

Lt. Franz Brinkhaus: 1	4./NJG1	Wellington	Jackerath, 35 km NW Köln (Gemse): 4.000 m.	00.50	109 Sqn Wellington Z1113
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 4./Res. Flak Abt. 512 and 3./Res. Flak Abt. 408 ('Wellington near Jackerath 01.23 hrs'), victory credited to Lt. Brinkhaus</i>					
Hptm. Werner Streib: 26	Stab I./NJG1	Whitley	Smakt, 6 km NNE Venray (prob. 5 B)	00.56	9 Sqn Wellington BJ674
<i>Note: coned by 12./III./Flak Rgt. 26, also claimed by Flak of 1.-4./schw. Flak Abt. 401 ('Wellington Maashees/Holland')</i>					
Oblt. Reinhold Knacke: 18	1./NJG1	Wellington	10 km E. Weert (prob. 5 C): 5.400 m.	01.00	26 OTU Wellington DV707
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 1., 3. & 4./Res. Flak Abt. 157 ('Whitley Weert 4.000 m. 00.58-59 hrs')</i>					
Hptm. Erich Simon: 2	E./NJG2	Wellington	sea 30 km W. Haamstede (32324)	01.14	23 OTU Wellington N2851, 101 Sqn Wellington Z1612, or 158 Sqn Wellington Z8577
Oblt. Heinrich Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein: 2	9./NJG2	Wellington	sea W. Zeeland? (Hamster)	01.16	23 OTU Wellington N2851, 101 Sqn Wellington Z1612 or 158 Sqn Wellington Z8577
Oblt. Dr. Horst Patuschka: 2	7./NJG2	Wellington	sea W. Zeeland?	01.17	23 OTU Wellington N2851, 101 Sqn Wellington Z1612, or 158 Sqn Wellington Z8577
<i>Note: probably also claimed by Flak of 2./Res. Flak Abt. 345 and 2.-4./Res. Flak Abt. 252 ('unknown enemy aircraft 14 km N. Ostende 500-200 m. 01.19 hrs')</i>					
Ofw. Heinz Strüning: 14	7./NJG2	Manchester	-	01.30	prob. 49 CF Manchester L7429
Oblt. Heinrich Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein: 3	9./NJG2	Manchester	sea (Hamster)	01.36	prob. 156 Sqn Wellington X3598
Oblt. Rolf Bokemeyer: 2	5./NJG1	Wellington	near Kalenberg, 20 km W. Bonn (Kolibri 'E'): 2.000 m.	01.43	22 OTU Wellington R1235
Lt. Franz Brinkhaus: 2	4./NJG1	Halifax	near Bergheim, 30 km WNW Köln (Gemse): 4.000 m	01.48	405 Sqn Halifax W7707
Oblt. Hermann Reese: 4	2./NJG1	Wellington	NW city edge of Süchteln (5 A): 3.500 m.	01.56	22 OTU Wellington R1714
<i>Note: coned by 3./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 250, also claimed by Flak of 1. & 3./Res. Flak Abt. 541 ('Wellington near Süchteln 01.55 hrs')</i>					
Oblt. Walter Barte: 3	4./NJG1	Wellington	Wijchmaal 30 km N. Hasselt (6 A): 3.400 m	01.57	115 Sqn Wellington Z1614
Oblt. Alois Lechner: 3	E./NJG2	Wellington	-	01.57	poss. 101 Sqn Wellington X3670 or 142 Sqn Wellington Z1209
Oblt. Reinhold Knacke: 19	1./NJG1	Halifax	3 km ESE Weert (prob. 5 C): 4.500 m.	02.04	1652 CU Halifax L9605
<i>Note: coned by 13./III./Flak Rgt. 611 and 2. & 3./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 250 ('4-mot enemy aircraft Moesdijk'), also claimed by Flak of 1. & 4./Res. Flak Abt. 133 and lei. Flaktrupp 2./I./Flak Rgt. 42 ('Halifax near Weert 02.07 hrs'), and by Flak of 1./Res. Flak Abt. 541 ('prob. Liberator near Moesdijk, SE Weert towards 02.10 hrs')</i>					
Hptm. Werner Streib: 27	Stab I./NJG1	Whitley	Maasisland near Alem, NNE 's Hertogenbosch (prob. 5 B)	02.05	26 OTU Wellington DV740
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 2./gem. Flak Abt. 155 ('Wellington 8,5 km SE Zaltbommel 3.500 m 02.02 hrs'), 1.-4./schw. Flak Abt. 471 and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 445 ('enemy aircraft Aarlom/Holland')</i>					
Oblt. Manfred Meurer: 2	9./NJG1	Hampden	Diepenveen, 3 km N. Deventer (4 C)	02.05	14 OTU Hampden P2116
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 3./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 403, 1./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 471 and 1. & 2./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 445 ('unknown type of enemy aircraft near Diepenveen 02.10 hrs')</i>					
Oblt. Wolfgang Thimmig: 8	2./NJG1	Halifax	3 km NW Maarheeze (Grossraum 5): 5.300 m.	02.26	10 Sqn Halifax W1042
<i>Note: coned by 11.-13./III./Flak Rgt. 611, also claimed by Flak of 1. & 3./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 404 and 2./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 151 ('Halifax near Maarheeze 02.26 hrs')</i>					
Ofw. Wilhelm Beier	E./NJG2	Wellington	30 km NW Oostende (Hamster)	02.07	poss. 101 Sqn Wellington X3670 or 142 Sqn Wellington Z1209
<i>Note: claim not listed in OKL/RLM E./NJG2 Confirmed Abschussübersicht</i>					
Oblt. Walter Barte: 4	4./NJG1	Manchester	Kinrooi, 20 km SW Roermond (6 A): 3.500 m.	02.14	106 Sqn Manchester L7301
<i>Note: aircraft on loan to 50 Squadron</i>					
Oblt. Alois Lechner: 4	E./NJG2	Wellington	-	02.23	poss. 101 Sqn Wellington X3670 or 142 Sqn Wellington Z1209
Ofw. Wilhelm Beier	E./NJG2	Wellington	40 km N. Oostende (Hamster)	02.25	poss. 101 Sqn Wellington X3670 or 142 Sqn Wellington Z1209
<i>Note: claim not listed in OKL/RLM E./NJG2 Confirmed Abschussübersicht</i>					
Oblt. Helmut Woltersdorf: 21	7./NJG1	Wellington	near Klarenbeek, 8 km SE Apeldoorn (4 B)	02.25	CGS Wellington N2894
<i>Note: coned by 11./III./Flak Rgt. 26 and 1./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 409, also claimed by Flak of 1.-3./Res. Flak Abt. 305 and 2./Res. Flak Abt. 646 ('Wellington on school at Klarenbeek 01.30 hrs')</i>					

Oblt. Reinhold Knacke: 20	1./NJG1	Wellington	3 km SW Middelbeers/Eindhoven (prob. 5 C): 3.500 m	02.30	26 OTU Wellington W5704
<i>Note: coned by 12./III./Flak Rgt. 26, also claimed by Flak of 3./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 401 ('Whitley V near Middelbeers towards 02.30 hrs'); Flak claim marked 'VNE'</i>					
Lt. Helmut Niklas: 1	6./NJG1	Wellington	Montigny-le-Tilleul, 5 km SW Charleroi (6 C): 2.000 m.	02.46	15 OTU Wellington R1791
Oblt. Helmut Woltersdorf: 22	7./NJG1	Wellington	near Vorden, 10 km SE Zutphen (4 B)	02.55	156 Sqn Wellington DV715
<i>Note: coned by 2./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 250, also claimed by Flak of 2. & 3./Res. Flak Abt. 181 ('unknown type of enemy 4-engined aircraft near Voorden, SE Deventer towards 03.30 hrs'); Flak claim marked 'VNE'</i>					
Lt. Helmut Niklas: 2	6./NJG1	Wellington	near Wamont, 4 km S. Landen (6 C): 3.000 m.	03.11	15 OTU Wellington W5586
Oblt. Alois Lechner: 5	E./NJG2	B-24	-	03.56	Köln raid, unidentified

1-2 June 1942 (Second 1000 Bomber Raid - Essen)

In the second raid carried out by the 'Thousand Force', 956 aircraft were dispatched to bomb Essen between 00.30 and 02.27 hrs. Another 48 Blenheims of 2 Group and Army Co-Operation Command were sent out to intrude over German airfields between 23.58 and 02.17 hrs, in an effort to disrupt the Nachtjagd activities. 33 Fighter Command aircraft were dispatched on the same duties. Due to a prevailing haze covering the target area, bombing was very scattered and the raid was considered a failure. 31 bombers and three intruder Blenheims were lost.

En route, the Essen raiders found shelter in a considerable layer of cloud, but the moon was two days past full and visibility was good (between 1,5 and 8 kms at operational altitude), which favoured the defending Nachtjäger. These flew an estimated 67 sorties in the *Dunkelnachtjagd* boxes in the Netherlands, Belgium, NW Germany, and Southern Denmark between 23.32 and 04.35 hrs. The night hunters achieved 20 confirmed victories (four bombers returned with fighter damage), whilst the Flak arm was credited with at least 13 confirmed victories.

When the outward-bound Essen force crossed the Dutch coast, a 114 Squadron Intruder Blenheim and three Main Force Wellingtons fell foul of Flak:

-114 Sqn Blenheim V6337: hit by Flak and crashed into the English Channel at 00.06 hrs.

-301 Sqn Wellington R1615: hit by 3./Res. Flak Abt. 541 and crashed near Mol-Postel at 00.50 hrs.

-26 OTU Wellington HX375: caught in the cross-fire of 1.-3./Res. Flak Abt. 157, Res. Flak Abt. 266, 2./lei. Res. Flak Abt. 875 and 3./lei. Flak Abt. 757, impacted in the Northern harbour area of Antwerpen at 01.15 hrs.

-460 Sqn Wellington Z1344: hit by 1., 2. & 5./Res. Flak Abt. 266, 12./Flak Rgt. 32, 1.-3./Res. Flak Abt. 157, 2./lei. Res. Flak Abt. 875 and 2./lei. Flak Abt. 757, crashed into the mouth of the River Scheldt off Ellewoutsdijk at 01.37 hrs.



Lt. Siegfried Elsässer flew this Ju88 C-6 in the Ergänzungsstaffel of NJG2 at Gilze-Rijen in the spring of 1943. The Einsatzstaffel of NJG2, which was re-named Ergänzungsstaffel of NJG2 in August 1942 (both abbreviated E./NJG2) achieved some 16 night Abschüsse between March and October 1942, including two by Hptm. Simon on the second 1,000 Bomber Raid of 1-2 June. (Coll. Stefan Elsässer)



A fine in-flight impression of II./NJG1 Bf110-E's, taken during the Gruppe's temporary detachment to Norway during Operation Donnerkeil in February 1942. In the foreground are Lt. Schnauffer and his Bordfunker Uffz. Rumpelhardt flying G9+LN ('Ludwig Nordpol') of the Gruppenstab. The crew achieved their first combat victory on 1-2 June 1942. (Coll. Fritz Rumpelhardt)

I./NJG1 based at Venlo airfield and patrolling the Räume in the direct flight path of the bomber stream shot down six Essen raiders. The Gruppe's claimants were: Hptm. Streib/Ofw. Ruscher, Oblt. Loos/Uffz. Gumm, Ogefr. Hubatsch/Ogefr. Östreicher (in Bf110 G9+GL), Oblt. Reese/Uffz. Heu, Fw. Pähler/Uffz. Lux and Oblt. Bender/Fw. Stolper. The latter crew, belonging to the 3. Staffel, claimed a seventh victory, of an unidentified aircraft shot down at 00.30 hrs. No claim location, however, is known and this Abschuss was probably later denied to the claimant. The *Staffelkapitän* of 9./NJG2 Oblt. Wittgenstein destroyed an outward-bound Halifax at 00.43 hrs in *Raum Hamster*. This claim has been tied up to the loss of 10 Squadron Halifax L9623, which a Dutch police post at Flushing reported to have crashed in flames near Cadzand at 00.46 hrs.

In Germany, ten aircraft fell foul of Flak, the first to the 7. Flak Division based at Köln and the remaining nine by Flak of the 4. Flak Division covering the Ruhr. One of the latter was shared with a Nachtjäger:

- 114 Sqn Blenheim R3620: hit by 2./Res. Flak Abt. 245 and 1./Res. Flak Abt. 270, crashed at Buschbell at 00.29 hrs.
- 61 Sqn Lancaster R5544: hit by 3./Res. Flak Abt. 133 and crashed near Düsseldorf-Eller at 01.30 hrs.
- 106 Sqn Lancaster R5844: hit by 3./Res. Flak Abt. 394 and impacted at Homberg at 02.07 hrs.
- 13 Sqn Blenheim Z6186: coned by 11./III./Flak Rgt. 26, hit by 3./Res. Flak Abt. 646, crashed S. of Rheinberg, time unknown.
- 97 Sqn Lancaster R5571: hit by 3./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 263 (Eisb.), 2./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 471 and 1. & 3./Res. Flak Abt. 445, crashed at Henrichenburg, time unknown.
- 405 Sqn Halifax W7713: hit by 2.-4./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 407 and 1./Res. Flak Abt. 181, crashed at Nierst, time unknown.
- 11 OTU Wellington DV767: hit by 1. & 3./Res. Flak Abt. 646, crashed at Im Grind, N. Rheinberg, time unknown.
- 102 Sqn Halifax R9529: hit by 1./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 233, crashed at Haus Schuir in Essen, time unknown.
- 12 OTU Wellington X3203: hit by 5./Res. Flak Abt. 394, 2./Res. Flak Abt. 394 (lei. Flaktrupp) and 14./2.Lsp. 106, crashed at Moers, time unknown.

Whilst the bombing attack was in full progress, at 01.04 hrs, Lt. Schnauffer and his *Bordfunker* Uffz. Rumpelhardt of Stab II./NJG1 took to the air from St. Trond in Bf110 E-2 G9+DC (W.Nr. 4516) for a *Dunkelnachtjagd* patrol in box 6 C. Incidentally, it was almost one year since they had teamed up as a night fighter crew, and seven months since they had joined II./NJG1. Some 40 minutes into their patrol, the fighter controller of *Raum 6 C*, Lt. Paul Kühnel, guided the team onto a homeward-bound Essen raider. After achieving visual contact, at a height of 3,500 metres, Schnauffer fired a burst of cannon fire into Halifax II W1064 MP-J of 76 Squadron, which was struggling home on three engines, his gunfire causing the tail section to be virtually exploding. At 01.55 hrs, the aircraft crashed at Bossut-Gottechain. It

was the first of Schnauffer's final all-time record of 121 nighttime Abschüsse, exactly 100 of which he achieved with his *Bordfunker* Fritz Rumpelhardt. Shortly after, ground control directed the crew to a second four-engined bomber, but this time the outcome was completely different, as Uffz. Rumpelhardt recalls: "On the 1st June 1942 I received the news that I had been made up to the rank of *Unteroffizier*. I had barely sewn my new shoulder boards on, when we received the order to get airborne for what was to be our 13th combat sortie. It was during the course of this sortie that we were to taste our first success in aerial combat. We took off at 01.04 to patrol in *Raum 6 C* (at Jodoigne, Belgium, author's note). Weather conditions were ideal. We experienced no difficulty raising the fighter controller who came over loud and clear on the frequency. All things considered, conditions were ideal for a satisfactory outcome. After forty minutes flying time our controller vectored us onto a target flying on an outward-bound heading at 3,500 metres altitude. We were guided in until we received the obligatory "targets have contact" which meant that the two *Seeburg* traces representing our fighter and the bomber had merged on the operator's table. Despite this, we had yet to make visual contact with the target.

After several course corrections in liaison with the ground station I thought that I had sighted a barely perceptible darker shadow above us on the starboard quarter against the horizon. I immediately directed Schnauffer towards it and after a few moments we clearly recognised the bulk of an enemy aircraft - a Halifax.

We eased out some 150 metres to the side. Now it was a question of calming the nerves since the bomber had shown no signs of having spotted us as it doggedly ploughed on homewards through the night skies. It was difficult to avoid the thoughts that ran through my mind at that instant; in the next few moments both our fates would be decided. Would it be him or us! Naturally enough our optimism swayed the balance. Up to now we had exchanged the bare minimum of words. I marvelled at Schnauffer's calm and composure. The only thing that counted at this moment was the imminent attack. The theory had been rehearsed and these very scenarios run through many hundreds of times in his mind. He would pull up the nose of the fighter, flip up the 'spoon' - the armament selection cover switch on the head of the control column enabling the pilot to co-ordinate flight manoeuvres and weapons firing - depress the gun-firing button with the aid of the 'spoon' and let the bomber fly through the burst of fire. In the last seconds of the manoeuvre the pilot would then throw the stick forward and to the side, peeling away in order to get clear of the tail gunner or ventral gunner's potential radius of fire. This was in fact the Achilles Heel of this tactic since under these conditions the night fighter made an ideal target for the tail-gunner's four machine guns. So much for the theory though.

A special moment for us; I reported to the fighter controller that we were making 'Pauke Pauke', the code-word for an attack and then all hell broke loose. Our first burst raked the bomber's wing, setting it ablaze, while a huge sheet of flame erupted on our second,



Above and below: The remains of 76 Squadron Halifax W1064, Schnauffer's first Abschuss, lying in a field at Bossut-Gottechain. (Coll. Horst Jeckel)



which was sufficient to decide the fate of this huge bird. At no time had we observed any defensive fire. We eased out to one side, clearly able to see the RAF roundels by the light of the tongues of flame and looked on as the crew took to their parachutes, happy enough that they were alive and heading into captivity.

Our joy at our first victory was boundless. A long and barely intelligible howl of pleasure resonated through the ether to the ground station where the celebrations were barely any less restrained. The success was as much theirs as it was ours. Suddenly the Halifax dropped one wing and plunged earthwards. The impact, 15 km south of Leuven, and the ensuing detonations could be seen for miles around.

In the meantime I had loaded new magazines in the heavy MG FF cannon and it wasn't long before we were being directed onto a new contact. We were forced to break off this hunt even as we made visual contact since the fighter in the neighbouring sector had been vectored onto the same target. We watched as he shot it down. Shortly before 03:00 it was our turn again.

With the throttle "against the stops" we slowly managed to reel the Tommy in. By the time "targets have contact" had been reported we found ourselves in the area of Gent (outside of Raum 6 C) and could barely make out the instructions of the ground controller. We nonetheless continued for a few more minutes on our westerly track. It was long enough to allow me again to be able to discern a slightly darker form ahead of us and off to the side. We were in luck; this was the second bomber to fly in front of our sights. In our excitement we couldn't immediately agree on the aircraft type. We were both sure that this was another four-engine machine and therefore belonged on the other side of the 'sewer'. The ritual resembled that of our first Abschuss although the outcome was not so clear cut. I have taken the following details directly from my diary: 'At around 390-400 kph the relatively high speed of the enemy aircraft rather surprised us. Schnauffer once again positioned himself some distance underneath the target. After a spell of observing our prey Schnauffer carried out his first attack aiming for the starboard wing. There were no visible results. After unleashing a second salvo a small flame could just about be discerned. The high speed of the Tommy meant that we couldn't press home the attack on the third firing pass. As a result we were getting in close and thought we could make out hits in the wing, all the more since we were flying through a plume of vaporised fuel streaming back out of his wing tank. With all barrels blazing we closed to within 20 metres. This audacity was to prove to be our undoing since heavy machine gun fire hammered against our fighter. Banking the Me sharply over, we broke off and peeled away. After levelling off, we were able to assess the effects of the defensive fire. The pilot had stopped a round in his left calf. Our port engine appeared to be on fire and had to be shut down. One of the rudders was inoperable, the control cables almost certainly having been shot through. Our landing light was on and couldn't be extinguished, leaving us lurching around like an illuminated target.'

This page and opposite: Nearing the Dutch coast during its return flight from Essen on 1-2 June 1942, 1652 CU Halifax R9372 was coned by searchlights, hit by Luftwaffe and Marine Flak and crashed into the dunes near Velsen. The crew of six all survived to be taken prisoner of war (Coll. Hans Nauta).



We were so preoccupied with our own straitened circumstances that we couldn't observe the effects of our last pass. We were in something of a quandary to say the least. The first thought was, bale out! This wasn't exactly advisable at 600 metres altitude, however. Fortunately we were able to re-start the engine that had been stopped and once again climb for altitude. We had now been airborne, however, for some considerable time and there was not much left in the tanks. We decided to head back for home. Given the distance we were from the controller in Raum 6 C establishing communication proved fruitless. Having managed to make contact with the field at St. Trond, I managed to take a QDM bearing with the trailing aerial. I had to fire off two recognition flares and one red distress signal before the runway lighting was finally switched on for us. The landing approach was a little tricky since with one rudder knocked out, turns could only be flown with the ailerons, in other words in an extremely steep bank. Following touch down it was as much as the pilot could do to keep the kite on the track. It suddenly veered off to the left and we were in the crash area, the field adjacent to the runway. Ignition off and stamp on the brakes until they were red hot! The crate finally came to a stand and suddenly there was unbelievable quiet and stillness all around us. We had certainly never been so happy to clamber down from the Me as now. As we had come in on finals I had radioed that we required medical assistance. We now immediately loaded the pilot into the ambulance and he was driven off to the sick bay. Our "Dora-Cäsar" had taken about 19 hits all told. I myself was the only part of the aeroplane that wasn't hit. In the end though our patience had paid off. We no longer had any need to fear comparison with the other successful crews".

Lt. Schnauffer was admitted to a hospital in Brussels; he returned to active service some four weeks later. Schnauffer's Gruppenkommandeur Hptm. Ehle and his Funker Ofw. Weng, flying a sortie in Raum 6 B in Bf110 G9+CC, intercepted a homeward-bound 16 OTU Wellington (which Ehle misidentified as a 'Blenheim Mark IV') to the NNE of Brussels. After their second attack, the Nachtjagd crew witnessed how three of the crew baled out of their flaming bomber, one crew member falling to earth with his parachute on fire.

Whilst the Essen force was re-crossing the Dutch coast, Flak destroyed six 'heavies':

-prob. 115 Sqn Wellington X3721: hit by M. Flak Abt. 813 and crashed off Hoek van Holland at 02.24 hrs.

-78 Sqn Halifax W1143: hit by 2./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 233 (4. Flak Div.) in target area, impacted 2 km SE of Hellevoetsluis at 02.26 hrs after taking hits from 1./Res. Flak Abt. 442.

Note: the sole survivor of the crew of W1143 declared to his German captors that his aircraft had been damaged by gunfire over Essen and was struggling home on three engines when it was mortally hit over Hellevoetsluis.. W1143 was on loan to 10 Squadron for the night.

-1652 CU Halifax R9372: lost power in one engine over target, unable to maintain height, coned by 2. & 3./Res. Scheinw. Abt. 168 (claimed as 'Halifax 1 km SW IJmuiden 02.42 hrs'), hit by Flak of 1./lei. Flak Abt. 764, I.-III. Zug 5./Res. Flak Abt. 242 and 8./M. Flak Abt. 808 Südost, crashed in dunes at Velsen at 02.42 hrs.

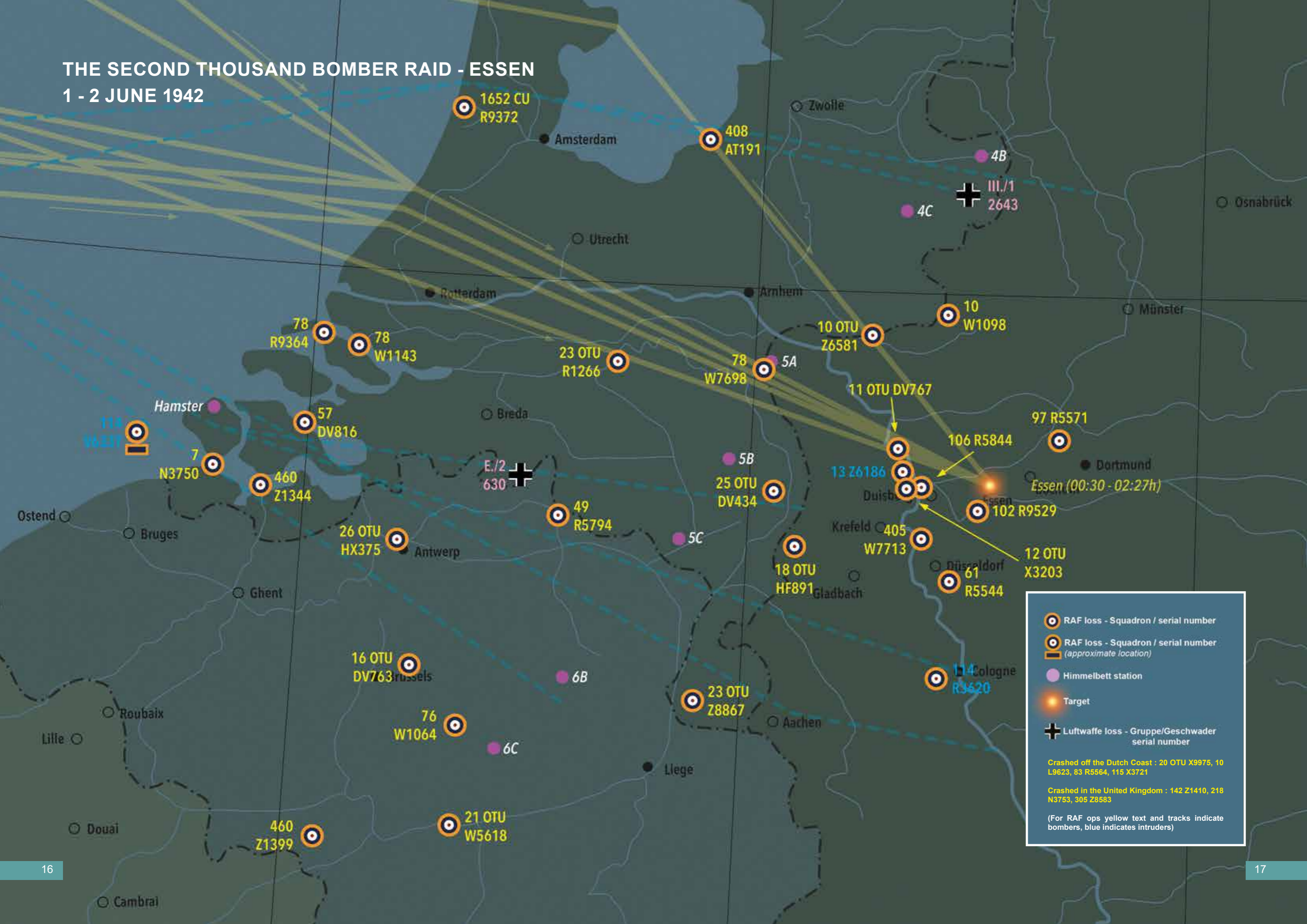
-57 Sqn Wellington DV816: hit by ship's Flak of the 32. Minesweeper Flotilla and crashed into the Westerschelde NW of Wemeldinge at 02.43 hrs.

-78 Sqn Halifax R9364: hit by 1. & 5./Res. Flak Abt. 442 and crashed at Stellendam at 02.50 hrs.

-prob. 20 OTU Wellington X9975: came under machine gun fire of the Stützpunkt Brunhilde and crashed into the sea 8 km west of Haamstede at 02.53 hrs.

THE SECOND THOUSAND BOMBER RAID - ESSEN

1 - 2 JUNE 1942





Above: The Nachtjagd now faced real danger when returning to their airfields in the form of intruding Hurricanes like this one of 1 Squadron. 22 Victory ace Oblt. Helmut Woltersdorf was killed on this night when shot down by a 3 Squadron Hurricane whilst landing at Twente airfield in Eastern Holland. (Coll. ww2images.com)

Oblt. Patuschka, flying one of 11 Ju88s of E. and III./NJG2 that were active from Gilze-Rijen between 23.36 and 05.08 hrs, scored a double 'Wellington' Abschuss near Vlissingen. His first victim has actually been identified as a 7 Squadron Stirling that came down in the Westerschelde, south of Vlissingen at 02.23 hrs.

In turn, Fighter Command Hurricane intruders of 1 Squadron claimed two aircraft shot down over Holland (including a Do217 near Eindhoven) and a Hurricane of 3 Squadron claimed one aircraft damaged over Twente. Returning Wellington crews lodged claims for three fighters shot down, all over the North Sea off the Dutch coast, on the bombers' return track. These were a Bf110 to the west of Goeree-Overflakkee at 02.00 hrs, a 'Fw190' north of Ouddorp at 02.05 hrs, and an unidentified single-engined fighter west of The Hague at 02.25 hrs. (It must be noted that no single-engined Nachtjäger are known to have been sent into action against the Essen raid). Main Force bombers also claimed four Nachtjäger as damaged. Set against these claims, the Nachtjagd lost four crews in air combat.

An intriguing Nachtjagd loss occurred near Turnhout, where a Ju88 C-4 of E./NJG2 impacted following air combat at 02.39 hrs, Ofw. Schade and his crew all perishing. Quite possibly, the Junkers went down in a 'friendly' fire incident, as Ogefr. Hubatsch of 3./NJG1 reported a 'Wellington' Abschuss near Turnhout within the same time frame, and no Main Force bomber loss occurred in this area.

Another of the German losses was Oblt. Helmut Woltersdorf, at that time one of the top-scoring Nachtjagd pilots with 22 confirmed victories to his credit. Operating from Twente aerodrome in Eastern Holland in *Raum 4 B* (JLO Oblt. Lenuweit), Woltersdorf shot down 10 Squadron Halifax W1098, on its homeward flight, where it crashed near Oeding. One of the bomber's gunners, however, riddled the German ace's Bf110 F-4 with an accurate burst of fire, injuring the *Bordfuncker* Ofw. Heino Pape. Oblt. Woltersdorf managed to nurse his Messerschmitt back to base, but received no permission to land due to Hurricane intruder activity in the circuit. When he finally got the green and lined up his aircraft for landing, Sgt. Peter Masters Gawith RNZAF, flying Hurricane IIc BD960 of 3 Squadron, got on his tail, and shot the Bf110 down; it crashed into a row of parked aircraft at 02.32 hrs. (The Hurricane pilot returned with a claim for an unidentified aircraft damaged over Twente airfield at 02.45 hrs). Both Woltersdorf and his *Funker* were killed instantly in the sea of flames which erupted at the site of impact.

Lt. Karl-Heinz Völkopf: 3	5./NJG2	Hampden	IJsselmeer, N. Harderwijk (<i>Hering</i>)	00.06	408 Sqn Hampden AT191
Oblt. Heinrich Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein: 4	9./NJG2	Halifax	- (<i>Hamster</i>)	00.43	10 Sqn Halifax L9623
Hptm. Werner Streib: 28	Stab I./NJG1	Wellington	3 km W. Bracht, 5 km SSE Venlo (<i>prob. 5 B</i>)	00.46	18 OTU Wellington HF891
<i>Note: also claimed by 3./Res. Flak Abt. 541 (Wellington Bracht), Nachtjagd and Flak claims both confirmed</i>					
Oblt. Jakob Bender: 4	3./NJG1	Wellington	Heer (<i>Maastricht, prob. 5 A</i>)	01.32	23 OTU Wellington Z8867
<i>Note: interception effected with Lichtenstein A/I</i>					
Hptm. Alfred Haesler: 2	9./NJG1	Wellington	Breedenbroek, near Aalten (<i>4 C</i>)	01.48	10 OTU Whitley Z6581

Lt. Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauer: 1	Stab II./NJG1	Halifax	Grez-Doiceau, 15 km S. Leuven (<i>6 C</i>): 3.500 m.	01.55	76 Sqn Halifax W1064
Hptm. Erich Simon: 3	E./NJG2	Halifax	sea 20 km W. Domburg (<i>32313, Hamster</i>)	02.04	prob. 83 Sqn Lancaster R5564
Oblt. Hermann Reese: 5	2./NJG1	Wellington	Kerkdriel, NE 's Hertogenbosch (<i>prob. 5 A</i>)	02.08	23 OTU Wellington R1266
Fw. Heinz Pähler: 3	2./NJG1	Manchester	Arendonk, E. Turnhout	02.08	49 Sqn Manchester R5794
<i>Note: sortie possibly flown in Raum 5 A, interception effected with Lichtenstein A/I</i>					

Oblt. Helmut Woltersdorf: 23	7./NJG1	Halifax	near Oeding, SE Winterswijk (<i>4 B</i>)	02.08	10 Sqn Halifax W1098
Oblt. Reinhold Eckardt: 20	7./NJG3 (detached III./NJG4)	Wellington	2 km W. Binche: 2.600 m.	02.09	460 Sqn Wellington Z1399
Oblt. Kurt Loos: 6	Stab I./NJG1	Wellington	2 km S. Horst, NW Venlo (<i>prob. 5 B</i>): 4.500 m.	02.25	25 OTU Wellington DV434
Hptm. Erich Simon: 4	E./NJG2	Wellington	45 km W. Domburg (<i>22456, Hamster</i>)	02.25	26 OTU Wellington 'E' (damaged)
<i>Note: badly shot up on return flight by night fighter 60 km NW of Domburg at 02.25 hrs, crashed on landing at West Malling</i>					

Oblt. Dr. Horst Patuschka: 3	7./NJG2	Wellington	W. Vlissingen (<i>prob. Hamster</i>)	02.25	7 Sqn Stirling N3750
Oblt. Dr. Horst Patuschka: 4	7./NJG2	Wellington	W. Vlissingen (<i>prob. Hamster</i>)	02.34	poss. 305 Sqn Wellington Z8583 (damaged)

Note: damaged by enemy action, stalled and crashed at 03.45 hrs while trying to make single-engine landing at Manor Farm

Hptm. Walter Ehle: 9	Stab II./NJG1	Blenheim	Perg, NNE Brussels (<i>6 B</i>): 2.500 m.	02.34	16 OTU Wellington DV763
Oblt. Reinhold Eckardt: 21	7./NJG3 (detached III./NJG4)	Wellington	Moustier: 3.700 m.	02.31	21 OTU Wellington W5618

Ogefr. Herbert Hubatsch: 1	3./NJG1	Wellington	near Arendonk, E. Turnhout (<i>prob. 5 C</i>)	02.50	poss. Ju88 C-4 R4+CT W.Nr. 630 of E./NJG2
<i>Note: according to entry in KTB Gilze-Rijen airfield, crashed near Turnhout following air combat at 02.39 hrs. Confirmation date victory Ogefr. Hubatsch unknown</i>					

Ofw. Heinz Strüning: 15	7./NJG2	Wellington	-	03.20	prob. 15 Sqn Stirling R9318 (damaged)
<i>Note: attacked twice by Ju88 near Ghent at 03.10 hrs, damaged in outer starboard engine and starboard tail plane; attacking Ju88 claimed as damaged by MUG and RG</i>					

Ofw. Heinz Strüning: 16	7./NJG2	Wellington	-	03.30	prob. 301 Sqn Wellington Z1331
<i>Note: attacked by Ju88 50-60 miles E. of Harwich at 03.15 hrs, evaded by diving turns</i>					

2-3 June 1942

A relatively small force of 195 bombers revisited Essen, bombing between 01.29 and 02.10 hrs, for the loss of 14 of their number. Flak accounted for one 'heavy' of the Essen raid:

-75 Sqn Wellington X3408: hit by Flak in the target area and again on its return flight over Duisburg, finally crashing at Aalst-Waalre at 03.47 hrs.

In reaction to the raid, approximately 35 *Dunkelnachtjäger* of NJG1, NJG2 (including ten Ju88s of E. and III./NJG2 that operated from Gilze-Rijen between 00.40 and 05.05 hrs) and NJG3 patrolled over the Netherlands and the approaches to the Ruhr. These reported 11 Abschüsse, at least eight of which were confirmed by the *Abschusskommission*. The *Kommandeur* of II./NJG2 Hptm. Lent and his *Funker* Fw. Kubisch destroyed a 408 Squadron Hampden near Medemblik for Nachtjagd's first claim of the night. It was Lent's first of nine victories during the month of June 1942, all achieved in just ten operational sorties in Bf110 R4+AC. Oblt. Lütje, who was appointed *Staffelkapitän* of 8./NJG1 on 1 May 1942, reported a *Luftkampf* with a Halifax ca. 02.10 hrs in which the right-hand engine of his Bf110 G9+LS was shot out; he performed a belly-landing at Twente.

Hptm. Helmut Lent: 39	Stab II./NJG2	Hampden	IJsselmeer E. Medemblik (<i>Hering or Eisbär</i>)	01.06	408 Sqn Hampden AT154
Hptm. Werner Streib: 29	Stab I./NJG1	Wellington	600 m. E. Dülken/5 km W. Viersen (<i>5 B</i>)	01.35	Essen raid, unidentified.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 1.-6./Sperrfeuerbatt. Flakuntergruppe Mönchengladbach ('Wellington Dülken 01.35 hrs'), confirmation date victory Hptm. Streib unknown</i>					
Oblt. Siegfried Wandam: 3	3./NJG1	Wellington	Molenbeersel, 2 km S. Stramproy	01.35	12 Sqn Wellington Z8533
Oblt. Manfred Meurer: 3	9./NJG1	Halifax	Bienen, near Emmerich (<i>4 C</i>)	01.54	61 Sqn Lancaster R5562
Oblt. Werner Rowlin: 2	8./NJG1	Wellington	6 km N. Gildehaus (<i>4 A</i>)	01.58	57 Sqn Wellington X9787
Ofw. Rolf Bussmann: 7	7./NJG2	Halifax	-	02.25	35 Sqn Halifax R9444
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 1./Res. Flak Abt. 157, 1. & 2./Res. Flak Abt. 266, 11.-13./Flak Rgt. 32 ('Halifax Leonard 3300-2000 m 02.30 hrs'), confirmation date victory Ofw. Bussmann unknown</i>					



Above: Broken Wings. On 14 June 1942, the mortal remains of P/O Taylor RCAF, pilot of 408 Squadron Hampden AT154, were washed ashore near Medemblik and recovered by the Germans. He was shot down by Hptm. Lent over the IJsselmeer on 2-3 June 1942. (Coll. Hans Nauta)

Below: Five aircrew Unteroffiziere posing with Ofw. Paul Gildner's Do215 B-5 of 5./NJG2 at Leeuwarden. The photo was taken after Gildner's 33rd Abschuss (a 7 Squadron Stirling that he shot down off Petten on 2-3 June 1942) and before his 34th victory claim, on 8-9 June 1942. (Coll. Piet Bouma)



Fw. Fritz Schellwat: 2	5./NJG1	Lancaster	4 km E. Waterloo, SE Brussels (6 C): 3.200 m	02.30	61 Sqn Lancaster R5613
Oblt. Eckart-Wilhelm von Bonin: 5	6./NJG1	Wellington	1 km NW Busseghem, 10 km NNW Brussels (6 B): 3.900 m.	02.41	156 Sqn Wellington DV786
Oblt. Dr. Horst Patuschka: 5	7./NJG2	Halifax	-	02.50	prob. 460 Sqn Wellington Z1394
<i>Note: also claimed by 32. MS Flotilla, confirmation date victory Oblt. Patuschka unknown</i>					
Oblt. Alois Lechner: 6	E./NJG2	Halifax	-	03.00	prob. 102 Sqn Halifax R9491
Ofw. Paul Gildner: 33	5./NJG2	Stirling	sea 70 km W. Petten (Salzhering)	03.10	7 Sqn Stirling W7500

3-4 June 1942

170 aircraft bombed Bremen between 01.10 and 02.00 hrs, 11 were lost. Over the Netherlands and NW Germany, an estimated 34 *Dunkelnachtjäger* of NJG1, 2 and 3 opposed the raid. 14 of these undertook radar pursuits, which resulted in eight Abschüsse. All of these were confirmed by the OKL/RLM, as were two Wellington claims of the Bremen-based 8. Flak Division:

-115 Sqn Wellington X3635: hit by 1.-3./Res. Flak Abt. 265, came down 1 km south of Adelheide (Delmenhorst) at 01.30 hrs.

-101 Sqn Wellington X3473: coned by Flak Scheinwerfer 'Cäsar' of 4./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 222 and hit by 3./Res. Flak Abt. 117, 1. & 3./Res. Flak Abt. 611 (o) and 4./Res. Flak Abt. 222 (IV Zug), crashed at Bremen-Blockland at 01.35 hrs.

A third 8. Flak Division claim, for 214 Squadron Stirling W7537 destroyed at Süstedt, was contested by Uffz. Heinz Vinke of 5./NJG2, who was operating under control of box *Roland*. Engaged in his 113th *Nachtjagd Einsatz* (and 213th overall), a patrol from Leeuwarden in Bf110 R4+AC between 00.30 and 01.51 hrs, Hptm. Lent scored his 40th Abschuss, with the aid of his regular *Funker* Fw. Kubisch. Ofw. Klever, a former *Zerstörer* veteran in 13(Z)/LG1 with two Spitfire Abschüsse achieved during the Battle of Britain to his credit, opened his nighttime score in 1./NJG3 with a Wellington Abschuss of the Bremen raid. His quarry, a 3 Group Wellington, actually escaped damaged from the encounter.

In turn, NJG3 lost two Bf110s in air combat, three of the four German airmen being killed. DK+IK of the 2. Staffel crashed at Unzen and D5+KH of the 1. Staffel impacted near Telbrake. The latter aircraft was probably shot down by the rear gunner of 305 Squadron Wellington Z8581. Near Rhede, the Polish *Wimpey* was attacked seven times by a 'Bf109' and badly shot up, but after the final attack, the *Nachtjäger* was seen to explode in mid-air and crashing in flames at 01.14 hrs.

Below: On 3-4 June 1942, the Bremen-based 8. Flak Division destroyed two Wellingtons. Depicted is an impressive Flak barrage over Bremen. (Coll. Carsten Petersen)

