

## Task Force Baum

Three messages were sent by the task force. The first message was sent the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> March from Rieneck requesting air support on an enemy division marshalling area at Remunden. In the afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup>, Capt. Baum called Lt. Dahmen, who was in a plane, on the F17 and gave his location which was on high ground between Rieneck and Grafendorf. A message was sent the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> stating that the mission was completed and that two attempts had been made to break out but losses had been heavy. It was also stated that one more attempt would be made and if it was unsuccessful, the force would "hole up." The first and third messages were acknowledged by ~~G-4~~ a Roger on the G-4 net.

Approximately 700 Russian prisoners were freed near the town of Grafendorf.

There were approximately 1400 American officers and 200 NCO's in the stockade south of Hammelburg. A Lt. Colonel was the highest ranking

officer in the group.

The force had four light tanks left when they were fighting on Hill 427. Three of these were from a platoon of the 37<sup>th</sup> Tank Bn, and the other was from his command section.

There was no tank fight at Ibers. The medium tank ~~was~~ ~~knocked~~ of the force was knocked out by smoke fire between Gemunden and Ibers. A light tank was lost near Gemunden due to a thrown track.

The order of march at the beginning of the mission was as follows: medium tanks with infantry riding, infantry in half-tracks, light tanks, and assault guns. When no resistance was expected, the light tanks were sent to the head of the column.

Subordinate commanders in the task force were as follows: -

Capt. Lang	- Infantry
Lt. Rutto	- Medium tanks
Lt. Weaver	- Light tank platoon
Sgt. Graham	- Assault gun platoon
Lt. Zolman	- Reconnaissance section

There was a total of eleven officers in the force.

The only briefing prior to the mission was the actual telling of the men the purpose of the mission. Fifteen maps with the route marked were issued. The men who comprised the force had slept only one night in the four days prior to the mission.

The force did not enter Hammelburg.

The column reached Gemunden the morning of 27 March and found that 12 troop trains had just unloaded and crews were servicing the engines. All of the engines were destroyed by the force. Three medium tanks were knocked out by bazooka fire in going through the town. An enemy division was billeted in the town and the fighting soon became heavy. A platoon of infantry was dismounted and sent to secure a bridge over the river but the bridge was blown while two of the infantrymen were standing on it. Because of increasing opposition, Capt. Baum decided to withdraw from the town and follow the route Capt. Baum Lt. Witt and

The force then proceeded north and went 15 miles out of the way to find a crossing over the river. The enemy destroyed six bridges after the force had already crossed them and set up road <sup>block</sup> behind them. The air mission arrived at Remunden but there was no opportunity to use it as the force quickly withdrew from the town.

The result was all knocked out near Hammelburg. One was knocked out on the edge of town and the other two were destroyed on Hill #27 southwest of Hammelburg.