



Abe Bahm

2019 Honoree

On March 26, 1945, 24-year-old Captain Abraham J. Baum, infantry, 4th Armored Division, U. S. Army was tasked with leading a mission behind enemy lines to rescue Allied prisoners from OFLAG XIII-B, a POW camp near Hammelburg, Germany. Although General Patton denied being aware of the fact that his son-in-law, LTC John K. Waters, who was captured in Tunisia in 1943, was being held at this camp, it was rumored that the task force was organized solely to save Waters.

The tall, red-headed, Bronx native led what was dubbed Task Force Baum with gusto. Accompanied by 296 men, Baum was wounded by enemy rocket fire but continued with the operation. Eventually the task force reached the camp and the prisoners were freed, but on their return back to the American lines they came up against heavy numbers of well-organized German troops who surrounded the men: “No less than an entire German Corps was diverted to the seeking out and destruction of the two company task force.”

Eventually 32 of the task force were wounded, 9 killed and 16 were missing in action, presumed dead. Approximately 35 men made it back to safety, but Baum was shot in the leg while continuing to fight after he along with the rest of the survivors were captured by the German troops. Baum was liberated from a POW camp on April 5, 1945, 10 days after the mission. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross on April 10, 1945.