

REPORT ON THE MEDICAL SERVICES - 1 AIRBORNE DIVISIONOPERATION 'MARKET'

BY COLONEL E.I.B.HARVEY, D.S.O., A.D.M.S. 1 AIRBORNE DIVISION
(not present on operation)

This report has been compiled from evidence collected from returned personnel, and two letters from Medical Officers in enemy hands at the time of their writing. The narratives of the individual units are appended, and these are of necessity incomplete.

The proposed method of implementing the Medical Plan is indicated in 1 Airborne Division Medical Operation Instruction No.1 (see Annexure 'L').

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS.

1. On 17 Sep, 16 Para Fd Amb (Lt Col E.TOWNSEND, M.C.) were dropped accurately and landed with full equipment and personnel. 181 Airlanding Fd Amb (Lt Col A.T.MARRABLE) less one section landed successfully in nine gliders.
2. 16 Para Fd Amb proceeded direct to ARNHEM and established a D.S. in SAINT ELIZABETH HOSPITAL which was opened by 2200 hours.
3. 181 Airlanding Fd Amb opened a D.S. at once in the area of the L.Z. and casualties were received shortly after landing, some of these being landing injuries.
4. During this and the succeeding day the Medical Services functioned according to plan, the responsibility for casualties of the second lift, being undertaken by 133 Para Fd Amb (Lt Col W.C.ALFORD) and the reserve section of 181 Airlanding Fd Amb.
5. By the evening of the 19 Sep both 133 Para Fd Amb and 181 Airlanding Fd Amb were established side by side in OOSTERBEEK. En route 133 Para Fd Amb had been delayed by the enemy who were in close contact in the area OOSTERBEEK.
6. On 20 Sep both medical units in OOSTERBEEK were captured, and the majority of Medical Officers and R.A.M.C. personnel were removed to a P.O.W. cage, but a small number were allowed to remain with some 40 seriously wounded casualties.
7. From 21 Sep these two units, or that part of them that had been left in the area, united to form a small hospital, centred in the Municipal Hospital.
8. 16 Para Fd Amb was captured in ARNHEM on 18 Sep and the C.O. and majority of Medical Officers were sent off as P.O.W. After protest the surgical teams were allowed to remain to care for some thirty serious cases.
9. Thus by 20 Sep all three medical units were in enemy hands, and the Divisional Medical Services comprised the reserve section of 181 Airlanding Fd Amb, A.D.M.S. (Col. G.M.WARRACK) and his staff and certain R.M.Os. These were all amalgamated and casualties from within the perimeter were collected to this improvised dressing station.
10. On 26 Sep certain medical personnel, including Lt. Cols ALFORD and MARRABLE were apparently released to work in the D.S. at OOSTERBEEK, and this installation seems to have carried on as a Dressing Station until 27 Sep.

11. On 24 Sep Lt.Col.HERFORD of 163 P. Amb organised an attempt to get Medical supplies over the river. He and Capt.LOUIS,R.A.M.C.would attempt to take over six cwt of medical stores with four medical orderlies. This was made in daylight,at 1430 hrs on 24 Sep. Lt.Col.HERFORD constituted himself an envoy and made contact with the senior German officer after crossing the river by assault boat. It appears that Capt LOUIS and his party were made P.O.W.and nothing further has been heard of them.
12. Lt.Col.HERFORD made contact with the senior German medical officer,and arranged for the barracks at APPELDOORN to become a hospital for British wounded. This was staffed by personnel who arrived from OOSTERBEEK on 26 Sep. Col.G.M.WARRACK also arrived on that day and took command of the hospital. At the same time as the hospital was being organised parties of wounded and medical personnel were being evacuated to the interior of Germany. The evacuation arrangements were bad,but as a result of strong protests from Lt.Col.HERFORD the arrangements were improved and properly equipped hospital trains were provided.
13. Valuable assistance was rendered by the Dutch,who provided some medical stores and offered the services of Dutch Surgeons. Many British wounded were distributed among a number of German hospitals in the area,some of these were brought into the barracks,but the majority were evacuated.
14. By 30 Sep there were some 850 cases and 250 personnel in the hospital. Evacuation proceeded from time to time up till 16 Oct when the hospital was almost clear. The majority of personnel had by this time had been sent back to the HANOVER area as P.O.W. Lt.Col.HERFORD escaped from the hospital on the night of the 16 Oct. Col.G.M.WARRACK and Lt.Col.A.T. MARRABLE were still there.
15. The hospital at ARNHEM was closed on 12 Oct and the remaining personnel sent to APPELDOORN.
16. A further attempt to get medical stores across the river had been made on the night of the 24 Sep by Lt.(QM) J.TIERNAN, 181 Airlanding Fd Amb; six half ton blocks,mainly plasma,sulpha drugs,dressings and blankets,were made up by Lt.(QM) J.TIERNAN and he,with some 20 other ranks,were ferried across in DUKES and assault craft. These were sunk on the north bank and it was impossible to land the stores. Lt.(QM)J. TIERNAN remained all day on the north side and swam back on the night of the 25 Sep.
17. The withdrawal of 1 Airborne Division took place during the night of the 25 Sep.
- GENERAL MEDICAL PICTURE.
18. Initially the medical arrangements worked according to plan,provision being adequate for DZ and LZ immediate casualties. By the third day all three medical units were in enemy hands,but were permitted to carry on. Conditions of working were fair,and much assistance was obtained from the Dutch. Food was at times short. The enemy,on the whole,were co-operative and rendered assistance in the care of wounded. The impression is that this behaviour was largely due to the apprehension,on the part of the Germans, of a successful British attack. Some examples of Nazi boorishness were noted.
19. Something over two thousand casualties appeared to have been treated in the period 17 Sep - 16 Oct,all of 1 Airborne Division.
20. It is known that Capt.A.W.LIPMANN-KESSEL performed 96 surgical operations up to the 12 Oct.
21. The majority of wounded were later evacuated from British Dressing Stations and Hospitals to the interior of Germany.

22. Only three Medical Officers have returned from the north of the river together with some 25 other ranks R.A.M.C.

23. Capt.G.F.H. DRAYSON,R.A.M.C.attached 10 Para Bn and Capt J.T. DOYLE,R.A.M.C.were killed in action,and Capt B.BROWNSCOMBE,R.A.M.C. appears to have been shot by a drunken SS Corporal outside the Municipal Hospital at ARNHEM.

SUPPLIES.

24. The initial supplies landed were adequate for three days working. Plasma and Pencillin were short after this period.

25. Re-supply failed and the only replacements available were those taken through the lines under the Red Cross. Some plasma and other items of medical equipment were brought into ARNHEM by the Dutch underground, but the major part was picked up by the enemy.

26. Plasma retrieved from D.Z.three weeks later was in good condition. The Dutch provided what medical equipment they could and,at APPELDOORN, the German medical service also provided drugs and dressings.

CONCLUSIONS.

27. It would appear that the Medical Services provided a large measure of care for heavy casualties under the most difficult circumstances. Collection of casualties into the Dressing Stations in the initials phase was difficult owing to lack of transport,and later owing to the close contact of the enemy. After the medical units were over-run collection was even more difficult as all jeeps were either destroyed or captured.

28. The high value of the Surgical Teams in an Airborne Operation was once again evident.

29. Inter-communication between A.D.M.S.and Medical Units was impossible in the early stages,and was later only established by personal contact and passage through the enemy lines under Red Cross protection.

30. It was once again clear that one of the principal difficulties of the Medical Services is lack of transport in the early stages,which can only be overcome by the allotment of a glider element of not less than four Horsas.

16 PARACHUTE FIELD AMBULANCE

- 17 Sep Drop accurate and 100% landing of equipment and personnel. Immediate move to ST ELIZABETH HOSPITAL, ARNHEM, open by 2200 hrs; casualties waiting on arrival of unit. D.S. established in a large well equipped hospital with 2 operating theatres and Dutch civilian nurses. No X-ray available.
- 18 Sep Heavy fighting in hospital area, which was occupied by S.S. Troops. Lt. Col. E. TOWNSEND, Major GORDON, Capt. HELLS and TOBIN and majority of O.Rs. were taken prisoner. The two surgical teams were allowed to remain, as a result of protest, but the remainder of personnel were removed to P.O.W. cage.
- 19 Sep Hospital recaptured. Capt. KEESEY and 10 O.Rs. rejoined. Later in the day S.S. Troops again captured the area.
- 20-27 Sep The hospital was under German supervision, and during this period many casualties were dealt with, the majority being evacuated through enemy services to APPELDOORN. On 25 Sep there was heavy shelling believed to be covering the withdrawal of the Division.
- 27 Sep With the exception of 1 Surgeon, 2 M.Os. and a R.C. Chaplain and 20 O.Rs., British personnel left for APPELDOORN, these remaining to care for 30 serious cases unfit to be moved.
- 12-13 Oct. The hospital was closed and all personnel were moved to APPELDOORN.

SUPPLIES.

Plasma soon ran out but obtained from D.Z. via German lines, safe conduct being afforded to the Red Cross Flag.

German medical supplies were fair, but no sulpha drugs could be obtained.

Penicillin ran out on D + 4.

133 PARACHUTE FIELD AMBULANCE.

- 18 Sep The unit was dropped accurately except for 2 sticks of Lieut CLIFF's section, that landed 1 mile south of CIPPERLOO. A Dressing Station was established in a house on the E. side of the D.Z. where some 50 casualties were dealt with. At nightfall the unit moved, with wounded, to WOLFHEZEN and set up in a hospital by the level crossing.
- 19 Sep At 1000 hrs the unit moved into houses in OOSTERBEEK. An air attack by German fighters was encountered en route. A Dressing Station was established opposite 181 Air Ldg Fd Amb and an operating theatre established in a Dentist's home.
- 20 Sep Enemy advanced up ARNHEM - OOSTERBEEK road and at 0930 hrs both Fd Ambs fell into enemy hands.
- 21 Sep 181 Air Ldg Fd Amb and 133 Para Fd Amb coalesced and formed a M.D.S. under general supervision of Colonel G.M. WARRACK.
- 21-26 Sep It seems that during this time large numbers of casualties were dealt with, and the M.D.S. became very congested. On 22 Sep Colonel WARRACK received a message from A.A. & Q.M.G. as a result of which he went through the lines back to the Divisional H.Q. A truce for an hour taken over to M.D.S. in British transport, which was given a safe conduct. The Germans also provided a lorry for this purpose. In the later phase casualties, and R.A.M.C. personnel were evacuated from time to time to APELDOORN area. Lt Col W.C. ALFORD is believed to have arrived at APELDOORN, together with O.C. 181 Air Ldg Fd Amb and others on 27 Sep. The whereabouts of these two officers from the 20 - 26 Sep is uncertain.
- 27 Sep The M.D.S. at OOSTERBEEK was finally closed and all personnel were sent to APELDOORN.

181 Air Landing Field Ambulance.

- 17 Sep The unit less Reserve Section landed successfully in nine Gliders, and established an M.D.S. in houses near WOLFHEZEN at 665807. Casualties, not in any great numbers, were received in during that day, and the day following.
- 13 Sep Unit moved and established M.D.S. in OOSTERBECK.
- 19 Sep The greater part of 133 Parachute Field Ambulance came in to this area and set up an M.D.S.
- 20 Sep The M.D.S. locality was overrun by the enemy and certain personnel were removed.

It would seem that Lt. Col. A. T. MARRABLE was removed to a P.O.W. cage but returned later.

From this time on the M.D.S. was merged with 133 Parachute Field Ambulance, the whole being under the supervision of A.D.M.S., Colonel G. M. WARRACK.

NOTES ON R.A.P. AT DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

- 17 Sep An R.A.P. under Lt.D.H.RANDALL, R.A.M.C. was established in the cellar of Divisional Headquarters. Mortar Fire and Shelling of the Divisional Headquarters area became very heavy and a number of casualties were admitted to the R.A.P. This quickly became very congested and there was shortage of water and Medical supplies.
- 21 Sep By this time conditions were becoming impossible and A.A. & Q.M.G. gave instructions for an additional house to be opened up for the less badly wounded. This was put under the charge of Capt.T.D.V. SWINSCOW R.A.M.C. Conditions became so congested in Divisional Headquarters R.A.P. that with the heavy fighting round the perimeter, the wounded were in extreme danger, as there would have been no possibility of clearing them if the house had caught fire. The casualties would have proved a serious embarrassment in the event of an attack on the Headquarters. For this reason A.A. & Q.M.G. sent for the A.D.M.S. from OOSTERBEEK and they obtained the consent of the Divisional Commander to ask for safe conduct for the wounded to OOSTERBEEK.
- 22 Sep During this period some Medical Supplies and water were obtained by War Correspondents under cover of the Red Cross, passing through the enemy lines. Some wounded had been evacuated to the M.D.S. at OOSTERBEEK, but each time transport was sent across it failed to return, having been retained by the Germans. The enemy at all times showed complete respect for the Red Cross and their behaviour towards the wounded was correct.

APPENDIX 'E'POLISH PARA FIELD AMBULANCE.

The unit dropped on 21 Sep and a M.D.S. was established in a hospital at DRIEL. Casualties were dealt with and evacuated via 130 British Field Ambulance to Corps Medical Units. In the initial stages there was a shortage of transport. The M.D.S. came under heavy Mortar and Shell fire at frequent intervals. The transport of the sea tail joined with the unit on 23 Sep., but nearly all of it was lost shortly after this from Shell Fire.