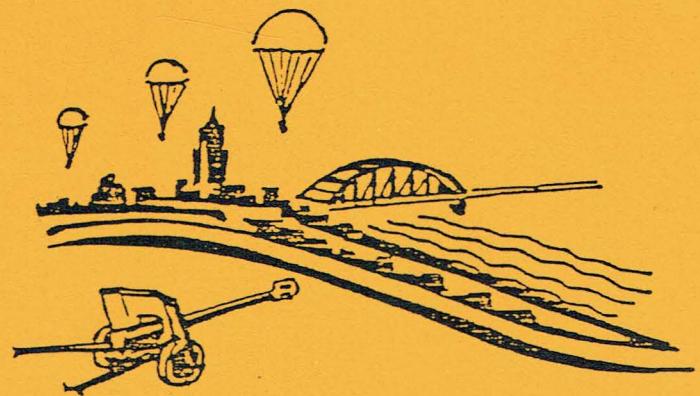


*NOW GATHER ROUND ME COMRADES
AND A STORY I WILL TELL..*

WEST ARNHEM, 19th SEPTEMBER 1985



WERKGROEP "AIRBORNE WEST ARNHEM"

*English translation of the stories:
Mr H.A. Duinhoven, Oosterbeek.*

Drawings: Mr A. van Wordragen, Arnhem.

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West Arnhem"*

WELCOME TO ALL OUR GUESTS

In West Arnhem, somewhere between the St. Elisabeth Hospital and the Arnhem Prison, is an estate which is known as 'Lombok'. It was built in 1900 as a very fashionable workmen's quarter. The greater part of the men were working as staff members at the prison, or employed by Dutch Rail; others were civil servants or shopkeepers, and many of them were skilled craftsmen.

Owing to its situation, being bound by Utrecht Road (to the south) the railway-line (to the north), the hospital (to the east) and the prison (to the west) a new community came into being, whose spirit can be compared with that of a village. There was -and still is- a great sense of solidarity.

One of the most binding factors is the 'West Arnhem Musical Association' a brass-band, founded in 1922. They are always present at commemorations, national celebrations, at birthdays of the members of our Royal Family, at special days organised for our children. The musicians or nearly all of them live at 'Lombok'. After the last war, many activities were started, like: a club for old people, with folkdancing and swimming - a home for young people and since plans were made, to invite you all, some forty people in the age-group between 60 and 83 have been studying English to learn a few words in English, which will enable them to welcome you in your mother tongue.

As you all know very well fierce fighting went on, also here at 'Lombok' during the Battle of Arnhem. There were many casualties, both among the soldiers and the civilians. And why then, have we invited to come to 'Lombok', after more than 40 years. The reason is quite simple, really: Last year we saw so many Arnhem veterans walking through our streets to try and find a certain street, a particular corner or perhaps that very spot where so much happened. The older people who, like yourselves, had to live through the worst parts of the battle, would have loved to talk with you about the September days of 1944 - but, unfortunately, most of them could not speak English.

So the question was brought forward at one of the committee meetings of our 'Quarter Council': would it be possible to bring about a contact between the Airbornes and the civilians of Lombok.

The proposal got general approval, and so a group of five people started with the preparations.

Thanks to the mutual feeling of solidarity we have managed to raise the necessary funds and the money came from private persons and from the business world.

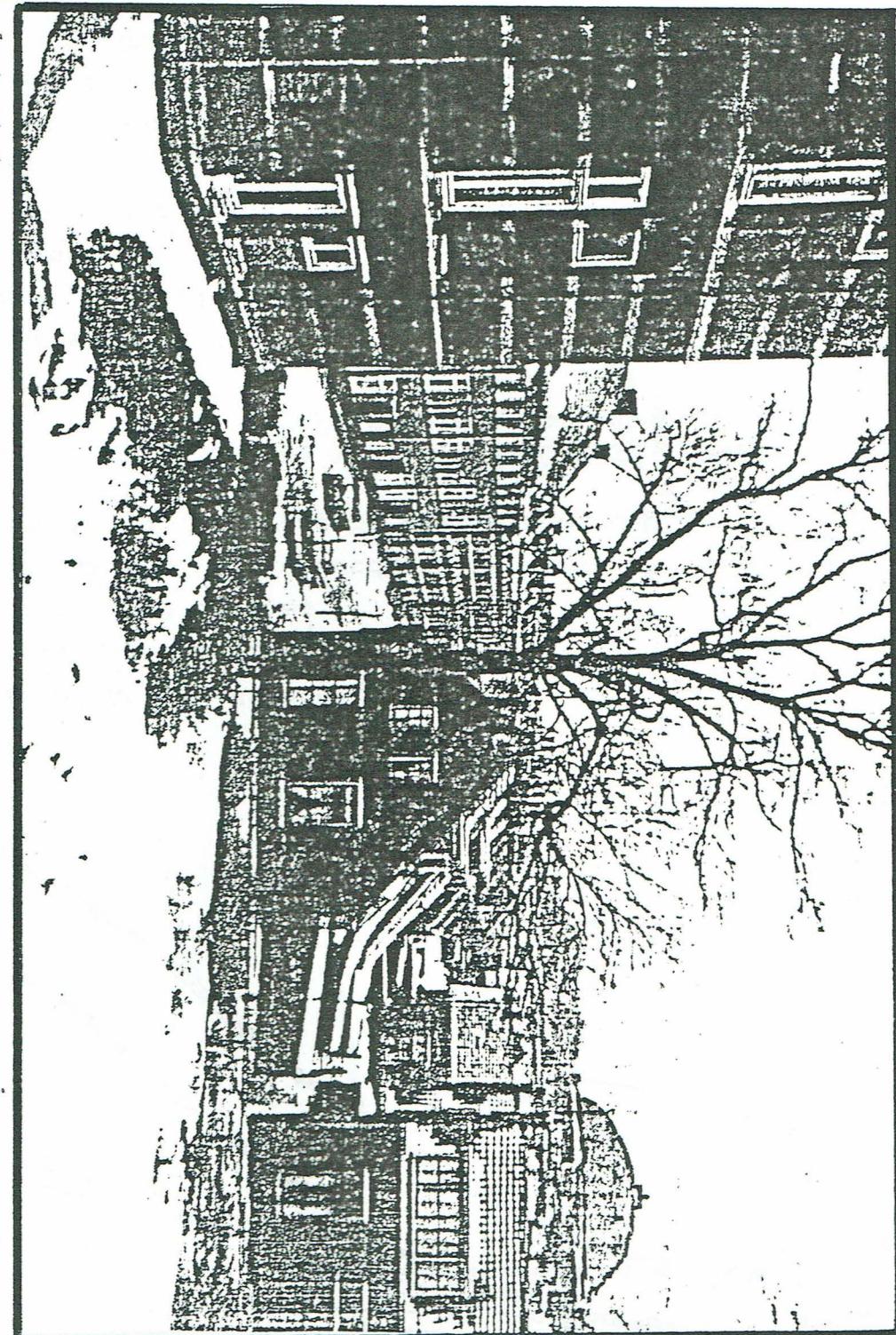
We would like to take the opportunity to thank in particular:

Major G.G. Norton, Editor and Manager of 'Pegasus Journal'	
Capt. S.A. Watts, Director of Music Airborne Forces	
Mr J.J. Rudolphie	Oosterbeek Holland
'Lest We Forget' Foundation	Oosterbeek Holland
Airborne Museum	Oosterbeek Holland
'Friends of the Airborne Museum'	Oosterbeek Holland

We received a great deal of material assistance from several quarters. Apart from this, some twenty people have volunteered to make this day, September 19th 1985, to a complete success. Also official quarters from Oosterbeek cooperated faithfully - amongst others a complete First Aid Team. And all this on a totally voluntary basis. We owe our best thanks to all of them.

We now wish to mention in particular St. Elisabeth Hospital: the Old-Dutch word for HOSPITAL is "GUEST HOUSE". Indeed, it has always been a 'guest'house. In former days, when medical care was not yet what it should have been, the entire staff of St. Elisabeth Hospital used to help the people of Lombok, irrespective of their faith or origin. And to this very day they are still backing us. And how! They offer you this warm welcome at their expense and entirely with their own staff members. The luncheon for our guests would not have been possible but for them.

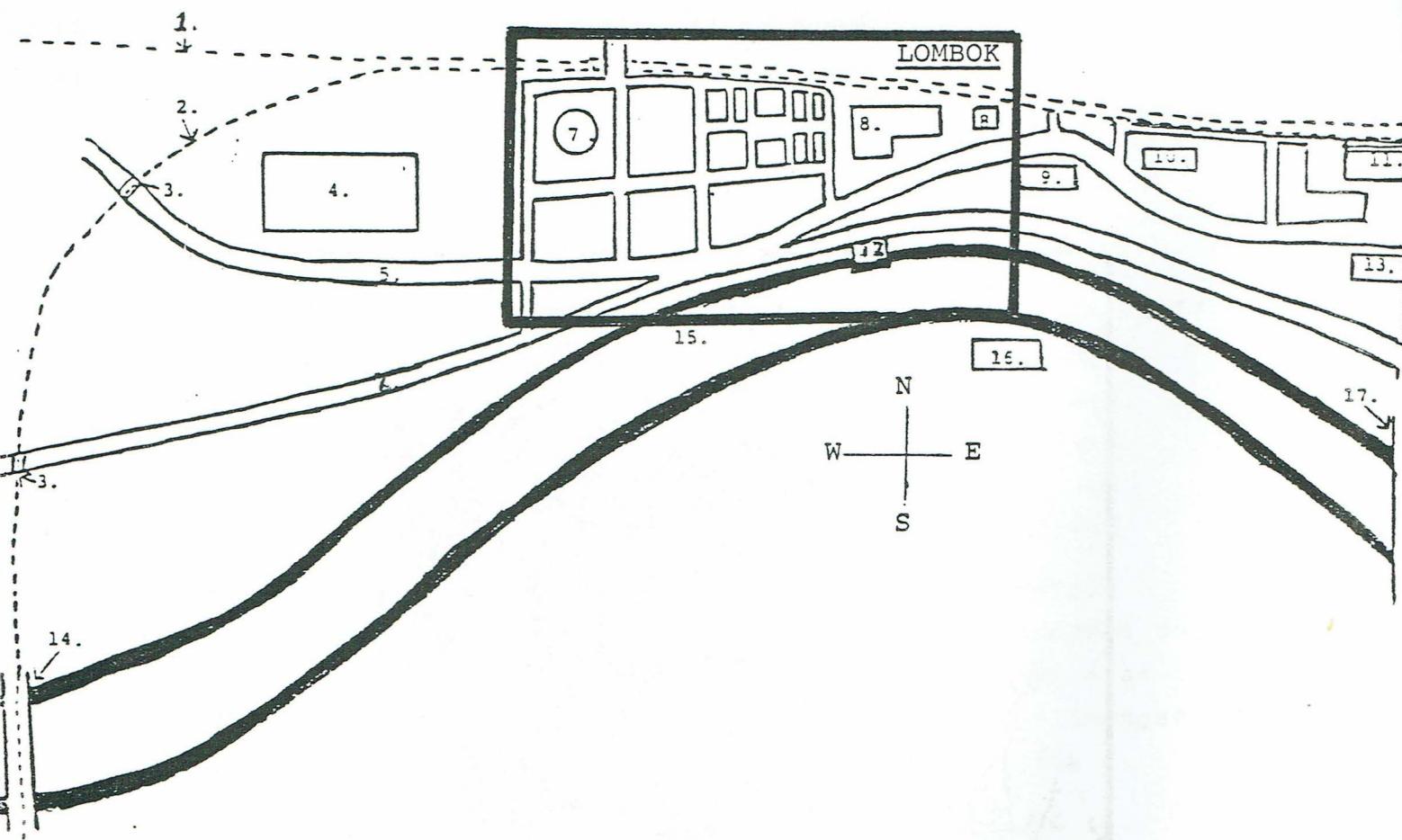
But we have all done this, because of you, as a token of our sincere appreciation and gratitude, in spite of the misery the battle brought to you and us. From the same sense of gratitude with which we tried to help you during the September days of 1944, we have now invited you to come here.



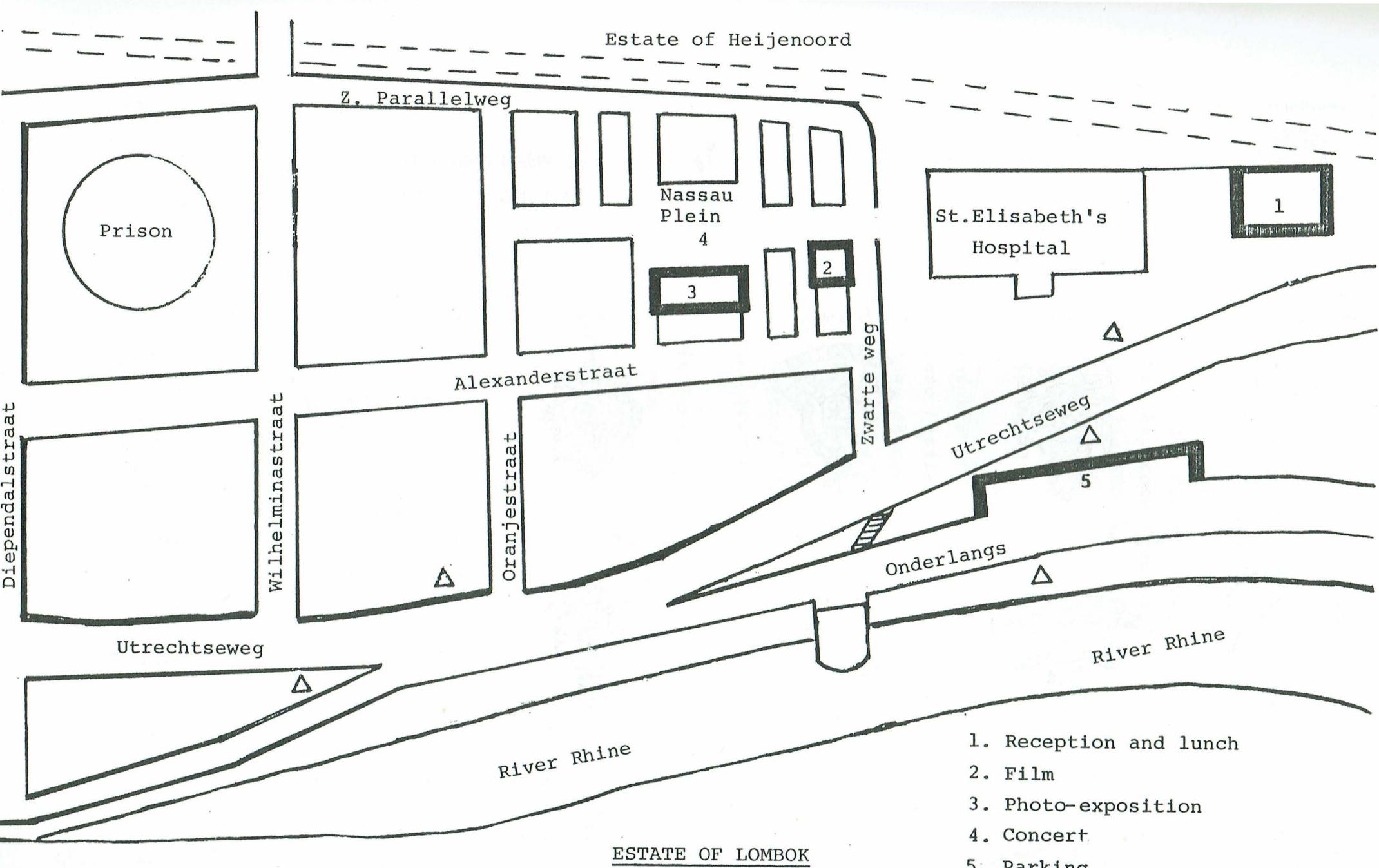
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BETWEEN HOSPITAL AND PRISON

West Arnhem

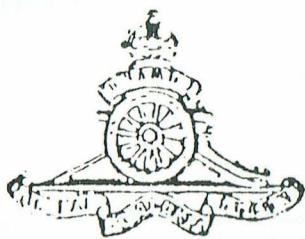


1. Railroad Arnhem-Utrecht
2. Railroad Arnhem-Nijmegen
3. Small railway bridges
4. Buildings KEMA (the woodland is known as the BRINK)
5. Utrechtseweg (mainroad between Arnhem and Oosterbeek)
6. Klingelbeekseweg (the lower road which Gen. Frost took to reach the traffic bridge at Arnhem. The John Frost Bridge)
7. The prison
8. St. Elisabeths Hospital
9. Museum (in 1944 known as the monastery)
10. Building of the PGEM
11. Arnhem main station
12. Rijnhotel (in 1944 called the pavilion)
13. Hotel Haarhuis
14. Railwaybridge over the river Rhine
15. The river Rhine
16. Brickworks
17. The new traffic bridge over the river Rhine.

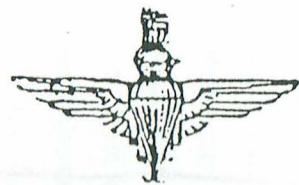


ESTATE OF LOMBOK

1. Reception and lunch
 2. Film
 3. Photo-exposition
 4. Concert
 5. Parking
- △ Busstop



Royal Artillery



Parachute Regiment



Army Air Corps



Royal Air Force



U.S. Army Air Force



Royal Engineers



Reconnaissance Corps



Polish Parachute
Brigade



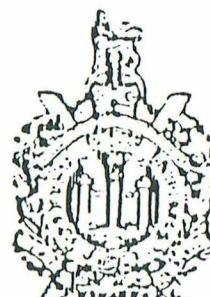
Royal Army Medical Corps



Border Regiment



5th Staffordshire Regt.



Kings Own
Scottish Borderers



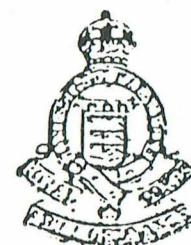
Royal Corps of Signals



Corps of Military Police



Royal Army Service
Corps



Royal Army Ordnance
Corps



Intelligence Corps



Royal Electrical &
Mechanical Engineers



2 Troop 10 Commando

INSIGNIAS OF ALLIED
UNITS ENGAGED IN THE
BATTLE OF ARNHEM 1944



EMBLEMEN
GEALLIEERDE ONDERDELEN
SLAG OM ARNHEM 1944



Dorsel Regiment

THE RED DEVILS

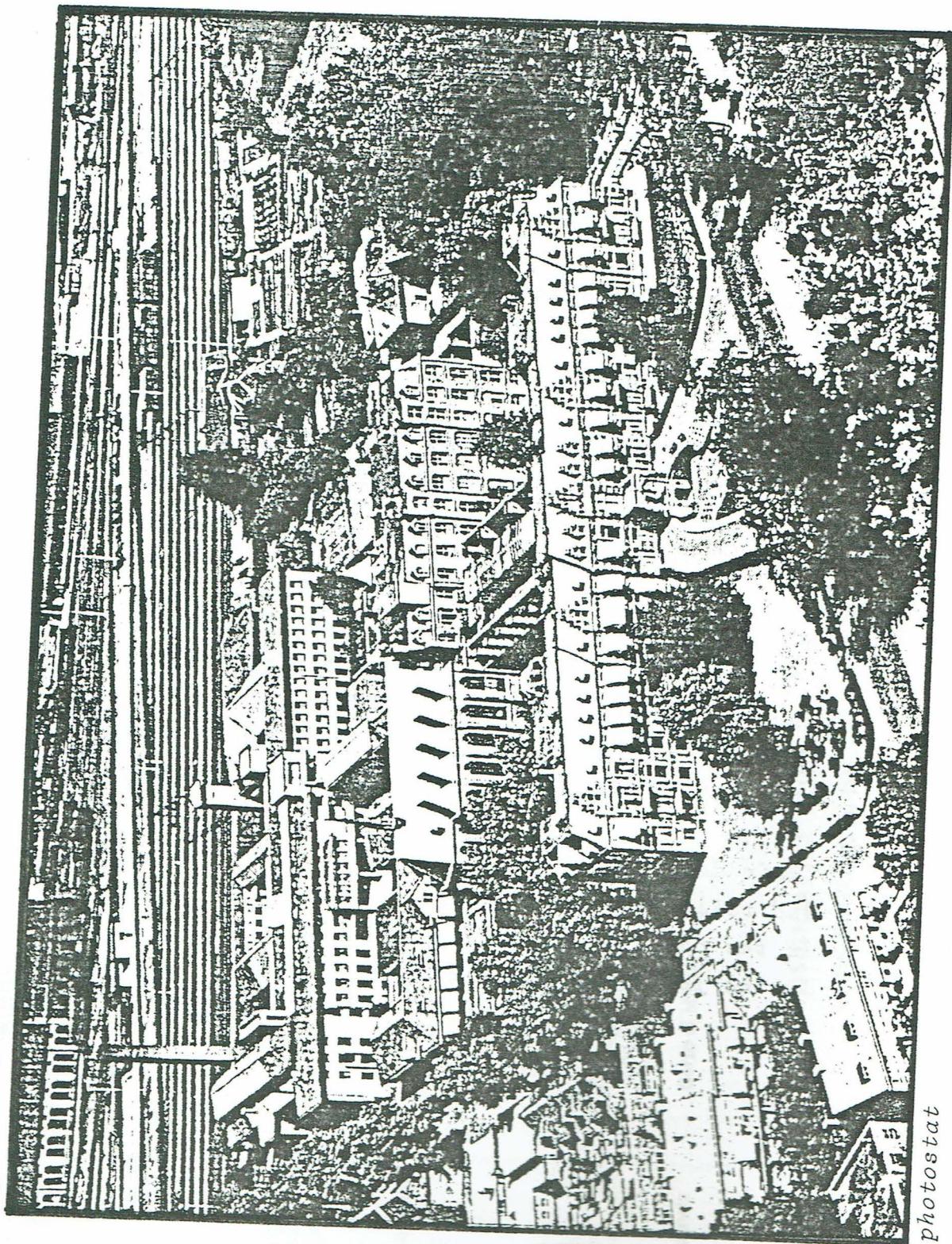
Now gather round me comrades,
And a story I will tell,
Of the only men the Jerry fears,
For he thinks they come from hell,
Their nickname the RED devils,
Is known to everyone,
Twas fought and earned by British blood,
And given by the Hun.

Like many Knights and heroes of the old,
They went into battle courageous and bold,
When 'ere they charged c'ver the Battlefield,
The Jerry always before them did yield,
And midst the sound of shot and shell,
Was heard a terrifying yell,
When "Whoa Mahomed" filled the air,
Those Jerries trembled with despair.

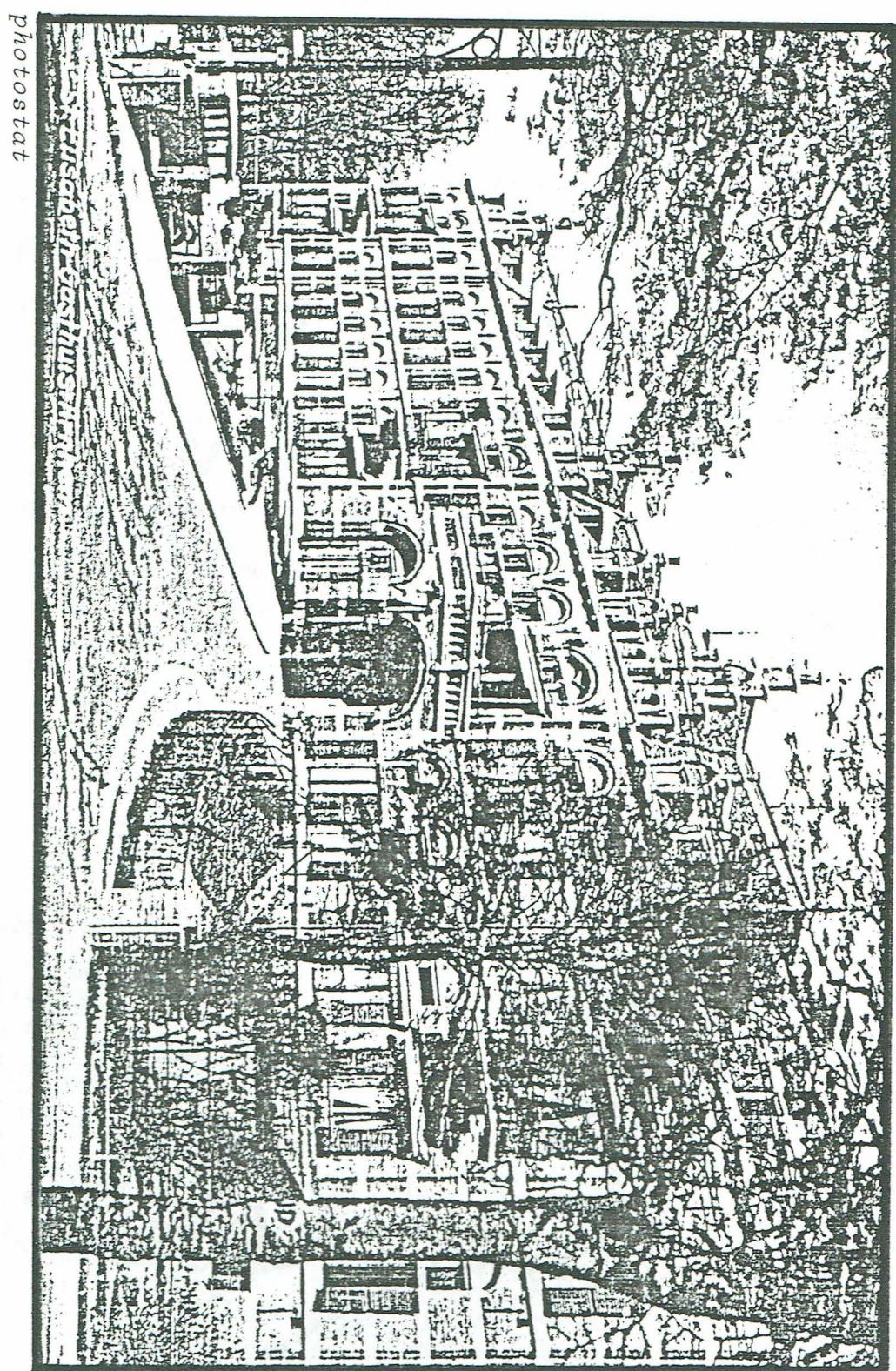
No longer in Tunisia, can be heard the sound of War,
Of the screaming of the Stukas' diving for the floor,
When everywhere about, was like a second hell,
They remember all these things, and their comrades
that fell.

Their deeds shall live in glory,
And take an honoured place,
In the pages of our History,
In the fight for the human race.

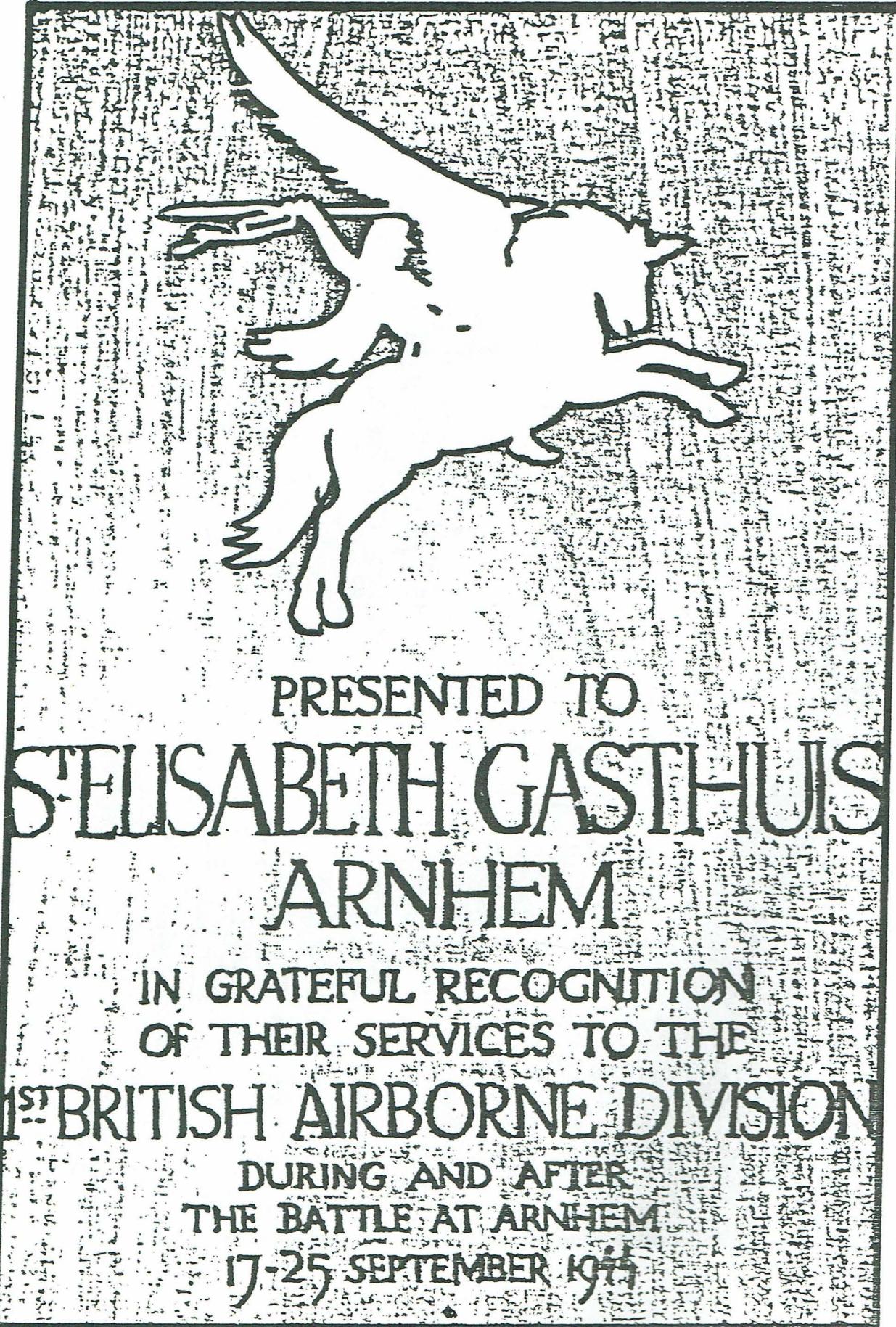
Pat O'Brien
Norrie Hill



photostat



photosat



'Twas on a cool September day,
They did start to wend their way
And as they started to emplane,
Their thoughts flew back once again
To bitter battles of the past
When they had been within death's grasp.

And as the planes flew through the sky,
They wondered who would be first to die -
They thought of all their boyhood years,
In an efford to drive away their fears
And wether they were rich or poor,
Their Mothers held their hearts secure.

Then Zero Hour came at last,
They leapt into the slipstream blast -
The gliders, too, went round and round
Till they crash landed on the ground,
This glorious spectacle lit by the sun
Did strike terror in the heart of the Hun.

Thus, as they ended their airborne trip
With the Hun they came to grips,
Towards Arnhem Town they made their way
Into the thick of the fray,
Soon the fields were coloured red
With blood flowing from the wounded and dead.

In Arnhem Streets the fighting was bitter,
Bodies covered the Streets like litter,
The din of battle was everywhere
Mingled with "cries of despair",
When "Whoa Mahomed" filled the air
Those Jerries trembled with deep fear.

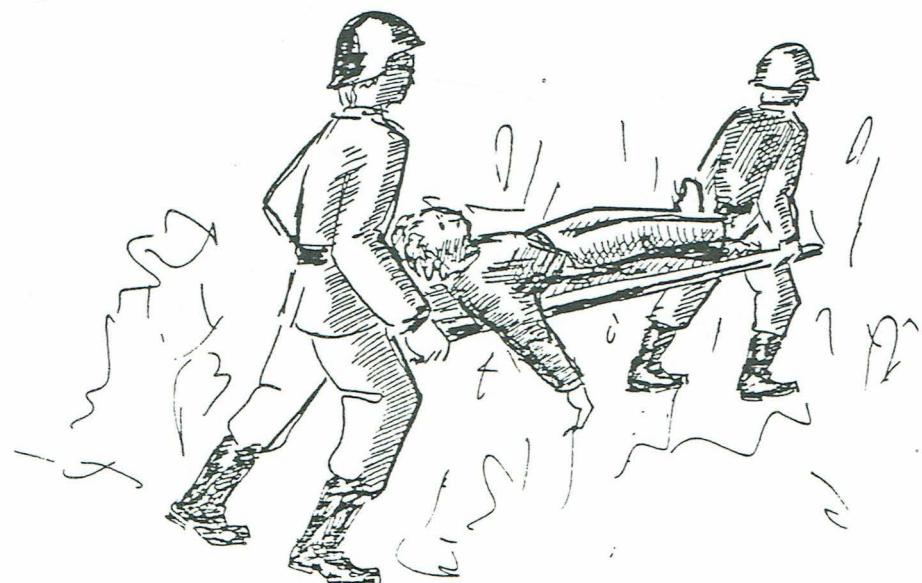
At Arnhem Bridge, a brave little band
Made a gallant heroic stand,
Aided by the gallant Dutch
But the odds proved too much,
Whilst on earth they have been in Hell
We hope - "To Heaven" goes those that fell,
So when you pray - remember them,
Those "Angels of Arnhem".

Their deeds shall live in glory
And take an honoured place
In the pages of our history,
In the fight for the human race
Lest we forget SEPTEMBER, 1944.

Pat O'Brian and Norrie Hill

(Two of 1st Bde Para's
3rd Parachute Bn. 1944)

(Written 1945)



" THE SECOND ARMY WILL SOON BE HERE "

I have been asked, to recall those fateful days of September 1944, during the battle at Arnhem. However, as for the battle in general, I knew very little, being an early casualty, never getting close to the bridge. Naturally I can only relate from memory my own personal experiences, not of heroics more of survival.

My rank was that of platoon sergeant in the 11th battalion parachute regiment having been dropped on the second lift on September 18th.

My story begins on entering the town after a long, Stop - Go, walk from the dropping zone. An overturned tram lay on it's side in the centre of the main road. Enemy small arms fire soon dispersed the company. Defence positions were taken up behind cover and in slit trenches dug in people's well tended gardens. After a long delay the signal came to re-form and advance towards the bridge. Much activity was going on around the hospital. We hadn't continued far, before a sudden burst of fire opened up, spraying the wall behind me with bullets, miraculously I was only hit once in the foot. After a moments stillness, came another volley of fire, this time sweeping the street before me. A voice shouted "Sergeant Butler has caught it". Quickly I was helped into the nearest house.

My platoon officer came rushing in, commiserated, and said "Hold up here for the medics". How fortunate I was to meet Mr and Mrs De Winkle, who with nurse like efficiency bathed my foot, extracted the bullet, dressed the wound and supplied a slipper. For the rest of the night, oblivious of the fighting, we spent a pleasant evening, showing photo's and trying to overcome the language barrier, especially my efforts to explain my wife's near expectancy of my first child. Having little hope of finding the medical section I remained with the De Winkle family. During all this time there were sounds of a hell of a battle going on around the bridge.

Early in the morning I was told that de Germans seemed to be in control of the neighbourhood and would be searching the houses.

My hosts suggested they hide me, this I kindly refused, determined to join my unit. However, before I had time to depart, an English speaking neighbour called in with information of British soldiers occupying numerous houses, thus offering to escort me to them.

I can remember my exact parting words to my new found friends:

"Have no fear, the second army will soon be here" This same phrase

was to be repeated many times to other families.

Off we ventured, with me hobbling behind my guide, in the direction of the bridge. It seemed miles, having to shelter in three houses on the way, in between frightening incidents of evading the enemy. We saw gallant Dutch civilians being jostled through the streets to the prison compounds. My escort ran the risk of being one of these daring Hollanders. Guns and mortar fire sounded louder than ever, now coming from other directions as well as the bridge. Families in the cellars were always welcoming and generous, the children affectionate. Eventually we reached our destination. In the house there were four paratroopers from my own battalion. Apart from the din of explosions, little else seemed to be going on immediately around us, until a skirmish ensued when British boys were running from one side of the road to the other seeking cover. Everywhere was chaotic, German machine guns had found targets, but no enemy could be seen by us, now it was difficult to know which house contained friend or foe. We took up positions around the windows, gradually the sporadic shooting became intensive, until a hail of bullets shattered into the room. Our resistance in exchange fire was futile, we retired to the loft. Another hour passed. After a lull, loud bosche commands were being given, then came another firing spree into the house. I realised this was only covering fire, then they came crashing in, firing at will. I remember thinking to myself "Now they will throw grenades". I pressed myself securely behind an old wringer and other attic junk, concealing myself with anything available. Everyone remained silent, my heart beating and pumping fast and loud. I couldn't see, but I could hear noisy scufflings and loud shouts, obviously my companions were being routed out. I dare not breathe only to give a sigh of relief at the sound of receding footsteps. It was ages before I could summon up sufficient courage to move, not knowing where to go. Little did I realise that when I did leave it was to be my most sorrowful and vivid memory.

Stealthily slipping out by the rear, I unexpectedly came face to face with a young German soldier. For a fraction of a second we looked at each other, frozen like petrified rabbits. I squeezed the Sten gun trigger, still looking at me he slumped to the ground.

Sickened with remorse, in desperation, I found myself struggling lamely through gardens and somehow climbing fences. My foot was throbbing, blood seeping through the bandage, single rifle shots pursuing me. I said a little prayer on finding refuge in a garden shed, my slipper was lost, my foot the size of a balloon. Feeling sorry for myself, but thankful to be alive, I lay on the floor and just listened to the outside bombardment, hoping the second army would soon arrive.

At dawn the following day, carefully looking out of the hut, I saw a Hollander picking vegetables from his garden, I threw a stone but received no reaction, I called out but he completely ignored me and walked back into his home. To my surprise, minutes later, he returned waving me to come in. His broken English told me that isolated Tommy soldiers were still occupying certain houses and pointed one out to me.

Elsewhere heavy shelling continued, fighting sounded severe. Time went by, but I dare not attempt to reach the house, armoured cars were prowling the streets and small arms were intermittently firing in the near vicinity. When a moment of inactivity prevailed, I literally hopped along as fast as I could, not being able to put my foot to the ground and only just managing to reach safety as a German truck sped by. Luckily for me I was seen by the British lookout. The moment I banged on the door willing hands helped me in. My arrival was greeted with enthusiasm by five private soldiers and a corporal from varied units. One soldier was upstairs sitting comfortably in an armchair nursing a nasty shoulder wound. All accepted me eagerly as senior rank, I felt elated, no longer the scared sergeant of yesterday. How grateful I was to be with such fine company, we set about getting ourselves really organised.

Household goods were barricaded against the windows. Time went slowly. On the second shift the lookout shouted "Tanks!", one cruised past menacingly. A truck stood at the end of the street with Jerry soldiers taking cover. We checked equipment and ammunition, everyone was outwardly calm and alert, even joking. Shooting came from everywhere, opposite windows and doorways. I wondered how many of us were holding other houses. I shouted "Go easy with the ammo". My boys were now firing and swearing

with desperate bravado, most of us claiming more than our actual share of hits.

After a while the inevitable happened, an agonising cry and a lad fell back, a bullet in his chest. No field dressing was enough for this wound. We lay on the floor giving what help we could, in less than a minute I decided to surrender our two seriously wounded. Someone tore a piece of white sheet from the bed for a flag, we shook hands and waving our flag of truce, placed our two unfortunate men outside. I raised my hand in appreciation to the invisible enemy. Within ten minutes they were carried away. Steady sniping by both sides continued becoming subdued. We noticed prisoners being rounded up, armoured cars were in view while artillery and mortar fire blasted away in the near distance. We wondered how long we could last - before nightfall we knew. The climax came swiftly, first a spell of machine gun and rifle fire then a thunderous bang and part of the house was ripped open. I didn't see any of my courageous fighting soldiers again, comparative strangers but unforgettable comrades.

The next thing I knew the Germans had put me on a stretcher and I was taken to a dressing station. The medical orderly redressed my foot and offered a cigarette and sausage. A German officer said to me "It will soon be all over". I wondered what had happened to the second army.

Finally, I would like to say, I served as a soldier from the very beginning of the war. First saw action at Dunkirk then onwards to other theatres of war, yet in spite of it's calamitous outcome, I am proudest to have fought amongst the people of Arnhem.

London, 4th June 1985

George Butler

A BEAUTIFUL SUNDAY MORNING

It started so beautifully on that Sunday morning, September 17th 1944.

It was beautiful weather and my father (A. Derksen) and I were walking on Onderlangs. Suddenly we were surprised by the sounds of aircraft. Low-flying aircraft make a lot of noise and it is frightening especially when realising that they may drop bombs. What we did not know at that time was that they were carrying paratroopers. And just because of the sounds of engines my Dad and I ran home: Zwarteweg number 14.

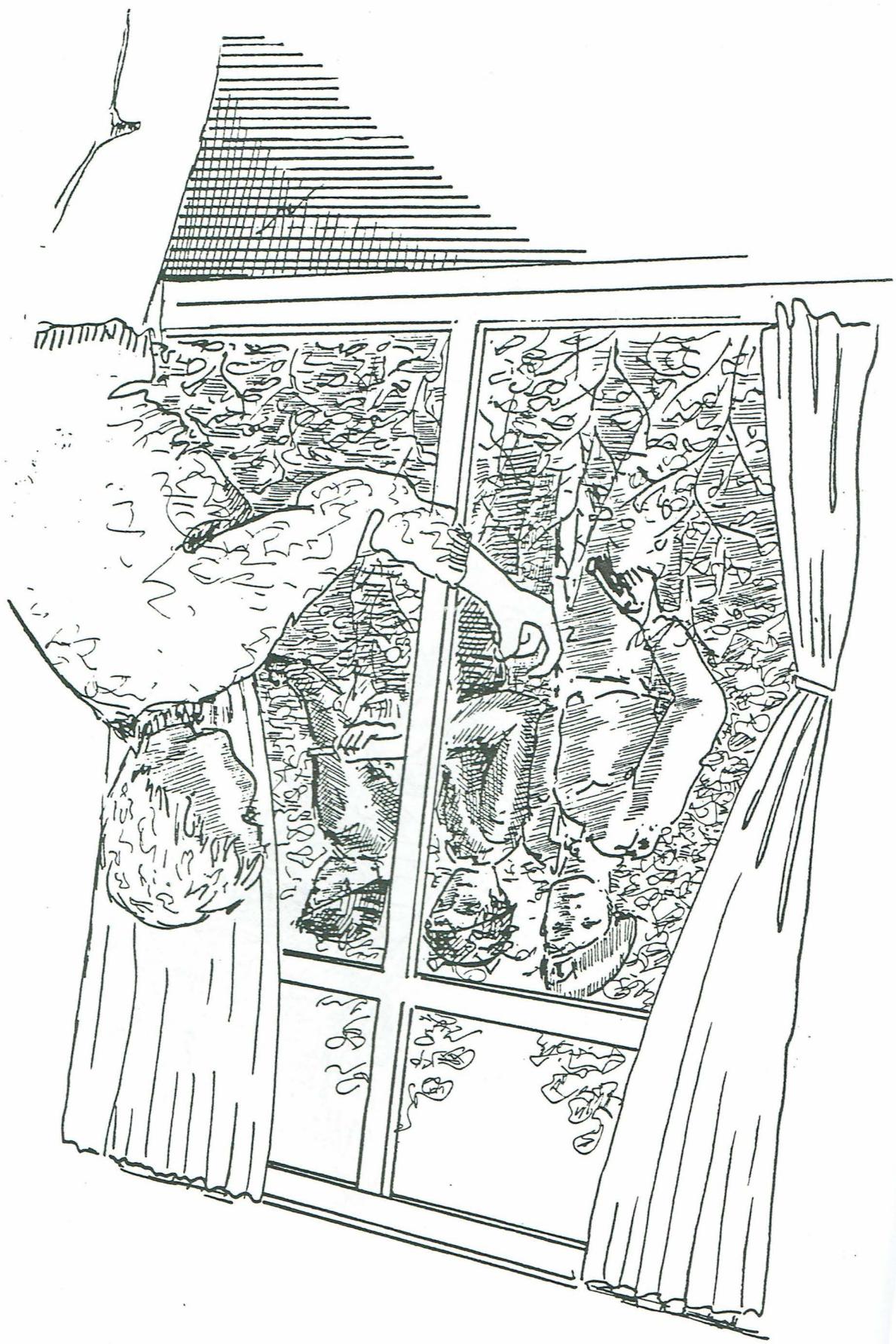
After the landings, which must have taken place between 12.00 and 13.00 we found out that the aircraft had been carrying paras. Later that day, at about six in the evening I saw the Germans who had been at 'Lombok' had taken their heels, and I saw the first British soldiers in our district. We were so happy, for these soldiers had come to liberate us. But this happiness was not to last for very long, for we saw the return of the Germans, who had been so scared at first. Now they drove with their anti-aircraft guns and tanks into Zwarteweg and searched house by house to see whether there were any Britons inside. The return of the Germans had given us such a shock and we walked to our neighbours, Nr 13 Zwarteweg. Shortly after that street fighting started and we thought it safer to stay with our neighbours.

My brother Jan and I were watching from the window at the back of the house, when we saw three Englishmen walking on the path between the gardens. This path had a dead end against the infant school and the Englishmen could not go any further. My brother Jan and I saw what had happened and we beckoned them to go into our place at number fourteen, because the door was still open. They got the message and now walked into our house. We dared not go home now, because there were still Germans in our street and around the Elisabeth Hospital. What was to be done?? The Englishmen were in our house, and outside the Germans were all over the place and were likely to enter our house. And if they would find us with the Englishmen, with whom they were mad by now, you could expect anything from them, including killing us. Then we went out to warn all the neighbours of our row of houses, (among them the Jansens and the Hagenbeek-family and others whose names I cannot remember after forty years) telling them about the Englishmen in our house.

Then all of us went to the Vande Linden family, living at 135, Alexander Straat, where we spent the night. The next morning, so September 29th we no longer saw German soldiers, but just British. This meant we were now English-held territory again, and consequently free for a while.

Then we went to Mr Weimar, who lived opposite the Vande Linden family. Mr Weimar spoke English and he saw to it that the three Englishmen could now come out of our house. During that period we did not know that the three Airbornes who had been hiding in our house, had been General Urquhart, and two other officers, Taylor and Cleminson. It was not until after the actual liberation of Arnhem in 1945 when they first visited our place, we heard that he had been General R.E. Urquhart, C.O. of the 1st British Airborne Division.

Written by
Mrs N. Jansen-Derkens,
who then lived at
No. 14 Zwarteweg, in the
District 'West-Arnhem'.





AN ENGLISH LADY

This is the story of Mrs Behr. During the Battle of Arnhem and still now Mrs Behr lives in Alexanderstraat.

Mrs M. Behr-Brown is English by birth and consequently, in 1940, she spoke Dutch with an English accent. So you will understand that it was very difficult for her in our German-occupied country to speak half-Dutch and half-English. Time and again she had to be on the watch-out. Just imagine how difficult it was for her to go and do her shoppings. Of course, the people who had known her for a long time were informed, but there might arise a different situation, if there were Germans or Dutch collaborators in the shop. On the other hand, her husband's surname is Behr, which is a proper German surname, although Mr Behr is of Dutch origin.

On September 17th 1944 Mrs Behr was very happy, too, that the paratroopers had landed, the men of the 1st British Airborne Division.

When the Britons were at 'Lombok' (one of the estates near Elisabeth Hospital) and fighting the Germans there, it was quite a relief for Mrs Behr. Now she actually saw her fellow-countrymen and she, too, could visualise the liberation. Isn't it most understandable that the return of the Germans was a major disappointment?

During the fighting in Alexanderstraat one of the British officers got a sort of 'blackout': the explosions had overwhelmed him -and had sent him spinning in the street. He was yelling. The British para's pressed themselves against the frontdoors of the houses. From there they were shouting at their officer. They dared not approach him because the Germans had the street under cover.

The Englishman who was pressed against the frontdoor of Mrs Behr's house was John Harrison. Mrs Behr, who was still in the house, went to the door to have a look - and opened it. John, the Englishman, tumbled into the hall. Mrs Behr said: "Come in.". And that is what John did. In the living-room John saw a photograph on the wall - it was Mrs Behr's brother. He, too, was serving in the British army and in the photograph he was wearing his uniform. According to the English fashion, the photograph was in a collage in a large frame. John, the Englishman, was most astonished: an English lady in German-occupied territory. Mrs Behr then helped John to escape from his critical circumstances.

For many years after the war Mrs Behr received dozens of letters from mothers and wives who wanted to find the graves of their husbands or sons. She was able to help some of them.

She gave dozens of English letters to the pupils of the schools, so that they could take up contact with British people.

Thirty years after the Battle of Arnhem, Mrs Behr was accommodating an English couple, as she was used to in the month of September. During that same period John Harrison was also in Arnhem and he was looking for a small English lady. At a certain moment the English couple was walking along Mrs Behr's house, and at that very moment an English coach drove into Alexanderstraat. In this coach was John Harrison, who had spotted this English couple. John shouted: "Stop! Stop this coach! This is someone of my unit, of 1944." The coach stopped and John addressed the English couple. John told them he was looking for a small English lady. "Oh", said the English couple, "just press this doorbell." He suited the action to the word, and, indeed, this is how Mrs Behr and John Harrison found each other, after thirty years. Their meeting was properly celebrated. "There was a great reunion", is the English saying.

(After that the Leicester Branch of the Parachute Regiment invited Mrs Behr to come to England, and she was made an Honorary Member of the Branch).

CIVILIANS

The Blom family had a shop in Oranje Street, where -amongst others- milk and vegetables were sold. Mr. Blom, like so many others, had seen the British paratroopers land on September 17th 1944-and it was not long before the estate of 'Lombok' saw very bitter fighting. They soon closed the shutters before the windows and sought safety in the vegetable-hall behind their shop (both the shop and the hall are still on that spot - Frederiks). There the Bloms and other families who lived in Oranje Street found shelter in the large cellar of the vegetable-hall. There were about thirty people in there. Some of these people who later had left the cellar, saw amongst other frightful things how a heavy grenade hit the Elisabeth Hospital. Terrible fighting took place in Oranje Street. Tanks drove up and down the streets. At a certain moment it became too much for the Blom-family and for the other people who were still in this cellar. The Bloms put their horses to the milk-cart and a large flat cart. Ready for the journey they left the vegetable-hall together with the other families.

At the crossing of Heijenoordse Way and Northern Parallel Way they said goodbey to the Elings-family, who continued on Northern Parallel Way. The Blom family and the other families with their two carts turned into Heijenoords Way. (just across the Oranje Street bridge) After walking about 200-300 meters they saw British aircraft coming towards them. Probably the pilot must have taken them for a German column and machine-gunned the milk-cart and the flat cart. The results of the strafing by the aircraft were disastrous. The ravage was enormous. The suitcases of the families were sent flying from the cart. The other cart was on one side, and the horse was blown across the fence of one of the gardens, which belong to the houses at Heyenoordse Way.

A number of people of the various families, amongst them their father Mr D. Blom, who had found themselves on or around the carts, were killed. Others were seriously injured. With this story one of our objectives has been to commemorate the former people of Lombok, who, during the Battle of Arnhem, were among the casualties during the several battles taking place in the estate of Lombok.....

Some of these people were so badly injured that even now, after 41 years, they still have the scars.

The wounded were taken to the hospital. After an hour Mr Blom and

his mother were back in the shop in Oranje Street. After arriving there, they saw the Germans with the captured British jeeps in the yard behind their shop. The shop was one big muddle. The rabbit-hutches in the yard were empty. The car which had been in the pent-house, was also gone. It was a big muddle, indeed!

After getting two of their suitcases from the cart and taking the horse and the milk-cart from Heijenoordse Way, Mr Blom and his mother spent the night there.

The following day they left together, heading for the Bakenbergs Way. There was a make-shift Red Cross station. Then they went on, in the direction of the town of Otterlo. Uncles of Mr Blom buried Blom Sr the following day, and collected the horse and the milk-cart and also went on their way to Otterlo. In Ermelo, to the north of Otterlo, Mr Blom and his uncles met. Mr Blom's mother was at Apeldoorn, one of the larger towns. In one of the Apeldoorn hospitals was her little daughter, who had been very seriously wounded during the air-raid. So the mother had gone east, from Ermelo to Apeldoorn. Mr Blom remained with his uncles.

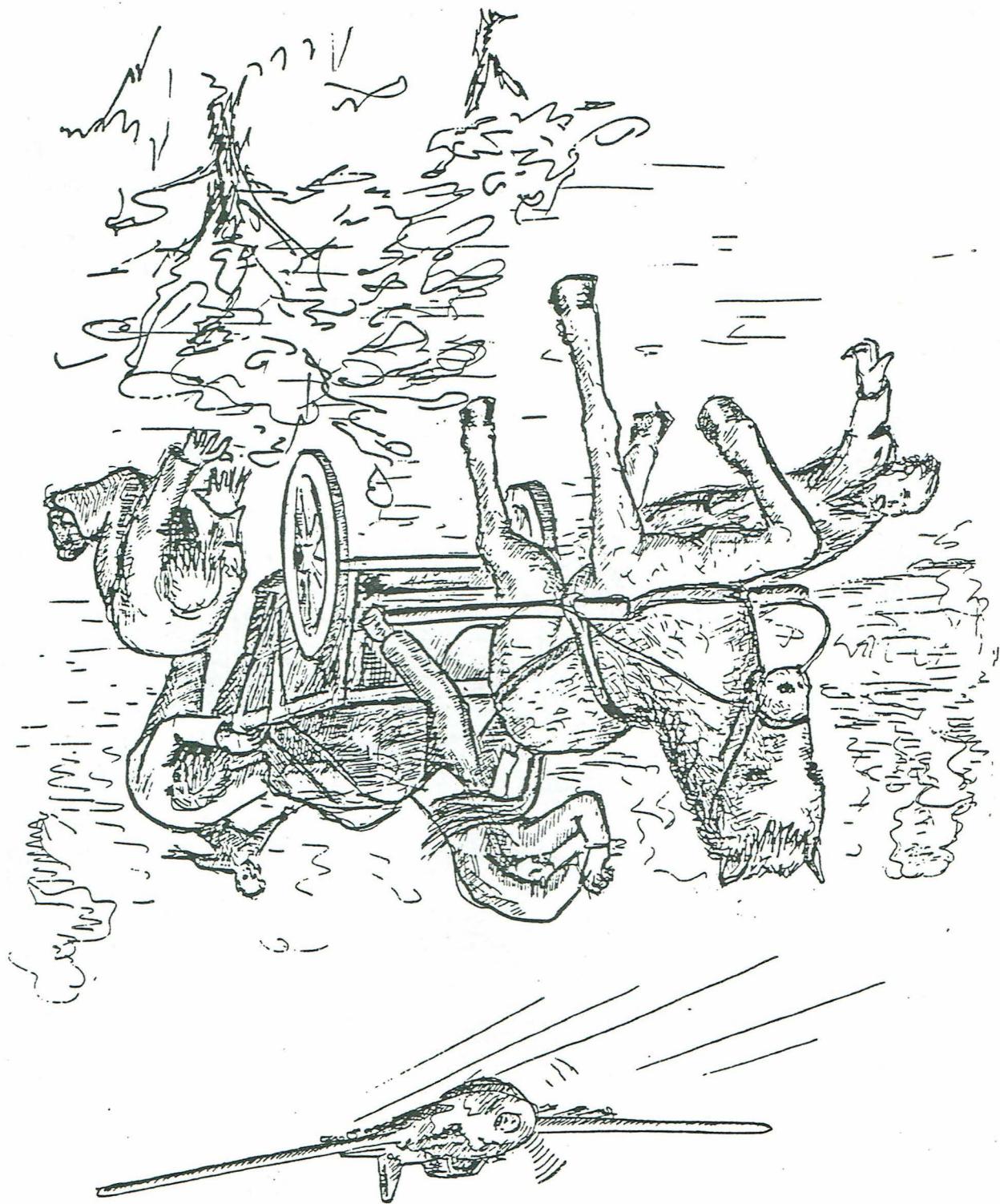
Towards the end of their evacuation-period Mr Blom and one of his uncles went back once to Oranje Street. Nothing was left in the shop.

Until the time the people of Arnhem were allowed to return to their town, in 1945, Mr Blom stayed with his uncles, who earned their living by cutting wood in the forests.

When, in 1945, Mr Blom returned to their shop in Oranje Street, they had to clear the debris from the shop. The debris was put on the pavement. Oranje Street consequently became one big rubbish heap, for everybody put the debris on the pavement for want of a better place.

Story from Mr J. Blom
(in 1944 twelf years old)

During the war the Blom-family
lived at 63-65 Oranje Street.





TWO ENGLISH COINS FOR LUCK

On Sunday, September 17th, 1944 I landed by parachute on the D.Z. at Telephone Way, near Wolfhezen. Only three minutes after the jump I got a drink of water from a Dutch couple. Somebody took a photograph and it was not until 1984 on my first return to the Arnhem area, when I discovered it, in the Airborne Museum at Oosterbeek.

About a hundred yards further up the road was a bungalow. On the door was a small note in English, which said: 'No bread today - gone away for the day'. In an open window there was a jug of water and two glasses. I did not drink, but left two English coins for luck. We then moved on towards a farm about 200 yards away, where we collected our equipment. I asked the farmer if we could have his horse and cart to take our equipment to Arnhem. The farmer would lend them to us on the condition that his son came with us to bring back the horse and the cart when they were no longer needed. The boy was very brave, but when the shooting got very bad, just outside Arnhem, we sent him back to the farm. I would like to meet him, if he has survived. The farm was about 50 yards from the main road, not far from Wolfhezen and about halfway from there to Heelsum. On our way to Arnhem we passed a car which was shot up by members of my Battalion in it were a German General and his driver, not all that far from the farm.

We were on the main road to Arnhem and passed the Hartenstein Hotel at Oosterbeek. We had to leave the Utrecht Road to side roads and then came near the Elisabeth Hospital, not far from the Station and past the 'Monastery'. We moved along the upper road, but were forced to a halt: we met lots of tanks and machine-guns and got orders to get back, along the Rhine Hotel. I joined up with a new officer, again up the same road, and again had to come back down the Rhine road. By that time we were only with a few of us left. We had tried to reach the bridge on every road - and my Battalion, the 3rd Battalion must have been nearly wiped out. I then went round the houses, at the back of the Rhine Hotel with 5 or 6 men, along the river bank and three of us got as far as the Pontoon Bridge. I can honestly say that I have seen the river Rhine standing on its side - it was like a wall of water, of about 200 by 30 yards: shelling and mortars and machine-guns, from four sides.

How we came out of it alive I can't say - it must have been the English money I left for luck in the bungalow!

It was near the Pontoon Bridge when I noticed I was bleeding above my eyes from small cuts - a small bullet in my left leg which soon was swollen and getting stiff. I had been bleeding from inside my body for a few days. All in all it lasted for 4 weeks. I also lost the use of my left arm for months. Near the Pontoon Bridge with running sweat and blood I was temporary blinded. Three of us were taken prisoner there. There were tanks against us, as well as infantry.

We were stood up against a wall for a night and part of the following day. Then the survivors from the bridge joined us and we were taken outside Arnhem, about a kilometer. We were interrogated, so we gave our name and army number. The interrogator was a German Canadian. He told me he had been waiting for us for three weeks.... I was at Arnhem, for 8 days altogether. We had our boots taken from us, and we were put in a cattle truck, fifty men per truck, and we were in it for 5 days, going into Germany.

We first went to a camp Limburg (12A?). I was 16 days without food, we had water twice in that time. For a month we were without boots and we had no treatment for our wounds. We were forced to work on bomb damage, from LIMBURG for food, then walk to work without boots.

Then we went to HALLE, in what is now East-Germany. We had three jobs there. The first job was underground-tunnelling for approx. 3 months. We had a bowl of potato soup a day and one-tenth of a loaf of bread. And for Christmas 1/4 of a Red Cross box. Every 4 weeks the Gestapo used to go to our small camp while we were working, and they used to leave 4 cards on our wooden beds; on the cards was written in English, asking us to join the FREE ENGLISH, the FREE WELSH, the FREE SCOTS and the FREE IRISH. No one did. The next job we had was burying German civilians in communal graves in Halle Crematory grounds. We were in a 1000 bomber raid by the Americans. Just after that 4 men and myself escaped and got back to the American lines. We were with the Americans for a week and then we were sent home.

I had 5 years of treatment, 3 days a week in hospital for back-injuries. It took me 17 years to get back the same weight I had before we went to Arnhem... I then went to work for a group of

hospitals as a general foreman over 40 men, carpenters, masons and painters until I had a heart-attack and then I had to give up work.

I returned to the Arnhem area for the 40th Anniversary and I was welcomed and helped by very kind people.

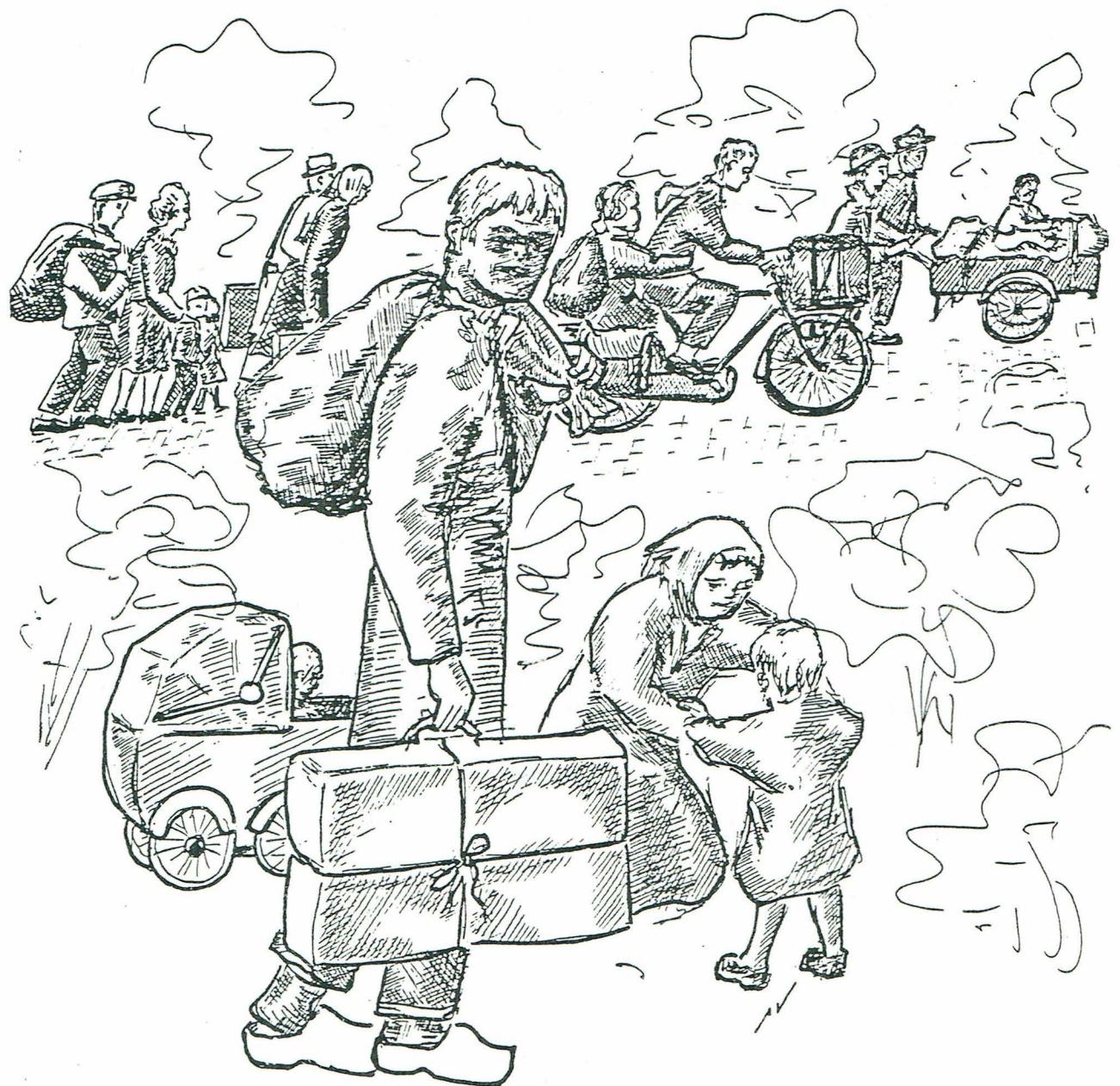
If I had to do the same things all over again and fight for the freedom of the individual, I would. This freedom seems nothing until we lose it, as all older people know. We don't have to speak the same language, for there is something we feel deep inside us. Freedom is like health: it is nothing until lost. I hope that the younger generations will be equally kind and brave as the older ones.

For forty years I have not been able or willing to talk about all this I wanted to forget all of it. In the end my wife persuaded me to go back to Arnhem for the 40th Anniversary. Helped by her and the Dutch people I got the courage to face it all and to my own intense relief I can now talk about it again. I will try and come back and meet you all again.

Mr W.N. Hill,
3rd Battalion Para Regt,

CARMARTHEN

SOUTH WALES



"SOMETHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN"

(partly from my diary)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17th 1944 It was a Sunday morning, the sun was shining in a blue sky - it was beautiful weather. We had plans to go for a long walk in the afternoon and that is why we wanted to attend the 9.30 service in the Dome Church at Arnhem. All of a sudden, at eight o'clock, the alert was given. Usually it never came at such an early hour and we said: "Something is going to happen". It lasted for about 15 minutes. At half past eight, there it was again! Now we could no longer go to the Dome Church. Then we went to the Home for Deaconesses. Hardly had the service started when we heard the alert again. Now there were a great many of aircraft. The lady beside me just looked at me. Suddenly we heard a terrific explosion. The lady beside me said: "That must have been one of the aircraft". Then we heard the sounds of firing outside. I was so scared that the aircraft were to bomb us. The people in the church became rather noisy, but the minister continued with his sermon. We waited till twelve o'clock. We left the church by the emergency-exit, and with the sounds of aircraft still overhead, we arrived home safely. People whom we met on our way thought it might turn out to be a proper battle. We didn't believe one word of it. When we got home, father was waiting for us. He had been very much concerned about us. They had been to the air-raid shelter which was made one week before, by Mr Visser and my father. Now it was about one o'clock; we went in, quickly put some bread, a knife and butter in a bag and ran to the wood where the shelter was. Hardly had we arrived there, when the first firing started. Outside the shelter there was a terrible noise. I heard people yelling and screaming for fear. We could have crawled into the ground, for you cannot really shelter for bombs. We were in the shelter until six in the evening. When we got out, we met some people. They told us that paratroopers had been dropped. We had to have a meal first, so we went home. When we arrived there, we lit a fire to warm our meal. We still heard the sounds of firing. We were not looking forward to the night.

MONDAY. When we got outside at six in the morning, the Britons had been driven back again, and were said to be in the neighbourhood of Oranje Straat. Then the Germans put four tanks in our street. They began to fire at the paratroopers who were at 'Lombok',

one of the estates nearby. We saw the Tommies slipping along the houses. There were terrible sounds of firing. The Germans were in the trees along the road and as soon they saw us, they fired at us, so we could not stay outside.

TUESDAY. There were waves of big aircraft, dropping paratroopers, panniers and containers. Between twelve and one o'clock there was no firing so we went outside to have a look. We were hardly outside, when the Germans threw handgrenades into a house which went up in flames. They said that there were still Tommies inside. A moment later one of the paras came out, severely wounded. He walked a few yards and then collapsed. His uniform was on fire.

WEDNESDAY. The people living at 'Lombok' were all evacuated. The prisoners in 'the Dome' (nearby prison) were all released. One of them came walking into our direction, but the Germans thought he was a Tommy and shot him. People were walking along, with blankets and bags, children pottering behind their parents. They all went to Heijenoord, Hoogkamp and Sterrenberg. Rumours had it that the Germans were to flatten 'Lombok', to have a better field of fire for the 'Betuwe' (area south of the river Rhine). It looked like a migration of nations.

THURSDAY. Grenades fell all around us. All day bullets and grenades whisked past us. At ten in the morning we could get some flour at the baker's, but again and again we had to take cover from grenades.

FRIDAY. All morning we had to stay in the cellar. Mother made vegetable-soup and peeled the potatoes in the cellar. The following night we stayed in the living-room and slept there on the floor - but not much sleep was granted. That night the houses opposite ours got fifteen direct hits, causing many casualties.

SATURDAY. Father and I have been out to get shelter with other people for the following night. We wanted to go to Warnsborn, but we could not get there. At the Amsterdamse Weg we had to take shelter from aircraft which started to fire at the troops. We went to Mrs Beaufort and there we could spend the night, with eight of us. The explosions of grenades was not as bad as where we lived.

SUNDAY. By eight o'clock we went back home again. On the Zandpad we suddenly saw eight aircraft coming in very low. They began to fire, we dropped flat on the ground. I lay down on Grannie. On all fours we crawled to the farmhouse of the Aalberse family and took

shelter in the barn. When the firing was over, we ran home. When we arrived there we were told that all of us had to leave the town. It said on pamphlets on the R.C. Church. We spent the night at home. The next day, however, we left. We took all our things from the cupboards and hid all of it under the floor. Everything was packed in sheets and pillow-cases. It was quite a muddle. Quickly I grabbed some blankets and sheets and that is how we left. People on bicycles took others on their luggage-carriers. Our plan was to go to the town of Zutphen and from there to Sliedrecht. Unfortunately we could not go any further than Dieren. We went a long, long way, and eventually got to Friesland.

On April 21, 1945 we were asked to accommodate four Canadians. They gave us a wonderful cup of tea, and lovely cheese. The next morning they left, after we had thanked them for liberating us. Now there was one desire left: HOME.

This story is written by

Mrs de Waard,

who lived at Heijenoord during
the Battle of Arnhem.

