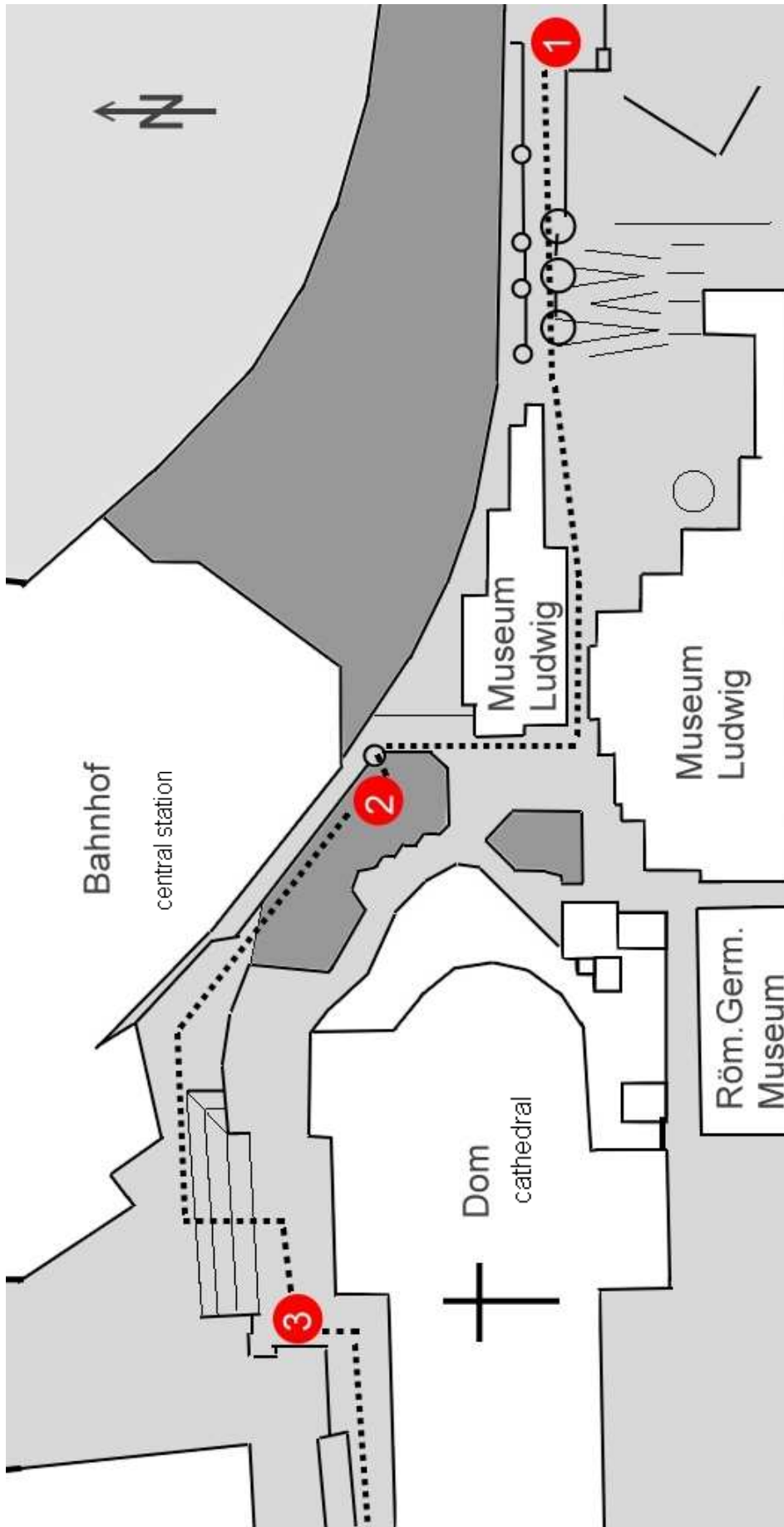
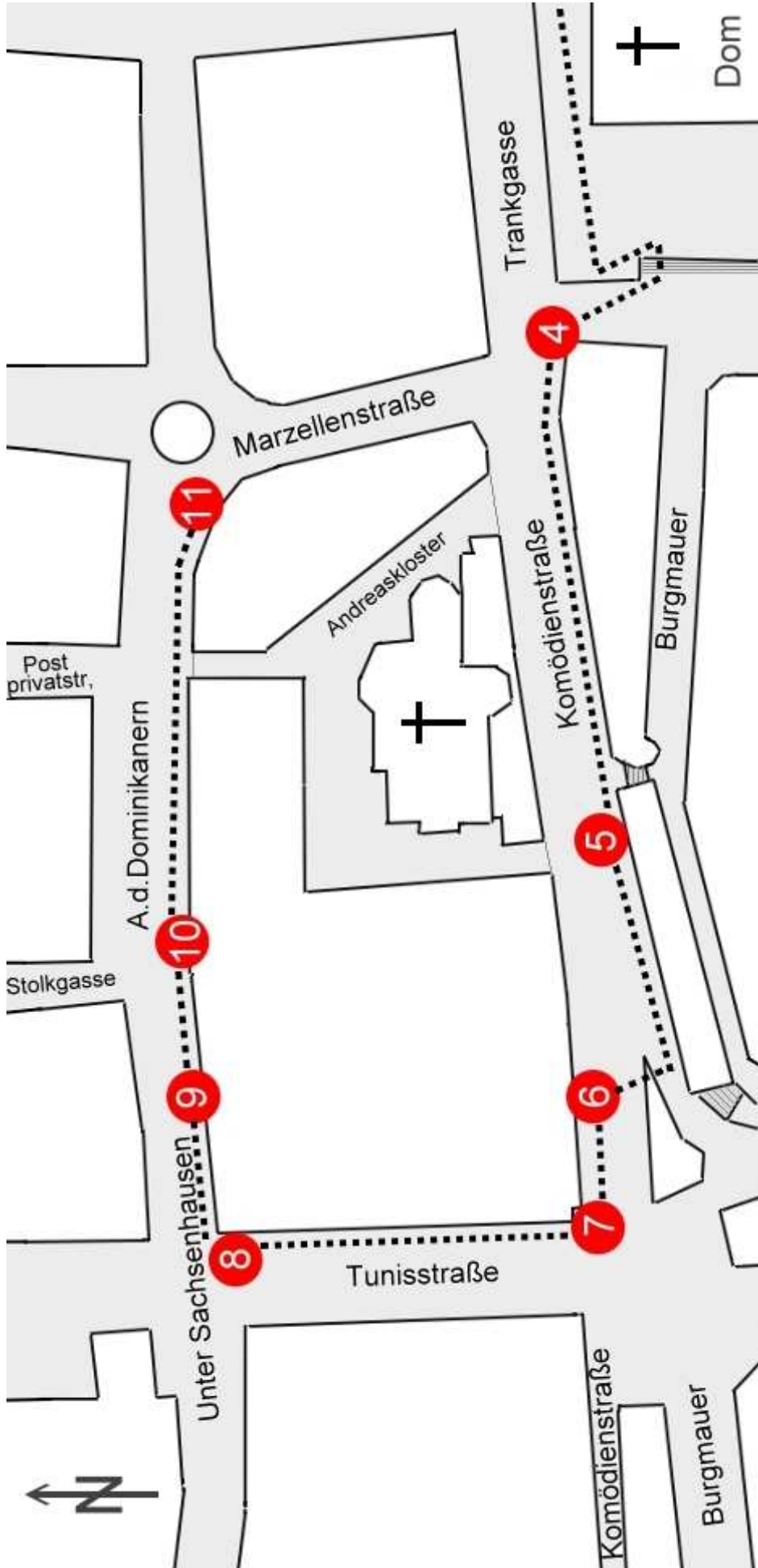


Sightseeing tour tank duel

Cologne, March 6, 1945

Source: www.anicursor.com







tank duel sightseeing tour - print version

In case you plan to visit Cologne and look for the places the tank duel took place, this page could be a little help for you. Here I have created a little city sightseeing tour, where you will visit the most relevant places of the tank duel. Duration of this tour is about 1 hour. Two small town plans are available too for give you a little orientation.

1

Start of the tour: the bridge ramp of the Hohenzollern Bridge, south side (where the cathedral is located)

View today in direction Bridge ▼

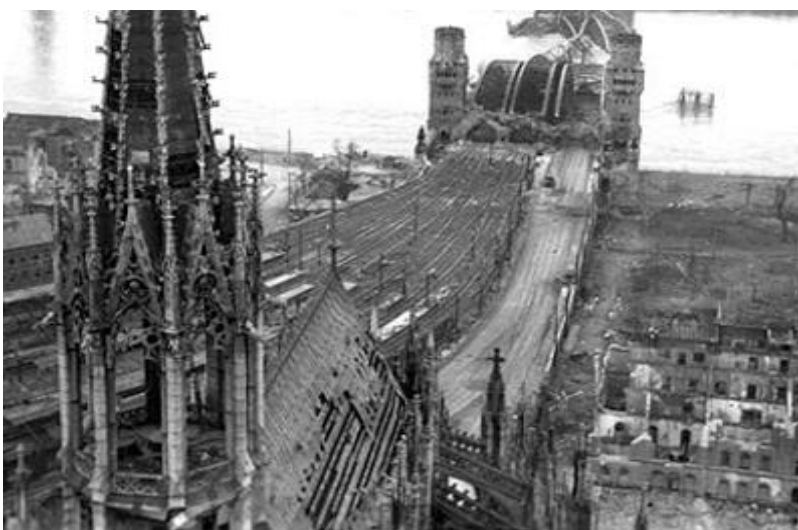


view 1945 ▼



Source: DVD "Köln 1945 Nahaufnahmen", published by Hermann Rheindorf

Until 1945 the Hohenzollern Bridge was used for car and tram traffic too, this part was located here at this side of the bridge. After the war only the railway part of the bridge was rebuilt. During the 1980's the bridge was renovated with two new tracks on the north side of the bridge.



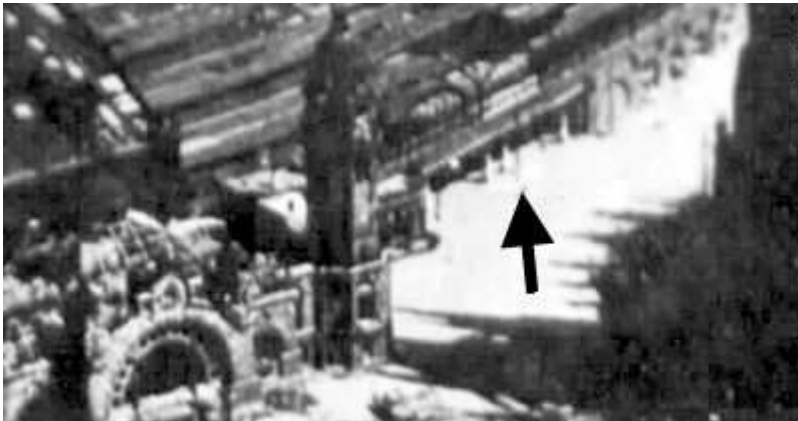
▲ The three German tanks were rolling over the old car traffic part of the bridge on the morning of March 6, 1945 from across the Rhine in order to defend the city on this side of the Rhine against the advancing Americans. They drove down the long straight ramp the street level. The ramp ended not far away from the Trankgasse tunnel. The

Trankgasse is located on the other side of the central station coming from the Rhine River bridge, first parallel to the ramp, then crosses the railway tracks in a tunnel, and then leads next to the cathedral to street Komödienstrasse. ▼



▲ Black dashed line is the path of the three tanks on the ramp, the black arrow shows Trankgasse coming from the Rhine.

Let us now go towards the Cathedral. We are passing one building of the Museum Ludwig on the right side and then go sharply to the right. After a short distance there is a spiral staircase, we go down. There we see the tunnel where Trankgasse is coming out and as a second street the Johannisstrasse. The street coming from the old town is the street Domhof. Location 1945 ▼



Location today ▼



2

Here, at this point two German tanks remained and were waiting for the advancing US troops. The third German tank drove in a westerly direction to the train station Gereon, probably via Trankgasse, Marzellenstrasse, An den Dominikanern, Gereonstrasse (still without lot of rubble and therefore good for passing). Looking into western direction through the second Trankgasse tunnel below the "Domplatte" (which connects central station and cathedral at this location) one can see the Komödienstrasse in background. In 1945 the tunnel and the "Domplatte" wasn't existing, so the German tank commander's view was much better, when he saw the Company 'F' Sherman tanks advancing in Komödienstrasse behind the piles of rubble on the street.

View out of the tunnel in direction Komödienstrasse ▼



Let us go in that direction along the railway construction, on the central station forecourt we follow the large staircases on the left up to the cathedral.

3

Standing over the western Trankgasse tunnel exit we have another good look towards the Komödienstrasse ▼



Let us now follow the flow of pedestrians to the right along the cathedral.

At the northern tower of the cathedral we don't follow the other people going to the left towards the pedestrian zone but go straight ahead to the little part of the cathedral square where you will find some trees and benches. Straight ahead we now can see the tourist office. But we look to the right, down to the Trankgasse.

4



▲At this place the Panther tank was located when he had hit the Sherman and came here to wait for more US troops and tanks.

Let us now go down to the street corner, we look straight ahead into street Marzellenstrasse. The houses at the left corner and the right corner were already existing in 1945. At the end of the first road section we can clearly see the former house of the German Labor Front, from where cameraman Bates was filming the famous Panther sequence. The intersection in front of this house was the place where the Pershing shot and hit the Panther.

In 1945 the Komödienstrasse was not as wide as it is today. The former middle of the road was there where the midline road marking can be found today. Now we walk along

the Komödienstrasse into western direction.

After about 120 meters, we will see a staircase between the houses on the left side which leads to the street Burgmauer.

5

Approximately in the middle of the next following house and then in front of this house, there where the street is separated from the parking area, the Sherman was located on March 6, 1945 when he was hit ▼



The little passage to the St. Andreas church on the other side of the road still exists, the house at the corner now placed a few meters more backwards and in direction towards the cathedral. And at the old street corner there stood the second Sherman who can see on the famous photo taken by Fred Ramage ▼



Source: The U.S. Army 3rd Armored Division History Website. Photo: Fred Ramage/Getty Images

Now look into western direction, where you can see a wide street area / a large intersection. Beyond the intersection you can see two streets leading from western city parts to the cathedral ▼



▲ The left multi-lane street is street Burgmauer, the street on the right Komödienstrasse. Until 1945 both streets were leading seperately towards the cathedral, houses were standing between the streets. The entire remaining way towards the cathedral, the street Komödienstrasse was as small as you can see it there. After the war, this area was not rebuilt. For modern traffic needs it was rebuild as you can see it today, more wide. During the metro construction in the 60s they found a piece of a Roman wall, you can see it in the middle of the intersection today.

We now cross the street to the other side of Komödienstrasse the next crosswalk.

6

Arriving at the other street side, look back towards the cathedral. It's approximately the place where Fred Ramage took the famous photo with the two Sherman tanks.

Now we got to street corner Tunisstrasse / Komödienstrasse.

7

Another view back towards the cathedral will remember us that at this place the American Sherman tank crew was advancing to the cathedral not knowing that their fate was sealed already ▼



Around the corner we follow the street Tunisstrasse to the next intersection Tunisstrasse / Unter Sachsenhausen. The Tunisstrasse was built up after the war as part of the "Nord-Süd-Fahrt", a wide street through the city from the northern parts to the southern parts, in March 1945 it did not exist in this form.

8

At this intersection, we turn our attention first to the left, there are the streets (first) Unter Sachsenhausen followed by Gereonstrasse (with church St. Gereon) then Christopstrasse and after crossing the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Ring the Gladbacher Strasse. Over these roads Company 'E' advanced to the Cologne city on March 06, 1945. Many film sequences were taken there, below for example a photo showing Gereonstrasse and St. Gereon ▼



We now look to the right. There we see streets Unter Sachsenhausen (at the beginning) and An den Dominikanern (in the further course). In background left we can see again the ancient house of the German Labor Front from where Bates was filming the Panther sequence ▼



This street is still as wide as it was in 1945 and there are a few old buildings which were not destroyed during the war. In this street the US cameramen Bates and Rosenmann took several film scenes, in particular the shooting Pershing in front of the house of the German Labor Front ▼







Let's go ahead on the right side of the road, about 50 meters further.

9

There we find a house on the right side, from whose entrance out the cameramen filmed the Pershing shooting with his guns. This house was the building of the Reichsbank in Cologne. On the other side of the street we can see another house which stood already there in 1945 ▼



Let's go. 20 meters further, on the right side there's a building, the Deutsche Bank built up after the war.

10

In front of the old and during the war destroyed building at this place they filmed the triumphant images of the Pershing crew ▼



Directly opposite on the other side of the road there was the post office building in 1945. In the movie we can see a German soldier capitulating in front of this building ▼



The post building survived the war, but in the late 90s it was replaced by the modern construction of a senior residence.

Let's go to the intersection Marzellenstrasse / An den Dominikanern and watch the house on the other side, the former house of the German Labor Front, which today hosts the social court.

11

Out of the following windows cameramen were filming or took photos ▼



▲Bates and Rosenmann were Army cameramen and filmed the Panther scenes, Himes was an Army photographer. One photo was taken by an unknown photographer and can be found in the NARA archives.

Now look around the corner, at the end of the street there's the place where the Pershing hit the Panther ▼



▲View today



▲View 1945, out of the house of the German Labor Front out. The buildings on the left side are still standing today.

End of the tour.