

# Battle of Targul Frumos & 24<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division

## Kampfgruppe "W"

### Commander, Colonel von Waldenburg



## Battle of Târgul Frumos

The Battle of Târgul Frumos (May 2-7, 1944) was fought near Iași, Romania between the German Reich's Wehrmacht and its Romanian allies on one side and the Soviet Red Army. The battle started as the Soviets attempted to capture Iași in the final stage of their spring offensive, as part of their conquest of eastern Romania.

According to accounts by Hasso von Manteuffel, one of the two German division commanders, and Frido von Senger und Etterlin the German forces defeated a major Soviet offensive while inflicting serious casualties on the 2nd Ukrainian Front

The battle of Târgul Frumos was a series of battles over several days during which armoured forces of German LVI Armoured Corps (Panzerkorps), in particular of the Grossdeutschland Division and 24th Panzer Division, engaged the Red Army's 16th Tank Corps, which was attacking from the north too.

Despite initial successes of the Soviet attack, a series of counter-attacks managed to destroy the spearhead of the Soviet forces before adequate defensive measures could be taken. The battles sapped Soviet tank strength to a point where a continuation of the attack into Romania was no longer possible. In the three days of fighting, the German LVII Panzer Corps (mainly Grossdeutschland and 24th Panzer Division) and L Army Corps defeated the Soviet force and claimed the destruction of over 350 Soviet tanks, ca. 100 of these claimed by 24th Panzer Division.

Soviet sources make few references to the battle. Historian David Glantz has found some mention of operations in Romania in April and May 1944 in divisional histories. The main source for him is Soviet 2d Tank Army's history, where a direct reference to

the battle could be found. It states that in late March 1944, the tank army was shifted into the sector of 27th Army with the mission of

*“attacking in the direction of Fokuri and Podul-Iloaei. Subsequently, the army was to strike a blow toward the city of Iași and secure it.”*

In the narrative on follow-on operations by the tank army it is stated that it attacked together with 27th Army’s 35th Rifle Corps. It also claims that 3d Tank Corps reached Targul-Frumos, but was thrown back by the German counterattacks. The 16th Tank Corps identified by the German officers appears not to be mentioned in the account.

Despite German claims that the Soviet attack was a full-fledged offensive, it appears now that the battle of Târgul Frumos was a relatively small-scale operation in the context of 1944's fighting on the Eastern Front, even though a Soviet success would have put the Red Army into a much stronger position for its eventual attack into Romania.



И.С. Конев

General Hasso von Manteuffel

### Soviet

- 2nd Ukrainian Front
  - 27th Army
    - 35th Rifle Corps
    - 89th Guards Rifle Division
    - 180th Rifle Division
  - 2nd Tank Army
    - 3rd Tank Corps
    - 16th Tank Corps (unconfirmed)

### German

- Army Group South
  - 8th Army
    - 24th



Ukraine

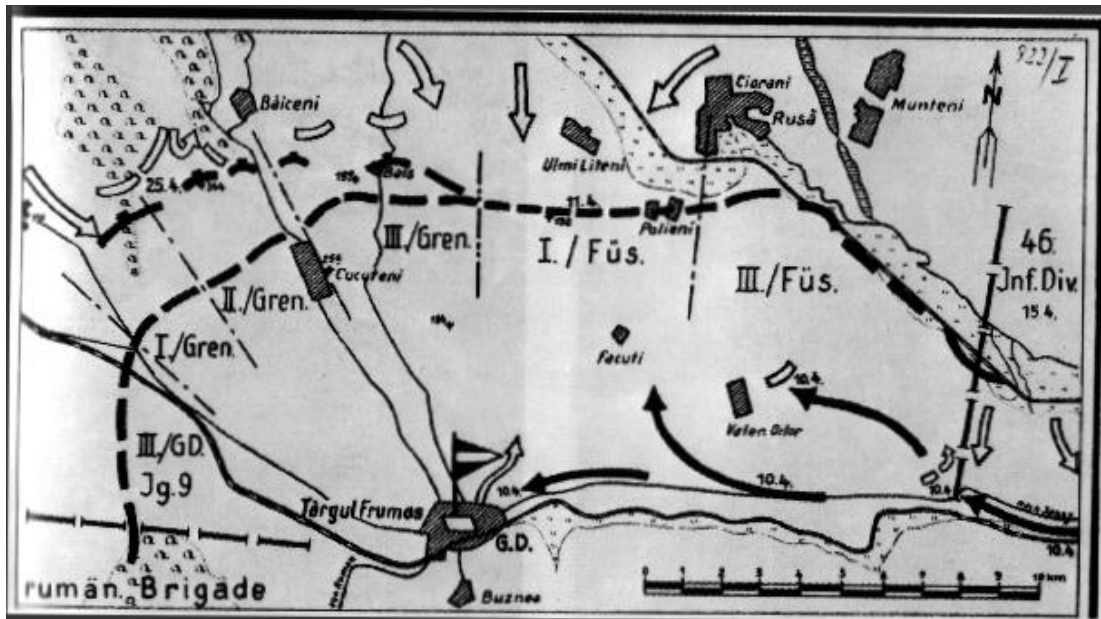
Panzer

### Division (Army Reserve)

- LVI Panzerkorps
  - Panzergrenadierdivision "Grossdeutschland"
  - 46th Infantry Division
    - Battle group of 3rd SS-Division Totenkopf
  - L Armeekorps

### Romanian

- 18th Mountain Division
- 1st Guards Division
- 1st Air Corps
  - 5th Bomber Group
  - 8th Assault Group (flying German Hs 129 ground attack planes)
  - 9th Fighter Group



### Task Organization of the 24<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division on May 1, 1944

Kampfgruppe "E" (Commander. Lieutenant Colonel von Einem)

1. 2 motorized panzer grenadier battalions
2. 1 motorized panzer artillery battalion

Kampfgruppe "W" (Commander, Colonel von Waldenburg)

1. Kampfgruppe headquarters (26<sup>th</sup> Panzer Grenadier Regiment Headquarters)
  - a. Headquarters squadron with:

- i. Recon section
    - ii. Panzer hunter section
    - iii. Security section
  - b. Infantry gun squadron with:
    - i. 3 150-mm infantry guns on Panzer 38 tanks
  - c. AA squadron with:
    - i. 9 20mm self-propelled AA guns
- 2. Panzer battalion
  - a. 2 panzer squadrons each with:
    - i. 6-8 MK IV tanks
  - b. 1 panzer squadron with:
    - i. 9 assault guns
- 3. Medium panzer grenadier battalion
  - a. 2 panzer grenadier squadrons with:
    - i. 18 medium armored personnel carriers
  - b. One heavy squadron with:
    - i. Panzer hunter sections with 3 75mm guns
    - ii. Canon section with 3 75mm canons on APC's
    - iii. Infantry gun section with 2 75mm guns
    - iv. Engineer section on APC's
- 4. Light panzer grenadier battalion
  - a. 1 panzer grenadier squadron with:
    - i. 22 light panzer vehicles
  - b. 1 panzer grenadier squadron in trucks
  - c. 1 heavy squadron with:
    - i. Panzer hunter section with 3 75mm guns
    - ii. Canon section with 4 75mm canons on APC's
    - iii. Grenade launcher section with 3 81-mm mortars on APC's
    - iv. Engineer section on APC's
- 5. Panzer artillery battalion
  - a. 1 battery of heavy 150mm field howitzers on "Hummel" self-propelled mounts
  - b. 1 battery of 150mm assault howitzers on Panzer IV "Brummbär"

#### **Bibliography**

Glantz, David M, *Red Storm Over the Balkans – The Failed Soviet Invasion of Romania, Spring 1944*, Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas

Various internet resources