



Two unique nighttime shots of Bf110s, most probably of II./NJG1, being prepared for operations in the winter of 1940-1941. Both stem from a photo album of Reinhold Eckardt, who opened his nighttime score on 9-10 January 1941 (Coll. Wim Govaerts).



11-12 January 1941

Due to adverse weather conditions, there was no *Nahnachtjagd* reaction to a 35-aircraft raid on Wilhelmshaven. No *Fernnachtjäger* were employed over the UK on this night either.

15-16 January 1941



Oblt. Albert 'Ali' Schulz of 2./NJG2 sitting on the edge of the cockpit of a Bf110 D-0 'Dackelbauch' at Gilze-Rijen, probably in early 1941. Schulz opened his score with a double Abschuss on 15-16 January 1941 (Coll. Thomas Knauf).

A 58 Squadron Whitley was the only aircraft lost from a force of 96 aircraft that were sent out to bomb Wilhelmshaven. It was shot down in flames by Oblt. Prinz zur Lippe-Weissenfeld and his BF Uffz. Renette of 4./NJG1, while flying Bf110 C G9+EM, during a 1. Welle radar-directed patrol in *Dunkelnachtjagdraum Hering*, under control of Lt. Jauk. Incidentally, the 2nd and 3rd wave patrols in box *Hering* all failed to achieve enemy contact on this night. A few hours after the events, Oblt. zur Lippe-Weissenfeld wrote his Combat Report:

"On 15 January 1941 I was assigned to dark night fighting in the Den Helder area. After several unproductive vectors I was passed an interception course of 320 degrees (i.e. NW, author's note) and 3200 m. After two course refinements I saw a dark shadow 150 m away to the left. I altered my heading toward the target I'd recognised, overtaking rapidly. In order not to overshoot I had to pull the nose up, reporting the target as a definite Whitley-Armstrong. I placed myself about 30 m back to make my attack but from this range I could no longer make out the target because the armoured windscreen was almost completely opaque (the effects of icing). At this point the enemy spotted me and took evasive action, the rear gunner firing several long bursts without hitting me. I pulled in close enough that I could see both exhaust flames through the armoured glass (about 10 m), firing a short burst. Breaking away I established that the machine was on fire. After about two minutes the wing came off and the aeroplane crashed".

The *Fernnachtjagd* Gruppe mounted a maximum effort intruder operation over Eastern England with 15 aircraft. Six of them bombed Driffield, Linton-on-Ouse, Lincoln, York and Norwich with SC 50 bombs and incendiaries. Oblt. Albert ('Ali') Schulz and his crew (BF Uffz. Krüger and BM Gefr. Lurtinghausen, accompanied by war correspondent *Flieger* Dressler) of 2./NJG2 mingled with training aircraft in the circuit of Church Fenton, and returned with claims for two 'Blenheims' destroyed. On his return to Gilze-Rijen airfield, Schulz reported that he shot down his first quarry in flames, and had forced his second adversary to crash-land in woods on the edge of the airfield in two attacks, where he saw the aircraft disintegrating. These, in fact, were both Defiants, the second (N1542) was damaged and force-landed near this airfield. Following his Abschüsse, the Schulz crew dropped 120 incendiaries on Church Fenton, causing several fires.

Oblt. Egmont Prinz zur Lippe-Weissenfeld: 2	4./NJG1	Whitley	5 km N. Petten (Hering): 3.200 m.	22.46	58 Sqn Whitley N1521
Oblt. Albert Schulz: 1	2./NJG2	Blenheim	over Church Fenton airfield: 150 m.	02.30	54 OTU Defiant L7002
Oblt. Albert Schulz: 2	2./NJG2	Blenheim	edge Church Fenton airfield	02.45	54 OTU Defiant N1542 (damaged)



58 Squadron Whitley V N1521 GE-J left Linton-on-Ouse at 17.55 hrs on 15 January 1941 for a raid on Wilhelmshaven. Whilst on its way back, it was tracked on the Freya and Würzburg of one of Nachtjagd's earliest operational Dunkelnachtjagd radar stations Tiger on Terschelling Island. Tiger's JLO Lt. Jauk guided Oblt. Egmont Prinz zur Lippe-Weissenfeld of 4./NJG1 onto the tail of the Whitley, but the night hunter was forced to approach his quarry to some 10 metres as his cockpit was iced up and he had a very limited field of vision. When zur Lippe saw the exhaust flames on both engines of the Whitley, he opened fire at point blank range and shot it down at 22.46 hrs between the Zwanenwater (Swans' Lake) and Callantsog. P/O W.E. Peers and his four-man crew all perished. Luftwaffe personnel are seen inspecting the snow-covered remains of the Whitley, against the background of the Zwanenwater and the North Sea dunes (Coll. Mix, via Rob de Visser).

16-17 January 1941

Nachtjäger operating against an 81-aircraft raid on Wilhelmshaven and four *Fernnachtjäger* intruding over Britain failed to achieve *Feindberührung*. One Main Force aircraft was shot down by Marine Flak:

-58 Sqn Whitley Z6462: hit by 5./M. Flak Abt. 808 (Fort Erfprins in Den Helder) in both engines and crashed at Anna Paulowna at 21.15 hrs.

22-23 January 1941

12 *Fernnachtjäger* were dispatched to the UK for *Störangriffe* (nuisance raids) on targets in Eastern England. Four crews reported bombing attacks on Lincoln, Cromer and Marham airfield.

29 January 1941

During a special mission on the evening of 29 January, two *Fernnachtjäger* claimed seven barrage balloons shot down over London. Fw. Sommer of 2./NJG2, who flew Ju88 R4+MH on his 20th *Feindflug*, destroyed six of them.

31 January-1 February 1941

Four *Fernnachtjäger* intruded over Britain, one dropping a load of ten SC 50 bombs on Lincoln.

3-4 February 1941

Seven *Fernnachtjäger* were employed over Britain, six bombing various targets in Eastern England, including three airfields. One of their number failed to return; Do17 Z-10 R4+BK of 2./NJG2 was shot down in combat with a Hampden and crashed in the North Sea 50 km east of Lowestoft with the loss of Oblt. Häuser and his crew.

4-5 February 1941

30 Hampdens were dispatched to bomb Düsseldorf. One of their number failed to return, victim of the 4. Flak Division. From a six-aircraft mining operation off St. Nazaire, one aircraft was lost to Flak:

-49 Sqn Hampden P4299: hit by 7./II./Flak Rgt. 44, 8./II./Flak Rgt. 44 and 3./schw. Res. Flak Abt. 447, crashed in the Reichswald near Goch at 21.53 hrs.

-106 Sqn Hampden AD750: hit by Flak and crashed near Nantes at 22.50 hrs.

5-6 February 1941

During the course of the night, seven *Fernnachtjäger* intruded over Eastern England, four bombing a variety of targets, including Marham airfield.

8-9 February 1941

In the first half of the night, four *Fernnachtjäger* bombed Norwich, Lincoln and searchlight positions near Lincoln and Ipswich.



Uffz. Friedrich Kleinenbrands (BF to Fw. Wilhelm Beier, standing 2nd from left) with his pet dog Bobby and groundcrew, 3./NJG2, Gilze-Rijen, winter 1940-41. Kleinenbrands was awarded the Ehrenpokal für besondere Leistungen im Luftkrieg (honor goblet for special achievements in the air war) on 19 October 1942 (Coll. Thomas Knauf).

9-10 February 1941

Three *Fernnachtjäger* dispatched on intruder duties to the UK failed to make *Feindberührung* or drop their bombs due to low cloud conditions. A fourth intruder attacked a Wellington landing at Hemswell without visible results at 06.00 hrs. Forty minutes later, the same crew intruded in the circuit of what they identified as Scampton, where they dropped ten 50 SC bombs from low level into a row of parked Wellingtons with their position lights on. Before speeding off, the intruder saw at least three *Wimpey*'s being consumed by fire.

10-11 February 1941

43 aircraft attacked oil storage tanks at Rotterdam (no losses), and 222 aircraft were dispatched to raid industrial targets in Hannover. In reaction, four Bf110 crews flew standing patrols in *Raum Hering* (JLO Lt. Jauk) between 19.38 and 04.05 hrs, three further Bf110 patrols being made in *Raum Hase* between 22.21 and 06.05 hrs. A Hannover-bound bomber was destroyed by Flak:

-21 Sqn Blenheim T2282: coned by Marine searchlights, hit by Luftwaffe Flak of 3./lei. Res. Flak Abt. 831 and Marine Flak of M. Flak Abt. 703, crashed into the Westerschelde off Valkenisse at 22.00 hrs.

Two further Hannover raiders were shot down in the *Dunkelnachtjagd Räume Hering* and *Hase*. Hptm. Ehle, *Gruppenkommandeur* of II./NJG1 and his *Funker* Ofw. Weng in Bf110 G9+AC achieved an outward-bound Wellington Abschuss during a *1. Welle* patrol in box *Hase*, whilst 21-year old Lt. Fellerer and his *Bordfunker* Ogefr. Hätscher of 5./NJG1, flying a *4. Welle* sortie in *Hering*, opened their score by shooting down a 49 Squadron Hampden on its return flight near Alkmaar.



Ju88 C R4+DD or R4+DB of I./NJG2 at Gilze-Rijen with one Abschußbalke, or victory bar, winter 1940-41 (Coll. Piet Bouma).

Taking off in four successive waves from Gilze-Rijen between 23.45 and 04.42 hrs, I./NJG2 dispatched four Do17 Z-10s and six Ju88 C-2 sorties on *Fernnachtjagd* duties into the *Räume* A, B and C. For no own losses, the intruder crews returned with six Abschüsse -near West Raynham, Feltwell, and Waddington airfields. Actually, three of these claims resulted in total losses. A fourth claim for a 'Blenheim' shot down near West Raynham in fact was a 222 Squadron Spitfire, which escaped damage. Oblt. Herrmann and his crew of Uffz. Böttner and Gefr. Mandel in a Ju88 C-2 of I./NJG2 claimed two 'Herefords' destroyed near Waddington; his second quarry was a 144 Squadron Hampden, which was damaged and force-landed at Hemswell. The intruders also reported bombing attacks on Weyborne, Coltishall, Marham, Catfoss, Cranwell, Hemswell and Waddington airfields, plus three indecisive *Feindberührungen*.

A staff officer of I./NJG1 wrote the following on both the *Nachtjagd* and *Fernnachtjagd* effort of this night, his account underlining the potential of long-range intruding over Britain:

"The night of 11 February 1941 was crowned with renewed and important successes for our night fighters. Hauptmann Ehle who had taken off on a Dunkeljagd sortie opened the victory scoring list. At an altitude of 4000 metres west of Nunspeet his Bordfunker Oberfeldwebel Weng had suddenly sighted a Wellington in the moonlight cruising over the cloud deck one thousand metres below them. He quickly drew the pilot's attention to the enemy aircraft and Ehle lost no time in diving down and engaging the unsuspecting victim. His firing pass hit home, forcing the Tommy to lose altitude. The enemy pilot was nonetheless able to put the stricken aircraft down on its belly, landing on the frozen surface of the Zuider-See. The five crew members were able to evacuate the blazing aircraft and were taken captive. Leutnant Bokemeyer serving with II./NJG1 likewise made contact with a Wellington, but was hit in the port engine by the bomber's defensive fire and forced to break off. The enemy bomber was apparently crippled and seen to go down in a steep dive indicating in all likelihood another victory. As it subsequently proved impossible to locate the wreckage this victory was not officially recognised. Moments later, however, Leutnant Fellerer (Bordfunker Obergefreiter Hätscher) reported a "genuine" victory. In co-operation with a Würzburg ground search radar, he had been vectored precisely onto a "Handley-Page" and shot it down in flames at an altitude of 2,600 metres. Our night fighters reported two further engagements with enemy bombers that night but in both cases were unfortunate to return empty-handed.

*On the other hand our long-range intruders, the Fernnachtjäger enjoyed one of their best nights thus far. Oberleutnant Schulz was the first to score, dispatching a "Bristol Blenheim" at 01:10 over West Raynham aerodrome at just 200 metres altitude. Although Oberleutnant Schulz subsequently had to evade the close attentions of a British night fighter, he was able to jettison his ordnance (120 incendiaries) over the airfield at Waybourne and returned home safely. Hauptmann Jung (along with his crew Uffz. Schürcks and Uffz. Thomas) was the second intruder to report a victory. At 02:30 he downed a Wellington in flames, likewise at 200 metres altitude over West Raynham. He too was subsequently able to drop his incendiaries, the resulting fires engulfing Coltishall aerodrome. At around 03:00 he was engaged at 800 metres altitude off Great Yarmouth by a "Blenheim". Accepting combat, he was able to loose off three accurate bursts of fire, setting his adversary alight. This victory, however, could not be "officially" recognised and added to the night's tally either, since the crew had been unable to observe the crash and pinpoint its location. (The Hptm. Jung crew had left Gilze-Rijen in a Do17 Z-10 at 23.45 hrs, briefed to fly a patrol in *Raum C*; they returned to their home base at 03.46 hrs. After landing, six bullet hits were counted in their Dornier, taken in return fire of their Wellington victim, author's note)*

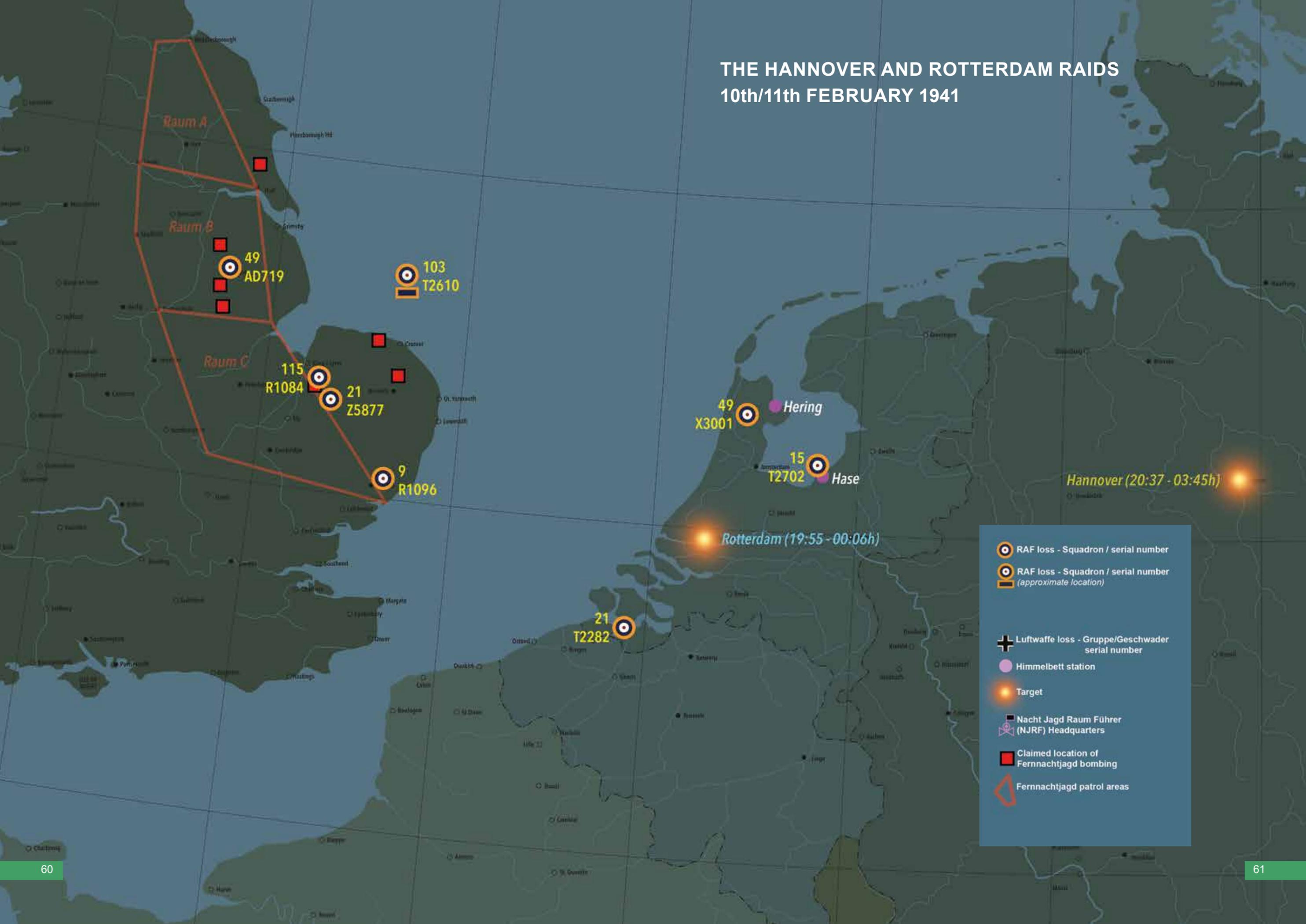
*At the controls of his Do17 Z, Leutnant Feuerbaum (who had left Gilze-Rijen at 00.07 hrs, accompanied by Gefr. Denzin and Uffz. Funke, for a patrol in *Raum C*, author's note) had caught a Wellington that he had encountered in the circuit at Marham. Although he scored hits and set the bomber alight, he too was unable to observe it crash. Oberleutnant Semrau (with his crew of Uffz. Peters (BF) and Uffz. Robert Behrens (BS), take off at 02.04 hrs for a patrol in *Raum C*, author's note) was more fortunate in his Ju88. After pursuing and firing at a "Blenheim" for some fifty minutes with no evident success, he came across bustling activity over Feltwell aerodrome. Closing in from astern on two "Blenheims" orbiting the field, he shot them both down from the lowest possible altitude. Oberleutnant Herrmann reported a further "double". With his crew of Uffz. Böttner and Gfr. Mandel, Herrmann brought down two "Hampden-Herford" aircraft at low altitude over Waddington. Other aircraft deployed on intruder sorties that night dropped 120 incendiaries and ten 50kg bombs on airfield installations and factories, returning with reports of extensive damage. In another incident, ten 50 kg bombs were released by a Ju88 over a taxiing British aircraft. Ten minutes later the same "Ju" attacked a Wellington orbiting at three hundred metres altitude with its navigation lights on. The outcome of the attack was unfortunately not recorded".*

At 08.30 hrs, the last of the *Fernnachtjäger*, returning from an uneventful sortie in *Raum A*, touched down safely at Gilze-Rijen.

Hptm. Walter Ehle: 5	Stab II./NJG1	Wellington	IJsselmeer, 15 km W. Nunspeet (Hase): 3.000 m.	23.35	15 Sqn Wellington T2702
Oblt. Albert Schulz: 3	2./NJG2	Blenheim	over West Raynham airfield: 200 m.	01.10	222 Sqn Spitfire (undamaged)
Hptm. Rolf Jung: 1	2./NJG2	Wellington	over West Raynham airfield: 200 m.	02.30	115 Sqn Wellington R1084
Lt. Leopold Fellerer: 1	5./NJG1	Hampden	Zuid-Scharwoude, 10 km N. Alkmaar (Hering): 3.200 m	03.50	49 Sqn Hampden X3001
Oblt. Paul Semrau: 1	3./NJG2	Blenheim	over Feltwell airfield	04.10	21 Sqn Blenheim R3758 (damaged)
Oblt. Paul Semrau: 2	3./NJG2	Blenheim	over Feltwell airfield	04.15	21 Sqn Blenheim Z5877
Oblt. Kurt Herrmann: 7	1./NJG2	Hereford	over Waddington airfield	06.49	49 Sqn Hampden AD719
Oblt. Kurt Herrmann: 8	1./NJG2	Hereford	over Waddington airfield	06.58	144 Sqn Hampden P1164 (damaged)

THE HANNOVER AND ROTTERDAM RAIDS

10th/11th FEBRUARY 1941





A Bf110 crew of NJG1 preparing for a sortie from Deelen in the winter of 1940-41 (Coll. NeunundzwanzigSechs Verlag).

14-15 February 1941

At least two *Fernnachtjäger* operated over Britain. On his return flight, Fw. Strüning of 1./NJG2 encountered a 206 Squadron Hudson over the North Sea, which he claimed 'shot down in flames'. The aircraft, however, in the hands of S/Ldr. Dias, escaped damage, the gunners of the Hudson claiming hits on their attacker.

Fw. Heinz Strüning: 2	1./NJG2	Hudson	sea 75 km E. Great Yarmouth	07.30	206 Sqn Hudson (undamaged)
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15-16 February 1941

Nachtjäger operating in *Helle Nachtjagd* fashion over the Netherlands shot down both aircraft that failed to return from a 73-aircraft raid against Sterkrade. Fw. Kalinowski and his BF Uffz. Zwickl of 6./NJG1, who were scrambled as 2. *Welle* in Bf110 G9+LP at 22.10 hrs for a sortie in *Raum 7 A*, destroyed a Wellington that was caught in the searchlights of the *Flakscheinwerfer Regiment 2* in the Zutphen area. It was the only successful fighter out of six Bf110 *Helle Nachtjagd* sorties that patrolled in the *Räume 7 A, B and C* between 20.30 hrs and midnight.

At least three *Fernnachtjäger* operated over the UK, two of which submitted a claim for a bomber destroyed. Both fighters stated in their *Abschussmeldungen* that their adversaries were seen to 'crash down'. Fw. Strüning most probably engaged two 44 Squadron Hampdens, one of which was hit in several places when flying over Lincoln, the second aircraft being severely damaged with its port engine put out of action and the port wing being hit by bullets over Waddington. There were no casualties to the bomber crews. Oblt. Bönsch attacked and damaged two Oxfords of 2 Flying Training School practicing over Cranwell. All their quarries, however, escaped destruction. During his action over Cranwell, Bönsch's Ju88 C-2 R4+FH took a few hits from gun fire, which forced him to make an emergency landing upon his return to Gilze-Rijen. Incidentally, Bönsch' claim was his second *Abschuss*; whilst serving as St.Kpt. of the *Zerstörerstaffel* in KG30, he had claimed a Roc shot down near Narvik on 30 April 1940.

Fw. Heinz Strüning: 3 (damaged)	1./NJG2	Wellington	65 km ENE Southend or Southwold	19.58	44 Sqn Hampden P2917 or X3025
Fw. Ernst Kalinowski: 2 Note: coned by <i>Flakscheinw. Rgt. 2</i>	6./NJG1	Wellington	Barchem, 10 km W. Zutphen (7 A): 1500 m.	23.05	15 Sqn Wellington T2847.
Oblt. Hans Jüsgen: 1 Note: coned by 5./ <i>Flakscheinw. Rgt. 3</i> ('unknown type of aircraft 23.11 hrs')	2./NJG3	Whitley	Malden, 8 km S. Nijmegen	23.19	77 Sqn Whitley T4164.
Oblt. Herbert Bönsch: 2	1./NJG2	Blenheim	Waddington airfield	01.25	2 FTS Oxford R6076 or V3244 (damaged)

21-22 February 1941

Wilhelmshaven was the Main Force target for the night, 34 aircraft being dispatched to bomb the Northern German port. Just two Nachtjäger were employed against the raid, without making *Feindberührung*. Two Wellingtons failed to return, one of which was destroyed by Marine Flak:

-75 Sqn Wellington T2503 or 149 Sqn Wellington R1045: coned by searchlights and hit between 22.05-22.11 hrs by Luftwaffe Flak Abt. 762 and Stabsbatterie, 1.-3. & 5./M. Flak Abt. 226 (Nordeney), crashed in flames in sea near Heligoland at 22.11 hrs.

23-24 February 1941

Six *Fernnachtjäger* bombed and strafed various targets in Eastern England, including Leconfield and Mildenhall airfield. One of the intruders rammed a barrage balloon at 00.45 hrs but managed to regain base on one engine.

35 Wellingtons and 17 Blenheims were sent to Boulogne-sur-Mer, one falling foul of Flak:

-115 Sqn Wellington L7810: hit by Flak of III./Flak Rgt. 32 and crashed near Pihen-lès-Guînes at 21.00 hrs.

25-26 February 1941

RAF Bomber Command dispatched 80 bombers to attack Düsseldorf. One of their number was shot down by Flak of the 4. Flak Division:

-103 Sqn Wellington T2621: coned by 13./III./Flak Rgt. 26, hit by 10./II./Flak Rgt. 44, exploded and crashed in River Rhine 1 km N. of Rhine bridge at Homberg near Duisburg, time unknown.

Four *Fernnachtjäger* were dispatched to the UK. A pilot of 2./NJG2 patrolling near Marham (which he mis-identified as 'Waddington') fired two bursts of gun fire at an aircraft coming in to land at a height of 150 metres, but failed to see his adversary crashing. Four minutes later, he shot down a Main Force Wellington that was also on its landing approach to Marham. The *Fernnachtjäger* went on to drop 60 incendiary bombs on Gainsborough at 00.30 hrs, before speeding back home.

Fw. Ernst Ziebarth: 1	2./NJG2	prob. Blenh.	over Waddington airfield	23.442	18 Sqn Wellington R1009
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Bf110 D-3 W.Nr. 4227 of 5./NJG1 somersaulted on take off from Deelen for a practice flight in daylight on 18 February 1941, Lt. Harras Matthes suffering from a heart attack and died (Coll. Horst Münter via Andreas Wachtel).

