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MISSION NO. 49

Uncategorized

TARGET: AIRFIELD AND MARSHALLING YARD

EPINAL-BLAINVILLE, FRANCE

23 MAY, 1944

French airfields and marshalling yards were the targets for the day with the Eighth Air Force supplying 1045 heavy bombers and 1185 escorting fighters. The 457th supplied two twelve-aircraft boxes, to make up the 94th A and B Combat Wings. Major Fred A. Spencer served as Air Commander with Captain Jerry Godfrey as pilot of the A Wing and Major William F. Smith was Air Commander of the B Wing, with Captain Clarence E. Schuchmann as pilot.

The target for the A Wing was the marshalling yards at Blainville, located eleven miles southeast of Nancy on the main rail line from Strasbourg to Paris. The B Wing's target was the marshalling yards at Epinal, located forty miles south of Nancy on a connecting link between two double track lines out of Paris. The A box dropped bombs on a target of opportunity. Results were unobserved due to the cloud cover. The B box dropped on the primary target at Epinal with good results.

The mission was marred shortly after its assembly by a B-24 group cutting through the lead box of the B Wing. This scattered the Wing's pattern, and resulted in a collision between a B-17

Lt. Americo Procopia aborted the mission because of mechanical trouble. Additionally, the left landing gear was locked in the down position and the right landing gear in the up position. The crew was unable to correct either manually. Bombs were dropped in the Channel and the plane began circling the field to use up fuel. After the other planes returning from the mission had landed Lt. Procopia made a smooth landing on the left gear and tail wheel. When the right wing dropped and hit the runway the plane veered and went off the runway. No one was injured.

Duration of mission 7 hours