

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

Multiplayer Campaign 3 Mission 9 Total Campaign Mission 49 1944 Mission 29
Villeneuve-St. Georges, France - night of May 11th and morning of May 12, 1944
The 'Ell Cat's 12^h Combat Mission.

Full Moon – weather on takeoff 'good'.

We had 10 days rest and relaxation but the crew of the 'Ell Cat are back to the office tonight. This time we are hitting the rail yards in Villeneuve-St. Georges, France. There have been repeated reconnaissance reports of German troops and armor being moved to the coastal areas of France. Our strike tonight is going to help disrupt their efforts.

On the home front, everyone is talking about the upcoming invasion of Europe. When will it happen? Where will it happen? We know that it is coming soon and so, obviously, do the Germans.

Take off at 8 pm is perfect and soon The 'Ell Cat takes up her position as the fourth plane in the lead bomber stream. As we head out over the Channel, Sgt. Evans, our bomb aimer, takes his secondary position and begins dropping Window to help confuse the German's long range radar. As we approach the middle of the Channel, we reach our operational altitude of 24,000 feet. The droning of our Merlin Type XX engines is soothing to the crew.

By 10 pm, we are over occupied France. Suddenly searchlights frame us in their harsh gaze and flak bursts around our bomber stream. Then the guns fall silent. We all know what this means. “Keep your eyes peeled for fighters!” orders Pilot Officer Dixon. Suddenly The 'Ell Cat shudders as cannon shells hit her from underneath the bomber. The tail takes superficial damage; the port wing takes superficial damage and the bomb aimer's autopilot system is destroyed. A Me110 G-4 with Lichtenstein Radar and Schrage Musik upward firing cannons flies past after delivering its deadly attack. Luckily it disappears into the night and doesn't return. We leave the searchlights behind as well.

Sgt. Evans returns to his nose position and sees the broken glass and damaged equipment. He reports the damage to the captain. “It's getting damn cold in the plane and I'll have to call out course corrections to you, Willy” comments Evans over the com.

“Turn your heaters up, boys” says PO Will Dixon, “I'll take us lower on the return trip.”

As we approach the target, we see that the pathfinders have done their job. Searchlight beams are everywhere. We are pinned by three beams as more flak all around us. In the distance, we see what appears to be a bomber explode. This may be a fake as the Germans have now developed an anti-aircraft shell which mimics a bomber exploding in order to harm the moral of the bomber crews.

Then, once again, the flak falls silent and we are attacked by a night fighter coming in from 10:30 level – it's a Ju88 C6 with a Lichtenstein Radar set on its nose. It hits us three times. The first hit does superficial damage; the second hit knocks out Sgt. Moss' oxygen system! The third hit deflects off the front of the aircraft as a spider web of cracks appears in the front window screen of the bomber.

The mid upper turret and tail guns open up on the Ju88 as it shoots past The 'Ell Cat. The mid upper gun damages the Ju88's port wing and the tail gun hits its starboard engine nacelle. The propellers stop as the engine belches black smoke. The Ju88 disappears into the night.

The bombs drop as the PO takes the bomber in to a steep dive to an altitude where oxygen is not required. 50% of the bombs are on target as the rail yards becomes flaming ruins. We turn for home flying at 6,000 feet. Soon we are back over the Channel. Sgt. Moss will be ok but he nearly passed out during the dive to a more friendly altitude.

The return trip is uneventful.