

“The 'ell Cat” - Lancaster Mk 1
Multiplayer Campaign 3 Mission 2
Total Campaign Mission 42 1944 Mission 22
Gun Positions – St. Valery, France - night of April 3 and morning of April 4, 1944
The 'Ell Cat's 5th Combat Mission.
Crescent Moon – weather on takeoff 'poor'.

The 'Ell Cat takes off in awful weather – rain lashes the planes of the 104th as clouds cover the sky 5 of 10. Our target for tonight is the heavy gun positions and turrets which cover the beaches near St. Valery, France. The team have been talking about an upcoming invasion of Europe to finally free her from her Nazi occupiers. This may be where the landings will take place.

As we rose above the runway, Flight Engineer Collier alerted us to engine 3 which began to run rough but he soon got it sorted out and The 'Ell Cat forms up with the bomber stream. Most of our flight path would take us over the UK east of London and west of Ipswich but soon we would turn South and head over the Channel. Even over the UK, we still had to be on the alert as German night fighters were encounter more and more over England.

An hour later as we turn over the Channel, cloud cover is 10 of 10 and lightning flashes in the distance. We expect a mission recall, but none is forthcoming which indicates the critical nature of tonight's mission. Hopefully the bad weather will also keep the night fighters away.

As we approach the coast of France, Powell in the mid-upper turret reports that he's lost turret power. He will attempt repairs. We then see target flairs in the distance, and we begin our bomb run. Flak fills the sky with blue, red and green tracers flying everywhere. These guns are well protected. Searchlights flash on and send their beams of light across the sky. It's really a great light show if it wasn't so deadly. Evans takes control and reports “Bomb doors open. Bombs dropped. Bomb doors closed.” Pilot Dixon turns to our return course as explosions rock the ground far below. A bomb damage assessment the following day confirms 50% of bombs on target.

“The turret mechanism is shot. I'm going to operate it manually,” reports Powell.

An hour and a half later, we land at back at Norwich fighting strong crosswinds the entire way. Now it's time for debriefing and breakfast.