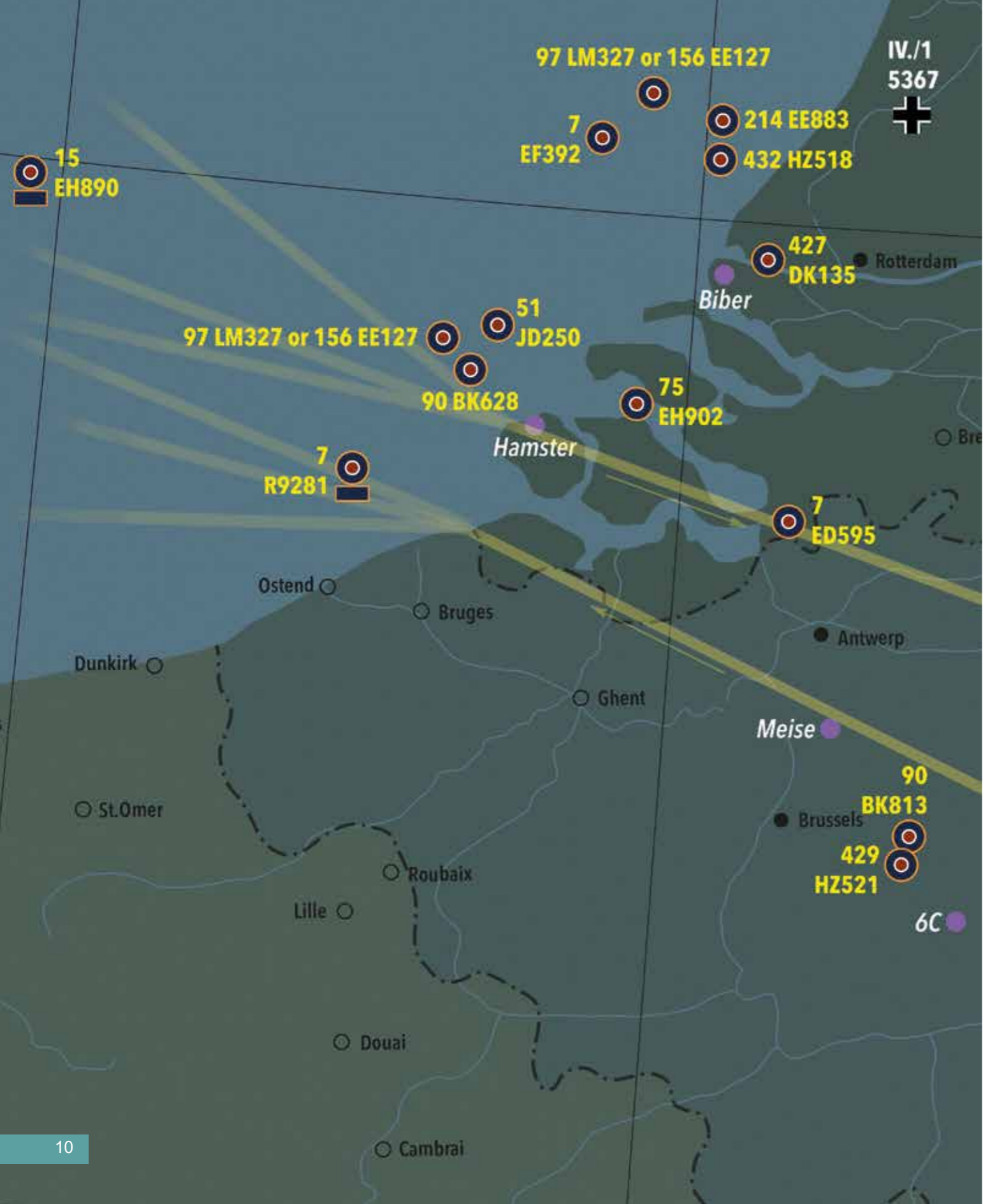
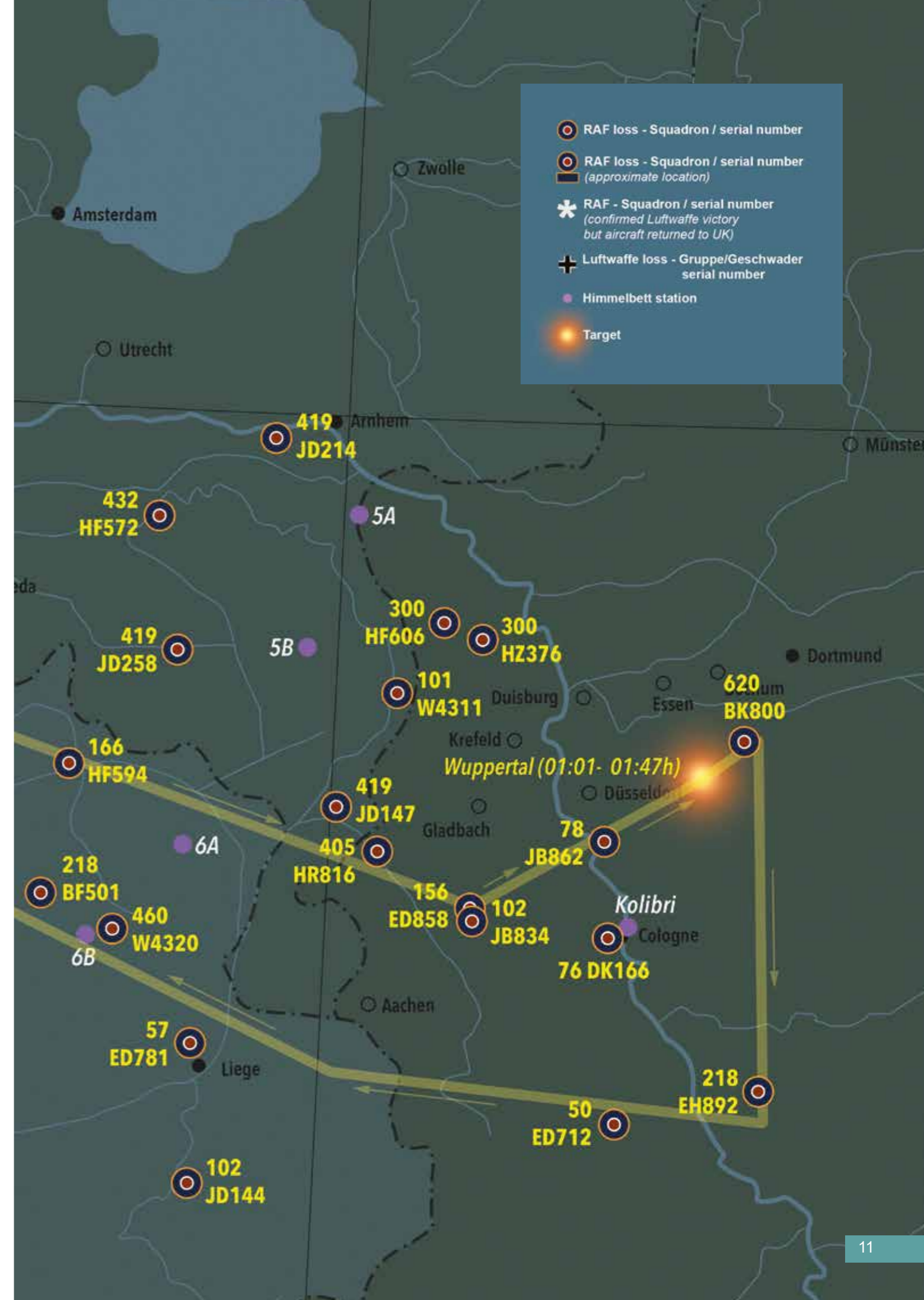


THE WUPPERTAL RAID

24th/25th JUNE 1943



- RAF loss - Squadron / serial number
- RAF loss - Squadron / serial number (approximate location)
- RAF - Squadron / serial number (confirmed Luftwaffe victory but aircraft returned to UK)
- Luftwaffe loss - Gruppe/Geschwader serial number
- Himmelbett station
- Target



Hptm. Werner Hoffmann: 6	4./NJG5, det. 4./NJG1	Lancaster	3 km. SW Erkelenz (6278, 6 A): 5.300 m.	01.24	156 Sqn Lancaster ED858.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of schw. Flak Abt. 5711 and schw. Flak Abt. 5713 ('Lancaster Spiel nr. Titz 01.35 hrs'), Flak claim marked 'VNE', victory Hptm. Hoffmann confirmed on 20.12.1944</i>					
Maj. Günther Radosch: 25	Stab II./NJG3, det. Stab I./NJG1	Lancaster	Grubbenvorst, 8,5 km NNW Venlo (prob. 5 A): 5.500 m.	01.29	101 Sqn Lancaster W431
Hptm. Walter Milius: 7	Stab III./NJG3, det. 2./NJG1	Halifax	1 km. N. Zetten, 2 km. SE Wageningen (<i>Himmelbett</i>): 1.800 m	01.30	419 Sqn Halifax JD214
Ofw. Reinhard Kollak: 23	7./NJG4, det. II./NJG1	Stirling	Haasrode, 6 km SSE Leuven (6 B): 4.100 m	01.39	90 Sqn Stirling BK813
Fw. Herbert Hubatsch: 3	5./NJG5, det. 6./NJG1	Stirling	2 km. E. Kalenborn (<i>Kolibri</i>): 4.800 m.	01.50	218 Sqn Stirling EH892.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 1. & 3./schw. Flak Abt. 331, 6./schw. Flak Abt. 245 and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 477 ('Stirling Oberwillscheid 01.37 hrs'), victory Fw. Hubatsch confirmed on 20.12.1944</i>					
Hptm. Werner Hoffmann: 7	4./NJG5, det. 4./NJG1	Wellington	1 km. S. Brasel, Antwerpen (6 A): 4.700 m.	01.54	166 Sqn Wellington HF594
Oblt. Hans Autenrieth: 14	6./NJG4, det. II./NJG1	Stirling	Kaggevinne, 4,5 km. WSW Diest (6 C): 4.000 m.	01.59	218 Sqn Stirling BF501
Lt. Friedrich Graeff: 5	Stab I./NJG4	Halifax	6 km. NE. Barvraux (<i>Himmelbett</i>): 5.700 m	02.17	102 Sqn Halifax JD144
Hptm. Wittgenstein: 32	Stab IV./NJG5, det. 1./NJG1	Lancaster	sea 30 km W. Katwijk (HH 23 a, <i>Biber</i>): 3.200 m	02.25	97 Sqn Lancaster LM327 or 156 Sqn Lancaster EE127
Lt. Heinz Strüning: 30	2./NJG1	Lancaster	sea 30 km. W. Schouwen (KG 21 e, <i>Hamster</i>): 4.800 m.	02.49	97 Sqn Lancaster LM327 or 156 Sqn Lancaster EE127.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of M. Flak. Abt. 810 and by Nordbatterie Vlissingen, victory Lt. Strüning confirmed on 19.12.1944</i>					
Hptm. Wittgenstein: 33	Stab IV./NJG5, det. 1./NJG1	Stirling	sea 80 km W. Katwijk (HH 43 e, <i>Biber</i>): 250 m.	02.50	7 Sqn Stirling EF392
Lt. Heinz Strüning: 31	2./NJG1	Halifax	sea 20 km. WNW Schouwen (JG 97 b, <i>Hamster</i>): 2.300 m.	02.56	51 Sqn Halifax JD250
<i>Note: coned by III./Flak Rgt. 32, also claimed by Flak of 1./Ilei. Flak Abt. 716 ('Viermot Zeebrugge 02.55 hrs'), and by Flak of 4./Igem. Flak Abt. 295 ('Stirling Zoutelande 2.800 m 02.55 hrs'). Victory Lt. Strüning confirmed on 19.12.1944</i>					
Lt. Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauffer: 14	Stab II./NJG1	Wellington	Hamme-Mille, 11 km. S. Leuven (6 C): 4.700 m.	02.58	429 Sqn Wellington HZ521
Lt. Heinz Strüning: 32	2./NJG1	Stirling	sea 25 km. W. Schouwen (KG 29 d, <i>Hamster</i>): 2.500 m.	03.02	90 Sqn Stirling BK628.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of M. Flak Abt. 810, victory Lt. Strüning confirmed on 19.12.1944</i>					
Ofw. Kurt Karsten: 4	7./NJG4, det. 1./NJG1	Stirling	sea near northern edge of Walcheren (LH 24 e, <i>Himmelbett</i>): 3.300 m.	03.02	7 Sqn Stirling R9281.
Hptm. Wittgenstein: 34	Stab IV./NJG5, det. 1./NJG1	Stirling	sea 20 km W. Katwijk (HJ 14 g, <i>Biber</i>): 850 m.	03.09	214 Sqn Stirling EE883
Hptm. Wittgenstein: 35	Stab IV./NJG5, det. 1./NJG1	Wellington	sea 10 km. W. Den Haag (HJ 44 d, <i>Biber</i>): 200 m.	03.35	432 Sqn Wellington HZ518

The wreckage of Halifax JD214 of 419 Squadron lying in a field near Wageningen. It was claimed shot down by the Gruppenkommandeur of III./NJG3 Hptm. Milius (temporarily detached to 2./NJG1 at Venlo) during the 24-25 June 1943 Wuppertal raid. (Coll. Richard Koval).



25-26 June 1943 GELSENKIRCHEN

Supported by 20 Fighter Command intruders that were active over the Low Countries between 23.05 and 04.23 hrs, 473 RAF 'heavies' were dispatched to attack Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr between 01.02 and 02.07 hrs. 31 Main Force bombers were lost.

Just as on the previous night's raid, it appears that the German defences were relatively ineffective against the outward-bound bomber stream. This was partially due to the 7-10/10ths cloud that prevailed en route and the absence of moonlight: a half moon came to the aid of the defenders only about 03.00 hrs, when most of the bombers had already left the Continent on their return flight. Another factor which played a major role was the strong R/T and AI interference that several Nachtjäger were heard complaining about; one *Himmelbett* patrol in the Bergen/Alkmaar sector, for example, tried eight times to intercept British aircraft between 00.42 and 03.07 hrs but, because of interference with his R/T and *Lichtenstein* AI, none of the pursuits ended in the destruction of bombers. Actually, one of the British radar jammers, a 515 Squadron Defiant engaged in a *Mandrel* screen sortie (airborne radar jamming in support of the Main Force raid), was destroyed off the Dutch coast by Oblt. Hadeball, St.Kpt. of 12./NJG4 and temporarily attached to 2./NJG1. Incidentally, he mis-identified his quarry as a 'Hurricane'.

During the course of the night, a rather meagre number of 53 *Himmelbett* sorties were flown by the Nachtjagd. Almost one-third of these sorties were successful, 17 crews tallying a harvest of 30 Main Force victory claims, three aircraft returning with fighter damage.

IV./NJG1 again struck hard at Bomber Command, the Leeuwarden and Bergen/Alkmaar-based Gruppe claiming 18 heavy bombers shot down over Northern Holland. These included two Abschüsse by guest crews: Oblt. Hans Leickhardt, St.Kpt. of 2./NJG5 and his *Funker* Fw. Herbert Grosse, and Oblt. Martin Drewes, St.Kpt. of 7./NJG3 and his BF Uffz. Fritz Hrachowina. A third guest crew, Uffz's Busch and Rulf of 2./NJG5 experienced a frustrating 2. *Welle* patrol against the returning 'heavies' in box *Zander*, as Wilhelm Rulf recorded in his *Flugbuch*: "Bf110 G9+EX. 63rd sortie, Nachtjagd. Bergen 26.6. 02.00 hrs, Bergen N.H. 26.6. 03.53 hrs. 113 Mins. 650 kms. *Zander*. Enemy contact and air combat with Halifax, without visible results".

All the 18 Abschüsse of IV./NJG1 were *anerkannt* as confirmed victories on 20 December 1944. The crews achieved their successes during patrols in the *Himmelbett* boxes *Salzhering* (Medemblik), *Hering* (Den Helder), *Zander* (Zandvoort), *Tiger* (Terschelling), *Eisbär* (Stavoren), *Löwe* (Opeinde) and *Schlei* (Schiernmonnikoog). Ofw. Scherfling dispatched three Lancasters during a 1. *Welle* patrol in *Raum Zander*; Hptm. Sigmund, *Kapitän* of the 10. Staffel, scored four Abschüsse, and the Maj. Lent/Ofw. Kubisch team one, during a sortie that they flew from Leeuwarden in Bf110 G-4 G9+AF between 00.46 and 01.48 hrs. II./NJG1 at St. Trond remained on the ground, as no 'heavies' passed through the GCI boxes in Belgium. Five Abschüsse went to III./NJG1. During a *Himmelbett* patrol that lasted between 00.47 and 02.34 hrs in Bf110 G-4 G9+EA, Oblt. Werner Husemann and his BF Fw. Rudolf Seufert of Stab NJG1 scored a triple Abschuss (confirmed on 19 December 1944), as did Oblt. Geiger, *Kapitän* of 7./NJG1. Geiger scored his 33rd-35th confirmed kills (all three *anerkannt* on 20 December 1944) during a sortie in *Himmelbett* box *Hase* (based at Harderwijk on the Eastern shore of the IJsselmeer) and under guidance by JLO Oblt. Schuhen. Interestingly, the R/T traffic of his patrol was overheard by a British listening station, which recorded: "You are near a hostile" (JLO to Geiger at 01.22 hrs); "Hostile is burning" (Geiger to JLO at 01.25 hrs); "Hostile is burning. Hostile is crashing" (Geiger to his JLO at 02.00-01 hrs); "I have contacted another hostile. Hostile is burning" (Geiger to his JLO at 02.09 hrs); "I must land immediately. My engine is out of action". (Geiger to JLO at 02.10 hrs). Oblt. Meister of Stab I./NJG4, temporarily detached to 1./NJG1 at Venlo, achieved a kill in box 5 A, as his *Funker* Uffz. Forke recorded in his diary: "Exceptionally, today we're to fly in the first wave once more, in 5 A. The weather isn't exactly auspicious. Even so, Tommies are coming. We go up, get a prompt vector. I acquire the target in my Li-set and give more guidance. Then Oblt. Meister fires, this time from dead astern. Since everything in front is obstructed (with his radio and radar equipment, author's note), I first see the Tommy as he burns close by us to port. He remains in the air a little while longer. Beneath the clouds a sudden bright glow. Impact. Sieg Heil, that went perfectly".

Operating against the returning bombers, Oblt. Drewes and Hptm. Jabs simultaneously flew a patrol, probably in box *Salzhering*, as Drewes recalled more than half a century later: "We had to deal with ever-more massive inbound flights, often with aircraft in a high echelon. What more could we now do as defenders? I flew a sortie in the same GCI sector as Hauptmann Jabs, as his wingman, in formation. That was far too gruelling. We made another attempt. We went to the same radio beacon of our sector in high echelon



An unusual victory claim on this night was a 515 Squadron Defiant which fell to the guns of Oblt. Hadeball off the Dutch coast. He understandably perhaps identified it as a Hurricane. (Coll. ww2images.com)

... that was 26 June 1943, the 3rd anniversary of *Nachtjagdgeschwader 1*. The ground controller provided a clear report of the flights going through, and I and Jabs sent a bomber down at almost the same moment”.

In three cases, two night fighter crews each claimed the destruction of one and the same aircraft, and two claims by Oblt. Geiger of 7./NJG1 have been identified as ‘double’ claims. At 02.00 and 02.09 hrs respectively, Geiger claimed two ‘Lancasters’ destroyed over the IJsselmeer. He apparently attacked 51 Squadron Halifax HR731 twice, the ‘heavy’ going down over the IJsselmeer at 02.01 some 20 km. west of Harderwijk. After evaluation by the *Wiesbadener (Abschuss) Kommission*, both Abschüsse was credited to Geiger as full victories on 20 December 1944. (The remains of this 51 Squadron aircraft and crew were recovered by the Dutch Air Force Recovery Team in August 1967). Hptm. Frank (2./NJG1) and Major Schaffer (*Kommodore* of NJG5) both claimed a Wellington shot down at 02.17 hrs in the Gouda/Leiden area; their Abschüsse both concern the loss of a 196 Squadron Wellington. In the end, Frank was credited with the kill. In a timespan of only four minutes, between 02.21 and 02.25 hrs, Hptm. Sigmund and Uffz. Baldischweiler (who flew in Bf110 G-4 G9+CZ under control of box *Löwe*) were both credited with the shooting down of a Stirling into the mud flats of the Waddensea. Their claims concern the loss of 15 Squadron BK699, which reportedly crashed into the Dantziggat, south of Ameland, following a night fighter attack, at 02.21 hrs. At 02.37 hrs, Hptm. Frank and Hptm. Wohlers (*Kommandeur* of IV./NJG4, attached to 3./NJG1) both claimed a Wellington destroyed near Gouda; again, their claims concern the loss of one aircraft, a 166 Squadron Wellington, and, again, Frank received official confirmation of the victory.

The Flak was credited with a relatively meagre tally of three kills, 61 Main Force aircraft returning with Flak damage, 9 of them severely shot up. One of the latter, 61 Squadron Lancaster W4830 was later abandoned near Baston:

-90 Sqn Stirling EH900: hit by 1./schw. Flak Abt. 430 (Eisb.), 2./schw. Flak Abt. 543 (Eisb.), 2.-6./schw. Flak Abt. 301, 2./schw. Flak Abt. 543 and 2. & 3./schw. Flak Abt. 429, crashing at Isingort nr Legden at 01.40 hrs.

-103 Sqn Lancaster ED528: was hit by 1./schw. Flak Abt. 550, 5./schw. Flak Abt. 333, 5./schw. Flak Abt. 221 and z.b.V. 5745, causing the two port engines to burst into flames, exploding 2 km north of Lüdinghausen at 01.16 hrs.

-101 Sqn Lancaster LM318: hit by 3./schw. Flak Abt. 429 (Eisb.), crashed SE of Lüdinghausen at 01.22 hrs.

Returning heavy bomber gunners claimed four *Nachtjäger* destroyed: an unidentified aircraft over Apeldoorn at 01.10 hrs by 75 Squadron Stirling BF434, a Ju88 to the SW of Hengelo by a 5 Group Lancaster at 01.25 hrs and a ‘Bf109’ 6 km. north of Coesfeld at 01.33 hrs by 50 Squadron Lancaster DV167, and, finally, a Ju88 over Harderwijk at 02.10 hrs by the rear gunner of 102 Squadron Halifax W7920. At 01.25 hrs, about 15 minutes before reaching Gelsenkirchen, Lancaster JA691 of 49 Squadron was engaged by a Ju88, which made two attacking passes. After his second pass, the Junkers flew over the cockpit of the Lancaster and collided with the port wing, tearing off the port aileron and damaging the flaps and outer fuel tank. The bomb load was jettisoned and JA691, in the hands of F/O H.J. Randall, limped back to Fiskerton, landing at 03.55 hrs. The bomber crew did not receive official credit for the destruction of the *Nachtjäger*, as this could not be confirmed.

Set against these claims, the *Himmelbett* *Nachtjagd* suffered the loss of two Bf110 G-4s in air combat. From the first fighter, G9+CR of 7./NJG1, the crew (Oblt. Rapp and his BF Uffz. Ortmann) baled out safely at Alemhoek at 03.00 hrs, but the second one was not so fortunate. At around 01.50 hrs, Lt. Denzel, a 9-confirmed victory ace of 12./NJG1 and leader of a detachment based at Bergen/Alkmaar flying in Bf110 G-4 G9+HZ, was caught by a 141 Squadron Beaufighter that was covering the Gelsenkirchen raid. For ten minutes both aircraft tried to out manoeuvre each other. Finally, the British fighter, in the hands of F/O Kelsey, got behind the Messerschmitt and

gave it a three-second burst of cannon and machine gunfire, which killed the German ace. Denzel’s *Bordfunker*, Uffz. Dunger, baled out with injuries before *Nachtjäger* crashed in a ball of flame in a meadow near Vollenhove, to the NW of Zwolle.

Eight aircraft laid magnetic mines off the Frisian island chain (between 00.46 and 00.56 hrs), 25 other ‘heavies’ performing the same duties off the French Atlantic coast (between 01.26 and 02.29 hrs). One 115 Squadron Lancaster of the latter force failed to return; it was shot down to the NW of Angers by Oblt. Gollasch of 11./NJG5.

Maj. Rolf Leuchs: 4	11./NJG1	Halifax	1½ km. S. Bergen/Alkmaar (<i>Hering</i> or <i>Salzhering</i>): 5.500 m.	00.51	78 Sqn Halifax JB928
Ofw. Karl-Heinz Scherfling: 14	10./NJG1	Lancaster	West-Beemster, 20 km. N. Amsterdam (<i>Zander</i>): 6.400 m.	00.54	100 Sqn Lancaster ED988
Oblt. Heinz-Martin Hadeball: 11	12./NJG4, det. 2./NJG1	Hurricane	sea 30 km NW Westkapelle (KG 28k, <i>Hamster</i>): 2.300 m.	01.00	515 Sqn Defiant AA572
Oblt. Hans Leickhardt: 4	2./NJG5, det. 11./NJG1	Lancaster	IJsselmeer 20 km NW Harderwijk (FM 73, <i>Hase</i>): 4.000 m.	01.06	106 Sqn Lancaster W4367
Maj. Helmut Lent: 71	Stab IV./NJG1	Wellington	IJsselmeer nr. Urk (FM 51, prob. <i>Eisbär</i>): 6.000 m.	01.13	466 Sqn Wellington HF544
Oblt. Werner Husemann: 6	Stab NJG1	Halifax	3 km. S. Hoorn (<i>Hering</i>): 6.000 m.	01.13	75 Sqn Stirling BK768
Oblt. Werner Husemann: 7	Stab NJG1	Stirling	Ziewent, 15 km. WNW Winterswijk (<i>Himmelbett</i>)	01.17	218 Sqn Stirling EH898
Oblt. Ludwig Meister: 10	Stab I./NJG4, det. 1./NJG1	Stirling	3 km SW Aalten, S. Winterswijk (5 A): 3.200 m.	01.23	214 Sqn Stirling BK767
Oblt. August Geiger: 33	7./NJG1	Stirling	Empel, 5 km. NNW Zutphen (HN 43, <i>Hase</i>): 5.600 m.	01.26	218 Sqn Stirling EF430
Hptm. Wilhelm Dormann: 12	9./NJG1	Halifax	Holtwick, 10 km. NNW Coesfeld (HP 79, 4 C): 5.800 m.	01.28	408 Sqn Halifax JB858.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 2. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 221, 5./schw. Flak Abt. 333, 5./schw. Flak Abt. 221, z.b.V. 5742 and z.b.V. 5745 ('Halifax Hegerort 01.35 hrs'), victory Hptm. Dormann confirmed on 20.12.1944</i>					
Maj. Günther Radusch: 26	Stab II./NJG3, det. Stab I./NJG1	Halifax	1 km. E. Wanroij, 20 km S. Nijmegen (5 B): 5.700 m.	01.58	51 Sqn Halifax JD261
Oblt. August Geiger: 34	7./NJG1	Lancaster	IJsselmeer 20 km E. Edam (FL 95, <i>Hase</i>): 4.200 m	02.00	51 Sqn Halifax HR731
Hptm. Wilhelm Dormann: 13	9./NJG1	Halifax	Gorssel, 6 km. N. Zutphen (HN 27, 4 C): 6.000 m.	02.01	427 Sqn Halifax DK190
Oblt. August Geiger: 35	7./NJG1	Lancaster	IJsselmeer 20 km ESE Edam (GL 31, <i>Hase</i>): 5.600 m.	02.09	51 Sqn Halifax HR731.
<i>Note: same claim as 02.00 hrs, both claims confirmed as full victories on 20.12.1944</i>					
Oblt. Erich Gollasch: 6	11./NJG5	Lancaster	Grez-Neuville, NW Angers (<i>Himmelbett</i>): 3.200 m.	02.11	115 Sqn Lancaster DS663
Hptm. Franz Buschmann: 3	12./NJG1	Lancaster	sea 50 km. W. Texel (DJ 74, <i>Salzhering</i>): 3.000 m.	02.17	44 Sqn Lancaster R5740
Hptm. Hans-Dieter Frank: 38	2./NJG1	Wellington	14 km. NNW Gouda (<i>Gorilla</i>): 5.300 m.	02.17	196 Sqn Wellington HE412
Oblt. Werner Husemann: 8	Stab NJG1	Lancaster	5 km SSE Zutphen (<i>Himmelbett</i>)	02.19	106 Sqn Lancaster R5572
Hptm. Rudolf Sigmund: 20	10./NJG1	Stirling	sea 8 km. E. Texel (DK 39b, <i>Salzhering</i>): 3.000 m.	02.22	15 Sqn Stirling BK699
<i>Note: same claim as Uffz. Baldischweiler 02.25 hrs, both claims confirmed as full victories by OKL/RLM on 20.12.1944</i>					
Uffz. Hans Baldischweiler: 2	12./NJG1	Stirling	Waddensea 5 km. NE Holwerd (CM 63 A, <i>Löwe</i>): 2.300 m.	02.25	15 Sqn Stirling BK699
Hptm. Rudolf Sigmund: 21	10./NJG1	Stirling	2 km. E. Hippolytushoef (EK 26, <i>Salzhering</i>): 6.000 m.	02.31	106 Sqn Lancaster W4256



A veteran 44 Squadron Lancaster, R5740 KM-O which became Hptm. Franz Buschmann's third victim on this night. (Coll. John Hartmann)

Hptm. Hans-Joachim Jabs: 28	11./NJG1	Halifax	twixt Alkmaar and Koedijk (FK 52, <i>Hering</i>): 5.400 m.	02.35	427 Sqn Halifax DK135
Hptm. Hans-Dieter Frank: 39	2./NJG1	Wellington	11 km. ENE Gouda (<i>Gorilla</i>): 3.800 m.	02.37	166 Sqn Wellington HF589
Oblt. Martin Drewes: 5	7./NJG3, det. IV/ NJG1	Lancaster	nr Den Hoorn, Texel island (<i>Salzhering</i>): 5.000 m.	02.40	57 Sqn Lancaster ED943
Hptm. Hans-Joachim Jabs: 29	11./NJG1	Halifax	Breezand, 13 km. S. Den Helder (EK 58, <i>Hering</i>): 4.200 m.	02.40	102 Sqn Halifax JB843
Hptm. Rudolf Sigmund: 22	10./NJG1	Wellington	Waddensea Holwerd/Ternaard (DL 91g, prob. <i>Tiger</i>): 4.800 m.	02.43	166 Sqn Wellington HE346
Hptm. Franz Buschmann: 4	12./NJG1	Halifax	sea 60 km. W. Den Helder (EH 24, <i>Salzhering</i>): 3.000 m.	02.45	106 Sqn Lancaster EE125 or 115 Sqn Lancaster DS666
Ofw. Heinz Vinke: 27	11./NJG1	Lancaster	sea 70 km. W. Den Helder (EH 26, <i>Salzhering</i>): 2.400 m	02.47	106 Sqn Lancaster EE125 or 115 Sqn Lancaster DS666
Ofw. Karl-Heinz Scherfling: 15	10./NJG1	Lancaster	sea 5 km. W. IJmuiden (GK 11f, <i>Zander</i>): 5.500 m.	02.51	101 Sqn Lancaster ED373
Hptm. Hans-Joachim Jabs: 30	11./NJG1	Lancaster	IJsselmeer 10 km N. Enkhuizen (EL 86ga, <i>Hering</i>): 5.000 m.	02.56	429 Sqn Wellington HF495 (Cat. B damaged).

Note: homeward-bound, attacked in Alkmaar area at 02.45 hrs by Bf110, setting bomb bay on fire (extinguished in steep dive) and injuring two of crew, crash-landed at Hardwick. Victory Hptm. Jabs confirmed as full victory on 20.12.1944

Hptm. Rudolf Sigmund: 23	10./NJG1	Lancaster	IJsselmeer 10 km N. Edam (FL 72e, <i>Hering</i>): 4.300 m.	03.01	9 Sqn Lancaster ED831
Ofw. Karl-Heinz Scherfling: 16	10./NJG1	Lancaster	5 km. S. Hillegom, S. Haarlem (<i>Zander</i>): 4.000 m.	03.08	103 Sqn Lancaster W4827



Sqn Ldr A M Hobbs and his crew prepare to board Lancaster ED831 WS-Y in June 1943. Less than a week later they all died in this aircraft when it was shot down by Hptm. Rudolf Sigmund of 10./NJG1. (coll. ww2images.com)

26-27 June 1943 MINELAYING

One homeward-bound 432 Squadron Wellington, out of a small force of eight Wellington *Gardeners* that were dispatched to the French Channel (dropping their mines between 01.17 and 01.24 hrs) was claimed destroyed by Fw. Hobusch of 4./NJG2. Eight further Wellingtons that sowed their magnetic mines off the French Atlantic coast between 02.01 and 02.14 hrs all returned safely.

Fw. Fritz Hobusch: 4	4./NJG2	Wellington	sea 80 km. SW Lorient (KK 83g, <i>Himmelbett</i>): 1.000 m.	01.42	432 Sqn Wellington HF568
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Note: date in OKL records and OKL/RLM Confirmed Abschussübersicht of 4./NJG2 erroneously given as 28 June 1943 01.42 hrs

27-28 June 1943 MINELAYING

30 Lancasters and Stirlings were sent on mine-laying duties in the Frisians (between 01.17 and 01.44 hrs), and off the French Atlantic coast (between 01.28 and 02.22 hrs). Oblt. Gollasch of 11./NJG5 claimed the only aircraft that failed to return; he shot homeward-bound 101 Squadron Lancaster ED377 down to the WNW of Angers whilst under *Himmelbett* control.

Oblt. Erich Gollasch: 7	11./NJG5	Lancaster	Angrie, 25 km. WNW Angers (<i>Himmelbett</i>): 2.800 m.	02.27	101 Sqn Lancaster ED377
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28-29 June 1943 KÖLN

Köln was subjected to three consecutive heavy raids in late June and early July, starting on the 28-29 June. Supported by 14 Fighter Command sorties that intruded on Venlo, Gilze-Rijen, Eindhoven, Florennes and St. Trond airfields, 608 aircraft were sent out to bomb the city between 01.40 and 02.26 hrs.

In reaction to the raid, the *Nachtjagd* made about 90 *Himmelbett* sorties, the first becoming airborne at 22.19 hrs and the last landing at 03.55 hrs. During the whole period when RAF aircraft were flying over the Continent, German Observer Corps posts along the Dutch and Belgian coast passed back by R/T messages about the flight of British aircraft, and many details of Flak, searchlights and explosions. British listening stations overheard the radio traffic of 25 GCI pursuits, but the actual number of radar chases was probably considerably higher, somewhere in the region of 40-50. The *Nachtjagd* effort was hampered by the dark night (no moon), moderate visibility and the prevailing thick layer of 10/10ths cloud en route and over the target. 17 *Nachtjäger* achieved 25 bomber *Abschüsse*, which exactly matches the number of Main Force losses. However, one of the *Nachtjagd* claims probably concerns a bomber that escaped damaged. A comparatively high number of nine 'heavies' returned with damage sustained in fighter attacks. One of these, 427 Squadron Halifax EB148 later crashed at Isleham. At least six of the *anerkannte* *Nachtjagd* *Abschüsse* were contested in vain by Flak, the Flak arm being credited with only one kill. 75 Main Force aircraft returned with Flak damage, 7 of them badly shot up:

-76 Sqn Halifax DK150: hit by 3./schw. Flak Abt. 383, 4./schw. Flak Abt. 475, 2. & 4./schw. Flak Abt. 133 and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 546, crashed at Angermund nr Düsseldorf at 02.17 hrs.

During the four hours after midnight, II./NJG1 employed 17 *Himmelbett*-controlled fighters over Belgium. Two crews had to abort their sortie due to engine failure, the 15 remaining Bf110 crews achieved 12 confirmed *Abschüsse* and one undecided *Feindberührung* (by Fw. Fries in *Raum Meise*), for no loss of their own. In one typical sortie, Lt. Hager and his BF Uffz. von Bergen of 4./NJG1 left St. Trond at 00.06 hrs for a patrol in *Raum 6 A* (Zonhoven). Almost 1 ½ hours later, Lt. Alfred Schürmann, the JLO of this *Raum*, and Uffz. von Bergen, using his *Lichtenstein* A/I, skilfully vectored Hager onto two outward-bound Halifaxes. Hager shot down both quarries from below and behind in the Maastricht area; his fiercely burning second victim exploded in mid-air only seconds before it crashed near Valkenburg. On landing back at St. Trond at 02.34 hrs, Hager's Bf110 G-4 G9+CC was subjected to a burst of gunfire from a Fighter Command intruder, which missed the *Nachtjäger*. Patrolling in *Raum Lurch* (at Liège) and under guidance of JLO Oblt. Riedel, Lt. Schnauffer and his *Funker* Lt. Dr. Baro in a Bf110 G-4 of Stab II./NJG1 scored a triple victory in the Liège area. They had a narrow escape during their third interception, as Schnauffer wrote in his Combat Report: "The impact from below astern on the starboard wing resulted in an explosion. The Halifax was ripped to pieces and only in the last instant I was able to turn away". Ofw. Schellwat, accompanied by his regular *Bordfunker* Uffz. Willmann of 5./NJG1 destroyed a 35

Major Günther Radosch, Gruppenkommandeur of II./NJG3 and temporarily attached to Stab I./NJG1, achieved two Halifax and two Lancaster kills during the 28-29 June 1943 Köln raid. One of the leading personalities in the *Nachtjagd*, 'Fips' Radosch survived the war as Kommodore of NJG3 with 65 confirmed night *Abschüsse* (Coll. Jochen Jahrow).

