

Operation Gomorrah: Raids on Hamburg



The Allied bombing of Hamburg during World War II included numerous strategic bombing missions and diversion/nuisance raids. As a large port and industrial centre, Hamburg's shipyards, U-boat pens, and the Hamburg-Harburg area oil refineries were attacked throughout the war. The attack during the last week of July 1943, Operation Gomorrah, created one of the largest firestorms raised by the Royal Air Force and United States Army Air Forces in World War II, killing 42,600 civilians and wounding 37,000 in Hamburg and virtually destroying most of the city. Before the development of the firestorm in Hamburg there had been no rain for some time and everything was very dry. The unusually warm weather and good conditions meant that the bombing was highly concentrated around the intended targets and also created a vortex and whirling updraft of super-heated air which created a 1,500-foot-high tornado of fire, a totally unexpected effect. Various other previously used techniques and devices were instrumental as well, such as area bombing, Pathfinders, and H2S radar, which came together to work with particular effectiveness. An early form of chaff, code named 'Window', was successfully used for the first time by the RAF - clouds of tinfoil strips dropped by Pathfinders as well as the initial bomber stream - in order to completely cloud German radar. The raids inflicted severe damage to German armaments production in Hamburg.

Day One:

Guests are met by MHT at Hamburg Airport before transferring to our hotel in central Hamburg.

Officially the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg the name reflects its history as a member of the medieval Hanseatic League, as a free imperial city of the Holy Roman Empire, a city-state, and one of the 16 states of Germany. Along with an initial briefing we conduct a walking tour of the city centre to discuss the role the city played in the war and discuss the city's air defences and visit the Hamburg Flak Tower and it's museum.

Day Two:

The main day is all about the Operation itself. Now guests are familiar with the target city we conduct a talk on Operation Gomorrah and the 8 day Battle of Hamburg. Throughout the day we will be describing a timeline of events balancing between the actions of the RAF and USAAF and the defenders on the ground. We will be discussing Bomber Command in terms of the aircraft used on the raid and the crews that would have taken part and then at the location of the main aiming points we explain in detail how the raid was actually carried out in terms of area bombing. We end the day at the Hamburger Strasse Memorial where guests begin to reflect on the implications of the operation from the point of view of those on the ground.

Day Three:

Three is about reflection, both in terms of the crews and those on the ground. We visit the Nikolaikirche Memorial and Raid Exhibition before visiting the Ohlsdorf cemetery for civilian dead memorial before moving on to the aircrew cemeteries nearby.

What's included:

*Hotel Bed & Breakfast
Accommodation*

*All transport from
the official overseas
start point*

*Accompanied for the
trip duration*

All Museum entrances

*All Expert Talks and
Guidance*

Low Group Numbers

*Low Single Room
Supplements*

*"I just wanted to thank
you for the trip, it was a
great experience & both
Nicky and I enjoyed
it very much. Your
depth of knowledge on
the subject certainly
brought the past alive."*

Military History Tours

is all about the 'experience'. Naturally we take care of all local accommodation, transport and entrances but what sets us aside is our on the ground knowledge and contacts, established over many, many years that enable you to really get under the surface of your chosen subject matter.

By guiding guests around these historic locations we feel we are contributing greatly towards 'keeping the spirit alive' of some of the most memorable events in human history.

Let their sacrifice not be in vain.