

8-9 October 1943 HANNOVER AND BREMEN

Bomber Command mounted two major raids against German targets –Hannover and Bremen. Hannover was the target for 504 aircraft, which bombed between 01.22 and 01.54 hrs. As a major diversion to the Hannover raid, 119 aircraft (mainly Stirlings) were sent to Bremen; this force attacking between 01.08 and 01.26 hrs. The whole force on these two targets followed the same route until a point east of Meppen, when the Bremen force turned off to create a diversion at Bremen.

The approach of the combined force was first reported to the I. Jagdkorps HQ at 23.31 hrs, when the spearhead of the force was located near Den Helder. The stream, which was estimated as ‘approximately 400 aircraft’, was said to be heading in an easterly direction. In reaction, onwards from 23.50 hrs the Korps sent up 32 Bf110s and six Ju88s of NJG1 (1. JD) on *Himmelbett* patrols in 26 GCI boxes on the bombers’ outward-bound route. The first waves of another 160 twin-engined Nachtjäger of NJG1, 2, 3, 5 and 101 (109 Bf110s, 38 Ju88s and 13 Do217s) were sent up at around the same time on freelance *Wilde Sau* night fighting duties, just over half of the 304 aircraft that the Korps had available for immediate action. II./NJG3, the first of the freelance Gruppen, began taking off from Schleswig shortly before midnight; during the next 50 minutes, the mass of freelance twin-engined fighters were ordered to gather over *FF Marie*, SE of Bremen. 52 single-engined Wild Boars of JG300 and 301 were also scrambled by Hajo Herrmann’s 30th Jagd Division for target area Wild Boar night fighting.

Despite heavy jamming of the R/T traffic and ground radars in the GCI chain covering the Netherlands, a Lancaster of 7 Squadron was shot down by one of the *Himmelbett*-controlled fighters near Groningen, just before the running commentary of 2. JD, broadcasting from Stade, started to announce the course of the –still undivided– bomber stream: “*Hostile aircraft reported in Groningen area*”. “*Spearhead of hostiles on a course of 90 degrees* (i.e. due east, author’s note). *Measured height 5,000-6,000 metres*” (00.28-00.31 hrs). Due to strong British intruder activity in the Netherlands, the controller of 1. JD (Deelen) decided to break off the *Himmelbett* operations against the outward-bound bomber forces at an early stage. (One Bf110 made a forced-landing at Vechta after sustaining hits from a Mosquito of 605 Squadron). By 00.34 hrs, the bombers were reported north of Quakenbrück and four minutes later, the spearhead of the stream had penetrated to the Vechta area, whilst the fighters were ordered to stay near beacon *Marie* at 00.43 hrs.

At 00.50 hrs, a message was passed “*Hostiles in area south of Bremen near beacon M. Aircraft ordered to fly to large beacon M*”; the order to gather over *FF Marie* was repeated until 01.00 hrs.

At 01.08 hrs, when the first bombs were dropped on Bremen, the 2. JD controller decided that the main target was to be Bremen. Fighters were ordered to this city to operate over the target in Wild Boar fashion, above the Flak ceiling which was to be at 4,500 metres. Interestingly, the groups of twin-engined fighters were told, at 01.13 hrs, to patrol at different heights above the Flak. NJG1 were given the space between 5,000 and 5,300 metres as an interception area. Above them, from 5,600 to 5,900 metres were the fighters of NJG3 and higher still, at 6,200 to 6,500 metres NJG5 aircraft were permitted to hunt for the ‘heavies’. (No mention was made in the *Laufende Reportage* at which heights the elements of NJG2 and NJG101 were to operate over the target). Throughout the 18-minute attack on Bremen, both single and twin-engined fighters engaged the diversionary force. 15 combats were fought and two bombers shot down. A third Bremen raider, 35 Squadron Halifax HR777 was badly shot about by an unidentified Nachtjäger near Bersenbrück at 00.56 hrs, turned back and was written off in a crash-landing in the UK, and three Stirlings returned with fighter damage. Nachtjäger actually filed claims for eight Bremen raiders destroyed. In turn, a Bf110 of 1./NJG3 was shot down and crashed NW of Essen/Oldenburg, the *Bordfunker* sustaining injuries. One of the Nachtjäger that was involved in the air battle over Bremen was Lt. Heinz Grimm of Stab IV./NJG1. In the target area, Grimm achieved a Halifax *Abschuss*, which, incidentally, was never filed with the OKL/RLM. Only moments after the combat, his Bf110 G-4 G9+CE was hit by the Bremen Flak and Lt. Grimm was forced to bale out with severe burns, breaking both legs upon hitting the tail of his aircraft. He succumbed to his wounds four days later, and was decorated with the *Ritterkreuz* posthumously in February 1944, for his 24 confirmed (and two unconfirmed) *Abschüsse*.



On 8-9 October 1943, Lt. Heinz Grimm in Bf110 G-4 G9+CE of Stab IV./NJG1 was hit by Bremen-based Flak. He baled out with severe burns, breaking both legs upon hitting the tail of his aircraft and succumbed to his wounds four days later. In February 1944, he was posthumously decorated with the *Ritterkreuz*, for his 24 confirmed and two unconfirmed *Abschüsse*. (Coll. Christian Breitenbach).

Bremen-based Flak of the 8. Flak Division claimed 10 *Viermot* kills during the course of the night. Four of these were confirmed by the *Abschusskommission*, one solely to Flak and three being credited as shared victories to both Flak and Nachtjäger (including Hptm. Müller of Stab JG300 and Ofw. Klaiber and his *Funker* Ofw. Laurent of 3./NJG5):

-156 Sqn Lancaster ED969: coned by 2. & 3./Flakscheinw. Abt. 269 and 1. & 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138 (‘Lancaster nr. Obenaltendorf SE Otterndorf 01.30 hrs’), hit by unidentified Nachtjäger and crashed at Obenaltendorf, 21 km NW of Stade at 01.30 hrs. Note: filed with OKL as ‘8.FI.Div.+N.J.’

-102 Sqn Halifax HX173: coned by 3./Flakscheinw. Abt. 498, 3./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138 and 1. & 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 238, hit by 1. & 2./schw. Flak Abt. 606, 2. & 3./schw. Flak Abt. 262 (o), 1./schw. Flak Abt. 390 and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 542, crashed nr. Lichtenhorst at 01.30 hrs.

The 2. JD controller also believed a second wave of bombers to be heading for Bremen, as became clear from a message that he passed at 01.33 hrs: “*Further hostiles approaching Bremen. Aircraft ordered to stay over Bremen*”. This, in fact, was the Main Force on Hannover. It was not until 01.35 hrs, 13 minutes after zero hour and by which time almost half of the Main Force had already dropped their load on Hannover, that the 2. JD controller obviously discovered the true nature of the Bremen ruse and promptly dispatched the assembled mass of freelance fighters to Hannover, some 95 kms (60 miles) away: “*Aircraft ordered to fly at once to Hannover. New target Hannover*”, which was followed, four minutes later, by: “*All aircraft ordered to Hannover on a course of 150 degrees* (i.e. SSE, author’s note) *from Bremen to Hannover*”. Many fighters that were originally ordered to Bremen seem to have met the main bomber stream in the Hoya area on its way to Hannover and to have followed the aircraft to the primary target.

Although the 2. JD radio traffic was interfered with by ‘ABC’, just as on the previous night, within minutes after the announcements of 01.35-39 hrs that Hannover was the main objective, dozens of fighters arrived over this city. With the assistance of searchlights forming a lane across the target, by the fair and cloudless weather prevailing over Hannover, and by the *Laufende Reportage* of 2. JD, Nachtjäger claimed at least 20 combat victories in an action-packed half hour over and around the target. Participating in the fierce air battle over the burning city were a number of flying instructors of II./NJG101, operating from Deelen in Holland, who scored two probable *Abschüsse* in Wild Boar fashion. One crew claimed a third probable kill, over a Stirling of the diversionary force to Bremen. All of these three ‘probables’ were later confirmed as full victories. The Wild Boars of JG300 and 301 also made an appearance over the city under attack; they claimed six bombers shot down, three of which were later *anerkannt*. One of the claims in the latter category, for a Lancaster shot down to the SW of Hannover by Lt. Treusch, concerns the loss of JA706 of 7 Squadron. Already damaged in an attack by Lt. Fehre of 4./NJG3 and his crew of BF Uffz. Malies and BS Gefr. Schreiter (who were given official credit for a full victory on 10 May 1944), Lt. Treusch gave the bomber the *coup de grace*. Eventually, the Wild Boar pilot received official credit for an *endgültige Vernichtung*, or final destruction of an already damaged aircraft, by the *Abschusskommission*.

In return, the rear gunners on board Halifax JD417 of 78 Squadron and 44 Squadron Lancaster JA700 each claimed a Ju88 as destroyed over Hannover, respectively at 01.31 and 01.38 hrs; JD417 was badly damaged in the combat. The MUG of 57 Squadron Lancaster JB513 engaged a Ju88 at 01.39 hrs, setting one engine ablaze and causing it to explode over the target, and, finally, the rear gunner on board Wellington LN236 of 432 Squadron destroyed a fourth Ju88 over Hannover at 01.41 hrs. Set against these claims, the I. Jagdkorps reported the loss of three twin-engined Nachtjäger as shot down in air combat: Bf110 G-4 G9+RY of 11./NJG1 at Diepholz, Me210 A-1 G9+AE of Stab IV./NJG1 near Cloppenburg and Ju88 C-6 R4+MP of 6./NJG2 over Hannover. The pilot of the latter aircraft, Lt. Gross with one victory and his crew were all killed in the crash. In addition, the gunners on board 405 Squadron Lancaster JA980 destroyed an unidentified Nachtjäger after a long running fight on the first leg out of the target, seeing it go down and crash. Just three minutes later, another fighter (a Bf110 G-4 in the hands of Ofw. Sawert of 4./NJG5) came in from below at 18,000 ft and raked the Lancaster from nose to tail, the ‘heavy’ going down on fire near Engern, reportedly at 02.20 hrs. (JA980 was also claimed shot down by Flak, in co-operation with four searchlights).

Apart from these Nachtjagd losses, a Ju88 A-4 *Beleuchter* of III./KG3 was destroyed by ‘friendly’ flak and crashed at Heeßen/Bad Eilsen near Bückeberg, without injury to the crew. A single-engined Nachtjäger was destroyed in quite unusual fashion: north of Hannover, Lancaster JA902 of 467 Squadron was involved in a head-on collision with a Fw190, which was destroyed. The Lancaster lost its front turret in the encounter, the crew’s WOp baling out, but managed to return safely. The identity of the fighter remains unknown; the 30. Jagd Division only reported a Bf109 G-6 of 1./JG300 as 60% damaged in combat with a Halifax and a Fw190 A-6 of Stab JG301 as 40% damaged in somersaulting on landing at München-Riem, the pilot receiving injuries.

In the whirling chaos over Hannover, some overclaiming on the part of the defending night fighters was inevitable: whereas 27 Hannover raiders were lost, plus six others returning with fighter damage, the Nachtjäger that fought the Hannover force submitted 25 victory claims.

Oblt. Schnauffer and his crew of Fw. Rumpelhardt (BF) and Uffz. Gänzler (BS) of 12./NJG1 claimed a Halifax and a Wellington shot down. Their first victim, LW317 of 158 Squadron that impacted at Schwaförden, was also claimed destroyed by Flak of the 8. Flak Division, but the Flak gunners’ claims were officially turned down by the *Abschusskommission*. The Schnauffer crew’s second adversary (a 432 Squadron Wellington, the only *Wimpey* out of 28 participating aircraft of this type lost on the raid) crashed in front of the church of Holtensen to the SW of Hannover. This this *Abschuss* was also contested –unsuccessfully– by Flak of the 15. Flakbrigade. According to an entry in the War Diaries of the XI. *Luftgau Kommando*, the Wellington was 100% destroyed in the crash at 01.42 hrs, only small and scattered pieces of the crew were found at the place of impact. Fw. Rumpelhardt recounts his 36th *Feindflug*: “*Heinz had continued to refine his method of attack against one or both of the bomber’s wings. He was thus able to set alight the port inner engine of a bomber on his first firing pass. It appeared to be burning fiercely. In the light of the blazing city below, however, the rear gunner had caught sight of us and surprised us with his salvos. We didn’t realise what damage we had sustained until we inspected the machine after touching*

THE HANNOVER AND BREMEN RAIDS

8th/9th OCTOBER 1943

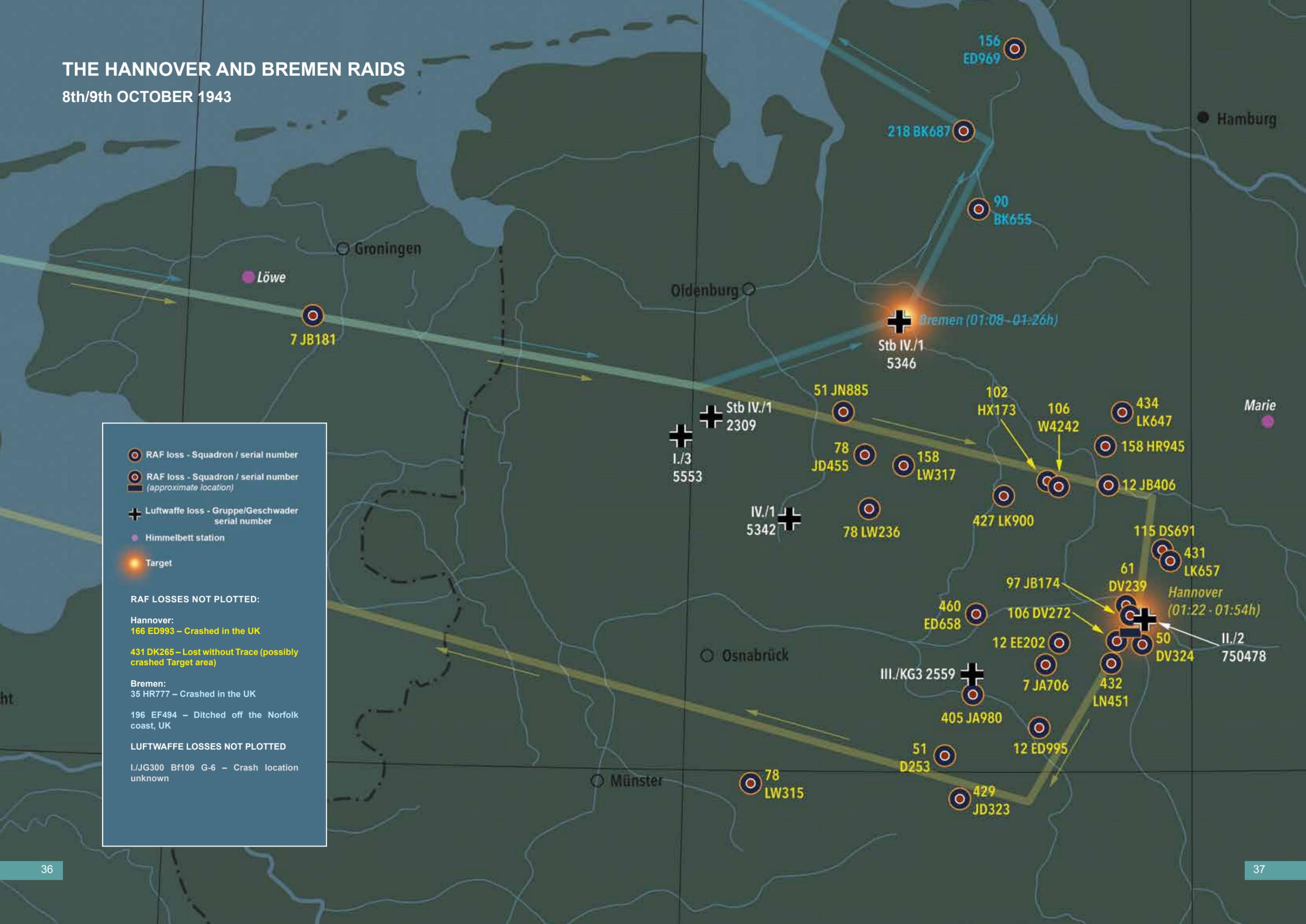
- RAF loss - Squadron / serial number
- RAF loss - Squadron / serial number (approximate location)
- Luftwaffe loss - Gruppe/Geschwader serial number
- Himmelbett station
- Target

RAF LOSSES NOT PLOTTED:

Hannover:
 166 ED993 – Crashed in the UK
 431 DK265 – Lost without Trace (possibly crashed Target area)

Bremen:
 35 HR777 – Crashed in the UK
 196 EF494 – Ditched off the Norfolk coast, UK

LUFTWAFFE LOSSES NOT PLOTTED
 I./JG300 Bf109 G-6 – Crash location unknown



down. We had taken one hit in the port drop tank, which, along with its starboard 'colleague' carried our supplementary fuel reserves, enabling us to considerably increase our endurance. Ordinarily these tanks ought to have been jettisoned before engaging an enemy aircraft since if the empty or partially empty containers were hit during air combat there was a great risk of explosion. (As is well known it's not the liquid contents themselves that would burn but the vapourised gases...). I was at a loss to understand why Heinz had not managed to jettison the tanks and we didn't discuss the matter. Fortunately there were no consequences and we once again enjoyed an enormous stroke of luck. The blazing Halifax continued to plough straight ahead through the night skies before lurching into its death throes, plummeting almost vertically down and exploding just prior to smashing into the ground. The crash site was located south of Bremen. Unfortunately there were several houses in the area of Schwaförden that shared the fate of the enemy aircraft as it came down in their vicinity. We subsequently headed towards Hannover, where, after thirty minutes flying time, we once again made contact with an enemy aircraft, which unfortunately for us failed to result in any visible effect. Heinz had in fact pulled the nose up too high, which allowed the bomber to fly too quickly through his gunsight. We were sure we had achieved strikes but there were no signs of fire that would have proved fatal. I suspect that Heinz had misjudged his pass and was unable to react spontaneously to compensate for the Tommy's coolly flown defensive manoeuvres. As it was we soon lost sight of him. Just minutes later, however, a third Halifax, likewise returning homewards, wandered in front of our guns. Having taken on board the lessons of his earlier mishap our 'driver' had mastered his plan of attack on this occasion. It was one of the finest that I had ever experienced. In next to no time the bomber's entire starboard wing was in flames. Defensive fire was notable by its absence. Explosion and impact followed so quickly that we feared that hardly any of the crew would have had the time to jump clear. With the last of the signal flares that had been going off against the horizon now gradually dying down we turned for home. We touched down safely at 02:43 without further incident after some two and a half hours in the air. I had not been particularly happy with my skills at the radar and although we had made several intercepts after a fashion, I still found the whole Wild and Tame Boar business rather difficult and felt very much a beginner. It had not been a classic Lichtenstein intercept. There had been far too much interference or jamming on the set to the point where I could barely use it..."

Towards the end of the Hannover raid, the Nachtjäger onslaught slowly petered out, but the gunfire of the Hannover Flak defences increased again. The 15. Flakbrigade was credited with nine confirmed victories, three further claims were credited as shared victories to both Nachtjäger and Flak:

-61 Sqn Lancaster DV239: coned by 1./Flakscheinw. Abt. 169 (Werfer 17), hit by 3./schw. Flak Abt. 521 (o), 6./schw. Flak Abt. 801 (o), Pers. Battr. Nord & Süd/schw. Flak Abt. 185, 2./schw. Flak Abt. 185 and crashed at Hannover-Hainholz at 01.37 hrs. Note: claimed as 'Halifax'.

-106 Sqn Lancaster DV272. coned by Scheinwerfer Rgt. 56 (Werfer 62), hit by 2.-5./schw. Flak Abt. 521, 3./schw. Flak Abt. 461 and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 418 (Eisb.), crashed at Ronnenberg at 01.41 hrs.

-431 Sqn Halifax LK657: coned by 2./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 139 (Werfer 59), hit by 1., 2. & 4./schw. Flak Abt. 801 (o), Pers. Battr. Ost I schw. Flak Abt. 801, Pers. Battr. Süd schw. Flak Abt. 185 (o), crashed at Klein-Burgwedel, NE of Hannover at 01.46 hrs.

-unidentified 'Stirling': coned by 1./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 139, hit by 1.-5./schw. Flak Abt. 801 (o) and Pers. Battr. Ost I schw. Flak Abt. 801, crashed in centre of Hannover at 01.47 hrs.

-51 Sqn Halifax JD253: hit by 1. & 2./schw. Flak Abt. 243 and 1.-4./schw. Flak Abt. 625, crashed at Dörentrup/Farmbeck at 01.50 hrs.

-405 Sqn Lancaster JA980: coned by 3./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 139, 1. & 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 149 and 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 619, hit by 2. & 3./schw. Flak Abt. 801 (O), Pers. Battr. Ost I/schw. Flak Abt. 801, 4. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 521 (o) and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 418 (Eisb.), crashed at Engern, 3 km. E. Rinteln at 01.55 hrs. Note: Flak Abschussmeldung bears note 'victory achieved in co-operation with Nachtjagd', participating Nachtjäger unidentified.

-158 Sqn Halifax HR945: coned by 3./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 139, 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 619 and 2. & 3./Flakscheinw. Abt. 169, hit by 1. & 6./schw. Flak Abt. 461 (o), 2./schw. Flak Abt. 185 (o) and Pers. Battr. Nord & Süd/schw. Flak Abt. 185, crashed 4 ½ km NE Hudemühlen at 02.10 hrs. Note: Flak Abschussmeldung bears note 'victory achieved in co-operation with Nachtjagd', participating Nachtjäger unidentified.

-78 Sqn Halifax LW315: hit by 1. & 2./schw. Flak Abt. 423, 1.-4./schw. Flak Abt. 625 and zbV 5768, crashed at Harsewinkel, 12 km. NW Gütersloh at 02.15 hrs.

-429 Sqn Halifax JD323: coned by 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 139, 1. & 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 169 and 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 149, hit by 2., 4. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 521 and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 418 (Eisb.), crashed at Siebenhöfen near Blomberg, 13 km. E. Detmold at 02.20 hrs.

The controller of 2. JD announced at 01.55 hrs that the attack on Hannover was over: "Attack subsiding. Only a few hostiles still there". Although, at first, fighters were withdrawn in the direction of Bremen ("All aircraft ordered to fly between Bremen and Hannover, a little to the south of beacon M") at 02.08 hrs, instructions to land were passed from 02.16 hrs onwards, whilst the controller issued an urgent warning about the presence of intruder aircraft half an hour after the end of the Hannover raid. The rear gunner on board homeward-bound 426 Squadron Lancaster DS711 was credited with the destruction of an (unidentified) attacking Ju88, which was seen to explode south of Osnabrück at 02.08 hrs.

Apparently no attempts were made to hunt down the bombers on their return journey, apart from a few *Himmelbett* sorties that were flown over the Netherlands. Before the weary bomber crews reached the safety of England, only one more heavy bomber Abschuss was logged by the German defences. An unidentified 'heavy' was claimed destroyed by a night fighter of 2./NJG1 operating under GCI control in box *Biber* on the Dutch coast, a claim which was later downgraded by the *Abschuss Kommission* to a 'probable victory'. The last *Himmelbett* patrols landed by 04.10 hrs.

The I. Jagdkorps War Diaries entry for 9 October 1943 summed up the nights total tally for the Korps as '39 contacts with the enemy, resulting in 4 certain and 27 probable claims'. After official evaluation, 27 Nachtjagd claims were confirmed by the *Abschusskommission*; eight 'heavies' returned with Flak damage and nine damaged in Nachtjäger attacks.

Ofw. Heinz Vinke: 29	11./NJG1	Halifax	3 km SW Norg, SW Groningen (Löwe): 5.600 m	00.28	7 Sqn Lancaster JB181
Lt. Erwin Ernst: 3	9./NJG1	Halifax	Wehrbleck, W. Nienburg (FS 5): 4.500 m.	01.08	78 Sqn Halifax LW236
Note: coned by 1. & 3./Flakscheinw. Abt. 238, 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138 and 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 498, also claimed by Flak of 1.-3./schw. Flak Abt. 262, 1./schw. Flak Abt. 390, 1./schw. Flak Abt. 542 and 4./schw. Flak Abt. 611 ('Halifax nr. Wehrbleck 01.08 hrs, 8. Flak Div. + N.J.'), claim Lt. Ernst confirmed on 10.5.1944					
Hptm. Karl Becker: 2	2./NJG3	Halifax	1 ½ km. S. Stocksdorf (Himmelbett): 6.000 m.	01.10	51 Sqn Halifax JN885.
Note: coned by 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 268 and 1.-3./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138, also claimed by Flak of 1. & 4./schw. Flak Abt. 231, 5./schw. Flak Abt. 231 (o) and 2. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 222 ('Halifax nr. Beckeln SW Wildeshausen 01.10 hrs, 8. Flak Div. + N.J.'), claim Hptm. Becker confirmed on 10.5.1944					
Uffz. Wilhelm Gölzenleuchter	2./NJG3	Halifax	Lichtenhorst nr. Rodewald: 5.200 m.	01.11	ASM, 102 Sqn Halifax HX173.
Note: also claimed by Flak searchlights and Flak of 8. Flak Div. ('Halifax nr. Lichtenhorst 01.30 hrs'), claim Uffz. Gölzenleuchter rejected and victory credited by OKL to 8. Flak Div. on 4.6.1944					
Oblt. Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauffer: 28	12./NJG1	Halifax	Schwaförden, 8 km. N. Sulingen: 5.100 m.	01.13	158 Sqn Halifax LW317.
Note: coned by 3. & 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138 and 3. & 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 498, also claimed by Flak of 1. & 3.-5./schw. Flak Abt. 611 (o), 3./schw. Flak Abt. 262 (o) and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 390 (o) ('Halifax Schwaförden 3000 m 01.16 hrs, 8. Fl. Div. + N.J.'). Flak claim rejected by OKL on 10.5.1944 and victory credited to Oblt. Schnauffer on 10.5.1944					
Fw. Kurt Emler	7./JG300	Stirling	20 km SE Bremen (WNW LF Marie): 6.200 m.	01.17	VNE, prob. 620 Sqn Stirling EF433 (Cat. AC damaged).
Note: attacked by 'Ju88' or 'Me210' on bombing run near Bremen at 01.15 hrs, damaged in tailplane, rudder, flaps and rear gun turret. Abschussmeldung bears note that Fw. Emler's unit made official (posthumous) enquiry with Luftflotte Kdo. Reich on 10.5.44 re. confirmation of claim. Abschuss not listed in OKL/RLM 7./JG300 Confirmed Abschussübersicht					
Fw. Herbert Ludwig: 5	6./NJG101	Stirling	10-20 km. SE Bremen	01.23	prob. 620 Sqn Stirling EF433 (Cat. AC damaged).
Note: same claim as Fw. Emler 01.17 hrs, claim Fw. Ludwig confirmed on 10.5.1944 (EF433 crew reported attacked by 'Ju88' or 'Me210' on bombing run near Bremen at 01.15 hrs, damaged in tailplane, rudder, flaps and rear gun turret.					
Lt. Kummer (?) : 1	Stab II./JG301	Lancaster	5 km. NW Hannover: 6.200 m.	01.24	Hannover raid, unidentified.
Note: victory confirmed on 10.5.1944					
Hptm. Paul Szameitat: 16	5./NJG3	Stirling	30 km. SW Stade: 4.500 m.	01.25	90 Sqn Stirling BK655
Note: coned by 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 268, 2. & 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138 and 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 269, also claimed by Flak of 2. & 3./schw. Flak Abt. 231, 3. & 4./schw. Flak Abt. 222, 2./schw. Flak Abt. 222 (o) and 3./schw. Flak Abt. 185 ('Stirling nr. Rhade 01.30 hrs, 8. Fl. Div. + N.J.'). Flak claims rejected by OKL on 10.5.1944, victory credited to Hptm. Szameitat on 27.5.1944					
Ofw. Fritz Brandt: 1	4./NJG101	Lancaster	SE Bremen	01.25	Bremen raid, unidentified.
Note: victory confirmed on 10.5.1944					

The remains of 158 Squadron Halifax LW317 at Schwaförden (Coll. Matthias Zeisler).



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Lt. Karl Rechberger: 3	12./NJG3	Lancaster	over target Hannover: 5.300 m.	01.25	prob. 97 Sqn Lancaster JB174
<i>Note: victory confirmed on 19.6.1944</i>					
Oblt. Karl-Heinz Seeler	1./JG301	Halifax	2 km. N. Rhade: 2.800 m.	01.27	ASM, 90 Sqn Stirling BK655
<i>Note: claim not listed in OKL/RLM 1./JG301 Confirmed Abschussübersicht, rejected and victory credited to Hptm. Szameitat (claim 01.25 hrs)</i>					
Hptm. Friedrich Karl Müller: 9	Stab JG300	Halifax	NW Hannover: 4.800 m.	01.29	427 Sqn Halifax LK900.
<i>Note: coned by 1. & 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 269 and 3. & 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138, also claimed by Flak of 3./schw. Flak Abt. 185 and 1.-5./schw. Flak Abt. 222 ('Halifax nr. Holtorf 01.20 hrs, in co-operation with Nachtjagd'). Victory credited by OKL as shared victory to Flak searchlights, Flak and Hptm. Müller on 4.6.1944</i>					
Fw. Kurt Emler	7./JG300	Stirling	N. Hannover: 5.900 m.	01.32	VNE: ASM, Hannover raid, unidentified
<i>Note: claim not listed in OKL/RLM 7./JG300 Confirmed Abschussübersicht</i>					
Lt. Josef Kraft: 3	Stab II./NJG5	Stirling	40-50 km. N. Bremen: 4.000 m.	01.32	218 Sqn Stirling BK687.
<i>Note: coned by 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 268, 1./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138 and 1. & 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 269, also claimed by Lt. Augenstein at 01.42 hrs and by Flak of 5./schw. Flak Abt. 117, 3.-6./schw. Flak Abt. 531 and 2./schw. Flak Abt. 542 ('Stirling Ebersdorf 01.31 hrs'), credited as full victories by OKL to both Lt. Kraft and Lt. Augenstein on 10.5.1944</i>					
Hptm. Hans-Wolfgang von Niebelschütz: 7	Stab IV./NJG5	Lancaster	Hannover	01.33	prob. 115 Sqn Lancaster DS691
Hptm. Paul Semrau: 15	Stab III./NJG2	4-mot	10 km. NNW Hannover: 5.900 m.	01.35	<i>Hannover raid, unidentified.</i>
<i>Note: victory confirmed on 10.5.1944</i>					
Oblt. Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauffer: 29	12./NJG1	Wellington	nr Holtensen, SW Hannover: 5.300 m.	01.42	432 Sqn Wellington LN451.
<i>Note: coned by 1.-3./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 169 and 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 149, also claimed by Flak of 4. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 521 (o) Grossbattr, 2./schw. Flak Abt. 521 (o) and 3. & 4./schw. Flak Abt. 801 ('Wellington nr. Holtensen SW Hannover 01.42 hrs'). Flak claim marked 'VNE: ASM', rejected and victory credited to Oblt. Schnauffer on 10.5.1944</i>					
Lt. Hans-Heinz Augenstein: 17	9./NJG1	Stirling	Ebersdorf 7 km NW Bremervörde: 6.100 m	01.42	218 Sqn Stirling BK687
Uffz. Heinz Amsberg: 2	9./NJG1	Lancaster	nr Schwarmstedt (FU 1): 5.300 m.	01.42	12 Sqn Lancaster JB406.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 5./schw. Flak Abt. 801, 6./schw. Flak Abt. 461, 2./schw. Flak Abt. 185 and Pers. Battr. Nord/schw. Flak Abt. 185 ('Halifax nr. Schwarmstedt/ Fallingbostal 01.35 hrs'). Flak claim confirmed by OKL on 10.5.1944, victory Uffz. Amsberg confirmed on 10.5.1944</i>					
Ofw. Armin Klaiber: 1	3./NJG5	Lancaster	25 km. NE Hannover: 5.200 m.	01.42	prob. 106 Sqn Lancaster W4242
<i>Note: coned by 1./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138, 3. & 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 498 and 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 238, also claimed by Flak of 2. & 4./schw. Flak Abt. 611 (o), 4./schw. Flak Abt. 262 (o), 3./schw. Flak Abt. 606 (o), 1./schw. Flak Abt. 390 (o) and 1./schw. Flak Abt. 542 (o) ('Lancaster nr. Rodewald/Lichtenhorst 01.45 hrs'). Victory credited by OKL as shared victory to Flak searchlights, Flak and Ofw. Klaiber on 4.6.1944</i>					
Lt. Otto Brüning	1./JG300	4-mot	W. Hannover: 3.500 m.	01.43	ASM, 106 Sqn Lancaster DV272.
<i>Note: also claimed by 15. Flak Brigade ('Lancaster Ronnenberg/Hannover 01.41 hrs'). Brüning's Abschussmeldung bears note that his unit made (posthumous) official enquiry with Luftflotte Kdo. Reich 10.5.1944 re. confirmation of Abschuss. Claim not listed in OKL/RLM 1./JG300 Confirmed Abschussübersicht, Flak claim confirmed on 10.5.1944</i>					
Uffz. Otto Kutzner: 1	5./NJG3	Lancaster	S. Hannover (i.Zus.W.): 3.000 m.	01.46	50 Sqn Lancaster DV324.
<i>Note: coned by 2./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 139 (Werfer 59), also claimed by Flak of 1./schw. Flak Abt. 418 (Eisb.), 6./schw. Flak Abt. 801 (o) and 2., 4. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 521 ('Lancaster nr. Wilkenburg S. Hannover 01.50 hrs'). Flak and Flak searchlight claims confirmed by OKL on 10.5.1944, claim Uffz. Kutzner confirmed as H(erausschuss) on 18.5.1944</i>					
Hptm. Siegfried Hahn: 8	9./NJG3	Halifax	Langenhagen nr Hannover: 5.400 m.	01.48	<i>Hannover raid, unidentified</i>
<i>Note: victory confirmed on 18.5.1944</i>					
Lt. Paul Fehre: 1	4./NJG3	Halifax	15 km. SW Hannover: 4.500 m.	01.48	7 Sqn Lancaster JA706.
<i>Note: coned by 3./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 139, 1. & 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 149 and 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 619 ('Lancaster nr. Altenhagen 01.47 hrs, 15. Flakbrigade + N.I.')</i>					
Lt. Werner Treusch: 3	6./JG300	Lancaster	SW Hannover (i.Zus.W., e.V.): 3.900 m.	01.48	E.V., 7 Sqn Lancaster JA706.
<i>Note: same claim as Lt. Fehre 01.48 hrs, Lt. Fehre credited with full victory 10.5.1944, claim Lt. Treusch credited as E.V. (Endgültige Vernichtung) on 12.6.1944</i>					
Uffz. Ernst Reitmeyer: 3	3./NJG5	Lancaster	NE target Hannover: 5.000 m.	01.50	prob. 434 Sqn Halifax LK647
Maj. Günther Radosch: 40	Stab NJG5	Lancaster	20 km. W. Hannover: 4.200 m.	01.51	<i>Hannover raid, unidentified.</i>
<i>Note: victory confirmed on 27.5.1944</i>					
Hptm. Ernst Zechlin: 2	4./NJG5	Lancaster	40 km. WSW Hannover: 6.200 m.	01.52	460 Sqn Lancaster ED658
Lt. Hans-Joachim Beck: 1	6./NJG101	4-mot	SW Hannover	01.54	12 Sqn Lancaster ED995
Ofw. Heinrich Säwert: 5	4./NJG5	Lancaster	W. Hannover: 5.500 m.	02.00	78 Sqn Halifax JD455
<i>Note: coned by 1., 3. & 4./Flakscheinw. Abt. 498 and 3./Flakscheinw. Abt. 138, also claimed by Flak of 1. & 4./schw. Flak Abt. 262, 1./schw. Flak Abt. 606 and 1., 3. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 611 (Grossbattr) ('Halifax nr. Stocksdorf S. Bassum 02.00 hrs'). Flak claim rejected by OKL on 10.5.1944, victory Ofw. Säwert confirmed on 10.5.1944</i>					
Oblt. Gustav Tham: 4	11./NJG5	Lancaster	Barsinghausen, 10 km. W. Hannover (i.Zus.W.)	02.04	12 Sqn Lancaster EE202.
<i>Note: coned by 1./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 139, 1. & 2./Flakscheinw. Abt. 169 and 3./Res. Flakscheinw. Abt. 149, also claimed by Flak of 1., 2. & 6./schw. Flak Abt. 801, Pers. Battr. Ost I/schw. Flak Abt. 801 and 2./schw. Flak Abt. 521 ('Lancaster nr. Barsinghausen, SW Hannover 02.04 hrs'). Claim Oblt. Tham and Flak searchlight and Flak claims all confirmed by OKL as shared victory on 10.5.1944</i>					
Uffz. Josef Brunner	2./NJG1	Halifax	sea 35 km. W. Den Haag (HH 76, Biber)	03.04	ASM, Hannover raid, unidentified.
<i>Note: claim not listed in OKL/RLM 2./NJG1 Confirmed Abschussübersicht</i>					

Four unescorted American bomber forces were routed as a single force across the North Sea and Denmark before the Bomb Divisions split to attack four targets in East Prussia and Poland. 90 Fortresses bombed Anklam, 80 Fortresses attacked Marienburg, 40 Liberators targeted Danzig and 100 Fortresses bombed Gdynia, all between 11.44 and 13.23 hrs.

Probably because the Americans took the gamble to send out the 'heavies' completely without escort, the I. Jagdkorps reacted with a massive defensive effort, totalling 566 fighter sorties, including all of the around 100 twin-engined Nachtjäger that were deemed suitable for daylight operations. On the outward-bound route, both the single-engined Tagjäger and the Nachtjäger were unable to engage the *Amis*, but 20 twin-engined night fighters of NJG2 and NJG5 controlled from Berlin by the JLO of I. JD, attempted interception of the Anklam force in the target area. At 11.20 hrs, these fighters were warned of '140 Allied aircraft 25 km east of Stralsund', which was some 50 kms away from the bombers' target. 18 minutes later, the bombers were reported 25 km SW of Anklam. During the first leg of the return route, Fw. Brendel of 9./NJG5 achieved a 'brennender Herausschuss' (aircraft shot out of formation on fire), which was confirmed to him as a full victory on 17 June 1944. Hptm. Borchers, *Kommandeur* of III./NJG5, also filed a 'brennender Herausschuss' and Ofw. Altner of 8./NJG5 claimed an 'Abschussbeteiligung an einer Boeing' during his 52nd *Feindflug* in Bf110 C9+ES, as he recorded in his *Flugbuch*. Altner's claim, however, is not listed in the OKL/RLM Confirmed *Abschussübersicht* of his Staffel, and was most probably rejected.

Operating singly or in small formations and aided by the perfect, cloudless weather conditions, elements of NJG2, NJG3 and NJG101 successfully engaged the combat boxes on the return routes, predominantly over the Bay of Danzig, the Baltic, over Jütland, and over the North Sea. Six crews of these Geschwader were each credited with a B-17 kill, all achieved over Denmark and Schleswig Holstein, a further five claims for a B-17 destroyed (by Ofw. Ternieden of Stab II./NJG2, Ofw. Schmale of 3./NJG3, Oblt. Szardenings of Stab II./NJG3, who flew Ju88 C-6 D5+BC on this occasion, Lt. Beck and Fw. Ludwig (both of 6./NJG101), plus two B-24 Abschüsse of the Danzig raid, which were submitted by Lt. Reichenberger of 2./NJG2 and Uffz. Füttscher of 11./NJG3, were all turned down after investigation by the *Wiesbadener Kommission*. Ogefr. Heinrich Bode, BS to Uffz. Füttscher of 11./NJG3 noted in his *Flugbuch*: "9.10.43. Ju88 +HW. T/o Kastrup 13.56, landing Kastrup 16.02. First daylight sortie with three Ju88s against 34 Liberators and Fortresses. Strong return fire. Lt. Lippert forced to make an emergency landing. We attacked until we had spent all our ammunition, scoring hits in cockpit and both wings. Abschuss of one Liberator". Lt. Stock of 12./NJG3, who had become airborne from Grove in Ju88 D5+OX at 13.59 hrs, claimed a 'Boeing Fortress II' shot down at Juvre Sand, north of Römö Island, at 14.54 hrs. Although this Abschuss can be positively tied to the loss of B-17F 42-30802 'Gynida' of the 388 BG/560BS, it was denied to the claimant, as stated in the *Leistungsbuch* of Uffz. Heinz Philipp: "Involved in the Abschuss as 1st Mechanic in crew Lt. Stock (pilot) and Uffz. Eiben (BF). Claim was not confirmed".

A *Kette* (4-aircraft formation) from NJG2, led by Geschwader *Kommodore* Obstlt. Karl Hülshoff and his crew of Fw. Meyer (*Funker*) and Ofw. Licht (BS), engaged a *Pulk* of B-17s returning from Gdynia. Lt. Ewald Wüstenfeld in Bf110 G-4 R4+VL of 3./NJG2, who had already flown a fruitless sortie over Northern Germany between 11.09 and 12.35 hrs, was among this small formation, and later recorded in his *Flugbuch*: "T/o Greifswald 13.53 hrs, Tagjagd with enemy contact of ca. 100 Boeings over the Baltic south of Kopenhagen, landed Pütznitz 15.18 hrs". Obstlt. Hülshoff claimed a B-17 shot down on Lolland Island, but, despite the fact that his Abschuss was officially confirmed by the RLM on 19 August 1944, modern research showed that no aircraft actually crashed on Lolland that day. Major Rolf Jung, *Kommandeur* of I./NJG2, and his crew of Ofw. Theo Schürcks (BF) and Fw. Heinz Lüttringhaus (BS) in a Bf110 G-4 scored a Fortress kill, which was *anerkannt* on 24 June 1944. Jung recounted long after the war: "During the attack on this formation I damaged a B-17, I saw smoke erupting from the port inner engine. As I had myself suffered many hits (certainly more than 50), my instruments had become unserviceable and the landing gear no longer functioned, I had become more careful, placed myself as previously agreed in the sun against the formation, where we had intended to join up again. But I remained on my own and flew along beside the formation. When one of the machines dropped behind (I believe the one I had damaged), I said to my radio operator and mechanic that we should force it down to land. They agreed and just before Samsö I approached the B-17. It dropped its undercarriage and I dropped away a little. The crew baled out over Samsö and the aircraft crashed on the island. I then had to do a belly landing at Kiel-Holtenau". Jung's victim, Boeing B-17G 42-37718 (BO-H) of the 306th BG/368th BS, crashed at Alstrup on Samsö Island. The 10-man crew (with the exception of Right Waist Gunner Sergeant Douglas R. Farris who was killed by shrapnel) escaped by parachute and were taken prisoner.

According to an entry in his *Leistungsbuch*, Fw. Koch of 11./NJG3 was the last Nachtjagd claimant of the day, reporting a B-17 kill to the west of Grove, the airfield from which he had been scrambled in Ju88 C-6 D5+AW and accompanied by his regular crew of Uffz's Gärtner (BF) and Prinz (BM) at 15.05 hrs; they returned to their home base at 16.01 hrs. It must be noted that Koch only made a short entry in his *Flugbuch* that he "Attacked 26 Boeing Fortresses"; his Abschuss was later officially rejected by the OKL/RLM.

In all, 28 Fortresses and Liberators were shot down by the I. Jagdkorps, against the loss of 10 German fighters destroyed. Even though the Nachtjäger were free from fighter attack throughout the day's operations, they still suffered the loss of four of their number. A Bf110 G-2 of 8./NJG2 crashed at Store Torøje with the loss of its crew, a Ju88 C-6 of II./NJG3 was abandoned by its crew near Husum, a Ju88 C-6 of 10./NJG3 crashed at Aalborg, one crew member being injured, and, finally, Ju88 C-6 D5+GW of 12./NJG3 impacted near Tjaereborg after attacking a formation of *Amis*, two of the crew perishing. Six further night fighters, it must be added, returned with severe battle scars, although no casualties amongst their crews were reported. Upon his return from his very first daylight sortie, the *Staffelkapitän* of 10./NJG3 Oblt. Müller recorded in his *Flugbuch*: "1463rd flight. Oblt. Müller, crew Fw. Kostädt, Uffz. Witt, Ju88 D5+EF, Tagjagd, t/o Aalborg-W. 9.10.1943 14.37 hrs, landing Aalborg-W. 9.10. 16.31 hrs, (flight duration) 114 mins, (travelled) 680 kms. Remarks: shot 'Liberator' out of formation of 50 Lib., one hit in own undercarriage".