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Section D

Chapter V

LIBERATION CAMPAIGN NORTH WEST EUROPE

Phase 5.

The advance from the Seine to the Siegfried Line and the battle for Arnhem - 29 August - 30 September 1944.

Book III

Lt. Colonel G.W. Harris

PREPARED BY THE

HISTORICAL SECTION

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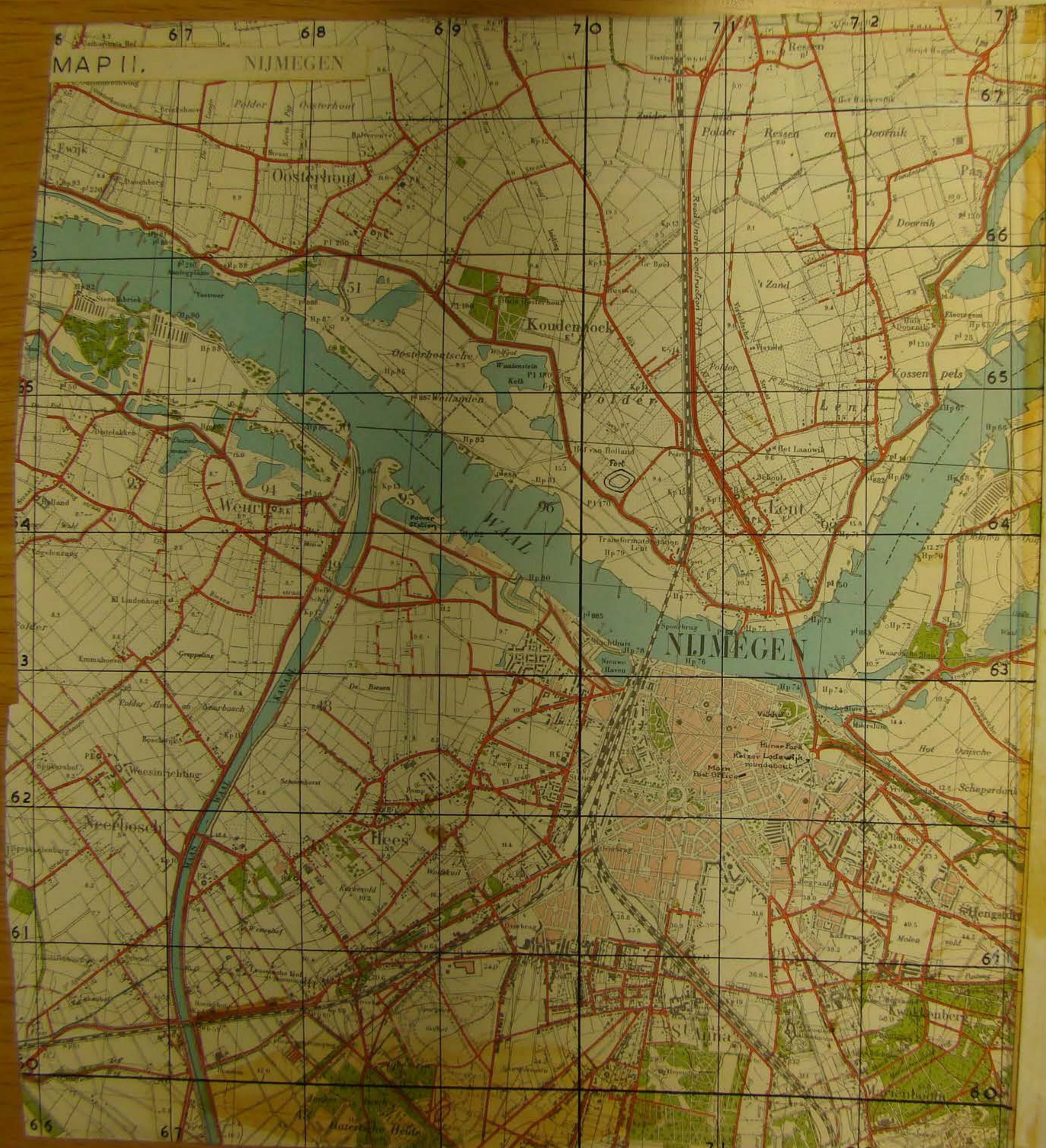
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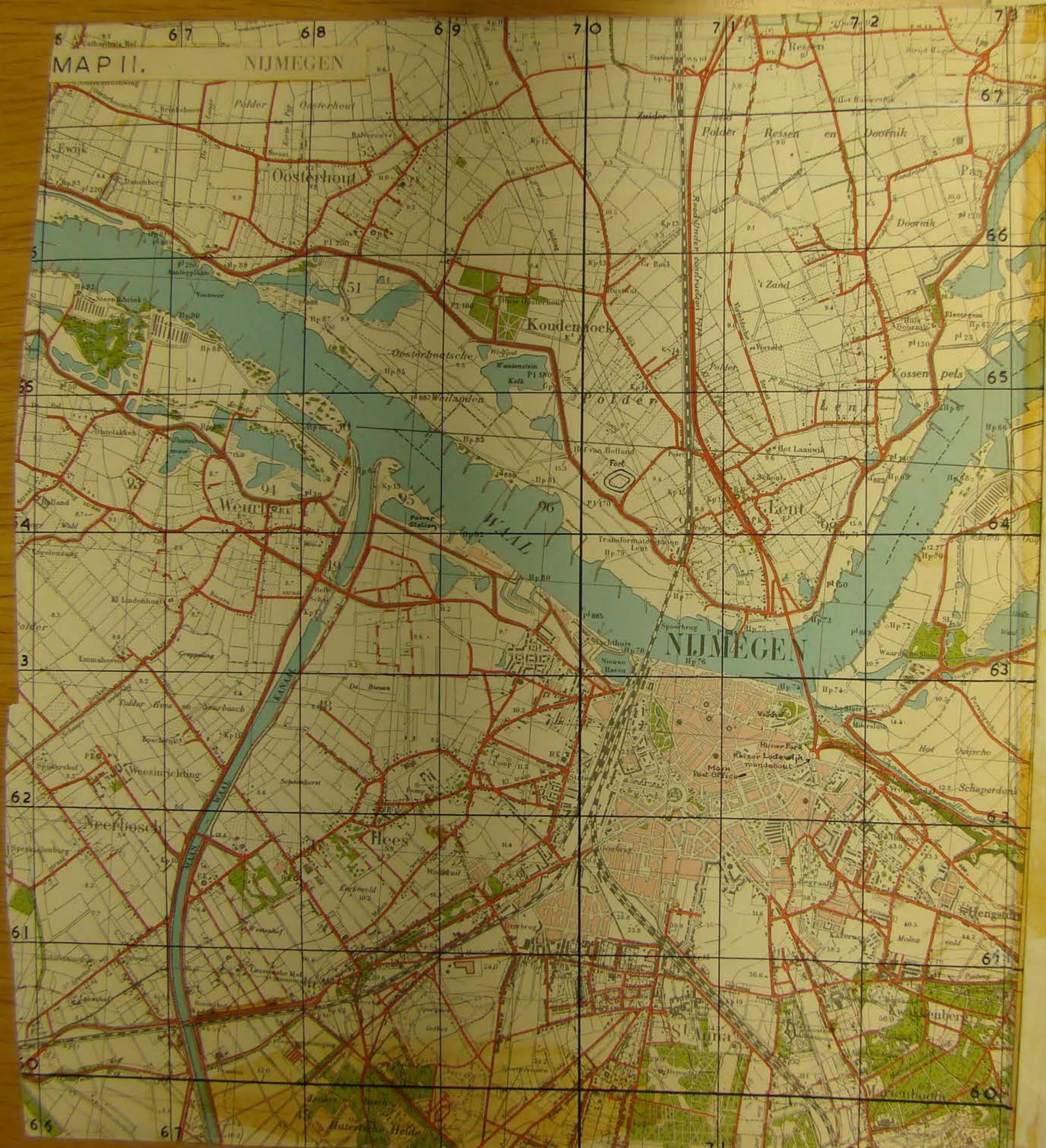
MAP II.

NIJMEGEN



MAP II.

NIJMEGEN



Section D

Chapter V

LIBERATION CAMPAIGN NORTH WEST EUROPE

Phase 5.

The advance from the Seine to the Siegfried
Line and the battle for Arnhem - 29 August -
30 September 1944

Book III

Chapter V. The Advance from the Seine to the
Siegfried Line and the Battle for Arnhem -
29 Aug to 30 Sep 1944

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Chapter VI - Preparations for Operation 'MARKET GARDEN'

Reference Map No. 8

Section I - Development of First Allied Airborne Army plans

1. Outline plan for Operation 'MARKET'

Lieut.-General Browning telephoned the Chief of Staff First Allied Airborne Army at 1430 hours 10 September to say that he had just returned from the Continent with a tentative skeleton plan for an enlarged Operation 'COMET'. He stated that General Eisenhower and Field Marshal Montgomery now wanted to employ three or possibly four divisions and the Polish Parachute Brigade in the same general area as for 'COMET', but extending further south.

The tentative plan is below:-

"OPERATION BINSWEN (MARKET)"

Outline Plan

"INFORMATION"

1. Enemy

The enemy is fighting determinedly along the ALBERT Canal from inclusive ANTWERP to inclusive MAASTRICHT. He has elements of two infantry divisions and elements of two parachute divisions, plus a large number of flak units, holding the canal. None of these troops has yet fought the Allies in the WEST, so that they are fighting stubbornly and their morale is good. There is every sign of the enemy strengthening the river line through ARNHEM and NIJMEGEN, especially with flak. The latter is sited for dual purpose role - both A.A. and ground.

2. Own Troops

Guards Armoured Division is across the canal in the area HASSELT - HECHTEL - NOUVEAU LEOPOLD.

50 Division and 11 Armoured Division are fighting for bridgeheads between Guards Armoured Division and ANTWERP.

15 Division is reaching ANTWERP today.

It is the intention of the Commander-in-Chief 21 Army Group to advance NORTH across the MAAS, WAAL and NIEUW RIJN, form a strong bridgehead NORTH of ARNHEM and continue his operations NORTH into HOLLAND and EAST against the REICH. The main axis of the advance is EINDHOVEN - GRAVE - NIJMEGEN - ARNHEM.

HS/21
AG/TS/W/59/244
p.9.

HS/SHARP/74-10/2
Folio 996/7

INTENTION

3. Airborne Corps will capture and hold crossings over the canals and rivers on Second Army's main axis of advance.

METHOD4. 1 British Airborne Division

Will land and capture the ARNHEM bridges with sufficient bridgehead to pass formations of Second Army through.

101 82 U.S. Airborne Division

Will seize and hold the bridges at NIJMEGEN and GRAVE with the same object in view. The capture and retention of the high ground between NIJMEGEN and GROSSEBERG is imperative in order to accomplish the Division's task.

82 101 U.S. Airborne Division

Will seize the following on the Second Army's main axis to ensure the speedy pass through of that Army to the GRAVE, NIJMEGEN and ARNHEM crossings:-

- a. Canal crossing 3596
- b. WALKENSWAARD
- c. MINDHOVEN
- d. Bridge in square 4425
- e. ST OEDENRODE
- f. VEGHEL
- g. UDEN

52 (L) Division

Will be flown in NORTH of ARNHEM as soon as airfields are available.

LIFTS

5. In principle as for LINNET

TIMING

6. Preferably late evening, but will probably have to accept morning owing to 8th Air Force support.

INTER-COMMUNICATION

7. H.Q. Airborne Corps will have direct links with 30 Corps, Second Army and 21 Army Group.

82 101 U.S. Airborne Division will have two direct links - one to Second Army and one to 30 Corps.

Other signal lay-out, including air support, as for LINNET.

ADMINISTRATION

8. Supply will be by air for the whole force.

TAILS

9. 1 British Airborne Division - 30 Corps, as for COMET
Tails for American Divisions as for LINNET.

SUPPORTING UNITS

10. Any supporting A/Tk guns or reconnaissance units required by American Airborne Divisions will be supplied by Second Army.

10 Sep 44."

[COMMENT:- No date is mentioned in this plan, but 15/16 Sep was the proposed date which accompanied it (see Appendix A to this chapter), and on 11 Sep General Brereton accepted 15 Sep as D day and Second Army and 30 Corps were notified.]

HS/21AG/TS/
173/5
p.119A
HS/21AG/TS/R/
38/241
p.5A.

Appendix A to
This Chapter

Military Review
Aug 1952, p.40.

HS/21AG/TS/W/
39/244
p.10

HS/AL/131 Pt.I
paras 14 and 15

Military Review
Aug 52. p.39
ARAW/22642
Combined Time
Schedule.
HS/AL/675/13
p.292

2. Preliminary decisions by Commander First Allied Airborne Army - 10 Sep.

At a conference held that evening General Brereton decided to transpose the tasks of 82 and 101 US Airborne Divs to avoid air columns crossing. 101 US Airborne Div was located near the southern airfields in England, 82 US Airborne Div near the northern ones.

On this day also General Brereton placed Lieut.-General Browning, Commander British Airborne Corps, in command of the airborne forces allotted to the operation and made Major General Williams, Commander IX Troop Carrier Command, responsible for the whole troop carrier operation.

3. Factors affecting the planning of Operation 'MARKET'

(a) Opposing forces

(1) Operational readiness of airborne troops

Headquarters British Airborne Troops was converted into an operational Corps HQ in Aug 44, but still had to make increases in its Corps HQ Signals during the planning stage and even during the operations.

1 British Airborne Div was at full strength and although never committed to action since its return from Italy, had been concerned from 6 Jun 44 in the planning of fifteen airborne operations before this one. 82 and 101 US Airborne Divs had taken part in the original Normandy landings and had been reconstituting in England for 7½ and 8 weeks respectively. 1 Polish Parachute Brigade had not been in action and was not mobilized until 1 Jul 44.

(11) Operational readiness of aircrews and glider pilots

American aircrews and glider pilots were not fully trained for night work. For example, in the plans for Operation 'LIGNET', which had a night take off for an early daylight landing, the Americans included NO gliders in their first lift.

The RAF, on the other hand, could fly in gliders and parachutists by day or night.

HS/AL/131 Pt.IV
HS/21AG/TS/W/39/245
HS/SHAEP/74-10/2
f.1020/1

(iii) Strength of airborne troops and troop carrying aircraft available

For this operation each division was one brigade or equivalent over establishment. 1 Airborne Div had 1 Polish Para Bde under command and 82 and 101 US Airborne Divs, each had three parachute infantry regiments and one glider infantry regiment under command.

Sufficient aircraft were available to lift about $1\frac{1}{2}$ standard divisions at one time; so the first two lifts could take in the 3 divisions each at roughly 3 brigade (regiment) strength and a third lift would complete them to 4 brigade (regiment) strength.

HS/AL/131 Pt.IV

52 (L) Div (Airportable) could not be flown in till after this. Airborne engineers to prepare airstrips for their landing could be flown in in the third lift.

(iv) Air Support available

over 1100 bombers and 1200 fighters were available to support the operations.

HS/AL/131 Pt.I
para.18(d)

(v) Enemy opposition likely to be encountered

Enemy flak was estimated to have increased by 35% and to be a formidable threat to the fly in, particularly at the major bridges; and the enemy night fighters were considered a greater danger than their day fighters.

HS/AL/131 Pt.I
paras 23, 22, 10
HS/21AG/TS/W/
39/244
p.11, 12.

On the ground it was considered that the enemy would not be able to muster against the airborne troops, before their relief by 30 Corps, any mobile force larger than a brigade, with very few tanks and guns. 30 Corps was expected to reach Arnhem between D + 1 and D + 3 day.

(vi) Decision by Commander First Allied Airborne Army

General Brereton decided that the air support available was capable of neutralising the enemy opposition by day, provided the force did not fly into strong flak areas; he would therefore attack by day after air preparation, but the avoidance of flak would be a factor in the selection of dropping and landing zones.

HS/21AG/TS/W/
39/244
pp. 11, 12.

(b) Hours of daylight and rate of build up

(1) Hours of daylight

The approximate hours of daylight at this time were:-

Date	Daylight	Remarks
8 Sep	about 15 hours	D day for 'COMET'
17 Sep	about 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours	Date of 'MARKET'
23 Sep	about 14 hours	D day for 'MARKET' on 12 Sep morning.

Greenwich
Observatory
Records
(HS/AL/3017/1
f.13)

NS/WD/WH/206A/1.I
 Appx K. Pt. IV
 Annex D
 NS/WD/WH/91B/1.I
 82 US Airborne Div
 PO 11 Annex 1a(1)

NS/SHARP/74-10/2
 r.936

NS/WD/WH/193/1.I
 Appx. C

[COMMENT:- These have been calculated on first and last light, when the sun was 9° 40' below the horizon; this basis was used in the times in 1 Para Bde CO No. 1 of 13 Sep 44 para 5. If 12° below is used, which is the American practice, daylight would be just over half an hour more in each case].

On 12 Sep morning at a British Airborne Corps conference Major General Williams, Commander IX US Troop Carrier Command, pointed out that "owing to the reduced number of hours of daylight and increase of distance, it would not be possible to fly more than one lift per day".

[COMMENTS:- (A) The flight plan for 'COMET' had been made for two lifts in one day, but this involved a night take off.

(B) The distance for 'COMET' and 'MARKET' was practically the same, possibly 'LINNET' at Tournai was being referred to.

(C) Sub para (a) (ii) above would appear to have some bearing on this too].

(ii) Rate of build up

General Brereton's decision to attack by day (sub para (a) (vi) above) had left the build up still as fast as in 'LINNET', which was the proposal in the outline plan for 'MARKET':-

Para 1 above
 Appx A to this
 chapter.
 Gen. Stearley's
 Comment

First lift	evening D day
Second lift	morning D + 1 day
Third lift	evening D + 1 day

and this decision in sub para (i) above only set the third lift later to morning D + 2 day

(c) Ground for landing and of tactical value

(i) Major bridge objectives

It was considered that the bridges over the three major rivers were of such importance to the Germans that the responsibility for demolition would lie with a very senior commander and demolition action would not be taken before the airborne forces reached them, even though they landed some little distance away.

(ii) Ground of tactical value to the operation as a whole

The high ground immediately southeast of Nijmegen, in the Crossbeek area, overlooked all approaches to the town south of the R. Waal. The capture and retention of this high ground was an essential part of the operation as a whole. If this ground was lost to the enemy, the capture of Nijmegen bridge would be of no use to Second Army till this high ground had been retaken.

Interview with
 Lt. Gen. Browning
 on 7.10.54
 (NS/AL/3017/1
 1.19)

Letter from
 Lt. Gen. Browning
 of 12.10.54
 (NS/AL/3017/1
 1.19)

HB/AL/131 Pt.I
para 13 and Appx B
Map 2
HB/ED/WHF/206A/1.I
Appx C, E.
HB/AL/675/13
pp. 263/4
HB/21AG/TS/W/39/244
Chapt 2 p.28
Chapter VII
para 22
letter dated
31.5.54 from
Maj. Gen. Urquhart
(HB/AL/3017/1
f.16)

HB/ED/WHF/193/1.I
Appx C

HB/AL/131 Pt.I
para 112
Appx B Map 2
and Appx D
HB/21AG/TS/W/
39/245
HB/ED/WHF/193/1.I
Appx C

Para 1 above
Military Review
Agg 52
pp. 40/41

(iii) 1 Airborne Div landing area and primary objective

From reports by Dutch officers, who had previously lived and trained in the flat polderland immediately south of Arnhem, and also from photographic interpretation, this area was considered unsuitable for a mass landing of airborne troops, though parachutists could land here. To the north of Arnhem was some open ground but it was covered by heavy flak sited to protect Deelen airfield. The most suitable airlanding terrain appeared to be the open area on the wooded highish ground west-northwest of the town, between 5 and 8 miles from the road bridge, which was the division's primary objective. This ground lay outside the area tactically necessary to the division for maintaining its objective and part of the first lift would therefore have to guard it for use by later lifts. This area was decided on for the first two lifts, while for the parachutists of the third lift an area was selected close to the south of Arnhem road bridge, by then flak nearby would have been overcome. The third lift gliders were few and a small area north of the river was available for them.

[COMMENT:- The general area for the first and second lifts had previously been selected for Operation 'COMET']

(iv) 82 US Airborne Div landing area and objectives

Good landing areas were selected on the high ground at Groesbeek and in the Overasselt area, between Grave and the southern end of the Maas-Weal canal. Ground closer to Nijmegen was covered by flak concentrations.

[COMMENT:- The same general areas had previously been selected for Operation 'COMET']

From the west edge of the Overasselt area it was about 2 miles to Grave bridge but the division's line of flight almost passed over this bridge. It was decided to drop a company short, close to the west end of the bridge, as an improvised coup de main party.

The divisional objectives were so widely spaced that only one battalion out of the first lift could be allocated to the capture of the bridges in Nijmegen.

(v) 101 US Airborne Div objectives

In the outline plan this division's objectives were spread over 30 miles of road from Joe's Bridge to Veghel. This was considered too great a dispersion and

in consultation with Commander Second Army the objectives were reduced to cover only Mindhoven to Veghel. This area contained two canal crossings at Veghel and Zon.

[COMMENT:- Joe's Bridge was captured by 30 Corps on 10 Sep]

Lieut.-General Horrocks in an interview on 15 Oct 54 stated that Commander 101 US Airborne Div appreciated in his plan that the greatest danger to his sector of the axis was likely to come from the direction of Best.

(vi) 101 US Airborne Div landing area

Good landing areas were selected close to the south-west of Veghel and to the northwest of Zon. The ground south of the Wilhelmina canal at Zon was covered by flak concentrations and ground defences round Mindhoven. So the troops to capture that town would land 8 miles away and with an 80 feet wide canal between them and their objective. The bridge over this canal on the Zon-Mindhoven road, was known to be intact.

(vii) Approval of landing and dropping zones

The zones selected above were approved by Commander First Allied Airborne Army.

[COMMENT:- See paragraph 7 for comments].

4. Factors affecting the planning of Operation 'GARDEN', which also affected Operation 'MARKET'

In order that the airborne troops should start their operations with the advantage of surprise it was decided that 30 Corps would not advance before the first lift dropped.

In front of 30 Corps bridgehead the ground on either side of the road to Valkenswaard was heavily wooded and marshy and not suitable for tanks. 30 Corps considered Typhoon support essential to enable them to break out of their bridgehead. This support could not be given by 83 Group till 8th US Fighter Command, who would be protecting the fly in, had departed.

Sufficient hours of daylight were required for 30 Corps armoured spearhead to break out and reach their objective that night.

[COMMENT:- This last factor is not recorded, but is evident from 5 Gds Armad Bde OO No 1]

HS/AL/3017/1
f.20

HS/AL/131 Pt.I
para 112 and
Appx B Map 1
Military Review
Aug 52 pp.40/41

HS/WD/WRK/91A/1.I
Appx A/16/71.

HS/21AG/TS/W/
39/244
p.12

HS/AL/131 Pt.I
para 20

HS/AL/83
para 4(b), 9

para 18 below

Chapter VII
para 2

para 9 below

HS/SHARP/74-10/2
f.513

HS/21AG/TS/W/
38/241 f.28A

Weather forecasts
in Bomber Command
ORB Appx Vol.III
Sep 44.

HS/21AG/TS/W/
38/241 f.6A
HS/AL/83
Appx R
HS/21AG/TS/W/
39/244 f.14

HS/SD/WHK/91A/1.1
Appx A/10/79, 80.

HS/SD/WHK/193/1
Appx C
AL 131 Pt.I,
Appx D

HS/SHARP/74-10/2
f. 1027

5. Decision on time of start of the drops in Operation 'MARKET'

(a) The first lift

These ground force factors appear likely to have led to H hour, the time of start of the first drop, being fixed at 1300A hours.

As unsigned report in a First Allied Airborne Army file notes on this:-

"There were certain advantages resulting from an afternoon drop. This allowed early preparation by other air forces and gave the airborne troops a few hours of daylight and then the cover of darkness for their consolidation."

(b) The second and third lifts

The time of start of these drops was fixed at:-

Second lift	1000A hours D + 1 day
Third lift	1000A hours D + 2 day

[COMMENT:- This timing gave a daylight take off for all gliders and troop carriers. It may also have been influenced by the prevalence of early morning mist or fog at this time in England, or by the need for air preparation on the route.]

(c) Effect on the build up of airborne troops

This slowed the build up from the original plan of about 25 hours to about 46 hours.

6. The final weather forecast

On 12 Sep D day was fixed at 17 Sep and the final weather forecast at 1630 hours 16 Sep was satisfactory:-

"Period 17-20 Sep suitable for airborne ops with fair weather apart from morning fog. Light winds."

General Brereton decided that the operation would take place on 17 Sep, as arranged.

7. Comments by Narrator on the flight planning of Operation 'MARKET'

In 'COMET' Commander British Airborne Corps insisted on coup de main parties and an early morning first lift to obtain surprise, owing to lack of landing zones near his bridge objectives. The LZs and DZs chosen were some little distance from these, but in areas as far as possible clear of flak concentrations, and the important bridge objectives, which were in flak areas, were to be seized by normal coup de main parties, which would land before first light. The main body would start to drop soon after sunrise. Supporting air forces would attack all flak positions lying along the corridor immediately before the main operation and during it.

HS/21AG/TH/W/
39/244
pp.11, 12
and Appx 2

Interview and
correspondence
with Lt.Gen.
Browning in
Oct 54
(HS/AL/3017/1
f.19)

HS/AL/3017/1
f.2

Military Review
Aug 52,
pp.40/41

HS/AL/3017/1
f.20
Para 8 of
Chapter VII

The landing and dropping zones chosen for 'MARKET' in the Arnhem and Nijmegen areas were in roughly the same locations as those chosen for 'COMET'. The avoidance of strong flak appears to have been as much a major factor in this decision, as it had been in 'COMET'. The increase in daylight hours available for air preparation appears to have been offset against the increase in flak; LZs and DZs were not brought nearer to the major bridge objectives.

One other factor had changed in the abandonment of coup de main tactics. To fly such parties into the strong flak areas at the major bridges in daylight offered little hope of any success; but the estimate made of German demolition policy (para 2(c) (1) above) did not make closer LZs and DZs essential to replace these tactics.

Major General Urquhart's letter of 22 Nov 1952 should be seen on flak in the selection of LZs and DZs at Arnhem.

In the selection of LZs and DZs in the southern area, Eindhoven - Veghel, flak avoidance again appears to have played a major part, as the following extract from Military Review shows:-

"General Williams [Commanding IX Troop Carrier Command] determined that it would be inadvisable to drop parachutists south of the Wilhelmina canal because of flak concentrations round Eindhoven. This meant that the nearest drop zone would be about 8 miles from that objective. General Taylor [Commanding 101 US Airborne Div] estimated that it would take 2 hours for a regiment to assemble after landing and another 3 hours - a total of 5 hours - for it to reach the city."

This plan and estimate do not appear to have taken into consideration the delaying effect of the 80 feet wide Wilhelmina canal, should the Germans blow the bridge at Zon.

[COMMENT:- In an interview on 15 Oct 54 Lieut.General Horrocks considered this canal no obstacle to airborne troops, but in actual practice it set the Eindhoven regiment back about 8 hours behind schedule.]

It would appear that the importance of time in the capture of Eindhoven was not fully appreciated (see para 12 below), or a way would have been found to reconcile the security from flak risk of the airborne troops on the fly in with their need on landing of a quick route to Eindhoven. It does seem that the hazard of this canal could have been avoided or minimised.

Appendix A to Chapter VIFirst Allied Airborne Army - Commander's meeting - 10 Sep

HE/SHAEP/74-10/2
folios 1014/7.

General Brereton called the meeting to order, following which General Browning read an outline of the proposed plan.

General Brereton requested information as to when the IX Troop Carrier Command could martial all its craft, to which General Williams responded that he had 220 aircraft stationed in France at the present time and it would take approximately 24 hours to assemble all craft in the United Kingdom; that if this operation paralleled the LINNET setup it would be a simple matter to get his craft formed up.

General Browning stated he had told Marshal Montgomery that the operation could not be scheduled until the 15-16 at the earliest.

AVM Hollinghurst [38 Group RAF] stated that they could be ready within 24 hours; that they were actually ready now except for the 48th Group which was on supply duty but could be gotten back.

General Brereton stated that we would comply with 21st Army Group's intentions and desires when these were ascertained and that timing would be our greatest question, that the factors most affecting the time element would be the obtaining of additional photo coverage, maps, detailed planning, and whatever air preparation might be necessary.

General Browning stated it was his opinion the movement of the two American divisions would also enter into the time element.

General Williams stated that the lift would have to be modified, due to the distance involved, which precluded the use of double tow lift and meant that single tow only could be employed.

[COMMENT:- This refers to the American practice of towing two gliders behind one aircraft.]

General Brereton stated that no change of martialling areas was involved.

General Browning advised that the 101st A/B Division could be briefed with all of the material the 1st British Division has now.

General Brereton felt that the time set by General Browning should allow ample time for all arrangements. He also believed it better if the time could be made sooner so that if weather prevented an operation the date could be set back; that the date should not be considered a final date but merely a figurative date to give ample leeway to have everything completed by that date and that if we could step things up and have things just as complete by the middle of the week we could then decide whether the date could be set up 24 hours.

Brigadier Welch [British Airborne Troops] stated that a definite date must be set in order for them to make arrangements for briefing and once the date was set it would be rather awkward to advance the date due to their time schedule.

General Williams recommended that the 101st Division should take the southern route and that the 82nd Division should come straight across.

General Brereton announced that in view of what General Williams said he accepted the outline that General Browning had submitted with the exception that the areas assigned to the 82nd and 101st Divisions should be changed in order that the 101st Division could take the southern route.

General Cutler [First Allied Airborne Army] announced that the name of this operation had been designated as MARKET.

General Stearley [First Allied Airborne Army] suggested coming into the area by way of Antwerp as earlier considered and that all serials should use that route.

General Williams desired to suspend freight hauling tomorrow as it would take 48 hours to get his aircraft back; that the 48th Group was in the same predicament. General Brereton directed General Parks to get a message to the Supreme Commander concerning this.

Brigadier Goldsmith [First Allied Airborne Army] brought up the question of the use of bombers for resupply. General Brereton stated that if the same assurances are given for this operation as for LINNET, bombers would be made available.

Brigadier Goldsmith stated that resupply by air would be for a period of ten days.

General Gavin [82 US Airborne Div] asked if the British would administer evacuation and supply of the American divisions, to which General Browning responded that the Second Army would supply transportation and any units desired.

General Stearley stated that the question of two lifts was important; that it was necessary to have good preparation by the Eighth Air Force on the routes and area; that we could not drop at daylight and get good effective preparation; that if we went in in the evening we would have the entire day to prepare.

General McAuliffe [101 US Airborne Div] desired to know when he could expect coverage. Colonel Cella [First Allied Airborne Army] stated it could be expected by midnight tomorrow for one copy, and six additional copies not later than 12 hours thereafter.

Colonel Cella stated that it would take 48 hours to reproduce maps in sufficient quantities for this operation, starting immediately. General Brereton directed Colonel Cella to insure that everything possible was being done to accelerate production of maps and that nothing was being overlooked.

General Browning stated he would report to General Brereton tomorrow evening on what he considered the 101st Division would be able to do.

General Brereton announced that tomorrow night will be the day on which the date will be definitely set.

Section II - Development of Second Army plans8. Second Army Outline plan for 'MARKET GARDEN'HS/TS/MARKET
& GARDEN

SA/00/16/Ops of 12 Sep 44 is given below, with amendments issued on that date shown in brackets (...) and marked "Amdt" in the margin:-

"SA/00/16/OpsNOTES FOR PLANNING FUTURE OPS SECOND ARMY

12 Sep 44

The following notes are based on conversations which have already taken place between the Army Commander, Corps Commanders and the Chiefs of Staff.

They are a basis for planning only and may be altered as the situation develops.

OBJECT OF SECOND ARMY

1. To place Second Army including airborne forces astride the Rivers MEUSE, WAAL and NEDER RHINE on the general axis GRAVE 6253 - NIJMEGEN 7062 - ARNHEM 7577 and to dominate the country between the RHINE and the ZUYDER ZEE thus cutting off communications between GERMANY and HOLLAND.

TASK OF FIRST CANADIAN ARMY

2. First Canadian Army has been directed to capture the Channel ports as early as possible and is to relieve 12 Corps NORTH and WEST of R SCHELDE up to excluding ANTWERP by a date to be agreed mutually between First Canadian Army and Second Army.

CONCORD

3. Will be notified later.

D DAY

4. NOT before 23 Sep.

[COMMENT:- Fixed at 17 Sep, on 12 Sep]

GROUPING5. 8 Corps

Guards Armoured Division or 11 Armoured Division (when relieved by 43 Division) /

3 British Division

30 Corps

Guards Armoured Division or 11 Armoured Division /

50 (H) Division

43 Division (from D - 3)

8 Armoured Brigade

HS/21AO/TS/W/
38/241/6A

12 Corps

7 Armoured Division
 15 (S) Division
 53 (W) Division
 4 Armoured Brigade

A decision as to which division will transfer to 8 Corps will be made in about 48 hours time.

OPERATIONS DURING INTERVENING PERIOD UP TO 23 SEPTEMBER6. (a) 12 Corps

One division (53) will hold ANTWERP

One Division (15) will relieve 50 (W) Division in GHEEL K 0788 bridgehead by evening 12 September

15 (S) Division is to capture GHEEL K 0788 and MOLL K 1790.

7 Armoured Division

On relief by First Canadian Army will be in reserve with elements if necessary filling gaps between 15 (S) and 53 (W) Divisions.

(b) 30 Corps

30 Corps will gain crossings over the MEUSE - SCHIEDE junction canal and will stop the enemy congealing on the Corps front without, however, any major expenditure of ammunition.

(c) 8 Corps

Will concentrate forward.

(d) During this period Corps will expend minimum amount of ammunition and petrol compatible with carrying out above tasks. The build up of the administrative situation for the main operation will otherwise be prejudiced.

MAIN OPERATION

7. (a) The main thrust will be carried out by 30 Corps advance on the axis:

NECHTEL	K 3483
SINDHOVEN	E 4218
VECHTEL	E 4837
UDEN	E 5342
GRAVE	E 6253

and will make contact with the airborne forces. After making contact with the airborne forces it will establish itself across the rivers MEUSE, WAAL and NEDER RHINE.

(b) 12 Corps will advance to secure in succession:

	RETHY	K 1599
	ARENDONCK	E 1505
and possibly	TURNHOUT	E 0506

and will protect the LEFT flank in conformity with operations of 30 Corps.

- (c) 30 Corps will protect the RIGHT flank in conformity with operations of 30 Corps and act as Army reserve

AIRBORNE CORPS

8. (a) It is not yet known if the airborne forces are referred to as Airborne Corps or Airborne Army, but for the purposes of these notes they will be referred to as Airborne Corps.

(b) Composition

1 Airborne Division (including Polish Parachute Brigade)
82 US Airborne Division (possibly including elements of some other airborne formation).
101 US Airborne Division

(c) Tasks

Airborne Corps is to commence to drop on D Day with the following tasks:-

- (1) 1 Airborne Division including Polish Parachute Brigade capture bridges over NEDER RHINE at ARNHEM and to dominate the surrounding country.

Amdt.

- (11) ~~101~~ (82) US Airborne Division is to capture bridges over MEUSE and WAAL in area GRAVE and NIJMEGEN and dominate intervening area.

Amdt.

- (111) ~~82~~ (101) US Airborne Division is to capture and dominate all crossings over obstacles on the main axis of 30 Corps i.e. road NIECHTEL - EINDHOVEN - VEGHEL - UDEN - GRAVE (see paragraph 7(c) above [7(a)]).

Amdt.

- (d) ~~82~~ (101) US Airborne Division will come under command 30 Corps on dropping.

Amdt.

Airborne Corps less ~~82~~ (101) Airborne Division will come under command Second Army on dropping.

- (e) This tentative plan has been given to Airborne Corps for examination.

PLANNING OF AIRBORNE OPERATION

9. (a) Following representatives of Airborne Corps are being requested to come to HQ Second Army as soon as possible:-

Brigadier General Staff
Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster General
Chief Signal Officer
Commander Royal Artillery
Chief Engineer

Amdt.

- (b) Following representatives of ~~82~~ (101) US Airborne Division are being requested to proceed to HQ 30 Corps as soon as possible:-

G
Q
RA
Signals

REARBORNE TAILS OF AIRBORNE FORMATIONS

10. Tail of 1 Airborne Division (including Polish Parachute Brigade) is already concentrated forward.

21 Army Group have been asked to provide details of tails of US Airborne formations.

ROYAL ENGINEERS

11. Chief Engineer Second Army is providing sufficient bridging resources for the following:

(a) MEUSE initially

Class 9 bridge
Class 40 bridge

followed by

- * Class 40 barge bridge, at first single track and later double track. See note below.

(b) WAAL initially

Sufficient Class 40 rafts to ferry over approximately 500 vehicles per day.

followed by

Class 40 bridge

later followed by

- * Class 40 barge bridge similar to that over MEUSE. See note below.

(c) NEEDER RHINE

- * As for WAAL. See note below.

Chief Engineer will report how many Class 40 and Class 9 routes can be provided between the ALBERT canal and the MEUSE.

(Corps will provide the following one way routes (taking into account any bns captured intact).

Amt.

30 Corps	2 Class 9 routes
	2 Class 40 routes
12 Corps } 8 Corps }	1 Class 9 route
each	1 Class 40 route)

- * NOTE The provision of the barge bridges depends upon sufficient barges being captured locally.

TIMINGS

12. The approximate timings by which bridges can be constructed on the assumption that all crossings over the major obstacles have been blown are as follows:-

<u>MEUSE</u>	Class 9 bridge	D + 7 (D + 2)
	Class 40 bridge	D + 3
	Single track barge bridge	D + 8
?	<u>WAAL</u>	
	Class 40 rafts	D + 2 (rising to 500 vehicles a day by D + 4)
	Class 40 bridge	D + 7
	Barge bridge	D + 13
	<u>NEEDER RHINE</u>	
	Class 40 rafts	D + 4 (rising to 500 vehicles a day by D + 6)
	Class 40 bridge	D + 12
	Barge bridge	D + 18

HS/AL/400
p.228

FORWARD MOVES OF 8 CORPS

13. (a) As from the date 8 Corps concentrate forward the following will be left in the SHINE area under the operational command of Commander 6 Guards Tank Brigade who will be directly under Second Army for operations and L of C for local administration (Q Second Army to arrange this):-

6 Guards Tank Brigade
 3 AGRA } less one medium regiment per
 5 AGRA } division and such 155 mm guns as
 8 AGRA } are already forward.

59 AGRA

8 Corps Anti-Tank Regiment

- 7 8 Corps LAA Regiment (Brigadier Royal Artillery to discuss this with Chief of Staff)

- (b) 43 Division to be concentrated in the area DIEST X 1168 under 30 Corps by evening D - 3. Remainder of 8 Corps (less units and formations in paragraph (a) above) to be concentrated in area WEST of ALBERT canal by evening D + 2.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

14. (a) Staffs Yeo (DD)

Should be available to 30 Corps for the operation.

- (b) DUKWs

Two companies will be available for the operation and will be allotted initially to 30 Corps.

MAPS

15. (a) 1/25,000 and 1/100,000 maps of whole area will be available.

- (b) 1/50,000 will NOT be available

PRIORITY OF ARMOURED REPLACEMENT

16. First priority

30 Corps

Second priority

Remaining armoured formations

BRAC will please discuss with Chief of Staff.

ADMINISTRATION

17. (a) Maintenance of Second Army for the operation is dependent upon:-

- (i) Adequate railway resources coming into operation. These will not commence before 14 Sep.

The date of D Day will be reviewed after these services have been in operation three or four days.

- (ii) Leaving as much of Second Army as possible grounded on the SHINE as long as possible.

- (iii) Expenditure of all types of ammunition prior to the operation being rigidly controlled.

(b) Maintenance of Second Army after D Day has been based on normal 21 Army Group rates with a very small reserve in area BRUSSELS, which in the case of ammunition is unlikely to exceed:

(1) In the case of 8 Corps and 12 Corps: 150 rounds per gun 25 pounder.

(11) In the case of 30 Corps: 250 rounds per gun 25 pounder.

(In view of the advancement of the date of the Operations it is most improbable that any reserve will be available)"

Amtd.

[COMMENT:- The advancement of D Day to 17 Sep left little time for the concentration forward of the additional formations and maintenance resources required.

RS/AL/1200/96/B.
Book II
Chapter IV
Paras 22, 24.

RS/AD/RAE/212/1.1

8 Corps Main HQ arrived forward on 15 Sep. 43 Div, due D-3, did not complete concentration forward till evening 16 Sep. 3 Br Div, due D+2, completed their forward concentration, as planned, on 19 Sep. Sufficient maintenance resources were brought forward to enable the operation to be launched.]

9. Chief of Staff Second Army Conference - 13 Sep.

RS/21AG/TS/55/5
Folio 59A

The main points in para 8 above, which the notes on this conference revise or

add to, are:-

GROUPING Gds Arm'd Div would remain in 30 Corps, 11 Arm'd Div would pass to 8 Corps command. 52 (Air-portable) Div would possibly be included in Br Airborne Corps.

RS/21AG/TS/173/5
Folio 97A

[COMMENT:- Late on 12 Sep 21 Army Group telegraphed to HQ Airtps, Second Army, "C in C considers that 52 Div is unlikely to be required for op MARKET".]

ZERO HOUR 1300 hours 17 Sep Zone A.

OPERATIONS DURING PERIOD PRIOR TO D DAY. This was revised to:-

"7. Corps tasks are as follows:-

12 Corps

(a) To clear area between ALBERT Canal and MEUSE junction canal within Corps boundaries.

(b) To establish bridgehead over the MEUSE junction canal.

8 Corps

(a) 8 Corps will come into the line on the RIGHT of 30 Corps and will take over 11 Armoured Division in situ at a time to be notified later.

(b) The boundary between 8 Corps and 30 Corps will be issued later."

MAIN OPERATION. Corps Tasks were revised as below:-

8. British Airborne Corps

(a) 1 Airborne Division including Polish Parachute Brigade - no change.

(b) 82 US Airborne Division - no change.

- "(c) The plan for the employment of 101 US Airborne Division will be made direct between commander 101 US Airborne Division and commander 30 Corps.

Commander 101 US Airborne Division arrives BRUSSELS 1100 hrs 14 Sep.

30 Corps

- (a) 101 US Airborne Division is to capture and dominate all crossings over obstacles on the main axis of 30 Corps i.e. road HECHTEL - BINDERVEN - VEGHEL - UDEN - GRAVE.
- (b) 30 Corps will pass rapidly through the corridor established by British Airborne Corps and 101 US Airborne Division and will establish itself on the high ground in the area between ARNHEM and the ZUYDER ZEE.

8 Corps

Will progressively relieve 30 Corps of responsibility for its RIGHT flank and will capture initially WERT and SOERENDONK.

8 Corps will later advance as far NORTH as the MEUSE and possibly beyond.

12 Corps

Will progressively relieve 30 Corps of responsibility for its LEFT flank and will capture initially RETHY, ARENDONCK, and TURNHOUT and later advance as far NORTH as the MEUSE and possibly beyond."

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS OF DROPS. Details were given.

ARTILLERY

Anti-aircraft policy was given, subject to 21 Army Group confirmation [see para 10 below]

Two medium regiments would be brought forward by 8 Corps.

"AIR SUPPORT

11. (a) All tentacles and personnel for airborne formations and for control at HQ Second Army will be provided by US Army.
- (b) Close support will be provided by 83 Group RAF.
- (c) 8 USAAF will engage all active hostile AA batteries within or without the bomblines.
- (d) Second Army will be responsible for co-ordinating the bomblines.

BRIDGING

12. Sufficient bridging to cross the three major obstacles of the MEUSE, WAAL and NEDER RHINE has been assembled by OE Second Army. This equipment will be brought forward by 30 Corps as required. OE Second Army will advise on this matter.

It is important to relieve 30 Corps of as much responsibility for the bridging of these rivers as is possible. A CAGRE has been appointed to command all bridging on each river and responsibility will be as follows:-

- (a) If bridges are intact, additional bridges will be built by Second Army.
- (b) If bridges are blown, but the bridgehead is securely held by Airborne troops, the bridges will be built by Second Army.

- (c) If, however, there is fighting in progress and the operation is a tactical crossing, bridging resources and the CAORE to command them will be placed under command 30 Corps. As soon as a bridgehead is firmly secured, Second Army will assume responsibility for that crossing, thus freeing 30 Corps for his next task.

AIRFIELDS

13. It will be necessary to prepare an airfield for landing 52 (Airportable) Division, possibly in the area of ARNHEM.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

- 16 (a) Initially 30 Corps will be responsible for traffic control of the main axis.
 (b) Army will take over responsibility for traffic control from 30 Corps as required by 30 Corps.
 (c) Additional personnel and comms for traffic control will be provided by Army."

10. Final co-ordination of ground and airborne plans - 14/15 Sep

(a) Second Army Notes

Extracts from SA/GO/16/Ops dated 15 Sep 44 to British Airborne Corps are given

below:-

"British Airborne Corps

The following notes contain the arrangements for operation MARKET as understood at this HQ. Please confirm that you agree.

CODEWORDS

1. The codeword for operations of ground troops is GARDEN.
 The codeword for operations of airborne troops is MARKET.

DATE

2. The operation will take place on 17 Sep.

H HOUR

3. H hour which is the time of the first drop will be 1300 hours (Zone A time comes into force 0300 hours 17 Sep.)

LENGTH OF TIME OF DROPS

4. In the case of 101 Airborne Div the drop will take place from 1300 to 1340 hours and all aircraft will be back over our own lines by 1400 hours.

In the case of 1 and 82 Airborne Divs, the drops will last approximately from 1300 to 1400 hours."

[Paras 5 to 10 dealing with postponement procedure, bomblines, landmarks and recognition signals are omitted here]

"FORWARD MOVEMENT OF CORPS

11. 8 and 12 Corps will not begin any forward move before H + 1 hour.

HS/21AG/TS/W/
 38/241
 Folio 13A

12. 30 Corps will begin to move forward on their main axis from H hour onwards, but until after H + 1 hour all 30 Corps troops will remain SOUTH of the bomblines operative from H - 2 hours to H + 1 hour. During briefing it should be made clear that fighting will certainly be going on on 30 Corps front in the area of its bridgehead over the MEUSE-SCHIEBELT JUNCTION CANAL, and our guns will be firing at ground targets. Guns may also be taking on ground targets on the other Corps fronts.

CODENAMES

13. Twenty copies of the codenames to be used during the operation are attached.

AA.

14. No second Army troops will undertake any AA fire by day from half an hour before sunrise on 17 Sep until further notice."

(b) 21 Army Group G (Air) notes

21 Army Group G (Air) notes of the meeting held at Main HQ Second Army on 14 Sep, at which the above arrangements were co-ordinated, contain the following additional items:-

"PROTECTION"

7. The troop carrying aircraft and gliders would be protected during the flight to and from the DEs and LZs by aircraft of the EIGHTH US FIGHTER COMMAND. During this time hostile AA outside the appropriate bomblines would be engaged.

At H + 65 minutes 83 Group RAF would assume responsibility for the protection of the force except during periods of re-supply on the following days."

"AIR SUPPORT"

11. It was agreed that ground attacks for the airborne forces should be provided by 83 GROUP RAF in accordance with the normal procedure. The army air support communications would centre on HQ SECOND ARMY."

11. BOUNDARIES

The inter Army Group boundary became 8 Corps' boundary with XIX US Corps and was:-

"All incl XIX Corps WAVRE J.74 - TIRLEMONT K.05 - HASSELT K.36 - SITTARD K.66 - GARZWEILER P.1375 - LEVERKUSEN P.47." Thence the boundary continued "all incl 21 ARMY GP OPLADEN P.5275 - WARBURG B.92 - BRUNSWICK".

The boundary between 8 and 30 Corps was fixed as follows from 1200 hours 16 Sep:-

"All incl 8 Corps rd LOEVAIN - DIEST to rd junc 087655 - CAGNEVINNE 0864 - rd and rly crossing 1365 - rly and stream crossing 1568 - line of rly to rd and rly crossing 1866 - LUMMEN 2168 - GENEBOUCH 2471 - x rds 283716 - rd junc at 347729 - rd junc 351752 - rd junc 353757 - excl BOSCHEN BIDE 3678 - thence all incl 8 Corps rd and rly crossing 3683 - line of rly to rd and rly crossing 420011 - rd junc 432029 - x rds 480080 - x rds 499117 - rd junc 524183 - rd junc 517261 thence all incl 30 Corps rd to BEEK 5427 to GEMERT 5730 to VOLVEL 5640 to HILL 6444 to GRAVE 6253".

HS/21AG/TS/W/
38/241
Folio 11A

HS/TS/MARKET &
GARDEN
HS/21AG/TS/55/5
Folios 38A, 53A

HS/21AG/TS/55/5
Folio 52A.

Both 8 and 30 Corps were given equal running rights on road Leende 4707 Geldrop 4816 and 8 Corps was given running rights for return traffic on road Helchteren 3575 - Genebosch 2471 from the construction of the bridge at Genebosch.

HS/21AG/TS/55/5
folios 51A, 58A

The boundary between 30 and 12 Corps from 730610 (on the previous boundary) was fixed as below from 1745 hours 14 Sep:-

"All incl 30 Corps rd to LOUVAIN to AERSCHOT thence all excl 30 Corps rd June 965692 - SICHEM 0770 - x rds 0972 - church at SCHOOT 115777 - MEERHOOT 1484 - MOLL 1790 - incl 30 Corps POSTEL 2201."

On 16 Sep this was amended beyond SicheM to:-

"thence all incl 12 Corps x rds 094727 - rd June 112795 - MEERHOOT 1484 - BAILEY 2088 - LOMMEL 3095 - WESTERHOVEN 3706 - MEERVELDHOVEN 3815 - rd June 415184 - rd June 414195 - OLLAND 3834 - NISTERRODE 5047."

HS/21AG/TS/55/5
folios 51A, 53A,
60A

Also from 1745 hours 14 Sep the northernmost part of the inter Army boundary between Second Army and First Canadian Army became the line of R. Schelde from J.2577 to the Dutch frontier at D.5512.

Then on 17 Sep 21 Army Group instructed First Cdn Army to fix a new boundary, when they took over Antwerp, and that:-

"Subsequently on a date to be decided later inter army bdy North from Canal de Junction de l'Escaut a Meuse will be all incl First Cdn Army Herenthale J.9790 - Turnhout E 00 - Tilburg E 13 - Hertogenbosch E 34 - Saltbommel E 2860 - Utrecht E 29 - Hilversum E 20."

The Northern end of the inter army boundary fixed on 20 Sep after Antwerp had been taken over was -

"excl Brussels - all incl First Cdn Army Molines J 77 - Lierre 7886."

12. Comments by Narrator on the ground plan for Operation "MARKET GARDEN"

(a) Internal timing of the operation

HS/21AG/TS/166/6
f.21A para 6
Interviews with
Lt.Gen.Browning
Lt.Gen.Horrocks
in Oct 54
(HS/AL/3017/1
f.19, 20)
HS/ED/NWB/181/1.1
Appx O/7

In Operation 'LIMNET' it was laid down that: "The Airborne Corps will be prepared if necessary to hold out alone and supplied from the air only, for about 10 days". No such instruction was issued for 'MARKET GARDEN', but in a discussion before the operation, General Dempsey said that he expected to reach Arnhem by D + 2 day and General Browning stated that he was prepared to hold that area till D + 4 day with airborne forces only. No latest date was fixed for a junction between 30 Corps and 1 Airborne Div and dates were not discussed with General Horrocks, whose orders to Gds Armd Div were - "advance at maximum speed".

(b) The 30 Corps/101 US Airborne Div link up

This phase of the battle was of major importance. The link up would throw the enemy off the Corps axis from Joe's Bridge to Veghel, the enemy crust broken by 30 Corps would not be able to reform unopposed across this axis south of the Veghel - Grave gap and in Gds Armd Div 30 Corps had the mobility to beat the Germans to that area.

Yet the urgency of this link up does not appear to have been stressed, when examination is made of 101 US Airborne Div's flight plan and of the action of 101 US Airborne Div and Gds Armd Div during the night 17/18 Sep.

Para 7 above
Paras 5 and 8
of Chapter VII

Section III - British Airborne Corps plans - Operation 'MARKET'

13. British Airborne Corps - Operation Instructions - Operation 'MARKET'

The main points of these instructions are given below:-

"INFORMATION"

1. Enemy

The enemy is fighting determinedly along the general line of ALBERT and ESCAUT canals from inclusive ANTWERP to inclusive MAASTRICHT. His line is held by the remnants of some good divisions, including Parachute Divisions, and by new arrivals from HOLLAND. They are fighting well but have very few reserves. The total armoured strength is probably not more than 50-100 tanks, mostly Mark IV. There is every sign of the enemy strengthening the defences of the river and canal lines through ARNHEM and NIJMEGEN, especially with flak, but the troops manning them are not numerous and many are of low category. The flak is sited for dual purpose role - both AA and ground.

2. Own Troops

It is the intention of the Commander-in-Chief, 21 Army Group, to advance NORTH across the MAAS, WAAL and NEDER RIJN, form a strong bridgehead NORTH of ARNHEM and continue his operations NORTH into HOLLAND and EAST against the REICH. The main axis of the advance is EINDHOVEN - GRAVE - NIJMEGEN - ARNHEM, which is allotted to 30 Corps.

INTENTION

3. Airborne Corps will capture and hold crossings over the canals and rivers on Second Army's main axis of advance, from about EINDHOVEN to inclusive ARNHEM."

ORDER OF BATTLE

4. HQ Brit Airborne Corps
 1 Brit Airborne Div
 52 (L) Div (Airportable)
 1 Polish Para Bde (under command 1 British Airborne Division)
 2 Airlft Lt AA Bty
 Phantom detachments on scale of one per Corps HQ and division
 878 US Airborne Aviation Engineer Bn
 82 US Airborne Div
 101 US Airborne Div (to pass to under command 30 Corps on landing)
 Such additional units as were provided by Second British Army to assist after the ground forces had joined up.
 Liaison Missions provided by SPHQ
 Civil Affairs Staff
 Detachment Netherlands Army Cdos

COMMAND

5. Brit Airborne Corps would come under command of Second Army on landing. First Allied Airborne Army were responsible for the whole protection of the air flight.
6. Seaborne elements would be under command of 30 Corps until they reached their formations or units.

HS/AL/131
 Part IV
 HS/21AG/TB/W/
 38/241
 f. 9B, 10A,
 28A.

TASKS7. 1 Brit Airborne Div

"Will land to capture the ARNHEM Bridges, with sufficient bridgeheads to pass formations of Second Army through".

8. 82 US Airborne Div

"Will seize and hold the bridges at NIJMEGEN and GRAVE with the same object in view. The capture and retention of the high ground between NIJMEGEN and GROSSEBEEK is imperative in order to accomplish the Division's task."

9. 101 US Airborne Div

As ordered by 30 Corps - would seize bridges at VEGHEL, 4736 and ZON, 4425; capture EINDHOVEN, 4218, and occupy ST OEDENRODE, 4232.

10. 52 (L) Div

"Will be flown in NORTH of ARNHEM as soon as airstrips are available and will concentrate in reserve nearby, in accordance with orders which will be issued on landing. They will be prepared to fly-in their 'O' Group with the first wave of aircraft landing."

Allotment of aircraft and gliders11. First Lift

	<u>Para aircraft</u>	<u>Tug aircraft and Gliders</u>
101 US Airborne Div	432	70
82 US Airborne Div	480	50
1 Airborne Div	155	320
HQ Airborne Corps	-	38
Totals	1067	478

Second lift

101 US Airborne Div	-	450
82 US Airborne Div	-	450
1 Airborne Div	126	256
Polish Bde	-	10
Totals	126	1166

Third lift

101 US Airborne Div	-	382
82 US Airborne Div	-	402
878 US Engineer Avn Bn	-	50
Airfield Control Units	-	13
Polish Bde	114	35
Totals	114	882

In addition British resupply would be flown in by 35 aircraft with the 2nd lift and 166 with the 3rd lift.

DZs and LZs

12. 101 US Airborne Div - in area 4435, 4128, 4227
 82 US Airborne Div - in area 6554, 7552, 7656-7752
 1 Airborne Div - in areas 6283, 6479, 6581
 HQ Airborne Corps - with 82 US Airborne Div.

HS/WD/WW/181/1.1
 Appx 0/8

Air Support

13. (1) Direct Air Support would be provided by 83 Group RAF probably assisted by 84 Group RAF.
- (11) Two American Air Support Parties were allotted each to 1 Airborne Div, 82 and 101 US Airborne Divs and HQ Airborne Corps. One party was allotted to 52 (L) Div.
- (111) Requests for Air Support would be routed direct to Second Army from all Air Support Parties, requests from divisions being monitored and priorities decided by Corps HQ only when necessary.

Timing

14. The time at which the first main drops would commence each day, would be:-

D day	"H" hour	1300A hours
D+1 day	"X" hour	1000A hours
D+2 day	"P" hour	1000A hours

14. Brit Airborne Corps - Administrative Units and Corps Main HQ

(1) Administrative ground units required for US Airborne Divisions

HS/21AG/TB/W/
39/243
f.13a, 22a, 11a

HS/SHAEP/74-10/2
folio 750

HQ First Allied Airborne Army notified SHAEP on 14 Sep that the following administrative units were essential for US divisions on operation MARKET:-

4 Quartermaster Truck Companies
1 Quartermaster Service Company
Medical Units
Graves Registration Units

to be available in Brussels area on 17 Sep.

On 15 Sep HQ SHAEP replied that units would be provided by 12th Army Group and Communication Zone.

That same day HQ First Allied Airborne Army telegraphed to SHAEP that the four truck companies should concentrate fully loaded mainly with ammunition; loading details would follow but this loading must not prejudice the arrival of the transport in Brussels area on 17 Sep.

(11) Seaborne Tails of Airborne Divisions

HS/21AG/TB/W/
39/243
folio 15a

On 14 Sep it was decided that the Seaborne Tails of 82 and 101 US Airborne Divs would sail from England on the night of D + 1.

HS/WD/WWH/184/1.I
Appx B para 12
Appx C para 19

The seaborne tails of the remainder of British Airborne Corps were already in Belgium and on 15 Sep this echelon of 52 (L) Div (Airportable) was ordered to dump its loads and equipment and assist 30 Corps third line transport.

Section IV - 30 Corps plans - Operation 'GARDEN'

15. 30 Corps - Preparatory planning

30 Corps records:-

"The planning and preparation for 'GARDEN' by 30 Corps can be divided into three phases:-

- (a) The assembly prior to the operation
- (b) The break out
- (c) The thrust to contact the airborne forces

(a) The Assembly

The assembly and the marshalling of the forces before the operation presented a number of unusual points which are worth consideration.

The first point was that the assembly had to be so flexible that the Commander would be able to call forward any body of troops he might find necessary, from the operational point of view, once the Guards Armoured Division had led the break through. The nature of the operation was such that it was never possible to plan a fixed order of march for the whole Corps, (approximately 20,000 vehicles), and this necessitated a very careful order of assembly, and an efficient organisation, to call forward groups of troops as they might be required.

The second point was that the whole of the concentration in the BOUNG LROPOLO area had to be effected in a very brief time, through serious bottlenecks at DIEST and BIERINGEN which it was not possible to improve.

The third point was that the nature of the operations were known to be such that groups of administrative and technical vehicles had to be afforded local protection in the form of detachments of offensive troops.

The fourth point was that the column, which from the start was restricted to one axis, included two very large and very vulnerable groups - one - a bridging group, which in certain circumstances might extend to some 5,000 vehicles, and two - the administrative tails of the airborne forces, amounting to some 2,000 vehicles and of necessity requiring a high priority in the order of march.

(b) The Break-out

The terrain to the NORTH of the bridge over the MEUSE-ESCAUT Canal at 3596 (JOE'S BRIDGE), and the activity of the enemy in that area, made it clear from the start that the break out operation would be one of considerable difficulty. The bridgehead was small and only served by two bridges. There were few roads and the country to the NORTH and to the flanks of the bridgehead was heavily wooded and very marshy, making it well nigh impossible for the armour to move off the roads.

Bearing these points in view, the Corps Commander directed that the basis of the break out plan should be a very heavy artillery programme supported by heavy waves of Typhoons, and that, relying upon this weight of metal, the armour and infantry of the Guards Armoured Division would break through and advance with all possible speed."

HS/AL/83
para 4

16. Topography

(1) Main axis (Hindhoven, 4218 - St Oedenrode, 4232 - Grave, 6153 - Nijmegen, 7062 - Arnhem, 7477).

HS/AL/83 Appx K
HS/WD/MWH/181/1.1
Appx 0/9

The main axis from the Meuse - Escut canal to Nijmegen was a first class road of width between 20 and 30 feet with good grass verges for most of its length. From Nijmegen to Arnhem the road was wider in places but of poorer surface.

Embankments and ditches, marshy ground, peat and clay appeared likely to limit deployment of armour and vehicles to the following areas:-

Valkenswaard, 4108, to Zon, 4426
St Oedenrode, to Grave
2 miles North of Grave to Nijmegen, except for one mile
about 652600.

HS/AL/83 Appx K
HS/WD/MWH/181/1.1
Appx 1/16, 1/17

All bridges on this road were reported to be intact and probably up to class 40 standard with the exception of the bridge over the Maas-waal canal, E 671606. This was reported as blown on the evening of 16 Sep, but a further reconnaissance on 17 Sep morning found it intact. It was a class 60 bridge. The railway bridges at Nijmegen and Arnhem were both reported to be intact, also a class 24 pontoon road-bridge at Arnhem.

The woods on either side of the road from the Meuse-Escut canal to Valkenswaard provided good cover for the enemy.

The country in the Grave - Nijmegen area was dominated by the high ground round Groesbeek, 7555, close southeast of Nijmegen.

The ground between Nijmegen and Arnhem was known to be polder land, cut up into small fields by deep wide ditches and liable to flooding.

(11) Subsidiary axis. (Valkenswaard - Leende, 4808, - Geldorp, 4816 - Helmond, 5522 - Bakel, 6124 - Gemert, 5730 - Volkel, 5640 - Mill, 6445 - Escharen, 6151).

This was a first class two-way road to Helmond after which it became a good secondary one, mostly two-way but in places only fit for single line traffic. Little deployment appeared feasible south of the Hindhoven canal, 5319, thereafter possibilities appeared to be fairly good except west of the road in 6026 and from Volkel to 2 miles northwest of Mill.

Bridges were reported to be up to class 40 except one at 441084 between Valkenswaard and Leende, which appeared to be only class 25. All bridges on this route were reported intact.

(iii) Water obstacles(a) Wilhelmina canal at Zon

Width 80 to 100 feet.

(b) Ruid Willems Vaart canal at Veghel

Average width 30 feet.

(c) R Maas at Grave

Normal width 300 feet.

Normal depth 6 feet, but liable to sudden rises of 13 feet or more

after heavy rain.

Banks are flat with little cover and are topped with gravel and peat.

There are concrete casemates at 220 yard intervals on the left bank.

(d) Maas - Waal canal

Width 200 feet.

(e) R Waal at Nijmegen

Width at normal low water 850 feet.

There are no locks and there is a regular seasonal variation in depth.

Low water is in Sep/Oct. Even then the river is navigable for vessels of

10 feet draught.

Banks are normally dyked except where there is a quay, landing stage,

or port.

(f) R Nederrijn at Arnhem

Normal width 300 feet. In winter up to 1640 feet.

Depth 8 to 14 feet.

This river is fairly constricted between dykes, which are usually

made of earth but in places are reinforced with stone setts. There is

normally a towpath on one or other bank. There is little cover on either

bank.

17. The Enemy(1) 30 Corps Intelligence

On 7 Sep 30 Corps estimated the enemy strength encountered on the Albert canal and Antwerp between Hasselt/at about ten full infantry battalions, six of which were provided by 719 Division, formerly stationed in northwest Holland, the remainder probably being composed of remnants of 7 Army.

A Yachtman's Guide
to the Dutch
Waterways by
T.E. Thorpe.
pp. 46, 49.
(N.O. Library)

NS/AD/WAR/181/1.1
Appx Int 2 to 9

Further back, in the area of the R Waal, about 200 88 mm guns could probably be switched from an anti-aircraft to a ground role. And a Dutch resistance report of battered Panzer formations sent to Holland to refit might be true.

From 8 Sep onward reinforcements arrived for this force and identifications were obtained of four Parachute Regiments, two GAF Regiments, two weak battalions (one Rft, one 2bV) of 1 SS Pz Div, the Dutch SS Battle Group and various battle groups formed in Holland from the remnants of 15 Army. About 50 armoured fighting vehicles of 559 and 344 A Tk Bns were estimated to be in support on 8 Sep, but no further information on the refitting Panzer Divisions was obtained; 9 SS Pz Div was a possibility, they had not been identified elsewhere.

The enemy made no attempt at divisional organisation in this period; transport, signals and heavy equipment were almost non-existent. Battle groups were formed from regiments or from stragglers and were named after their Commanding officers; they varied in strength from 100 to 3,000. Many went into battle so quickly that the men did not know the name of their battle group. Food and ammunition were short, but some of these groups fought with great and at times fanatical determination.

Enemy casualties in the fighting between the canals were heavy and included some 2,000 prisoners. But it was estimated that about 6 battalions of infantry with 20 armoured fighting vehicles of 559 A Tk Bn were still available to contest the Corps advance on 17 Sep from the bridgehead on the Eindhoven road. Artillery support would probably not be great as few guns appeared to have been withdrawn from the anti-aircraft defences of Arnhem and Nijmegen to support the forward troops. The rumoured Panzer formation appears to have been considered non-existent or too weak for action, as no use had been made of it in the forward area during this period.

(11) Air Reconnaissance

Air reconnaissance was hampered by poor visibility from 12 to 15 Sep and also by the shortage of reconnaissance aircraft on advanced landing grounds. This shortage appears likely to have been due to the use of Brussels airfields for flying in supplies; at any rate Commander 2 TAF protested that these freight carriers were impairing the operational efficiency of his formation.

MS/ED/HEE/181/1.I
Appx A/6 to 9
RAF Narrative
The Liberation
of North West
Europe Vol.IV
PP.147, 153

18. 30 Corps - Plan in Outline

HS/WD/MWR/181/1.1
 Appx 0/7
 Appx 0/10
 HS/AL/83

(i) INTENTION

"30 Corps will advance when ordered at maximum speed and secure the area incl Nunspeet, 6621 excl Arnhem".

(ii) GROUPING AND ORDER OF BATTLE

The Order of Battle for 30 Corps, together with the additional troops under command of their formations is shown at Appendix 'B'.

(iii) AXES OF ADVANCE AND ORDER OF MARCH

30 Corps was to advance on one main axis through Eindhoven - Grave, and for part of the way on a more easterly subsidiary axis to be used only by fighting troops, in the following general order:-

Gds Armd Div
 HQ Main 30 Corps
 43 Div
 50 (T) Div

(iv) MOVEMENT AND TRAFFIC CONTROL

Speed of advance was the key to success. The importance of this, and of the efficient traffic control and good march discipline necessary to achieve it, was impressed on all ranks.

Gds Armd Div (less their Administrative Group) would lead the Corps and it was expected that they would clear the start point by 1300 hours on D + 1 day. They would control their own move.

The remainder of the Corps would follow on their heels at, it was hoped, 10 miles in the hour and 35 vehicles to the mile. This move would be during daylight only, from 0600 to 1900 hours, and vehicles would halt on the road for the night from 1900 to 0600 hours. Tactical moves by night were permissible. At this rate the tail of the Corps should clear the start point on D + 5 day. A provisional march table was issued and a special traffic control organisation for this move was set up under 30 Corps control.

(v) TIMING

H hour the time of start of the airborne drop had been fixed provisionally at 1300 hours 17 Sep.

HS/WD/MWR/181/1.1
 Appx 0/7
 Appx 0/9

IS/WD/NWS/343/1.I
 appx F.
 IS/WD/NWS/181/1.I
 appx L/17
 para 10(b) above

Z hour the time at which Gds Arm Div were to pass the Corps SP, Joe's Bridge 3596, was considered likely at first to be at the same hour; but later the SP was moved forward to the northern edge of the wood at 3698 and Z hour was finally fixed at 1435A hours. By this time 83 Group would be responsible for the air support of the whole force.

(vi) TASKS OF FORMATIONS

"(a) Guards Armoured Division

Guards Armoured Division will advance at 'Z' hour at maximum speed to area ANHEM and by-passing APELDOORN will dominate the area from incl HUNSPERT to excl APELDOORN.

Should bridges at GRAVE, NIJMEGEN or ANHEM have been destroyed, Guards Armoured Division will fan out to the flanks on the SOUTH bank of the river and, in conjunction with Airborne Troops in the area, take all appropriate action to facilitate the task of 43 Division to carry out bridging operations. This will include securing the flanks of the proposed bridge site and, if possible the securing of a small bridgehead.

(b) 15/19 H Group

15/19 H Group will advance to area BINDERHOVEN and there come under operational command of 506 BCT [101 US Airborne Div] with a view to helping to keep clear 30 Corps main axis of advance in the BINDERHOVEN area.

(c) 44 BTR Group

44 BTR Group will advance to area WHEGEL [Veghel] and there come under operational command 501 BCT [101 US Airborne Div] with a view to helping to keep clear 30 Corps main axis of advance in the WHEGEL area.

(d) SRY Group

SRY Group will -

(i) Advance to area GRAVE and there be in support of troops of 82 US Airborne Division with a view to assisting that division to keep clear 30 Corps main axis of advance in the GRAVE area.

(ii) Be prepared to take part in a major river crossing operation under command 43 Division.

(e) 43 Division

43 Division will -

(i) Advance, when ordered, at maximum speed and secure area from inclusive APELDOORN E 7803 due SOUTH along high ground to a point of junction with 1 Brit Airborne Division in the area NORTH of ANHEM.

(ii) Send dets to secure crossings over R IJSEL at DEVENTER 9407 and ZUTPHEN 9494.

(iii) Should bridges over either R's RAAS, WAAL or NEDER RIJN have been destroyed, be prepared to carry out an assault crossing and bridging operation."

(f) 50 (N) Division

50 (N) Division will continue to hold the existing bridgehead over the MEUSE - ESCAUT canal. Thereafter the division will:-

- "(i) Send detachment to secure a crossing over R IJSEL at DOBBURG 9081.
- (ii) Advance when ordered and secure high ground to the NORTH of ARDEN, relieving 43 Division of part of their responsibility and keeping contact with Northern troops of 1 Brit Airborne Division.
- (iii) Be at all times available as a Corps reserve."

(g) 101 US Airborne Div

101 US Airborne Div were to facilitate the advance of 30 Corps as far as R MAAS. They would drop in the areas 4435, 4128 and 4227, seize the bridges at VEGHEL and ZON, then capture EINDHOVEN and send detachments to ST OEDENRODE.

(vii) AIR SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

No air support of 30 Corps was permissible when an airborne drop was in progress in the vicinity.

For the break out by Gds Armd Div the whole rocket firing Typhoon effort of 83 Group RAF (two wings) was placed in support, controlled by a contact car with this Division.

A Forward Control Post attached to HQ 30 Corps would monitor all calls for air support from ground and airborne formations, to impose a veto if such support would endanger our own troops.

The detailed arrangements for support, made with 83 Group, are given in 30 Corps Air Notes:

"One Sqn RP Typhoons will carry out an attack immediately after the arty barrage finishes, along the road North to Vaalkenward ahead of the leading tps of Guards Armd Div.

Ten sqns Typhoons (RP and fighter bombers) will be available thereafter to provide a "Cab Rank" over the advancing troops which can be directed onto any targets or areas of suspected opposition which are encountered in the advance as far as Vaalkenward. Beyond this point the presence of airborne elements makes close air support impracticable on a pre-arranged basis."

(viii) ARTILLERY

All field and medium artillery and part of the anti-aircraft artillery in 30 Corps would support the break out under the direction of the CRA Gds Armd Div.

HS/WD/WW/181/1.1
Appx Q/8

RAF Narrative
The Liberation
of North West
Europe
Vol. IV p.151
HS/AL/83
para 9(c)
HS/WD/WW/181/1.1
Appx A/6, Q/7

HS/WD/WW/181/1.1
Appx A/9

Anti-aircraft defence of the bridges on the main axis was arranged, but, from D day till further orders, a HOLD FIRE on all anti-aircraft fire during daylight was imposed to prevent damage to the aircraft of the airborne operation.

(ix) ENGINEERS

Forward airfields were urgently required. The condition of airfields at Volkel, 5640, and Eindhoven was to be reported early and teams for reconstruction held ready to go forward if ordered.

CE 30 Corps was put in charge of all bridging operations; Army and G.H.Q. Troops Engineers were placed under his command and he could demand if necessary all of 43 and 50 Div RE. Sufficient bridging equipment was brought forward to Bourg Leopold, 2682, to bridge all obstacles up to, but excluding R IJssel. Teams of personnel and equipment were made up and held in readiness to be sent forward if bridges or assault crossings, were required over the R Maas, the Maas-Waal canal, the R Weel, or the R Nederrijn.

Gds Armd Div were given sufficient bridging equipment to enable them to reach the R Maas and start rafting there.

A more detailed account of the bridging organisation is given in Appendix "C".

(x) ADMINISTRATION

(a) Supplies, Petrol and Ammunition

Formations and Corps Troops were ordered to hold the following:

	<u>Supplies</u>	<u>Petrol</u>
Gds Armd Div	8 days	200 miles
43 and 50 Divs and 8 Armd Bde	6 "	250 "
Corps Troops	4 "	150 "

All formations were to carry, as a minimum, double second line holdings of 25 pounder ammunition and might have to carry on with depleted second line holdings owing to slender stocks at Roadhead.

(b) Troop Carrying Transport

43 Div would be lifted in dukws, 50 Div in lorries.

(c) R.E.M.E.

Not more than one Brigade Workshop would move with each formation in the early stages.

Traffic Control Posts were equipped with Recovery detachments.

HS/WD/HWE/187/1.1
Appx A, D.

HS/AL/83
Section 6

(d) General

A summary of the Corps Maintenance Plan is recorded in 21 Army Group Operation "MARKET GARDEN" Section 6.

It will be noted that the maintenance commitments, which included maintenance of Brit Airborne Corps from 22 Sep, or earlier in emergency, far exceeded those normally executed by a Corps.

(xi) INTERCOMMUNICATION AND LIAISON

Special arrangements had to be made for inter-communication. Notes on these are in Appendix "D".

Liaison Officers were exchanged between HQ 30 Corps and HQ Brit Airborne Corps. 101 US Airborne Div provided contact detachments with Gds Armd Div.

APPENDIX B

30 Corps Order of Battle for Operation "GARDEN"

S/WD/NWR/484/1.1
ppx 0/7
ppx 0/10

Gds Arm'd Div

(1) Under command

84 Med Regt RA
198/73 A Tk Bty RA
Det 4 Svy Regt RA
11 P'd Coy RE
Part 128 Bridge Coy
Reconnaissance parties 16 Airfield Constr Gp
Reconnaissance parties 5357 Airfield Constr Wing

(11) Under command for movement

Elements 100 AA Bde (anti Motor Torpedo Boat role on R WAAL)
Reconnaissance party 100 AA Bde

43 Div

(1) Under command

8 Arm'd Bde (less one armoured regiment)
Royal Netherlands Bde
147 P'd Regt RA (less one battery)
One platoon 210 P'd Coy RE
84 Med Regt RA
419/52 Hy Bty RA
One battery 4 Svy Regt RA

(11) Under command for movement

Hq 128 Bridge Coy and part of Bridging Column
30 Corps Tps RE (less 11 P'd Coy RE and one platoon 210 P'd Coy RE)
7 Army Tps RE
23 Mech Sqd Pl
Elements 16 Airfield Constr Gp
Elements 5357 Airfield Constr Wing

50 Div

(1) Under command

86 P'd Regt RA (less one battery)
7 Med Regt RA
One battery 4 Svy Regt RA
199/73 and 196/73 A Tk Bty RA

101 US Airborne Div (from time of landing)

(1) To come under command 506 BCT on arrival in BIELEHOVEN area.

15/19 H, with under command :-

One squadron Royals
One battery 86 P'd Regt RA

- (11) To come under command 301 RCT on arrival in VACHUEL area
44 R Tks, with under command :-

one squadron Royals
one battery 4 RHA
and under command for movement :-
detachment 27 LAA Regt

ERY (to support 82 US Airborne Div on arrival in GRAVE area)

- (1) Under command

one squadron Royals
one battery 147 Fd Regt RA

- (11) Under command for movement

detachment 27 LAA Regt

Other Units

100 AA Bde, with 27 LAA Regt under operation control, less detachments
RE Bridging Columns
Seaborne tails of Airborne Divisions

APPENDIX CRE ASPECT OF OPERATION "GARDEN"

HS/AL/63
Appx.D

"SCOPE OF TASK"

The problem facing the CE in the "GARDEN" Operation was entirely one of bridging. Apart from the four major obstacles of the MEUSE, MEUSE - WAAL Canal, WAAL and NEDER RIJN there were, at least, two sizeable water obstacles before the MEUSE was reached, namely, the WILHELMINA Canal and the ZUID WILLEMS VART Canal.

PLANNING

- (a) Although the Airborne forces were being dropped with the object of capturing the bridges intact, engineer planning had to be based on the worst cases where all obstacles would have to be bridged.
- (b) Another factor in planning was that although the bridges might be blown, the Airborne forces might be in possession of the sites and routes in between, so that work could be carried out on all bridges simultaneously if rafts were used to ferry bridging equipment forward.

ORGANISATION AND CONTROL

In order to meet these commitments, a large engineer force was assembled at BOURG LEOPOLD under the Corps Chief Engineer, their control being decentralised through CSAGRE who were placed under command of Corps for that purpose. This involved :-

- (a) three CSAGRE,
- (b) two formations of Army Troops Engineers,
- (c) two formations GHQ Troops Engineers,
- (d) two formations Canadian Army Troops Engineers,
- (e) two Mechanical Equipment Platoons.

The above was, of course, in addition to Corps Troops, Divisional Engineers, and the Corps Mechanical Equipment Platoon. The Divisional Engineers were to be placed under command CSAGRE, as required, according to the circumstances. In all, there was a total of about 9,000 Royal Engineers and Pioneers, not counting the Airfield Construction Units.

Nearly the whole resources of the Army Group Bridge Column were assembled at BOURG LEOPOLD under their CHASC with four Bridge Company HQs.

This amount of bridging equipment on wheels was sufficient to provide bridges over the initial obstacles, bridges and rafts over [the MEUSE and] the MEUSE - WAAL Canal, Close Support Rafts over the WAAL and NEDER RIJN and a Class 9 bridge over NEDER RIJN.

HS/WD/NWE/187/1, I
Appx A.

In addition, a large amount of bridging equipment, about 2,000 lorry loads, was brought to BOURG LEOPOLD and dumped. This was sufficient to provide eventually three bridge crossings over each major obstacle, on pontoons or barges, and to refill all the bridging vehicles.

RE CORPS PLAN

With the knowledge that this bridging was at BOURG LEOPOLD and could be called forward on priority, no bridging was put in to the order of march except a small amount under the direct command of the Guards Armoured Division; this was sufficient to bridge small obstacles on the route and to provide Assault Boats and Rafts to get the leading troops and tanks over the major obstacles should the bridges be blown, but held by our own Airborne Troops.

BRIDGING COLUMNS

Plans were, therefore, made to form pre-arranged columns to meet various contingencies or a major bridging commitment. These columns were given code-names and convey serial numbers so that they could be called forward by the Traffic Control organisation when required. The columns so constituted were, roughly, as follows :-

- (a) Columns to provide bridges and rafts over each obstacle on the assumption that all bridges were blown but held by our troops, and that bridging over each obstacle would take place at the same time.
- (b) Columns to provide the full scale of rafts and bridges for individual obstacles should any one be blown and held by our own troops.
- (c) Columns to provide assault equipment and initial bridging and rafts for each individual obstacle should it be held by the enemy.
- (d) Columns to provide duplicate bridges over each river should the existing bridge be intact.
- (e) A column to go right through past ARNHEM to provide equipment to form an opposed bridgehead over the IJssel.

Each column included the correct number of RE Units and formations to carry out the task, which had been planned and studied by them. In all, twenty different columns were planned and details worked out. Of these columns, four were eventually called forward, exactly as planned, and the system worked very well. Subsequent bridging was called up as required on an "ad hoc" basis.

The composition and capacity of these columns is given in greater detail in the RE Battlefield Tour.

U/AL/808
21.I pp.98-100

APPENDIX DSpecial Intercommunication Arrangements1. COMMUNICATIONS

Additional communications were provided as below :-

(a) Between the Airborne Forces and Second Army and 30 Corps.

- "(i) Two links, A9 and A11, between Main Second Army - 30 Corps - Br Airborne Corps in UK. These were already established. When communications were established with Airborne Corps after it had dropped, they would be maintained on whichever of A9 or A11 was the better.
- (ii) One link (C5) 30 Corps - Br Airborne Corps - 101 US Airborne Div - Main Second Army - Tac Second Army. Two British operators were attached to 101 US Airborne Div to work on C5.
- (iii) One link (C8) Main Second Army - Tac Second Army - 30 Corps - Br Airborne Corps.
- (iv) 101 US Airborne Div sent to HQ 30 Corps one SCR 193 with US operators to work on C14 to the Airborne Div Guard sets of 101 US Airborne Div, 82 US Airborne Div and 1 Br Airborne Div in turn. Two US operators were sent to Gds Armd Div to work on C14 a set to be provided by Gds Armd Div.
- (v) 101 US Airborne Div provided 5 SCR 300 (FM sets), each with two operators, to work between forward elements of Gds Armd and 101 US Airborne Divs.
- BA (vi) Div Arty Gp. 3 No 19 Sets and 1 Cdn 9 Set each with US operators would work a Div Arty Gp from CRA Gds Armd Div to FOCs and Pd Regts of Gds Armd Div. Fire control sets from Airborne Divs would come up on the group as required.
- (vii) Med Arty Gp. 84 Med Regt would have one set with a US operator to which fire control sets of Airborne Divs would work as required.
- 'g' (viii) One 76 Set with crew would move with DA and QMG Br Airborne Corps to work on C6 to Rear Br Airborne Corps in UK. This set would be with Rear 30 Corps until Airborne Corps seaborne tail joined Main Airborne Corps HQ.
- (ix) As soon as seaborne tail of Br Airborne Corps HQ joined Br Airborne Corps HQ, a one-to-one link would be established between Rear 30 Corps and Br Airborne Corps. Second Army would provide the set at Rear 30 Corps."

IS/AL/83
ppx. E

(b) Inside 30 Corps(1) RM

Sets were borrowed from a reserve army group Royal Artillery to provide communications between HQ 30 Corps and headquarters of Army Groups Royal Engineers, Chief Engineer Second Army (advanced headquarters with 30 Corps), stores control point BOURG LEOPOLD and bridging vehicle control point with 24 Tpt Coln RASC (Br).

A cable detachment from 30 Corps Signals was allocated to each Army Group Royal Engineers to provide the signal layout for the bridging site at each river line.

(11) Traffic Control

Sets were provided to link Main HQ 30 Corps, Traffic Office 30 Corps, 3 Regulating Headquarters and 8 Traffic control Points.

2. CODES AND CIPHER

Instructions were issued telling ground formations how to contact and communicate with airborne formations.

8/AL/808/
ol.I p.100

8/MD/NWE/187/1.I
ppx 8.

8/MD/NWE/181/1.I
ppx 0/9

8/AL/83
ppx 8.

Section V - 8 and 12 Corps plans - Operation 'GARDEN'

19. 8 Corps - Plan in outline

HS/WD/WWE/146/1.1
Appx D/1

8 Corps intention recorded in Operation Instruction No.10, issued on 17 Sep,

was:-

"8 Corps will:-

- (a) Assist the op of 30 Corps by operating on its rt flank, and thereby broadening the base of Second Army for its adv into Holland.
- (b) At a subsequent date, move H.E. to the line of the Meuse on the rt of 30 Corps."

The first part of this intention would be carried out in three phases:-

- I. 3 Br Div, which was on the way forward from France, would concentrate and then establish a bridgehead over the Meuse-Escaut canal in the area of Lille St Hubert, 4294.
- II. 3 Br Div would capture and dominate the area Leende, 4807 - Weert, 5897.
- III. 11 Armd Div would pass through 3 Br Div, capture Helmond, 5522, and dominate the surrounding country.

1 Belgian Bde and 4 Armd Bde (less two regiments, one with 12 Corps and one with 30 Corps) would be in reserve.

One field regiment RA of 11 Armd Div and two medium regiments would support 3 Br Div's attack.

20. 12 Corps - Plan in outline

HS/WWE/159/1.1
Appx D1, D5

12 Corps task was to advance on the left of and in conjunction with 30 Corps with the object of protecting the latter and preventing any enemy to the west of 30 Corps axis either:-

- (a) endangering the axis of advance of the Corps
- (b) breaking out from the west towards Germany

On 16 Sep 12 Corps Operation Instruction No.8 was issued, which gave divisions tasks briefly as below:-

- 15 (S) Div would operate in the area bounded by the Albert canal and Turnhout canal and establish a bridgehead over the latter.
- 53 (W) Div would leave one brigade group to hold Antwerp under 7 Armd Div command, send one brigade group to 15 (S) Div to establish a bridgehead over the Meuse-Escaut canal in area 3097 north of Lommel, cross this bridgehead with the remainder of the division, operate between the Turnhout and Wilhelmina canals and establish a bridgehead over the latter.
- 7 Armd Div would be responsible for holding the Corps front between 15 (S) Div and First Cdn Army.

On 17 Sep Operation Instruction No.9 was issued, superseding No.8. Owing to the increased opposition to 15 (S) Div and indications that the enemy reserve had been drawn onto that front, the establishment of a class 40 bridge in square 0792 might be delayed thus prejudicing the Corps task. Divisional tasks were therefore changed and are given in full below:-

53 (W) Div (with one armoured regiment group 7 Arm'd Div under command from 18 1200A hours and 3 AGRA in support plus RA 30 Corps support for operation in LOMMEL area).

- "(a) To est brhead and Cl 9 br in square 3097 by 180630A.
- (b) Prior to gen adv Northwards to est brhead and Cl 40 br at DE MAAT 2296 on night 18/19 Sep.
- (c) (i) Subsequently, to adv, seize and hold as firm bases the following:-
 EUSEL 3109, DUSEL 3010 and REUSEL 2010 and the area
 SILVARENBEEK 1923 - DIESSEN 2222 - ESBEEK 1921.
- (ii) Once seized, these areas will not be vacated without orders from HQ 12 Corps.
- (iii) TILBURG 1633 will also be captured if possible, but this is NOT vital to the op.
- (iii) Until the Cl 40 br is open at DE MAAT 220962 there will be no adv except for recce patrols beyond the line (all incl) EINDHOVEN 4218 - EUSEL 3109 - DUSEL 3010 - HAPERT 2710 - REUSEL 2010.
- (d) To est a strong protective and control screen on the CORPS STOP LINE:-
 MARSHES 1631 - 1628 - 1222 - POPPEL 1219 - VOOR EEL 1013 - WOOD 1010
- (e) To est two brheads over the WILHELMINA CANAL and to build one Cl 40 and one Cl 9 over this obstacle covered by these brheads. Strategically the best sites for these brs are:-
 Cl 40 3024
 Cl 9 3925".

15 (S) Div (with 3/4 CLY under command)

- "(a) To maintain the present GHEEL brhead in square 0792 and enlarge it as early as possible.
- (b) To secure line of MEUSE JUNCTION CANAL within Div bdys.
- (c) To secure that enemy NORTH of MEUSE JUNCTION CANAL and WEST of TURNHOUT CANAL in squares 1995, 1996 and 2096 are prevented from interfering with the constr of subsequent use of the brs at 200928 and 220962 (DE MAAT). This is a fire task and does NOT entail occupation of the above area by tps.
- (d) To afford close protection for the constr of the Cl 40 br at 200928.
- (e) To est a Cl 9 br in square 0792.
- (f) To be prepared to carry out either of the following tasks:-

(1) TASK 'TURN'

To seize and hold as firm bases BETHY 1599, CASTERLE 0697 and ARKENDONCK 1505. Once held these areas will NOT be vacated without orders from HQ 12 Corps. TURNHOUT 0506 will also be captured if possible, but this is NOT vital to the op.
To est a strong protective and control screen on the CORPS STOP LINE:-
BARSHES 1108 and 1007 - SE of TURNHOUT - line of R L'AA through squares 0405, 0100, 9996, 9794, 9392 - GRUBBENDONCK 9092.

(11) TASK 'BOX'

To seize and hold as firm bases the following:-

DIRSCHOT 3125, BOXTEL 3234, ST MICHIELS OOSTEL 3440, KRAMVOIRT 2643, UDHOUT 2038, LOON-OP-ZAND 1539. Once seized these areas will NOT be vacated without orders from HQ 12 Corps. SHERTOOGHENDONCK 3146 will also be captured if possible, but this is NOT vital to the op.
To est a strong protective and control screen on the CORPS STOP LINE:-
Br 309454 - thence line of canal to bend 182448 - LOON-OP-ZAND 1539 - CANAL at 110360 - thence line of CANAL to br 185307."

7 Armcd Div

- "(a) To provide one Armcd Regt Group to pass to under comd 53 (W) Div wef 181200A.
- (b) To maintain the def of ANTWERP until relieved. It is vital that the docks area is securely held. (4 Cdn Inf Bde under comd for this purpose).
- (c) To ensure that the enemy cannot debouch Southwards over the ALBERT CANAL within Div bdys, or Eastwards from HURENTHALS 9790 between the ALBERT and MUUSE JUNCTION CANALS and to destroy any parties of enemy who may attempt to do so.
- (d) To be prepared to adv and carry out Task 'BOX' as given in para 5 (f) (11) above.

Chapter VII - Operation 'MARKET GARDEN'

Reference Maps 9 and 10

Section I - Operations south of Grave - 17/18 Sep.

HS/WD/NWR/196/1.I
Appx. JA.

1. Gds Armd Div - Plan in outline.

Extracts from Gds Armd Div OO No 12 dated 15 Sep are below:-

"INTEN.

4. Own Tro

(d) Airborne Troops

- (i) 1 Br Airborne Div (with POLISH Para Bde) and 82 US Airborne Div are operating under British Airborne Corps. Their tasks are respectively -

To capture intact brs over NEDERRIJN and dominate the surrounding country.

To capture intact the brs over R MAAS and R WAAL in areas GRAVE and NIJMEGEN and to dominate the intervening country.

- (ii) 101 US Airborne Div is being dropped under arrangements of British Airborne Corps in the area from excl GRAVE to incl BEINDMOVEN in accordance with requirements of 30 Corps. The task of 101 US Airborne Div, which comes under comd 30 Corps on landing, is to facilitate the adv of 30 Corps as far as R MAAS.

INTENTION

5. Gds Armd Div will advance at 'Z' hr at maximum speed to area ARNHEM and by-passing APELDOORN will dominate the area from incl NUNSPEET to excl APELDOORN.

METHOD

8. Timings

- (a)

- (b) 'H' hr is the time at which tps taking part in op 'MARKET' first drop.

'H' hr has been fixed provisionally for 1300 A hrs 17 Sep. This will be confirmed.

Postponements will be for periods of 24 hrs.

- (c) 'Z' hr is the time at which leading tps of the Div taking part in op 'GARDEN' will adv. 'Z' hr is likely to be the same as 'H' hr and will in any case not be earlier. The exact time of 'Z' hr will be notified later.

14. Div Tasks

Gds Armd Div will carry out its task in two phases:-

PHASE I

- (a) On the afternoon of D Day Gds Armd Div with 5 Gds Armd Bde leading will capture VALKENSWAARD 4108.
- (b) The adv will be preceded by full arty sp as coord by CRA.
- (c) As the adv outsteps the range of arty sp this will be taken up by the TYPHOONS on a prearranged plan.
- (d) Two bns 50 (N) Div will move forward behind leading tps astride the main axis to protect the flanks and subsequently take over VALKENSWAARD.
- (e) Leading tps will pause on the bound 'JUDAS' [Rd VELENHOVEN 3714 - WAARLE 4012 - AALST 4213 - HEEZE 4911] until ordered fwd by GOC to make contact with 101 US Airborne Div in area EINDHOVEN.
- (f) The Div may conc SOUTH of EINDHOVEN in areas of the CL preparatory to further adv.

PHASE II

- (a) The Div will continue the adv two up as ordered by GOC at first lt D + 1 and will go through to the final objective.
- (b) at GRAVE 6253 where the GLs converge, the bde which reaches this pt first will continue the adv, while the other bde will wait for the tail to clear.
- (c) If 32 Gds Bde should lead, it is probable that Div HQ will pass through 5 Gds Armd Bde and take sta between the two bdes.

HS/WD/HWR/199/1.I
Appx. H.

RA Gds Armd Div OO dated 16 Sep shows that fire support for the break-out would be provided by 10 field regiments, 3 medium regiments, one heavy battery and one heavy anti-aircraft regiment acting in a ground role. This fire support would be supplemented by RAF Typhoons. RA Gds Armd Div was not included in this fire plan.

2. 5 Gds Armd Bde - Plan in outline

HS/WD/HWR/343/1.I
Appx F, E.

Extracts from 5 Gds Armd Bde OO No.1 dated 16 Sep are below:-

"INTENTION"

- 5. Gds Armd Bde will advance to EINDHOVEN 4218 on D day preparatory to an adv to area NUNSPEET on D + 1.

METHOD

6. Grouping and Order of March at Appx 'A'

[At end of OO below]

8. Timings

- (c) 'Z' hr is the time at which leading tps of the Bde Gp will cross Div SL.
'Z' hr is likely to be H + 70.
['Z' hr was finally fixed at 1435 A Hrs (H+95)]

Chap VI para 18

12. Phases

Phase I - Adv to WINDHOVEN

- (a) On the afternoon on D day 5 Ode Armd Bde Gp will capture VALKENSWAARD 4108. Head of IG Gp will halt at Bde SP (JONES BR 3596) at Z - 30 mins and mov fwd on orders of Col. J.O.E. VANDELEUR to cross Div SL (NORTHERN edge of wood 3698) at Z.

(b) ARTY

- (i) Z - 35 to Z - 15 Counter bty by ten Pz Regts, three Med Regts, one Hy Regt, Hy AA
(ii) Z - 10 to Z + 10 concentrations from HEUVEL 3803 to VALKENSWAARD by Med Regts and Hy Regt. [Actually a barrage by the Med Regts]
(iii) Z - 5 to Z + 5 Hy Mortars of 50 (H) Div on known enemy localities.
(iv) Z - 3 to Z + 20 Pz Arty barrage from 1000x ahead of SL, extending 1000x each side of CL.
Rate of adv - Z - 3 to Z static
Z to Z + 20 200x per min.
[See comment below]

HS/WD/NWR/199/1.I
Appx B.

(c) Air

After Z + 20 a cab rank supplied by eleven sqns of Typhoons. In addition, Spitfires and Mustangs available for Armd Recce.

(d) 231 Bde

Two inf bns will adv dismounted on either side of CL except for carriers. Leading BN will cross SL at Z + 5 [later changed to Z hr] and halt at HEUVEL 3803. Second Bn will then pass through to VALKENSWAARD.

HS/WD/NWR/898/1.I

- (e) Between Hls PETER and ANDREW [From Joe's bridge to Valkenswaard] all vehs of this Bde Gp will keep to the left of the rd leaving the right free for the adv of 32 Bde Gp.

- (f) Leading tps will pause on JUDAS [Rd VELDHOFEN-WAARLE-AALST-NEER] until ordered fwd by this HQ to contact 101 US Airborne Div in area WINDHOVEN.

Phase II

- (a) 5 Gds Armd Bde Gp will continue the adv at first light on D + 1 as ordered by this HQ.
- (b) At GRAVE 5253, where the Gls converge, the Bde Gp which reaches this point first will continue the adv, so it is essential this point is reached before 32 Bde Gp.
- (c) If 32 Bde Gp is to lead, Div HQ is to lead 5 Bde Gp.

[COMMENT:- The field artillery barrage for the breakout had only just over half the intensity of the one which supported 11 Armd Div's advance in operation 'GOODWOOD', where 8 field regiments (6 here) fired at the same rate on the same width of front, but with a rate of advance of 150 yards per minute. (200 yards here)]

HS/AL/1200/77/B
p.29.

Appendix 'A'GROUPING AND ORDER OF MARCH1. MOVEMENT ORDER FOR PHASE I

		<u>Vehs</u>	<u>Time past Bde SP - Br 3596</u>	
	(a) Irish Gds Gp (incl 2 Armd IC, 3 IC, two tps 2 HCR, OP 153 Fd Regt RA, P2 Ech and LAD)	246	Z-30	Z+20
1	(b) RE Recce Party (as detailed by OC 14 Fd Sqn RE)	12	Z-20	Z+23
	(c) Two Bns from 231 Bde (deployed on either side of rd)	-	-	-
	(a) One Sqn 2 HCR (less two tps)	32	Z+23	Z+28
	(b) Tac Bde HQ (incl Tac HQ 2 HCR and P3 Sec)	30	Z+28	Z+32
2	(c) 153 Fd Regt RA (incl one sec 84 Med Regt RA)	138	Z+32	Z+50
	(d) 14 Fd Sqn RE (less recce deta incl br lorries and boats)	56	Z+50	Z+60
	(a) Gren Gp (incl 1 Mot Gren Gds, 2 Armd Gren Gds, P2 Ech & LAD, Scissors Br, RE recce)	396	Z+60	Z+105
3	(b) Q Bty 21 A Tk Regt RA	24	Z+105	Z+108
	(c) Main Bde HQ (incl ADS, AWD, AOD)	50	Z+108	Z+112
	(d) 19 (Br) Gds Lt Fd Amb	40	Z+112	Z+115
	(e) 2 Minden Bty 21 A Tk Regt RA	24	Z+115	Z+120

2. (a) Bde SP - JOE'S BR 3596.
 - (b) Speed - Best possible.
 - (c) Density - 60 VTM.
 - (d) Halts - NIL; unless ordered by Bde Comd.
 - (e) Lights - Full at discretion of comds.
 3. Bde will move on LEFT of rd from Bde SP as far as VALKENSWAARD 4108.
 4. A Ech will be under comd 2 HCR for movement and protection.
 5. Div SL - Front edge of WOOD in square 3698.
- The timings shown above are those at which the heads of columns cross the Bde SP.
The head of Irish Gds Gp must NOT pass the Div SL until 2.
6. Units will send reps to the unit moving in front of them to tie up entrances on to the main rd to the br.

3. Gds Armd Div and forward units of 50 (N) Div - Narrative 17 Sep.

(1) Irish Guards Group

HS/WD/NWE/898/1.I

The Irish Guards Group plan was for one squadron of 2 Armd IG with the RE reconnaissance party and a bulldozer to lead the Group and capture the bridge at 403069, a mile short of Valkenswaard. The other two squadrons, each carrying one company of 3 IG on tank back, and the remainder of 3 IG travelling lorryborne would then pass through and capture Valkenswaard.

HS/WD/NWE/898/1.I

The artillery programme was carried out to time and 2 Armd IG and 2 Devons (50 Division) crossed the Start Line at 1435 hours.

The leading tank closed up to the barrage and followed about 300 yards behind it in poor visibility due to dust from the shell bursts. For 10 minutes all went well, but suddenly the rear of the leading squadron and head of the second one were attacked by enemy infantry with bazookas and anti-tank guns, and 9 tanks were knocked out in two minutes. Best positions possible for defence were taken up, the edges of the wood and ditches were sprayed with fire and the Typhoons were brought into action, which made very low and accurate attacks on the enemy positions.

HS/AL/83
Pt II para 5
2 TAF Daily Log
Sheet 1592
HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx A/9

[COMMENT:- 21 Army Group report of Operation 'MARKET GARDEN' appears to be wrong in showing the Typhoons operating at the same time as the field artillery barrage. 2 TAF show them as operating on 30 Corps front from 1512 to 1926 hours, this fits better with 30 Corps Air Notes, 5 Gds Armd Bde orders and 2 Armd IG narrative]

HS/WD/NWE/412/1.I

2 Devons were at this time roughly at the frontier, too far back to help much initially, but their continued advance and the action of the Irish Guards and Typhoons between them produced 250 prisoners by 1530 hours.

HS/WD/NWE/196/1.I
Appx JJ.
HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx L/17.
HS/WD/NWE/412/1.I
Ampts. Bde Op Instr
43.

[COMMENT:- The Irish Guards Group appear to have been overconfident in the effectiveness of the artillery barrage, as the wood where this action developed, 3700, was known to be held by the enemy. The only extra fire that it received appears to have been from 50 Div's 4.2" mortars.]

HS/WD/NWE/199/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/884/1.I

By about 1610 hours the leading troops of 2 Armd IG had reached the north edge of the wood 300 yards short of Heuvel. For their further advance they required the medium barrage to be fired again. As they were within 200 yards of its start line, they decided to draw back about 500 yards. Delay in turning the bulldozer is recorded, but opposition appears to have remained alive in area 3700 - 3800 for some time longer, as the barrage did not begin till 1739 hours, 1½ hours later.

HS/WD/NWE/884/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/199/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/505/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/514/1.I

[COMMENTS:- (a) Start of barrage is recorded as below:-

2 Armd IG	1630 hours
HQ Gde Armd Div RA	1735 hours
7 Med Regt RA	1739 hours
64 Med Regt RA	1739 hours

2 Armd IG appear to have recorded several entries an hour earlier than the time at which they occurred, but 1610 hours above is confirmed by HQ RA Gde Armd Div.

Chapter VI, para 16.
HS/WD/NWE/828/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/199/1.I

(b) The road was of two way width and its verges had in some places been found to be mined. This 500 yards withdrawal must have been an awkward operation. If the first line of the medium barrage had been omitted, there would have been no artillery fire on the front edge of the wood West of the road, immediately ahead of the leading squadron.]

HS/WD/NWE/199/1.I
Appx H.

This barrage was a 20 minute one, lifting 200 yards per minute, due to stop 200 yards short of the bridge at 403069 - the leading squadron's objective. 2 Armd IG do not appear to have kept up close behind it, or they would have been on this objective immediately after 1800 hours whereas at 1830 hours they called for a 5 minutes concentration to be fired on it.

[COMMENT:- 2 Armd IG record 1730 hours as their time at this bridge.]

HS/WD/NWE/514/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/884/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K, Part IV
Annex D, para 5.

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx L/17
Interview of Oct
54 with Lt. Gen
Horrocks

RAF Narrative
Vol. IV p.150
HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx A/11.
2 TAF Daily Log
Sheet 1592.

HS/WD/NWE/898/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/834/2.I

HS/WD/NWE/904/1.I

The leading squadron took up positions guarding the bridge and the remainder passed through them entering Valkenswaard at dusk, which on
Group
Zone A time was about 1930 hours. Here the Irish Guards took up
harbour positions for the night. 2 Armd IG had lost 9 tanks and had
8 men killed and several wounded; 3 IG had casualties of 7 killed and
19 wounded. Gds Armd Div informed 30 Corps of their intention to harbour
here and Commander 30 Corps concurred; they had had a tough fight.

83 Group RAF had flown 116 Typhoon sorties in support of Gds Armd Div,
under control of the contact car with 2 Armd IG. Their attacks were made
only some 50 yards on either side of the road and about 200 yards ahead of
the leading vehicles. This combined operation worked very successfully.

(11) Supporting units of 50 (H) Div.

Meanwhile 2 Devons had pressed on forward and by 1730 hours had reached
their objective on the road at Heuvel, 3803, with half the battalion. The
other half was clearing the woods, 3604, supported by tanks (15/19 H) and
artillery. By dusk only part of this wood had been cleared. Defensive
positions were taken up by each half battalion and clearing of the remainder
was postponed till the morrow.

1 Dorset remained most of the day in their positions round La Colonie,
3597, waiting for the time when they could pass through 2 Devons. At 1700
they started to move forward to the road junction at 371999 in lorries, but
traffic was very congested and not till 1830 hours did their head reach this
point, while their tail only came in at 2100 hours; it was dispersed up the
track at 373001. Their Commanding Officer had to use a motor cycle to reach
HQ of the Irish Guards Group, passing tanks and transport double and treble
banked on his way. Just before dusk 231 Bde ordered the battalion to dig in
where they were to protect 90 Fd Regt RA who were moving up to them. Later
231 Bde approved the move forward of the battalion at first light.

HS/WD/NWE/475/1.I
and Appx B
Appx E/17.

231 Bde had intended to move 90 Pd Regt RA during the night 17/18 Sep to Hook, 3803, where they would be protected by 2 Devons and be able to support the Brigade in its task of holding the bridgehead and the Corps axis up to and including Valkenswaard. But this was changed and during the night they were only brought forward to 370998 in 1 Dorset area, ready to move to Hook next morning with that battalion.

(iii) 5 Gds Armd Bde - Locations 1800 hours.

HS/WD/NWE/882/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/343/1.I
Appx F.

Sub-para (i)
above.

Sub-para (ii)
above.

At 1800 hours the head of the Grenadier Guards Group was in 3493. In front of them up to 3698, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, were the 256 vehicles of B Sqn 2 HCR (less two troops), 5 Gds Armd Bde Tac HQ, 153 Pd Regt R.E. and 14 Pd Sqn R.E. Ahead of these the 258 vehicles of the Irish Guards Group will have extended from short of the bridge at 403069 down towards the battlefield of the afternoon in 3700. Into the gap behind them 1 Dorsets were moving.

(iv) 5 Gds Armd Bde - Movements after 1800 hours.

HS/WD/NWE/882/1.I

At this time, 1800 hours, the Grenadier Guards Group were ordered to move up past the units ahead to 3698, where they would probably have to deploy to protect Bde H.Q. A reconnaissance party went forward immediately, but by the time their reconnaissance was complete, the Irish Guards Group had moved forward and Bde H.Q. followed up, finally halting for the night at 383023. Here the Grenadier Guards Group made a box round Bde H.Q., the artillery and the engineers. The tail of their Group was in by 2230 hours.

HS/WD/NWE/455/2.I
(Q Bty)
HS/WD/NWE/343/1.I
Appx F.

The head of the remainder of the Brigade Group - Main Brigade H.Q., 19 Pd Amb and two batteries of 21 A Tk Regt RA, halted for the night on the road North of La Colonie.

(v) Forward units - location summary night 17/18 Sep.

Locations for the night 17/18 Sep of 5 Gds Arm'd Bde Gp and the forward battalions of 50 Div were:-

Valkenswaard, 4108	Irish Guards Group
Area 3803	Half battalion 2 Devons
Area 3802	Tac HQ 5 Gds Arm'd Bde, Grenadier Guards Group, 153 P'd Regt RA, 14 P'd Sqn RE.
Area 3601 on flank	Half battalion 2 Devons
Area 3700-3799	1 Dorset, 90 P'd Regt RA.
Area 3596-3795	9 DLI
Area 3698-3497	1 Hamps
Area La Colonie	Remainder of 5 Gds Arm'd Bde Group

HS/WD/NWE/285/1.I
Appx B.

HS/WD/NWE/196/1.I

The remainder of Gds Arm'd Div did not cross the Meuse-Escaut canal on 17 Sep.

(vi) German counter-attack on the bridgehead.

About 0200 hours 18 Sep a German attack on the bridgehead was repulsed. This came in from the northeast with an estimated strength of one battalion infantry, 20 mortars and 12 guns.

4. Gds Arm'd Div - Narrative 18 Sep.(1) 5 Gds Arm'd Bde

The Irish Guards were first held up by German armour at Asiet; 2 MCR tried to find a way round to the east, but were unsuccessful. The Grenadier Group, who were following them, were then ordered to pass to the west of Eindhoven and proceed direct to Ron. They were repeatedly held up by bridges too weak for tanks and by the evening had just succeeded in by-passing Asiet, when word was received that the Americans had captured Eindhoven.

Meanwhile the Irish Group had captured Asiet, but had been unable to dislodge some German infantry and 88-mm guns from a position, where the road crossed the Donzel river just north of the town. Typhoon support was not

HS/WD/NWE/884/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/884/2.I
HS/WD/NWE/882/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/828/1.I

available this day owing to bad weather. Soon after 1700 hours the Germans withdrew from here and the group was able to advance through Eindhoven to Zon.

But during the morning one patrol of 2 HCR found a way through, west of Eindhoven, and reached the Americans. Details of the gap to be bridged were sent back and the size and type of bridge confirmed through 2 HCR and also by telephoning to the American engineers at Zon. The necessary bridging equipment was brought up to Valkenswaard and rushed forward as soon as the road was opened. Bridge construction started about 2400 hours.

(11) 32 Gds Bde.

The Welsh Group moved up to Valkenswaard and then branched right, but their advance on this route was opposed and by nightfall they were just south of Geldrop, 4815, which was held by the enemy.

The Goldstream Group moved up to Valkenswaard in the afternoon, where a decision was awaited on which route would be used for further advance - by Helmond, or by Zon.

(111) Remainder of Gds Armd Div.

The division required 6 hours running time on 19 Sep before it would all be clear of the start line.

5. Comment by Narrator.

Aalst was the objective for 17 Sep, but by last light it had not been reached; the crust of the German defence had been broken and a halt would give it an opportunity to reform; the successful night advance to the Somme by 11 Armd Div and 2 HCR was known; but the decision was made not to continue the advance that night.

6. 50 (H) Div - Narrative 18 Sep.

1 Dorset started at first light to mop up the area forward of Hoek and reached Valkenswaard by 0925 hours. 2 Devon moved up behind them to Hoek.

At noon 50 (H) Div passed under operational command of 8 Corps. This was the first time since Aug 1943 that the division had left operational command of 30 Corps.

HS/AL/808.
p.107.

HS/WD/NWE/200/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/886/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx L/18.
HS/WD/NWE/881/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx L/18.

HS/WD/NWE/285/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/412/1.I

HS/AL/83 p.41

7. 101 US Airborne Div - Plan in outline.

HB/24AG/TB/W/33/245
Chap VI para 3 (c)
(iii)

The tasks of 101 US Airborne Div, which originally covered 30 miles of road, were finally reduced to 15 miles and were:-

- (a) to seize the four road and rail bridges over the R. Aa and Willems Vaart canal at Veghel, 4837.
- (b) to seize the road bridge over the R. Dommel at St Oedenrode, 4232.
- (c) to seize the road bridge over the Wilhelmina canal at Eon, 4425.
- (d) to seize Eindhoven and the main road bridges over the streams in that city.

Two dropping and landing areas had been selected; a small one just west of Veghel and the main area on the west side of the road St Oedenrode-Eon.

[COMMENT:- This meant that the regiment due to capture Eindhoven landed 8 miles away, with the Wilhelmina canal between it and its objective.]

101 US Airborne Div had under command for this operation three parachute infantry regiments and one glider infantry regiment. The commander decided to fly in the three parachute regiments on the first lift with divisional HQ, the reconnaissance platoon, one battery of 75-mm howitzers and engineer, signal and medical personnel. These would be carried in 424 troop carrying aircraft and 70 gliders with 70 tug aircraft. The second and third lifts consisted of 450 and 385 gliders respectively with their tug aircraft. Engineers, medical, transport and most of the glider infantry formed the main part of the second lift and artillery and the remainder of the glider infantry the third lift.

The tasks given to regiments were:-

- (a) 501 Parachute Inf would carry out the divisional task at Veghel.
- (b) 502 Parachute Inf would seize St Oedenrode with one battalion, the remainder being in divisional reserve.
- (c) 506 Parachute Inf would carry out the last two divisional tasks, the seizure of Eon and Eindhoven.

8. 101 US Airborne Div - Narrative 17 Sep.

HS/21AG/TS/W/39/245.
Military Review
Aug 52. p.40.

Just under 7,000 men of the division landed from the first lift with few casualties and against little opposition.

A last minute change was made in the dropping zones of 501 Precht Inf. One battalion was dropped about 3 miles to the northwest, on the north side of the Zuid Willemsvaart canal to facilitate the seizure of the Veghel bridges from both sides. The remainder of the regiment dropped on the original landing zone, assembled quickly and by 1500 hours had secured the Veghel bridges intact against scattered resistance. The detached battalion met stronger resistance, but by 1700 hours had rejoined the regiment, which by dark was well dug in to hold the town against enemy attack.

The 1st Battalion 502 Precht Inf, after a skirmish, secured St Oedenrode and the bridge over the R. Dommel intact, where it dug in.

The 1st Battalion 506 Precht Inf, moved off by companies without formal assembly to seize the bridges over the canal at Zon, they met scattered resistance, but the enemy blew the main bridge, when they were within 100 yards of it. The other two bridges were found to have been blown previously. The regiment crossed the canal by improvised means and by 2400 hours had established a bridgehead 2,000 yards deep.

When the Zon bridge had gone, one company of the 3rd Battalion 502 Precht Inf was sent to seize the bridge over the canal at 3824, southeast of Best. It was secured against little enemy resistance, but was recaptured by a strong German counter-attack just before dark. The remainder of the 3rd Battalion was then sent to that area to recapture the bridge next morning.

[COMMENTS:- (1) Zon would appear to have been a good site for the 'coup de main' tactics used by 82 US Airborne Div at Grave (see para 13)

(2) 101 US Airborne Div appear to have intended to capture Eindhoven on 17 Sep. The reason why they did not advance further towards it during the night 17/18 Sep is not traceable.]

Military Review
Aug 52 pp.37,40
and correspondence
with Major Huston.

9. 101 US Airborne Div - Narrative 18 Sep.

501 Preht Inf and 1st Battalion 502 Preht Inf held Veghel and St Oedenrode respectively all day against intermittent light attacks.

The attack by 3rd Battalion 502 Preht Inf on the Best bridge went in at first light, but failed with heavy casualties against an enemy force, which appeared to have been strongly reinforced during the night. The 2nd Battalion was ordered to assist and penetrated the outskirts of Best, but was forced back by heavy fire. At dark the whole regiment less the 1st Battalion held a defensive position east of the road leading to the bridge.

506 Preht Inf advanced on Bindhoven at first light. The leading battalion was held up at Woensel, one mile north of the city, by determined resistance. Another battalion was sent round wide to the east; they outflanked the enemy defences and seized the town at 1300 hours. Contact was made with a patrol of 2 HCR at 1215 hours north of the city and with Gde Armd Div at 1900 hours just south of the city.

At about 1530 hours the second lift arrived and 327 G11 Inf took on protection of the landing zone and divisional service area.

10. 8 Corps - Narrative 17/18 Sep.

(a) 3 Br Div.

9 Bde reached the forward area on 17 Sep and by 1800 hours had relieved 11 Armd Div in the Petit Brogel - Lille St Hubert area, where they prepared for their assault.

8 Bde arrived on 18 Sep and by 2230 hours were concentrated in area Caulille, 4390, with one battalion up on the line of the canal.

9 Bde launched their attack across the canal at 2400 hours 18 Sep.

One of the medium regiments due to support 3 Br Div attack did not reach the area till 19 Sep.

(b) 50 (W) Div.

At noon 18 Sep the division came under operational command of 8 Corps. 8 Corps then became responsible for the main axis up to Bindhoven.

HS/WD/NWE/146/1.1

HS/AL/83 p.41.

HS/WD/NWR/285/1.I

The remainder of the division closed up to the canal and dispositions that night were:-

231 Bde	Valkenswaard-Hoek-area 3502.
151 Bde	the bridgehead at Joe's Bridge.
69 Bde	holding the canal to the right of the bridgehead to exclusive Neerpelt.

11. 12 Corps - Narrative 17/18 Sep.(a) 53 (W) Div.HS/WD/NWR/397/1.I
Apx PP.

158 Bde assaulted across the Meuse-Escout canal north of Lommel at 2300 hours 17 Sep with two battalions up. There was little enemy reaction initially, but later considerable opposition developed from both sides of the road leading north and the bridging site remained under fire. But by late afternoon 18 Sep, a class 9 bridge had been built and the bridgehead was extended to Luykgestel, 3401. 160 Bde, preceded by 53 Recce Regt, started to pass through the bridgehead late in the evening.

HS/WD/NWR/370/1.I

71 Bde rejoined the division from Antwerp early on 18 Sep.

(b) 15 (S) Div.

HS/WD/NWR/365/1.I

During the nights 17/18 and 18/19 Sep 227 Bde relieved 44 Bde in the Aart bridgehead. About 1800 hours 18 Sep a German attack on the bridgehead by a battalion of infantry with two tanks was repulsed.

HS/WD/NWR/317/1.I
HS/WD/NWR/317/1.I
70 Sep 17.

(a) 50th Volksgrenadier Div would capture the bridge at Gennep and the bridge over the canal at Lommel 3403 and Valkenswaard 3502 and would mop up their area.

Section II - Operations in area Grave-Nijmegen, 17/20 Sep.

12. 82 US Airborne Div - Plan in outline

The divisional task was:-

"Land by parachute and glider commencing D Day South of Nijmegen; seize and hold the highway bridges across the Maas River at Grave and the Waal River at Nijmegen; seize, organize, and hold the high ground between Nijmegen and Groesbeek, - deny the roads in the Division area to the enemy; and dominate the area bounded North by line running from Beek [7560] West through Hatert [6858] thence Southwest to Eindscheestraat [6155], South by River Maas and the Hook [7251] - Riethorst [7450] highway, East by Cleve [8955] - Nijmegen highway and Forst Reichswald, and West by line running North and South through Eindscheestraat".

The dropping zones selected were:-

- (a) DZ "O" in the Overasselt 6553 area, with a small subsidiary one for one company just west of Grave, on the other side of the R. Maas.
- (b) two just east of Groesbeek 7455; DZ "T" north, DZ "N" south.

The two landing zones chosen were also immediately east of Groesbeek, LZ "T" and LZ "N".

82 US Airborne Div had under command for this operation 325 Gl1 Inf and 504, 505 and 508 Pcht Inf. The commander decided to fly in the three parachute regiments in the first lift with divisional H.Q., one parachute field artillery battalion, one artillery anti-tank battery, reconnaissance, engineer and signal personnel. These would be carried in 482 troop carrying aircraft and 50 gliders with 50 tug aircraft. The second and third lifts consisted of 450 and 402 gliders respectively with their tug aircraft. Three more field artillery battalions, one more anti-tank battery and the medical company were the main units in the second lift, while 325 Gl1 Inf formed the major part of the third lift.

Regimental tasks were:-

- (a) 504 Pcht Inf would capture the bridge at Grave and the bridges over the Maas - Waal canal at Neuman 6953 and Blankenberg 6855 and would mop up their area.

HB/21AG/TS/W/
39/245.

~~325 Gl1 Inf~~
~~508 Pcht Inf~~

HB/WD/HWE/91B/1.I.
82 US Airborne Div
PO No 11.

(b) 505 Precht Inf would secure the southern landing zone, Groesbeek and key points to the south and southwest; and mop up in their area.

(c) 508 Precht Inf would secure the northern landing zone and designated key points in their area. They would prevent all hostile movement south of the line Hatert 6858 - Klooster 7158, and mop up their area. They would be prepared to seize the Waal River crossing at Nijmegen on order of the divisional commander.

Airborne Warfare
pp. 104/5.

[COMMENT:- Just before the takeoff the divisional commander directed commander 508 Precht Inf to commit not more than one battalion to the seizure of the Nijmegen bridges as soon as possible after landing, but not at the expense of the security of the remainder of his sector].

13. 82 US Airborne Div - Narrative 17th Sep.

Just over 7,300 personnel landed with 10 75 mm howitzers and 8 57 mm anti-tank guns, casualties were light. Flak in the Overasselt area was initially heavy but inaccurate, the first parachutists to land in this area destroyed all the flak crews and took over their weapons.

504 Precht Inf dropped one battalion northeast of Overasselt, which captured the bridge at Heumen intact by 1600 hours against strong resistance, and then went on to capture the bridge sites at Blankenberg and Hatert by dark, but both bridges were blown as they approached. Another battalion, with Grave bridge as their task, landed a company close to the west of the bridge and the remainder west of Overasselt. They advanced on the bridge from both sides, surprised the force guarding it and captured it intact by 1430 hours. The remainder of the regiment landed west of Overasselt. By 1930 hours all their tasks were accomplished and by 2300 hours the enemy had been forced to abandon the town of Grave.

One battalion of 505 Precht Inf dropped 2,000 yards too far northeast, but the regiment had completed their tasks by 2000 hours and had made contact with 504 Precht Inf.

Airborne Warfare
pp. 104/5.

508 Precht Inf were greeted on landing with a report that Nijmegen town and bridges were lightly held. They sent one battalion immediately to capture them, but met heavy resistance about 400 yards from the road bridge, which stopped their attack. Another battalion occupied the high ground near Berg en Dal against some opposition and cleared the landing zone north-east of Groesbeek against considerable resistance. The third battalion seized the Jonker Bosch area south of Nijmegen. These tasks were accomplished by 2030 hours.

14. 82 US Airborne Div - Narrative 18th Sep.

504 Precht Inf maintained hold on it's bridges and with 508 Precht Inf (one platoon from each regiment) captured the bridge at 671604, where the main Grave - Nijmegen road crossed the Maas - Waal canal. This bridge was damaged and, though normal traffic could pass, it was doubtful if it could carry tanks.

505 and 508 Precht Inf cleared the glider landing zones east of Groesbeek collecting 16 anti-aircraft guns and 150 prisoners in the process. But this entailed the virtual abandonment of pressure towards Nijmegen bridge, only one company could be spared for this purpose.

HS/AL/131. p.8.

HS/AL/131. p.8.

The second lift of gliders came in in the afternoon, several gliders overshoot the area, but a substantial number of these men later reached the division.

[COMMENT:- The divisional report wrongly shows the arrival of this lift in the morning.]

15. 82 US Airborne Div - Narrative 19th Sep.

After the leading troops of 688 Armd Div reached 504 Precht Inf about 0820 hours, that regiment left four companies to guard it's bridges and the main road and relieved a battalion of 508 Precht Inf at Jonker Bosch Woods 6859. One of it's battalions was then withdrawn to divisional reserve.

505 Preht Inf attached its 2nd Battalion to Gds Armd Div to assault the Nijmegen bridges. The remainder of the battalion maintained its sector of responsibility to the south.

508 Preht Inf improved its positions to the northeast to include Wyler, 7858, and repelled repeated counter-attacks during the day.

The third lift failed to arrive owing to bad weather in England (see para 20 below).

16. Gds Armd Div - Narrative 19th Sep.

HS/WD/NWE/882/1.I.
HS/WD/NWE/883/1.I.

About 0600 hours the new bridge at Zon was ready and 5 Gds Armd Bde advanced over it, this time with the Grenadier Guards Group leading. Desultory fire was met from German stragglers, but there was nothing to check the group till they reached Grave, where the bridge was crossed at appropriate intervals. Then word was received of the weakness of the bridge at 671604 and the column was diverted to Heumen, finally halting at 702584 about 1100 hours, while the attack on Nijmegen was planned.

[COMMENT:- Time of arrival at Grave would appear to be:-
0820/0830 2 HQR
0930/1000 Grenadier Guards Group]

Para 15 above
HS/AL/83. p.44.
HS/WD/NWE/199/1.I.
HS/WD/NWE/882/1.I.
HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I.
Appx L/19.

Information from 82 US Airborne Div and from the Dutch resistance indicated that a determined rush by tanks and infantry was likely to be successful. The 2nd Battalion 505 Preht Inf was placed under command Gds Armd Div to assist in this attack and a plan was made to advance with a force of one company 1 Gren Gds, one squadron 2 Armd Gren Gds and the American battalion, organised in two mixed columns, the main one to capture the road bridge, the other the railway bridge. At the rendezvous with the Dutch guides and the American regiment, further information was received that the Post Office was a German H.Q. and contained the apparatus for blowing the bridge. A third column was therefore formed to capture this. The American

contingent for this column was provided by Major-Gen. Gavin stopping the first platoon he saw and detailing them. The attack was launched at 1600 hours from the convent at 726587.

HS/AL/83. p.45.

[COMMENT:- 30 Corps gives the time of attack as 1500 hours, 1 Gren Gds as 1600 hours and 2 Armd Gren Gds as 1645 hours. 1 Gren Gds is considered most reliable here.]

The Post Office was captured, but the right column was held up just short of the Keizer Lodewijk roundabout at the entrance to the bridge approach. After they had lost 4 tanks, two platoons climbed on top of a house and found they had an excellent view of the enemy moving about in the gardens by the road bridge, they waited till a flanking platoon opened fire on the right and then began execution, but a German 88 mm replied to their fire and shot the house away below them; by great luck only one man was wounded. The Post Office column also tried to get forward on the left of the roundabout but were held up by fire from Huner Park. Fighting in this area went on well into the night. Meanwhile the railway bridge column were also held up by fire from their bridge approaches.

17. The capture of the Nijmegen bridges - 20th Sep.

Reference Map No 11.

(a) Plan in outline.

A more elaborate plan was made for the attack on 20th Sep.

Before making another attack on the road bridge the Grenadier Guards group would clear the houses north from the Post Office and east to the west side of the Valkhof, the old Dutch fort beside the bridge approach, while the American battalion with them would work forward into the buildings which overlooked the Park, gardens and bridge approach, southeast of the Fort. Then a converging attack would be made on the road bridge. The small column which had tried to capture the railway bridge on the previous afternoon was to stay in the area just southwest of that bridge, mopping up and preventing the enemy

HS/WD/NWE/882/1.1.
HS/21AG/TB/V/39/
245.
HS/WD/NWE/884/1.1.

in the town from interfering with the main American assault across the river further to the west. (see below).

504 Parachute Infantry were first to clear the area between Jonker Bosch and the R. Weal and then, with 2 Arm'd IG in support, to assault across the river west of the town, at the same time as the Grenadier Guards attacked the road bridge.

(b) Grenadier Guards Group operations.

Clearing operations went well, though slower than expected on the left. By 1400 hours the police station and the convent immediately west of the Valkhof had been captured and orders were issued for the attack on the gardens, park, fort and bridge approach to go in at 1530 hours.

4 Company in their attack on Huner Park had a very rough time, but the King's Company on the left found an approach to the right rear of the fort, which was not covered by fire, and they were able to get within 15 yards of the enemy without being seen. Their sudden appearance loosened up the enemy defence and by about 1700 hours they were through the fort. But not till about 1830 hours was the fire from the approach and from under the bridge more or less subdued and patrols from the two companies and from the American battalion, which had been fighting on 4 Company's right, all met on the embankment.

About 1800 hours American reports started to come in that they were in control of the north end of the bridge, but none of them were visible. A troop of tanks of 2 Arm'd Gren Gds and an Officer of 14 P'd Sqn RE were collected at the Keizer Lodewijk roundabout and at 1830 hours rushed the bridge. There was a road block at the north end, but the gap was not closed; an 88 mm gun was just beyond, but the leading tank fired first and scored a bull. Still no Americans were visible and not till the tanks had gone 1500 yards further did they find them. Apparently it was the northern end of the railway bridge, which the Americans had captured.

H3/AL/808
P.110/111
P.108.

The RE Officer cut the demolition wires at the side of the bridge, then started to search for charges. One set was found ready for firing, connected to the wires, which he had cut, but the bridge demolition chambers yielded prisoners, not charges. In all 81 prisoners were taken from the chambers and from the girders above, from which snipers had been busily firing all this time.

HS/WD/NWE/455/2.I.
HS/WD/NWE/884/2.I.

Two troops of Q Bty 21 A Tk Regt RA crossed the bridge after the Grenadier tank troop to defend the north end of the bridge and were followed after dark by 3 IG.

An Cosentoir -
Aug 49.

[COMMENTS:- (1) According to Colonel General Kurt Student, Field Marshall Model ordered that Nijmegen bridge would not be blown, as he reckoned that it could be held.

(ii) No means of blowing the bridge appears to have been found in the Post Office.

(iii) The report that the bridge was saved, because the demolition wires were cut by Dutch partisans, is not considered to be correct.]

HS/AL/83. p.44.
HS/56/Part iv
Jan/Feb 1949.

(c) 504 Pzcht Inf and 2 Armd IG.

HS/AL/808. p.108.
HS/AL/83. p.49.
HS/21AG/TS/W/39/
245.
HS/WD/NWE/884/1.I.

For their assault across the river the Americans borrowed the 32 assault boats, which Gds Armd Div had with them. They had never used this British equipment before, but that did not deter them. They welcomed RE assistance from Gds Armd Div to build and man 2 close support rafts to follow them across with anti-tank guns.

HS/WD/NWE/199/1.I.
HS/WD/NWE/879/1.I.
Appx I.

Two squadrons of 2 Armd IG took up positions on the South bank facing the fort at 702643 to support the attack. Artillery support which included smoke, was laid on from 55 and 153 Pz Regts and one section of 84 Med Regt from 1445 - 1500 hours. 376 FA also supported the attack.

504 Pzcht Inf then launched their attacks from near the Power Station 6864. The smoke was not effective due to the weather and the enemy brought heavy fire down on the first wave; but despite very severe casualties, some men in boats, some swimming, reached the far bank and maintained a bridgehead 100 yards deep and 700 yards wide till the arrival of the follow up waves. The Americans then turned right handed and attacked the fort, with the Irish Guards shooting them right in on to their objective.

By 1800 hours the fort and the north end of the railway bridge were in their hands.

18. Other operational activities - 20th Sep.

(a) 82 US Airborne Div.

HS/21AG/TS/W/39/
245.

Southeast of Groesbeek enemy attacks from the Reichswald were repelled in the morning. Then in the afternoon a much stronger one penetrated the divisional perimeter near Mook, but the position was restored by 2000 hours.

To the north a pincer attack supported by armour forced the Americans to withdraw from Wyler to the highground to the West. The enemy followed up and put in a heavier attack on Beek, which forced the Americans out to the southwest. An American counter-attack regained Beek by 2130 hours, but was unable to hold it and by 2300 hours the Germans had recaptured it.

A document captured on a prisoner showed that these attacks were part of a divisional plan to sever the Grave - Nijmegen road.

HS/WD/WWE/879/1.I.
Appx I.

The Coldstream Guards Group came under 82 US Airborne Div command from 0700 hours, moved to Dekkerswald 7257, and in the evening assisted in the counter-attack on Mook.

HS/WD/WWE/845/1.I.

SRF, less two half squadrons guarding its echelons, and one squadron Royals reached 82 US Airborne Div and came under command from 1700 hours.

(b) Remainder of Gds Armd Div

HS/WD/WWE/828/1.I.
HS/WD/WWE/886/1.I.
HS/AL/83. p.81.

2 HCR reconnoitred west, found a vast German food store at Oss 4754, shot up a convoy of barges and tried without success to seize the ferry over the R. Waal at Tiel 4268. They also reconnoitred southeast on both sides of R. Maas towards Mook and Grijk 7149.

1 WG continued to protect the Grave bridge which it had taken over the evening before.

HS/WD/WWE/1109/2.I.
HS/WD/WWE/1119/1.I.
HS/WD/WWE/1145/2.I.

Gds Armd Div A Echelon and RASC arrived in the forward area by afternoon escorted by two squadrons 2 HCR. They had been delayed by enemy action at Eon and 26 lorries carrying petrol and ammunition had been lost in an enemy air attack on Bindhoven.

HS/WD/NWR/459/1.I.
HS/WD/NWR/181/1.I.
and Appx A/12.

19. HQ 30 Corps and 30 Corps Air Support.

Main Corps HQ reached the forward area during the evening of 20th Sep after being delayed by the enemy attacks on the axis south of Zon.

Little air support was available on 19th and 20th Sep owing to poor flying weather and the restrictions imposed while airborne operations were in progress.

20. HQ Brit Airborne Corps.

(a) 17th Sep.

HS/AL/131
HS/WD/NWR/193/1.I.
and Appx A

HS/21AQ/TS/W/38/
241. f.19A.
HS/AL/83 Appx R.
HS/WD/NWR/181/1.I.
Appx L/17.

The Corps HQ, in 38 gliders, flew in with 82 US Airborne Div in the first lift and was established near Mookache Baan 743540. Wireless contact could only be made with 82 US Airborne Div and Airborne Corps Rear HQ in England. At 1800 hours the time of arrival of the second lift next day was postponed four hours from 1000 to 1400 hours on account of a weather forecast of early morning fog. This message reached 30 Corps at 2330 hours, but no time is recorded in the Airborne Corps War Diary.

(b) 18th Sep.

Due to poor weather conditions on the southern route, the whole of the second lift came in on the northern one. Enemy reaction was stronger, but the escort was completely effective.

(c) 19th Sep.

The weather this day was bad for flying. Only the aircraft in one part of England could take off, this covered 101 US Airborne Division's third lift, the glider element of 1 Polish Para Bde and resupply for 1 Airborne Div and 82 US Airborne Div. The southern route though suffering from worse weather than the northern, was used for tactical reasons. Enemy reaction was much stronger and our losses were higher.

Corps HQ moved to De Kluis 7057, onto the main axis of advance.

(d) 20th Sep.

The weather on 20th Sep was worse and no troops were flown in. Parachute resupply only came in.

It was not till this day that the seriousness of the situation of 1 Airborne Div was known.

HS/WD/NWE/193/2.I.
Appx J. 274, 400.

In the afternoon Commander 52 (L) Div sent a signal to Commander 1 Brit Airborne Corps suggesting that one of his brigades should be flown in from England to reinforce 1 Airborne Div, but this was not approved.

Section III - 1 Airborne Div - 17 to 20 Sep

Reference Map - No.12. Arnhem.

21. 1 Airborne Div - Planning for 'Market'.

HS/AL/131 Pt IV.
and Pt I, para 10.

(a) The division's tasks.

The division's tasks were to secure the road bridges in Arnhem, the main one at 746768 and the pontoon one at 738774, and to form a bridgehead to pass formations of Second Army through. The leading formation, 30 Corps, was expected to reach this area from the south between D+1 and D+3 day.

HS/AL/3017/1
f. 16, 19.

[COMMENT:- Major General Urquhart in a post-war letter gives D+2 to D+4 day and Lieut-General Browning confirms this.]

(b) Aircraft available and timing of lifts.

Chapter VI
para 7 (c)

Only sufficient aircraft were available to lift half the division at one time. A third lift would be required for 1 Polish Para Bde, which was under command. The first aircraft of each lift would reach the target area as below:-

HS/AL/131 Pt IV.
HS/21AO/TS/W/38/
241. p.28A.

First Lift	1300 A hours D day,
Second Lift	1000 A hours D+1 day,
Third Lift	1000 A hours D+2 day.

HS/AL/131 Pt I.
Appx E.

Each of the first two lifts would take an hour to drop, while the third would take half an hour.

(c) Landing and dropping zones.

HS/WD/HWE/206A/1.I.
Appx I.
" A.

The zones selected for the first two lifts were 5 to 8 miles west-northwest of the main road bridge in Arnhem; well outside the area which the division would occupy when on its objective. The third lift would have only a few gliders, which would land on a small open area that would be only just outside the division's bridgehead, and its parachutists would land immediately south of Arnhem road bridge.

HS/AL/3017/1
f.16.

[COMMENT:- Safe by then because flak there would have been overcome.]

A holding force would be necessary to secure the main landing area till the second lift had arrived, so the maximum striking force that could be flown in in

the first lift would be one parachute brigade group - the same strength as had been planned for Operation 'Comet'.

HS/WD/WHM/206A/1.I. (d) Coup de main.

Appx A.

R. Pt IV

Annex C, D.

HS/AL/131 Pt I

para 112.

Chap VI para 7.

In operation 'Comet', with its first lift starting to drop about sunrise, coup de main parties were being flown in before first light, one company to each of the three major bridge sites, Arnhem, Nijmegen and Grave.

The later timing in Operation 'Market' and the formidable flak expected at each major bridge led to the abandonment of this policy. Instead a coup de main party of 1 Airlbg Recce Bqn, less one troop, was included in the first lift to land in the same area as the remainder of the division and then to seize the road bridges in Arnhem.

(e) Topography.

From the landing area three roads led to Arnhem, two south of the railway through woods to begin with and then through a suburb, one north of the railway mainly through wooded country. The two southern roads joined on reaching Arnhem and then entered a bottleneck at St Elisabeth Hospital, which at its narrowest was about 500 yards wide, between the river on the right and the railway in a cutting on the left.

[COMMENT:- See Major General Urquhart's remark in Appendix B.]

The only ways over the river were the ferry at Heveadorp 6876, the railway bridge at 7076, the two road bridges in the town and any boats that might be found.

The landing and dropping zones were open areas in wooded country, difficult ground for the holding force to keep clear of enemy.

(f) The enemy

(1) Estimated strength on 12 Sep, when 1 Airborne Div Order Group was held.

British Airborne Corps estimated that the enemy would not be able to muster against the airborne troops, before their relief by 30 Corps, any mobile force larger than a brigade, with few tanks and guns.

HS/AL/131 Pt I
para 22.

HS/AL/3017/1
f.16.

HS/WD/NWN/206A/1.I
Appx F.
HS/WD/NWN/181/1.I
Appx INT/2
Appx B to this
chapter.

HS/WD/NWN/207/1.I
Appx H.

HS/SHAF/74-10/2
f.609 - 616.

The Struggle for
Europe, p.501.
HS/AL/3017/1.f.11
HS/WD/NWN/206A/1.I
Appx K Part V
Annex Q3

Commander 1 Airborne Div gave out at his Order Group that the estimated strength of the enemy was a brigade group with some armour.

[COMMENT:- On 7 Sep 1 Airborne Div Intelligence recorded a report of one broken Panzer division having been sent back to the area north of Arnhem to rest and refit. 30 Corps mentions a somewhat similar report, but Second Army appears not to have believed this. (see Chapter II paras 28 and 53 (iii)). Major General (then Brigadier) Lathbury states that in the Corps Commander's briefing for Operation 'Comet' the suspected presence of II Pz Corps refitting in the area was mentioned, but no reference to this was made in the 'Market' briefing and he did not consider it in his plan for that operation.]

(11) Information about the enemy which reached the U.K. between 12 and 17 Sep.

(a) Lt-Col Tasker of First Allied Airborne Army (0.2) collected information from 21 Army Group, Second Army and 30 Corps as at 1100 hours 12 Sep, which was passed to 1 Airborne Div and attached to their Intelligence Summary issued on 14 Sep. Under "Enemy Intentions" this stated:-

".....such reinforcements as have been made available have been put in to thicken up the line, and there is still no direct evidence that the area Arnhem - Nijmegen is manned by much more than the considerable flak defences already known to exist...."

(b) In this same Summary 1 Airborne Div states:-

"Rather fragmentary Dutch reports confirm that there are twenty thousand German troops East of the IJssel in the Hengelo - Bocholt - Cleve area where tanks have previously been reported. The same sources also state that defences are being prepared along the line of the IJssel...."

(c) On 15 Sep Lt-Col Tasker sent to HQ Airborne Troops a paper based on an appreciation by GSI Second Army on 14 Sep. This did not add to the enemy strength likely to be met by 1 Airborne Div.

(d) On 15 Sep a report from the Dutch Resistance reached London giving the location of 9 SS Div as along the R.IJssel. This does not appear to have reached 1 Airborne Div till 20 Sep.

(111) Comments by Narrator

HS/WD/NWE/104/1.I.
Appx A, B.
HS/WD/NWE/193/2.I.
Appx E (Appx C)

(a) Second Army main source of enemy intelligence at this time appears to have been the interrogation of prisoners. Appendix C to British Airborne Corps Op Instr No.1 records that it had been ~~impossible~~ to develop a wide-spread network of Resistance in Holland with W/T communications working to the U.K.

Intelligence about Arnhem, 55 miles behind the German front line, would therefore be likely to be scanty.

(b) It is not clear by what channel British Airborne Corps and its divisions were intended to receive Dutch Resistance reports sent to London. The report mentioned in sub/para (11) above would have been of great value to 1 Airborne Div, if it had reached them quickly. The division had a 'Jedburgh' under command with a direct liaison link to Special Forces HQ London, but this evidently did not provide the answer.

HS/WD/NWE/193/2.I.
Appx E (Appx C & D)

(iv) Post war enemy information

Three points from the enemy side are noted below; they have not been investigated but appear reliable:-

HS/AL/2069, p.6.

(a) The presence of II SS Pz Corps consisting of 9 and 10 SS Divs appears to have had no connection with Operation 'Market Garden'. General Bittrich, the Corps Commander, is stated to have received orders on arrival in the Liege area on 4 Sep, to move the divisions to the Arnhem - Apeldoorn area for rehabilitation.

HS/AL/2069
pp 1, 26-29.
HS/AL/1285/B.
The Supposed Spy
at Arnhem p.3.

(b) After Arnhem there was a rumour current that information about the airborne operation had leaked out to the enemy and that German panzers had been moved to Arnhem because of this. An article to this effect was published in the Sunday Despatch of 23 Apr 1950. Investigations by Colonel Boeree show no leakage about the Arnhem landings, but a British/Dutch Resistance leakage about the air landing north of Eindhoven, and that this information was thought so improbable by the German recipient, that it was treated as an attempted double cross and not passed on.

(c) Colonel General Student commanding First Para Army, with HQ south of s'Hertogenbosch, states in a post-war article that the airborne attack came as a complete surprise to him.

An Cosentoir
Aug 1949

HS/WD/NR/206A/1.1
Appx E Part IV
Annexure C and
Part I, pp. 2, 3.

22. 1 Airborne Div Plan

The plan in detail is recorded in Part IV of the report quoted in this margin, but an outline summary is given below.

The operation was to be carried out in three lifts on three consecutive days, weather permitting.

The availability of aircraft and gliders by lifts and the troops to be carried in each lift were as follows:-

(a) First Lift - Aircraft:-

12 Pathfinder aircraft - 38 Group RAF.
143 Parachute aircraft - IX US Troop Carrier Command
358 Tug aircraft - 38 and 46 Groups RAF.
358 Gliders

Troops to be carried:-

The Div HQ.
1 Airlfdg Recce Sqn
1 Airlfdg Lt Regt RA. (less one battery)
1 Airlfdg A Tk Bty RA.
1 Para Sqn RE.
9 Pd Coy RE
1 Para Bde
1 Airlfdg Bde (less certain sub units)
16 Para Pd Amb.
181 Airlfdg Pd Amb.

(b) Second Lift - Aircraft:-

126 Parachute aircraft - IX US Troop Carrier Command
301 Tug aircraft - 38 and 46 Groups RAF.
301 Gliders
35 Resupply aircraft - 38 Group RAF.

Troops to be carried:-

4 Para Bde
2 Airlfdg A Tk Bty RA.
One battery 1 Lt Airlfdg Regt RA.
4 Para Sqn RE.
133 Para Pd Amb
Balance of divisional troops and 1 Airlfdg Bde.

(c) Third Lift - Aircraft:-

114 Parachute aircraft - IX US Troop Carrier Command
35 Tug aircraft - 38 Group RAF.
35 Gliders
163 Resupply aircraft - 38 and 46 Groups RAF.

Troops to be carried:-

1 Polish Para Bde Group (less its Light Battery).

HS/21A0/TS/6/40/249

In the first lift 1 Para Bde had as their first responsibility the capture of the main road bridge in Arnhem, 746768, with second priority the pontoon bridge at 738774. 1 Airlbg Bde were to protect the dropping and landing areas until the arrival of the second lift on D+1, then to concentrate and form a perimeter defence line on the western outskirts of Arnhem.

4 Para Bde, in the second lift, were to move east and continue the perimeter line along the high ground just North of Arnhem, linking up with 1 Para Bde on the main road Arnhem - Apeldoorn, Z7803.

1 Polish Para Bde group, in the third lift, were to land their parachutists south of the river immediately opposite Arnhem, cross the river by the main bridge and occupy a position on the eastern outskirts of Arnhem. Their gliders would land on a small piece of open ground north of the river and close outside the perimeter west of the town.

It was thus intended to form a firm bridgehead round Arnhem with a false front position and standing patrols pushed well out in front of the main position.

All landings were to take place in daylight.

23. 1 Para Bde plan.

The brigade was to land on D day on DZ "X" and LZ "Z" and advance on Arnhem bridges by three routes -

Right - by Heelsum 6477 and the low road through Heveadorp 6777.

2 Para Bn.

Centre - by Heelsum and the main Utrecht-Arnhem road.

3 Para Bn.

Left - by Johanna Hoeve 6980 and the main Ede-Arnhem road.

1 Para Bn.

1 Airlbg Recce Sqn, less one troop, was under command to seize the bridges by "coup de main". They would use the left route for this task.

2 Para Bn was to seize or take over the bridges, moving on them with one company south of the river and the remainder on the north bank. They would hold them facing south, west and northwest.

HS/WD/NWE/206A.1
Appx K Part IV
Annexure D
and Part I - p.4.

3 Para Bn was to assist 2 Para Bn, approaching the bridges from the north, and would hold on their right facing northeast and east.

1 Para Bn was to move on orders of HQ 1 Para Bde, when it was clear that 2 and 3 Para Bns were satisfactorily launched, and was to occupy the high ground just north of Arnhem, retaining one company in brigade reserve, about 753793.

Each battalion had under command:-

One troop anti-tank battery RA.
Troop or detachment RE.
One section Field Ambulance.
Two Forward Observation Officers.

3 Airltdg Lt Bty RA was in support of the brigade. It would first take up position in the divisional gun area south of Wolfhezen 6679, but as this would be too far back when the brigade reached Arnhem, it would be prepared to move East on the evening of D day under command of 1 Para Bde.

[COMMENT:- See Major General Lathbury's remark in Appendix B]

24. 1 Airltdg Bde plan

The major part of the brigade was to land on D day, the remainder on D+1, both landings would be on LZ "S". Their initial task was the protection of the landing of the second lift, after which they were to occupy the western sector of the divisional area and to protect the landing of the gliders of the third lift.

The brigade plan for the initial phase was that 7 KOSB would protect DZ "Y" until 4 Para Bde was clear; 1 Border would protect DZ "X" and LZ "2" until the divisional troops were clear; 2 S Staffords, who would land less two companies in the first lift, would protect LZ "S". Strong company groups would be established - by 7 KOSB at Planke Wambuis, 6683, and by 1 Border at Renkum, 6276. 2 S Staffords would occupy Wolfhezen, 6680.

In the second phase 2 S Staffords, as soon as they were joined by their second lift, were to move to their sector of the perimeter covering the

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I.
Appx K Part IV
Annexure P.

Ede - Arnhem road. 1 Border would move on orders of Brigade HQ to area Koude Herberg, 6878, covering the main Utrecht - Arnhem road and the Heveadorp ferry. 7 KOSB were to move, as soon as 4 Para Bde were clear of LZ "Y", into brigade reserve in the area of the cross roads 720792, and would establish a company group to protect LZ "L" till 1 Polish Para Bde gliders were clear.

25. 4 Para Bde plan.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I.
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure E.

On D+1 day the brigade would drop on LZ "Y" and their 43 gliders would land on LZ "X", on which 1 Para Bde had dropped the day before, two miles to the south-southeast.

On landing, 11 Para Bn was to form a firm base astride the Ede - Arnhem road, in the area 6682, just north of LZ "S", and be responsible for the security of the brigade glider group, when it reached its dispersal point at 677817. 10 and 156 Para Bns would protect the brigade from the west till ordered to move to Arnhem. The Brigade axis, by which all three battalions would move to occupy the defence sector north of Arnhem, would be the Ede - Arnhem road.

[COMMENT:- This plan was changed on landing,
see para 32 below.]

26. 1 Airborne Div - General Narrative - 17 Sep.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I.
Appx K. Part I
page 4.

The air column crossed the Dutch coast at a point on the island of Over Flakke, then flew eastward, south of the R. Maas, to a point south of Hertogenbosch, where the column for Arnhem turned Northeast and crossed the rivers Maas and Nederrijn. Very little flak was encountered, though rising columns of smoke in one or two places gave evidence of effective action by the escorting bombers and fighters.

Both glider and parachute landings were accomplished practically without opposition, and almost 100 per cent at the correct place and on time. Glider landings took place, starting at 1300 hours, then followed the drop of the parachutists. Casualties in landing were slight, concentration in rendezvous was quick and units moved off from 80 per cent to 100 per cent strong. The time taken to concentrate was below, and the high percentage arriving at rendezvous far greater than, anything so far achieved on any exercise or operation.

From here operations split into two separate parts, owing to the necessity of dispersing the airlanding battalions to guard the landing areas for the second lift on D+1 day. 1 Para Bde advanced to capture the bridges in Arnhem, the remainder of the first lift stopped in the landing area.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I. 27. 1 Para Bde - Narrative 17 Sep.

Appx K Part IV
Annexure H.

HS/WD/NWE/337/1.I.

HS/WD/NWE/872B/1.I.

HS/WD/NWE/872B/3.I.

HS/B/55. pp. 36-38.

HS/WD/NWE/626/1.I.

HS/AL/808.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I.

Appx K Part V

Annexure R. p.4.

(a) The Brigade Commander's picture

The flight was excellent. No flak until just before the drop, which was extremely good, accurate both for time and place.

Coloured smokes showed up well and rendezvous arrangements worked satisfactorily. Battalions were in touch with Brigade HQ by wireless and Liaison Officer within half an hour. Battalions were about 100 per cent strength except for a few 3 inch mortars and plato. In I Airlfdg A Tk Bty 10 out of 12 6-prs arrived and 6 out of 8 17-prs. The majority of Bren carriers landed safely. There was no opposition on landing and the local people said there were few Germans in Arnhem. 2 Para Bn ambushed a number of German vehicles in Heelsum, their rendezvous, and took about 20 prisoners.

2 and 3 Para Bns moved off soon after 1500 hours, by which time they had their anti-tank guns and most of their transport. In view of the satisfactory drop and reports 1 Para Bn was ordered to move about 1530 hours. There was a slight delay in the arrival of Brigade HQ transport, but the commander's jeep

arrived about then and he moved off with his Intelligence Officer on the southern route having ordered Brigade HQ to follow directly their transport arrived. Before moving the commander heard that 1 Airldg Recce Bn had lost most of their transport and could not carry out the "coup de main" task. He ordered 2 and 3 Para Bns to move with all speed and, if necessary or possible, to send one company forward in jeeps in view of probable light opposition.

[COMMENT:- Neither battalion appears to have found this possible (see Major General Urquhart's remark in Appendix B.)]

About 1600 hours the brigade commander reached 2 Para Bn, who were then overcoming minor opposition about 673772. He then returned by Heelsum, owing to reports of enemy in the woods between 2 and 3 Para Bns, and about 1630 hours reached 3 Para Bn near 683785. B Company in the lead was meeting minor opposition just east of this point. The battalion was rather strung out, the heavy weapons were not keeping up.

Shortly afterwards two enemy armoured cars bumped B Company near the Koude Herberg cross roads, 685783. They had no plate forward, and lost their 6-pr before it could get into action. The opposition here stopped this Company.

Meanwhile the brigade commander learned from 1 Para Bn by wireless that they were in contact with forces estimated at one battalion with four tanks about 675820 on the main Ede- Arnhem road. Communications with this battalion were bad and after this practically no more information came through except a location, 691811.

From about 1730 hours 3 Para Bn axis was under automatic fire from the woods to the North about Bilderberg, 679786. G Company came forward through this and forked left to by-pass the opposition facing B Company. Wireless touch with them was soon lost. The remainder of the battalion closed up and A Company came under heavy fire from the north. They were ordered to send a patrol to investigate.

HS/AL/1285/A
p.52A.

Later they put in a two platoon attack to deal with this enemy.

[COMMENT:- This was the southeastern end of Bn Krafft's position.]

Meanwhile about 1800 hours the Divisional Commander arrived. He said he was expecting Major Gough and part of 1 Airedg Recce Bn to come forward on this road. Both commanders decided to await his arrival before returning to their respective HQs.

The enemy fire on the tail of the battalion group now became very accurate, they were closed up forward and an all round defensive position was taken up at dusk about 690784. Soon afterwards A Company's two platoons returned from their attack with 20 prisoners, having had about 20 of their own men wounded. They reported that they had encountered a strong position of about one battalion in the area of Bilderberg and had overrun three machine gun posts and killed about 9 Germans.

An officer was sent to contact G Company, he found a number of dead Germans and burnt and burning ammunition lorries in their wake just short of the railway, but no G Company.

There was no communication with Divisional HQ as the Divisional Commander's Rover had been hit. 1 Para Bde HQ reported that 2 Para Bn were progressing well and had reached the railway bridge over the river at 707765 and that the right hand route appeared to be the best approach to the bridge. Nothing more had come through from 1 Para Bn. The brigade commander ordered his brigade HQ to follow on after 2 Para Bn and said that he and the divisional commander would remain with 3 Para Bn for the night.

Commander 1 Para Bde records:-

"At last light on D Day I was not worried about the situation. The enemy had certainly reacted quickly and were holding the two main roads from the West - Tiger and Leopard [centre and left routes], but 2 Bn were now making good progress after overcoming early opposition. Owing to bad communications with 1 Bn I had not got a true picture of the scale of opposition confronting them."

HS/AL/1285/A
p.52A.

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About 2130 hours just before wireless finally failed, information came from brigade HQ that 2 Para Bn were on the main bridge, which was intact.

3 Para Bn were unable to evacuate their casualties, as patrols during the night found enemy both east and west on the battalion axis. They left this location at 0430 hours next morning.

(b) 2 Para Bn

Meanwhile 2 Para Bn had continued their advance till they reached the railway line in area 7177, where A Company in the lead were brought to a halt. The main problems ahead were an armoured car and machine gun fire from Den Brink, 7277. An anti-tank gun and B Company were brought forward to deal with these. C Company in the meantime branched right to capture the railway bridge, but it was blown in their faces as they reached it. B Company put in an attack on Den Brink and A Company infiltrated forward. This loosened the opposition and with enemy fire erratic in the dusk, A Company found they could advance again. A message was sent to B Company to disengage and follow on, but it is believed that this did not reach them. However after dark had fallen they did disengage and set off for their Phase III objective - the pontoon bridge.

C Company after concentrating near the railway bridge were ordered to their secondary objective - buildings 39 and 43 on the town plan, in Nieuwe Plein, believed to be the German town HQ.

Wireless communication with these two companies failed about dusk.

A Company encountered only minor opposition as they advanced again and by about 2000 hours they reached the north end of the main road bridge having taken forty prisoners on the way. An attempt was made by a platoon to cross the bridge under cover of darkness, but this was foiled by a gun in a pillbox at the north end and an armoured car on the bridge. A platoon set the pillbox on fire and the car withdrew. This put the North end of the bridge completely in our hands and the surrounding buildings were prepared for defence.

HB/AL/3017/1

f.3.

HB/WD/WWE/872B/2.1
APPX C.

77 0000 N

82

Meanwhile the remainder of the battalion group, less B and C Companies, and brigade HQ with the small units under their command had followed A Company and the force which reached the main bridge that evening consisted of:-

1 Para Bde HQ, less the brigade commander
 2 Para Bn, less B and C Companies
 Commander 1 Airlidg Recce Sqn and detachment
 Commander 3 Bty 1 Airlidg Lt Regt RA, with observation party.
 B Tp (6 pr) 1 Airlidg A Tk Bty RA
 1 Para Sqn RE, less detachment
 1 Para Bde Sig Sec
 1 Para Bde Def Pl
 One Platoon 250 Coy RASC
 Detachment 16 Fd Amb
 Commander 89 (Para) F S Sec and detachment

HS/WD/PWE/206A/1.1.
 Appx K Part V
 Annexure Q, U.

[COMMENT:- 16 Fd Amb, less detachments, left this force when it passed St Elizabeth Hospital, and established the brigade dressing station there.]

An enemy attack was beaten off by A Company and three German lorries, which crossed from the south were shot up and set on fire. As there was now too much light round the north end of the bridge for a crossing to be attempted, it was decided to put B Company across in some boats seen near the now useless pontoon bridge, the centre section of which had been taken away by the Germans. An officer's patrol went to the pontoon bridge, but found that B Company had not yet arrived and they were unable to move the boats. Another patrol was sent to find C Company at the German HQ, but it was unable to reach them.

[COMMENT:- This patrol reported that C Company was surrounded. Presumably they found Germans all round buildings 39 and 43 and assumed that C Company was there. Actually they were still west of Brug Strast, 757778. (see para 29 below.)]

(c) 1 Para Bn

1 Para Bn in the meantime had reached Wolfhesen Station soon after 1600 hours and received a report there from commander 1 Airlidg Recce Sqn, of infantry holding the road to the east and tanks on the road to the north. They decided to move

up the road to the north. The tanks withdrew through infantry holding positions astride the road at 673816. R Company, in the lead, attacked and occupied the road junction at 675820, where they were heavily engaged by tanks and infantry and suffered about 50 per cent casualties, but were unable to tell battalion HQ owing to wireless failure.

The remainder of the battalion had, meanwhile, by-passed this opposition and reached road junction 690809 [690806?]. They were just about to advance to join the main road at cross roads 691811, 400 yards to the north, when 5 tanks and approximately 15 half tracks passed this point moving northwest up the road. The enemy were also heard digging in the wood at 694809. It was now 1900 hours. Wireless communication was out to brigade and to R Company. An officer was sent back to bring R Company forward.

Just after dusk an armoured car and some infantry approached the battalion's lying up position and were engaged. Enemy fire opened from the wood 695809. The battalion commander decided to take up an all round position till R Company should come up and then by-pass to the south again.

It was not till about 2200 hours that R Company's predicament was known. Medical personnel with all available transport were sent back and R Company was ordered to rejoin the battalion. Patrols sent to the main road reported many enemy there and drew fire.

1 Para Bn left this location at 0400 hours next morning.

28. Remainder of First Lift - Narrative 17 September.

(a) Airborne Div HQ

HQ/WD/NWR/206A/1.1.
Appx K Part I
page 8 and Part V
Annex T.

By 1430 hours 17 Sep Divisional HQ had opened at 657799. Shortly afterwards the two report centres joined up. There was intermittent small arms and mortar fire in the surrounding woods.

The Commander visited HQ 1 Airdlg Bde during the afternoon and later commander 1 Para Bde and 3 Para Bn with whom, as already related, he spent the night.

Shortly after dark Divisional HQ moved into 4 gliders on LZ "2", about 655798.

Communications were set up only on those sets which would operate on the move, so as to keep Divisional HQ as mobile as possible. By just after 1600 hours communications were through to 1 Para Bde, 1 Airlbg Bde, 21 Indep Para Coy, Tac Div HQ and the divisional commander's Rover.

Shortly afterwards communication with 1 Para Bde was lost.

[COMMENT:- HQ 1 Para Bde apparently had only a 68P set with them and had not waited for their glider borne sets to join them before setting out. This 68P set soon passed out of range.]

At 1730 hours a dispatch rider was sent to HQ 1 Para Bde, but he was unable to find them and returned at 2050 hours.

(b) 1 Airlbg Recce Bn - 17 Sep.

The squadron was to leave one troop in divisional reserve and to seize the bridges in Arnhem by 'coup de main' with the remainder plus a detachment RE.

The troop detailed for divisional reserve, A troop, lost one section on the fly-in and had a bad landing, which delayed them till about 1800 hours before they could take up their role. They were then sent to hold the north-west corner of DZ "X" for the night.

About 1530 hours commander 1 Para Bde heard that the squadron had lost most of their transport and would not be able to carry out their 'coup de main' task. The origin of this message is not recorded, Major Gough denies sending it, and by this time it appears possible that he and his 'coup de main' party, short of 4 jeeps, two in each of C and D troops, had already moved off from their rendezvous in the northwest corner of LZ "2" to reach the Ede - Arnhem road.

[COMMENT:- The squadron war diary records 1540 hours for the move, but Major Gough puts it much earlier.]

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K Part V
Annexure T.
Index C.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I.
Appx K Part IV
Annexure C

HS/WD/NWE/209/1.I.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K Part IV
Annexure H.
HS/AL/3017/1
f.6.

The "coup de main" force quickly reached Wolfhezen station, crossed the railway and turned east. It was then held up in the wood at 671804 by enemy small arms and mortar fire, which it was unable to subdue.

HS/AL/1285/A
p. 52a.

[COMMENT:- This was the north end of Bn Kraft's position.]

Major Gough, commanding the squadron, made a reconnaissance of the road to the north and soon after 1600 hours reported to 1 Para Bn, who were following his squadron, that there were enemy infantry down the railway to the east and tanks up the road to the north. He then went back to divisional HQ with commander 1 Airlbg Bde as he could not make wireless contact with 1 Para Bde HQ. At divisional HQ Major Gough was told to contact the divisional commander with part of his squadron.

HS/AL/3017/1. 2.16

[COMMENT:- Major Gough, on the other hand, states that he received instructions from the GSO 1 to hand over his squadron to his second in command and report personally to the divisional commander.]

Major Gough set off up the centre route, but ran into stiff enemy opposition and could not get through. He received information that 1 Para Bde HQ was forward on the south route, so returned and went forward by that road, arriving at the bridge with brigade HQ. He was then unable to get back to find the General or return to his unit.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I.
Appx K Part IV.
Annexure O. 2.

Meanwhile his second in command had taken over command of the squadron, C Troop was left under command of 1 Airlbg Bde and the remainder of the "coup de main" force was withdrawn to the divisional area.

Then at 2100 hours a troop was sent off to get through to 1 Para Bn [Bde?], which was reported to have reached the bridge. They reached the main Healsum - Arnhem road and found a fight in progress, which prevented further advance. Divisional HQ ordered them to return.

(c) 1 Airlbg Bde - Narrative 17 September

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I.
Appx K Part IV
Annexure O.2.
HS/WD/NWE/335/1.I.
HS/WD/NWE/244/1.I.
The brigade's first lift of 161 gliders, after a quiet flight, landed 16 gliders short. Of these 8 belonged to 7 KOSB, of which 6 contained supporting arms, 6 belonged to 1 Border, one of which was the commanding officer's, and 2 belonged to 2 B Staffords, one of which contained a company HQ.

By 1500 hours units had passed through their rendezvous and moved to take up their dispositions, which were:-

7 KOSB A Company at Planken Wambuis, 6683 with one platoon forward on the road to Ede at the edge of the woods at 633840.

B and C Companies in the woods on the west edge of the DZ, 6083 and 6182.

Battalion HQ with D Company in reserve at the southeast corner of DZ.

1 Border A Company in the wood on the north edge of DZ "X", 6480.

B Company in Renkum, 6276.

C Company in the wood on the east edge of LZ "Z", 6579.

D Company at the crossroads, 633784, on the Heelsum - Bennekom, 5879, road.

Battalion HQ at Jonkershoeve, 6479 in the centre of the DZ "X" - LZ "Z" area.

2 B Staffords at Reijers Camp, 6681, having sent two platoons to clear Wolfhezen.

One platoon of 9 Fd Coy was under command, but was landing with its parent company and contact was not made till next day. (see sub-para (d) below.)

After landing the brigade lost all its reserve ammunition. This was loaded on the attached RASC platoon, which received conflicting orders from CRASC and from brigade. It obeyed the former and went to take over installations in Arnhem instead of reporting to the brigade rendezvous.

No 2 Wing Glider Pilot Regt, which had brought the brigade in, concentrated on the south edge of LZ "S" and two squadrons moved east to occupy the area north and south of Wolfhezen station. They appear to have been in these positions by 1600 hours. Later one squadron advanced to the wood at 672804 and a third squadron moved to the south of the station. One of these relieved C Troop 1 Airlbg Recce Bqn. Little opposition was met during the day.

Casualties from all LZs and DZs were brought into a dressing station near brigade HQ, they amounted to about 100 by nightfall.

HS/WD/NWE/671/1.I.
HS/WD/NWE/209/1.I.

There was little enemy activity during the night except for some slight mortaring of the railway crossing at Wolfhezen and some movement north of the main Arnhem - Ede road.

(d) 9 Pz Coy - Narrative 17 September

HS/WD/WH/627/2.1

The company landed short of two gliders. One detachment left to join the reconnaissance squadron for the 'coup de main', and another for the capture of the railway bridge. The remainder, which included the platoon under command of 1 Airlbg Bde, moved off to capture the Hotel Wolfhezen, 672793. Strong opposition was met and they withdrew to a defensive position about 300 yards west protecting the artillery in area cross tracks 665792. From here they could cover the road in front of the hotel, which was 1 Airlbg Bde's task for their platoon.

(e) 1 Airlbg Lt Regt - Narrative 17 September

HS/WD/WH/206A/1.1

Appx E. Part V.

Annexure R. pp.4, 5. 23 guns out of 24 arrived.

Two batteries of the regiment landed on 17 Sep and one on 18 Sep;

On 17 Sep afternoon only targets in support of 1 Para Bde were engaged, but in the evening targets were also engaged in support of the company of 1 Border at Renkum.

Communications were maintained with 1 and 2 Para Bns, but those with 3 Para Bn failed.

29. 1 Para Bde - Narrative 18 September

(a) At the Bridge - (See Sketch Q opposite page 81)

HS/B/55 pp.37-39
HS/WD/WH/872B/3.1
HS/AL/808 pp.132-3
HS/WD/WH/206A/1.1
Appx E. Part IV
Annexure N.
Blackwoods
Oct 1945
"The Battle of
Arnhem Bridge"
HS/WD/WH/872B/1.1

About 0300 hours 9 Coy 3 Para Bn joined the force at the Bridge. After a few encounters with the enemy on the evening before, they had reached the railway and moved along beside it. On arrival at the railway station they found no one about, so went down the main street to the bridge, meeting only two welcoming Dutch policemen; then just before the bridge area they had a small brush with a German car. They took up positions on both sides of the road near the school occupied by the RE, with whom they made contact. But all was not so innocent as it seemed, one platoon was surprised by the enemy and taken prisoner, then further attacks came in among the shrubs and the company was split up and had to pull back, some men to the school, some to other houses.





PLAN OF
NIJMEGEN
REFERENCE

LEGEND

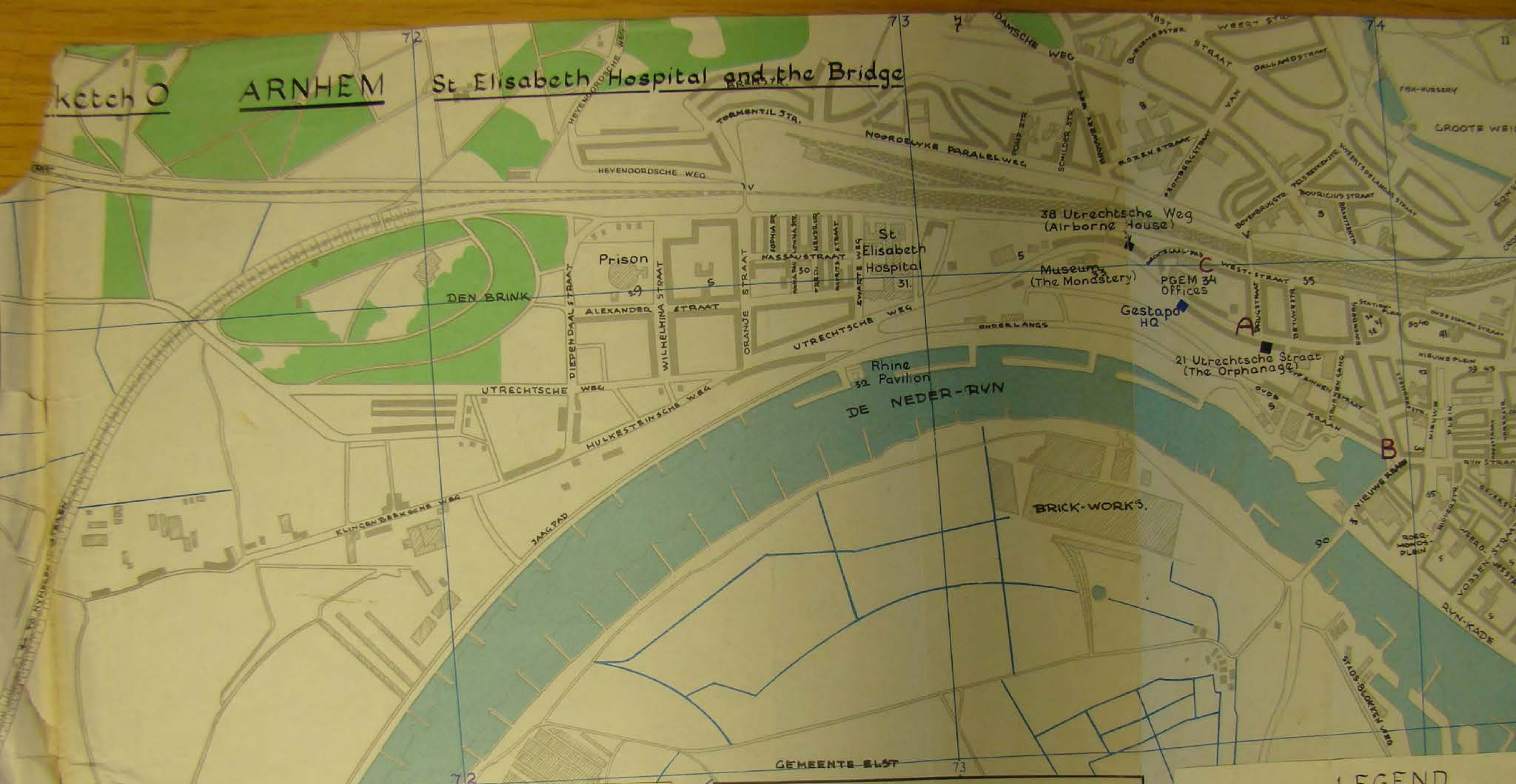
- A Limit of advance of C Coy 2 Para
- B Limit of advance of 1 Para
- C Limit of advance of 2 S. Staffords



Sketch O

ARNHEM

St Elisabeth Hospital and the Bridge



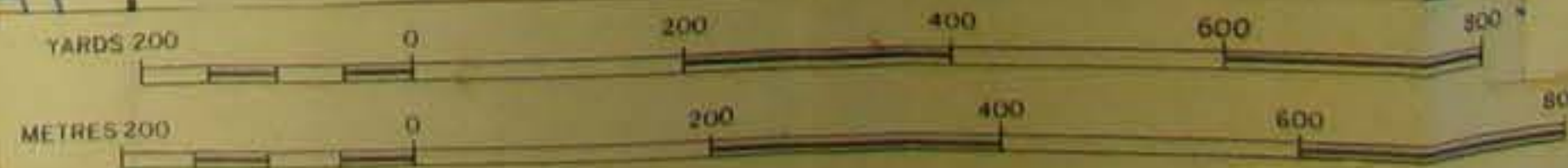
Fate of Buildings at the Bridge

<u>Date</u>	<u>Buildings</u>	<u>Fate</u>
17/18 Sep. night	17	Vacated (burnt 18 Sep)
18 Sep.	1, 9, 11	Burnt
18 Sep. evening	12, 13	Vacated
18 Sep. evening	16	Set on fire, but fire put out
19 Sep.	8, 10, 14, 15	Burnt
20 Sep.	7, 16	Burnt
20 Sep. evening	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Set on fire

TOWN PLAN OF

ARNHEM

REFERENCE



LEGEND

- A Limit of advance of C
- B Limit of advance of 1 P
- C Limit of advance of 2 S

Sketch O

ARNHEM

St Elisabeth Hospital and the Bridge

78

77 000m.N.

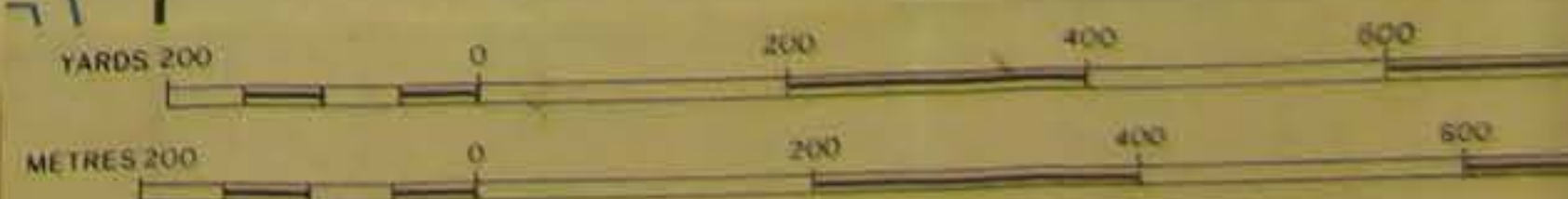


Fate of Buildings at the Bridge

<u>Date</u>	<u>Buildings</u>	<u>Fate</u>
17/18 Sep. night	17	Vacated (burnt 18 Sep)
18 Sep.	1, 9, 11	Burnt
18 Sep. evening	12, 13	Vacated
18 Sep. evening	16	Set on fire, but fire put out
19 Sep.	8, 10, 14, 15	Burnt
20 Sep.	7, 16	Burnt

TOWN PLAN OF ARNHEM

REFERENCE



The shrubberies here had also given trouble to the RE. Besides consolidating in the school (16) which had a field of fire, they had also occupied the next building to the north (17). But Germans crept up to this house through the shrubs and the ground floor became a trap. The house was untenable, but a diversion was necessary to get the wounded out and back to the school. A raid was made on the next house to the north, which appeared to be some kind of German HQ. This effectively eased the pressure for the time being.

Now B Coy of 2 Para Bn was also on the move during the night, following up after A Company. They came to St Elisabeth hospital and then crossed to the river road. Shortly before reaching their objective the pontoon bridge, they ran into some enemy and had to fight their way through. They found signs of a previous fight here.

[COMMENT:- 1 Para Sqn records a fight in this area soon after dusk. The German defenders were possibly operating from the Orphanage at 21 Utrechtsche Straat, where C Company was held up on the upper road (see below.)

B Company then took up defensive positions for the night in houses at the pontoon bridge, but before first light were ordered to join up at the main bridge. Their last platoon left here just after dawn and had to use smoke to cross the open square - Roermonds Plein. Further on this platoon came under fire from the south bank and had to go to ground in the houses facing the river. They made a detour inland, but failed to get through to the bridge and were overwhelmed next day. The remainder of B Company reached the bridge.

The platoon of 9 Pd Coy, which had gone to help capture the railway bridge the day before also reached the bridge this day.

Lt. Col. Frost, 2 Para Bn, moved to Brigade HQ this morning to command all the forces in the bridgehead. Sketch O (opposite) shows the buildings occupied by our forces.

[COMMENT:- In "Airborne Forces" the total numbers that reached the bridge are estimated to have been about 700. This estimate is agreed.]

HS/AL/3017/1
f.3

HS/WD/RWL/626/1.1.
HS/AL/1285/C
f.9(a)

HS/AL/675/13
p.272

HS/AL/3017/1
f.4

G Coy 2 Para Bn were unable either to reach their objective in Nieuwe Plein or the bridge. It was quite dark when they reached St Elisabeth Hospital and had a brush with some Germans, who had just debussed. They shot these up and continued forward on the main road with five prisoners. They found the Gestapo HQ on their right occupied by only two Germans, but just beyond this they came under fire from ahead. They fought their way up to the junction of Brug Straat, destroying an armoured car, but could not get past this point, though they fought all night. They decided to withdraw before first light and advance again by the lower road.

About 0430 hours they withdrew through the gardens of the houses north of the road as far as the PGEM offices, but here they found the road ahead and to the south under fire. One platoon succeeded in crossing the road to the south aiming for the Monastery.

[COMMENT:- Probably these men met B Company 3 Para Bn, see sub-para (b) below.]

Another platoon with company HQ crossed the road to the west and then occupied two houses close beyond, Nos 38 and 40 Utrechtsche Straat. Heavy ammunition ran out and enemy tanks shot up the buildings. A break out was attempted, but the company appears to have been overwhelmed in detail by noon after midday.

At the bridge the highlight of the morning was the arrival of a column of armoured cars and half tracks across the bridge from the south. Eleven of these were destroyed on the embanked bridge approach, one containing rations finished up against the school (16), but German fire prevented salvage operations and later set the half track on fire. Part of the building then caught fire, but this was eventually put out.

1 Airlidg Lt Regt gave magnificent support, their fire being directed by commander 3 Battery from the highest building in the bridgehead. Despite enemy attacks the position this morning seemed very secure and all ranks were in high

spirits. The remainder of the brigade was expected at any moment. The bridge had been examined and found not to be prepared for demolition. Wireless contact had been made with the forces to the South and encouraging messages had been received. The defenders were counting on the arrival of the leading elements of Second Army this day.

HS/WB/HWS/207A/1
H-1.

[COMMENT:- Contact was with 82 US Airborne Div, not with 30 Corps as recorded in 2 Para Bn History. If it had been with the latter, it would have been known that there was no hope of Second Army arriving that day.]

It was not always easy to see whether buildings were held by friend or foe. The old North African battle cry of "Whoo Mahomet" was found to be a good recognition signal, as the Germans could not imitate it.

Early in the afternoon a message came from 1 Para Bn that they were having great difficulty in getting on. A fighting patrol was sent to the pontoon bridge to guide them from there, but it was brought back at dusk as no one had arrived by then.

After a day of fairly continuous mortaring, which did little damage to the buildings, the enemy put in a very determined attack along the river bank from the east. From prisoners taken, 2 Para Bn found that they were fighting SS Panzer Grenadiere from an SS Panzer Corps, which happened to be near Arnhem at this time. This was their first knowledge of the presence of this formation. Two enemy tanks were destroyed in this attack, but 1 Para Bde Def Pl in buildings 12 and 13 suffered heavy casualties and had to be withdrawn. During the day three more houses in the bridgehead had been set on fire and had had to be vacated.

Ammunition was beginning to run short, but at 2000 hours encouraging news was received over the wireless from divisional HQ - two battalions were to break through during the night and bring reserves of ammunition with them. The rest of the night passed quietly, lit by burning buildings.

(b) Trying to reach the bridge

(1) 1 Para Bn

At 0100 hours 1 Para Bn decided that they could not wait longer for R Company. They left guides and set off down the track to the south with the intention of getting to their objective via the town, as they had heard the bridges were in our hands. It was slow going through the woods with guns and carriers. About 0300 hours an enemy post was bumped near the cross tracks 697797, both sides had casualties, but the enemy withdrew. About 0430 hours S Company in the lead reached road junction 709783 and came under enemy fire from both sides of the road about 713782. S Company attacked and occupied the northern end of the position. It was now about 0530 hours, just beginning to get light, when a message was received on the artillery net from the bridge that 2 Para Bn were in urgent need of reinforcements. It was decided to disengage and bypass to the south and go to the bridgehead. S Company had had 30 casualties.

(11) 3 Para Bn

The brigade commander had decided that 3 Para Bn would disengage before first light, move south on to 2 Para Bn's route and follow that to the bridge. 3 Para Bn moved off at 0430 hours and about 0630 hours B Company in the lead ran into opposition just before reaching St Elisabeth Hospital. On their way they had heard firing to the north and northwest but only encountered a little sniping from the south shortly after crossing the railway. Here it was found that the battalion had been split in two, only battalion HQ, the divisional commander and brigade commander, one 6-pr and one troop RR were with B Company. Forward elements of B Company passed the hospital and made contact with some men of 2 Para Bn. [Probably G Company, see sub-para (a) above.] Then enemy infantry with two tanks were seen approaching and the company was concentrated in houses both sides of the road, west of the hospital. The enemy then attacked intermittently from 0900 to 1600 hours, but did not come to close

quarters and casualties were light. During the morning wireless contact was made with C Company at the bridge, who were in good heart, but getting short of ammunition. Then wireless contact was made with A Company, who reported they were held up and trying to get through. About 1500 hours roughly 20 men, and a carrier, a mixture of A Company and the defence platoon, reached B Company and replenished their ammunition. The battalion commander then decided to try to break out north to the railway and by the railway to the bridge. His strength here was now about 130 to 140. The divisional commander and brigade commander also decided to try and break out by an independent route. The brigade commander was wounded and hidden in a cellar, later being moved into St Elisabeth Hospital. The divisional commander was pinned in another house for the night.

(ii) All the roads in B Company area were under intermittent enemy fire, but by working through houses and gardens and dodging across roads, the company almost reached the sunken railway yard at 728782, but could get no further. They were now surrounded and in two groups, but the enemy did not appear to relish closing in on them further even though some of their tanks assisted shortly before dark.

(iii) 1 Para Bn

Meanwhile 1 Para Bn had swung south and by 0700 hours had reached the railway bridge at 712775, where they met mortar and shell fire. On their way they had picked up HQ Company of 3 Para Bn. They located the enemy astride the road in houses 717776, in the factory 720776, in area railway bridge 715780 and 4 armoured cars and 1 tank were seen to move to high ground 718778, which was held strongly.

At 0900 hours an attack was put in with good supporting fire and the houses at 717776 were captured, a second attack on the factory failed. The battalion then joined up with A Company 3 Para Bn and an attack was put in with them on the factory and the high ground to the left. This was successful and the battalion broke through but ran into further opposition at road junction 726778. It was

now about 1500 hours. After a short fight this road junction was gained.

[COMMENT:- 1 and 3 Para Bns must have been very close to each other here and neither knew it. (See Major-General Urquhart's notes in Appendix B).]

The battalion pressed forward on the main road, but were again held up short of St Elisabeth Hospital. About 1830 hours orders were received from the bridgehead that the battalion must get through. It was now about 100 strong and had practically no ammunition. The commander decided to try right down on the river bank. About 2000 hours he met the commander of 2 S Staffords in area 726776, who had about 40 men of his R Company with him. Together they made a plan to get to the bridge, starting at 2100 hours. 1 Para Bn was refilled with ammunition. Then came news that the bridge had been overrun and the attack was put off.

(c) General

16 Pd Amb in St Elisabeth Hospital were taken prisoner this day and all personnel were removed except two surgical teams, which as a result of a protest, were allowed to remain and continue operating.

Artillery communications with 1 and 2 Para Bns were satisfactory, but those with 3 Para Bn were still out.

30. Comment by Narrator on operations on the night 17/18 Sep.

A point worth noting here is the success which attended night moves. The morale, training and light armament of airborne troops make darkness an ally, as 6 Airborne Div found on the advance to the Seine.

Major-General Urquhart's comment on para 21 (c) and Major-General Lathbury's comment on the first draft of this para, both in Appendix B, should be seen when considering whether more use could have been made of this night.

Krafft's report gives an insight into the thoughts of one part of the German force at this time.

HS/WD/NWE/969/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part V
Annexure U

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part V.
Annexure R.

With the 6th
Airborne Division
in Normandy
pp. 131/6

HS/AL/1285/A
pp. 81-90

HS/WD/NWR/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part V
Annexure T
Appx K. Part I.

31. Remainder of First Lift - Narrative 18 September

(a) Divisional HQ

During the night momentary wireless contact was made with Airborne Corps and again during the day. During the afternoon the Phantom set at divisional HQ made contact with 30 Corps. No contact was made on the Air Support set.

During the morning first an officer, then a 22 set, was despatched to try and reach 1 Para Bde, but neither could proceed further than 1 Para Bn.

At about 0700 hours divisional HQ moved to crossroads 665784.

About 0820 hours news at divisional HQ was that 1 and 3 Para Bns were held up by stiff opposition and needed help, also that the enemy had penetrated into Heelsum and surrounded one company 1 Border, but that this position was not serious.

About 0915 hours, as there was no news of General Urquhart, Brigadier Hicks, commanding 1 Airlift Bde, took over command of the division. He decided to relieve the first lift party of 2 S Staffords from guarding LZ "S" and send them by the main Utrecht - Arnhem road to assist 1 and 3 Para Bns to reach the bridge.

The second lift did not arrive at 1000 hours as expected. At 1800 hours 17 Sep its take off had been postponed four hours due to expectation of fog, but this signal does not appear to have reached 1 Airborne Div.

At 1400 hours 2 S Staffords were held up about 708782 and it was decided to send their remaining two companies which were due in the second lift, to assist them, when they arrived. It was also decided to take 11 Para Bn from 4 Para Bde on their arrival and send them to assist 2 S Staffords, leaving 4 Para Bde only two battalions for its original task.

At 1500 hours the second lift started to drop and at 1515 hours, when he landed, Commander 4 Para Bde was informed of these decisions.

Divisional HQ was moved to the Hartestein Hotel, 693783, in the afternoon.

(b) 1 Airlift Recce Bn

The squadron less one troop reconnoitred the main Utrecht - Arnhem road and ran into opposition at 708782 about 0800 hours. The enemy tried to cut them off but were held off. Later the squadron was relieved by 2 S Staffords.

HS/WD/NWR/209/1.I
HS/WD/NWR/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure 02.

The remaining troop, under command of 1 Airlbg Bde protected the Northeast corner of LZ "S".

(c) 1 Airlbg Bde

The despatch of 2 8 Staffords to assist 1 Para Bde has been related in sub-para (a) above. This left LZ "S" very lightly guarded, but the second lift landed without enemy interference.

West of this on DZ "Y", 7 KOSB's forward platoon on the Bde road bore the brunt of the enemy's thrust during the night and morning and was finally driven back onto its parent company. Meanwhile the reserve company was sent up to drive the enemy out of the wood in front of this platoon's position. The enemy then infiltrated from the North into the woods on the East of the DZ. An improvised force from the support company was sent to deal with them.

At 1000 hours, when the drop was due, the situation was reasonably well in hand, but the second lift did not arrive. The battalion spent the next five hours chasing any enemy seen or heard, finally making him withdraw northward and having the DZ clear of close range fire, when the second drop did come in at 1500 hours.

To the South the company of 1 Border in Renkum was surrounded in the early morning. At about 1400 hours they were ordered to fight their way out. They had to abandon their support arms except machine guns, as their transport was destroyed. The enemy had reached Laura, 6378, before the second lift came in and despite mortar fire by the battalion, were able to cause casualties on the DZ.

Some changes had now to be made in the brigade plan for the second phase, as 2 8 Staffords were not available to occupy a sector of the town perimeter. The brigade commander now divided it as below:-

7 KOSB from 4 Para Bde boundary to the railway.

Glider Pilots from the railway exclusive to Point 63.5, 6378.

1 Border from here to Heveadorp.

HS/WD/TWR/206A/1.I
Appx E. Part I
do. Part IV
Annexure 02
HS/WD/TWR/244/1.I
HS/WD/TWR/931/2.I

7 KOSB co-ordinated their move with 4 Para Bde and set off about last light along the road just north of the railway. They found considerable congestion on this route, as 4 Para Bde units were using it too for the first part of the way. Their A Company at Planken Wambuis, due to a misunderstanding, moved earlier direct to 686813.

[COMMENT:- This was presumably the locality which they had decided to hold for their second task - the protection of the landing of the third lift gliders on LZ "L".]

This early withdrawal enabled the enemy to occupy the woods round Reijersheide, 6781, where the reconnaissance troop was ordered to watch them.

About last light the remainder of the brigade moved back to its perimeter positions and shortly afterwards 7 KOSB passed under command of 4 Para Bde.

[COMMENT:- 4 Para Bde do not agree on the time at which command passed. (see para 35).]

During the afternoon and night all patients were ferried from the dressing station at Wolfhezen to a new site in Oosterbeek.

(d) 1 Airldg Lt Regt.

Early in the morning of 18 September one battery was moved by the lower road to a position alongside the Oosterbeek Laag church, 696773. Local protection was provided by their glider pilots and some artillery anti-tank guns.

After the second lift came in, the remainder of the regiment moved to the area northwest of Hartestein and south of the railway.

(e) 21 Inden Para Coy

All three platoons moved out during the morning to mark DEs and LZs for the second lift. Enemy opposition was encountered on all landing areas and was driven back. Further stiff fighting took place to keep the areas clear till the second lift arrived in the afternoon.

32. 4 Para Bde - Narrative 18 September

Flak was a little heavier than on the day before and enemy around the DE caused a number of casualties, but by 1530 hours, half an hour after the drop began, the brigade was a going concern 75 to 80 per cent strong.

HS/WD/WWE/492/1.I

HS/WD/WWE/878/1.I

HS/WD/WWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure O.1
HS/WD/WWE/876/2.I
HS/WD/WWE/877/2.I

About then the GSO 1 of the division arrived and reported to commander 4 Para Bde that 1 Para Bde's drive to the bridge had been checked, Brigadier Hicks had taken over command of the division and 11 Para Bn was to move off straight away, following 28 Staffords, and advance to the bridge. Both these battalions would be under command 1 Para Bde.

Commander 4 Para Bde ordered 11 Para Bn to move off and 156 Para Bn to move to 11 Para Bn's rendezvous area, at the southeast corner of the DZ, prepared to lead the brigade advance along the line of the railway; 10 Para Bn would hold the area of the wood north of the DZ, 624842.

11 Para Bn moved off about 1730 hours, picked up their transport and anti-tank guns on the way, turned southeast at Wolfhezen and reached divisional HQ about 1900 hours, where they were held till about 2230 hours. In the early hours of the morning they halted behind 28 Staffords short of the St Elisabeth Hospital area, and the commanding officer went forward to 1 Para Bn.

156 Para Bn moved off about 1700 hours, skirting the DZ on the west and south and followed 11 Para Bn to Wolfhezen where their transport joined them about 2000 hours. Here a report was received from an officer of 7 KOSB that the enemy were holding a strong outpost line along the Dreijensche Weg from the main Bde - Arnhem road to the railway. They continued to advance and about 2100 hours their leading platoon was ambushed and broken up about 696794. The forward company tried a left flanking movement, but could not get forward. The battalion commander decided to form a firm base in the wood 678802 and continue forward at first light. Communication with brigade HQ had broken down, but this was the brigade commander's general intention too, except that an earlier start next morning was required.

Meanwhile the tail of the brigade closed up and positions taken up for the night were:-

10 Para Bn, southeast corner of DZ
4 Para Bn, road and track junction 637814
HQ 4 Para Bde, hotel 647813.

About an hour after dark D Coy 10 Para Bn, which had dropped north of the DZ, rejoined the battalion here. 10 Para Bn had incurred some casualties in repelling intermittent desultory attacks during the evening; they were warned to be ready to advance again at 0300 hours.

133 Pd Amb moved to Wolfhezen at nightfall with their wounded.

HS/AL/1285/C.

f.11(a)
HS/AL/3071/1

f.5

HS/AL/3017/1
f.21

33. The Bridge - 19 to 21 September

HS/R/55
pp.39-43
HS/AL/808
pp.133-4
HS/AL/1285/C
f.11(a)
HS/WD/788/626/1.1

In the early hours of 19 September about 60 Germans collected just outside the school (16), evidently believing it had been vacated. They were soon undeceived as a concerted volley of grenades dropped among them.

At dawn 19 September there was still no sign of relief from any direction and the enemy tightened their ring round the perimeter. Sniping had to be stopped to conserve ammunition to repel assaults. This enabled the enemy to improve their positions. All roads between the houses were now under enemy fire and the fire of the flak guns on the south bank could not be subdued.

Shells and mortar bombs were gradually knocking down the houses and starting fires. The number of wounded was growing steadily; they and the prisoners were kept in the capacious cellars under brigade HQ.

The enemy infantry and tanks continued to press their attacks from the east near the river bank. The brunt of these fell on A Company 2 Para Bn. The supply of plat ammunition ran out and the tanks then fired into the houses at point blank range. Houses had to be evacuated, were occupied by enemy infantry and then had to be retaken, a very costly method of defence. Block 8 and house 10 were burnt out, but the company held on in the area of the bridge arches between them.

To the east blocks 14 and 15 were set on fire during the day, but the mixed force here of the defence platoon, RE, R Sigs and BASC kept the fire in 14 under control till the evening and held off infantry and tank attacks throughout the day. But during the night they were withdrawn to join A Company.

The troop of anti tank gunners did fine work manhandling their guns in the open under heavy fire into fresh positions from which they could engage, but just before dark a Tiger tank, keeping them under small arms fire, drove down the road opposite buildings 2 to 6 pumping shells into each.

Again the night was comparatively quiet, patrols went out, but could find no gaps in the enemy cordon. Burning buildings made it almost as light as daylight. It was now obvious that the only relief which could come would be from 30 Corps to the south.

As dawn broke on 20 September the enemy renewed his bombardment and his attacks. Twice he captured the archways of the bridge ramp and fixed demolition charges

Sketch P. **ARNHEM** St. Elisabeth Hospital and the Bridge

Air photographs 12 Oct 1944. (106G/3322.Nos 3170, 3172, 3173.)



a. Arnhem Road Bridge
destroyed by air attack
on 7 Oct. '44 (AE AF. Daily
Int/Ops Summary 8 Oct. '44)

Appx A to
this Chapter.

HS/ED/TW/3728/1.1
HS/ED/TW/3728/3.1
HS/ED/TW/969/1.1
HS/ED/TW/876/2.1



Opp A to
this Chapter.

only to have them counter attacked and the charges removed, but too few defenders were left to repel his third attack, which took and held this area. East of the road only the school was now in our hands and in the early afternoon this was set on fire again and had to be vacated. Thus by mid afternoon only the brigade HQ area was held and the 6 para there were under direct small arms fire and could no longer be manned. Enemy tanks could now cross the bridge with impunity.

During all the battle of the bridge Lieut. Grayburn of A Company had shown gallantry of the highest order. He and his platoon had beaten off countless enemy attacks and when they were forced to give ground as the buildings caught fire, they repeatedly fought their way back. Though wounded three times he remained with his men to the end, and he died having shown an example of devotion to duty, which can seldom have been equalled. His conduct won him the Victoria Cross, which was awarded posthumously.

A message of encouragement and congratulation was received from divisional HQ during the morning and later another saying that 30 Corps leading elements should reach the bridge by 1700 hours. A very fierce battle raged at close quarters all round the defended area till, at about 2000 hours, the brigade HQ building caught fire. There were now over 200 wounded in the cellars, they were moved to another building, but this also was set on fire, and it was decided to surrender them. The enemy were quick in evacuating them, but also infiltrated into the position and made it untenable. The force split up, but their efforts to fight a way out proved vain, ammunition was finished and shortly after daylight 21 September the last small party was overwhelmed and the gallant fight to hold the bridge was over. Well over half the force had been killed or wounded and the remainder were taken prisoner.

34. The Bottleneck at St Elisabeth Hospital - 19 September

Sketch P opposite gives an indication of the type of ground fought over.

(a) Planning the attack

The position here at about 2100 hours 18 September was as below:-

in area 726776 - 1 Para Bn about 140 strong with 2 S Staffords less two companies. They had just heard that the bridge had been overrun and had cancelled the attack, which they had been about to mount.

MB/ST/WH/872B/1.I
MB/ST/WH/872B/3.I
MB/ST/WH/969/1.I
MB/ST/WH/876/2.I

in area 728782 - 3 Para Bn about 130 strong.

On the move to - Remainder of 2 S Staffords from LZ "S" and 11 Para Bn
this area: from DE "Y".

This composite force was all under command of 1 Para Bde, but the brigade commander had been wounded and was no longer with them and brigade HQ was with 2 Para Bn at the bridge. Lt.Col. Dobie, 1 Para Bn appears to have taken command.

About 2300 hours 18 September a call for artillery fire from 2 Para Bn at the bridge was picked up by 1 Para Bn. Lt.Col. Dobie decided to mount his attack again. Then Lt.Col. Lea commanding 11 Para Bn arrived and a fresh plan was made to use all three battalions.

[COMMENT:- Records and post-war correspondence show disagreement between battalions and divisional HQ on what orders were received and issued during the night up to 0230 hours, but at that time an order to attack reached 1 Para Bn.]

Lt.Col. Dobie's plan was for 1 Para Bn to advance on the right by the river bank and 2 S Staffords on the left by the main road; starting time 0330 hours. 11 Para Bn was to follow 1 Para Bn and the latter's HQ Company and transport was to follow 2 S Staffords. The attack started at 0400 hours, the delay of half an hour being due to 2 S Staffords according to 1 Para Bn records. But 2 S Staffords record 0445 hours for their start.

(b) 1 Para Bn's attack

1 Para Bn reached the river at 730779, where they met a party of 3 Bn, who had already been forward on the river route. They reported that it was too strongly held for a break through. 1 Para Bn was however determined to try and before dawn, despite heavy fire, had cleared a way to road junction 739776, inflicting many casualties and capturing prisoners. Tanks were spotted on the high ground on the left, which soon came in to the attack. By 0600 hours the position was desperate, the battalion was down to about 40 men and was under fire from three sides. Tanks were engaging them at point blank range. A breakout was attempted to get into the houses to the north, even though they were occupied by the enemy. Some of the battalion managed to break in, but they were soon overpowered.

[COMMENT:- Road junction 739776 is confirmed by a Dutch source. 1 Para Bde records 739778 and 1 Para Bn 7389776]

NS/WI/WW/206A/1.1
Appx K Part IV
Annex N.

NS/WI/WW/872B/1.1
Escape from Arnhem
p. 60
NS/AL/307A/1
f.16, 18.

NS/AL/1285/C.
f.23

Your Men in Battle
(Imp War Museum)
HS/AL/1285/c
HS/AL/3071/1
f.5, 12.

HS/WT/WH/2062/1.1
APPX K Part IV
Annex D para.5

(c) 2 8 Staffords' attack

2 8 Staffords state that their attack went in at 0445 hours. D Company in the lead lost heavily, as it became light. B Company then passed through and secured the "Monastery", 734780 [Museum on the town plan] by 0630 hours.

[COMMENT:- First light was about 0530 hours]

A Company, which had joined the first lift companies about midnight, then passed through and seized the PQEM (Provincial Gueldran Electricity Company) building nearest to the railway, but two attempts to advance further were beaten back.

No further progress appeared possible on this axis, so arrangements were made with 11 Para Bn for an attack to be put in round the left flank. This was about 0830 hours.

(d) 3 Para Bn's attack

Now 3 Para Bn, near the railway, knew nothing of this force collecting together less than half a mile to the south-southwest. Their commander decided, on evening 18 September, that if the enemy did not attack him when dark came, he would make another attempt to reach the bridge. About 0230 hours the battalion quietly vacated its houses, moved down to the river bank and turned east, but ran into very heavy fire short of the pontoon bridge and could advance no further. The battalion then withdrew to the Pavilion, 728778, to form a strong point there. On the way back contact was made with both 1 Para Regt and 2 8 Staffords advancing. The commander decided to follow up 1 Para Bn at first light and give them what support he could. This he did, but while still in the undergrowth below the "Monastery", a number of 1 Para Bn casualties came back through him and then his battalion came under heavy fire. It was now about 0730 hours, the battalion could not find fire positions from which to shoot the enemy and their casualties were mounting rapidly. The commander decided to withdraw to the Pavilion, every man making his own way. Only about 20 men got back fit for further action.

(e) 11 Para Bn's changes of plan

11 Para Bn moved forward from behind 2 8 Staffords' rear echelon somewhat slower than expected and A Company in the lead only reached the hospital about

HS/AL/3071/1.f.5
Your Men in Battle
(Imp War Museum)

first light. Lt.Col. Lea ordered them forward on the left route initially, owing to the lack of cover on the lower one. They reached a position about halfway between the hospital and the "Monastery", just behind 2 S Staffords' HQ.

The composite force here had now no commander, Lt.Col. Dobie had gone forward with his battalion and been wounded and captured. Divisional HQ had sent Col. Barlow, deputy commander 1 Airdlg Bde, to take command, but he had not arrived [apparently he was ambushed on the way].

Lt.Cols. Lea and McCardie agreed on a left flank attack being made by 11 Para Bn; but when Lt.Col. Lea returned to his HQ after a quick reconnaissance he found a garbled message from Divisional HQ, which appeared to indicate that 11 Para Bn was to stand fast in its present area. He notified 2 S Staffords of this and that the attack was off for the time being. He issued orders to his companies for consolidation of the area.

Lt.Col. Lea states that shortly afterwards the GSO II (Air) of the division [later killed in action] arrived at HQ 11 Para Bn with a marked map and orders for the battalion to take up a position north of the railway in the Heijencord - Diependael area, 7278. Lt.Col. Lea decided to make a firm base from the river to the railway, using 1 Para Bn HQ Company and transport to hold the area of the anti tank screen at 725777, and C Company 2 S Staffords, which was also in this area, to hold the east edge of Den Brink, his own B Company and the artillery anti tank guns with him would cover the centre of this line. The rest of his battalion would then concentrate on Den Brink before attacking north across the railway.

[COMMENT: There is no record of such an order in the Divisional HQ war diary, nor did the divisional commander or the GSO I issue this order or send the GSO II (Air) forward, but at 1330 hours the order to 4 Para Bde to disengage and move east, south of the railway, (see next para) concludes - "later, if possible, 4 Para Bde should make contact with 11 Para Bn and occupy high ground north of ry 7178". The close similarity between that objective and the one which Lt.Col. Lea now planned to capture, makes it appear that knowledge of the divisional plan, while still in a tentative stage, did reach 11 Para Bn and was considered to be an order; but why and by whom the GSO II (Air) was sent forward has not been ascertained.]

(f) The German attacks on 2 S Staffords and 11 Para Bn

Meanwhile, forward of the "Monastery", tanks broke into 2 S Staffords position about 0900 hours. They had no anti tank guns up, the only one with the battalion was in the screen at 725777, but they had their piats and they beat off attack

HM/WD/WW/206A/1.1
Appx K. Part III
Annexure M
HM/AL/3071/1
f.16

Your Men in Battle
(Imp War Museum)
HM/WD/WW/969/1.1
HM/AL/3071/1
f.12.

after attack till about 1100 hours, when they ran out of pistol ammunition. The tanks then overran the position splitting the defenders into pockets and causing extremely heavy casualties. Only a few small parties succeeded in fighting their way back to the anti tank screen, where C Company re-organised them.

[COMMENT:- C Company had been held up during the night advance and only reached this area at first light. It was not employed in the Monastery fight.]

HS/AL/1285/C.
f.13, 11(e)

But A Company and some of the Mortar Platoon were still fighting in the PGM area and later appear to have withdrawn a short distance to 38 Utrechtscheweg, which according to a Dutch report was held a second time by British troops from about 1300 to 1400 hours.

HS/AL/3071/1
f.5

The German tanks after shooting up 2 S Staffords came warily forward having no infantry with them. A Company 11 Para Bn were unable to stop them and sent two of their platoons back. The tanks came forward to the hospital and then returned and drove the remainder of A Company north into the buildings by the railway northeast of the hospital. From here this party moved west in the sunken railway yard, climbing out at the bridge at 727782, where they found German posts between them and Den Brink and were later captured.

[COMMENT:- Major Gilchrist states that the tanks were not fired on by the anti tank screen at 725777. This may have been due to our own men screening the anti tank guns; HQ Company 1 Para Bn attacked eastward here about this time.]

HS/AL/3071/1
f.5
HS/WD/NWE/876/2.I

Back in the area west of the hospital the preliminary moves started for 11 Para Bn plan. C Company 2 S Staffords, having absorbed the small parties which had come back to it, moved to Den Brink, clearing some minor opposition on the way, and the anti tank guns and B Company 11 Para Bn moved to their new positions. Then, while C Company 11 Para Bn was on the move northwest from the area of the road junction, 725777, it was caught in flank by a German tank attack moving west along Alexander Street. The anti tank gun here was knocked out and B Company to the south and C Company 2 S Staffords to the north were heavily mortared. This attack came as a complete surprise to 11 Para Bn, who thought that their eastern flank was adequately protected; they did not realise the extent of the reverse east of the hospital.

[COMMENT:- It is possible that this attack was made by the tanks, which had broken through 2 S Staffords, exploiting forward past the south end of St Elisabeth Hospital. (A Coy 11 Para Bn rules out the route round the north end of the hospital.) Or other tanks might have come in with infantry support by the bridge at 727782, which appears to have been left unsecured.]

(g) The Withdrawal

C Company 2 S Staffords suffered heavily from the German mortaring, which caught them before they had had time to dig in. They also had no anti tank guns or plato with them and, when the tanks later turned on them, they were overrun and had to withdraw southwest. B Company 11 Para Bn and the survivors of 1 and 3 Para Bns were much better placed to withstand attack, they held the Germans off and then later in the day withdrew to area 706774. Here Lt. Col. Thompson, who was commanding 1 Airlbg Lt Regt, which was in action near the Oosterbeek Laag church at 696773, reorganised them into a defensive position. Their strengths were as below:-

Your men in
Battle
(Imperial War Museum)
HQ/WD/NWF/969/1.I
HQ/WD/NWF/876/2.I
HQ/WD/NWF/872B/1.I
HQ/WD/NWF/492/1.I

HQ/WD/NWF/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure 02

1 Para Bn	116
3 Para Bn	40
11 Para Bn	150
2 S Staffords	100
Glider Pilots	30

Their anti tank gun strength was:-

HQ/WD/NWF/872B/1.I
HQ/WD/NWF/492/1.I
HQ/AL/307/1
f.12

1 Airlbg Lt Bty	4	6 prs under command	1 Para Bde
2 Airlbg Lt Bty	3	6 prs (E. Tp supporting 11 Para Bn)	
2 S Staffords	1	6 pr	

35. 4 Para Bde - Narrative 19 September

About 2300 hours 18 Sep Commander 4 Para Bde went to divisional HQ and received fresh instructions. His brigade was to advance between the road Bde - Arnhem and the railway, both inclusive, and secure the high ground Koepel, 712793, with a firm left flank on the road.

HQ/WD/NWF/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure 01.
HQ/WD/NWF/877/2.I
HQ/WD/NWF/626/3.I
HQ/WD/NWF/338A/1.I

[COMMENT:- The status of 7 KOSB was not clear. They passed to 4 Para Bde command at 2400 hours 18 Sep (1 Airlbg Bde) or 1030 hours 19 Sep (4 Para Bde), but the time of this change does not appear to have affected operations.]

HQ/WD/NWF/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure 02.

The brigade commander ordered 156 Para Bn to secure Koepel and 10 Para Bn to occupy a firm base in area 693811. 4 Para Sqn to remain in position, area 638814, with one troop of anti tank guns.

Brigade HQ moved to 668805 about 0730 hours and soon afterwards the brigade commander visited 156 Para Bn. The battalion had already captured point 56.5, 696796, and was going to mount a company attack to gain the Lichtenbeek woods about 705795, as a firm base from which to capture Koepel. This did not succeed and it was decided to attack with another company just to the north.

Meanwhile on the left, 10 Para Bn had met heavy opposition in area 694806 and had asked for and received permission to disengage and try a bolder west flanking movement. In the rear 4 Para Sqn had closed up to Wolfhezen.

The Brigade commander returned to his HQ and found the GSO 1 and CRA arriving. He was told that the divisional commander was back and would come and see him later. He reported his position and intentions and they cleared up 7 KOSB's status, that this battalion was under his command.

The brigade commander then visited HQ 7 KOSB at Johanna Hoeve and ordered them to hold their present position and be prepared to take over 156 Para Bn's Lichtenbeek objective, when captured, with one company. In the afternoon they were to protect the landing of the Polish gliders.

133 Fd Amb cleared all casualties from Wolfhezen by mid morning and 4 Para Sqn was brought forward to 672804. Brigade HQ moved forward to 684799.

10 Para Bn reached their objective, the road junction, 692811, and after hard fighting established a forward position just short of the pumping station, 699807, but found themselves up against a strong enemy defensive position to the east with more enemy on their north flank. Several attacks supported by tanks and self-propelled guns were beaten off and the battalion felt that it was in quite a healthy position to hold on till dusk and then renew the advance. It was here that Captain Queripel won the Victoria Cross. He continually exposed himself to danger in conveying orders to his men and helping the wounded, he charged and destroyed an enemy post, his leadership and personal bravery were an example to all. In the end, when the battalion was ordered to withdraw, he was cut off with a small party; he then held off the enemy alone, while they withdrew; he was not seen again. The award was posthumous.

156 Para Bn's first company attack towards Lichtenbeek had met infantry well supported by self-propelled guns and armoured cars; the attacking company suffered

HQ/AL/1285/C
f.11c, 19.

heavy casualties and lost all its officers. The second company attack on the left flank, met the same intensity of opposition and was held up with considerable losses. Battalion HQ and the support company attacked next and about thirty men of the battalion reached the road across the front - the Drejenachs Weg. More men were lost in a German air attack and finally at 1400 hours the battalion pulled back to its original firm base on point 56.5.

HQ/WD/WHK/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure M.

About this time the divisional commander arrived at brigade HQ and a plan was made to disengage 4 Para Bde, less 7 KOSB, and move it south of the railway to occupy a position on the east side of the present divisional HQ area.

The railway was an obstacle to this operation, Wolfhezen crossing was no longer held and Halte Oosterbeek Hoog crossing, 699792, had not been captured. Information had been received that 1 Airlbg Bde was going to attack the latter from the south at 1500 hours and 156 Para Bn were warned to give them support.

HQ/WD/WHK/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure O 2.

[COMMENT:- 1 Airlbg Bde account does not agree; they were sending a tank hunting patrol to knock out an armoured car and a self-propelled gun reported by a sergeant of 156 Para Bn to be in the orchard at 698794. This patrol was unable to carry out its task because it was attacked by our own troops. (1 Airlbg Bde blames the Poles, but it appears likely that C Company 156 Para Bn, who were holding this part of the front and had not been warned of this patrol, were responsible for stopping it).

HQ/AL/3071/1
f.5

About 1500 hours information from divisional HQ indicated the likelihood of the new plan having to be carried out. 10 Para Bn was therefore ordered to disengage forthwith and seize and hold Wolfhezen crossing for the brigade to cross. A little later the order came from divisional HQ to implement the plan.

HQ/WD/WHK/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure M, O 2
HQ/AL/3017/1
f.21

[COMMENT:- 1 Airborne Div war diary records the order given at 1400 hours, but 1 A/L Bde agrees with 4 Para Bde that it was later.]

10 Para Bn were being attacked when they received the order to withdraw. They began to thin out, but in doing so ran into another German attack mounted against their rear. This attack was neutralised and the battalion then moved back across the open ground of LZ "L", on which the Polish gliders now began to land. Meanwhile B Company and part of D Company 7 KOSB also moved onto the LZ to assist the Poles, who were few in number, to unload their gliders. The enemy pressing forward after 10 Para Bn saw this choice target and fired into it, and

Sketch Q.

ARNHEM L.Z. 'L'.

Air photographs 2 Oct. 1944

(106 G/3179. Nos. 3131, 3132.)



to the Red
wills at
them - by
Szwed Swiecicki

2110/TS/W/40/
Fig. 4.

101.
their fire was returned. So the Poles, who had been shot up by German fighters as they came in to land, found themselves in a hotter spot on the ground, with gliders catching fire and shots flying in all directions. Not an easy place for them to distinguish friends from enemies; that landing zone cannot have been a health resort for anyone.

[COMMENT:- Sketch 9 opposite shows the type of ground over which 4 Para Bde fought on 19 Sep, also traces of burnt out Polish gliders and the resupply drop of 18 Sep.]

Just after the gliders landed, the brigade commander held an orders group at which the commanders of 7 KOSB and 4 Para Sqn were present. 7 KOSB less one company was ordered to cover the withdrawal of 4 Para Bde to the south side of the railway, while one company covered 4 Para Sqn, who were made responsible for getting the brigade guns and vehicles across the railway. Wolfhezen was reported to be in enemy hands. The battalion was to disengage in half an hour's time.

Part of B Company 7 KOSB was close to brigade HQ. The battalion commander gave this company the role of RE protection and returned to his HQ. Here he found that battalion HQ, D and A Companies were being strongly attacked. He ordered C Company to co-ordinate their withdrawal with 156 Para Bn (they were close behind this battalion), arranged for battalion HQ and D Company, who were in the centre, to withdraw together and left word with A Company's wireless operator for that company to co-ordinate its withdrawal with 10 Para Bn, no officer being available to take this order owing to the enemy attack.

[COMMENT:- It appears probable that this company (at 686813) was already surrounded, as 10 Para Bn withdrawal had started earlier. From Krafft's sketch it appears that A Company and some of 10 Para Bn fought on here till late in the evening. None of this company reached the battalion rendezvous that evening.]

Meanwhile battalion HQ and D Company hit the enemy attack so hard that it stopped and finally drew right back, allowing them to disengage at almost the time ordered. A major and the drum major each accounted for twenty Germans by Bren gun fire.

At about the time of this brigade order group 156 Para Bn were ordered to withdraw to a rendezvous at 679796.

[COMMENT:- 4 Para Bde give this rendezvous, Major Powell and 7 KOSB confirm it, but 156 Para Bn war diary gives "Hotel Wolfhezen, 6779".]

AL/1285/C.
f.16(a)

AL/307/1
f.8

They withdrew under fire from the north and encountered enemy patrols to the south. The battalion commander changed his plan, and instead of moving north of the railway he decided to cross about 690796 and move south of the railway.

Evidently this order did not reach everyone, as the battalion split into two parts and B Company and half of B and C Companies took the route north of the railway up which they had advanced, and went on to Wolfhezen crossing. Here they were later cut off by the Germans and only one officer and six men got back to the battalion.

[COMMENT:- According to Capt Montgomery contact was made on arrival here with 10 Para Bn, but apparently it was not maintained.]

The remainder of the battalion, about 200 strong, reached point 23.2, 6879, where 4 Para Bde ordered them to form a brigade perimeter with its north flank on the railway.

Meanwhile 10 Para Bn had suffered heavy casualties in their withdrawal and were only about 250 strong when they reached Wolfhezen crossing. Here they cleared minor enemy opposition and took up a position 200 yards to the south.

4 Para Bn assisted brigade transport across the railway on a footpath at 676801 and through a tunnel at 668803. Then word was received that Wolfhezen crossing was again in our hands, so carriers and 17 prs were diverted that way. When all transport appeared to be across, the squadron moved to its rendezvous and then to the divisional perimeter, where defensive positions at Ommershol, 693791, and Soenenberg, 687785, were allotted and occupied.

A certain amount of transport tried to cross the railway at other points and was bogged in heavy sand.

7 KOSB reached their crossing place at 673801 and took up positions to protect the passage across the railway of the rest of the brigade. Here various sub-units reported to them and were assembled and despatched to their destinations, where these were known. No representative of 4 Para Bde HQ was present, so this work fell on 7 KOSB.

[COMMENT:- 1 Airborne Div account says - "no representative of 4 Airlanding Bde could be found", but this appears to be a mistake. Possibly this was only intended to be a battalion rendezvous, but became a brigade one owing to incomplete orders reaching sub units in the short time available.]

A check of the battalion here showed that none of A Company had reached the rendezvous, only elements of B were present, C was reasonably complete and D was

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1.9
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1.21

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1.7

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1.7

at about half strength. An attempt to find more of B failed and about 1800 hours, with all units of the brigade apparently clear, the battalion moved off by the road running southeast past the Hotel Wolfhezen to rejoin 1 Airlbg Bde.

Small forces of Germans followed up to the line of the railway, where in one place they were held and in another driven back, but in some places they filtered across, as a message reached divisional HQ at 1900 hours from 4 Para Bde that the brigade would not be able to disengage at dusk, nor move in the dark, owing to enemy opposition being encountered south of the railway.

At nightfall the position of the brigade was:-

Brigade HQ - in area point 23.2, 681797.

156 Para Bn, about 200 strong - holding a perimeter about 678799 to the south and up to about 684797.

[COMMENT:- 4 Para Bde gives 674797, but this does not make a perimeter with brigade HQ. Major Powell confirms 684797.]

A detachment, possibly 70 to 100 strong, in the area of Wolfhezen crossing.

10 Para Bn, about 250 strong - holding an area 200 yards south of Wolfhezen crossing.

4 Para Bn - just arriving in the divisional perimeter, but thought by 4 Para Bde HQ to be close to the east of 10 Para Bn.

About 2200 hours a party of 7 KOSB, roughly 40 strong, reported to brigade HQ and were incorporated in the brigade perimeter. The brigade commander wanted to pull 10 Para Bn in to his perimeter too, but they asked for and were given permission to use the dark to reorganise. He then proposed to move to the divisional area at 2300 hours, when 10 Para Bn would be fit to move, but states in his report:-

"Div deprecated a move ... it was agreed in the end that I should move the Bde at first light."

[COMMENT:- 1 Airborne Div war diary is not at all clear on this, but Major General Urquhart agrees that the Brigadier's statement is correct (see Appendix B).]

36. Comment by Narrator on the withdrawal timings

Times recorded in war diaries cannot all be relied on. For example the landing of the gliders is shown at various times between 1400 hours and 1630 hours.

HQ British Airborne Corps report gives 1519 to 1537 hours for the landing and this is supported by the take off times in RAF squadron ORBs. Based on this the chronicle of events on the afternoon of 19 Sep would be roughly:-

AL/3071/1 f.16(a)
206A/1.1
Part IV
Measure B.

AL/3071/1
f.8

AL/3071/1
206A/1.1
Part IV
Measure B.

AL/131 Pt.I
records

1500 hours - orders to 10 Para Bn to withdraw
 1530 hours - 10 Para Bn withdrawing through gliders landing
 1600 hours - orders to 156 Para Bn and 7 KOSB to withdraw
 1615 hours - 156 Para Bn start withdrawal
 1630 hours - 7 KOSB start withdrawal

37. 4 Para Bde - Narrative 20 Sep

Next morning, 20 Sep, the brigade set out about 0615 hours by the route - Point 23.2, 681797 - track junction, 678793 - Breede Laan - junction with main Utrecht / Arnhem road - Hartestein, to take up a position facing east astride this main road east of Hartestein. Communications to divisional HQ were poor and the location of units likely to be met was hardly known at all. The order of march laid down was 156 Para Bn, 4 Para Bde HQ and brigade troops, 10 Para Bn. The enemy was encountered about 682785, and 156 Para Bn tried to get round on the right, but were again held. It appeared that the column had hit the left or left rear, of a force moving from Wolfhezen, or Heelsum, towards Hartestein. 156 Para Bn took up a defensive position and beat off two counter-attacks. Casualties were heavy and by 1000 hours the battalion was down to a strength of about 90 men.

Meanwhile the brigade commander decided to swing left and by-pass the enemy; 10 Para Bn were turned to the northeast behind 156 Para Bn and put into the lead. They went too fast and opened out a gap behind them, touch was then lost, but a little later information came through that they were moving south down Valkenberg Laan. They were then informed that the remainder of the brigade was surrounded, but that they were to break through at all costs. They reached divisional HQ about 60 strong at 1310 hours.

Shortly after midday 156 Para Bn started to withdraw northeast, aided by artillery fire to discourage pursuit, but soon the small force left was surrounded by tanks and infantry, which moved in and broke the column up. A cup shaped depression was just ahead. This was cleared of its German occupants and manned by the remnants of the brigade about 80 strong. One tank and some infantry were left to destroy them, but they were held at bay for the rest of the day, till towards nightfall this small force made a dash for it and broke through to a position of 1 border near 687786.

NO/206A/1.I
 Part IV
 Annexure 01. M
 NO/206A/377/2.I

The brigade when surrounded had no anti tank guns left and only one pistol with one bomb, but they had grenades. The tank, which was left to deal with them, kept out of range of these and of the stalking parties, which repeatedly tried to get close enough to use them.

[COMMENT: Four 6 pr and two 17 pr guns out of the three troops supporting 4 Para Bde, less 11 Para Bn, reached the divisional area. It is not recorded whether they moved with 10 Para Bn on 20 Sep, or direct from Wolfhagen crossing on evening 19 Sep.

On arrival in the divisional area both battalions were allotted sectors in the east side of the perimeter and Commander 4 Para Bde was ordered to take command of this east side next morning.

38. The divisional perimeter is formed 19/20 Sep

(a) Divisional HQ - 19 Sep

At 0725 hours on 19 Sep the divisional commander returned from 1 Para Bde. Brigadier Hicks went back to his own brigade and his deputy commander was sent to co-ordinate the efforts of the battalions in the St Elisabeth Hospital area in their thrust to the bridge, but he disappeared on the way to them.

At 1330 hours the divisional plan was changed. 4 Para Bde, less 11 Para Bn, was to disengage, leaving 7 AOSB to protect the landing of the Polish gliders. They were then to move inside the main divisional position and protect the division from the east, by occupying a position on the line of the road and railway crossings at 712774, 715780 and 712784. Later, if possible, they were to make contact with 11 Para Bn and occupy the high ground north of the railway in 7178.

[COMMENT:- (1) 4 Para Bde do not agree to the time quoted here, see para 35 above.

(11) An order appears to have reached 11 Para Bn on the last item, see para 34 above]

The division had no communication through to Airborne Corps or Base, but the Phantom set to 30 Corps and the Public Relations set to the War Office appear to have been through for part of the day.

A resupply drop was made at the same time as the landing of the Polish gliders. The division had not yet been able to pass a message to Corps or Base that the supply dropping zone was still in enemy hands. Every effort was made with eureka,

100/100/464/2.1

100/100/206A/1.1
100/100/16/17
100/100/16/17
100/100/16/17
100/100/16/17
100/100/16/17

100/100/207A/1
H-1

yellow smoke, very lights, ground strips and yellow celanese triangles to attract the attention of the pilots and get them to drop their supplies on the divisional HQ area, but only a limited success was achieved. The remainder flew on in heavy flak and dropped the supplies to the enemy. Aircraft losses were heavy.

The parachute element of 1 Polish Indep Para Bde Gp, did not arrive this day. As it was now clear that they would not be able to carry out their original task, it was decided to change their dropping zone to the area 686759 - 695761 - 697748 - 684746 east of Driel, 6875, and to give them the task of holding a firm bridgehead on the south bank of the river in the area of their dropping zone. A message giving this new dropping zone got through during the night 19/20 Sep and a new supply dropping point at 691785 was also notified.

(b) 1 Airlbg Bde - 19 Sep

During the night 18/19 Sep 1 Border dug in with company localities at:-

Area Graftombe, 6878
 astride main road at 679784,
 point 63.2, 6778, [675781]
 area Weg, 6877 [684772]

They had a quiet day except for an attack by German aircraft in the afternoon. When the supply came in a little later, a number of panniers fell in the battalion area and were collected. Just before dark all positions were attacked lightly. After dark company positions were taken up closer to the divisional HQ area at:-

Area Graftombe
 Area Koude Herberg cross roads, 6878
 Area road 686775
 Area cross roads 688772, with one platoon at 685770

On their right No 2 Wing Glider Pilot Regt held the general area 688790 - 693793 - 691788 during the night 18/19 Sep, prepared for all-round defence. They had a disturbed night with considerable firing from the area of the railway line, but no attack developed. During the morning of 19 Sep one squadron was sent to the east side of the divisional HQ area, to hold the east edge of wood 700786 with a standing patrol at 702784. The unit had a quiet day with some desultory mortar fire. After dark orders were received that a smaller divisional perimeter would be held and minor adjustments were made in the positions facing north and west.

The exploits of 7 KOSB on this day have been recorded in para 35 above. As it was getting dark they reached the area of divisional HQ and were ordered to

11/11/1940/249

11/11/1940/249
 para 92

11/11/1940/206A/1.I
 para 1. Part IV
 measure 0 2
 11/11/1940/244/1.I
 11/11/1940/871/1.I
 11/11/1940/931/2.I

take up a defensive position on the right of the divisional line, which was facing north and west, in area 696791.

The composite force of 1, 3 and 11 Para Bns and 2 S Staffords in front of Oosterbeek Laag was augmented by a small party of 2 S Staffords, which had been left behind by the battalion on 18 Sep to unload their anti tank guns and then put into divisional reserve, and by Major Lonsdale second in command of 11 Para Bn. The latter took command of 1, 3 and 11 Para Bns and this force was thereafter known as "Lonsdale Force."

(c) Divisional Units - 19 Sep

(i) 1 Airlg Recce Bn

On 19 Sep the squadron less one troop reconnoitred towards Heelsum; contact was made with the enemy, but no strong pressure was encountered till mid afternoon. The squadron was then withdrawn. In the evening it reconnoitred eastward between the main Heelsum - Arnhem road and the railway up to 708784. The enemy were found to be holding the bridge over the railway at 712784, just short of Mariendaal.

The troop under 1 Airlg Bde was ordered to reconnoitre the Reijers Camp area and the Ede - Arnhem road. They were heavily mortared near Reijersheide, 678818, so tried further west. Here they found themselves cut off on the south side. They tried to get back by the main road, but ran into an ambush and only seven men and two jeeps reached the squadron.

(ii) 1 Airlg Lt Regt

On 19 Sep the remainder of the regiment moved to join the battery at Oosterbeek Laag.

(iii) Airborne Div RE

On the evening of 18 Sep 9 Pd Coy took up a defensive position at 687784 just southeast of Sonnenberg house. Here they were joined next evening by detachments of 1 and 4 Para Sqns, and the house was included in the defensive area.

The Hevesdorp ferry was inspected on 19 Sep and used to bring over from the south bank a party of 2 S Staffords, whose glider had had to land between the rivers.

(iv) 21 Indep Para Coy

On 19 Sep one platoon laid out the navigational aids for the Polish glider lift and had to beat off a heavy enemy attack while the gliders were landing. This platoon was cut off, but rejoined the company after dark. During the afternoon the company dug in in the grounds of Ommerhol house, 693791, where they were later reinforced by some 60 glider pilots and part of 4 Para Bn.

(v) No 1 Wing The Glider Pilot Regt

This unit was employed in the local protection of divisional HQ and the artillery area.

(d) The completion of the perimeter - 20 Sep

1 Airlbg Recce Bn was sent out early to hold positions in the area 696788 and the residue of 2 S Staffords were brought back to the area of the Laundry 697775.

Later in the morning enemy pressure built up on the whole eastern side of the perimeter. Forward on the right Lonsdale Force held out all day, but German self-propelled guns and/or tanks occupied the Batowijk area, 700777, and shot up all the houses round the forward gun positions of 1 Airlbg Lt Regt. It was here in this sector that Lance Sergeant Baskeyfield of 2 S Staffords won the Victoria Cross. The award was made posthumously, as he was killed when manning a second anti tank gun single handed, after his own had been knocked out. His supreme gallantry kept the enemy tanks at bay and inspired all those round him to hold out.

Further north the squadron of No 2 Wing The Glider Pilot Regt in the wood, 700786, was driven back to divisional HQ by infantry and self propelled guns and suffered considerable losses. In the afternoon it rejoined its regiment at the northwest corner of the perimeter.

The Main Dressing Station at 697784 fell into enemy hands.

Divisional HQ realised that the defensive line, which they had ordered 4 Para Bde to take up on this east flank, could no longer be reached and ordered 10 Para Bn, when they arrived, to occupy the cross roads at 705783. But this too was in enemy hands and this battalion appears to have occupied houses at 698784.

WD/WW/878/1.I

WD/WW/870/1.I
WD/WW/492/1.I
WD/WW/3071/1.
1.16

WD/WW/209/1.I
WD/WW/969/1.I

WD/WW/492/1.I

See Appx A to
this Chapter

WD/WW/871/1.I

WD/WW/206A/1.I
Appx E. Part IV
Annexure II
Annexure C 1

Para 60 below

Their strength was then about 60 men.

For the rest of the day the enemy was held on this line, which was thickened up a little in the evening when 156 Para Bn, strength also about 60 men, reached the perimeter and took up positions in the area 697786.

But the forward position of Lonsdale Force was no longer tenable and after dark they were withdrawn close to the gun area.

7 KOSB and 21 Indep Para Coy on the north of the perimeter held their ground against repeated attacks during the day.

At the northwest corner of the perimeter 2 Wing Glider Pilot Regt were unable to maintain their hold on point 63.5, 689789, and this high ground fell into German hands.

To the south of this, at Koude Herberg, 1 Border repulsed three attacks during the morning, but in the afternoon infantry with two flame throwing tanks and one self propelled gun forced them to vacate their positions. A counter attack was put in, the positions were retaken and a further attack beaten off. 9 SS Div was identified in these attacks.

About 1700 hours the supply drop took place. Opposition was again intense, but the drop was more successful and a good number of panniers and containers were picked up.

The day ended with a message from HQ Airborne Corps saying that Nijmegen bridge had been captured intact.

This was the first day of the intense shelling and mortaring, which the division was to experience each day till it was withdrawn. This fire soon riddled both air support wireless sets, which could not be dismantled from their veeps and dug in as other sets were this day. Up to this time no air support contact had been made.

Appendix A to Chapter VII

The Arnhem Victoria Crosses

In Holland on the 17th September 1944, Captain QUERIPPEL was acting as Company Commander of a composite Company composed of three parachute battalions.

At 14.00 hours on that day, his Company was advancing along a main road which ran on an embankment towards Arnhem. The advance was conducted under continuous machine-gun fire which, at one point, became so heavy that the Company halted on the left side of the road and suffered considerable losses.

Five Victoria Crosses were awarded for acts of valour performed at Arnhem. Four of these were posthumous -

Captain L.E. Queripel, R Sussex, attached to 10 Para Bn.

Flight Lieutenant D.A.S. Lord, 271 Bqn, 46 Group, RAP. He led a party of men

Lieutenant J.H. Grayburn, 2 Para Bn. While going, despite the extremely

Lance Sergeant J.D. Baskeyfield, 2 S Staffords. As a result of this, the

The fifth, Major R.H. Cain, W.F., attached to 2nd Staffords, lived to receive his decoration from His Majesty the King.

The citations for the army awards are given below.

As, however, the army pressure increased, Captain QUERIPPEL decided that it was impossible to hold the position any longer and ordered his men to withdraw. Despite their protests, he insisted on remaining behind to cover their withdrawal with his submachine pistol and a few remaining well-grounded. This is the last action he took in the war.

During the course of a period of nine hours of unceasing and bitter fighting, Captain QUERIPPEL displayed the highest standard of gallantry under most difficult and trying circumstances. His courage, leadership and devotion to duty were magnificent and an inspiration to all. This officer is officially reported to be wounded and missing.

Lieut. General, 1st February 1945.

THE VICTORIA CROSSCaptain Lionel Ernest QUERPEL (108181)The Royal Sussex Regiment
(1st Airborne Division)(Dorchester)

In Holland on the 19th September 1944, Captain QUERPEL was acting as Company Commander of a composite Company composed of three Parachute Battalions.

At 14.00 hours on that day, his Company was advancing along a main road which ran on an embankment towards Arnhem. The advance was conducted under continuous medium machine-gun fire which, at one period, became so heavy that the Company became split up on either side of the road and suffered considerable losses. Captain QUERPEL at once proceeded to reorganize his force, crossing and re-crossing the road whilst doing so, under extremely heavy and accurate fire. During this period he carried a wounded Sergeant to the Regimental Aid Post under fire and was himself wounded in the face.

Having reorganized his force, Captain QUERPEL personally led a party of men against the strong point holding up the advance. This strong point consisted of a captured British anti tank gun and two machine guns. Despite the extremely heavy fire directed at him, Captain QUERPEL succeeded in killing the crews of the machine guns and recapturing the anti-tank gun. As a result of this, the advance was able to continue.

Later in the same day, Captain QUERPEL found himself cut off with a small party of men and took up a position in a ditch. By this time he had received further wounds in both arms. Regardless of his wounds and of the very heavy mortar and spandau fire, he continued to inspire his men to resist with hand grenades, pistols and the few remaining rifles.

As, however, the enemy pressure increased, Captain QUERPEL decided that it was impossible to hold the position any longer and ordered his men to withdraw. Despite their protests, he insisted on remaining behind to cover their withdrawal with his automatic pistol and a few remaining hand grenades. This is the last occasion on which he was seen.

During the whole of a period of nine hours of confused and bitter fighting, Captain QUERPEL displayed the highest standard of gallantry under most difficult and trying circumstances. His courage, leadership and devotion to duty were magnificent and an inspiration to all. This officer is officially reported to be wounded and missing.

London Gazette, 1st February 1945.

THE VICTORIA CROSSLieutenant John Hollington GRAYBURN (149002)Parachute Regiment (Army Air Corps)
(Chalfont St. Giles)

For supreme courage, leadership and devotion to duty.

Lieutenant GRAYBURN was a platoon commander of the Parachute Battalion which was dropped on 17th September 1944, with the task of seizing and holding the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem.

The North end of the bridge was captured and, early in the night, Lieutenant GRAYBURN was ordered to assault and capture the Southern end with his platoon. He led his platoon on to the bridge and began the attack with the utmost determination, but the platoon was met by a hail of fire from two 20 mm. quick firing guns, and from the machine guns of an armoured car. Almost at once, Lieutenant GRAYBURN was shot through the shoulder. Although there was no cover on the bridge, and in spite of his wound, Lieutenant GRAYBURN continued to press forward with the greatest dash and bravery until casualties became so heavy that he was ordered to withdraw. He directed the withdrawal from the bridge personally and was himself the last man to come off the embankment into comparative cover.

Later, his platoon was ordered to occupy a house which was vital to the defence of the bridge, and he personally organized the occupation of the house.

Throughout the next day and night the enemy made ceaseless attacks on the house using not only infantry with mortars and machine guns, but also tanks and self-propelled guns. The house was very exposed and difficult to defend and the fact that it did not fall to the enemy must be attributed to Lieutenant GRAYBURN's great courage and inspiring leadership. He constantly exposed himself to the enemy's fire while moving among and encouraging his platoon, and seemed completely oblivious to danger.

On 19th September 1944, the enemy renewed his attacks, which increased in intensity, as the house was vital to the defence of the bridge. All attacks were repulsed, due to Lieutenant GRAYBURN's valour and skill in organising and encouraging his men, until eventually the house was set on fire and had to be evacuated.

Lieutenant GRAYBURN then took command of elements of all arms, including the remainder of his own company and re-formed them into a fighting force. He spent the night organizing a defensive position to cover the approaches to the bridge.

On 20th September 1944, he extended his defence by a series of fighting patrols which prevented the enemy gaining access to the houses in the vicinity, the occupation of which would have prejudiced the defence of the bridge. This forced the enemy to bring up tanks, which brought Lieutenant GRAYBURN's positions under such heavy fire that he was forced to withdraw to an area farther north. The enemy now attempted to lay demolition charges under the bridge and the situation was critical. Realising this Lieutenant GRAYBURN organized and led a fighting patrol which drove the enemy off temporarily, and gave time for the fuses to be removed. He was again wounded, this time in the back, but refused to be evacuated.

Finally, an enemy tank, against which Lieutenant GRAYBURN had no defence, approached so close to his position that it became untenable. He then stood up in full view of the tank and personally directed the withdrawal of his men to the main defensive perimeter to which he had been ordered.

He was killed that night.

From the evening of September 17th until the night of September 20th, 1944, a period of over three days, Lieutenant GRAYBURN led his men with supreme gallantry and determination. Although in pain and weakened by his wounds, short of food and without sleep, his courage never flagged. There is no doubt that, had it not been for this officer's inspiring leadership and personal bravery, the Arnhem bridge could never have been held for this time.

On the morning of 18th September, during the battle of Arnhem, Lieutenant GRAYBURN was in charge of a 6-pounder anti-tank gun at Oosterbeek. The enemy developed a major attack on this sector with infantry, tanks and self-propelled guns with the obvious intent to break into and overrun the British position. During the early stages of the action the gun commanded by this N.C.O. was responsible for the destruction of two Tiger tanks and at least one self-propelled gun, which in the confusion and firing of this N.C.O., who, with complete disregard for his own safety, allowed each tank to come well within 100 yards of his gun before opening fire.

In the course of this preliminary engagement Lieutenant GRAYBURN was badly wounded in the leg and the shoulder of his arm were either killed or badly wounded. During the brief respite after this engagement Lieutenant GRAYBURN refused to be moved to the Regimental Aid Post and spent his time attending to his gun and mounting ammunition to his comrades in neighbouring positions.

After a short interval the enemy renewed the attack with even greater ferocity than before, under cover of intense mortar and shell fire. During this time Lieutenant GRAYBURN continued to give orders after round at the enemy until his gun was put out of action. By this time his activity was the main factor in keeping the enemy tanks at bay. The fact that the survivors in the vicinity were held together and kept in action by the example and encouraging words of this N.C.O. after the enemy attacks were repulsed and driven off. Finally, when his gun was knocked out, Lieutenant GRAYBURN crawled, under intense enemy fire, to another 6-pounder gun nearby, the crew of which had been killed, and proceeded to use it single-handed. With this gun he engaged an enemy self-propelled gun which was approaching to attack. Another soldier crawled across the open ground to assist him, but was killed almost at once. Lieutenant GRAYBURN succeeded in firing two rounds at the self-propelled gun, scoring one direct hit which rendered it ineffective. While preparing to fire a third shot, however, he was killed by a shell from a supporting enemy tank.

The superb gallantry of this N.C.O. is beyond praise. During his remarkable days of heroic service of his valour was a constant inspiration to all ranks. He showed courage, ignored pain and, by his supreme fighting spirit, infected all who witnessed his conduct with the same gallantry and dogged devotion to duty which characterized his actions throughout.

London Gazette, 25th January 1945.

THE VICTORIA CROSSNo. 5057916 Lance-Sergeant John Daniel BASKEYFIELDThe South Staffordshire Regiment
(1st Airborne Division)

On 20th September 1944, during the battle of ARNHEM, Lance-Sergeant BASKEYFIELD was the N.C.O. in charge of a 6-pounder anti-tank gun at Oosterbeek. The enemy developed a major attack on this sector with infantry, tanks and self-propelled guns with the obvious intent to break into and overrun the Battalion position. During the early stage of the action the crew commanded by this N.C.O. was responsible for the destruction of two Tiger tanks and at least one self-propelled gun, thanks to the coolness and daring of this N.C.O., who, with complete disregard for his own safety, allowed each tank to come well within 100 yards of his gun before opening fire.

In the course of this preliminary engagement Lance-Sergeant BASKEYFIELD was badly wounded in the leg and the remainder of his crew were either killed or badly wounded. During the brief respite after this engagement Lance-Sergeant BASKEYFIELD refused to be carried to the Regimental Aid Post and spent his time attending to his gun and shouting encouragement to his comrades in neighbouring trenches.

After a short interval the enemy renewed the attack with even greater ferocity than before, under cover of intense mortar and shell fire. Manning his gun quite alone Lance-Sergeant BASKEYFIELD continued to fire round after round at the enemy until his gun was put out of action. By this time his activity was the main factor in keeping the enemy tanks at bay. The fact that the surviving men in his vicinity were held together and kept in action was undoubtedly due to his magnificent example and outstanding courage. Time after time enemy attacks were launched and driven off. Finally, when his gun was knocked out, Lance-Sergeant BASKEYFIELD crawled, under intense enemy fire, to another 6-pounder gun nearby, the crew of which had been killed, and proceeded to man it single-handed. With this gun he engaged an enemy self-propelled gun which was approaching to attack. Another soldier crawled across the open ground to assist him, but was killed almost at once. Lance-Sergeant BASKEYFIELD succeeded in firing two rounds at the self-propelled gun, scoring one direct hit which rendered it ineffective. Whilst preparing to fire a third shot, however, he was killed by a shell from a supporting enemy tank.

The superb gallantry of this N.C.O. is beyond praise. During the remaining days at Arnhem stories of his valour were a constant inspiration to all ranks. He spurned danger, ignored pain and, by his supreme fighting spirit, infected all who witnessed his conduct with the same aggressiveness and dogged devotion to duty which characterised his actions throughout.

London Gazette, 23rd November 1944.

THE VICTORIA CROSS

Captain (temporary Major) Robert Henry CAIN (129484)

The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers (attached

The South Staffordshire Regiment)

(1st Airborne Division)

(Salcombe, Devon)

In Holland, on 19th September 1944, Major CAIN was commanding a rifle company of the South Staffordshire Regiment during the battle of Arnhem when his company was cut off from the rest of the battalion and during the next six days was closely engaged with enemy tanks, self-propelled guns and infantry. The Germans made repeated attempts to break into the company position by infiltration and had they succeeded in doing so the whole situation of the Airborne Troops would have been jeopardised.

Major CAIN, by his outstanding devotion to duty and remarkable powers of leadership, was to a large extent personally responsible for saving a vital sector from falling into the hands of the enemy.

On 20th September a Tiger tank approached the area held by his company and Major CAIN went out alone to deal with it armed with a Piat. Taking up position he held his fire until the tank was only 20 yards away when he opened up. The tank immediately halted and turned its guns on him, shooting away a corner of the house near where this officer was lying. Although wounded by machine-gun bullets and falling masonry, Major CAIN continued firing until he had scored several direct hits, immobilised the tank and supervised the bringing up of a 75 mm. howitzer which completely destroyed it. Only then would he consent to have his wounds dressed.

The next morning this officer drove off three more tanks by the fearless use of his Piat, on each occasion leaving cover and taking up position in open ground with complete disregard for his personal safety.

During the following days, Major CAIN was everywhere where danger threatened, moving amongst his men and encouraging them by his fearless example to hold out. He refused rest and medical attention in spite of the fact that his hearing had been seriously impaired because of a perforated eardrum and he was suffering from multiple wounds.

On the 25th September the enemy made a concerted attack on Major CAIN's position, using self-propelled guns, flame throwers and infantry. By this time the last Piat had been put out of action and Major CAIN was armed with only a light 2-inch mortar. However, by a skilful use of this weapon and his daring leadership of the few men still under his command, he completely demoralised the enemy, who, after an engagement lasting more than three hours, withdrew in disorder.

Throughout the whole course of the Battle of Arnhem, Major CAIN showed superb gallantry. His powers of endurance and leadership were the admiration of all his fellow officers, and stories of his valour were being constantly exchanged amongst the troops. His coolness and courage under incessant fire could not be surpassed.

Appendix B to Chapter VIIExtracts from comments on the draft narrative of Section III byMajor Generals Urquhart and Lethbury

(Note: Originals are in HB/AL/3071/1. f.14, 16)

(1) Major General Urquhart's letter of 31 May 1954Comments

I do not think anybody really appreciated the size of the town of ARNHEM itself and the extent of the built up area in the neighbourhood. The built up area extended well to the WEST of OOSTERBEEK and all the houses and gardens along the roads, were surrounded by high fences and walls. The DUTCH type of wire fence is a pretty formidable affair and this is quickly appreciated when you start to try and climb over one of them. I do not think the majority of the troops were mentally prepared for this type of town fighting and that when they found that they were forced to operate along the roads - this was because movement off them was so difficult - this tended to aid the disintegration of the battalions. It must be remembered that Operation "MARKET" was the seventeenth of many plans and everyone was tending to take these in their stride and to make quick decisions as to the methods that might be adopted in their execution.

I think it was slightly optimistic to expect to send forward a company in jeeps. The units were limited in jeeps to those which dropped or landed with them and each individual jeep was a vital one and was, as usual, already overloaded.

I have always been puzzled as to the action of the 1st Bn and from your description here and the references which are given it becomes more and more obvious that they were very near the 3rd Bn. I agree that neither knew of this fact.

The wireless failure here and elsewhere, which prevented a clear picture being obtained, I think made a vital difference. In a heavily built up area such as this troops got very easily lost in houses and gardens and the only real progress which could be made was along the roads. The enemy sited light automatics covering many of the road junctions and this made a dash across such places a hazardous performance. It was in one of these scrambles that Brigadier LETHBURY was hit and we carried him in to a neighbouring house just in front of the St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Where did 1 Para Bn get the information that the bridge had already been overrun? Has this been checked?

As regards the statement on page 46: "orders came through from Divisional HQ about 0400 hrs to withdraw to OOSTERBEEK". The GSO I, who was at Div HQ almost continuously has no knowledge of any such order and I cannot believe that there was ever a suggestion of such action. I think a lot of the statements about action at this period are suspect.

When I got out of the house and back on the main road I found the rear echelon of the 8 STAFFS and heard something of the situation from them. This appeared very confused and my chief aim then was to try and get back to my HQ to sort things out. I did not realise then that there must have been in the neighbourhood

two, if not three, of the battalion commanders and it might have been an advantage if I had been told of their presence and could then have co-ordinated their plans. As it was, as soon as I got back to my HQ and got the picture there, I sent Colonel BARLOW, the deputy commander of 1 Airlidg Bde, forward to take charge and co-ordinate the action of 11 Para Bn and the 3 STAFFS. I do not think that I considered the 1st Bn as coming in to that co-ordination, for as far as I remember there was little known of their position.

9(6)
Lt-Col THOMPSON, commanding the Light Regiment, went forward on my instructions to try and organise all the odds and ends, who were trickling back, into position on the line of the railway. By the time he arrived there the situation had got too much out of hand and he collected them into positions in the OOSTERBEEK area. THOMPSON's work was quite invaluable both on this and on other occasions until he was badly wounded.

(e) 75
The picture, as I had it, of 4 Para Bde became more and more disturbing, but when I spoke to the Bde Comd on the wireless he gave me a very clear description of the state of affairs and asked to continue movement during the night. As far as I remember my opinion, at that time, was that as the result of the enemy's action the Bde was in no fit state to move by night. It had already lost much of its effective strength and its companies were scattered. I told the Brigadier to move at first light.

(11) Major General Lathbury's letter of 5 Apr 1954

Observations

Enemy Intelligence [Ref. para 21 (e)]

A week or ten days before 'MARKET' a similar operation was planned using only 1st British Airborne Division of which 1st Parachute Brigade was to seize Arnhem Bridge.

During the initial briefing by the Corps Commander the suspected presence of II Pz Corps refitting in the area was mentioned. During the briefing for 'MARKET' no further reference was made to this formation and I certainly never considered it in my plan.

1st Brigade Plan [Ref. para 23]

My plan was based on comparatively minor enemy opposition of poor quality and for this reason I advanced on a wide front in order to get through to the Bridge and to our final perimeter position as quickly as possible. Battalions were ordered to push on at all costs and to by-pass opposition wherever possible. The plan succeeded to the extent that part of the force got through to the Bridge and held it for longer than we ever expected to have to hold. On the other hand the plan was quite unsuited to the unexpected and changed situation which developed within the first 24 hours. In theory it is possible to regroup a force to meet a new situation, but in practice with inadequate communications and with units split up owing to the continual by-passing of opposition no effective regrouping was possible. If I had retained 1st Parachute Battalion in reserve instead of releasing it at an early stage of a battle, the situation might have been different. The fact that I did not was the result of incorrect assessment of enemy opposition at all levels.

Attacking by Night (Para 30)

I do not myself believe that more use could have been made of the night 17/18th September. 3rd Parachute Battalion must be the unit in the mind of the Narrator as 1st Parachute Battalion was continuously on the move and 2nd Parachute Battalion was on the Bridge. I remember the situation very vividly. 3rd Parachute Battalion had been up against quite stiff resistance that afternoon and had only 2 Rifle Coys left. It had been fighting or on the move continuously from the parachute drop until dark. A night attack would have been impossible without thorough patrolling to fix the enemy positions and the night was pitch black and the country very difficult and enclosed. I am sure that the correct answer was to give the Battalion a few hours rest, to patrol and then to disengage during the night. This was done successfully and I do not believe that the Battalion would have gained anything by trying to mount an attack with insufficient information earlier in the night. It must be remembered that in the advance to the Seine 6 Airborne Division was following up an enemy who had been defeated and was withdrawing.

Section IV - Operations south of Grave - 19/20 Sept

39. 30 Corps action in area Eindhoven-St Oedenrode 19/20 Sep

(a) 19 Sep

During the morning 15/19 H group, consisting of 15/19 H, A Sqn Royals and 341 Bty 86 Fd Regt, joined 101 US Airborne Div. A Sqn 15/19 H and the armoured cars came under command 506 Prcnt Inf at Eindhoven, the remainder went on to Zon and assisted in the American attack on Best.

The 2nd Battalion 502 Prcnt Inf had already attacked again here in the early morning without success, but in the afternoon with the aid of the tanks complete success was gained by 1800 hours. The site of the bridge, which had been blown by the enemy, was captured and 15 88 mm guns were destroyed, 1056 prisoners taken, mostly from 347 Div and over 300 enemy dead found on the field of action.

Just before this engagement finished a German armoured attack was made on the Zon bridge from the southeast. Some tanks approached within a few hundred yards of the bridge and shelled it and the town. Two tanks were knocked out by anti tank gun fire, the remainder withdrew. 15/19 H were recalled to deal with this threat, but it was over before they arrived.

But this German attack upset 30 Corps movement arrangements (see para 41 below). Gds Armd Div A Echelon would appear to have been crossing the bridge at this time as Q Bty 21 A Tk Regt record a lorry casualty in a tank attack on the bridge.

No enemy activity was recorded at St Oedenrode this day, nor at Eindhoven, round which extensive patrolling was carried out.

101 US Airborne Div's third lift came in during the afternoon, but it was much below the strength expected, owing to fog encountered en route.

(b) 20 Sep

During the night the 1st Battalion of 506 Prcnt Inf moved to Zon to assist in the defence of the bridge against an expected enemy tank attack. 15/19 H stood by at 0500 hours ready to move south across the bridge to assist and 44 R Tks moved up from their harbour just south of Eindhoven, first one squadron, then later the remainder.

834/2.I
474/1.I
181/1.I
1/20

181/1.I
1/20

455/2.I

834/2.I
474/1.I
181/1.I
1/20

The commanding officer of 15/19 H made a reconnaissance about a mile south of Zen bridge before it was quite light and found himself among German infantry moving west between the R. Donnel and the Corps axis. He got away unscathed and a squadron was sent to deal with these men, who were interrupting traffic with small arms fire. This squadron and another on the north bank became involved in a tank battle with some Panthers, which approached within about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile of the bridge on the south side of the canal. After tank casualties on both sides these withdrew.

The American infantry with 44 R Tks and the squadron of 15/19 H in the Eindhoven area started to clear the area east of the axis moving north and north-east. By 1005 hours the road was reported as passable for soft skinned vehicles and by 1100 a steady stream of vehicles was flowing up the axis again, but the country was very enclosed and the Panthers were still about. A patrol of 15/19 H just south of Nederwetten, 4623, found three between them and the axis and brewed up two. This interrupted traffic again, as our overs appear to have hit some of our own vehicles on the road.

One squadron of 44 R Tks assisted in both these tank actions and helped the Americans to take a large number of prisoners in the low ground beside the River Donnel. The other two squadrons advanced on Nuenen, 4821, where stubborn resistance was encountered with tank losses to both sides. By dusk this position had not been captured and the tanks were withdrawn to Tongelre, 4718. The enemy formation was identified as 107 Pz Bde.

43 Recce Regt took up a position south of Tongelre by 1700 hours to protect Eindhoven from the east.

40. 30 Corps action in area Veghel-Uden, 19/20 Sep

The enemy does not appear to have been very active in this area on these two days. 501 Pzcht Inf remained concentrated in the area of Veghel and included Herde, just south of the Willems Vaart canal in their defensive area on 19 Sep. One company was also sent to Dinter, 4441, this day, but found it strongly held.

The enemy attacked Veghel twice on the 19th; during the day with about 250 men from the northwest and again late in the evening.

Next day the Americans attacked Dinter and captured it with 420 prisoners.

1/259/1.I
R O

1/259/1.I

1/259/1.I
R O

Units passing up the axis do not record any delays due to enemy action, though the 15 mile stretch from Veghel to Grave was unguarded. 5 Coldm Bde are one of the few, who mention the enemy, they say:-

"a certain amount of enemy interference was going on by the bridge at Veghel, when the tail of the Bn column passed through."

But Commander 30 Corps did not like this gap and on the afternoon of 19 Sep his staff told 101 US Airborne Div that he was most anxious that some troops should be sent to Uden, on the axis roughly 4½ miles beyond Veghel. Commander 101 US Airborne Div does not appear to have been willing to take on this extra commitment until he was relieved of Eindhoven. Not till 21 Sep did he warn the regiment there to move to Uden on 22 Sep.

[COMMENT:- Commander 101 Airborne Div's responsibility had been cut in the planning stage to 15 miles of the Corps axis. EINDHOVEN to UDEN would increase his dispersion to almost 20 miles.]

41. Movement up the 30 Corps axis 19/20 Sep

In Appendix B is recorded the order in which units appear to have moved up the axis and their times, as far as can be ascertained from records.

On 19 Sep Gds Armd Div advanced across the new bridge at Zen as soon as it was completed. 5 Gds Armd Bde led with one squadron 2 HCR crossing at 0615 hours, followed by the Grenadier Guards Group and with the Irish Guards Group at the rear crossing at 1000 hours.

2 HCR reached Grave at 0820 hours after meeting slight opposition in Uden. The Grenadiers reached Grave about 1000 hours and went on to attack Nijmegen as recorded in para 16 above. The Irish Guards reached Malden, 7055, at 1400 hours. 30 Corps Commander and Tac HQ of the division appear to have moved ahead of the Irish Guards Group from their timings.

Next to move up the axis behind 5 Gds Armd Bde appears to have been the 15/19 H Group detailed to join 101 US Airborne Div. They started from just north of Joe's Bridge at 0600 hours, left one portion at Eindhoven about 1000 hours and reached Zen with the remainder about 1100 hours.

Behind them (or possibly just in front) Gds Armd Div Main HQ moved off from 2½ miles south of Valkenswaard about 0700 hours. HQ 2 HCR presumably preceded them and Tac HQ 30 Corps appears to have accompanied them (see comment below).

Next came 32 Gds Bde Group led by the Coldstream Guards Group with the Welsh Guards Group in the rear. The latter were brought in from the subsidiary route on the right and reached Valkenswaard about 0900 hours. The Coldstream Guards were delayed by 15/19 H dividing up at Hinderhoven, but once clear of Zon they went ahead well, reaching the forest area, 5545, just south-west of Zeeland at 1230 hours. Here they harboured till 1730 hours, when they moved forward to Valenberg, 6557, on the far side of Grave bridge.

[COMMENT:- HQ RASC Gds Arm'd Div records that Main HQ Gds Arm'd Div halted for four hours near Zeeland, 5746. There is also an entry in HQ 30 Corps Battle Log, which appears to indicate that Tac HQ 30 Corps was just north of Zeeland at 1537 hours:- "1537 Tac. We are now at 576473".]

84 Med Regt followed 32 Gds Bde Gp and behind them came the anti-aircraft guns for Nijmegen area, two RH units, the division's A Echelons and the divisional RASC. According to 30 Corps Movement Instruction one squadron of 2 HCR would guard the A Echelon and another the RASC, but 2 HCR regimental history states that the first squadron was also ordered to guard the anti-aircraft and engineer units. This A Echelon Group thus became 582 vehicles strong and the RASC 440 vehicles. Each total includes 40 vehicles of 2 HCR.

30 Corps original orders were that units would not move by night except for tactical reasons, or within 2 hours of their destination, but this was countermanded on 19 Sep. Two units, however, harboured for that night; 94 LAA Regt halted at 2100 hours about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles short of Grave bridge and 409 LAA Bty harboured at Veghel.

[COMMENT:- 94 LAA Regt's halt appears to have had the approval of GHA Gds Arm'd Div.]

All went well with the move of the two big groups under 2 HCR till the enemy tank attack on Zon bridge shortly after 1700 hours on 19 Sep (see para 39 above). This appears to have cut the first group in Q Bty 21 A Tk Regt's A Echelon, part of which was cut off and was again involved in the next day's attack in this same area.

The front part of the column continued forward till, in the dark, part of 100 AA Bde and 148 Pk Sqn took a wrong turning in Uden and went up the road to Nistelrode, 4947. The back part of 148 Pk Sqn went up the right road, was

259/1.I
p.263

552/2.I
Release log.

455/2.I

told it was wrong, turned round with great difficulty and came back to meet the Nistelrode party, which had also turned round with great difficulty. Finally the column was straightened out and moved on again. Fifth column activity in reversing a divisional direction sign in Uden was suspected.

Behind the break the two leading RASC companies were both halted in Eindhoven. Shortly after dark the German air force attacked the town and set fire to vehicles of both companies, ammunition and petrol, besides doing considerable damage to buildings. The second company then pulled back and concentrated south of the town. A report reached the American regiment at Eindhoven that the Zon bridge had been blown in the German attack; A Sqn 15/19 H moved up to Vlokhoven, 4322, to prevent the attack turning on Eindhoven and reconnoitred and found that the bridge was intact. The RASC column was marshalled and moved off again about midnight without further disturbance from the enemy. Some of the cut off tail of the A Echelons would appear to have followed them, as part of Q Bty's A Echelon, which had been cut off the night before, came under small arms fire in the bridge area on 20 Sep.

Traffic appears to have been interrupted from soon after first light 20 Sep, till between 1000 and 1100 hours. During this time the SRY Group, which had been following 44 R Tks, appears to have passed through but without its echelon, en route to join 82 US Airborne Div. 44 R Tks had been detached from the column to break the enemy attack.

Early this morning 20 Sep, Commander 30 Corps had wirelessed back for 43 Div to arrive at Nijmegen as early as possible, ready to assault across the R Waal, not before evening 21 Sep, if 82 US Airborne Div assault should fail. The anti aircraft group for Nijmegen and the seaborne tail of 1 Airborne Div were both frozen for 43 Div to pass. This division then followed Main HQ 30 Corps up the axis, when the road re-opened, but with a big gap between them.

The axis up to Eindhoven must have been very congested. 43 Recce Regt led their division, but were diverted near Aalst to a flank protection role. Next came 130 Bde, who crossed Joe's Bridge at 1445 hours, but at 1725 hours were only just north of Eindhoven; they finally halted at 2300 hours just south of Grave; as the column had become very spread out, and moved on again at 0600 hours 21 Sep.

[COMMENT:- It would appear that this halt and that of Main HQ Gds Armd Div on 19 Sep afternoon reduced the outflow of traffic from the bottle-neck, but that the enemy actions at Zon on 19/20 Sep caused more delay than the countermarches and halts that night].

42. 8 Corps Action - 19/20 Sep

(a) 19 Sep

3 Br Div's brigade assault across the canal in the Lille St Hubert area at midnight 18/19 Sep met determined opposition, but by 0830 hours a class 9 bridge had been built and it was no longer under fire. By 1930 hours part of a second brigade was across and a class 40 bridge had been completed. The third brigade of the division began to arrive in the forward area during the afternoon.

Enemy holding the railway embankment to the north were preventing the expansion of the bridgehead, so during the morning it was decided to send part of 11 Armd Div across Joe's Bridge to take Achel, 4297, and clear this opposition from the rear. A timing of 1400 hours was obtained, immediately behind the tail of Gds Armd Div, but the latter did not clear till 3 hours later and this group consisting of 2 FF Yeo, 1 Hereford and D Sqn Inns of Court only reached Valkenswaard that night. (The minor road bridges over the R Dommel south of here had been blown).

(b) 20 Sep

At 0900 hours 11 Armd Div, less 2 FF Yeo Group, started to cross the canal in the Corps bridgehead, while 2 FF Yeo Group moved east on Leende, 4808, thence northeast. Enemy resistance was met throughout the day, but by last light Zomeren, 5911, had been reached, though the bridge beyond was found blown. On the right the enemy still held Maarheeze, 5103; on the left contact had been made with 101 US Airborne Div south of Geldrop, 4815.

Further back the right of the bridgehead included Hamont, 4797, and the bend in the canal at 447944. On the left the enemy appeared to have pulled out.

Orders were received from Second Army for 69 Bde of 50 Div to be ready to move on 21 Sep morning under orders of 30 Corps.

1 Indep Belgian Bde Group joined 8 Corps during the day and was disposed behind the canal southeast of the bridgehead.

HS/WD/NWE/341/1.I

On the right of the Belgians 4 Arm'd Bde linked up with the Americans.
3/4 CLY rejoined them this day from 12 Corps, so now only 44 R Tks were detached. There was little enemy activity on this flank.

43. 12 Corps action - 19/20 Sep(a) 19 SepHS/WD/NWE/343/1.I
Appx 55

53 (W) Div issued Operation Order No. 17 on 18 Sep for their task of protecting the left flank of 30 Corps up to the Wilhelmina canal.

160 Bde Group would pass through the Lommel bridgehead; swing to the west; secure the bridge at 1900; clear the area - 28 easting - Junction canal-Turnhout canal - bridge 1805 - Wilreit, 2704; and secure a bridgehead at De Maat, 2296, to cover the construction of a class 40 bridge there.

71 Bde Group would secure a crossing at De Maat with one battalion, if the enemy resistance should weaken. The remainder of the group, or all of it if the crossing at De Maat was not secured, would follow 160 Bde Group through the Lommel bridgehead and occupy the area on their right up to Meerveldhoven, 3815.

158 Bde Group would be prepared later to occupy the area northwest of 71 Bde up to Hilvarenbeek, 1923.

HS/WD/NWE/400/1.I

160 Bde Group started to cross the bridge at 1750 hours 18 Sep. Before first light Wilreit was secured, but the battalion detailed for bridge 1900 ran into stiff opposition in wood 2603 and had to stage an attack. A fierce engagement took place ending in a German counter-attack, which overran two companies. The battalion had to withdraw to the Wilreit area. All the prisoners taken were from 6 Para Regt.

HS/WD/NWE/343/1.I
and Appx 58, 59,
60.

Just after midnight 18/19 Sep 71 Bde located a strong enemy fighting patrol in the woods immediately south of De Maat, so took all three battalions with it through the Lommel bridgehead early in the morning. Satisfactory progress was made and at 1430 hours the divisional commander gave 71 Bde one battalion from 158 Bde and an extension of task to include Oirschot, 3125, on the Wilhelmina canal.

158 Bde, less one battalion, was at the same time given Dextel, 3335, and St Michiels Gestel, 3440, as its likely task, while 160 Bde would hand over the bridgehead to 15(S) Div and take up a position from Reusel, 2010, to Hilvarenbeek.

[COMMENT:- This would extend the division over roughly 23 miles.]

HB/WD/TWE/370/1.I

71 Bde secured their original objective, but strong resistance in Winterle, 3318, stopped their advance towards Oirschot.

(b) 20 Sep.

71 Bde put in a battalion attack on Winterle, in the morning, but this was not successful.

At 1200 hours the divisional commander issued fresh orders. Commander 12 Corps had decided that 15(S) Div would be responsible for the protection of 30 Corps left flank north of the Wilhelmina canal and 53 (W) Div south of this canal; 71 Bde would secure Oirschot as quickly as possible; 46 (H) Bde of 15 (S) Div would temporarily take over the Lommel bridgehead; the area between Oirschot and the bridgehead was divided into 3 brigade areas; and the class 40 bridge site would be in the Lommel area instead of at De Maat.

HB/WD/TWE/978/1.I

Further attempts during the day by the battalion at Winterle to outflank the enemy had no success, the final one late in the evening was counter-attacked and suffered considerable casualties. 71 Bde decided to put a fresh battalion round the enemy flank during the night. They set off at 2100 hours, but were held up at Blijsterveld, 3419.

HB/WD/TWE/956/1.I

HB/WD/TWE/410/1.I

It was decided to abandon the Aart bridgehead, on the Oheel-Turnhout road, and 227 (H) Bde of 15 (S) Div was withdrawn by midnight 20/21 Sep.

Appendix G to Chapter VII

Movements up 30 Corps axis from 19 to 22 Sep 1944

Reece and harbour parties excluded

Unit	Before Zon	Zon	Between Zon and Grave	Grave	Location North of R. Mass	Remarks
<u>Gds Armcd Div</u>						
<u>5 Gds Armcd Bde Gp</u>						
B Sqn 2 HCR		19 0615(a)	190810(Uden)(b)	19 0820(c)	19 1155(R. Waal)(b)	
Grenadier Gds Gp		19 0600 (Approx)	190810(South of Veghel) (b)	19 1000*	19 1100(7058)	*19 0925(d)
2 Bty 21 A Tk Regt		19 0600			*(d)	
153 Fd Regt		19 0700			19 1330(Malden)	*In action
19 Lt Fd Amb		19 0800	191030(Veghel)		19 1700(6956)	
HQ 5 Gds Armcd Bde					19 1900* (6760)(a)	*Completed 50' bridge
14 Fd Sqn						
Q Bty 21 A Tk Regt		19 0900				
Irish Gds Group		19 1000			19 1400(Malden)	
Comdr 30 Corps		(b)			19 1400(Malden)(b)	{ Moved with 5 Gds Armcd Bde Group ?
Tac HQ Gds Armcd Div	19 0810(Eindhoven)	19 1005(b)	191010 (St. Oedenrode)(b)			
<u>15/19 H Group</u>	19 0600(Joe's Br)	19 1100*				*Moved off axis to 101 US Airborne Div
	19 1000(Eindhoven)					
HQ 2 HCR						
Tac HQ 30 Corps			191537(576473)(b)			
Main HQ Gds Armcd Div	19 0700(4 km south of Valkenswaard) (c)		4 hour wait (Zeeland) (e)		19 1740/1830* (Heumen)	*{ 1740 HQRE, 1800 HQRA, 1830 HQRASC
AP						
<u>32 Gds Bde Group</u>						
C Sqn 2 HCR			191040(Veghel) (b)			
			191155(Veghel) (b)			

Note: All times are from unit war diaries except where specially noted below:-
 (a) HS/WD/NWE/200.1.I. Appx J.11. (b) HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I. Appx L. (c) HS/21AG/TS/W/39/245 (d) HS/WD/NWE/199/1.I.
 (e) HS/WD/NWE/203/1.I.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Before Zon</u>	<u>Zon</u>	<u>Between Zon and Grave</u>	<u>Grave</u>	<u>Location North of R. Mass</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Coldstream Gds Op	19 0930(Eindhoven)		191230 to 191730 (5545)		19 1900(6657)	
55 Pz Regt	19 1045(Eindhoven) (d)		191630(Uden) (d)		19 2025(6657)	
HQ 21 A Tk Regt	19 0900(Valkenswaard)				19 after dark (6653)	
HQ 32 Gds Bde	19 0930(Valkenswaard)				19 2200(6657)	
128 Pz Amb	19 0900(South of Valkenswaard)		(191400(South of St Oedenrode)	19 2100	19 (6655)	
615 Pz Sqn			(19 1600 (Veghel)			
Welsh Gds Group	19 0900(Arrived Valkenswaard from right hand route)			19 after dark*		*All in position 19 2400
84 Med Regt	19 0800(Joe's Br)				20 0100(6956)	
<u>Gds Arm Div A Echelon Gp</u>						
D Sqn 2 HCR						
94 LAA Regt	19 0900(Dutch frontier)	19 1400	19 2100 to 20 0700 harboured (5851)	20 0820	20 1020(Heumen)	
100 AA Bde(elements)	19 morning (Joe's Br)		19 1900(Veghel)*(g)	20 0600		*409 LAA Bty harboured
148 Pz Pk Sqn	19 0800(South of Joe's Br)				20 0730(6554)	
11 Pz Coy	19 0800(South of Joe's Br)		Before 19 1900 (St Oedenrode)	20 0800		
AOP						
A Echelon Gds Arm Div		19 evening* (c)(f) 20 morning (f)				*A Echelon attacked by armour
<u>Gds Arm Div BASC Gp</u>						
A Sqn 2 HCR						
310 Coy BASC	19 1900(halted Eindhoven)				20 1200(6654)	
535 Coy BASC	19 1800 to 20 0030 (halted Eindhoven)		20 0530 to 20 0700(Uden)	20 1130	20 1215(6555)	
224 Coy BASC					20 1300(6555)	

note:- All times are from unit war diaries except where specially noted below:-

(b) HS/WD/NWE/101/1.I Appx L. (c) HS/21AG/TS/W/39/245 (g) HS/WD/NWE/854/3.I (h) HS/WD/NWE/ /259/1.I Appx C
(f) HS/WD/NWE/455/2.I. Q Bty (d) HS/WD/NWE/199/1.I.

Unit	Before Zen	Zen	Between Zen and Grave	Grave	Location North of R. Maas	Remarks
<u>Main HQ 30 Corps Gp</u>						
44 R Tks Group	19 to 20 0544 (South of Hindhoven)	20 0711*				*Moved off axis
88Y Group	20 0200 to 20 0500 (South of Valkenswaard)	20 1100(g)*			20 1700(7257)(c)	*Tanks before 20 1100 vehicles from 20 1100
Main HQ 30 Corps) Comdr 43 Div	(19 1800(South of Joe's Br) 20 1135(2 miles (b) north of Hindhoven)		(20 1355(2 miles south of St Oedenrode)(h) 20 1540(past Uden) (h)		20 1800(7155)	
73 A Tk Regt*	20 1330(moved on from Hindhoven)				20 1800(7153)	*Less three btys
1003 <u>Nijmegen AA Group</u>	20 1130(Valkenswaard)* (1)					*Frozen
Seaborne Tail A) 1 Airborne Div)	20 0900(crossed Joe's Br) (j) 20(9 miles south of Hindhoven) (j)*					*Frozen
43 Recce Regt Gp	20 1400(South of Aalst)* and (h)					*Moved off axis temporarily
130 Bde Group	20 1635(Hindhoven)(h) 20 1725(north of Hindhoven) (h)		20 1830 (St. Oedenrode)(h) 20 2300(South of Grave - halted)		21 0830(Nijmegen)	*Column very spread out
Tac HQ 43 Div			21 0345(Uden)* (h)			*Trying to pass 130 Bde
Tac HQ 8 Armd Bde	20 1600(Hechtel)		21 0230 to 21 0530 (3 1/2 miles south of Grave)		21 0930(6955)	
Artillery Group					21 1055(6559)(1)	
64 Med Regt	20 1630(Joe's Br)		21 0400 to 21 0625		21 1107(6659)(1)	
112 Pz Regt	20 1700(Joe's Br) 8	 to 21 0420 (South of Zeeland)		21 1040(6358)(k)	
43 Div RE Group	20 1700(Hechtel)(k)		21 0345 to 21 0530 (Veghel) (k)		21 1130(6258)	
214 Bde Group	20 1800 (Hechtel) 20 2359(Hindhoven)		21 0945(Uden) (h)		21 1750(6256)	
8 Netherlands Bde	21 1020(4 miles north of Hindhoven) (h)					

Note:- All times are from unit war diaries except where specially noted below:-

(b) HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I Appx L (h) HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I Appx C (1) HS/WD/NWE/534/1.I (j) HS/WD/NWE/1111/2.I
(k) HS/WD/NWE/658/2.I (1) HS/WD/NWE/264/1.I Appx J (m) HS/WD/NWE/268/1.I (n) HS/WD/NWE/984/1.I
(e) HS/WD/NWE/854/3.I (c) HS/21AG/TS/W/39/245

Unit	Before Zen	Zen	Between Zen and Grave	Grave	Location North of H. Mass	Remarks
<u>Main HQ 43 Div Group</u>	21 1020(Eindhoven) (h)				21 2030(7058) (m)	
<u>Artillery Group</u>						
<u>under 94 Wd Regt</u>	21 1020(1 mile south of Eindhoven) (h)		21 1555(south of Veghel) (l)		22 0300* (Neerbosch)	*All in 22 0545 (1)
<u>129 Bde Group</u>	21 0135(just south of Joe's Br) (b)				22 0200(6256)*(n)	*Nearly all in
<u>3 CCS(Lt.Sec)</u>				21 1400(6859)	PRIORITY ?
<u>"(Remainder?)"</u>	22 0200(Eindhoven)				22 1230(6859)	
<u>16 Airfield Construction Group</u>						
<u>78 Rd Constr Coy</u>	20 0900 to 21 1500 (Eindhoven)		21 2030 (Uden)*			*For Volkel airfield
<u>'BERTRAM' Bridging Column</u>						
<u>1 Cdn A Tps Engrs</u>	21 1210(Hechtel)(o)				21 1700(7060)(o)	PRIORITY
<u>85 Cdn Br Coy</u>	21 1330(Bourg Leopold)			21 1900	21 (Hatert))	move
<u>10 CCS(Lt.Sec)</u>	21 1300(South of Hechtel)				22 1000(6859)	
<u>"(Remainder)*"</u>						*Behind cut
<u>Nijmegen AA Group</u>	21 1930(unfrozen at Valkenswaard)(g)		22 0630(Veghel)(i)*			*Halted for 69 Bde Op to pass
<u>Seaborne Tail A</u>	21 2000(unfrozen 9 miles south of Eindhoven) (j)				22 0500 to 22 1800(S.W. of 22 1530 (j) Nijmegen)(j)	
<u>1 Airborne Div</u>	21(passed AA Group at Eindhoven) (g)					
<u>43 Recce Regt Co</u>	21 2000 to 21 2300 (Eindhoven) (p)				22 0900(b)* 22 0755(6650)(h)	*Tail
<u>69 Bde Group</u>	21 2345(south of Joe's Br) 22 0900(6 miles north of Eindhoven) (b)*		22 1200(between Veghel and Uden) (column cut by enemy action)(g)		22 1110(b) 22 1342(7058)(b)	*PRIORITY move

note:- All times are from unit war diaries except where specially noted below:-

(b) HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I Appx L. (g) HS/WD/NWE/558/1.I. (h) HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I Appx C. (i) HS/WD/NWE/534/1.I
 (j) HS/WD/NWE/1111/2.I (o) HS/WD/Canada/282/2.I (p) HS/WD/NWE/934/2.I (1) HS/WD/NWE/264/1.I Appx J.
 (m) HS/WD/NWE/268/1.I (n) HS/WD/NWE/984/1.I

Section V - Operations on the Island 21 to 26 Sep

44. 30 Corps orders for 21 Sep

The tasks which Commander 30 Corps gave to formations for 21 Sep were as below:-

Gds Armd Div: (A) Ensure security of Nijmegen road bridge.

(B) Advance earliest possible 21 Sep at maximum speed to area Arnhem continuing with original task for operation 'GARDEN' and also bringing assistance to 1 Airborne Div. Main axis through Hossen, 7167, operational traffic may also use road through Elst, 7070. If strong opposition is met, fan out west, reach Nederrijn west of Arnhem to contact 1 Airborne Div.

(C) Coldm Gds group remain in support of 82 US Airborne Div.

43 Div: (A) Relieve Welsh Gds at Grave and Neerbosch bridges earliest possible; patrol west from Grave.

(B) Send two battalions 130 Bde to assist Gds Armd Div to clear up west part of Nijmegen and to secure railway bridge 7063. (Airborne Corps are requested to assist by endeavouring to seize the north end of this bridge).

(C) Advance as soon as possible west of Gds Armd Div towards Nederrijn to assist 1 Airborne Div.

(D) Inter divisional boundary - railway line Nijmegen Arnhem inclusive to 43 Div, when the latter advance.

(E) Concentrate remainder of division as it arrives astride the main road between Grave and Neerbosch bridges.

45. Gds Armd Div fails to break through 21 Sep

On the night 20/21 Sep 3 IG was moved forward to protect the road bridge from counter-attack from the north; two companies crossed the river, while the rest of the battalion remained on the south side. At 0300 hours one squadron of 2 Armd IG joined the companies on the north bank.

During the morning of 21 Sep this force did not see any enemy, but experienced fairly heavy mortar and shell fire. Two troops 2 HCR, which were with 5 Gds Armd Bde, were unable to get forward on either flank, or in the centre, but on the latter axis they were able to pinpoint some anti-aircraft guns in area 6967, on a lateral road to Hossen from the road Nijmegen-Elst. The Irish Guards also found an enemy map which showed these positions in detail.

Then at 1100 hours the Irish Guards Group was ordered to advance north up the main road and break through to Arnhem.

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx OM/19

HS/WD/NWE/884/2.I
HS/WD/NWE/884/1.I
HS/B/84 p.504/7
HS/WD/NWE/828/1.I
HS/B/122 p.337

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
APPX INT/9

HS/B/84. p.506

- [COMMENTS:- (1) The main road in 1944 ran through ELST, the road alongside the railway on Sep 11. did not exist then.
- (11) The History of the Irish Guards gives an interesting comment on this plan.]

At 1330 hours the advance started and at 1350 hours it finished, when the 3 leading tanks were knocked out, as they came into view of the above enemy position. Only one field regiment RA was available to support this attack and their support does not appear to have been effective.

HS/WD/NWE/469/2.I

[COMMENT:- Something went wrong here, no FOO appears to have been with the Irish Guards at the beginning of the attack].

Typhoon support could not be used as, first the control set broke down, then later in the afternoon the fly in of the Poles automatically banned the use of aircraft on ground support.

3 IG, who had been riding forward on the tanks, tried to advance, but without success. A right flanking movement was also tried. Finally at 1830 hours the group drew back 1,000 yards to harbour.

HS/B/56 p.227/8

Meanwhile the Welsh Guards Group following behind the Irish Guards was held up on Nijmegen road bridge; here the leading squadron sat in their tanks from about 1300 to 1700 hours, not greatly enjoying the view. They were then ordered to find a way round on the left. They passed Fort Lent and knocked out 3 German tanks, but by then it was growing dark and they also were withdrawn to harbour near the bridge.

HS/WD/NWE/374/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I
APPX C.

46. 43 Div action on 21 Sep

By 0930 hours 130 Bde had two battalions clearing in Nijmegen and had taken over the bridges at Grave and Heerbosch with the third.

Battalion commanders had arrived before their units, so the clearance was started very quickly after the latter came in. By 1045 hours the railway bridge had been reached and by 1240 hours the south bank of the river had been cleared and the north end of the bridge was held. Carriers crossed the bridge, but it needed strengthening to take tanks. This was completed by 1615 hours.

HS/WD/NWE/905/2.I
HS/WD/NWE/658/2.I

HS/WD/NWE/409/1.I
and Wireless Log
HS/B/116. pp.122/3
HS/D/NWE/967/2.I

Meanwhile HQ 214 Bde arrived in the area between Grave and Heerbosch at 1130 hours, having just received a message from 43 Div that the divisional commander was coming with orders, which might involve a fairly early move.

The commander's orders were that 214 Bde would cross the river by the railway bridge, find out how the Guards were progressing and advance in the direction of Arnhem round their west flank. The necessity for the utmost speed was emphasised.

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx 1/21
HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I
Appx C.

[COMMENT:- HQ 30 Corps received a message from 43 Div at 1300 hours that 214 Bde would cross the river at Nijmegen by the railway bridge at 1400 hours. Then at 1355 hours HQ 43 Div received a message from 214 Bde that they could not use the bridge till 1500 hours].

214 Bde, which was all in harbour soon after midday, started to move forward to the railway bridge about 1530 hours. Meanwhile the brigade commander had gone forward to meet commander 5 Gds Arm'd Bde north of the river. It was decided that the enemy west flank rested on the maze of houses, orchards and trees round Oosterhout, 6866, and that further progress this day on the Guards' front appeared improbable. By this time only 2 hours of daylight remained, there appeared to be just time to close with the enemy at Oosterhout and probe his dispositions.

But the leading battalion of the brigade, 7 Som LI, was not at hand to do this. It was held up in the southern outskirts of the town at 1705 hours by part of Gds Arm'd Div and only reached a concentration area close southwest of the railway bridge at 1930 hours, after debussing and moving up on foot.

[COMMENT:- From the map a detour to the west would appear to have been possible].

Meanwhile the Welsh Guards put in an attack on the left flank (see previous paragraph) and commander 43 Div came forward to 214 Bde commander and at 1845 hours sent a message back to HQ 43 Div:

"Arm'd Div forces to north of river on our axis must remain there tonight, arrangements for relief at first light to be made between comds concerned."

[COMMENT:- North of the river on 43 Div axis there appear to have been this night:-

Previous para end
HS/WD/NWE/886/1.I
HS/B/27. pp.70/1
HS/WD/NWE/374/1.I

Welsh Guards Group (possibly)
One battalion 82 US Airborne Div
Part of 5 Dorset, guarding the bridge
Part of 7 Som LI, mostly A Echelon, which had crossed the road
bridge with the Guards' column].

47. 30 Corps orders for 22 Sep

The tasks given to formations for 22 Sep were:-

- 43 Div. (a) 52 Div Recce Group and Polish Para Bde placed under command.
(b) Capture Arnhem road bridge intact.

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx OM/20

- (c) Operate with maximum speed to contact 1 Airborne Div area Oosterbeek ferry 6976, subsequently passing one brigade group over Nederrijn.
- (d) Make Dutch brigade responsible for Grave bridges.
- (e) Hold Nijmegen bridges till relieved by 69 Bde.

Gds Armd Div

- (a) Remain as now disposed area Nijmegen allowing 43 Div complete priority all roads as early as possible 22 Sep
- (b) Form reserve brigade strength 6858, but Coldm Gds group will not move till agreed by 82 US Airborne Div.
- (c) Be prepared form reserve area Elst 7070 when 43 Div operations allow.

69 Bde

Take over command of Dutch brigade and responsibility for Grave, Neerbosch and Nijmegen bridges.

HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I
Appx C

Then at 0145 hours 22 Sep a personal message was received at HQ 43 Div for the divisional commander from commander 30 Corps. This gave a special sitrep of 1 Airborne Div at 2030 hours 21 Sep, which ended - "relief within 24 hours vital." The message continued:-

"Corps comd 30 Corps wishes you to appreciate urgency of situation today and that it is vital that contact be gained within 24 hours. All risks must therefore be taken."

48. 43 Div breaks through - 22 Sep

43 Div orders issued at 2230 hours 21 Sep were:-

FIRST

Div advances tomorrow two up through gds armd div to secure Arnhem br and make contact with 1 airborne div.

SECOND

214 bde will attack first lt tomorrow on left and excl of main route to Arnhem as already ordered. rly br will be used exclusively for conc incl use by tks.

THIRD

129 Bde will attack NOT before 1000 and adv on main axis Nijmegen-Arnhem using rd br which will be cleared by gds armd div. tps under comd 13/18 B less one sqn and hy mortar coy less two pls both ex 130 inf bde."

FOURTH

.....

[COMMENT:- The remainder of the order dealt with handing over responsibility for the bridges].

HS/B/27 p.73

214 Bde attack was made by 7 Som LI, who had under command one squadron 4/7 DG, a troop of 17 prs, machine guns and mortars of 8 Mx and in support one field regt RA and a battery of self propelled 25 prs. They advanced across the railway bridge at 0700 hours.

HS/WD/NWE/828/1.I
HS/B/122.
pp.341/4

C Sqn 2 HCR was under 43 Div command for this operation and they tried to slip round the German right flank on the river bank road in the early morning mist. Two troops were successful and these joined the Poles at Driel, but the mist lifted as squadron HQ was following them; the leading scout car was hit by a bazooka and the other vehicles had great difficulty in getting back clear of this very exposed position.

HS/WD/NWE/967/2.I
HS/B/27 pp.73/75.
HS/B/116 pp.124/
127

About 1000 hours the leading company of 7 Som LI was held up just short of Oosterhout. A second company was sent round to the right to outflank this opposition, but it was held up after working its way round to the north of the village. A battalion attack with strong artillery support was then arranged. This started at 1520 hours and by 1700 hours the village was cleared. 139 prisoners were taken, battalion casualties were 19 wounded, one of whom, the commander of the leading company died two days later. Two enemy tanks were knocked out and one was captured.

[COMMENT:- Artillery ammunition was short in the forward area].

CA IRA Vol.XIII
No.2 pp.63/66

5 DCLI, who had been waiting behind 7 Som LI, pressed forward on the left as soon as the village was clear, no enemy was met and a gap appeared to be open. Part of their original plan was scrapped, their armoured column was quickly formed up and despatched and the soft vehicle column moved off behind it with most of the men on foot. The light was fading rapidly as the head of the fast column reached Driel, where the leading tank most regrettably shot up one of 2 HCR's armoured cars, which they failed to recognise. But back at the De Hoop crossroads, 690708, fun had started. A German column of 5 tanks coming from Elst was signalled onto the axis in the dusk by a 5 DCLI despatch rider, who when he saw their crosses, hurriedly carried the news forward to Driel. The last vehicles of the fast column were still approaching rather strung out. The first got through, the occupants of the second got back. (See Appendix D for the detailed story). So both columns were warned; the soft column reached Driel by a detour; and a very successful ambush was laid, in which all 5 tanks were destroyed.

HS/WD/NWE/829/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/409/1.I

By 2015 hours 5 DCLI had made contact with the Poles and had handed over to them the 2 dukws, which they had taken up loaded with supplies and ammunition for 1 Airborne Div. Behind them 1 Wore B advanced to and occupied Valburg, 6670.

HS/WD/NWE/828/1.I

The two troops of 2 HCR with the Poles had a busy day, fighting hard and relaying messages. They had great difficulty in persuading the Poles that their cars were not suitable for use as tanks.

HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I
 APPX C
 HS/WD/NWE/372/1.I
 HS/WD/NWE/984/1.I
 HS/WD/NWE/984/2.I

HS/WD/NWE/884/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/834/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I
 Appx K 23

HS/WD/NWE/184/1.I
 Appx OM/21

HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I
 Appx D/38

On the right of the divisional front 4 Wilts of 129 Bde attacked north about midday. This brigade after moving all night up the axis, went into harbour north of Grave at 0400 hours. Four hours later they set off again and by 1100 hours were complete at Nijmegen, where 4 Wilts crossed to the north bank, the other battalions remaining south of the river. 4 Wilts attack took them to the side road leading from 695673 to Reasen Bommel station, where they met stiff opposition and had heavy casualties in one company. Two tanks of 2 Armd IG and one of 13/18 H were hit by the enemy during this action. They then tried to cross the railway on their right, but were unsuccessful. In the evening 5 Wilts crossed the R Waal and advanced up the east side of the railway about dusk. By 2200 hours they had fought their way up to about 400 yards south of Reasen Bommel station.

130 Bde handed over the bridges, Grave to Nijmegen, to R Netherlands Bde and 69 Bde (50 (N) Div).

49. 30 Corps orders for 23 Sep

Tasks for 23 Sep were:-

Gds Armd Div
 (less 32 Gds Bde)

5 Gds Armd Bde to protect the right flank of the bridgehead from 129 Bde to R Waal, advancing as far as pond 729658 in any case; one armoured regiment to be available to support 129 Bde in case of attack.

43 Div (a)

Retain one brigade group in area R Waal bridgehead enlarging this towards Bommel, 7367.

(b)

Capture Elst.

(c)

Secure and strengthen junction with 1 Airborne Div.

(d)

Reconnoitre westwards between Waal and Nederrijn.

50. Narrative 23 Sep

Commander 43 Div decided to send 130 Bde, with 13/18 H (from 129 Bde) under command, up to the Nederrijn via Velburg. 214 Bde would move 7 Som LI out of Oosterhout by 0630 hours to clear the road for 130 Bde and would attack Elst with 7 Som LI and 1 Wore R, not before 1000 hours. 43 Recce Regt would cross the R Waal before first light to carry out their reconnaissance task.

HS/WD/NWE/409/1.I
and Wireless Log

214 Bde ordered 7 Som LI to Elmeren area, 6769, and 1 Worc R to Het Klooster area, 6769. But 7 Som LI could not get wheeled vehicles to this area from the south or west, and 1 Worc R reported enemy to the north, so 7 Som LI concentrated at 664695, just short of Valburg, with all vehicles off the road.

HS/WD/NWE/905/2.I
HS/B/116 p.129

130 Bde move started in mist and pouring rain. 5 Dorset in the lead were shot up in and just beyond Valburg by enemy artillery and tanks. This delayed the major part of the column and it was late afternoon before the third battalion reached its area. Another cause of delay was that the dukws, in which the brigade moved, were unwieldy on these narrow, winding, embanked roads.

HS/WD/NWE/409/1.I
and Wireless Log.
HS/B/116 p.130

214 Bde's attack was postponed till 130 Bde was clear and went in at 1655 hours. On the left 1 Worc R reached the outskirts of Elst by last light, their squadrons of 4/7 DG having accounted for two Panthers and one Tiger. On the right 7 Som LI, who had started off across country with infantry alone and later were rejoined by their tanks, carriers and anti-tank guns, seized a position on the main road southwest of Elst after meeting very little opposition. Here they were astride the communications of the Germans facing 4 Wilts and had fights during the night with enemy coming from both directions.

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx I/24

On 129 Bde front there was no appreciable progress during the day, but 4 Som LI crossed the R Waal and moved up on the left of 4 Wilts to the southwest of Reet, 6968.

HS/AL/808 p.129
HS/WD/NWE/828/1.I

43 Recce Regt reached a line just west of the road Andelst, 6269 - Randwijk, 6175. The GSO I and CRE of 1 Airborne Div, who had crossed the river to Driel on 22 Sep, set off early on 23 Sep in one of 2 HCR's troops for 30 Corps HQ at Nijmegen. They were waylaid by an enemy half track and the GSO I had to take to the fields. A tank escort was then obtained from Driel, which saw the CRE past the danger spot, and later another car of 2 HCR brought the GSO I in. Both officers returned to Driel that night.

HS/WD/NWE/886/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx S/44

On the extreme right of the bridgehead 1 WG, with 1 squadron 2 Arm'd Recce WG in support, attacked towards Bommel against strong enemy fire and appear to have reached De Pas, 7266.

51. 30 Corps Operation Instruction No.25 of 23 Sep

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx O/11 and
Addt in
Appx OM/22

British Airborne Corps with under command R Netherlands Bde, SEY group less one squadron and 52 Recce Group (from 0900 hours 24 Sep) would relieve 69 Bde group on the

Nijmegen bridges by 1400 hours 24 Sep and become responsible for the bridgehead from Fort, 7264 to Groot Wiel, 6965. They would also be responsible for reconnaissance between the R Waal and the R Mass and also for an area south of the R Mass.

30 Corps in conjunction with British Airborne Corps would continue with operation 'GARDEN'.

43 Div tasks were:-

- (a) Secure the right flank of 30 Corps from inclusive Elst (after capture) to the Nederrijn at the point where the bridgehead is being established.
- (b) Ensure that the Poles cross the river to join 1 Airborne Div during the night 23/24 Sep.
- (c) Pass two battalions* over the Nederrijn on the night 23/24 Sep to link up with the west flank of 1 Airborne Div (*amended to "two companies" in 30 Corps O/29 of 232242A).
- (d) Be prepared to pass 129 Bde over Nederrijn to widen bridgehead when this brigade is released by action of Gds Armd Div (see below).
- (e) Reconnoitre west to 50 easting grid.

Gds Armd Div would take 69 Bde group under command from 1400 hours 24 Sep, when relieved of its present task. The division would then protect the right flank of 30 Corps from inclusive Bommel, 7367 (which would be captured) to exclusive Elst; keep the main road Nijmegen-Elst clear; and retain one armoured regimental group in reserve north of the R Waal. 32 Gds Bde would continue to operate on the Corps axis south of Grave.

52. Narrative - night 23/24 Sep

130 Bde reconnaissance for the crossing had been curtailed by their delayed arrival on 23 Sep and they only had with them sufficient assault boats for a one battalion crossing. Commander 43 Div decided that only the Poles and some dukws with supplies would be sent across during this night.

130 Bde handed over their assault boats, with personnel to operate them, to the Polish brigade. The latter were unfamiliar with this type of operation, so it did not start till a late hour and only about 200 Poles were ferried across before daylight stopped operation. 130 Bde provided covering fire, but the enemy still brought fire to bear on the crossing site. Finally the assault boats were left on the bank at daybreak, where they suffered from enemy fire throughout the day.

HS/B/116 p.131

HS/WD/NWE/193/1.I
Appx L

Copy of notes
made by Lt. Gen.
Sir Brian
Horrocks on the
Battle of Arnhem.
File HS/56/IV

HS/B/116 pp.132/3
and 135
HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx OM/23/2235

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/368/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I
Appx K 25

53. 30 Corps plan - 24 Sep

Late on 23 Sep Commander Second Army delegated authority to Commanders 30 Corps and 1 Br Airborne Corps to withdraw 1 Airborne Div if and when considered advisable.

Early next morning Commanders 30 Corps and 43 Div studied the southern end of 1 Airborne Div bridgehead from the Driel church steeple. As there seemed a danger that the airborne troops might be cut off from the river altogether Lieut. General Horrocks told Major General Thomas to carry out an assault crossing that night with a minimum of one battalion in order to relieve pressure on the bridgehead. He was then to pass over stores and Polish paratroopers if time permitted. He was also asked to reconnoitre further to the west, because if things went well that night it might be feasible to sideslip 43 Div across the Nederrijn in that area and carry out a left hook against the German forces attacking the Airborne perimeter.

On the other hand the situation of 1 Airborne Div might become so desperate before this plan took effect that evacuation might have to be given priority. It would appear that General Horrocks decided that BGS 30 Corps and Commander 43 Div would plan and prepare for the evacuation to take place on the night 25/26 Sep and communicate this plan to 1 Airborne Div, but that the decision as to whether the plan should be implemented and when, would not be taken till the morning of 25 Sep.

[COMMENT:- Lieut. General Horrocks's notes and 43 Div History differ here to some extent].

Lieut. General Horrocks then drove back to meet Commander Second Army at St. Oedenrode, where the whole situation was discussed. When he set off to return to his HQ, he found the road cut and had to stay the night in that area. Commander British Airborne Corps took over temporary command of 30 Corps.

54. Narrative 24 Sep

On the right of the bridgehead 69 Bde came under command Gds Armd Div in the afternoon and attacked north on and through the left of the Welsh Guards to capture Bessel. 5 R Yorks were held up on the right between De Pae and Hassen, but the other two battalions reached their objectives Hassen and Bema, 7168, with practically no opposition and during the night made contact with 7 Som LI on the railway south of Elst. This pinched out 129 Bde.

In 214 Bde 7 Som LI and 1 Wore R cleared the western half of Elst and at last light held the railway north and south of the village at 705722 and 705701, though there was still an enemy strong point in houses between Elst and Snodenhoek, 6971. 5 BOLI advanced east to the railway, where they were in contact with the enemy from road crossing 705735 to the Nederrijn. 130 Bde prepared for their night operation.

55. Narrative 130 Bde night 24/25 Sep

HS/B/116 pp.133/5
HS/WD/WWE/374/1.1
HS/WD/WWE/266/1.1
HS/AL/808 pp.112/3
and pp.129/130

The site selected for the crossing was the ferry at Heveadorp, which was by now outside the western side of 1 Airborne Div's perimeter. It was overlooked by the enemy on the high ground on the north bank. Incessant mortar and machine gun fire made movement in daylight between Driel and the river bank impossible. The church steeple in Driel provided the best view point for reconnaissance. The river current was weakest before midnight, after which it was due to increase considerably.

130 Bde plan was for 4 Dorset to cross under covering fire from the divisional artillery, the other two battalions, a squadron of tanks and machine guns and mortars of 8 Mx. Zero hour was to be at 2200 hours. The battalion objective was a factory about 600 yards inland. At the same time the Polish brigade was to cross on the right in the assault boats remaining from the previous night's operation.

But the assault boats for 4 Dorset did not arrive. Two lorry loads took a wrong turning and drove into the German lines to the east. Two more slid off the grassy road into a ditch and could not be traced. One lorry load reached the Poles, but it had no paddles. About midnight commander 130 Bde decided to postpone the crossing of the Poles and 5 Dorset brought their 12 assault boats across to 4 Dorset on carriers. 4 Dorset's crossing, due to start at 2200 hours, actually started at 0130 hours.

HS/WD/WWE/264/1.1

By now the river current had increased. The first wave landed much more spread out than was intended. The boats returned to the near bank further downstream. Men wading in mud and water dragged them back along the water's edge for more trips. By 0330 hours about 250 men had been embarked and the assault boats turned to ferrying stores till about 0415 hours, when it became light enough for aimed fire. German mortars and machine guns, firing on fixed lines, had interfered considerably with the

operation during the night, but the current appears to have been the worst factor. The battalion landed in small parties in the face of a strong and obstinate enemy on the wooded high ground. Efforts to link up were mostly unsuccessful, in the main the battalion fought dispersed in small groups out of touch with each other. A few men on the right succeeded in reaching 1 Airborne Div.

Only three of the dukws standing by to cross with supplies, were able to enter the water owing to the steepness of the banks. These stuck in the mud on the far side. CRE 1 Airborne Div crossed by one of these and made his way upstream in the water till he reached the perimeter and so was able to deliver the orders from British Airborne Corps for the evacuation.

56. 30 Corps plan 25 Sep

Lieut. General Horrocks by-passed the cut in the Corps axis with a carrier escort and reached his HQ by 1100 hours to be met with the gloomy news that all communication had now ceased to 4 Dorsets on the north bank, few assault boats were left and ammunition was getting short.

[COMMENT:- Neither the assault boat nor the ammunition position turned out to be as bad as was thought at first:-

(i) Assault boats. 43 Div had only 16 left; but the 42 stormboats, which had come forward in 'BERTRAM' column, had not yet been used. So the fact that 30 Corps reserve of assault boats was at the head of their column just south of the cut, was not the vital misfortune that it had appeared to be. In addition some German assault boats had been found in Nijmegen and were being inspected (40 were obtained from this source, but apparently too late for incorporation in the plan, see para 58 below).

(ii) Artillery ammunition. One regiment was reported to be down to 5 rounds per gun, but the general picture was that after the programme for that night (25 Sep), 30 Corps would probably be down to 50 rounds per gun. This allowed 43 Div 100 rounds per gun for one field regiment for the deception programme and 200 rounds per gun for three field regiments and one battery for the evacuation, plus a medium artillery allotment as well].

In consultation with Commander British Airborne Corps the decision was taken to withdraw 1 Airborne Div that night and the code word 'BERLIN' was sent to them. 30 Corps Operation Instruction No.26 was issued. Briefly this gave tasks as below:-
43 Div would be responsible for the evacuation and deception plan and would in addition complete the capture of Elst. They would hold one brigade group in reserve.

Gda Armd Div (less 32 Gds Bde) would capture Bommel.

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
HS/56 Part IV Gen.
Horrocks's notes.

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx I/25/1030, 1320
HS/WD/NWE/587/1.I
Appx D.2
HS/B/116. p.136
HS/WD/NWE/658/2.I

HS/56 Part IV Gen.
Horrocks's notes.
HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx OM/24/1850
HS/WD/NWE/264/1.I
Appx J.13, D.6

HS/56 Part IV Gen.
Horrocks's notes
HS/B/116 p.135

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx O/12

This instruction also outlined future developments:

Ode Arnd Div would continue to operate northeast to push the enemy out of range of Nijmegen bridge.

43 Div would reconnoitre and plan for a possible river crossing between Renkum, 6276 and Wageningen, 5776.

57. Narrative 25 September

HS/WD/NWE/374/1.I

130 Bde had still no communication with 4 Dorset and it was evident that the battalion had not been able to collect all its companies together. But communication with 1 Airborne Div was good and at 1030 hours a message was received from them agreeing to the evacuation plan and asking for it to be implemented forthwith, also saying that at least 30 assault boats would be needed. At 1145 hours 'BERLIN tonight' was received from HQ 43 Div, passed to 1 Airborne Div and acknowledged. The brigade commander then left to receive orders from commander 43 Div and at 1630 hours issued his own orders.

[COMMENT:- The gist of commander 43 Div's orders is given in the next paragraph].

HS/WD/NWE/259/1.I

Appx K.27

HS/WD/NWE/984/2.I

HS/B/116 p.136

On 130 Bde's left 43 Recce Regt with 12 KRRC under command held the left flank and in the afternoon 5 Wilts (129 Bde) despatched a mixed column to Zetten, 6172 for the deception programme. As dusk approached, this column moved somewhat ostentatiously up to the river bank in the Heteren area and by a fire programme did their best to make the enemy believe that an assault crossing was being made there.

HS/WD/NWE/368/1.I

Appx C.7

On the right of the bridgehead 5 B Yorks continued their advance on Bommel and captured it against opposition.

HS/WD/NWE/984/1.I

South of Elst 4 Wilts of 129 Bde found the enemy position on the road to Resen Bommel station vacated, which had held up the Irish Guards on 21 Sep.

[COMMENT:- The enemy here had been cut off during the night, when 7 Green Howards made contact with 7 Som LI to the north of them].

HS/WD/NWE/409/1.I

and Appx D

1 Wore R completed the capture of Elst and the enemy retreated towards Arnhem. 214 Bde patrolled up to about a mile east of the railway.

58. The Evacuation - night 25/26 September

HS/WD/NWE/266/1.I

HS/B/116 p.136

For the evacuation 43 Div, commander planned that ONE 43 Div would carry out ferrying operations under 130 Bde command at three points, one where 4 Dorset had crossed the night before, the other two opposite 1 Airborne Div. Strong artillery support would be given and 129 Bde would carry out a diversion on the west flank (see para 57 above). Evacuation to Nijmegen would be under divisional arrangements.

HS/WD/NWE/374/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/266/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/587/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/266/1.IHS/WD/NWE/266/1.I
HS/AL/808 p.113
HS/WD/NWE/667/3.I
HS/WD/Canada/282/
2.I

Appx 4

[COMMENT:- The number of assault boats and storm boats planned to be used is stated by CRE 43 Div and in 43 Div History to be 32 and 42 respectively, but 130 Bde gives the figures as 16 and 15. 130 Bde's figures appear to be correct for the numbers used (see Narrator's note filed in HS/AL/3047/1/22)].

CRE 43 Div arranged that 260 Pd Coy would operate assault boats on one site opposite 1 Airborne Div and 23 Cdn Pd Coy would operate stormboats on the other. On 4 Dorset's site 553 Pd Coy would operate assault boats and 20 Cdn Pd Coy stormboats.

[COMMENT:- These Canadian companies had come forward in 'BERTRAM' bridging column and were expert with stormboats.]

The engineer units concentrated at Valburg in the afternoon, but no movement forward was permitted till dark. At 2100 hours, when the fire plan began, the companies opposite 1 Airborne Div were in position behind the flood bank and had to carry their boats over this 20 feet high steep sided bank and over another smaller one to reach the river. There was no moon and it was raining, making this 300 yard carry no easy task, particularly for the stormboats. The lighter assault boats were in the water first and brought back the earliest loads, their first wave was away before 2130 hours; but the stormboats starting a little later brought over the greater ones. In the small hours of the morning the current quickened and assault boat crews were increased to 6 and then to 8 men, the pioneer platoon of 5 Dorset relieved casualties and kept the boats running. And the Canadian stormboats continued, despite mechanical troubles from the rain. Intermittent enemy fire came over in the night, but most of it was high and our casualties were surprisingly light, but as dawn broke grey the position changed. The enemy began to skim the surface of the water with automatic fire and could now observe his mortar fire; casualties quickly increased. A young Canadian officer took over a load of lifebelts and left them on the far shore. He made two trips with these and each time brought back a boat load of men. In the first trip he had about five casualties, in the second hardly a man got out unhit, many were dead. It was gallant work, but the order to stop had to be given, though still some hundred men could be seen waiting on the far bank. It was broad daylight when the crews moved back from the river bank with what boats could be retrieved.

Meanwhile on 4 Dorset site the south bank was lit up by the factory to the north, which was still burning, and the enemy were on the alert after the previous night's crossing. Before starting up the noisy engines of the stormboats, an assault boat was

HS/WD/Canada/
282/1.I
Appx 6
HS/B/116. p.138

sent across to ascertain the numbers to be brought back. Only 2 men were found. Major Hall of 4 Dorset crossed with withdrawal orders for the battalion, but was unable to find them. Periodic trips across were made throughout the night and one party of 4 Dorset came back in a boat left on the far shore the night before. In all about 50 men came back through this site during the night. At 0300 hours the storm-boats, which had been launched on this site, were brought back to the flood bank; then orders were given for four to be sent to 1 Airborne Div site. Only one of these was successfully launched, the enemy had the site under more or less observed fire; and this one was driven into the shore by machine gun fire before it had gone far upstream.

Behind the two eastern ferry sites 5 Dorset had organised a reception area and from here the exhausted but unconquered men of 1 Airborne Div were quickly passed back to a large barn in Driel, lit by the headlights of a jeep, where blankets and rum, tea and hot stew awaited them. Many of the men had discarded their clothes to swim the river, but the houses of the village were ransacked to provide covering for them. Over 2,000 men passed through here that night and were then transported back to rest or hospital in Nijmegen.

59. Narrative 26 September

30 Corps message 0/41 of 251925A ordered Gds Armd Div to advance east on 26th September to capture Haalderen, 7566, and secure the line of the Rijn Wettering Lange (a canal running from north of Haalderen to north of Elst).

69 Bde met strong opposition east of Beemel and were only able to advance 1,000 yards in this direction, but they reached the canal at 746698, to the northeast of Beemel, and the Welsh Guards Group on their left advanced through Aam, 7170, to the canal at 722715, meeting no opposition. An attack against Haalderen, with full artillery support, was arranged for next morning.

In 43 Div 129 Bde relieved two battalions of 214 Bde and the latter concentrated in the Andelat, 6269 area. Sounds of fighting were still heard on the north bank during the day and fighting patrols were arranged to cross the river during the coming night to bring back any more survivors.

Enemy air activity over Nijmegen continued and one direct hit was made on the road bridge, but it remained open for one way traffic.

HS/B/116 p.137
HS/WD/WWR/905/2.I

HS/WD/WWR/181/1.I
Appx OM/24
" 1/26/1900
" 1/26/2005

HS/WD/WWR/259/1.I
Appx K/29
HS/WD/WWR/181/1.I
Appx L/26/1405

HS/WD/WWR/181/1.I

5 DCII Advance from Nijmegen to Driel on 22 Sep 1944

Extract from the article "With 30 Corps to Arnhem" by Lt. Col. George Taylor, DSO, in 'QA IRA', Volume XIII, No.2, June 49.

Just before the head of the column had made contact with the Poles, exciting events had happened to the rear part of "A" Company, and to the soft vehicle column. Major Parker, bringing up the rear of his Company, in his jeep, followed by his two Company carriers and a 15-cwt truck, reached the De Hook cross-roads, when suddenly a tank column came round the corner from Elst.

Major Parker had passed the first tank before he realised that they were Germans. He then drove with all speed towards Driel, to report and join up with the rest of his Company. Behind the jeep came the first carrier, containing C.S.M. Philip, Pte. Tucker, the driver, and some others.

ACCOUNT BY C.S.M. PHILIP, D.C.M.

"Major Parker was leading 'A' Company's group of vehicles in his jeep, but was travelling at too great a speed for my carrier, and by the time we were half-way to Driel I was six hundred yards behind, and the carrier following behind was another two hundred yards away.

In the distance I saw Major Parker passing a tank, on the fork-roads between Elst and Driel, but I carried on as I failed to realise they were Germans. When I was within a hundred yards, I saw they were a column of tanks, and, what was more important they were all marked with the black cross. We could not stop, but charged on, hoping to get through. The first two tanks pulled over to the right of the road and we skidded to a standstill with the front of the carrier touching the front of the tank. At the time I was sitting on the top of the carrier with a light machine-gun on my lap. The Tank Commander leaned out of the turret and commenced to remove his goggles, so I immediately gave him a burst with my L.M.G. and he slithered down inside the turret. At the same time the German crew opened fire with the two machine guns, but as one was too low and the other too high we did not suffer any casualties, and we all baled out to the right and left of the road. As I went to jump from the carrier, I still clearly remember striking my head on the 88 millimetre gun of the tank. We were very lucky, as on each side of the road was a ditch containing mud and reeds, which afforded excellent cover. From this ditch I observed five Tiger tanks on the road above us, and about a dozen enemy infantry on the road about one hundred yards away. The driver, Pte. Rogers, and myself, using the cover afforded by the ditch and the failing light, managed to contact the remainder of the column which was in the rear, approximately one mile behind. I then informed Major Kitchen of the occurrence and the enemy's position."

Meanwhile, the rear carrier, containing Lt. Olding of "A" Company, had turned back and met Lt. Bellamy with his anti-tank guns. They immediately got the guns into position, ready for action, and waited until Major Kitchen came up with "C" Company. The latter made a rapid appreciation and decided to make a detour. This was successfully carried out and Major Kitchen arrived in the vicinity of rear Battalion Headquarters at 2100 hours. Meanwhile, Major Parker had reported the situation to Battalion HQ and had reorganised his Company, and, borrowing a number of PIATs from Battalion HQ and "B" Company, went back with the idea of finding his missing men and setting an ambush for the enemy tanks. On the way back he met Major Kitchen and got a report on the situation. It was appreciated that by now the tanks would probably be in contact with "B" Company.

AMBUSH OF THE TIGERSMajor Parker's Story

"We moved down the road and I dropped one Platoon half-way between the De Hoop cross-roads and Driel as a firm base. The tanks could be heard milling about in the distance, towards where I thought "B" Company were. I considered that sooner or later they would come back down the road to Elst and that the best place to intercept them would be the De Hoop cross-roads. Accordingly, we set our trap. I gave orders for complete silence and no rounds to be fired unless attacked by infantry because of the flash, PIATs to be fired in a volley of three when given the order. No firing to take place until the leading tank had hit the mines. We now heard German Tiger tanks shooting up 'B' Company, and as this was happening a German motor combination came up the road from Elst, presumably to contact the tanks.

He blew up literally on our 75 mines. Next, we heard the tanks returning, headed by a D.R. He also blew up. The leading tank was firing Verrey lights to light the way every thirty seconds. It was fairly obvious that they were 'windy'. There were five tanks. As the first tank reached the 75 mines, I gave orders for groups two and three to fire. There was a tremendous explosion and six PIAT bombs hit the tank. This put him completely out of action. The next tank hit the mines and received the same treatment. The third tank tried to back out, but hit a string of mines which had been pulled in behind it and came to a halt on the initial explosion, and every time he tried to move another mine went off. Eventually he, too, was knocked out, by Pte. Brown, who went within a few yards of the tank with his PIAT before he fired. The tank was out, but so was one of the eyes of the PIAT firer.

The last words of Brown as he was put on the jeep and lost consciousness were, 'I don't care, I knocked the so-and-so thing out.' It was his first action. He was proud of it. Brown was later awarded the Military Medal for this gallant action.

The two remaining tanks behind panicked and tried to back out in a hurry. They both ditched themselves in the deep ditch which ran alongside the road, the crews escaping into the woods. The Company was then reorganised, C.S.M. Philip first making sure that every tank was incapable of further action by dropping grenades down the turrets. This he did whilst exposed to heavy shell fire. For, attracted by the sound of the explosion and burning tanks, our own artillery shelled the cross-roads and a shell splinter wounded the stout-hearted C.S.M. in the face. He, however, resolutely carried on with his task.

The Company was then organised for a withdrawal, our task being completed, we moved back to the Battalion at Driel."

Section VI - Operations in the Arnhem area - 21 to 26 SepReference Map No. 1260. Reorganisation of the defence 21 Sep(a) Brigade sectors

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexures 01, 02

On 21 Sep morning the defence of the perimeter was reorganised with the east side under commander 4 Para Bde and the north and west sides under commander 1 Airlbg Bde. The point of contact between the brigades was fixed at 699790.

(b) 4 Para Bde sector - order of battle

4 Para Bde force consisted of:-

- (i) Southeast in the area of Oosterbeek Laag church, about 300 all ranks, the remnants of:-

1 Para Bde
2 S Staffords
11 Para Bn

- (ii) In the area east and northeast of divisional H.Q., about 165 all ranks, the remnants of:-

4 Para Bde HQ, signallers and defence platoon
10 Para Bn
156 Para Bn

"Arnhem Lift"
p.32/3
(Imp War Museum
Library)

- (iii) A detachment of glider pilots about 35 strong. These were given an area in the northern part of the front on 21 Sep.

(c) 1 Airlbg Bde sector - order of battle

1 Airlbg Bde force consisted of:-

- (i) On the north and northwest corner:-

7 ROSE, now under 250 in strength
21 Indep Para Coy, with detachment 4 Para Bn RE
2 Wing Glider Pilot Regt (less detachment at 1 Airlbg Bde HQ)

- (ii) On the west side:-

1 Border Regt, with the remainder of the divisional RE holding a locality between two of its companies.

(d) Divisional units

- (i) 1 Airlbg Regt RA, with their glider pilots, were in the area of Oosterbeek Laag church.

- (ii) The divisional reserve appears to have consisted of:-

One platoon 2 S Staffords
Divisional RASC and RACC
1 Wing Glider Pilot Regt (less detachments)

HS/WD/NWE/871/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/627/2.I

HS/WD/NWE/492/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/870/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/871/1.I

[COMMENT: 1 Wing Glider Pilot Regt does not give the location of squadrons, but 2 Wing does. The detachments referred to in sub paras (b) (iii) and (d) (i) appear likely to belong to 1 Wing].

(e) Medical

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part V
Annexure U
HS/AL/1285/A
p.174c
p.97
p.18, 54

133 Para Fd Amb and 181 Airlbg Fd Amb had set up medical dressing stations in Oosterbeek in the Hotels Vreewijk, Schoonoord and Tafelberg.

[COMMENT: The last named had been prepared for use as an emergency civil hospital. Field Marshal Model was using it as his HQ when 1 Airborne Div landed].

All of these had fallen into German hands on 20 Sep, but were now more or less in our front line.

(f) Locations at 2400 hours 20 Sep

Locations are shown on sketch B1 opposite.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure M
HS/AL/1285/C
HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure M
(Diary and trace)
Annexure O.1
HS/WD/NWE/878/1.I

[COMMENT: (i) Where the divisional trace of locations does not agree with unit reports, the latter have been taken as correct.

(ii) 10 Para Bn location cannot be ascertained definitely. The battalion does not give it. The divisional trace shows it at 705783, which is the position to which the battalion was ordered at 1310 hours 20 Sep but this appears to be too far east in view of sub para (e) above. Reading 4 Para Bde report with 21 Indep Para Coy sketch, the battalion location appears most likely to have been at the cross roads 693784.

61. Narrative 21 Sep

(a) Divisional H.Q.

HS/AL/1285/A
p.176
HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part V
Annexure R

HS/WD/NWE/514/1.I

During the morning the divisional commander and CRA visited the gun area and were there when wireless contact was made with 64 Med Regt in 30 Corps. The CRA identified himself to the regiment and from then on contact was maintained and supporting fire from 30 Corps was arranged on this link. 64 Med Regt record of targets is at Appendix E at the end of this section.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part III
pp.20/21

An air re-supply flew in about midday but was not successful. Another in the afternoon gave better results.

HS/21AO/TS/W/40/249
p.20

[COMMENT: The RAF had the correct map reference for these drops - 693785, but this gave an open area only about 300 yards long from north to south.]

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K. Part IV
Annexure H/22, 23

After two 24 hour postponements the parachute element of 1 Indep Polish Para Bde Op took off from England and at 1715 hours began to drop in the new dropping zone south of the river. The weather was not good and only 53 out of 110 aircraft reached this point and dropped just over 900 Poles; 13 aircraft were lost, 41 returned to England without dropping their loads and 3 landed at Brussels.

Sketch S.

ARNHEM

The Perimeter

Air photographs 12 Oct 1944.
(106 G/3322 Nos. 3174, 3175, 4173, 4174.)



LOCATIONS

20 Sep. 23.59 hours

- a..... Lonsdale Force,
2 S. Staffords and
Glider Pilots
- b..... C Sqn. 2 Wing Glider
Pilot Regt.
- c..... 10 Para Bn.
- d..... 156 Para Bn.
- e..... 1 Airborne Recce Sqn.
- f..... 7 K.O.S.B.
- g..... 21 Indep. Para Coy.
- h..... 2 Wing Glider Pilot
Regt.
- i..... A Coy 1 Border
- j..... R.E.
- k..... C Coy 1 Border
- l..... D Coy 1 Border
- m..... B Coy 1 Border
- +..... M.D.S.

ARNHEM-The Perimeter.

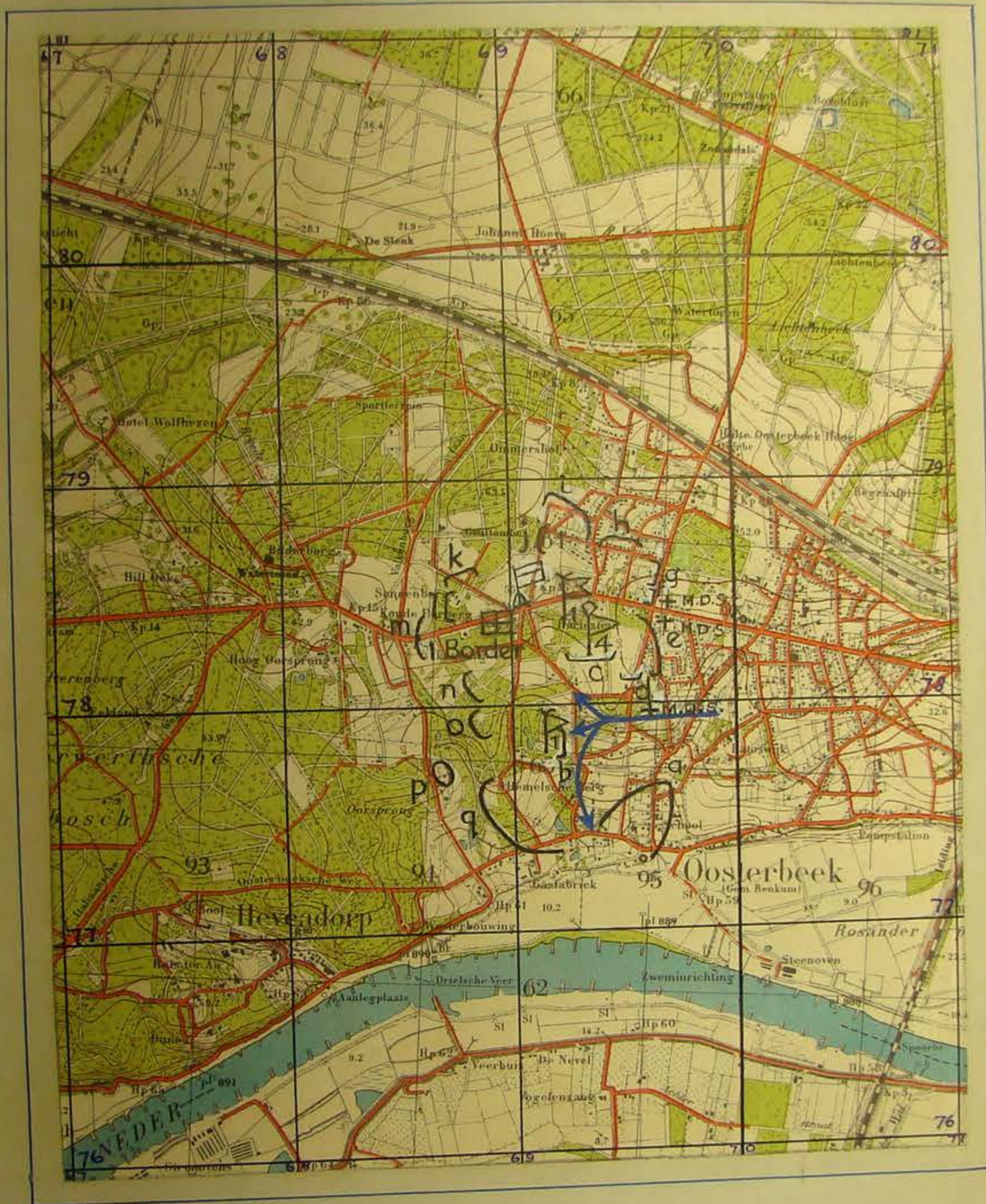


LOCATIONS

25 Sep. about 1400 hrs.

- a..... Lonsdale Force,
2 S. Staffords, R.A.
and Glider Pilots.
- b..... H.Q. 1 Airdg. Bde.
and Glider Pilots
- c..... Glider Pilots (divisional
reserve)
- d..... 4 Para Bde Defence Pl.
- e..... 21 Indep. Para Coy.
- f..... 10 Para Bn.
- g..... Glider Pilots and Poles
- h..... 156 Para Bn. and two
troops 1 Airborne
Recce Sqn.
- i..... 7 K.O.S.B.
- j..... 2 Wing Glider Pilot
Regt.
- k..... A Coy 1 Border
- l..... R.E.
- m..... C Coy 1 Border
- n..... Poles
- o..... C Sqn 2 Wing Glider
Pilot Regt.
- p..... D Coy. 1 Border
- q..... Breese Force
- +..... M.D.S.

ARNHEM - The Perimeter.



Limit of German Penetration →

LOCATIONS

20 Sep. 23.59 hours

- a..... Lonsdale Force,
2 S. Staffords and
Glider Pilots
- b..... C Sqn. 2 Wing Glider
Pilot Regt.
- c..... 10 Para Bn.
- d..... 156 Para Bn.
- e..... 1 Airborne Recce Sqn.
- f..... 7 K.O.S.B.
- g..... 21 Indep. Para Coy.
- h..... 2 Wing Glider Pilot
Regt.
- i..... A Coy 1 Border
- j..... R.E.
- k..... C Coy 1 Border
- l..... D Coy 1 Border
- m..... B Coy 1 Border
- +..... M.D.S.

Wireless communication could not be established with the Poles. Instructions were sent by liaison officer for the brigade to cross the river, while the division would endeavour to attack the northern end of the ferry, which had been lost this day, and send over boats and rafts.

Instructions were given to the GBE to establish a ferry across the river with reconnaissance boats and rafts improvised from jeep trailers. This was attempted at 699788, just south of the gun area, but the current was too strong for these rafts and the attempt had to be abandoned.

(b) 4 Para Bde sector

On the right attacks on the positions round Oosterbeek Laag church were repelled, but during the afternoon it was decided to shorten the perimeter here and the open ground south of the road was vacated.

On the left the morning brought small probing attacks, followed in the afternoon by a heavy attack on 10 Para Bn which was supported by at least one self propelled gun. This overran the battalion and a patrol after dark found free German movement all round their houses. Infiltration on both flanks of 156 Para Bn caused this battalion and 1 Airlbg Recce Bn to draw back their forward elements.

Brigade HQ moved to the wood 695784 and the brigade defence platoon took up a position at 695781.

[COMMENT:- Though the Germans infiltrated into the gap on the right of 10 Para Bn (see sub para (c) below), they did not take full advantage of it].

(c) 1 Airlbg Bde sector

On the north of the perimeter the enemy worked their way forward under considerable shelling and mortaring and their snipers became very active. 7 KOSB put in a counter-attack about midday, which eased the position, but in the late afternoon an enemy attack reached the White House, where they were first held by fire and then routed by a bayonet charge led by the commanding officer; but the battalion lost some of its best leaders in this action. The battalion commander took this opportunity to sidestep to his left to join up with 21 Indep Para Coy, ready for the move to contract the perimeter, which was due to take place that night. On the right of 7 KOSB, 1 Airlbg Recce Bn had been forced back by enemy attacks and had joined forces with 156 Para Bn. On their left 21 Indep Para Coy had beaten off all the attacks, which came in on its front.

On the western side of the perimeter 2 Wing Glider Pilot Regt were under attack throughout the day. In the afternoon they counter attacked the wood and drove the Germans back. On the northern part of 1 Border front shelling and mortaring was heavy all day, but the enemy did not attack strongly. In the south however the enemy captured the Hevedorp ferry during the night and then put in a strong infantry and tank attack about 0900 hours on B Company's forward platoon; the latter destroyed three tanks, but were then forced back. A counter attack was put in, but this was not successful and the company fell back to a position from Hemelsche Berg 689776 to a white house at 692775. On their right B Company held firm. Two platoons of HQ Company were sent to stabilise B Company's position. B Company then counter attacked, but the company commander was killed and the attack disintegrated. Survivors fell back on brigade HQ and were reformed into a composite force, named "Breeze Force", with a platoon of 2 8 Staffords from divisional reserve. This force took over the Hemelsche Berg position.

An example of German infiltration into the perimeter is quoted by 1 Airdg Bde. A liaison officer sent from Brigade HQ at 694779 to 2 8 Staffords at 697775 was ambushed on the way.

[COMMENT:- See comment in sub para (b) above.]

(d) 1 Indep Polish Para Bde Gp

After landing at 1715 hours patrols were sent to the Hevedorp ferry. They found this sunk and the enemy in possession of the north bank. Leading elements of the brigade reached the river, but found no boats or rafts had crossed from the north bank. The brigade commander then decided to move to Briel, 6875, and to take up defensive positions there.

[COMMENT:- This landing appears to have made the Germans transfer one battalion and a company of tanks from the Arnhem front to Elst].

62. Narrative 22 Sep

(a) Divisional HQ

The divisional commander had decided to shorten the perimeter during the night 21/22 Sep by a small withdrawal on the northern face, which would free 21 Indep Para Coy and the detachment of 4 Para Bn with them. These and a detachment of divisional RASC would be given to HQ 4 Para Bde for the eastern face. This operation was carried out successfully.

Just before first light 22 Sep the British GSO 1 (L) with the Polish brigade arrived at divisional HQ. Shortly afterwards information was received that 43 Div were taking over the lead in 30 Corps from Gds Armd Div and would be advancing on Oosterbeek ferry at first light 22 Sep, taking all risks to effect a relief that day. 1 British Airborne Corps authorised the division to withdraw to or cross the ferry if the situation warranted this.

About midday information came in from HQ Second Army that 43 Div would be attacking on a two brigade front at 1000 hours and that a patrol of 2 BCR had reached the Poles at 675745. The GSO 1 and CRE of 1 Airborne Div then left to cross the river and make contact with the Polish Brigade and 43 Div.

In the afternoon arrangements were made for the Polish Brigade to put 150 men across the river on the night 22/23 Sep to a rendezvous at 694769.

(b) 4 Para Bde sector

On the right of the sector a number of attacks were beaten off during the day, but the enemy do not appear to have been quite as aggressive as on 21 Sep. During the morning 11 Para Bn and a party of 2 S Staffords were pulled out of the defence system here and handed over to HQ 1 Airlbg Bde to aid 1 Border, whose left company had taken such a knock the day before.

In the centre the divisional RASC detachment was given a front from inclusive track junction 695776 to inclusive road junction 695780 with orders to work forward to take in, if possible, the next parallel road about 250 yards to the east.

21 Indep Para Coy took over from the north of the RASC to the MBS cross roads, 696784. In front of them 10 Para Bn were found to be still holding two of their houses. All their own officers had become casualties, but two RA officers were with them, one of whom had taken command.

The detachment of 4 Para Bn was placed in brigade reserve.

No ground was lost during the day but by evening ammunition reserves were becoming somewhat lean. The enemy appeared to have gained a healthy respect for the division, his attacks do not appear to have been pressed strongly this day, nor were they very numerous.

W/ND/WWE/206A/1.I
 W/ND/WWE/876/2.I
 W/ND/WWE/969/1.I
 W/ND/WWE/878/1
 W/ND/WWE/877/2

(c) 1 Airlab Bde sector

7 KOSB pulled back to new positions during the night and by 0100 hours 22 Sep was consolidating in the houses in the area 691788, 694787, 691786. At first light the battalion commander also decided to hold the tongue of wood at 692789, the southern extremity of the wooded grounds of Ommershol. The enemy here remained fairly quiet this day.

Brigade HQ was moved about 300 yards into a wood at 692778, where it would not be such an easy mortar target. Just as well too, as a German self propelled gun appears to have infiltrated to the old site about dusk that evening.

Most of the enemy attacks came in on 1 Border front, D Company suffered most in their exposed position, their strength was reduced to 37 and they were nearly surrounded. One squadron Glider Pilot Regt was put in position behind them.

Breeseforce prepared to launch an attack on Hevedorp at first light 23 Sep to recapture the ferry, but this was cancelled that evening, as bad visibility had prevented artillery registration.

(d) 1 Indep Polish Para Bde Op

The Poles had hard fighting throughout the day in their perimeter at Driel and tried to persuade the two troop commanders of 2 HQR, who joined them this day, to use their armoured cars as tanks in this action.

63. Narrative 23 Sep

(a) Divisional H.Q.

During the night 22/23 Sep a composite party of a dozen battle weary sappers was taken out of the firing line and, with all the reconnaissance boats which could be mustered, four in number, rowed 60 Poles across. One officer rowed 23 trips across the river that night.

Early in the morning on 23 Sep the GSO 1 and CRE of the division set off in armoured cars for 30 Corps HQ but were waylaid by an enemy half track. They later got through and returned to Driel that evening. The GSO 1 reached divisional HQ just before midnight after attending 130 Bde's orders group, at which it was arranged that the Polish Brigade would cross the river on the night 23/24 Sep, followed by 130 Bde on afternoon 24 Sep or night 24/25 Sep. The CRE remained on the south bank to brief 43 Div engineers.

HB/WD/WW/206A/1.I
Appx K, Part IV
Annex 0.2
HB/WD/WW/931/2.I
HB/WD/WW/244/1.I

HB/WD/WW/828/1.I

HB/AL/808/p.125
129

HB/WD/WW/206A/1.I
Appx K, Part IV
Annexure M
Appx K, Part III,
p.22

A supply drop took place in the evening, but only a small quantity was picked up, due to wide dispersion of this drop and the activity of enemy snipers. The drop, however, slightly relieved the food shortage for the wounded.

(b) 4 Para Bde sector

During the night 22/23 Sep, 21 Indep Para Coy sent forward a platoon and relieved 10 Para Bn in their two houses at 698784. This platoon was heavily attacked about 0715 hours by infantry supported by one tank and two self propelled guns. Their houses were quickly destroyed and they were forced to withdraw; they had 15 casualties, but destroyed one self propelled gun. The enemy followed them up but were held by Brigade HQ and 10 Para Bn, who after a very brief rest were put into a defensive position in a house at 696786 just north of the main road. The MDS again fell into German hands.

At the gun area 11 Para Bn returned to the east sector during the morning, having been relieved by some of the Poles, who had crossed the night before. The enemy were held at bay on this part of the front. The RASC suffered a minor reverse but recovered the ground lost.

But up in the north-east corner of the perimeter the position did not look so secure. Strong points were holding out grimly but had been unable to stop infiltration. In the early afternoon 156 Para Bn had to vacate their houses and take up a position about 50 yards back; a counter attack was put in, but was unable to regain the lost ground. The units in this area had found that houses were a snare unless self propelled guns and tanks could be kept at arms length and round a corner; they were now dug in in nearby gardens.

In the evening the forward positions of HQ 4 Para Bde defensive locality, which were only 80 yards from the MDS, were withdrawn to the rear positions, owing to a German ultimatum that the MDS would be in their mortar target area unless this was done. Brigade HQ was moved into the open 200 yards to the south.

(c) 1 Airlbg Bde sector

During the night 22/23 Sep about 35 Poles crossed and collected at the church in the gun area and were given to Breese force. They were not battle inoculated and incurred casualties through inexperience.

NO/WR/206A/1.I
Part IV
Measure 0.1.
NO/WR/878/1.I

NO/WR/1285/A
P.205
NO/WR/876/2.I

NO/WR/877/2.I

NO/WR/206A/1.I
Part IV
Measure 0.2.
NO/WR/244/1.I

7 KOSB had a day of hard scrapping in which they first lost some ground when the enemy advanced south under cover of the wood from Ommershol, and then regained it and cleared up most of the infiltration that had occurred. A day of continuous close fighting and heavy strain.

Heavy shelling of 1 Border positions continued all morning and culminated at midday in a strong attack on A and C Companies by infantry, self propelled guns and flame throwing tanks. C Company was able to hold its ground but the north flank of A Company was turned and all the officers were wounded. The German breakthrough was stemmed by HQ Company and by 1530 hours A Company was re-established, but not quite so far forward. By evening the enemy had infiltrated round D Company, which was still in wireless touch, but now only 25 strong.

About 0800 hours brigade HQ had found itself threatened by some enemy infantry, tanks and self propelled guns, which had infiltrated into the wood at 694778. These were engaged by 1 Airlbg Lt Regt and appear to have been driven out of the perimeter.

64. Narrative 24 Sep

(a) Divisional H.Q.

At 0535 hours a sitrep from Second Army was received via Phantom, as below:-

"214 Bde attacked 1700 hours to clear Blat. 129 Bde held up by enemy; no change in locations. Intention 130 Bde will assault river during night using two bns in area 6876. RE will then build Class 40 Br. 129 Bde on relief by 69 Bde under command Gds Armd Div will cross into the bridgehead established by 130 Bde in area 6876. 214 Bde will clear and hold right flank on line from 7070 - 7076".

[COMMENT:- This is a repeat of a Phantom report from 43 Div to Second Army at 1815 hours 23 Sep and paints the picture in rosier hues than would appear to be warranted. 43 Div had, on the R Seine, experienced the difficulties of bridging under fire, the position here was considerably worse, both in enemy strength and in ground].

At 0620 hours a Polish liaison officer reported that one battalion less its HQ Company was now on the north bank. 200 of these were allotted to 4 Para Bde, the remainder to 1 Airlbg Bde. Actually only about 125 had crossed during the night. Of these 100 went to 4 Para Bde and the remainder to 1 Airlbg Bde.

At 0740 hours Brigadier Hackett was wounded and Lt Col Murray, commander 1 Wing Glider Pilot Regt, took over command of 4 Para Bde.

During the day the Germans started to evacuate our wounded from the HDSSs, which were in their hands, to Arnhem.

The Sprig of
Gallagher No. 322
Vol. XXVIII 1948
and interview
Major Cousens.

BA/WD/NWR/206A/1.I
Appx K, Part III,
pp. 22/3
Part IV,
Annex M, 02

BA/WD/NWR/91A/1.I
Appx A/23/146
BA/AL/1200/77/C
Chapter VI

(a) Shortage of serviceable weapons, particularly pistols, was becoming a very serious handicap. The continuous attacks, mortaring and shelling added to the shortage of food and water, were sapping the strength of the division, but morale was still high and despite ammunition shortages the division had been able to hold grimly on to most of its ground since the deliberate closing in of the north face on the night 21/22 Sep. But this day saw a very awkward penetration on the east side, just north of the gun area which reached about half-way across the division's position (see sub para (b) below).

[COMMENT:- The Germans appear to have infiltrated daily on this axis from 21 Sep on, but not resolutely till this day, 24 Sep].

(b) 4 Para Bde sector

A German tank and infantry attack came in from the east which appears to have hit the right of the RASC and forced them back to the north. The attack reached 693778 and the infantry started to infiltrate forward into the wood where 1 Airlidg Bde HQ was dug in. Brigade HQ staff, signals and glider pilots all tried to drive them back, but were unsuccessful. To the south of this penetration "Lonsdale Force" and 2 8 Staffords held their ground and so did the artillery though the attack reached the northern edge of 2 Airlidg Bty position. To the north 21 Indep Para Coy held their positions, where they were joined by some of the RASC detachment, but the enemy infiltrated here and divisional H.Q. came under sniper and occasional machine gun fire. Finally in the evening the medium guns were registered in, one gun at a time, onto this enemy salient and a number of concentrations were brought down, which kept him quiet.

[COMMENT:- Behind (west of) 21 Indep Para Coy this thrust to the north will have been blocked by 4 Para Bde Def Pl and the divisional reserve of glider pilots. Their locations are shown approximately on Sketch R2, opposite page 147].

21 Indep Para Coy had a battle of words this day with the Germans to decide who should pull back from the area of the MDS in the Hotel Schoonoord. The company won the day with the help of one of their cooks, who, armed with a pistol, crept round behind the two threatening German tanks and with a lucky shot set one on fire; the other withdrew. North of the main road the newly arrived Poles took over on the right of the glider pilots. In the evening the enemy infiltrated round both flanks of 156 Para Bn but the battalion formed a box and held on. The MDS in the Hotel Tafelberg fell into German hands this day.

W/ND/WWT/206A/1.I
Part IV
Measure 0.2
W/ND/WWT/338A/1.I
Part D
W/ND/WWT/872B/1.I
W/ND/WWT/878/1.I
W/ND/WWT/877/2.I
W/AL/1285/A
1217

W/ND/WWT/206A/1.I
Part G and Appx K
Part III Traces

(c) 1 Airlbg Bde sector

In the early hours of the morning 7 KOSB found Germans digging in close to their front. Active patrolling drove the enemy back, but at first light it was found that many snipers and machine guns had occupied positions from which they could fire into the battalion's area. The morning was spent in clearing these posts out, which was accomplished, but not without casualties to the battalion. It was found that touch had been lost with 1 Airlbg Recce Bn on the right.

In the afternoon the battalion was closed in more to the left to make firmer contact with 2 Wing Glider Pilot Regt in the wood. Battalion strength was now only 7 officers and less than 100 other ranks. Then in the afternoon the glider pilots were driven out of their wood by an enemy attack, which included a flame throwing tank; they occupied houses south of 7 KOSB covering exits from the wood, but the enemy was now able to form up under cover only 50 yards from 7 KOSB flank.

[COMMENT:- 1 Airlbg Bde reports 2 flame throwing tanks knocked out here by 17 prs].

The Poles allotted to 1 Airlbg Bde were put under command of the glider pilot squadron near brigade HQ, where they were given the task of holding the cross tracks at 688781 and maintaining contact with 1 Border on the road.

D Company 1 Border were still holding out though they were now only 20 strong.

The medium artillery with 30 Corps did particularly good work breaking up attacks on the north and west this day.

65. Narrative 25 Sep(a) Divisional H.Q.

During the night 24/25 Sep 4 Dorset of 43 Div made an assault crossing across the river just downstream of the perimeter, but their landings were scattered and they were unable to concentrate as a fighting unit on the north bank and make contact with 1 Airborne Div. CBE 1 Airborne Div crossed the river behind them and about 0600 hours reached Divisional H.Q. with a letter from commander 43 Div. This explained that Second Army's intention was not now to form a bridgehead near Arnhem and gave the plan for the withdrawal of the division - Operation 'Berlin'. The date for this was then fixed for that night.

W/AL/808
D.125, 129, 130
W/AL/808/206A/1.1
Part IV
Annex C.2
W/AL/808/231/2.1
W/AL/808/231/1.1

W/AL/808
D.125, 129, 130
W/AL/808/206A/1.1
Part III
W/AL/808/231/4
Part IV, Annex H

At 1030 hours orders were given for the withdrawal of units on a timed programme by two routes, one on each side of the divisional area, which would be marked and have guides posted on them. Units would move in boatloads of fourteen, with muffled boots and would, if possible, by-pass any enemy met. 30 Corps artillery would fire a programme to cover the whole withdrawal. The crossing would start at 2200 hours. In general the furthest units would start first and the first of these was timed to cross the road between road junction 792774 and Oosterbeek Laag church, 796774 at 2145 hours.

At 2200 hours ferrying started and continued till 0550 hours, by which time about 300 personnel were left on the north bank. German fire had by then become so intense and accurate, with the arrival of daylight, that ferrying had to be abandoned. At the start of the operation the enemy shelling and mortaring was heavy, but this soon slackened and became spasmodic. It did not interfere seriously with the evacuation. Weather conditions were most suitable - the night was dark with an overcast sky, heavy rain and a strong wind.

Approximately 2400 troops were brought across to the south bank. The casualties in the division, including glider pilots and Poles, amounted to 7,578, but a number of these escaped and made their way back to our lines, days and weeks later.

(b) 4 Para Bde sector

During the morning the enemy made a determined effort to exploit the penetration, which he had made the day before just north of "Lonsdale Force". 1 Airlbg Bde HQ continued to block his progress west though he established a small party in the houses at 693781, which interfered with traffic to and from divisional HQ.

But his main thrust appears to have been south from here with tanks into the gun area behind "Lonsdale Force" and 2 S Staffords, combined with a similar attack from the north-west on their front. This latter attack was held and broken up but the former overran one battery position despite the very stout resistance put up by 1 Airlbg Regt. It had been proposed that "Lonsdale Force" should clear the wood to the north of them, but it was decided to use artillery instead and the fire of the medium guns was again brought down inside the perimeter. The German offensive spirit died down under this hammering, though some enemy appear to have remained in the original salient as two units encountered them while withdrawing to the river and they also towed out a damaged tank after dark. Sketch R.2 opposite page 147 shows the approximate state of the perimeter at the end of this penetration.

HS/AL/131 p.18, 5

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
Appx K, Part IV
Annexure O.2.
HS/WD/NWE/338A/1.I
Appx D
HS/WD/NWE/872B/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/872B/3.I
HS/WD/NWE/876/2.I
HS/AL/1285/A p.219
HS/WD/NWE/878/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/877/2.I
HS/WD/NWE/209/1.I

Appx A to this chapter.

[COMMENT:- One of the medium artillery targets is of considerable interest here - 693774 at 1345 hours. In their attack on 1 Airlbg Lt Regt the Germans must have reached the rendezvous, through which most of the troops in the perimeter were due to pass, when they withdrew that night].

It was here in the area east of the guns that Major R.H. Cain, WF, attached 2 S Staffords, won the Victoria Cross for outstanding valour. Throughout the whole battle he showed superb gallantry; he was always present where danger was greatest, encouraging his men by his fearless example. His tank hunting exploits with a piat were undertaken with a complete disregard for personal safety, and finally, on 25 Sep when his last piat was put out of action, he armed himself with a 2-inch mortar and by his daring leadership and skilful use of this weapon, broke up and repelled an enemy attack.

Elsewhere in this sector the enemy kept up pressure with infiltration and heavy mortar and artillery fire, but positions were held. In the afternoon 156 Para Bn was pulled back to make contact with the glider pilots on their right flank. Orders were issued for the evacuation giving the times for units to pass road junction 693774 the brigade rendezvous, but no record was kept of these times.

About 2100 hours the units at the north end of this sector began to move down to the river. They suffered under a heavy burst of mortar and artillery fire as they were starting, which appeared to be a reply to the beginning of the 30 Corps artillery programme covering the withdrawal. 1 Airlbg Recce Sqn moved by the route 691785 to 692773, encountering an enemy post at a T junction on the way.

[COMMENT:- Possibly 693781 (see above)].

They by-passed this to the right and joined a column of men moving south.

[COMMENT:- Presumably on 1 Airlbg Bde sector route].

21 Indep Para Coy formed up near 695784, and moved through a wood, which 30 Corps guns had been shelling at about 2100 hours.

[COMMENT:- Presumably the wood south-east of 693781 - a more easterly route than 1 Airlbg Recce Sqn's].

They encountered an enemy post in the wood and by-passed it to the west after suffering a few casualties. Other units do not record encounters on the withdrawal to the river.

(c) 1 Airlbg Bde sector

Before dawn a liaison officer arrived at brigade HQ to find out if contact had been made with the follow-up troops who had crossed during the night. No contact had been made, nor was any made later in the day.

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
 Appx K, Part IV
 Annexure C.2.
 HS/WD/NWE/931/2.I

7 KOSB had a surprisingly quiet morning, but this, as expected, turned out to be the prelude to an attack. At 1100 hours a heavy artillery concentration came down on the battalion and enemy parties were spotted assembling in the woods to the west. By sniping, machine-gunning and mortar and artillery fire the battalion frustrated the enemy intention and the attack never came in.

In 1 Border area, early morning enemy attacks on A and C Companies in the north were broken up by artillery fire. A corporal from D Company reached brigade HQ where he was given orders for their withdrawal and sent back, wireless communication having now failed. But some time later he returned, as the company was overrun just as he reached it.

Orders for the evacuation were issued. With D Company 1 Border overrun, the first unit to pass the brigade rendezvous at 692773 would be 7 KOSB at 2215 hours, Brigade HQ, glider pilots and Poles would follow, then 1 Border and lastly 'Breeseeforce'. Brigade HQ records a later postponement of 20 minutes, but units do not appear to have received this instruction.

[COMMENT:- It is interesting to note how close the two routes had to be fixed at their southern end].

Just about the time for starting the withdrawal, A Company 1 Border was attacked by infantry after heavy shellfire; the battalion changed its programme; A and C Companies held their positions for longer, then C Company put in an attack at 2300 hours and promptly withdrew acting as rearguard to the battalion. 7 KOSB ran into very heavy shelling soon after they had started south, which split the column; then they found they were off their route in the woods, so finished their march by compass.

66. Narrative 26 Sep

After crossing, all ranks marched to a rendezvous south of Driel, where rum, tea, hot food and a blanket were provided by 43 Div, a reception that was very much appreciated. From here they were transported to Nijmegen, where their seaborne echelon was awaiting them with accommodation and a change of clothing. [Comment: For smaller a missed at the time see A.L./121. and as missed fat was A.L. 3017/1/23]

67. The Defenders of the Perimeter

Practically nothing has been said of the courage and endurance of the defenders of the perimeter. There they held out, short of water and food, short of ammunition and sleep, under fire from mortars, snipers, guns and tanks; and still they held out, went tank hunting and sniper hunting and counter attacked. A heroic finale to the Battle of

HS/WD/NWE/206A/1.I
 Appx L, Part III
 pp.24/26

Appendix D to Chapter VII

HA/WD/HWE/514/1.1

Targets recorded by 64 Med Regt RA
in support of 1 Airborne Div.

Date	New targets	Repeat targets	Remarks
21 Sep	MZ 1 686774 NW 200	MZ 1 S 300	
	MZ 2 676772		
	MZ 3 684772		
	MZ 4 687771		
	MZ 5 680766		
	MZ 6 674767		
	MZ 7 677784		
	MZ 8 684786		
	MZ 9 687783		
	MZ 10 683783		} Out of range } until 1600 hours
	MZ 13 706773		
	MZ 14 706775	MZ 14 E 200, NE 100, W 200, N 100	
	MZ 15 704774		
	MZ 16 705784		
	MZ 17 688777 NE 100	MZ 17 NW 200	
	MZ 18 W 500		
	GUINEAS 685771		
	DERRY 683769		
	LEGER 679767		
22 Sep	DF 1 697783	MZ 14 NW 200	
	DF 2 698787	MZ 15 E 200	
	DF 3 705784		
	DF 4 697778	GUINEAS	
	DF 5 685711 [685771?]	" S 200	
	DF 6 684777	" E 100	
	DF 7 683784	" N 400	
	MZ 19 680782	MZ 19 S 200, SW 200	
	MZ 20 702781		corrected MZ 15 (close target, single SP gun
	MZ 21 682778		[should be 23?]
	MZ 22 700777		
	MZ 33 703762		
	MZ 101 695785	MZ 101 N 100, NW 100	Enemy HQ
	MZ 103 744805	MZ 105 S 100	
	MZ 105 ?		
	LINCOLN 688772		
	BILL 702767		
23 Sep	MZ 24 676783		(2 Coys Inf and SP guns attacking 6 by mortars
	MZ 25 682776	MZ 25 W 300	En inf forming up.
	MZ 26 695790		
	MZ 27 693792		

MZ 28 679771
YZ 699788

Corrected MZ 25 (?)
En Assembly Area

MZ 16 W 500, N 200
MZ 16 W 200, N 300
MZ 17 S 500
MZ 19 SW 300, N 300
MZ 19 W 200
MZ 22
GUINEAS N 100

En forming up

24 Sep

746806
MZ 30 695794
MZ 31 687787
Changed to
MZ 31 684790

MZ 30 W 200
MZ 31 W 100

Mortar area

1 x 88 SP and 1 tk.

MZ 31 W 200

En in wood
1 Coy and 5 tks
in open

MZ 32 701787

MZ 34 698777
MZ 35 690787

MZ 34 E 100, SE 200

En in open
Highly successful

(a) MZ 401 688777

? 698780

? 690789

YZI 689792

YZ 1 SW 200

En cone.

MZ 20 N 33

MZ 25 W 100

Mortars

MZ 26 SE 450

25 Sep

(b) MZ 37 695780/696784

MZ 38 683785

MZ 38 W 100, N 200,

NW 600, W 200

En movement

(c) MZ 39 682776

MZ 39 N 300, N 100,

E 100

} Situation quite

MZ 40 S 100

} serious

MZ 40 690774

699773 NE 100

689787

693774

} Main attack
} developing

MZ 19 and SW 300

MZ 20

MZ 25

MZ 31 and E 200

MZ 34 and N 500

MZ 35 NE 100, E 100

MZ 35 NW 300

COMMENTS:-

- (a) This map reference is the same as MZ 17.
- (b) This target almost coincides with 21 Indep Para Coy position.
- (c) This map reference is the same as MZ 25. Possibly it should be 692776, this would fit better to the comment "1 Tiger tk re-attacking".

Section VII - Operations south of the R. Waal - 21 to 26 Sep

68. The second cut in the Nijmegen corridor - 22/23 Sep
(30 Corps operations 21 to 23 Sep)

(a) 21 Sep

The 1st Battalion 501 Precht Inf, which had seized Dinter on 20 Sep, turned south across the Willems Vaart canal and after extensive patrolling attacked Schijndel in the evening and secured the northwest section of the town. The 3rd Battalion advanced west from Herde, south of the canal, and seized Schijndel railway station.

44 R Tks moved up from Tongelre to St Oedenrode and sent one squadron on to Veghel. Tank and infantry sweeps were made northwest, west and southwest from St Oedenrode; strong opposition was encountered about a mile to the north west and also to the west just south of the river; further south small parties of enemy were flushed and prisoners were taken.

506 Precht Inf held Zon and Tongelre and attacked Nederwetten. Contact with the enemy was lost here at midday as 11 Armd Div approached. One battalion was sent that night to St Oedenrode as divisional reserve and the regiment was warned for a probable move to Uden next day.

(b) 22 Sep

On 21 Sep evening 101 US Airborne Div obtained information from a prisoner that 1034 Regt, strength about 2,000, was about 2 miles south of Schijndel and had orders to break through at St Oedenrode. The divisional commander decided to attack this area at first light from the northeast with two battalions of 501 Precht Inf and one squadron 44 R Tks and from the south with two battalions of 502 Precht Inf.

But Schijndel was not completely captured on 21 Sep and this plan was modified. The two battalions of 501 Precht Inf with one squadron 44 R Tks first captured Schijndel by 0915 hours and then turned south. 502 Precht Inf was given two squadrons of 44 R Tks, one took part in the attack to the north and the other protected the west flank of this attack; but they met considerable opposition and at about 0900 hours, when they were half way from St Oedenrode to the railway line, they were ordered to consolidate and search to the northwest.

21/21/40/TS/W/
 39/245
 21/21/40/TS/W/854/3.1

21/21/40/TS/W/914/1.1
 21/21/131
 21/22/13

21/21/40/TS/W/854/3.1
 21/21/40/TS/W/
 39/245

506 Precht Inf had meanwhile received orders for their move to Uden, advance parties set off and the battalion at St Oedenrode marched off at 0900 hours. The other two battalions were to move piecemeal during the day, as transport became available.

Then an enemy column was reported to the east, between Gemert, 5831 and Erp, 5336, moving towards Veghel. There was now only one battalion in Veghel, 2nd Battalion 501 Precht Inf, so, at 0930 hours, 327 GII Inf was ordered forward from the Zon area, one battalion by truck, the remainder on foot. A patrol of Royals was sent to Erp area to investigate.

At 1130 hours reports came in from Royals patrol, first of one tank with enemy infantry, then of ten tanks just west of Erp. C Sqn 44 R Tks, which was on the west flank of 502 Precht Inf, was ordered to move to Veghel, but to leave one troop at 463358, where the road to Berde branched off from the 30 Corps axis. Here two armoured cars of Royals, with a 17-pr anti-tank gun commandeered from a passing column, were lying up for a Panther, which had just chased them out of Berde, after knocking out the other two cars of the troop.

By midday 2nd Battalion 501 Precht Inf were being hard pressed in their defensive positions astride the Veghel - Erp road, but they held firm and the German force, identified as 107 Pz Bde, swung round the north end of the village and cut the 30 Corps axis. Here the Nijmegen anti-aircraft group had been parked since early morning to let 69 Bde group pass on their priority move. They had taken up defensive positions with some guns deployed in an anti-tank role, others in a field role. Their furthest forward positions were cut off, but they and the Americans here kept the Germans out of the village.

The American reinforcements were now building up. The leading battalion of 327 GII Inf had moved off at 1030 hours and on arrival took up positions on both sides of the canal bridge south of Veghel. The remainder of the regiment followed up and two battalions of 506 Precht Inf also arrived during the day.

South of St Oedenrode the field and medium guns in 69 Bde group came into action in support and at the Berde road junction the troop of 44 R Tks collected an infantry escort from the halted column, advanced into Berde and engaged enemy holding the railway beyond.

107 Pz Bde appears to have continued on round the village, which at one time was surrounded, with the canal bridge under machine gun and mortar fire.

14/ND/WHF/534/1.I

14/ND/WHF/478/2.I
14/ND/WHF/474/1.I

14/ND/WHF/474/1.I

[COMMENT: 101 U.S. Airborne Div report an attack about 1400 hours from the north-west astride the canal, which 44 R Tks helped to repel. 44 R Tks do not mention this.]

When 107 Pz Bde's attack cut the axis, the two battalions of 501 Pzcht Inf in the Schijndel area were ordered to stop their attack to the south and to occupy Weibosch, 4237 and Berde respectively. The squadron of 44 R Tks with them was brought into Veghel, where C Squadron commander reported that "he thought it was a larger task than he could cope with."

Meanwhile from south of Nijmegen the Grenadier Guards group were sent back at 1500 hours to deal with the enemy responsible for the cut. They reached Uden shortly before dark without meeting opposition, found an American company there and were told the situation.

[COMMENT:- This "company" would appear to have been the advance parties of 506 Pzcht Inf]

A mixed patrol was sent forward to the road and railway crossing, 5140, half-way to Veghel. It had just reported this clear when a bazooka shot at the rear tank. The patrol made a firm pivot here, but was recalled at 2300 hours and rejoined safely at Uden after a fast journey with all weapons spraying the sides of the road.

The remainder of 32 Gds Bde followed the Grenadier Guards and harboured about 3 miles south of Grave.

At 1435 hours Commander 101 US Airborne Div was ordered by HQ 30 Corps to take command of all 30 Corps troops in the vicinity of the cut.

In the evening 50 (N) Div (8 Corps), which was due to move up to Eindhoven next day, was given absolute priority for their move and would come under 30 Corps operational control to help restore the situation on the axis.

(c) 23 Sep

101 US Airborne Div plan for 23 Sep was for 32 Gds Bde to attack from Uden towards Veghel, while one battalion of 506 Pzcht Inf with one squadron 44 R Tks would attack from Veghel to meet them. 32 Gds Bde was then to swing sharply south and cut off the enemy escape route through Erp.

[COMMENT:- The latter part of this plan is not recorded by 32 Gds Bde. 101 US Airborne Div makes a note of communication difficulties]

32 Gds Bde ordered the Grenadier Guards group to attack down the axis to meet the Americans attacking up it and the Coldstream Guards group to follow to Uden and then capture Volkel, 5640.

Patrols located the enemy about a mile down the axis and at Duifhuis, 5140, just east of the road. The Grenadier Guards attacked this area and occupied it and further east to the bridge at 526395. No opposition was met, but fire from the east caused casualties and tanks and half tracks were seen on this flank. Another company/squadron group then moved on down the axis meeting only slight opposition and contact was made with the Americans and 44 R Tks just outside Veghel about 1530 hours.

The Coldstream Guards group met strong opposition just west of Volkel, mounted an attack and by 1500 hours had driven the enemy out of the village towards Boekel. The group took up defensive positions near Volkel for the night.

Meanwhile at Veghel the German tanks appear to have been so active that an American attack towards Erp was cancelled and the advance up the axis did not commence till 1510 hours. After meeting the Grenadier Guards, 44 R Tks' squadron circled right and occupied Heuvel, 4937, while the Americans took up positions further to the southwest. Two German tanks were seen moving into Erp.

The Grenadier Guards group occupied positions for the night at Uden and at Hooge Hei, 5039.

By midnight 30 Corps traffic was again passing over Grave bridge.

During the day 501 Precht Inf withdrew the battalion from Weibosch to form a two battalion position on the railway from the canal, through Eerde, thence south to the main road.

During the afternoon 30 Corps released 50 (W) Div from their operational control and in the evening 101 US Airborne Div was transferred from 30 Corps to 8 Corps command.

Brigade locations of these two divisions at last light were:-

50(N) Div	151 Bde between Mindhoven and Zon
	231 Bde from Lieshout, 5126, to St. Oedenrode
101 US Airborne Div	502 Precht Inf in the St. Oedenrode area.
	506 Precht Inf advance parties at Uden.
	Remainder and 44 R Tks in the Veghel/Eerde area.

32 Ods Bde was in the area Uden-Volkel-Hooge, still under 30 Corps command.

[COMMENT:- It appears doubtful whether 32 Ods Bde ever came officially under operational command of 101 US Airborne Div.]

IS/WD/WWF/854/3.I

IS/WD/WWF/146/1.I
APPX B/C/448/2

IS/WD/WWF/882/1.I

IS/WD/WWF/181/1.I
APPX L/23

IS/WD/WWF/146/1.I

IS/WD/WWF/285/1.I

IS/21AQ/TS/W/
39/245

IS/WD/WWF/854/3.I

IS/WD/WWF/181/1.I
APPX L/23/2355
L/24/0125
L/22/1435

69. The right flank of the Nijmegen corridor 21 to 23 Sep
(3 Corps operations)

(a) 21 Sep

11 Armd Div cleared the enemy from the west bank of the canal in the Zomeren, 5912 area and in the afternoon one battalion of 159 Bde assaulted across the canal establishing a bridgehead by last light. Bridging then started at 602128.

29 Armd Bde cleared Maarheeze, 5103, and advanced to secure Nunen, 4822, and Nederwetten, 4623, just east of the Mindhoven-Zon road.

[COMMENT:- On 20 Sep evening 44 R Tks had attacked Nunen from the southwest, but had been unable to capture it, while part of A Sqn 15/19 H had been in action just south of Nederwetten. Early on 21 Sep 44 R Tks was moved to the St Oedenrode area, while 15/19 H gave close protection to the east of the Mindhoven-Zon road].

The brigade flushed 8 enemy tanks just east of Nunen, of which they destroyed 3, and by last light had completed their task. 15/19 H returned to 11 Armd Div command, less one squadron still with 101 US Airborne Div.

3 Br Div took over Maarheeze and advanced part way towards Weert, 5897.

(b) 22 Sep

During the night the enemy made determined attempts to reach the bridging site at Zomeren, but were beaten back each time, though on one occasion they nearly succeeded. The bridge was completed in time for armour to cross at first light and by midday Asten, 6113, had been cleared, 300 prisoners being taken, and the leading troops of 159 Bde were held up just north of Ommel, 6115. Meanwhile 29 Armd Bde had closed in on Helmond, 5622, from the west, but found it firmly held. Half the brigade remained to clear the portion of Helmond west of the canal, the remainder moved to Zomeren in the late afternoon.

3 Br Div found Weert vacated and both bridges damaged. They occupied it and repaired the road bridge to class 40 by midnight.

4 Armd Bde dismounted one squadron per regiment to act as infantry along the canal southeast of the Belgians. 69 Bde of 50 (N) Div moved up the 30 Corps axis under command of that Corps.

(c) 23 Sep

50 (N) Div was given absolute priority on 30 Corps axis and was ordered to dominate the area St Oedenrode, 4232 - Breugel, 4526.

WWT/146/1.I

WWT/854/3.I
 WWT/834/2.I
 39(b) of
 this chapter

[COMMENT:- St Oedenrode was now the most southerly town held by 101 US Airborne Div (see para 68 (c) above)]

11 Arm Div was ordered to advance with all speed on the axis Beurne, 6520 - Bakel, 6124 - Gemert, 5730, to relieve pressure on 30 Corps, whose axis had been cut the previous day between Veghel and Uden.

During the night the enemy had closed in on Asten and put in two small attacks on the bridge, both of which were repulsed easily. But in the morning the division had to fight its way out and progress was slow. By last light 29 Arm Bde had reached Liesel, 6714, and was just short of Vlierden, 6217, while 159 Bde had been clearing the woods southeast of Asten, where a considerable number of enemy were found.

185 Bde of 3 Br Div moved up and joined 159 Bde in the bridgehead by last light.

On the left 50 (W) Div had reverted to operational control of 30 Corps while restoring the situation on their axis. 52 and 61 Recce Regts, under their command, advanced to the line of the canal from Veghel, through Beek, 5427, to Helmond, and made contact with the enemy only at 552266 and 4835. Inns of Court linked up with them at Helmond.

70. The left flank of the Nijmegen corridor - 21 to 23 Sep
(12 Corps operations)

(a) 12 Corps orders 20 Sep

12 Corps orders on 20 Sep divided the responsibility for protecting the left flank of 30 Corps axis by giving 53 (W) Div up to the Wilhelmina canal and 15 (S) Div from there to the Willem Vaert canal.

(b) Action south of the Wilhelmina canal

By 0830 hours on 21 Sep 71 Bde (53 (W) Div) reached the Wilhelmina canal opposite Oirschot, but found the bridges blown and the enemy in strength on the far bank. Later in the day Winterle was captured, but snipers were still active in the vicinity till next morning.

The class 40 bridge over the Heuse-Wasout canal was completed at 1530 hours in the Lommel area and 5 PG (7 Arm Div) under 53 (W) Div command crossed over.

46 (H) Bde (15 (S) Div) were given the task of forcing a crossing over the Wilhelmina canal. It would appear that Oirschot was first chosen as the site, but that the enemy strength and bad roads found in that area caused a change to be made to Best.

1/10/1945/313/1.I
para 63

1/10/1945/313/1.I
1/10/1945/370/1.I
1/10/1945/366/1.I
1/10/1945/253/1.I
The Fifteenth
British Division
1945 pp.150,
151.

On 21 Sep afternoon the brigade advanced to the canal with 7 Seaforth on the right to force a crossing at Best and with 9 Cameronians on the left to relieve the battalion of 71 Bde, which was holding the south bank of the canal opposite Oirschot. By 2010 hours the relief was complete and patrols had crossed unopposed over the sagging remnants of the blown road bridge south of Best. At 1530 hours this brigade had reverted to their own division's command.

On 22 Sep 53 (W) Div continued to mop up, pressing forward to the west, but opposition was stiff and gains were small. At 1800 hours 71 Bde, in the north, had to withdraw one battalion from this drive to take over again from 46 (H) Bde opposite Oirschot, as the latter brigade required all its battalions for the attack on Best.

On 23 Sep opposition and infiltration in the north held the line generally static, but in the south the enemy began to pull out of the Postel, 2201, pocket.

(c) The attacks on Best

At 2115 hours 21 Sep 7 Seaforth started to follow their patrols over the remains of the road bridge and by 2230 hours a bridgehead about 700 yards deep had been established, which included the locks on the right and was just short of the railway bridge on the left. Only in the latter area was opposition met. During the night patrols to Best appear to have reported the village as practically unoccupied.

[COMMENT:- 7 Seaforth war diary is not clear on this point, but 46 (H) Bde and the divisional history confirm this].

Two rafts were built and battalion transport crossed; a class 9 bridge was also started and opened at 0915 hours next day. 2 Glas H then crossed with the task of clearing Best before advancing on Oirschot.

Meanwhile at 0800 hours one company of 7 Seaforth had been sent forward to occupy Best. They suddenly found that they were in a hornets nest of Germans and had to withdraw with the loss of one platoon.

2 Glas H attack came under heavy enfilade fire from the cement factory on the railway and only one company reached its objective, the church and monastery to the east of the level crossing.

6 KOSB (44 (L) Bde) was placed under 46 (H) Bde command and in the afternoon advanced to Steenweg, just northeast of Best, meeting only minor resistance on the way.

W/WD/NWE/366/1.I
The Fifteenth
Scottish division
139-45
p. 153 to 159
W/WD/NWE/966/1.I
W/WD/NWE/911/2.I
W/WD/NWE/896/1.I

Arrangements were then made for 9 Cameronians, on relief by 53 (H) Div to take over the defence of the bridgehead on 23 Sep and for 2 Glas H and 7 Seaforth to make a two battalion attack that day, but 6 KOSB would first advance west from Steenweg to make contact with 2 Glas H. This advance entailed house clearance all the way and finally 46 (H) Bde launched their attack at 1530 hours before 6 KOSB had completed their task.

On the right progress was made despite severe opposition and 2 Glas H, with three companies up, reached the level crossing, the station and an isolated farm 400 yards north of the factory. Here they took up positions with the enemy about 25 yards to their front. 7 Seaforth on the left were held up about 400 yards further back; they had been supported by excellent enfilade machine gun fire from the Beta factory near the railway bridge over the canal, but the enemy positions in the cement factory and on the railway embankment were very strong. In the evening one company of 9 Cameronians was put under 2 Glas H command and took up a position at road junction, 375262, and 6 KOSB reverted to 44 (L) Bde command.

(d) The drive to the north

On 22 Sep 15 (S) Recce Regt tried without success to break out north towards Bortel, 3334.

That afternoon 44 (L) Bde reached the Eindhoven area and sent 6 KOSB forward to under command 46 (H) Bde (sub para (c) above). In the evening 44 (L) Bde issued orders for the capture of Bortel next day by a one battalion group (6 RSP) and 15 (S) Recce Regt less one squadron, subject to the bridgehead being made firm on 22 Sep.

5 R Tks (7 Arm Div) also reached Eindhoven on 22 Sep under command 15 (S) Div, but were not used.

[COMMENTS:- (1) The class 40 bridge over the Wilhelmina canal near Best was not completed till 1100 hours 23 Sep.

(11) 15 (S) Div History states that 44 (L) Bde was put under Army command, but no record of this is traceable. They were however held by 15 (S) Div at one hours notice from 2100 hours 22 Sep till next morning.]

On 23 Sep 15 (S) Recce Regt again tried to break out north, but the support of 6 RSP group was not sufficient. By last light 6 RSP were just short of Vleut 3828, on the right front of 6 KOSB, now back again under 44 (L) Bde command.

W/D/WRE/256/1.I
W/D/WRE/365/1.I
W/D/WRE/931/1.I

W/D/WRE/850/2.I

W/D/WRE/253/1.I

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Scottish Div
193-45 p.156
W/D/WRE/911/1.I
W/D/WRE/1/22/149

W/D/WRE/961/1.I
W/D/WRE/366/1.I

Meanwhile 227 (H) Bde, less 10 HLI, reached Eindhoven on 23 Sep and with 5 A Tks under command were put in Army reserve. Late that night 10 HLI caught them up.

A patrol of theirs on the evening before had had a strange experience; they had found Aart vacated by the enemy and the way to Turnhout, so bitterly contested, open at last.

(e) The relief of the extreme left flank

Back in the Herenthals, 9791, area on the Corps left flank, 49 Div of 1 Corps started to arrive on 22 Sep. That day they took over a part of 7 Arm Div's front and next day another part, as far east as Larum, 0489.

71. The third out in the Wijnegem corridor and 8 Corps operations on the right flank - 24 to 26 Sep.

(a) 24 Sep - 8 Corps intention

8 Corps intention was that 50 (H) Div should come up on the right of 101 US Airborne Div and occupy Erp, Boekel and Volkel, while 11 Arm Div would thrust forward on the centre line Beurne-Gemert and complete the capture of Helmond. 3 Br Div would relieve 11 Arm Div in Beurne and 1 Belgian Group would secure a bridgehead at Bree, 5084, where Second Army required a bridge.

(b) 24 Sep - on 30 Corps axis

On 30 Corps axis Second Army had arranged that 32 Gds Bde would take part in a joint attack on Erp with 101 US Airborne Div: but early morning patrols found this village clear of enemy, so 327 GII Inf, who had now taken over the defence of Veghel, occupied it till 50 (H) Div should arrive and 32 Gds Bde remained where it was. 506 Pch Inf moved to Uden and 2nd Battalion 501 Pch Inf rejoined the remainder of the regiment in the Verde area.

Then shortly before 1000 hours an attack from the west started to develop on Berde in which 44 R Tks lost three tanks. A counter attack on Weibosch was arranged, but enemy action delayed this from forming up all afternoon.

A patrol of Royals south of Berde was driven back to the main road by a self propelled gun which then started to shoot up traffic on the axis. A troop of three tanks was sent to deal with this, but all three were brewed up.

14/10/410/1.I
14/10/350/1.I

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14/10/274/1.I
14/10/375/1.I

14/10/146/1.I
and Appx B/C

14/10/181/1.I
Appx L/24/0145

14/10/39/245
14/10/854/3.I
14/10/882/1.I
14/10/881/1.I

Two companies of 502 Pzcht Inf were also sent to Koevering, 4433, from the south to intercept this force, reported to be two tanks and about 40 infantry, but though they reached and held the village, they were unable to prevent the axis being out. These companies were supported by two squadrons of 52 Recce Regt.

Just before this, on a report that the situation was in hand here, HQ 8 Corps had advised Second Army that the Army reserve, 227 (H) Bde could be freed. This brigade had been allotted a priority move on the axis to St Oedenrode that evening for an attack on Schijndel.

When the later picture became known, a battle group of 7 Armd Div was given priority for a move next morning to clear the axis and capture Schijndel.

(a) 24 Sep - on the right flank of 30 Corps axis

During the morning 50 (N) Div advanced and 231 Bde took up positions at Veghel - Volkel - Erp, while 151 Bde occupied areas at Weiven, 4634-Nunen-Breugel, 4526, with patrols, and in one case a company, forward to the Willems Vaart canal. Later a company was sent to Lieshout, 5126. When the road was cut, the battalion in the Weiven area, 9 DLI, put out standing patrols and located the enemy on the road. 61 Recce Regt found Mill, 6445, unoccupied.

52 Recce Regt moved from 50 (N) Div to 1 Br Airborne Corps command at 0900 hours this day, but owing to the cut two squadrons were temporarily left behind under 50 (N) Div.

On the right 11 Armd Div thrust forward on the centre line Beurne - Gemert. A two-pronged attack on Beurne met considerable resistance and not till 1700 hours was the town secure. An advance northwest to Bakel, 6124, was held up and patrols west towards Helmond were unable to approach within 2 miles of the town.

One battalion of 3 Br Div moved forward to Liesl, 6714, east of the Zomeren bridge-head, where it joined 15/19 H and came under command 11 Armd Div.

(d) 25 Sep on 30 Corps axis

During the night 506 Pzcht Inf was recalled from Uden to Veghel to clear the enemy off the axis. At 0915 hours they attacked southwest from the Veghel canal bridge, with one squadron 44 R Tks in support.

[COMMENT:- This squadron was apparently only 3 troops strong. At the end of the previous day's fighting the regiment only had 33 tanks fit.]

11/11/40/TS/W/
39/245

11/11/40/TS/W/
39/245

11/11/40/TS/W/
39/245

11/11/40/TS/W/
39/245

11/11/40/TS/W/
39/245

11/11/40/TS/W/
39/245

11/11/40/TS/W/
39/245

11/11/40/TS/W/
39/245

HS/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/25/63

Appx A/25/30, 61,
63.

HS/WD/NWE/829/2.I
HS/WD/NWE/854/3.I

HS/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/25/33, 35
HS/WD/NWE/146/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/833/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/964/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/963/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/131/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/133/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/146/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/104/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/964/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/25/108

HS/WD/NWE/131/1.I

The attack included a left hook to come in on the road about 2,000 yards southwest of the canal bridge. Forward elements, supported by two troops of tanks, reached here by 1040 hours, but they did not dislodge the enemy and a wider sweep was arranged to strike the road from the east about half a mile northeast of Koevering.

Meanwhile south of the cut 5 DG and one company 1 BH, who had moved up from Best at first light, started to clear the axis before 0950 hours, but by 1040 hours were held up in close country just past Koevering, roughly 1400 yards from 506 Pocht Inf.

On both sides of the cut it was now difficult to use artillery.

At this time 131 Bde (7 Arm Div) was on the way forward to the cut, where they were to work under the direction of commander 50 (N) Div. First thing in the morning a tank/infantry group, under 8 H command, had been despatched from Windhoven area to clear the axis and capture Schijndel. While this was on its way, 5 DG was placed under 131 Bde command and more infantry was sent forward to make two groups, each of an armoured regiment and a battalion, one on each road - to Veghel and to Schijndel. By midday 8 H was in contact with the enemy half way from St. Oedenrode to Schijndel, but the infantry found their route very congested, despite their priority, and it was after midday when they started to operate north of St. Oedenrode, except for a carrier section which patrolled round the east side of the cut and made contact with an outpost of 151 Bde (50 (N) Div) at 1030 hours and with 506 Pocht Inf at 1230 hours.

Then about midday 506 Pocht Inf's second and wider sweep began, supported by one troop of tanks; it reached the wood just east of the main road half way along the gap. Here the leading tank was brewed up and the other two pinned behind sandhills, where they could not get into hull down positions. The infantry with them were unable to reach the road.

14/7 Queens coming up to join 5 DG found a very confused situation ahead of them, pockets of enemy and of 101 US Airborne Div appeared to be thoroughly mixed.

Then at 1500 hours a conference was held between commanders 8 Corps, 50 (N) Div, 101 US Airborne Div and 131 Bde, at which it was decided that 101 US Airborne Div would liquidate the enemy in woods 4534-4634, while 5 DG and 14/7 Queens watched the south. It was estimated this would take 3 hours. Then 5 DG and 14/7 Queens would advance on the road from Koevering to Hoeven, 4436, with the Americans on their right, and 8 H and 1/5 Queens on the left would advance on Schijndel. It was estimated that the axis would be

The American operation took longer than was expected, at 1830 hours two enemy tanks were reported to be still in area 4534, and by last light the road had not been cleared.

[COMMENT:- At some time during the day 1st Battalion 502 Pzcht Inf appears to have moved from St Oedenrode to Roevering. This is not mentioned in 101 US Airborne Div's report, but is in a Phantom message and appears likely from a 1/7 Queens statement that 502 Pzcht Inf HQ was there too.]

Meanwhile on the Schijndel road 1/5 Queens cleared the woods in 4234 and 4334 during the afternoon against little opposition, and at last light held positions north and northwest of these. They were halted here, because of the situation on their right flank.

At 2000 hours 1/7 Queens advanced to and occupied cross tracks in the area 4435. American tank hunting patrols during the night were unable to locate any enemy tanks.

It is interesting to note that 9 DLI (50 (N) Div), who were holding a stop line southeast of the cut, withdrew the M 10s from their forward platoons "to prevent any mistakes" after receiving two unfounded reports from outside of an enemy self-propelled gun in their area.

[COMMENT:- Recognition in this close country must have been difficult and intercommunication, with 3 divisions involved, must have been slow.]

(e) 25 Sep - on the right flank of 30 Corps axis

Early in the morning 30 Corps commander, who had been cut off from his own HQ the night before after visiting commander Second Army, by-passed the cut in the road with a carrier escort and rejoined his HQ.

East of the Willems Vaart canal 11 Armd Div made rapid progress against light opposition during the day, clearing Helmond and Gemert, 5730, and reaching St Anthonis, 7138. Here a most unfortunate event occurred. Four enemy half tracks, fleeing before the left spearhead of the division's advance, entered St. Anthonis, while commander 29 Armd Bde was holding an order group there. They killed two regimental commanders and wounded the brigadier and brigade major before being destroyed.

Contact was made with 2 HCR (Gds Armd Div) at St Anthonis and Inns of Court patrols reached the R. Maas north and south of Boxmeer, 7640. At the southern end of 8 Corps front 1 Belgian Group advanced to the R. Maas, from Helen, 6176, north to Sassen, 7086, the only point at which opposition was met.

RE/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/25/124

RE/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/26/20
RE/WD/NWE/964/1.I

RE/WD/NWE/833/1.I
RE/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/26/8

RE/WD/NWE/964/1.I
RE/WD/NWE/854/3.I

RE/WD/NWE/908/1.I

RE/WD/NWE/181/1.I
RE/WD/NWE/285/1.I

RE/WD/NWE/146/1.I

RE/WD/NWE/834/2.I

RE/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx 1/25

HS/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/26/17

HS/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/26/35
Appx A/27/33

HS/21AG/TS/W/
39/245
HS/WD/NWE/964/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/231/1.I
Appx P/25

HS/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
Appx A/27/33
HS/WD/NWE/350/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/146/1.I

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1939-45.
pp.160-162
HS/WD/NWE/911/2.I
HS/WD/NWE/896/1.I

A class 40 bridge was completed at Bree, 5084, under Second Army arrangements.
[COMMENT:- Presumably part of the administrative plan for handing this sector over to the Americans, see Chapter I, para 38.]

In the forward area a class 40 bridge was completed over the Wilhelms canal at Hof, 5125, and work started on another over the Willems Vaart canal at Donk, 5326. This would provide an alternative route for 30 Corps axis. 8 Corps also started work on a class 40 bridge at Helmond.

(f) 26 Sep - on 30 Corps axis

Responsibility for 30 Corps axis up to Uden passed to 12 Corps this morning and 101 US Airborne Div came under 12 Corps command, though not till the end of the day. 506 Pzcht Inf completed their clearance of the road and were then pinched out and returned to Uden in the afternoon. But the enemy, who had been identified as 6 Para Regt, had mined the road and it was 1400 hours before it was open to two way traffic, after clearance of mines and debris.

131 Bde continued their clearance and by last light were on the line of the railway just east of Schijndel station. 22 Armd Bde moved one armoured regiment forward to Veghel.

(g) 26 Sep - on the right flank of 30 Corps axis

8 Corps adjusted their dispositions on the right to bring Gemert into 3 Br Div area. 11 Armd Div patrolled to the R. Maas and by last light the west bank was clear from Oeffelt, 7646, to Vortum, 7837. To the south the enemy held Overloon, 7631, in strength; to the north contact had been made with 2 HCR near Ouyk, 7149.

50 (B) Div moved one brigade forward to guard the alternative 30 Corps axis and at 0940 hours the first vehicle of 30 Corps column crossed the new bridge at Donk.

72. The left flank of the Nijmegen corridor - 24 to 26 Sep (12 Corps operations)

(a) 46 (H) Bde action at Best - 24 Sep

Early in the morning of 24 Sep the enemy counter attacked the left company of 2 Glas B, overran it and worked their way in behind the centre company. Its position became untenable under attack from three sides and it withdrew to the company at the level crossing. These two then fought their way back together to the church and monastery, where the battalion stabilised its position in line with 7 Seaforth. The

brigade commander ordered 9 Cameronians to relieve 2 Glas H, who came into reserve. Their casualties had been 9 officers and 138 men and only 6 men remained of B Company, which had been on the left.

The relief took place and 9 Cameronians put in an attack which took them to the level crossing.

(b) 227 (H) Bde action at Best - 25 Sep.

On 24 Sep evening this brigade came back to the division from Army reserve, but without 5 R Tks which had reverted to its own division (7 Armd Div). They were ordered to clear, next day, the part of Best which lay west of the railway, working from the south.

The brigade commander decided to use 2 Gordons to clear and cover square 3714, in which the other battalions would then form up. These would then attack northwest, parallel to and west of the railway.

At 1000 hours 25 Sep the attack started, but the enemy fire was too strong. 2 Gordons then pulled back and a Typhoon attack went in on the railway embankment positions. The battalion advanced once more and their forward troops reached the embankment, but were again held up.

At this juncture the divisional commander decided to by-pass Best and to extend the divisional front northward to the R. Donnel. 227 (H) Bde were ordered to withdraw 2 Gordons and to advance to Liempde, 3632, next morning.

2 Gordons were only able to get a few men back from the one platoon, which had managed to cross the railway embankment.

(c) The drive to the north

On 24 Sep the third battalion of 44 (L) Bde, 8 RS, advanced through 6 KOSB, but were held up about a mile up the Bextel road. Meanwhile 6 RSF secured Vleut, 3828, on the right, against some stiff opposition. In the evening 5 DO (7 Armd Div) arrived in the bridgehead, having moved from under command 53 (W) Div to 15 (S) Div. But the axis had again been cut this day and this regiment was promptly ordered to move forward at first light to St Oedenrode.

On 25 Sep patrolling and consolidation was the order for the day, the break in the axis was not yet closed.

NS/WD/NWE/410/1.I
NS/WD/NWE/350/1.I
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NS/WD/NWE/913/2.I

NS/WD/NWE/959/2.I
NS/WD/NWE/961/1.I
NS/WD/NWE/931/1.I
NS/WD/NWE/829/2.I

HS/WD/NWE/410/1.I
 HS/WD/NWE/887/1.I
 HS/WD/NWE/925/1.I

Then on 26 Sep 227 (H) Bde attacked on the right of 44 (L) Bde, whose right battalion, 6 RSP, also pressed forward. For about a mile north of Vleut the going was good, but the woods beyond this were so dense that too much advantage lay with the defence. A Typhoon attack was put in, a number of prisoners were captured, but the enemy still held firm. Late in the afternoon 227 (H) Bde withdrew from the woods and took up a defensive position. 6 RSP also withdrew and with 6 KOSB moved to 227 (H) Bde's right flank ready for a further attack next day to close to the R. Dommel.

(d) 46 (H) Bde action at Best - 26 Sep

9 Cameronians and 7 Seaforth had a final crack at Best this day, supported by all the divisional artillery and a troop of self propelled anti-tank guns. 7 Seaforths broke through the devastating fire, which had so far prevented success and by evening were in possession of the factory. The enemy's sting had been drawn. 9 Cameronians also closed up on the railway line.

(e) Action south of the Wilhelmina canal

By last light 24 Sep Voorheide, 1608, was captured by 2 Mons and a strong enemy counter attack that night failed to dislodge them. But the Germans held firmly on to Reusel, 2010, though a footing was gained there on 25 Sep. Lack of roads and plenty of rain were two of the chief difficulties in the southern area.

At last light 26 Sep the division held the general line Dun, 3024 - Westelbeers, 2419 - Metersel, 2414 - Bladel, 2410 - southern part of Reusel-Voorheide.

Contact had been made on 25 Sep with 49 Recce Regt on the left.

(f) 7 Armd Div movements

On 24 Sep 7 Armd Div moved forward to the Eindhoven area, leaving 11 H to hold the line of the Heuse-Escant canal between 49 and 53 Dives. This task was completed next day when these two divisions made direct contact.

On 25 and 26 Sep the division was employed at the cut in 30 Corps axis (see paragraph 71(d) and (f) above).

(g) 1 Corps

The action of 49 Div on the immediate left of 12 Corps is given briefly below. For further detail see Chapter V.

HS/WD/NWE/896/1.I
 HS/WD/NWE/966/1.I
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HS/WD/NWE/313/1.I
 HS/WD/NWE/400/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/350/1.I
 HS/WD/NWE/375/1.I
 HS/WD/NWE/833/2.I

On 24 Sep 49 Div advanced across the Meuse-Facaut canal and on the right reached Turnhout, 0505, without opposition. A crossing was forced next day over the canal here, but it was decided to exploit success, which had been gained further to the west, and on 26 Sep this bridgehead was abandoned and the line of the Turnhout canal was the forward limit held in this sector.

Paras 40 and 68
to 71 above

73. Operations between Veghel and Grave - 24 to 26 Sep

Commander 30 Corps had expressed his concern on 19 Sep about the lack of troops between Veghel and Grave, but not till 22 Sep was 506 Regt able to move forward to occupy Uden. Then only their advance party arrived from the south, while 32 Ods Bde came down to this area from the north to deal with the second cut in the axis. On 24 Sep 506 Regt reached Uden, only to have to return that night to deal with the third cut, reaching Uden again on 26 Sep afternoon.

US/WD/WH/360/1.1
US/WD/WH/381/1.1

So 32 Ods Bde were left to hold this area from 24 to 26 Sep. The Goldstream Group held the Grave-Heesch, 4851, road just west of 30 Corps axis, with a company group at Oss, 4754, and the Grenadier Group held Uden, and on 26 Sep captured Heesch with 170 prisoners.

US/WD/WH/328/1.1
and Appx C
US/B.122.
pp.327/8 and
356/360

At Oss there was a very large German food dump from which both Germans and British had been drawing rations since HQ Ods Armd Div located it on 19 Sep. Some interesting incidents there, recounted in 2 HQR regimental history, are worthy of note.

74. Operations between the R. Meuse and R. Waal, 21-26 Sep

(a) 32 US Airborne Div

US/21AG/TS/W/
39/245

At first light 21 Sep 508 Proht Inf counter attacked at Beek, 7560, but without success and the enemy took advantage of this to press on to within 200 yards of Berg en Dal, 7360. He was held here and another counter attack was mounted in the afternoon, which succeeded in clearing Beek by 1800 hours.

On 22 Sep repeated enemy attacks on Wyler Berg, 7758, were beaten off and the area between the Wijmegen-Cleve road and the R. Waal was cleared as far east as Ubbergen, 7361-Pals, 7664. The Goldstream Ods Group reverted to Ods Armd Div command this day.

On 23 Sep the third glider lift came in carrying 325 OLI Inf and some artillery, engineer and other troops.

By evening 24 Sep clearance north of the road to Cleve had reached the line Smorenhoek, 7659 - Erlekom, 7862. The same general line was held on evening 26 Sep. SRY group took part in these operations under 82 US Airborne Div command.

(b) 30 Corps artillery link up with 1 Airborne Div

On 21 Sep 64 Med Regt heard an unknown station ask to come in on its regimental net, this was identified as the CRA 1 Airborne Div by knowledge of a mutual acquaintance and from then on 30 Corps was able to support 1 Airborne Div with artillery fire. Some of the targets ordered were at this time out of range, but batteries were moved forward to just south of Heerbosch area, 6661, to overcome this.

(c) 30 Corps Air Support

Air support and reconnaissance were negligible on 21 Sep owing to weather and the ban on flying during the airborne lift, but from 22 to 25 Sep Typhoon attacks on the enemy at Arnhem gave considerable assistance to 1 Airborne Div. On 22 Sep also the Typhoons claimed good bags in the Veghel-Gemert area, 30 Corps having agreed to the unusual procedure of strafing on recognition within the bombline; only one vehicle casualty of ours was reported. On 25 Sep a strong enemy air formation in the Nijmegen-Arnhem area was broken up by 83 Group RAF in the afternoon and further successes were obtained on 26 Sep in the same area. Nijmegen bridge appeared to be the enemy objective.

(d) HQ Airborne Corps

On 21 Sep the weather was bad and only a part of the parachute troops of 1 Polish Para Bde were able to fly in. On 22 Sep the weather was again bad in England, but on 23 Sep 325 Gl Inf (82 US Airborne Div) and the remainder of the Poles came in, the latter landing east of Grave, as requested by HQ Airborne Corps.

On 26 Sep the British Airborne Forward Delivery Airfield Group (AFDAG) was flown in in Dakotas onto Oud Keent airfield, 5854, and the aircraft took off again carrying American glider pilots. This was a grass airfield, which had been used to some extent by the Germans, though not for operations.

(e) The west flank

There was little activity in the area north and northwest of Grave. 2 HCR and later H. Netherlands Bde appear to have maintained patrols here.

HS/WD/NWE/845/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/514/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/181/1.I
Appx A/13 to 18
HS/AL/83

HS/AL/131

HS/M122 p.350
HS/WD/NWE/998/1.I

Section VIII - Lessons of the Operation

75. 21 Army Group record

The main lessons recorded by HQ 21 Army Group are under the following headings:-

- (a) The effect of weather on planning and execution.
- (b) The organisation of planning.
- (c) The effect of dispersion of airborne forces - both in time and distance.
- (d) The necessity for good communications.
- (e) The importance of the "break-out" by the ground forces.
- (f) The organisation of air support.
- (g) Some administrative lessons.

76. RAF Narrative

The RAF point of view on items (c) and (f) above is given in their narrative, where two other points of great mutual interest are dealt with:-

- (a) Unified operational control of air forces.
- (b) The balancing of risks.

77. 1 Br Airborne Corps report

The main comments here are on the following subjects:-

- (a) Dispersion
- (b) Surprise
- (c) Effect of weather
- (d) Training
- (e) Glider pilot organisation
- (f) Control of air forces
- (g) Airfields
- (h) Resupply

HS/AL/83, Pt.III

RAF Narrative
The Liberation
of NW Europe
Vol.IV,
pp.167-173

HS/AL/131
pp.20-24

HB/WD/NWE/205A/1.I
Appx K, Part III
pp. 43-47

78. 1 Airborne Div report

The main lessons dealt with in this report concern:-

- (a) The balancing of risks (paras 223-225)
- (b) Air support (paras 226-228)
- (c) Training (paras 229-238)

HB/21AG/TB/W/
39/245

79. XVIII US Corps (Airborne) report

Two main points are commented on in this report:-

- (a) The advantages and disadvantages of a daylight operation.
- (b) How the somewhat disorganised state of the enemy contributed to the success of the two American divisions.

HB/21AG/TB/W/
39/244 pp.1-3

80. First Allied Airborne Army report

Among the comments at the beginning of this report are:-

- (a) Overall command.
- (b) The necessity for initial strength.
- (c) The need for a quick junction between ground and airborne forces.

HB/AL/675/13
pp.292-295

81. The War Office monograph on Airborne Forces

The main lessons which Lt. Col. Otway has recorded in this are on the following subjects:-

- (a) The effect on surprise and effective strength of landing an airborne division in several lifts.
- (b) The balancing of risks.
- (c) The lack of reliable intelligence and the effect of this on plans.
- (d) The lack of close offensive air support.
- (e) The effects of a lack of external communications.
- (f) The necessity for a quick junction with ground forces.

He also records three German criticisms:-

- (g) That we used too much of our air force in protecting the airborne landings instead of interfering with the movements of German reinforcements.
- (h) That we lost surprise because our troops took so long to get into action against their real objectives.
- (i) That our mistake was not to have landed the entire 1 Airborne Div at once, and not to have dropped a second division east of ARNHEM.

82. An American comment

The Military
Review Sep 1952
pp.23, 25.

In an American article in the Military Review two points are mentioned which merit inclusion here:-

(a) Timing of the airborne operation

A German study suggested that if the airborne operation had been timed to take place well after the armoured attack on the ground had gained momentum the results might have been decisive, for then no German reserves would have been left to turn against the airborne troops.

(b) Length of time before relief by ground forces

The results seemed to cool some of the sentiment, which had been expressed from time to time, for a long range strategic envelopment and prolonged action from an independent airhead.

Chapter VIII - Second Army Operations 27 to 30 Sep

1. On the Island

HS/B/116
pp.140/2

Forward on the western flank 43 Recce Bgt were watching enemy activity on the north bank of the Nederrijn from concealed posts in Randwijk, 6175. On the night 26/27 Sep these posts heard Germans close at hand on the south bank. Confused fighting took place in the dark and in the morning quite a stiff little action developed, when an attempt was made to drive the Germans back into the river; they were more numerous and determined than expected. 214 Bde had to be brought forward to drive them out and fighting continued well into the night of the 27th, but as dawn broke on 28 Sep most of the Germans surrendered. In all 150 prisoners were taken.

HS/WD/TWR/181/1.I
HS/WD/TWR/368/1.I

On the right of the bridgehead 69 Bde continued to fight to reach Haalderen, but were unable to break the enemy's resistance.

The Germans went on trying to bomb the Nijmegen bridges, but failed to cut these vital links. Finally on the night 28/29 Sep specially trained personnel swam down the river with floating charges and attached these to both bridges. A complete span of the railway bridge was dropped into the river, but the demolition at the road bridge was not so successful, only 80 feet of roadway was blown away and this gap was bridged for single way class 40 traffic by 2000 hours on 29 Sep. Ten of the swimmers were taken prisoner and the remaining two died. The night of the 29th saw the river above each bridge well lit up and anti-tank guns were dug in on the banks. The enemy entertained himself by floating haystacks and logs down the stream and life in the vicinity became most uncomfortable with shells and bullets ricocheting off the water.

HS/B/116 p.144

On 29 Sep 43 Div were made responsible for the whole bridgehead and 5 Ods Armd Bde and 69 Bde passed to their command. A strong enemy counter attack on 69 Bde that evening was broken up by artillery fire.

On 30 Sep 6 HLI of 52 (L) Div was placed under 69 Bde command and relieved one of their forward battalions.

2. Between the R. Waal and the R. Maas

HS/WD/TWR/193/1.I
HS/WD/TWR/845/1.I

There was little change in the position of forward troops in this area between 27 and 30 Sep, but there were indications of increasing enemy activity to the east.

3. The eastern flank south of the R. Maas

8 Corps cleared the west bank of the R. Maas from Bambeek, 7739, to the north, but were unable to make any progress in the Overloon area, which was held strongly by the enemy.

On 28 Sep the boundary between 8 and 12 Corps was fixed 1000 yards east of the road Hechtel - Veghel - Grave.

From 0600 hours 29 Sep 8 Corps right boundary with XIX US Corps (the Inter Army Group boundary) was amended from Hasselt eastward to become:-

"incl Second Army rd junc 293629 - rd and rly crossing 324645 - excl Hasgdon 3571 - incl Meeuwen 4479 - all excl Bree 5084 - Weert 5896 - Asten 6113 - Deurne 6520 - Venray 7726 - Maashees 8231."

and 1 Belgian Bde passed under command of First U.S. Army.

On 29 Sep 6 Gds Tank Bde, which had been grounded at the R. Seine, arrived in the Geldrop, 4916, area and rejoined 8 Corps, while in the American area 7 US Armd Div took over from 3 Br Div and concentrated in the Deurne - Asten area, with the task of clearing the area Overloon - Venray from the north starting at midday 30 Sep.

On 30 Sep 3 Br Div was ordered to move one Bde over the Grave bridge into 82 US Airborne Div area, while the other two brigades would concentrate southwest of Mook, ready to bridge the river at Mook when the north bank was firmly in our hands.

4. The western flank south of the R. Maas

On 27 Sep 7 Armd Div made considerable progress against little opposition north of the Zuid Willems Vaart canal capturing Dinther, 4341 and Heeswijk, 4241. But the enemy held the south bank of the canal on the Heeswijk - Schijndel road, where the bridge was blown, and was found in strength to the northwest on the general line Geffen 4251 - Nuland, 4050 - Berlikom, 3745.

To the northeast of this area 32 Gds Bde held Oss securely and repelled a counter attack on Heesch, 4851.

Between the Zuid Willems Vaart canal and the R. Dommel, 153 Bde of 53 (W) Div relieved 131 Bde on 27 Sep and came under command of 7 Armd Div. No further advance was made here and the road St Oedenrode - Veghel remained under occasional shell fire.

HS/WD/NWE/146/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
APPX A/28/18
" A/29/38, 78.
" A/30/50
HS/WD/NWE/344/1.I

HS/WD/NWE/91A/1.I
APPX A/27/113
" A/28/28, 32
" A/29/77
" A/30/33
HS/WD/NWE/360/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/397/1.I
HS/WD/NWE/959/2.I

South of the R. Dommel 15 (S) Div closed to the river in the Fratershoef area, 339325, by 28 Sep. Next day they extended their area north to the Zuid Willems Vaart canal and took 158 Bde under command.

South of the Wilhelmina Canal 53 (W) Div vacated Voorheide on the night 27/28 Sep to straighten their line and it was reoccupied by the enemy. In the gap between 49 Div and 53 (W) Div Arendonck was held by Belgian partisans.

5. Move of 1 Airborne Div to England

On 28 Sep the survivors of 1 Airborne Div moved to Louvain by road and on 29 and 30 Sep they were flown back to England.

DD/WD/WWE/206A/1.1
Appx E. Part I
pp.25/26

Map 8 Operation 'MARKET GARDEN'

Order of Battle

21 Army Group skeleton Order of Battle 29 Aug to 30 Sep 1944 - (excluding units in UK and in suspended units)

Gds Armd Div
5 Gds Armd Bde
1 Mot Gren Gds
2 Armd Gren Gds
1 Armd Coldm Gds
2 Armd IG

32 Gds Bde
5 Coldm Gds
3 IG
1 WO

Armd Recce
2 Armd Recce BG

1 Airborne Div
1 Para Bde
1 Para Bn
2 Para Bn
3 Para Bn

4 Para Bde
156 Para Bn
10 Para Bn
11 Para Bn

1 Airltdg Bde
1 Border
2 S Staffords
7 KOSB

3 Brit Div
8 Inf Bde
1 Suffolk
2 E Yorks
1 S Lan R

9 Inf Bde
2 Lincolns
1 KOSB
2 RUR

185 Inf Bde
2 Warwick
1 Norfolk
2 KSLI

Recce
3 Recce Regt

MG
2 Mx

7 Armd Div
22 Armd Bde
5 DG
1 R Tks
5 R Tks
1 RB (Mot)

131 Inf Bde
1/5 Queens
1/6 Queens
1/7 Queens

Armd Recce
8 H

11 Armd Div
29 Armd Bde
23 H
3 R Tks
2 PP Yeo
8 RB (Mot)

159 Inf Bde
3 Mon
4 KSLI
1 Hereford

Armd Recce
15/19 H

15 (B) Div
44 Inf Bde
8 RS
6 RSP
6 KOSB

46 Inf Bde
9 Cameronians
2 Glas H
7 Seaforth

227 Inf Bde
2 Gordons
2 A & SH
10 HLI

Recce
15 Recce Regt

MG
1 Hx

51 (H) Div
152 Inf Bde
2 Seaforth
5 Seaforth
5 Cameronians

153 Inf Bde
1 Gordons
5 BW
5/7 Gordons

154 Inf Bde
1 BW
7 BW
7 A & SH

Recce
2 Derby Yeo

MG
1/7 Hx

52 (L) Div
155 Inf Bde
7/9 RS
4 KOSB
5 KOSB

156 Inf Bde
4/5 RSP
6 Cameronians
7 Cameronians

157 Inf Bde
5 HLI
6 HLI
1 Glas H

Recce
52 Recce Regt

MG
7 Manch

53 (W) Div
71 Inf Bde
1 Oxf Bucks
1 HLI
4 RWF

158 Inf Bde
1 E Lan R
7 RWF
1/5 Welch

160 Inf Bde
6 RWF
2 Mon
4 Welch

Recce
53 Recce Regt

MG
1 Manch

2 Cdn Inf Div
4 Cdn Inf Bde
R Regt C
RHLI
Essex Scot

5 Cdn Inf Bde
RHC
R de Mais
Calg Highrs

6 Cdn Inf Bde
Fus MB
Cameronians of C
8 Sask R

Recce
8 Cdn Recce Regt

MG
Tor Scot R

3 Cdn Inf Div
7 Cdn Inf Bde
R WPG Rif
Regina Rif
1 C Scot R

8 Cdn Inf Bde
GOR of C
R de Chaud
W Shore R

9 Cdn Inf Bde
HLI of C
SD & C Highrs
Nth NS Highrs

Recce
7 Cdn Recce Regt

MG
CH of C

4 Cdn Armd Div
4 Cdn Armd Bde
21 Cdn Armd Regt
22 Cdn Armd Regt
28 Cdn Armd Regt

10 Cdn Inf Bde
Line & Wall R
Alq R
A & SH of C
+ Lake Sup R (Mot)

Armd Recce
29 Cdn Armd
Recce Regt

(+ Not Shown in Inf
Army OB in NS/CAN)

Armd C Regts (att)
2 HOR (Gds Armd Div)
Royals
11 H (7 Armd Div)
Inns of Court
(11 Armd Div)
18 Cdn Armd C Regt
(4 Cdn Armd Div)

1 Indep Belgian Bde
Royal Netherlands Bde
(Approx strengths
- battalion group)

6 Gds Tk Bde
4 Tk Gren Gds
4 Tk Coldm Gds
3 Tk BG

1 Pol Para Bde
1 Pol Para Bn
2 Pol Para Bn
3 Pol Para Bn

4 Armd Bde
Greys
44 R Tks
3/4 Sharp-
shooters [OLY]
2 KRRC (Mot)

Czech Indep Armd Bde
(From 7 Sep)
1 Czech Armd Regt
2 Czech Armd Regt
Czech Mot Bn

8 Armd Bde
4/7 DG
13/18 H
Wotts Yeo [SRY]
12 KRRC (Mot)

1 Tk Bde HQ
30 Armd Bde HQ
31 Armd Bde HQ
(from 4 Sep)

31 Armd Bde
(to 4 Sep)
9 R Tks

11 R Tks (CML)
42 R Tks (CML)
49 R Tks (CML)

33 Armd Bde
145 MAC
1 H Yeo
1 R Riding Yeo

79 Armd Div
1 Lothians (Flails)
1 Pans (Flails)
22 Regs (Flails)

order of Battle

21 Army Group skeleton Order of Battle 29 Aug to 30 Sep 1944 - RAC Regts and Infantry Bns
(excluding units in UK and in suspended animation)

<p>orne Div Bde ra Bn ra Bn ra Bn</p> <p>3 Brit Div 8 Inf Bde 1 Suffolk 2 E Yorks 1 S Lan R</p> <p>Bde ra Bn ra Bn ra Bn</p> <p>9 Inf Bde 2 Lincolns 1 KOSB 2 RUR</p> <p>g Bde der taffords B</p> <p>185 Inf Bde 2 Warwick 1 Norfolk 2 KSLI</p> <p>Recce 3 Recce Regt</p> <p>MG 2 Mx</p>	<p>7 Armd Div 22 Armd Bde 5 DG 1 R Tks 5 R Tks 1 RB (Mot)</p> <p>131 Inf Bde 1/5 Queens 1/6 Queens 1/7 Queens</p> <p>Armd Recce 8 H</p>	<p>11 Armd Div 29 Armd Bde 23 H 3 R Tks 2 PP Yeo 8 RB (Mot)</p> <p>159 Inf Bde 3 Mon 4 KSLI 1 Hereford</p> <p>Armd Recce 15/19 H</p>	<p>15 (S) Div 44 Inf Bde 8 HS 6 RSP 6 KOSB</p> <p>46 Inf Bde 9 Cameronians 2 Glas H 7 Seaforth</p> <p>227 Inf Bde 2 Gordons 2 A & SH 10 HLI</p> <p>Recce 15 Recce Regt</p> <p>MG 1 Mx</p>	<p>43 (W) Div 129 Inf Bde 4 Som LI 4 Wilts 5 Wilts</p> <p>130 Inf Bde 7 Hamps 4 Dorset 5 Dorset</p> <p>214 Inf Bde 1 Worc R 7 SOM LI 5 DCLI</p> <p>Recce 43 Recce Regt</p> <p>MG 8 Mx</p>	<p>49 (WR) Div 145 Inf Bde 4 Lincolns 1/4 KSLI Hallams</p> <p>147 Inf Bde 1 Leicesters 11 RSP 7 DWR</p> <p>56 Inf Bde 2 SWS 2 Glosters 2 Essex</p> <p>Recce 49 Recce Regt</p> <p>MG 2 Kensingtons</p>	<p>50 (W) Div 69 Inf Bde 5 E Yorks 6 Green Howards 7 Green Howards</p> <p>151 Inf Bde 6 DLI 8 DLI 9 DLI</p> <p>231 Inf Bde 2 Devon 1 Hamps 1 Dorset</p> <p>Recce 61 Recce Regt</p> <p>MG 2 Cheshire</p>
<p>Div Bde</p> <p>53 (W) Div 71 Inf Bde 1 Oxf Bucks 1 HLI 4 RWP</p> <p>Bde ronians ronians</p> <p>158 Inf Bde 1 E Lan R 7 RWP 1/5 Welch</p> <p>Bde H</p> <p>160 Inf Bde 6 RWP 2 Mon 4 Welch</p> <p>Recce 53 Recce Regt</p> <p>MG 1 Manch</p>	<p>2 Cdn Inf Div 4 Cdn Inf Bde R Regt C RHLI Essex Scot</p> <p>5 Cdn Inf Bde RHC R de Meis Calg Highrs</p> <p>6 Cdn Inf Bde Pub MR Cameron of C 8 Bank R</p> <p>Recce 8 Cdn Recce Regt</p> <p>MG Tor Scot R</p>	<p>3 Cdn Inf Div 7 Cdn Inf Bde R Wpg Rif Regina Rif 1 C Scot R</p> <p>8 Cdn Inf Bde GOR of C R de Chaud N Shore R</p> <p>9 Cdn Inf Bde HLI of C SD & G Highrs Nth NS Highrs</p> <p>Recce 7 Cdn Recce Regt</p> <p>MG CH of C</p>	<p>4 Cdn Armd Div 4 Cdn Armd Bde 21 Cdn Armd Regt 22 Cdn Armd Regt 28 Cdn Armd Regt</p> <p>10 Cdn Inf Bde Linc & Wellld R Alg R A & SH of C + Lake Sup R (Mot)</p> <p>Armd Recce 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt</p> <p>[+ Mot Bn shown in Inf Bde in First Cdn Army OB in HS/CNHQ/Rpt/183 Appx C].</p>	<p>1 Pol Armd Div 10 Pol Armd Bde 1 Pol Armd Regt 2 Pol Armd Regt 24 Pol Armd (L) Regt</p> <p>3 Pol Inf Bde + 10 Pol Mot Bn (Dgns) 1 Pol Inf (High- land) Bn 8 Pol Inf Bn 9 Pol Inf Bn</p> <p>Armd Recce 10 Pol Mtd Rifle Regt</p>	<p>82 US Airborne Div 504 Preht Inf 1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn</p> <p>505 Preht Inf 1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn</p> <p>325 GII Inf 1st Bn 2nd Bn 2nd Bn 401 GII Inf (att)</p> <p>508 Preht Inf (att) 1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn</p>	<p>101 US Airborne Div 502 Preht Inf 1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn</p> <p>327 GII Inf 1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn</p> <p>506 Preht Inf (att) 1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn</p> <p>501 Preht Inf (att) 1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn</p>
<p>Bde Pen Gde Coldm Gde G</p> <p>4 Armd Bde Greys 44 R Tks 3/4 Sharp- shooters [CLY] 2 KRC (Mot)</p> <p>Para Bde Para Bn Para Bn Para Bn</p> <p>Czech Indep Armd Bde (from 7 Sep) 1 Czech Armd Regt 2 Czech Armd Regt Czech Mot Bn</p>	<p>8 Armd Bde 4/7 DG 13/18 H Wotts Yeo [BRY] 12 KRC (Mot)</p>	<p>31 Armd Bde (to 4 Sep) 9 R Tks</p>	<p>33 Armd Bde 144 RAC 1 N Yeo 1 E Riding Yeo</p>	<p>34 Tk Bde 7 R Tks 147 RAC 107 RAC 9 R Tks (from 31 Armd Bde)</p>	<p>2 Cdn Armd Bde 6 Cdn Armd Regt 10 Cdn Armd Regt 27 Cdn Armd Regt</p>	<p>4 SS Bde 41 Cdo 46 Cdo 47 Cdo 48 Cdo</p> <p>L of C 5 Kings 6 DWR 1 Bucks</p> <p>5 R Berks 18 DLI</p>

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Section D

Chapter V

LIBERATION CAMPAIGN NORTH WEST EUROPE

Phase 5

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