
The Round Tablette

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Welcome to the first October meeting of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table. Tonight's speaker is Derek Zumbro, author of *Battle of the Ruhr*, along with veterans, who will discuss the battle of the 'Ruhr Pocket.'

Crossing the Rhine, Allied forces in the north of Germany were not able to move east and take Berlin. Eisenhower enforced the diplomatic protocols that gave Berlin to the Soviets. Instead, the First and Ninth US Armies were used to create a pocket or cauldron of the Ruhr industrial area (the Ruhrgebiet).

The Ruhr district runs through the North Rhine – Westphalia region and is rich in coal and ore deposits. It was the largest industrial region in Europe in the 1930s and was the primary war production area for the Nazi state. Krupp and many other major firms were headquartered here.

Following World War I, under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, the Ruhr was demilitarized. In 1923, French and Belgian troops occupied the area to enforce German reparations payments. The German government responded with passive resistance as civil servants and workers alike refused to follow occupation orders. The Weimar Republic also massively inflated its currency to discourage continued occupation, and in the process destroyed the savings of the German middle classes. The US government sponsored the Dawes plan that reduced reparations payments and was the basis for ending the occupation.

The First Army (part of Bradley's 12th Army Group) moved north from the Remagen bridgehead area while the Ninth Army (attached to Montgomery's 21st Army Group), turned south, leaving the

rest of Monty's force to conduct OPERATION PLUNDER.

Facing the Allies were some 430,000 German troops, mostly shattered Heer divisions in Army Group B, SS training divisions, and Volksturm (mostly men too old for field service) and Hitlerjugend units (teenaged boys); all under the command of Field Marshal Walter Model. Despite their efforts, by 4 April, the force was encircled.

The Allies divided the pocket into sub-regions and began to reduce them one after another. The smaller, eastern part, centered on Iserlohn, surrendered on 15 April. The larger area in Hagen and Limburg held out till 17 April. Germans began surrendering to Allied units in droves, while others fanatically fought to the death.

Anti-Nazi resistance groups in the city of Düsseldorf attempted to surrender the city and end the aerial bombing attacks. The SS captured and executed many of the resistance members. Fighting in Düsseldorf ended on 21 April. Their efforts did convince the Allies to cancel the last planned 800 plane raid on the city.

There and throughout the areas controlled by German forces, The SS and the Gestapo were busy executing foreign laborers, political prisoners, prisoners of war, and others nearly randomly until the last possible moment. The Wehrmacht turned some Allied PWs over to the Gestapo for "special treatment." Fanatical German civilians killed others. Many faithful Nazis refused to give up until they faced death – though many of the party leaders tried to escape.

As defeat loomed, Model committed suicide rather than violate his personal oath, made to Hitler, to fight to the death. About 325,000 soldiers (of all kinds) were surrendered and imprisoned

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in PW camps. This marked the practical end of organized German resistance in the region.

Further Reading:

Derek S. Zumbro, *Battle of the Ruhr: The German Army's Final Defeat in the West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006).

Leo Kessler, *The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket* (London: Mandarin, 1990).

Charles Whiting, *Ike's Last Battle: The Battle of the Ruhr Pocket, April 1945* (South Yorkshire, UK: Pen & Sword, 2002).

William Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp, 1587-1968* (New York: Little, Brown & Company, 2003).

Douglas E. Nash, *Victory Was Beyond Their Grasp; With the 272nd Volksgrenadier Division from the Hürtgen Forest to the Heart of the Reich* (Bedford,PA: Aberjona Press, 2003).

Announcements:

Twin Cities Civil War Round Table - Sept. 18, 2012 Lee's Retreaded Tarheels 26th NC www.tccwrt.com - info @ tccwrt.com

St Croix Valley Civil War Round Table - Oct. 22, 2012 South Mountain - Steve Anderson - 715-386-1268 – rossandhaines@comcast.net

Rochester WWII History Round Table –507-280-9970; www.w2roundtable-rochester.org

Fort Snelling Civil War Symposium April 2013, <http://www.tccwrt.com/symposium.html> or tccwrt@yahoo.com

Minnesota Military Museum, Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy 115, Little Falls, MN 56345, 320-616-6050, <http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org/>
Air Show - Eden Prairie - July, 13-14, 2013; <http://www.airexpo-mn.org/> - 952-746-6100

Honor Flight - Jerry Kyser - crazyjerry45@hotmail.com - 651-338-2717

CAF - Commemorative Air Force - www.cafmn.org or Bill at 952-201-8400

Minnesota Air Guard Museum - www.mnangmuseum.org 612-713-2523

Friends of Ft. Snelling, www.fortsnelling.com

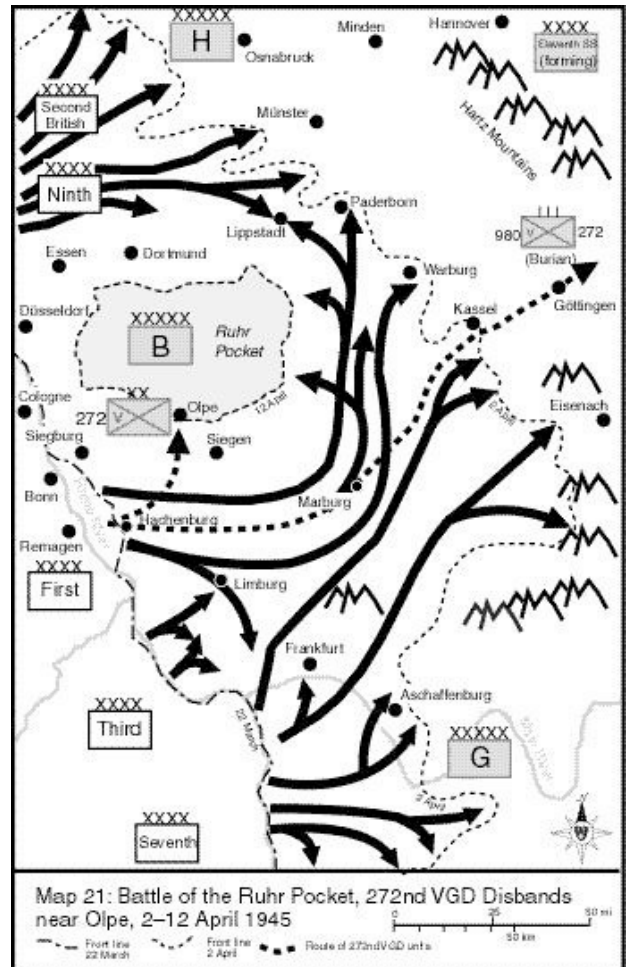
Fagen Museum in Granite Falls, www.fagenfighterswwiimuseum.org. 320-564-6644

Round Table Schedule 2012-2013

- 11 Oct. Ruhr Pocket
- 25 Oct. Germany in the 1930s
- 8 Nov. Interviews of Nazi Leaders
- 13 Dec. Relief of Bastogne
- 2013**
- 10 Jan. Defeat in the East 1943 (Eastern Front)
- 14 Feb. Emergence of Viet-Nam from WW2

- 14 Mar. Military Intelligence Language School
- 28 Mar. WW2 in the Middle East
- 11 Apr. Hitler's Breakwater Fighting in the Baltic
- 9 May Kampfgruppe Peiper at Malmedy

If you are a veteran, or know a veteran, of one of these campaigns – contact Don Patton coldpatton@yahoo.com



Map from Aegis Consulting Group, Inc. site: <http://www.aberjonapress.com/catalog/vwbtg/maps/Map%2021.jpg>



American soldiers examine the victims of mass shooting in Suttrop in the Sauerland, 2. May 1945 (National Archives, College Park) at <http://www.historisches-centrum.de/index.php?id=428>