We had drawn a secret mission. This was to be our trial by a jury of German night-fighters, searchlights, and flak-guns.

The briefing room was empty at 7:00, much to our surprise, we were to be the only crew sent out that night. The briefing officer gave us all the information necessary for the flight. Take-off time, time in flight, target, target time, and compass heading to and from, bombing elevation, all of this was written down in our pilot's notebook.

At last we went to the ship. I checked the bombload and ran through my bombsight. The pilot was working his pedals and instruments. All the crew were checking and double checking their guns and equipment around their positions, for a B-17 is one ship that should be put through its paces before the engines start. Everything completed, we were ready to go on this secret mission.

At 9:05 we were in the air with our nose east and the dark English countryside moving west. The Kiel Canal in the northern heart of Germany was our heavily defended target. All the way over the North Sea I visualized night-fighters and search-lights coming up to pick us out of the sky like an egg from its nest. Nothing happened.

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