

OPERATION RESCUE

PANZER LEADER Situation 31-6

by F. Pierce Eichelberger

Just 30 days before the end of the war in Europe, Force Baum was ordered by General George S. Patton to rescue several hundred prisoners of war (POWs) held at the Hammelburg POW camp. The camp was 60 miles behind enemy lines, with three German Divisions standing before the 307 American GIs sent to conduct the rescue. When the raiding force got to the camp they found over 1,500 POWs, not the several hundred they expected. There was not enough transport to take all of the prisoners to Allied lines.

The real reason for the operation was to rescue Patton's son-in-law, John K. Waters, who was held as a prisoner there (he was captured in Tunisia in 1943).

During the attack Waters was shot by a German guard and was unable to be evacuated when the column left the camp. It was 20 years after the war that the truth about the mission's objective was finally known.

After Patton's death, an excerpt of his personal journal appeared in the *Saturday*

Evening Post in August 1948. He wrote, "I can say this—that throughout the campaign in Europe I know of no error I made except that of failing to send a combat command to Hammelburg." When Creighton Abrams was given this mission by General William Hoge, he stated, "Fifty miles is a long way to go, sir, for that small a force. If we have to go that far, I want my whole command to go. Hell, a combat command can go anywhere."

Again *PANZER LEADER* demonstrates a solid framework for handling additional scenarios (a source of its continued popularity). Note the additional Jeep counters, POW counters and the Ferdinand tank destroyer counter provided on the insert.

The versatility of the Jeep was critical to the war effort. Allied Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower referred proudly to the Jeep in a speech after the war. "The Jeep, the Dakota airplane (C-47 or DC-3) and the landing craft were the three tools that won the war."

FURTHER READING

Baron, Richard, Abe Baum and Richard Gildhurst. *Raid!* G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, NY, 1981. An in-depth story by two that were there.

Denfeld, D. and Michael Fry. *Indestructible Jeep*. Ballantine Books, New York, NY, 1973. Military history of the Jeep from its design to its use in all theaters of World War II.

Fetherston, David. *Jeep*. Motorbooks International, Osceola, WI, 1995. The Jeep story from design through modern versions of the war-horse.

Margry, Karel. *After the Battle*, No. 91, "The Hammelburg Raid." London, UK, 1996. Great maps and pictures of sites important to the Hammelburg raid.

Toland, John. *The Last 100 Days*. Bantam Books, New York, 1967. Toland devotes a chapter to the Hammelburg raid.

Whiting, Charles. *48 Hours to Hammelburg*. PBJ Books, New York, NY, 1982. Paperback treatment of the raid.

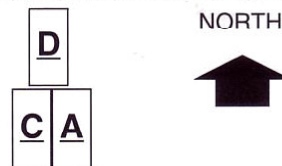


SITUATION NO. 31-6

RAID ON HAMMELBURG

MARCH 26-28, 1945: Elements of 37th Tank Battalion and the 10th Armored Infantry are sent 60 miles behind enemy lines to rescue an expected 300 Allied officers held as prisoners of war.

MAPBOARD ORIENTATION



AVAILABLE FORCES

GERMAN

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|----------|
| Grancellles | 3 I 2' | 2 C(I) 2 | 20 (H) 28 | St. Athan | 3 I 2' | Einkel | 3 I 2' | 0 C 0 |
| | 8 | 1 4 2401 10 | 2 0421 0 | | 8 | 1 | 8 | 1 2101 3 |
| | x5 | | | x2 | | x2 | x2 | x2 |
| Artain | 15 M 20 | 0 C 0 | 4 H 10 | 18 A 14 | 6 I 1 | Within 2 hexes of A-J2 | 6 I 1 | 6 I 1 |
| | 2 0543 0 | 1 2201 12 | 1 0311 0 | 10 Ferdinand 6301 | 6 SNG 1541 | 1 | 6 SNG 1541 | 1 |
| | | | | | x2 | | x4 | |
| Board D | 6 H 12 | 20 A 20 | 3 M 12 | 0 C 0 | 3 I 2' | Within 1 hex of D-N3 | 3 I 2' | 2 I 2 |
| | 1 0330 0 | 1 0231 0 | 3 0521 1 | 1 2201 12 | 8 | 1 | 8 | 1 5 1 |
| | | | x3 | | | | | |

ALLIED

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-------------------|
| Force Baum | 2 C(I) 2 | 5 A 5 | 11 A 8 | 40 (H) 32 | 4 I 2' | 2 C(I) 2' |
| | 3 2402 10 | 5 7201 11 | 9 7521 8 | 7 4201 8 | 10 ABR 1538 1 | 1 MB Jeep 2241 18 |
| | x6 | | x2 | | x4 | x3 |
| ALLIED POWs | 12 A 10 | 5 A 5 | 11 A 8 | 14 H 10 | 2 I 2' | |
| | 2 7000 0 | 5 7201 11 | 9 7521 8 | 9 5402 8 | 4 MFG 1402 1 | |
| | x4 | x5 | x9 | x3 | x3 | |
| Hex D-N3 | 1 I 1 | 2 C(I) 2 | 0 C 0 | 2 C(I) 2' | | |
| | 2 F1W 1601 1 | 10 ABR 1538 1 | 3 2402 10 | 1 14 1 | | |
| | x10 | x12 | x4 | x4 | | |

SETUP

GERMAN: Set up first in locations indicated. See insert for Ferdinand.

ALLIED: On turn 1, each unit starts at and moves out of hex A-A3. See insert for Model MB Jeeps and POWs. Force Baum alone was historical force. Option: Use instead the combat command.

SPECIAL RULES

- All POW counters are stacked on board D, hex N3, which is treated as a town hex and represents the POW camp. Allied POWs cannot move or fight until another Allied unit moves adjacent to camp at D-N3.
- Armored infantry units and POWs may ride on Sherman tanks or in halftracks.

- German units on Board D cannot move until Allied units move onto Board D. German units on Boards A and C cannot move until Allied units are within two hexes (reflecting the "garrison detachment" status of these non-frontline units).
- Smoke shell concentrations are permitted by both sides. (Optional: Jeeps may also transport POWs.)

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Allied player wins by moving at least one POW off the southeast corner of Board A (hexes A10 through H1). German wins by avoiding Allied victory.

TURN RECORD TRACK

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| ALLIES move first | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|