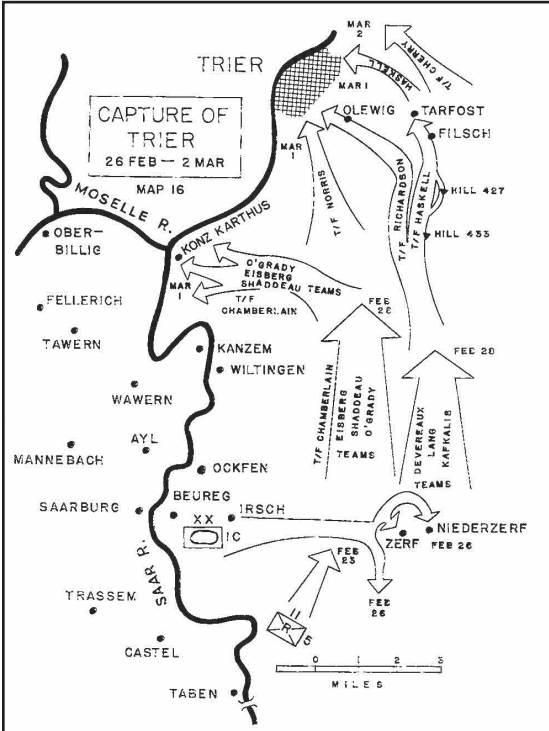


TRIER, GERMANY

day 14

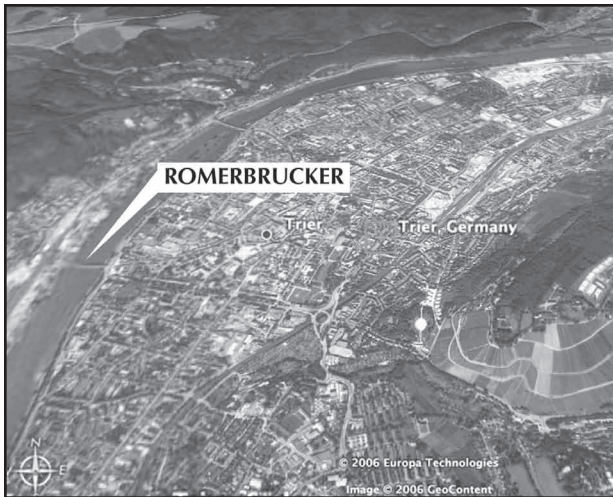
Trier, Germany, was a mere 60 miles or so due east. It was half a day's journey. By the time the tank column was readied with fuel, ammunition, and water, and had been checked out, it would be early evening before they arrived in Trier.



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The Capture of Trier (March 1, 1945)

Trier, the oldest city in Northern Europe, had a population of about 90,000. Many civilians had departed the city prior to the 10th Armored advance. The town had sustained heavy bombing and



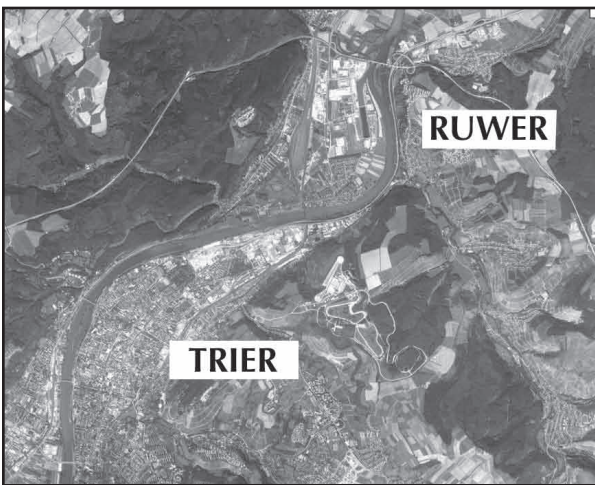
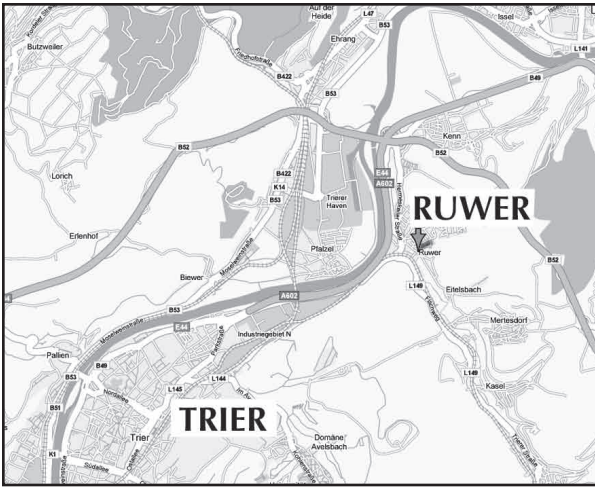
Present day Trier

artillery shelling in preparation for the capture.

On February 27, Combat Command B was ordered by General Morris to begin the attack on Trier. They moved

from Irsch to Zerf, then turned north for Zerf towards Trier, where they were hit hard by German 88mm artillery and the German 11th Panzer Division. German artillery was eliminated in

short order, and Combat Command B proceeded. On the evening of February 28, Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division was just two miles outside of Trier. On the hill east of Trier, Combat Command B discovered a large number of “Lager” camps. These were prison camps which contained approximately 50,000 allied prisoners



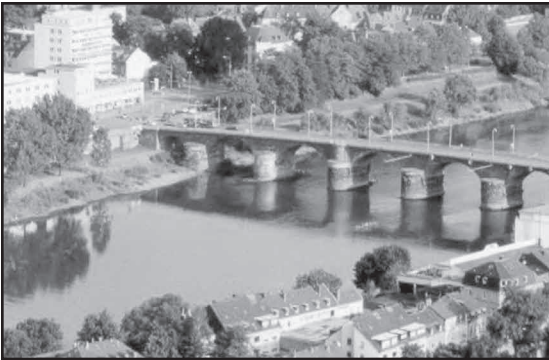
Present day Trier

(mostly Russian) and slave laborers in squalid, near starving conditions. Later in the war, after these prison camps had been liberated upon the fall of Trier, they were used to house and process German POW's.

Combat Command B turned their attention next to the burg of Ruwer, Germany, just a mile northeast of Trier. In order to eliminate a northern

escape route for the Germans who had been driven out of Trier, this small town had to be captured.

The attack on Trier was begun in the early morning hours of Tuesday, March 1, by Combat Command B rolling down from the hill east of Trier where the Lager camps had been located. By 4:00 a.m. the 10th Armored Division was inside of Trier. By 7:30 a.m. the northern



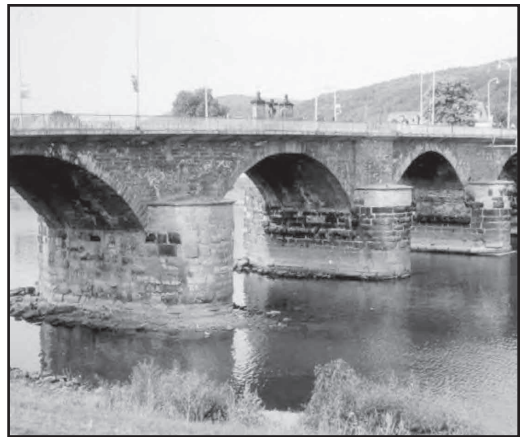
*2000 year old Romerbrucker
Trier, Germany*

section of the city had been captured.

Two bridges spanned the Moselle river at Trier, a northern bridge and the more southerly 2000 year old Romerbrucker (“Romerbrucker” translates to “Roman Bridge.” Aptly named as it was built by the Roman Empire during their occupation of this region of Europe). At 2:00 a.m.,

an attempt was made to capture the northern bridge.

Upon arrival, they saw that the bridge had already been destroyed, so a second platoon of tanks and infantry were quickly diverted to the southern “Romerbrucker.” As the platoon traveled down the road parallel to the river bank, they saw the



*2000 year old Romerbrucker
Trier, Germany*

bridge intact. Immediately the platoon of Combat Command B, 10th Armored Division tanks and infantry bolted across the bridge to the western side, receiving small arms fire, and expecting the bridge to be blown from underneath their feet at any second. When they reached the far western side of the Romerbrucker, they were amazed that not only had the bridge not been destroyed, but they were also able to capture the German major entrusted with the demolition of the bridge and five assistants who were too late in setting the detonator caps in the explosives. The bridge was now safely in allied hands.

After the bridge was captured, all of the wiring and two tons of dynamite placed under the bridge were removed by the 10th Armored Division 55th Engineers. The section of Trier east of the bridge was cleared of all German defenders. More than 800 German troops were captured in this one area.

At 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 1, General Walker called General Patton with official confirmation that Trier had been captured with the 2000 year old historic Romerbrucker bridge built in 28 AD still intact.

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On March 9, Melvin and the column of replacement tanks for the 11th Tank Battalion, 10th Armored Division rolled into Trier. They bivouacked just south of town in empty fields on both sides of the north/south road leading from Zerf to Trier. They had traveled the southern ap-

proach retracing the route traveled by the 10th Armored Division on their approach to capture Trier a little over one week earlier. They passed their own burned out tanks and half-tracks that had been destroyed by German 88mm artillery which had taken such a heavy toll on the 10th Armored's approach to Trier. This area between Irsch and Zerf became known as "88 Alley."

Seeing the tanks in the meadow at Luxembourg two days earlier had been a gripping moment. Now the lingering acrid aroma of molten steel and burned wiring furthered the adjustment of these soldiers to the environment they would have to learn to survive. Their senses were jolted and repulsed by the pungent odor of death as they passed the abandoned German artillery pieces and tanks.

The night of March 9th became a difficult night. The temperature had dropped unusually low which always made sleep difficult in battle. Some tried to sleep in the narrow cramped areas inside the tanks. Others pitched tents but found the cold hard ground less than ideal. Very few managed to get a sound sleep--ever, but for greater problems than the cold.