

Target for Tonight  
“The 'ell Cat” - Lancaster Mk 1

Multiplayer Campaign 3 Mission 3 Total Campaign Mission 43 1944 Mission 23  
Rail Yards – Chambly, France - night of April 7 and morning of April 8, 1944  
The 'Ell Cat's 6<sup>th</sup> Combat Mission.

Full Moon – weather on take off 'good'.

Our operational tempo seems to be picking up speed with more bombers flying more missions with a shorter turn around time between missions. The Reich has to be about to crumble from all the bombing throughout the day by the Yanks and the night by Bomber Command. Our target for tonight is another rail yard this time in Chambly and The 'Ell Cat has been chosen for the lead position in the 104<sup>th</sup> Squadron. We won't let our mates down. We are to home in on the green flares left by the Pathfinders.

Take off is perfect under the full moon shining in a cloudless sky. We form up and head across the Channel. Sgt Evens leaves his bomb aimer position and begins to drop window from the rear fuselage. Hopefully, that will confuse the German long range radar systems. The Channel dash is without incident as our bomber stream reaches operational altitude of 21,000 feet.

As we approach the French coast just west of Calais' flak zones, we fly contrail free. In the distance, we see flak bursts and searchlights. Suddenly we are illuminated by searchlights which we thought we avoided. Flak bursts around us as Pilot Officer Dixon takes violent evasive action. Dixon orders Evens to stop dropping window as the searchlights can pick up on the stream of silver foil and home in on it. This obviously works as we sleep back into the darkness. Behind us more flak bursts among the other bombers in our stream.

As the flak fades, cannon tracers flash across our bomber narrowly missing us. Our gunners spring into action but are too late to hit a Dornier 217 J-1 as it disappears into the night. All are on alert for a follow up attack. The Dornier does not make a return pass.

Soon Navigator Bishop informs us that Chambly is ahead and that we are on course. As we approach the city, more searchlights and flak bursts split the sky. Evans prepares for the bomb drop. Searchlights home in on our bomber but we have to fly straight and level to line up on the green target fares dropped by the Pathfinders. Our left wing suffers two superficial hits from flak then a left wing flap is blown off the aircraft.

“Target in site. Bomb doors open.” reports Evens. “Bombs dropped. 30% on target. Bomb doors closed.”

As the bombs do their work, huge explosions and fire erupt beneath us but we feel negligible thermal turbulence as Dixon turns us to our return course. More searchlights pick us up and flak bursts around us. The 'Ell Cat dodges through the flak without a scratch this time. Soon we are flying southwest of Calais and then back over the Channel.