 July 1940 Goering entrusted General Kammhuber with the setting up of a full-scale night fighting arm, giving him ample powers to achieve this aim. Within three months, Kammhuber's organisation was remodelled into the XII. Fliegerkorps, and by the end of 1940 the infant *Nachtjagd* had matured into three searchlight battalions and five night fighter Gruppen (I., II., III./NJG1, I./NJG2, and I./NJG3).

With the resources at his disposal, Kammhuber developed a system called *Helle Nachtjagd* ('illuminated night fighting'): radar-directed searchlights illuminating the target bombers, which were then intercepted and shot down by patrolling night fighters. The guiding principle of this technique was radar-guided close ground control (using the *Würzburg Riese*) of both the searchlights and fighters. As a result, 23 Bomber Command aircraft were destroyed in the 'Kammhuber Line', as the continuous belt of searchlights and radar positions between Schleswig-Holstein and Northern France were christened by the British bomber crews, between July and December 1940. During the same period, 90 further bombers were brought down by Flak; this figure does not include those RAF aircraft that were brought down by (light) Flak and machine gun fire during raids on German invasion targets in the Channel ports.

Throughout 1940 and early 1941, the individual Nachtjagd Gruppen led a nomadic life, constantly moving from one airfield to another, each time taking up battle stations in areas where Bomber Command raids were expected. The three Staffeln of I./NJG1, for example, between June 1940 and March 1941, operated from Düsseldorf, Gütersloh, Bönninghardt/Wesel, Amsterdam-Schiphol, Kassel-Rothwesten, Stade, Vechta, Köln-Butzweilerhof, Deelen/Arnhem, Berlin, Achmer, Gardelegen, Wittstock, Köln-Ostheim,

A flag of 4./NJG1, which was formed from 3./NJG1 on 1 September 1940. 3./NJG1, in turn, had been formed from 3./ZG1 on 5 July 1940 (Coll. Jörn Junker).



Acoustic aircraft detection aid called Ringtrichter-Richtung Horcher, or R.R.H., which was used in the first war years to detect British aircraft. These apparatus were replaced by the Würzburg radars from 1941 onwards (Coll. Horst Jeckel).

Volkel, Brandenburg-Briest, Oldenburg, and Eindhoven. On 18 March 1941, I./NJG1 finally settled down in Venlo airfield where the Gruppe was to operate in *Dunkelnachtjagd* and later *Himmelbett* (close ground-controlled) night fighting until the summer of 1943. But then, even after this date, individual Staffeln were regularly detached to other areas in Germany and the Occupied Territories. Other Nachtjagd units fared similarly, the Gruppen took up more or less permanent residence in 'home' bases in Germany and the Occupied Territories in the spring of 1941 from where they operated in the regional *Dunkelnachtjagd* and *Himmelbett* Nachtjagd areas for the next two years.

## 18-19 July 1940

68 aircraft were sent out to bomb six targets in Germany. The 8. Flak Division destroyed the only aircraft that failed to return during an attack on Bremen:

-115 Sqn Wellington P9227: hit by 1./Res. Flak Abt. 606 and crashed at Klein-Henstedt near Delmenhorst at 01.09 hrs.

The *Nahnachtjagd* failed to achieve enemy contact on this night. The *Lagebericht* (Situation Report) of the *Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe Führungsstab Ic* (Supreme Commander of the Luftwaffe, Air Staff Intelligence Officer) mentions for the first time activity of the *Fernnachtjagd*, or long-range German night intruder over Britain. A *Fernnachtjäger* operating off the British east coast reported enemy contact with a Wellington, which fired off two red flares following the fighter attack. This is the earliest documented *Fernnachtjagd* sortie in WWII.

Apart from organising an effective short-range defensive Nachtjagd, General Kammhuber also fully appreciated the value and effectiveness *Fernnachtjagd* over Britain, and set about developing the strength of an intruder force to the maximum extent. After the war, he declared:

"The purpose of long range night fighting is to hit the enemy where he is most vulnerable, i.e. on the ground, in his dispersals, when lined up for the take off, at the take off, when coming in for landing and when taxiing. Vigorous and correctly launched long range night fighter operations are, in my view, the most effective tactics of any kind of night fighting, especially if they are combined with continuous attacks on the ground organisation by bomber units. If one wants to get rid of a swarm of wasps, it is better to destroy the hive together with the wasps instead of trying to follow the individual wasps to kill them. It has, therefore, right from the beginning, been my intention to lay the strongest stress on long range night fighting".

For operational purposes, the intruder patrol areas in Eastern England were divided into three separate *Räume*: *Raum A* (Middlesborough-Darlington-Leeds-Hull), *Raum B* (Hull-Leeds-Sheffield-Nottingham-Boston), and *Raum C* (Boston-Nottingham-Bedford-Felixstowe). In late June 1941, a fourth patrol area was added, *Raum F*, or the Leicester-Woburn-Reading-Salisbury-Trowbridge-Gloucester-Leicester area.

Due to various factors, the strength of the *Fernnachtjagd* was never raised beyond the point of one single Gruppe, II./NJG1, which was re-named I./NJG2 on 3 September 1940. 4./NJG1 (later 1./NJG2) operated the Ju88 C-1, 5./NJG1 (later 2./NJG2) nine Do17 Z-7s and Z-10s, whilst 6./NJG1 (later 3./NJG2) flew the Ju88 C-2. The *Fernnachtjäger* initially operated from Schiphol, transferring to Gilze-Rijen on 8 September 1940. According to a very early ULTRA message, Luftflotte 2 took the decision on 20 August 1940 that the Ju88 intruders would carry bombs in addition to their machine gun and cannon armament, and therefore required that new Ju88s were equipped with bomb-dropping apparatus on delivery to the *Fernnachtjagd* Gruppe. Despite its meagre strength, never exceeding 22 aircraft and despite severe operational losses -ten aircraft on operations and five in non-operational crashes during 1940- the *Fernnachtjagd* made a promising start.

### 19-20 July 1940

Bomber Command flew 89 sorties to targets in Germany, the Netherlands and in mine-laying. Three aircraft failed to return, two being destroyed by heavy Flak:

-44 Sqn Hampden L4087: hit by 4./Res. Flak Abt. 615 and crashed into the sea off Skagen at 00.50 hrs.

-9 Sqn Wellington L7795: coned by searchlights and hit by Flak of 1. M. Flak Rgt., crashed in Eckernförder Bucht, N. of Boknis Eck at 01.05 hrs.

Both *Nahnachtjäger* and *Fernnachtjäger* were active in small numbers. Fw. Herbert Schmid of 1./NJG1 noted in his *Flugbuch*: "2493rd flight. Schmid + 2, Do17 Z 2N FH, Nachtjagd, Schiphol 19.7. 22.30, Schiphol 20.7. 01.45, 195 (mins), 975 (kms), 7th Einsatz. Feindberühr(ung) E(ngland)." (Herbert Schmid was a veteran of the Spanish civil war, who had flown 168 bomber sorties in the Legion Condor in 1937. In the Nachtjagd, he completed a total of 86 sorties in NJG1, 2 and 3, logging five *Feindberührungen* and two Luftkämpfe. In the rank of Oblt., Schmid defected to Britain on 9 May 1943).

Oblt. Streib, a former St.Kpt. of 2./ZG1 and victor over a Blenheim on 10 May 1940, who was appointed *Kapitän* of 2./NJG1 on 22 June 1940, scored the first Abschuss of I./NJG1. This also marked the first nighttime victory achieved by the Bf110. After take off from Borkenberge airfield, in the prevailing moonlight, Streib spotted a 51 Squadron Whitley that was engaged in a sortie to Gelsenkirchen, and shot the aircraft down without the aid of searchlights. His adversary crashed in flames at Saerbeck on the Dortmund-Ems Canal. Streib was destined to survive the war with 64 Abschüsse to his credit, all but one achieved at night.

Oblt. Werner Streib: 2	2./NJG1	Whitley	Saerbeck, near Ibbenbüren	02.15	51 Sqn Whitley P5007
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### 20-21 July 1940

The Situation Report of the Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe Führungsstab Ic mentions 'strong Nachtjagd activity' in reaction to 95 Bomber Command aircraft attacking six targets in Germany, airfields in the Netherlands, and in mine-laying. I./NJG1, flying from Borkenberge airfield and co-operating with Flak searchlights, destroyed both bombers that failed to return from various raids on targets in the Netherlands and Germany. 28 year-old Oblt. Ehle claimed a 37 Squadron Wellington that was engaged on a raid to Gelsenkirchen, his quarry plunging down in flames at Hansell near Münster. It was his first nighttime victory; whilst serving as St.Kpt. of 3./ZG1, he had been credited with two Polish PZL fighter aircraft destroyed, on 6 and 7 September 1939 respectively, and a Spitfire shot down on 1 June 1940. The Gruppen Adjutant Oblt. Wandam, a former Zerstörer pilot with 1./ZG1, sent down a 75 Squadron Wellington (that was detailed to bomb Horst) in flames at Weseke.

**Bf110 G9+AL flown by the Staffelkapitän of 3./NJG1 Oblt. Walter Ehle during the summer of 1940. Note the four Abschuss markings on the tail unit, three of which are daylight claims that Ehle achieved as St.Kpt. of 3./ZG1, the fourth depicting his first nighttime Abschuss on 20-21 July 1940. The photo was taken before early October 1940, when Ehle's Staffel was incorporated into II./NJG1 and Ehle was appointed Gruppenkommandeur (Coll. René Brachten).**



**The wreckage of Hampden P4344, one of three aircraft lost by 61 Squadron over Wilhelmshaven to Flak on 20-21 July 1940. The crew were all taken prisoner (Coll. ww2images.com).**

Oblt. Walter Ehle: 4	3./NJG1	Wellington	Hansell, 12 km NW Münster	01.38	37 Sqn Wellington R3210
<i>Note: coned for 3 mins by searchlights G and F of the 11th battery and searchlights E and F of the 13th battery of III./Flak Rgt. 147</i>					
Oblt. Siegfried Wandam: 1	Stab I./NJG1	Wellington	Weseke, 7 km NW Borken	02.33	75 Sqn Wellington R3165.
<i>Note: coned for 7 mins by searchlights F of the 13th battery and E of the 12th battery of III./Flak Rgt. 12</i>					

Three out of four 61 Squadron Hampdens attacking the battleships Admiral Scheer and Tirpitz in Wilhelmshaven harbour were shot down by Flak:

-61 Sqn Hampden P4358: hit by Flak of Ugruko Stadt (II. Marine Flak Brigade), Flakbatterie Horumersiel (M. Flak Abt. 282) and the Ugruko Schleusen (II. Marine Flak Brigade), force-landed on mud-flats at Rüsterei near Wilhelmshaven at 01.14 hrs.

-61 Sqn Hampden P4344: hit by Flak of II. Marine Flak Brigade, and by Luftwaffe Flak of Flak Btr. 30/XI and 2 cm light Flak of the Jever airfield defences, force-landed on dummy airfield Irmenhof near Jever at 01.57 hrs.

-61 Sqn Hampden P4343: hit by Flak of Ugruko Westwerft (II. Marine Flak Brigade) and crashed into the Grosser Hafen of Wilhelmshaven near the Kaiser Wilhelm bridge at 02.16 hrs.

### 21-22 July 1940

Only one of a total of 107 bombing sorties was lost from a wide range of operations to targets in Germany, the Netherlands and France. Oblt. Streib engaged a searchlight-held Whitley of 78 Squadron, one of eight Whitleys detailed to bomb the marshalling yards at Hamm and Soest, to the north of Münster and shot it down in flames near Sprakel-Gimbte.

Oblt. Werner Streib: 3	2./NJG1	Whitley	Gimbte, 10 km N. Münster	01.22	78 Sqn Whitley N1487.
<i>Note: coned for 1 min. by searchlight A of the 11th battery of III./Flak Rgt. 14</i>					

### 22-23 July 1940

*Nahnachtjäger* employed over Western Germany in reaction to 68 Bomber Command aircraft attacking a wide range of targets failed to achieve enemy contact due to adverse weather conditions. A Whitley engaged in a sortie to bomb Paderborn was shot down by Flak:

-58 Sqn Whitley N1472: hit by Flak and crashed at Kreuzkrug near Oesterholz ca. 02.00 hrs.

## 23-24 July 1940

Four Ju88 C-1s of 4./NJG1 were dispatched on *Fernnachtjagd* duties. Fw. Wiese reported a Wellington shot down after three attacks, his opponent crashing to the west of Texel, and Fw. Schramm also claimed a Wellington shot down over the North Sea; both claimants noted in their *Abschussmeldungen* that their quarry were seen to 'crash down'. *Fernnachtjagd*'s first two Abschüsse were followed by two claims during August (both unidentified), two in September (again, both cannot be confirmed by RAF records), and five in October. The intruder crews claimed three Abschüsse in November, and four more during December. Of these 18 Abschüsse achieved during 1940, just six can be traced in RAF records. The Royal Air Force reported three of these aircraft as total losses.

Fw. Otto Wiese: 1	4./NJG1	Wellington	sea 200 km W. Texel	22.30	unidentified
Fw. Gustav Schramm: 1	4./NJG1	Wellington	sea 80 km E. Great Yarmouth	23.55	unidentified



On the night of 23-24 July 1940, two Ju88 C-1 crews of 4./NJG1 scored the first two *Fernnachtjagd* Abschüsse in WWII. Depicted here are two shots of Ju88 C-2 R4+CL of 3./NJG2 getting its guns aligned and revving up its port engine. Both photos were taken at Gilze-Rijen in 1941 (Coll. NIMH).

Left: Fw. Otto Wiese of 4./NJG1 opened the *Fernnachtjagd* score on 23-24 July 1940. He was killed in action almost one year later (Coll. Horst Jeckel).

