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The Battle of Arnhem, known by its Allied codename of Operation ‘Market-Garden’, was the largest airborne battle in history, and the only attempt in the Second World War by the Allies to use airborne troops in a strategic role in Europe. It was a battle of Army Groups numbering hundreds of thousands of men – 21st Army Group under Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery against Army Group B under Generalfeldmarschall Walther Model – but repeatedly its outcome hinged on the actions of small forces and individual battalions at crucial points. Rather than a set-piece battle with a tidy beginning and end, it began on 17 September 1944 from a confused and daily changing pattern of events, and ended ten days later as the only major defeat of Montgomery’s career, and the only Allied defeat in the campaign in North-West Europe.

The direct origin of the Battle of Arnhem was actually Montgomery’s greatest victory, the Battle of Normandy (described in Normandy 1944: Allied Landings and Breakout, Campaigns Series 1). The destruction of the original Army Group B (Seventh Army and Fifth Panzer Army) in the Falaise Pocket in August 1944 at the end of the battle was a disaster for Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich. Of 38 German divisions committed to Normandy, 25 were completely destroyed, with at least 240,000 men killed or wounded, and a further 200,000 taken prisoner. Generalfeldmarschall Model, appointed on 18 August as both Commander-in-Chief West (Oberbefehlshaber West or OB West) and commander of Army Group B, found himself managing the rout of his shattered forces across northern France into Belgium and Holland.

In the planning before D-Day on 6 June, the Allies had assumed that they would advance steadily inland, with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commanding Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF), taking over the land
battle from Montgomery after a few weeks and directing the advance of his three Army Groups – Montgomery’s 21st Army Group, 12th Army Group under Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, and 6th Army Group under Lieutenant General Jacob Devers coming from southern France – on a broad front against a strong German defence. Instead, the Battle of Normandy had been weeks of hard-fought virtual stalemate followed by a sudden German collapse resulting in the Falaise pocket.

The very size of this victory was Montgomery’s undoing. Success in Normandy had depended on cooperation between the various Allied members and services. Now, with the unexpected destruction of Army Group B, many on both sides believed that history was repeating itself, and that August 1944 in France was August 1918 once more, with Germany virtually defeated and bound to surrender before the year ended. Senior Allied commanders, taught to regard a successful war as just one episode in their developing careers, began to display openly the self-interest and concern for their own futures they had kept buried during the battle.

After some delay, Eisenhower was due to assume command from Montgomery on 1 September, establishing SHAEF Headquarters at Granville in western Normandy. On 13 August, as Army Group B’s encirclement was being completed, Montgomery first raised with Eisenhower the idea of changing Allied strategy to a ‘single thrust’ advance by his own 21st Army Group, supported by First US Army under Major General Courtney Hodges, through northern France and the Low Countries and into Germany. Montgomery’s point was that German opposition against him was negligible, but that there was not enough transport to keep all three Army Groups advancing at full stretch over 500 km (300 miles) from Normandy. Even the fleets of Allied transport aircraft, it was said, could not sustain Montgomery’s divisions north of Aachen. Instead, Berlin was ‘practically convined’ at Patton’s continuing southward thrust towards Germany, holding First US Army

directing it increasingly south away from 21st Army Group. At the end of August, as Third US Army’s drive began to halt at the gates of Germany from lack of fuel, relations between Montgomery and the American generals could hardly have been worse.

Allied victory in the Battle of Normandy had also depended very heavily on massive air support for the ground troops, a duty imposed on Eisenhower on the often reluctant airman by Allied Expeditionary Air Forces (AEAF) under the unpopular Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory. On 15 August, Leigh-Mallory, also believing that the war in Europe was won, started to close down AEAF Headquarters and plan for his next posting. The Allied heavy bomber forces of RAF Bomber Command and USAAF 8th Air Force went back to their preferred strategy of bombing German cities, while the SHAPE tactical air forces split along national lines, with USAAF 9th Air Force supporting 12th Army Group and RA F 2nd Tactical Air Force supporting 21st Army Group. Since the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) in the west barely existed, and the Allies enjoyed unquestioned air supremacy, this appeared not to matter.

Before D-Day, SHAPE staff had identified the need for a new headquarters to coordinate the various Allied airforces for airborne operations; and as part of the disbanding of the AEAF Eisenhower created Combined Airborne Forces Headquarters on 2 August under Lieutenant General Lewis Brereton, the highly controversial former commander of 9th Air Force, who was disliked by Bradley. On 16 August this name was changed to First Allied Airborne Army as part of the Allied deception plan based around the fictitious First US Army Group (FUSAG), which had fooled the Germans for months.

Under pressure from Washington, where Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall and General Henry ‘Hap’ Arnold, commanding the Army Air Forces, both wanted a major airborne operation mounted in Europe before the end of the war, Eisenhower placed First Allied Airborne Army under 21st Army Group control. As the Allied supply crisis and dispute over strategy worsened, it was from this tangle of conflicting interests that an airborne solution, Operation ‘Market-Garden’, started to emerge.
The Opposing Commanders

The Allied Commanders

On 1 September, Eisenhower formally took command of the ground battle from Montgomery. Next day, after conferring with Bradley, Hodges and Patton, he issued his own interpretation of priority for Montgomery, a compromise 'two thrust' strategy from north and south including Third US Army's drive in the plan. Communications from SHAEF Headquarters at Granville were very poor, with top priority messages like this taking three days or more to reach Montgomery and Bradley. On the same day Eisenhower was immobilized with a twisted knee, while political demands on his time increased when on 5 September Winston Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff sailed for Quebec for a major strategy conference with President Roosevelt and his military advisers. In these circumstances, Eisenhower could exercise little control over the land battle or his own quarrelling subordinates.

Montgomery, as was his custom, remained at 21st Army Group Tactical Headquarters, relying on his chief of staff, Major General Francis 'Freddy' de Guingand, to represent him at SHAEF. Unfortunately, on 9 September de Guingand collapsed from exhaustion, and Montgomery sent him home to rest for a week. Montgomery regarded the 'two thrust' strategy as nothing more than the original broad front advance - which could not be sustained. Despite several meetings between Bradley and Montgomery, physical separation and communications problems compounded this breakdown in relations between 21st Army Group and the Americans.

With the activation of SHAEF, Montgomery was promoted from a general commanding all 43 SHAEF divisions to a field marshal commanding the fourteen divisions of his own 21st Army Group: in practice, with First Canadian Army occupied clearing the Channel ports, this meant the three Army Corps (eight divisions and four armoured brigades) of Second British Army under Lieutenant General Sir Miles 'Bimbo' Dempsey. As the effective ground commander for 'Market-Garden', Dempsey remains a complete enigma, entirely under the shadow of his illustrious and autocratic superior, for whose mistakes he seemed happy to shoulder the blame.

In Normandy, Montgomery had relied for his major offensives on the talented commander of British VIII Corps, Lieutenant General Sir Richard O'Connor. However, at the start of August, Montgomery brought out an old protégé, Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks ('Horrocks' to everyone) who was still recovering from wounds to command British XXX Corps. On 20 August, Horrocks' health collapsed, and he fell ill with fever. Montgomery concealed this fact while Horrocks recovered, and on 26 August he placed XXX Corps at the head of Second British Army's victorious advance north from the Seine. Horrocks commanded from a tank for the next two weeks as XXX Corps drove forward almost unopposed for 300km (200 miles), liberating Arras on 1 September, Brussels on 3 September, and Antwerp on 4 September, followed by British XII Corps under Lieutenant General Neil Ritchie. Unable to sustain all of Second British Army at this speed, Montgomery ordered VIII Corps to give up its transport and halt on the Seine, where the pragmatic O'Connor began to organize another posting for himself.

At Antwerp, XXX Corps halted, largely from exhaustion and lack of fuel. Although its sudden advance had trapped most of German Fifteenth Army under General Gustav von Zangen between the coast and the River Scheldt (Schelede) estuary, Horrocks failed to advance the short distance north of Antwerp to complete the trap. Instead, after a two-day pause, XXX Corps began to spread out eastward, trying to force the Albert and Meuse-But Canals and press into Holland. On 8 September the first launch of German V-2 rockets
against southern England from sites in northern Holland gave extra impetus to the need for Second British Army’s advance.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General Breton was at SHAEF Headquarters seeking a role for First Allied Airborne Army. A hard-living, hard-drinking former First World War pilot with a remarkable ability to prosper from defeat, Breton saw his role entirely as an organizer of air power, rather than as an Army commander. He was determined to fulfill General Arnold’s wishes by using all three airborne divisions assigned to First Allied Airborne Army in one operation.

Breton’s Deputy Commander for First Allied Airborne Army was also the commander of British 1 Airborne Corps, Lieutenant General F. A. M. ‘Boy’ Browning. A dashing figure, he had been appointed by Churchill to command British Airborne Forces in 1941 and had built them up by political and administrative manipulation of the British military establishment as a protégé of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. Disliked and distrusted by the Americans as a ‘superficially English aristocrat’, Browning was anxious to lead the troops he had created into battle before the war ended.

Repeatedly during August, airborne operations had been planned and then cancelled as the speed of the Allied advance made them unnecessary. On 2 September a drop by all three divisions near Lille and Courtrai, for which Second British Army halted its own advance, was cancelled at the last moment when Bradley diverted First US Army to liberate the area instead. Matters came to a head next day when Breton agreed with SHAEF on a new drop to be mounted on 4 September, only to discover that Browning had agreed an entirely different operation with 21st Army Group, using only 1 Airborne Corps to support an advance northward into Holland by XXX Corps on 6 September. Browning threatened to resign to stop Breton’s plan, leaving relations between the two men very poor. From Eisenhower to Browning and Horrocks, the Allied command chain for ‘Market-Garden’ was in disarray.

The German Commanders

Since 1941, Adolf Hitler had exercised direct control over German military operations from Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW) Headquarters at Rastenburg in eastern Germany. On 14 July 1944, a bomb plot to kill Hitler at Rastenburg by German Army officers had only narrowly failed, and senior German officers fought the rest of the war under a cloud of suspicion in which retreat or failure could bring arrest for treason.
General Kurt Student, former commander of the German airborne forces and the leading expert on their use, took command of a new First Parachute Army under Army Group B, to be formed east of Fifteenth Army with its headquarters at 's Hertogenbosch in central Holland. Model also ordered II SS Panzer Corps of two armoured divisions, which had been virtually destroyed in the Falaise fighting, to rally close to his own headquarters at Arnhem. The commander of II SS Panzer Corps, Obergruppenführer Wilhelm 'Willi' Bittrich, like Breitner a former pilot and a specialist in defence against airborne operations, had taken command of the Corps on 28 July and led it through the Falaise rout.

Kurt Student, shown after his promotion to Generaloberst and command of Army Group H following 'Market-Garden'. Born in 1890 of minor Prussian nobility, Student pioneered the use of German airborne forces and commanded them in France in 1940 and in the capture of Crete in 1941, the only completely successful strategic airborne operation of the war. Partly because of the high cost in casualties, the Germans mounted no further major airborne operations after Crete, and Student's career languished until September 1944. (IWM photograph MH6100)

The Allied Forces

By September 1944, Second British Army had overcome most of the amateurism that marked British forces earlier in the war and was a victorious army at the height of its abilities. Even so, and although its artillery and engineers were excellent and its infantry almost unbreakable in defence, it had a reputation for slowness and poor coordination when attacking. Having borne the brunt of the heavy fighting in Normandy followed by the pursuit across France, it was also exhausted, with battle fatigue casualties running at epidemic proportions. It was badly short of troops, and to keep it up to strength Montgomery was forced to break up one division in early September. Those troops that were left, believing the war was virtually won, were increasingly reluctant to risk their lives in battle.

Second British Army had also outrun its own supplies, its tactical Intelligence, and most of its air support. Almost half of 2nd Tactical Air Force was tied up with First Canadian Army, and the rest was searching for suitable airfields in Belgium. As German resistance stiffened, Lieutenant General Dempsey became deeply concerned at the weakness of the proposed northern thrust into Holland, and Montgomery agreed to a delay until 10 September. On that day, the Guards Armoured Division under Major General Allan Adair captured an intact bridge, promptly named 'Joe's Bridge', over the
Meuse-Escut Canal (50ms wide) near Neerpelt, and became the natural choice to lead the advance of XXX Corps under the still sickly Horrocks.

Like other British armoured divisions, the Guards Armoured had abandoned its formal organization in Normandy, adopting a ‘group’ structure; that paired an armoured battalion with a tracked battalion of the same regiment. Guardsmen were specially selected, and the division had a high reputation, but, as with other British divisions, the infantry shortage had forced it to reduce some battalions from three to two companies, and many of its recent replacements had come from other formations such as anti-aircraft artillery batteries. In all, the Guards Armoured Division probably numbered about 13,000 men and 200 tanks. After taking 1,400 casualties during two months in Normandy, it had lost a further 600 men in ten days' fighting along the Belgian canals, leaving it with few illusions about German fighting intentions.

Exact figures for higher formations have little meaning, but XXX Corps numbered at least 100,000 troops, and Second British Army more than 800,000 in total.

Also on 10 September, the still-crippled Eisenhower flew out to Brussels with his deputy, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, to meet Montgomery at last. This highly charged meeting produced another change of plan. In return for the promise of more supplies from Eisenhower, Montgomery would delay his drive northwards into Holland in order to use the whole of Second British Army and First Allied Airborne Army together. The plan was codenamed ‘Market-Garden’, and if it succeeded Montgomery hoped to use it to force Eisenhower into accepting the ‘single thrust’ north.

During September, Lieutenant General Blackett increased First Allied Airborne Army’s staff from 323 officers and men to 1,385. Its air component was about 1,300 C-47 Dakota aircraft, and 250 Albemarles, Halifaxes and Stirlings of the RAE, together with about 2,000 gliders. Transport pilots were regarded as non-combatants by the USAAF and generally ranked well below fighter and bomber crews. Unlike the Americans, British glider pilots and pathfinders were trained to fight as infantry in their own units once on the ground.

The ground element of First Allied Airborne Army was about 33,000 combat troops who would fly into action, plus a ‘seaborne tail’ to follow later.

US XVIII Airborne Corps Headquarters under Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway was complete by September, but Lieutenant General Browning was still busy turning his British Airborne Forces administrative headquarters into British 1 Airborne Corps Headquarters. In particular, Browning’s signals section was only created on 2 September, and he had no direct liaison with 2nd Tactical Air Force or other Allied air forces. Attempts very late in the planning of Operation ‘Market-Garden’ to provide air liaison officers resulted in failure. Like Horrocks at XXX Corps, Browning also had no Dutch liaison officer at his headquarters; however, all the airborne divisions...
had Dutch liaison officers for 'Market-Garden'.

The 82nd US Airborne Division and 101st US Airborne Division each had three regiments (each three battalions strong) of parachute infantry, who were all volunteers, and one of airdropping infantry in gliders, who were not. Each division had 36 field guns, twice as many as a British airborne division. All these troops were specially trained and of the highest quality, and both they and their commanders had recent battle experience. The two divisions were busy absorbing more than 10,000 replacements for casualties suffered in Normandy.

A Sergeant Pilot of the Glider Pilot Regiment, wearing his rank badges and pilot's wings (with an enclosed letter 'G' identifying him as a Second Pilot) on the Denim smock, and armed with a Mark IV Short Magazine Lee-Enfield rifle. The other man, carrying the standard Bren light machine-gun, may belong to any of the British Airborne units at Arnhem as unit and rank badges (except for NCOs) were not normally worn on the smock. He wears an early-pattern helmet with black leather straps, and has tied his face veil as a cape over his shoulders.

British parachute kit being explained to King George VI at an inspection in May 1944. On display is the British version of the 'leg bag' carrying the soldier's equipment. This was released during descent to dangle beneath the paratrooper on a restraining rope to minimize the danger of injury on landing. This bag holds a PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank), with an effective range of about 300 yards. (IWM photograph H36712)
**ALLIED ORDER OF BATTLE**

**SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCES (SHAPE)**
Supreme Commander: General Dwight D. Eisenhower
Deputy Supreme Commander: Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder
Chief of Staff: General Walter Bedell Smith

**12th ARMY GROUP**
Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley

**FIRST US ARMY** (from 24 September)
Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges

**XIX US CORPS**
Major General Charles H. Corlett

**2nd Armored Division**

**30th Infantry Division**

**7th Armored Division** (from 27 September)

**113th Cavalry Group**

**21st ARMY GROUP**
Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery
Chief of Staff: Major General F. W. de Guingand

**SECOND BRITISH ARMY**
Lieutenant General Sir Miles Dempsey

**XII CORPS**
Lieutenant General N. M. Ritchie

**7th Armoured Division**
Major General G. L. Vernon

**15th (Scottish) Division**
Major General C. M. Barber

**53rd (Welsh) Division**
Major General R. K. Ross

**VIII CORPS**
Lieutenant General Sir Richard O'Connor

**11th Armoured Division**
Major General G. P. B. Roberts

**3rd Division**
Major General L. G. Whistler

**4th Armoured Brigade**
Brigadier R. M. P. Garver

**1st Belgian Brigade**
Colonel B. Piron

**XXX CORPS**
Lieutenant General B. G. Horrocks

**2nd Household Cavalry Regiment**

**Guards Armoured Division**
Major General A. H. E. Adair

**5th Guards Brigade** (Grenadiers/Irish)

**32nd Guards Brigade** (Coldstream/Welsh)

**43rd (Wessex) Division**
Major General G. I. Thomas

**129th Brigade**: 4 SJI, 4, 5 Wilts

**130th Brigade**: 7 Hamp, 4, 5 Dorsets

**214th Brigade**: 7 SJI, 1 Worcs, 5 DCLI

Machine Gun Battalion: 8 Middlesex

**9th (Northumbrian) Division** (to VIII Corps 18 September)

**Major General D. A. H. Graham**

**69th Brigade**: 5 East Yorks, 6, 7 Green Howards

**11th Brigade**: 6, 8, 9 DLI

**231st Brigade**: 2 Devons, 1 Hamps, 1 Dorsets

Machine Gun Battalion: 2 Cheshires

**8th Armoured Brigade**
Brigadier E. G. Prior-Palmer

Royal Netherlands Brigade 'Princes Irene'
Colonel A. de Kuyter van Steveninck

**FIRST ALLIED AIRBORNE ARMY**
Lieutenant General Lewis H. Brereton
Deputy: Lieutenant General F. A. M. Browning

**AIR ELEMENT**

**USAAF IX TROOP CARRIER COMMAND**
Major General Paul L. Williams

**52 Wing**: 61, 313, 314, 315, 316, 349 Groups (Dakota)

**53 Wing**: 434, 435, 436, 437, 438 Groups (Dakota)

**50 Wing**: 439, 440, 441, 442 Groups (Dakota)

Total: 68 Squadrons, 1,000 aircraft

**RAF CROUP**
Brigadier L. N. Hollinghurst

**95, 299, 570, 620 Sq (Stirling)**

**49, 644 Sq (Halifax/Albatross)**

**Squadrons 240 aircraft**

**RAF 46 GROUP**
Air Commodore A. L. Fiddament (to 15 Sept)/ Air Commodore L. Darvall

**48, 233, 271, 437 (RCAF)**, 512, 575 Sqn (Dakota)

Total: 6 Squadrons, 279 aircraft

**GROUND ELEMENT**

**XVIII US AIRBORNE CORPS** (HQ secondary role only in battle)
Major General Matthew B. Ridgway

**82nd ('All American') Airborne Division**
Brigadier General James Gavin

**504th Parachute Infantry Regiment**

**505th Parachute Infantry Regiment**

**506th Parachute Infantry Regiment**

**325th Glider Infantry Regiment**

**376th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion**

**319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion**

**320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion**

**101st ('Screaming Eagles') Airborne Division**
Major General Michael Taylor

**501st Parachute Infantry Regiment**

**502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment**

**506th Parachute Infantry Regiment**

**327th Glider Infantry Regiment**

**377th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion**

**321st Glider Field Artillery Battalion**

**907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion**

**1 BRITISH AIRBORNE CORPS**
Lieutenant General F. A. M. Browning

**1st Airborne Division**
Major General E. E. Urquhart

**1st Parachute Brigade**: 1, 2, 3 Para

**4th Parachute Brigade**: 10, 11, 156 Para

**1st Airlanding Brigade**: 1 Border, 2 South Staffs, 7 KOSBs

**1st Airlanding Light Regiment, Royal Artillery**

**1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade**
Major General Stanislaw Sosobowski

**1, 2, 3 Parachute Infantry**

**52nd (Lowland) Division** (airportable)
Major General A. R. W. Allfrey

**158th Brigade**: 38 Royal Ulster, 10, 11, 156

**156th Brigade**: 30 KOSI, 7 Cameronians, 5 HLI

Machine Gun Battalion: 7 Manchester

**79, 80, 186 Field Regiments, 1 Mountain**

**Regiment, 34 Anti-Tank Regiment Royal Artillery**

**AIR FORCES**

**RAF SECOND TACTICAL AIR FORCE**
Air Marshal Sir Arthur Cunningham

**RAF 83 GROUP**
Air Vice Marshal H. Broadhurst

**39 (RCAF) Reconnaissance Wing** (Spitfire)

**121, 122, 123, 143 Wings** (Typhoon)

**125, 127 (RCAF) Wings** (Spitfire)

Total: 29 Squadrons, 350 aircraft

**RAF 2 GROUP**
Air Vice Marshal B. E. Embry

**136, 138, 140 Wings** (Mosquito)

**137, 139 Wings** (B-25 Mitchell)

Total: 13 Squadrons, 160 aircraft

**RAF 84 GROUP** (not involved in the battle)
Air Vice Marshal E. O. Brown

**AIR FORCES INVOLVED ON 17 SEPTEMBER**

**RAF DEFENCE OF GREAT BRITAIN (FIGHTER COMMAND)**
Air Marshal Sir Rodney Hill

**RAF BOMBER COMMAND**
Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris

**RAF COASTAL COMMAND**
Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas

**USAFF 9TH AIR FORCE**
Lieutenant General Hoyt S. Vandenberg

**USAFF 8TH AIR FORCE**
Lieutenant General James H. Doolittle
1st British Airborne Division consisted of two brigades of the Parachute Regiment, all volunteers from other units, and an airlanding brigade of infantry battalions, plus the attached 1st Polish Parachute Brigade under Major General Stanislaw Sosabowski. Many of its battalions had considerable previous combat experience and, like the Americans, its troops were of the highest quality. But it had never fought before as a division, nor under its current commander, Major General R. E. ‘Roy’ Urquhart. Waiting in reserve was 52nd (Lowland) Division, a British infantry division organized to be air portable in C-47 Dakotas once airfields were provided for it, together with two small specialist airfield engineer units, one British and one American.

The German Forces

On 1 September OB West reported that it possessed the equivalent of nine infantry divisions and two weak armoured divisions north of the Ardennes, and was outnumbered ten to one in tanks, three to one in artillery, and absolutely in aircraft. The capture of Antwerp on 4 September provoked ‘Mad Tuesday’ next day, as German rear-area troops of Armed Forces Command Netherlands fell back in chaos throughout Holland. In these circumstances, any accurate count of German forces opposing ‘Market-Garden’ was impossible, but Allied estimates suggest no more than 15,000 troops and 250 tanks by 7 September. Model’s great achievement was his organization of a coherent defence in just ten more days from this. Altogether 82,000 men, 46,000 vehicles and 530 guns of Fifteenth Army escaped across the Scheldt estuary by 23 September, and some were able to reinforce First Parachute Army by the time ‘Market-Garden’ started. Other troops came virtually untrained from reserve units, or were grouped together in improvised formations.

The basic German fighting unit for ‘Market-Garden’ was the Kampfgruppe (battlegroup), an improvised formation of no fixed size or strength. Some were smaller than battalions, but those that played an important role in ‘Market-Garden’ are best regarded as wrecked and reconstituted divisions, very weak in infantry but
strong in artillery and assault guns, with a size and combat power roughly equal to an Allied brigade. Kampfgruppe ‘Walther’, defending against XXX Corps, changed its structure daily, including troops from the Army, Navy, Luftwaffe and Waffen-SS, and existed for less than a month in its commander’s full identity has not survived. Kampfgruppe ‘Chill’ was formed by Generalleutnant Kurt Chill from the remains of his own 85th Infantry Division together with 84th and 89th Infantry Divisions. Even ordinary German formations in ‘Market-Garden’ were rarely at full strength. Generalleutnant Walter Poppe’s 59th Infantry Division was barely 1,000 men, 30 guns and eighteen assault guns, while 6th Parachute Regiment was without one of its battalions. Commanding or coordinating attacks between these improvised formations was extremely difficult, and they varied greatly in quality.

After its retreat from the Falaise pocket, II SS Panzer Corps claimed on 12 September to have only twelve functioning tanks. By this date 9th SS Panzer Division had formed itself into SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Hohenstaufen’ under its senior surviving officer, Obersturmbahnfuehrer Walther Harzer. After sending troops to Kampfgruppe ‘Walther’, this consisted of a company of PzKpfw IV and PzKpfw V Panther tanks, two batteries of Jagdpanther IV assault guns, a reconnaissance battalion, a weak panzergrenadier regiment, and an artillery battalion (twelve guns). SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Frundsberg’, formed from 10th SS Panzer Division under Brigadefuhrer Heinz Harmel, had only a few PzKpfw IVs and Jagdpanthers, its reconnaissance battalion and panzergrenadier regiment, but two artillery battalions. The total force was probably not more than 3,000 men with a high proportion of heavy infantry weapons and machine-guns. Like the Allied airborne troops, they were of the highest fighting quality.

Exhausted, routed or untrained, the Germans were indeed prepared to fight, although most were perfectly aware that the war was lost. Some, particularly in the Waffen-SS, had little wish to survive to face disgrace and possible war crimes trials. As the Allies pushed closer to German soil, most were ready to defend their homeland against an invader who demanded unconditional surrender, and whose attacks were visibly weakening.
Market-Garden, The Plan 17 September 1944

Browning returned to 1 Airborne Corps Headquarters at Moor Park near London after his meeting with Dempsey, and notified First Allied Airborne Army at Ascot that an air plan was required. Brereton also produced this plan, Operation 'Market', by 12 September. For simplicity, as far as possible all paratroops were to be carried by USAF aircraft and all gliders towed by RAF aircraft, regardless of the nationality of the troops. Despite predictions of up to 40 per cent aircraft losses, Brereton wanted to prove that a major air assault could be mounted in daylight (there was no moon in the target period, ruling out a night drop), and sided with his pilots by allowing only one major lift each day. As a result, the 'Market' plan would take at least three days to fly the complete airborne divisions to their targets. The fourth day would be spent on resupply, and 52nd (Lowland) Division would be flown in north of Arnhem over the next two days. In order to prevent

\[ \text{OPERATION 'MARKET', THE AIRBORNE PLAN. On 17 September, First Allied Airborne Army drops three airborne divisions along a corridor north of Eindhoven. 101st US Airborne Division secures bridges from Eindhoven to Veghel. 82nd US Airborne Division secures bridges from Grave to Nijmegen and the Groesbeek heights. 1st British Airborne Division secures Arnhem bridge and the high ground to the north.} \]

\[ \text{OPERATION 'GARDEN', THE GROUND PLAN. Simultaneous with 'Market' on 17 September, Second British Army drives northwards from the Meuse-Escal Canal on a very narrow front, led by XXX Corps, which links up with each of the airborne divisions in turn. Flanking attacks by XII Corps and VIII Corps on either side protect this drive. Once north of Arnhem, XXX Corps establishes the Guards Armoured Division on the Zuiden Zee with a bridgehead over the River Ijssel at Zutphen, and 43rd Division with a bridgehead at Deventer. Once Apeldoorn is secure, 52nd Division is flown in to reinforce this position and secure a bridgehead at Zutphen.} \]

\[ \text{With four divisions established north of the Lower Rhine, XXX Corps leads Second British Army east towards Osnabrück and/or south-east towards Hamm to encircle the Ruhr, possibly in conjunction with First US Army from the south. Meanwhile, First Canadian Army clears the remainder of the Netherlands and the V-2 sites.} \]
confusion over the target, Breiten also ruled that while his flights from England were in the air 2nd Tactical Air Force must remain grounded rather than flying into the same airspace. Allied meteorologists predicted at least two days of clear weather starting on Sunday 17 September, which became ‘D-Day’ for the battle.

Breiten agreed that Browning’s I Airborne Corps would command all three divisions of First Allied Airborne Army, with XVIII Airborne Corps relegated to an administrative role. Browning’s plan was for each of the first wave to land as a formed body in open country about 10km (6 miles) from its main objective, and then advance to capture it. If everything worked, each of the three complete divisions would finish after three days holding an all-round perimeter of at least 40km (25 miles) while the ground forces arrived.

These distances and timescales only made sense if the German troops were not in fact going to fight. Although handicapped by poor coordination between SHAEF, 21st Army Group and First Allied Airborne Army, the Allied picture of German forces in the ‘Market-Garden’ area was reasonably clear. Browning’s plan estimated the Germans at Arnhem as one broken panzer division, or the equivalent of 3,000 infantry with a few tanks, which was exactly right. Allied Intelligence had tracked II SS Panzer Corps Headquarters back from France to the Eindhoven-Arnhem area before losing it on 4 September, and had identified First Parachute Army Headquarters near ‘s Hertogenbosch and Army Group B near Arnhem itself by 16 September. The only significant Allied error was a SHAEF belief that II SS Panzer Corps might have retreated to the Kleve area, east of Nijmegen, rather than north.

In Browning’s plan, 101st Airborne Division under Major General Maxwell Taylor was to drop north of Eindhoven, to capture the bridges over the River Aa and the larger Willems Canal (30m wide) at Veghel, over the minor River Dommel at St Oedenrode, and over the Wilhelmina Canal (35m wide) at Son, and then go on to capture Eindhoven by nightfall. Originally, Browning had wanted Taylor to secure the road from Eindhoven to Grave, a perimeter of 65km (40 miles). Taylor protested, and Dempsey overruled Browning, allowing 101st Airborne to hold at Veghel and leave a gap of about 20km (13 miles) in the Allied deployment. Even so, Taylor planned to take all three of his parachute infantry regiments on the first day, believing that artillery support would soon arrive from XXX Corps.

Brigadier General James Gavin, Ridgway’s successor commanding 82nd Airborne Division, also believed that Browning had set him too large a task, but chose not to protest. Because of the expected threat from the Kleve region, Browning made Gavin’s first priority the capture of the Groesbeek heights, an area of wooded hills about 100m high and 12km (8 miles) long to the east of Nijmegen, followed by the bridges over the River Maas (Meuse) at Grave (250m wide) and over the Maas-Waal Canal (60m wide). Only then was 82nd Airborne to try for the road bridge over the Waal (300m wide) in the centre of Nijmegen. Gavin took a mixed force of infantry and artillery on his first lift, realizing that he might have to fight alone for some time.

The landing zones for 1st British Airborne Division under Major General Urquhart were on the heathland west of Arnhem. But Browning specified that Urquhart’s main objective was to be the road bridge over the Lower Rhine (100m wide) in the town centre, together with the railway bridge and a nearby pontoon bridge (discovered late on 16 September to have been dismantled by the Germans). Urquhart’s troops, joined by 1st Polish Parachute Brigade, would then secure the high ground just north of Arnhem. Urquhart decided to lead with his airlanding troops, and take half his artillery and anti-tank guns on the first lift. Suggestions that a small party of paratroops or glider troops could land directly on Arnhem bridge from the south came too late to change the plan.

On 16 September at Leopoldsburg (Bourg Leopold) about 20km (13 miles) south of Joe’s Bridge, Horrocks briefed XXX Corps’ senior officers on ‘Garden’, the ground plan. The Guards Armoured Division would lead XXX Corps’ drive northward, codenamed the ‘Club Route’, aided by flank attacks from XII Corps on the left and VIII Corps (which had just begun to move from the Scine) on the right. As XXX Corps linked up with each airborne division it would take them under
command from 1 Airborne Corps, handing off its 
troops further south to VIII Corps as it did so.

If the main bridges at Grave, Nijmegen or 
Arnhem were destroyed, the Guards Armoured 
would secure the river bank and 43rd (Wessex) 
Division following would mount an assault crossing. 
Both divisions were issued rations for four days and 
fuel for 400 km (250 miles). Horrocks' main concern 
was breaking through the German defenders 
between Joe's Bridge and Valkenswaard, believed to 
be six battalions and 20 armoured vehicles. In fact 
Kampfgruppe 'Walther' had ten weak battalions 
(including 6th Luftwaffe Penal Battalion in tropical 
uniforms) and ten assault guns defending the bridgehead. Once this German 'crust' was broken, 
Horrocks expected easy going.

The German Plan

Strictly, there was no German plan for 'Market-
Garden'. Some form of Allied advance from the 
Meuse-Escaut Canal was expected, but German 
tactical intelligence was so bad that Kampfgruppe 
'Walther' believed that it was facing Canadians, 
while during the battle SS-Kampfgruppe 'Frunds-
berg' identified the Guards Armoured Division as 
Americans.

At the highest level, German defensive plans 
were based on two assessments of Allied intentions. 
One threat was an amphibious landing by the 
(completely fictitious) Fourth British Army on the 
Dutch coast to cut off the remaining troops of 
Fifteenth Army. The other was a drive north-east 
towards Wesel by 21st Army Group as part of a 
pincer move to encircle the Ruhr. The Germans 
expected landings by First Allied Airborne Army to 
support either of these operations, and Generalfeldmarschall Model deployed the meagre 
forces of Student's First Parachute Army in central 
Holland to cover them both, exactly in the path of 
'Market-Garden'. Model's personal headquarters 
was the Hartenstein Hotel in Oosterbeek, just east 
of 1st British Airborne's planned landing sites.

SS Panzer Corps was not part of Model's 
defence, coming under Armed Forces Command 
Netherlands while it rested. Obergruppenführer 
Bittrich's own headquarters was at Doetinchem, 
25 km (15 miles) east of Arnhem, with his troops 
spread out between Arnhem and Davenport. On 12 
September SS-Kampfgruppe 'Hohenstaufen' was 
ordered to start entraining for Siegen near Koblenz in 
Germany, where it would be refitted. The last of its 
vehicles were due to leave on 17 September, after 
which SS-Kampfgruppe 'Frundsberg' was to move 
to Aachen to refit. On 16 September Bittrich sent 
Brigadeführer Harmel by car to SS Headquarters in 
Berlin to plead in person for reinforcements, while 
Obersturmbannführer Harzer continued to train his 
troops. The Allied landings next day would come as 
a complete surprise.

* British paratroops of 1st Parachute Brigade 
boarding a C-47 Dakota of USAF/FIN Troop 
Carrier Command on the morning of Sunday 17 
September. The soldiers are wearing their 
parachutes and harness 
over the sleeveless version of the parachute smock 
or 'jump jacket' introduced in 1941. Modelled 
on the German version, this 
sweat-fronted gabardine 
garment was worn over the Denison smock and 
discarded on landing. 

(WWM photograph K7588)

A Sergeant Glider Pilot (identified as a First 
Pilot by the crown at the centre of his pilot's 
winged badge) wearing MRC body armour, 
developed by the British Medical Research 
Council in 1941. Arnhem was probably the only 
occasion on which MRC armour was worn in 
action. In theory, MRC armour was worn under 
the battledress, but the method shown was more 
comfortable.
resolved itself into two streams, with 101st Airborne Division on the southern route into Holland, and both 82nd Airborne Division and 1st British Airborne Division on the northern route. I Airborne Corps Headquarters took off in gliders behind 82nd Airborne, including Browning’s personal chef and wine cellar.

Before boarding his own Horsa glider, Urquhart told his chief staff officer, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Mackenzie, that in the unlikely event of both himself and Brigadier Gerald Lathbury, commanding 1st Parachute Brigade and 1st British Airborne’s senior brigadier, being killed or captured command of the division should pass to Brigadier P. H. W. ‘Pip’ Hicks, commanding 1st Airlanding Brigade and flying in that day, rather than to Brigadier J. W. ‘Shan’ Hackett of 4th Parachute Brigade, who was senior to Hicks but not due to arrive until 18 September. Urquhart preferred the elderly and solid Hicks to Hackett, a 33-year-old cavalryman with a background in special forces.

By 1135 the last aircraft had left the ground. The two columns of the sky train each stretched for 130km (94 miles) in length and 3km (three miles) in
breadth. On the southern route, 101st Airborne was
carried by 424 Dakotas and 70 glider/tug
combinations. On the northern route, 82nd
Airborne travelled in 482 Dakotas and 50 glider/tug
combinations, followed by the 38 glider/tugs
(enough for an infantry battalion) of 1 Airborne
Corps Headquarters. 1st British Airborne led as
planned with 1st Airlanding Brigade and its artillery
and divisional troops in 358 glider/tugs, with 1st
Parachute Brigade following in 145 Dakotas. The
total was 1,051 troop carrier aircraft and 516
glider/tug combinations, or 2,083 aircraft in all,
lying at an average height of 1,300ft (500m). Escort
on the northern route came from 371 Spitfires,
Tempests and Mosquitos of Fighter Command,
with 548 P-47 Thunderbolts, P-38 Lightnings and
P-51 Mustangs of 8th Air Force on the southern
route. Average flight time was between 90 and 150
minutes to target.

At about 1200 local time, all 117 German anti-
aircraft positions along the ‘Market-Garden’ route
were bombed and strafed once again by 212
Thunderbolts of 9th Air Force, while 50 Mosquitos,
48 Mitchells and 24 Bostons (the RAF version of
the A-20 Havoc) of RAF 2 Group bombed German
barracks and airfields at Nijmegen, Deelen, Ede and
Kleve. Allied pilots reported German anti-aircraft
crews abandoning their positions before the aircraft
attacked. At 1240, twelve RAF Stirlings dropped
the British pathfinders of 21st Independent Para-
chute Company to the west of Arnhem. At the same
time, four USAAF Dakotas released the pathfinders
to 101st Airborne north of Eindhoven, and two
more put the pathfinders of 82nd Airborne down
near Grave bridge. The main drop of 82nd Airborne
on to the Groesbeek heights would go in without
pathfinders to achieve surprise, directly on top of
the anti-aircraft batteries.

Meanwhile, the two great columns of transport

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**Operation Market: The Allied Fly-in, 17 September 1944**

 Lieutenant General Browning designed his
own uniform as commander of British
Airborne Forces and wore it into action for ‘Market-
Garden’. Made of
barathea, it had a false
Uhlans-style front and a
zip opening at the neck,
displaying a regulation
shirt and tie, and was
worn with medal ribbons,
collar patches and rank
badges on the shoulders.

The highly polished
brown 'Sam Browne' belt
and swagger stick are
correct for a Guards
officer. For 'Market-
Garden' Browning also
wore grey kid gloves. The
only indication that he is
in Airborne Forces is the
famous red beret (which
he introduced), with the
cap badge correct for his
rank. (DWM photograph
H21248)
aircraft had crossed into enemy airspace. The Dakotas, without armour, guns or self-sealing fuel tanks, slowed to 110mph and decended to 500ft (160m) for the drop. The average time over the German anti-aircraft positions was about 40 minutes. On the southern route, Brereton and Ridgway each watched from a Flying Fortress with the 101st Airborne. Of 75 German fighters scrambled, about 30 reached the sky train, but were seen off by its escort. The only dogfight was over Wesel, where seven out of fifteen Me 109s were lost for one American fighter. The anti-aircraft defences were least damaged over Eindhoven, where 101st Airborne lost 33 Dakotas and Brereton's own aircraft was holed. Some gliders failed to complete the trip, or broke up in mid-air. In total 68 Allied aircraft and 71 gliders were lost from all causes in the flight, including two RAF and eighteen USAAF fighters.

At 1300 the first gliders of 1st Airlanding Brigade skidded to earth west of Arnhem, followed by Urquhart's artillery and divisional troops. Of 319 gliders, 35 failed to arrive, of which 21 landed in England and flew in to Holland next day. The only serious loss was two gliders each carrying a 17pdr anti-tank gun. Meanwhile, Major General Taylor jumped with 6,769 men of 101st Airborne north of Eindhoven. 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment landed correctly on its drop zone south of Veghel, except for 1/501st which was dropped by a fortunate error at Heswijck, 5km (three miles) to the north-west on the wrong side of the Willems Canal and the River Aa. 502nd Parachute Infantry and 506th Parachute Infantry landed together with 101st

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### ALLIED AIR TRANSPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIRCRAFT</th>
<th>Cruising/towing speed (mph)</th>
<th>Range (miles)</th>
<th>Payload (Troops)</th>
<th>Payload (Equipment/Supplies lb)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBEMARLE</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>HALIFAX</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STIRLING</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-47 SKYTRAIN (British name DAKOTA)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>20*</td>
<td>6,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All these aircraft, normally unarmed, were capable of towing one glider at maximum range, or two at shorter ranges, or of carrying the payload shown. A 6,000lb supply load is the equivalent of two large pieces of equipment, e.g., a jeep, trailer or small artillery piece.

*For parachute drops only. For air transport the C-47 could carry up to 28 troops, and the Stirling up to 40 troops.

### GLIDERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GLIDERS</th>
<th>Max towing speed (mph)</th>
<th>Stalling speed (mph)</th>
<th>Payload (Troops)</th>
<th>Payload (Equipment/Supplies lb)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HORSA</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAMILCAR</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG-4A WACO (British name HAMILCAR)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3,750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The HAMILCAR could only be towed by four-engined aircraft such as the Halifax and Stirling. It was designed as a large cargo carrier only, and carried larger calibre artillery pieces or bulldozers. All the gliders had a crew of two pilots.

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### ALLIED AIRLIFT REQUIREMENTS

- **Formation**: C-47 Dakotas (carrier)
- **Giders/Tugs**: (all kinds)
  - Parachute battalion (British/American/Polish) 35
  - Parachute brigade/Regiment (British/American/Polish) 120-140
  - Airlanding battalion - 60-70
  - Divisional artillery* (British) - 160
  - Field artillery battalion* (American) - 95
  - Parachute artillery battalion* (American) 60
  - Airborne division 400
  - Airportable division 2,000 (transport only)

*These are approximate figures only.

**British paratroops of the 1st Parachute Brigade inside a C-47 Dakota, either about to take off or in flight, on Sunday 17 September. This picture gives some idea of the amount of equipment carried into battle by the paratroops. In addition to their leg bags, two of the men have special weapons cases, probably to protect machine-guns. Note the quick-release ring at the centre of the parachute harness on each man's chest. (IWM photograph K7556)**

- *A British light artillery regiment and anti-tank regiment was twelve 75mm guns, six 105mm guns, twelve 6pdr A/T guns, and six 17pdr A/T guns. An American field artillery battalion was twelve 75mm guns or parachute artillery battalion.*
Airborne Headquarters just north of the Sonsche forest. At the same time, 6,527 men of 82nd Airborne dropped successfully for the loss of two Dakotas south of Nijmegen, Brigadier General Gavin jumping from the lead aircraft as was his custom. Of these, 2,016 men of 504th Parachute Infantry landed at Grave, including a company of 2/504th dropped deliberately west of the bridge, while 505th Parachute Infantry and 508th Parachute Infantry dropped on to the Groesbeek heights just north and south of the village. The drop included the first ever parachute deployment of artillery into battle by the 544 men of 376th Parachute Artillery Battalion, jumping with their twelve disassembled 75mm howitzers from 48 Dakotas. At about 1330, Browning's I Airborne Corps Headquarters landed near Groesbeek village, without two of its gliders. Finally at 1353, 1st Parachute Brigade jumped west of Arnhem to complete the British landing. By 1408, some 20,000 combat troops, 511 vehicles, 330 artillery pieces and 590 tons of equipment had been safely landed.

As the sky train climbed to 3,000ft (1,000m) for the return journey, Brereton flew back to IX Troop Carrier Command Headquarters at Eastcote (near Moor Park) to oversee the preparations for the second wave next day together with Tedder and Ridgway. Brereton was delighted to have proved that heavy enemy anti-aircraft defences could be overcome to mount a major daylight airborne operation. The whole 'Market' deployment from England was already fixed, and when the second wave flew out next day his role in the battle would effectively be over. There was no one in England to coordinate the land battle with the air plan, and no reserve.

- Men of 1st Airlanding Light Regiment, Royal Artillery, unloading a jeep and trailer from a Horsa glider on Landing Zone 'L' near Wolfheze, just after touchdown on Sunday 17 September. The tail section of the Horsa was made to detach for ease of unloading. On the left, with red beret, is Lieutenant Colonel W. F. K. 'Sheriff' Thompson, commanding the regiment. Note the signaller in the jeep behind Thompson, already trying to establish a radio net with his 22 radio set, and the wingtip damaged by the glider on landing. (IWM photograph BU1164)

- Top right: CG-4A Waco gliders of 101st Airborne Division circling and landing north of the Sonsche forest, Sunday 17 September. This picture gives a good idea of the flatness of the Dutch countryside on either side of the path of XXX Corps' advance. Note that one glider, far right, appears to have ploughed in on landing, breaking its left wingtip and leaving a plume of disturbed earth. (IWM photograph MH2071)
THE ALLIED ATTACK,
17 SEPTEMBER

At 1400, with fighter-bombers of RAF 83 Group waiting overhead, Lieutenant General Horrocks’ XXX Corps opened its bombardment at Joe’s Bridge with eleven field artillery regiments and six medium regiments, a total of 408 guns. After 35 minutes, the Irish Guards Group led off for the Guards Armoured Division along the Club Route up the Eindhoven road, with infantry from 231st Brigade of 50th (Northumbrian) Division keeping pace on either side of the road to widen the bridgehead. Despite Horrocks’ fears, the breakthrough went well, as Kampfgruppe ‘Walther’ was overwhelmed by the weight of Allied firepower. But Major General Adair, commanding the Guards Armoured, stuck strictly to orders and halted at Valkenswaard at 1930, having lost nine tanks. At the same time, XII Corps under Lieutenant General Ritchie attacked with 15th (Scottish) Division north from Aart and 53rd (Welsh) Division north from Lommel against Kampfgruppe ‘Chill’. Attacking across country without the air support of the Guards, these troops made little progress. Nevertheless, the German defensive crest had been broken, and Field Marshal Montgomery reported to London that XXX Corps would be in Arnhem next day.

North of Eindhoven, 101st Airborne reached most of its objectives by 1600. 501st Parachute Infantry secured the rail and road bridges at Heeswijck and Veghel, and 502nd Parachute Infantry captured the St Oedenrode bridge against light opposition. But at Son, a handful of trainees from the Luftwaffe’s Division ‘Hermann Goering’ blew the bridge over the Wilhelmina Canal as 506th Parachute Infantry arrived, and a weak push by a company of 2/502nd Parachute Infantry towards an alternative bridge south of Best was checked by part of Parachute Battalion ‘Jungwirth’ (of Kampfgruppe ‘Chill’), producing a stalemate. Until bridging equipment from XXX Corps arrived at Son, there was no way forward. Taylor sent foot patrols south towards Eindhoven, but like Adair he made no effort to enter the town.

In response, General Student, watching the landings from his personal headquarters at Vught, redirected 59th Infantry Division from Fifteenth Army, moving eastward by train through Tilburg, to reinforce LXXXVIII Corps at Best. Later that afternoon Student received what he subsequently described as a complete set of plans for ‘Market-Garden’ from a crashed Allied glider, almost certainly missing from Browning’s headquarters. General Hans Reinhard of LXXXVIII Corps ordered Kampfgruppe ‘Chill’ to hold to the last man, while LXXXVII Corps under General Otto Sponheimer moved 719th Coastal Division eastward to Turnhout in support.

Further north still, 82nd Airborne’s attempt to capture its bridges also met with mixed fortune. 505th and 508th Parachute Infantry established themselves on either side of Groesbeek village, while 504th Parachute Infantry secured Grave bridge. But two of the three bridges over the Maas-Waal Canal were blown by their German defenders before more troops from 504th and 506th Parachute Infantry arrived on foot. This closed the direct road from Grave to Nijmegen, leaving only the bridge nearest Heumen in American hands. Not until after dark was a single company of 1/508th Parachute Infantry sent into Nijmegen to investigate the road bridge across the River Waal, with the aid of some PAN (Dutch resistance) workers. This was stopped well before the bridge by Kampfgruppe ‘Henke’, an improvised battalion of soldiers, airmen and railway guards defending Nijmegen.

As the first reports of the landing at Wolveheze came in at 1300, Generalfeldmarschall Model quickly abandoned the Hartenstein Hotel, moving Army Group B Headquarters from Oosterbeek to Terborg, some 50km (30 miles) to the east. At 1330 Obergruppenführer Bittrich at Doetinchem, calling for Brigadefuhrer Harmel’s immediate return from
Berlin, ordered his men on to full alert, and SS-Kampfgruppe 'Hohenstauffen' started unloading its remaining vehicles from the trains. At 1500 Model arrived at Doetinchem and assumed direct command of II SS Panzer Corps from Armed Forces Command Netherlands, much to Bittrich's annoyance.

Nevertheless, Model and Bittrich agreed that the key to the battle was not Arnhem, but Nijmegen road bridge. If the Allied drive could be stopped on the Waal, any success farther north became irrelevant. Bittrich wanted to destroy both Arnhem and Nijmegen bridges at once, but Model refused, more aware of Hitler's suspicions and claiming that he needed the bridges for a counter-attack.

At Rastenburg, Hitler was stunned and shaken by the Allied airborne assault. In response to Model's signals he agreed to give the defeat of 'Market-Garden' absolute priority, ranking even above the defence of Germany. Over 3000 fighters were promised for next day, virtually the entire Luftwaffe frontline strength in western Europe. Model also obtained the troops in training from Wehrkreis VI, the military district of Germany immediately east of the Netherlands, together with all those in transit or on leave in the Wesel area, at least 3,000 men formed into improvised march battalions. General Friedrich Christiansen in Amsterdam also promised reinforcements from Armed Forces Command Netherlands under his chief training officer, Generalleutnant Hans von Tettau. More importantly, the armour, artillery, ammunition and replacement troops that II SS Panzer Corps badly needed would start to arrive within 48 hours.

The Battle of Arnhem was exactly the kind of military improvisation at which Model excelled, and three hours after the Allied landings his defence plan was ready. General Student was to handle operations near Eindhoven, sending Kampfgruppe 'Chill' against XII Corps and XXX Corps, and 59th Infantry Division together with 107th Panzer Brigade (promised by Generalfeldmarschall Rundstedt at OB West) against 101st Airborne. The forces from Wehrkreis VI under General Kurt Feldt were to recapture the Groesbeek heights from 82nd Airborne, with II Parachute Corps being rushed from Cologne to assist. SS-Kampfgruppe 'Frundsberg' was to move across Arnhem bridge to Nijmegen that evening and prevent any Allied crossing, while SS-Kampfgruppe 'Hohenstauffen' held the British west of Arnhem. During the battle, Model visited Obersturmbahnführer Harzer's headquarters every day to ensure that reinforcements were getting through.

By 1500, while 1st Airlanding Brigade secured its defensive perimeter around the landing zones west of Arnhem, the British were already in action against 16th SS Panzergrenadier Depot Battalion (440 strong) under Hauptsturmführer Sepp Klaften, which had been training on the heath. The SS NCO Training school 'Arnhem' at Woerden also formed a scratch force, as did Kampfgruppe 'Walter' of Luftwaffe troops from Deelen. The 3rd Dutch SS Police Battalion was also on its way from the north. The first 47 prisoners the British took came from 27 different parent units.

At about 1540, 1st Parachute Brigade started to move towards Arnhem by three routes, 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment down the main Oosterbeek highway (the 'Lion' route) with the brigade headquarters, led by 28 jeeps of 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron under Major C. F. H. 'Freddie' Gough along the line of the railway, 1st Battalion to the north ('Leopard') and 2nd Battalion to the south ('Tiger'). Most of 1st British Airborne's radios were working, but as expected there were problems in maintaining contact, and divisional headquarters could not reach Gough or Lathbury, who were about to come under heavy fire from Klaften's troops near Oosterbeek. The powerful Luftwaffe transmitter at Deelen, calling for help from all directions, added to the problem.

At about 1600 a false rumour reached Urquhart that most of the gliders carrying Gough's reconnaissance force had failed to arrive. Leaving his headquarters, Urquhart set out to find Gough and check on his division, driving off in his jeep down the 'Lion' route. Reaching part of 2nd Battalion, he failed to find its commander, Lieutenant Colonel John Frost, and swung northwards, meeting Lathbury with 3rd Battalion but away from his own brigade headquarters.

The first part of the paratroops' advance had been almost a triumphal procession beside grateful Dutch civilians. Now, among the trees and buildings
The Allied Failure

During the morning, 506th Parachute Infantry cleared Eindhoven of a single German company and secured the bridges over the River Dommel east of the town. By the evening, the Guards Armoured had passed around east of Eindhoven and reached the destroyed bridge at Son, where work on a Bailey bridge began. The Welsh Guards’ attempt to strike out across country had bogged down against Kampfgruppe ‘Walther’ in the flat terrain, and Major General Adair ordered it to rejoin the main axis at Son.

During the day, German LXXXVI Corps arrived from the east under General Hans von Obfstfelder with 176th Infantry Division (7,000 trainees and semi-valids) and Division ‘Erdmann’ (3,000 recruits for the planned 7th Parachute Division), strengthening the German position between Weert and Helmond. Meanwhile, after a strong attempt by 2/502nd and 3/502nd Parachute Infantry to capture Best bridge, it was finally blown at 1100 by 59th Infantry Division. The British advance now depended entirely on the speed at which the Bailey bridge at Son was completed.

With dawn at Nijmegen, Gavin ordered 1/501st and 3/508th Parachute Infantry to try again for the road bridge. Three times during the day the paratroops reported that the bridge was theirs, but each time the German defence held. Blocked at Arnhem bridge, SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Frundsberg’ began the slow process of ferrying troops and vehicles across the Pannerden Canal, the canalized stretch of the Lower Rhine east of Arnhem. The first troops reached Nijmegen on bicycles, followed by four PzKpfw IV tanks, the vanguard of SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Reinhold’. Brigadeführer Harmel, who had driven flat-out from Berlin, set up headquarters next day at Doornbosch 9km (six miles) north of Nijmegen to coordinate the defence.

Also at dawn, the first troops of Corps ‘Feldt’ from Wehrkreis VI, about 3,400 barely trained men in four groups under 406th Landesschützen Division, started to attack on the Groesbeek heights, finding gaps in the thin American line. During the day, the PAN warned Gavin of more Germans massing in the Reichswald. Taking this to heart,
Men of "C" Troop of Major Gough's 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron near Wolfheze station on Monday 18 September, with their jeeps just visible beyond the railway line. The soldier in the foreground is armed with a PIAT. This picture gives a good idea of the woodland between the British landing zones and Oosterbeek. (IWM photograph BU1144)

The result of the attack by 9th SS Reconnaissance Battalion of the 'Hohenstaufen' across Arnhem bridge into Frost's position, taken by an RAF reconnaissance aircraft on Monday 18 September, looking east. The picture shows the raised section of the main road leading on to the bridge itself (to the right of the picture). Over twenty destroyed German half-tracks and reconnaissance vehicles can be seen. Hauptsturmführer Viktor Grabner, commanding the battalion, who had received the Knight's Cross from Obersturmbannführer Harzer at noon on the previous day, was killed in the attack. (IWM photograph MH2862)

Lieutenant Colonel John Frost was the most experienced battalion commander in 1st British Airborne Division, having commanded 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment since October 1942 and led it through battles in North Africa and Sicily. Like all British paratroops, he was a volunteer. He is shown here as a major in the uniform of his parent regiment, the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), after receiving the Military Cross for leading the Bruneval Raid of 27 February 1942, the Parachute Regiment's first Battle Honour.

82nd Airborne and Browning with them fought the rest of the battle for Nijmegen bridge looking over one shoulder, preparing to defend against an expected armoured drive by 11 SS Panzer Corps across the Groesbeek Heights which never came.

At Arnhem, both sides attacked before dawn. Kampfgruppe 'von Tettau' (including 224th Panzer Company with French Renault tanks) moved against 1st Airlanding Brigade from Renkum to the west, gradually aboring all other German forces west of Oosterbeek in a firefight that lasted most of the day. Meanwhile, 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment resumed its advance towards Arnhem bridge against SS-Kampfgruppe 'Spindler', with Lathbury and Urquhart in attendance.

As 3rd Battalion's advance pushed within 2,000m of the bridge, the British and Germans became intermingled in confused street fighting. Urquhart's party was cut off, and shortly before noon Lathbury was wounded and had to be left in a nearby house. As the Germans closed in, Urquhart accompanied by two captains was forced to take refuge in a sympathetic householder's attic while enemy troops patrolled the streets below. With Urquhart and Lathbury both missing, Brigadier Hicks officially took over the division at 0915, sending 2nd Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment (two companies strong) to reinforce 1st Parachute Brigade's increasingly fragmented drive.

At Arnhem bridge itself, Frost was still in a strong position, with at least as many troops as SS-Kampfgruppe 'Knaust' of the 'Hohenstaufen', which attacked from the north. The Germans soon discovered that the airborne troops were formidable enemy, and that infantry assaults achieved little against them. Artillery and armour were needed to blast Frost's men out of their houses, and two 100mm guns began the process just after dawn. At 0930 about 22 vehicles of 9th SS Reconnaissance Battalion returned from Nijmegen and tried to charge across the bridge and into Frost's position, only to be destroyed by British mines, anti-tank guns and grenades. But Frost had rations only for 48 hours, and was forced to restrict ammunition during the day. Meanwhile, 1st Parachute Brigade was checked by SS-Kampfgruppe 'Spindler' still short of the bridge. Over the next two days the replacement tanks and guns demanded by Model...
Arnheim Bridge, 17-23 Sept 1944

Frost's men held the northern part of the bridge, denying the Germans a crossing place, until the night of 20/21 Sept. The last British resistance near the bridge ceased 23 Sept.
started to arrive at Arnhem from all over Germany, including Flak Brigade ‘Von Sowoda’ from Luftwaffe West equipped with 70 anti-aircraft guns (33 x 88mm, 29 x 20mm and 8 x 37mm) in five battalions.

All this was unknown to Browning and his staff, who were rapidly discovering the difference between an administrative headquarters and an Army Corps command. There was endless trouble with radio communications, for which Browning later blamed his signals section. In fact the GHQ Liaison Regiment ('Phantom') unit with 1st British Airborne was in touch with London through its specialist radio equipment, as was a BBC reporting team with a VHS set (later in the battle, newspapers carrying their first reports were dropped to the troops at Arnhem), and the division had direct contact with Frost on Arnhem bridge. 1st British Airborne was also speaking to 1 Airborne Corps Rear Headquarters at Moor Park, which was in intermittent contact with Browning. The PAN, using a private telephone system belonging to the regional electricity company, also sent coded messages between Arnhem and Nijmegen warning 82nd Airborne that 1st British Airborne was in trouble, and the same telephone system reached south to 101st Airborne at Son. The failure was not principally one of communications, but of staffwork and experience at Browning's headquarters. Next morning 1 Airborne Corps asked Moor Park for copies of 1st British Airborne's signals, and that afternoon firm radio contact was established. But for the vital first two days of the battle, Browning was never in proper command.

At 1000 in England, the glider/tug combinations of the delayed second airlift took off, followed by the paratroop carriers at 1200, all in one stream on the northern route escorted by 867 fighters of 8th Air Force and Fighter Command. In the bad weather, 91 out of 904 gliders taking off failed to arrive or were lost over Holland. At 1300 two battalions of 327th Glider Infantry Regiment and some divisional troops, a total of 2,656 men, 146 jeeps, 109 trailers and two bulldozers, reached 101st Airborne safely in 428 gliders, and Major General Taylor ordered his deputy, Brigadier General Gerald Higgins (at 34, the youngest general in the US Army) to take over the western flank of his defences. Within the hour, 502nd Parachute Infantry reinforced by British tanks from 8th

Armoured Brigade attacked 59th Infantry Division's positions at Best and took more than 1,400 prisoners; the village itself remained in German hands. Farther north, a probe by 59th Infantry Division towards Veghel was beaten off by the Americans.

On Groesbeek heights the morning attack by Corps 'Feldt' had overrun part of 82nd Airborne's landing zones, which were cleared in a rifle charge by 505th Parachute Infantry just as 385 gliders landed with 1,782 men and the remainder of the division's artillery (twelve 75mm guns, twelve 105mm guns and eight 57mm anti-tank guns) at 1300, almost capturing General Feldt himself. As the tug aircraft departed, 135 B-25 Liberators of 8th Air Force dropped resupply to 82nd Airborne (80 per cent of which was recovered) and a further 117 Liberators dropped resupply to 101st Airborne (50 per cent recovered), losing eleven aircraft. At 1700 Browning ordered Gavin to plan for a night attack on Nijmegen bridge, then changed his mind and cancelled the attack.

West of Arnhem the British second wave arrived at 1500 to heavy German anti-aircraft fire which set fire to the heath below them. Hackett's 4th Parachute Brigade, in 124 Dakotas, dropped from 800ft (250m) right on top of 3rd Dutch SS Police Battalion, which was skirmishing with 1st Airlanding Brigade, causing the Dutch SS to rout. The remainder of the South Staffordshire Regiment and the rest of the divisional troops also landed in 296 gliders, a total of 2,119 men. Only one Dakota was lost, but 20 escorting fighters were shot down holding off 90 Luftwaffe aircraft.

This landing was followed by 145 Stirlings and
Dakotas of RAF 38 and 46 Group on resupply. But the intended supply drop zone was still in German hands, and the Germans copied the British recognition signals. Most of the aircraft were hit by anti-aircraft fire, and of 87 tons dropped only twelve tons reached 1st British Airborne, for the loss of thirteen aircraft.

On landing, Hackett was surprised to be told by Mackenzie that Hicks was commanding the division, and was taking away 11th Battalion of the Parachute Regiment and the South Staffordshires to reinforce 1st Parachute Brigade’s attack. Hackett arrived at the Hartenstein Hotel, now established as 1st British Airborne’s headquarters, shortly before midnight, where Hicks ordered him to send his remaining two battalions at once up alongside 1st Parachute Brigade towards Arnhem. Hackett protested that he needed a plan, and that his brigade should attack towards its original objective of the high ground. A heated exchange followed in which Hicks accused Hackett of trying to take the division from him, but finally agreed to a delay.

The absence of the commander of 1st British Airborne at this point was critical. What mattered was a bridgehead over the Lower Rhine. If Hicks had given up the original objective of Arnhem bridge he could have secured the Hoveendorp ferry and the ground on either side, dug in and waited for XXX Corps. But this would have meant disobeying Browning’s orders and abandoning Frost.

With the junction between XXX Corps and 101st Airborne complete, Major General Taylor came under Horrocks’ command. In turn, 50th (Northumbrian) Division was passed to VIII Corps under Lieutenant General O’Connor and began to move up towards Eindhoven. Just on midnight, VIII Corps began its delayed supporting attack with an assault crossing of the Meuse-Escal canal at Lille St Hubert by 3rd Division, part of which was still on the road from Brussels.

After two days, the battle was starting to swing against Montgomery. Despite breaking through the German defences, XXX Corps was checked at Son while the two flanking Army Corps had yet to make an impact. I Airborne Corps had lost any advantage of surprise from its airborne assault and had fallen into disarray. There was little information available to 21st Army Group on which to base an assessment, and no British reserve with which to influence the battle.

On the other side, Model’s counter-attack was now ready.

**The German Counter-Attack, 19 September**

On Tuesday (D plus 2) the weather continued with fog in the morning and rain all day. The third wave of flights from England, due to take off at 1000, was fogbound until 1300 when the last battalion of 327th Glider Infantry took off with 101st Airborne’s artillery in 385 gliders, of which 189 were lost or turned back. The 428 gliders carrying 82nd Airborne’s reinforcement, chiefly two battalions of 325th Glider Infantry, remained grounded all day. The 114 Dakotas of 1st Polish Parachute Brigade were also grounded, but the brigade’s small component of 35 gliders took off alone.

News of these changes was not passed by First Allied Airborne Army to 2nd Tactical Air Force in Belgium, which continued to fly support according to the original timetable. As a result, the airborne troops in Holland received no air support, compared to 125 Luftwaffe fighter sorties. During the day, 43 Allied aircraft and 73 gliders were lost. Considering his job complete, Lieutenant General Brereton flew to Brussels with Ridgway and drove on to Eindhoven, wearing his dress uniform complete with medals, to watch the victory.

At 0330 in the dark and fog at Arnhem, 1st Parachute Brigade started its attack eastward along the line of the Lower Rhine, while 4th Parachute Brigade (10th and 156th Battalions of the Parachute Regiment) moved north-east across the railway line towards the high ground. 1st Parachute Brigade made about 400m towards the bridge before the fog lifted shortly after dawn, when it found itself caught in a German crossfire on the river road, between 20mm multi-barrelled anti-aircraft guns firing from the southern bank and SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Spindler’ from the embankment to the north. By 1000 the British attack had collapsed and been routed. At the
end of the day, 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment numbered 40 wounded men, while 3rd Battalion escaped with 116 men. The attack through the town by 11th Battalion of the Parachute Regiment and 2nd Battalion of the South Staffordshires also met little success, reducing them to about 150 and 200 men respectively in the day’s fighting. But by 0715 they had driven SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Spindler’ back far enough to free Major General Urquhart from his attic. Urquhart reached the Hartenstein minutes later by jeep, and began to reorganize what remained of his division. Hackett’s attack north-east was reinforced by 7th Battalion of the King’s Own Scottish Borderers from 1st Airlanding Brigade, leaving only 1st Battalion of the Border Regiment in reserve. Warnings were broadcast to 1st Polish Parachute Brigade not to land on its planned zones, which were under German control. Urquhart also ordered Colonel Hilary Barlow, deputy commander of 1st Airlanding Brigade, to take command of the street battle in Arnhem. Barlow set off towards the fighting and was never seen again, alive or dead. Years later, his battered cigarette case was found less than 1,000m from Arnhem bridge.

At Son, the Bailey bridge was complete, and the Guards Armoured resumed their advance at dawn. By 0820 the Household Cavalry reached Grave bridge, where Browning and Gavin were waiting for Horrocks, with the Grenadiers arriving two hours later. The journey of 85km (53 miles) from Joe’s Bridge to Nijmegen had taken the Guards Armoured 42 hours and 130 casualties.

The arrival of XXX Corps put 82nd Airborne under Horrocks, who was increasingly uneasy, and left Browning commanding only 1st British Airborne, with which he was barely in contact. The two Army Corps commanders, with Gavin and Adair, set up a joint HQ near Heumen and pro-ceeded to command by a form of mutual agreement.

With 325th Glider Infantry delayed, Gavin had organized 450 of his glider pilots into an improvised battalion and was grateful for support from 8th Armoured Brigade and the Guards Armoured. An attack by 2/505th Parachute Infantry with the Grenadiers at Nijmegen began that afternoon but again failed to reach the bridge. Gavin proposed an assault crossing of the Waal to take the bridge from both ends, and Horrocks ordered XXX Corps’ assault boats forward from Hechtel, through the Flak Brigade ‘Von Swoboda’. Neither Generalleutnant von Tettau to the west nor Obersturmabführer Harzer to the east had a clear picture of the battle, or could coordinate their own forces, but 4th Parachute Brigade found its drive north-east firmly blocked.

Under fire from SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Kraft’ and threatened from the west, Hackett began to pull his brigade back south of the railway line at 1600. Just at this moment the Polish gliders arrived without an escort and landed between the British and German forces on their planned landing zone, having failed to receive Urquhart’s warning. Only two Polish anti-tank guns and a handful of men survived to join the British. By the end of the day, Hackett’s three battalions each numbered about 250 men. Resupply aircraft of RAF 38 and 46 Group following the Poles, 63 Dakotas and 100 Stirlings, dropped only 31 out of 390 tons correctly to 1st British Airborne, losing thirteen aircraft.

On Arnhem bridge, the day began with a German air raid, followed by shells and mortars from SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Knaust’ to the north and SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Brinkmann’ to the east. Frost now had only 250 unwounded men in ten of the
eighteen houses he had first occupied. Protecting the wounded and prisoners was becoming a critical problem, as were food, water and ammunition. The battle for Arnhem bridge had become a waking nightmare in which the troops lost track of time. The Germans continued to blast the British out of their positions, but every time they attacked they were driven back, and the bridge remained closed. A summons to Frost to surrender was contemptuously rejected.

On the left flank of XXX Corps’ drive towards Arnhem, 53rd Division of XII Corps had exhausted itself reaching the Turnhout–Eindhoven road. 7th Armoured Division took over the Aart bridgehead, and 15th Division sidestepped eastward to pass through 53rd Division next day. On the right flank, 3rd Division of VIII Corps had almost reached Weert, and 11th Armoured Division had passed through towards Helmond, reaching just south-east of Eindhoven. The pressure on 101st Airborne led Dempsey to reinforce Taylor with a further armoured battalion from VIII Corps’ 4th Armoured Brigade.

As dusk fell, the Luftwaffe bombed Eindhoven with 120 Ju 87s and Ju 88s (its only long-range bombing raid of autumn 1944 in Western Europe), causing at least 1,000 civilian casualties. Brereton and Ridgway, who had just arrived in the town by jeep, were caught up in the bombing and separated. Next morning Ridgway pressed on northwards to meet Taylor and Gavin at their respective headquarters. Brereton went separately to see Taylor at Son before turning back, and flew next day to SHAPE Headquarters to attend a planning conference, making no further effort to influence the battle.

The fog and rain continued into Wednesday (D plus 3), grounding the Poles and 325th Glider Infantry in England once again. Only resupply drops were possible, and 82nd Airborne received 80 per cent of its supplies. By dawn Urquhart had pulled 4th Parachute Brigade back and assembled his division into a roughly-shaped pocket at Oosterbeek with its base on the Lower Rhine. Using the Phantom radio equipment, Urquhart agreed with 1 Airborne Corps that the Poles should now land at Driel, opposite the Heusden ferry, to establish a bridgehead. Urquhart got through on the BBC radio to change 1st British Airborne’s supply drop zones, but dropping canisters into the woods and streets of Oosterbeek against the intense German anti-aircraft fire was haphazard, and only thirteen per cent of its intended supplies reached 1st British Airborne. Uncoordinated German attacks continued all the way around the British perimeter at Oosterbeek, with the forces intermingled in the woods and houses. An attack shortly after dawn by Kampfgruppe ‘von Tettau’ and SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Kraft’ against the perimeter was heavily repulsed. With neither side strong enough to make a decisive attack the fighting began to slow down, largely from exhaustion, into an affair of snipers and mortars. In at least one house the British and Germans held different floors and passed rations to each other, while 1st British Airborne found time during the battle to produce a one-sheet newspaper.

But this slowing of the pace did nothing to diminish the casualties. By the end of the day no Parachute Regiment battalion numbered more than 100 men, and only 1st Battalion of the Border Regiment was still intact. Within the perimeter both movement and care of the wounded became impossible, with the Main Dressing Stations coming under fire. By agreement the British pulled back slightly at mid-day to give the Germans possession of these buildings, allowing them to tend the
wounded properly. This was one of several incidents of cooperation between enemies in a very hard-fought battle. Model further ordered that all civilians in Arnhem and Oosterbeek, which were now in a battle zone, were to be evacuated, which took four days to complete. The 'Orange Battalion' of the PAN with 1st British airborne, some of whom fought at Arnhem bridge, quietly disbanded next day.

North of Eindhoven, on what 101st airborne had started to call 'Hell's Highway', the German attacks began again at dawn. 107th Panzer Brigade advanced once more from the east against Son but was beaten back by 101st airborne with British armoured support. Taylor then switched to a limited offensive, and 1/501st Parachute Infantry at Heeswijck took 418 German prisoners.

While 101st airborne and 8th Armoured Brigade fought, XXX Corps continued up the road as best it could, including the delayed assault boats and 43rd (Wessex) Division moving from Hechtel. The first troops of the division's 130th Brigade reached Grave at noon, but on the congested road the full division took even longer than the Guards Armoured to reach Nijmegen.

At 1 Airborne Corps Headquarters the delays on Hell's Highway together with the news from Arnhem caused Gavin to snap at Horrock's slowness, while the normally icy Browning threw an ink bottle at a picture of a German general on the wall. Help was offered by 52nd (Lowland) Division, which volunteered to fly into an airstrip near Nijmegen next day. Browning, still expecting the Poles and 325th Glider Infantry, turned the offer down.

Because of 82nd Airborne's weakness and the expected major attack at Groesbeek, the Guards Armoured was broken up to provide support. While the Grenadiers and Irish Guards prepared for the assault crossing, the Welsh Guards covered Grave bridge, and the Coldstream supported the Groesbeek position. Meanwhile the Household Cavalry patrolled west as far as the main supply depot for First Parachute Army at Oss, where the pragmatic storekeepers issued supplies to both sides (German rations from Oss reached as far south as British 3rd Division at Weert during the battle).

That morning, the Irish Guards and 504th Parachute Infantry started to clear the suburbs of Nijmegen for the river crossing, while the Grenadiers and 505th Parachute Infantry moved towards the bridge. The assault crossing began at 1440, just after the arrival of the boats, with an attack by Typhoon of RAF 83 Group, followed by a ten-minute artillery and smoke bombardment from 100 guns of XXX Corps with the tanks of the Irish Guards. At 1500 two companies of 3/504th Parachute Infantry crossed the Waal west of the bridges in 196 assault boats under heavy German artillery fire. Half the boats reached the far shore, and six successive journeys brought the rest of 3/504th Parachute Infantry and 1/504th Parachute Infantry across. Once ashore, 3/504th Parachute Infantry attacked eastwards, clearing first the railway bridge then the road bridge at the cost of 107 casualties. Some 417 German bodies were later recovered from the railway bridge area alone. At the same time, 505th Parachute Infantry and the Grenadiers attacked through the town towards the road bridge, the first Grenadier tanks crossing at 1910. In defiance of Model's orders, Brigadeführer Harrel ordered the bridge blown as the Grenadiers crossed, but the charges failed to go off. Later that night Model, not realizing he was too late, authorized Bittrich to blow Nijmegen bridge if necessary.

On Groesbeek heights, Corps 'Feldt' resumed its attack at dawn with 406th Landesschützen Division to the north and the newly arrived II Parachute Corps to the south. Serving under General Feldt, this consisted of the Training Battalions of 3rd and 5th Parachute Divisions, both of which had been destroyed in Normandy. By mid-morning 82nd Airborne had identified this attack as coming from both full strength parachute divisions and alerted Gavin, who returned to his command post from Nijmegen. At first II Parachute Corps' drive met considerable success, and by evening it had almost reached the bridge at Heumen, threatening to cut the road behind 82nd Airborne. But counter-attacks by 508th Parachute Infantry, supported by the Coldstream, gradually restored the position.

At Arnhem bridge, Frost had water for only one more day, and Urquhart advised I Airborne Corps
Key to unit colours:
- Red: German
- Green: American
- Blue: British

1430: RAF Typhoon rocket strike

- Nijmegen
- US 82 GAVIN
- Ger SS FRUNDSBERG
- Br 8 HORROCKS
- Br Gds ADAIR

Keizer Karelplein

Allied dispositions and movements:
1. 504th Parachute infantry
2. Power Station: Browning and Horrocks watch the crossing
3. 3/504th cross river at 1500 under cover of smoke-screen and gunfire
4. Irish Guards tanks
5. Providing gunfire support
6. 2/504th Parachute Infantry attacks Hunner Park at 1500
7. Grenadier Guards group clears the Valkhof and crosses bridge, 1800–1900
8. Grenadier Guards group, 2000

River Waal

THE RIVER CROSSING AT NIJMEGEN
1500–2000 20 Sept 1944, as seen from the Groesbeek Heights

German dispositions:
A. KG Henke (part)
B. Fort Hof van Holland held by KG Henke, captured 1600
C. SS anti-aircraft positions
D. SS Reinhold
E. KG Henke (part)
F. Hunner Park and Fort Valkhof held by KG Euling

20 September
that relief of the bridge by Guards Armoured was now critical. The German bombardment continued, blasting down the buildings still held by the British and using flamethrowers to clear them from the rubble. At noon Frost himself was badly wounded by a mortar blast, and Major Gough took over command of the remaining troops. Almost out of ammunition, with wounded crowded into cellars, the British held on to their shrinking perimeter. Shortly after 1800 four PzKpfw VI Tiger tanks at last crashed their way across Arnhem bridge from north to south, but nothing else could follow them. At 2100 Gough negotiated a truce enabling the Germans to collect over 200 wounded of both sides from the cellars, including Frost who became a prisoner.

Much farther south, the British flanking operations remained painfully slow. In a last effort by XII Corps, 15th Division forced the line of the Wilhelmina Canal at Best, but still the village itself remained in German hands. VIII Corps began moving 69th Brigade of 50th Division northward to reinforce 101st Airborne, while 11th Armoured Division made some progress towards Helmond. With the German flanks growing stronger, these attacks across country stood little chance.

At Oosterbeek, far from expecting to crush 1st British Airborne, Model put Kampfgruppe 'von Tettau' under II SS Panzer Corps in order to check an expected breakout by Urquhart's troops. More German reinforcements continued to arrive, and XII SS Corps was expected with the new 180th Infantry Division and 190th Infantry Division within a week. In keeping with German doctrine rather than expecting any chance of success, Bittrich also ordered Harmel to counter-attack and retake Nijmegen next morning.

With only three battalions of the 'Frundsberg' between Nijmegen and Arnhem, it seemed that nothing could stop the Allies reaching Arnhem that night. But on the other side Adair's Guards Armoured, fought to a standstill, would not advance at night into the polder of the 'island' without infantry, and Horrocks let them halt.

Meanwhile, far away from the battlefield, SHAEF Headquarters completed its move from Granville to Versailles, just west of Paris, drastically improving its communications. After four days, it was becoming clear to the senior Allied commanders that the original 'Market-Garden' plan had failed, and that the war against Germany was by no means over yet. The first hint of a change in attitude came when Montgomery at 21st Army Group Headquarters received a message from Eisenhower denying that SHAEF had ever intended a broad front advance and reaffirming priority for the northern thrust. With 'Market-Garden' a failure and both sides temporarily locked in an exhausted stalemate, the whole nature of the Battle of Arnhem was about to change.
The fog and rain continued into Thursday (D plus 4), which was bitingly cold. As dawn arrived, Generalfeldmarschall Model at Army Group B issued fresh orders. Corps ‘Feldt’ was to hold its position. It had spent itself in the attack over the Groesbeek heights, and with Nijmegen bridge now in Allied hands there was little that it could do. Model placed all troops as far south as Elst under II SS Panzer Corps, which was to wipe out the British at Arnhem while containing any drive north of Nijmegen. Student’s First Parachute Army was to organize a coordinated pincer attack by LXXVIII Corps and LXXXVI Corps against Hell’s Highway for next day.

At Arnhem bridge, the last fight began at about 0900, as Gough and his men tried to break out northwards against SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Knaust’. There was no formal surrender or end to the fighting. In small groups, the British either ran out of ammunition or were overwhelmed. Some refused to give up or fought on with knives, and the last shots were not fired at Arnhem bridge for another two days. But at 1200, SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Knaust’ at last crossed Arnhem bridge. Frost’s men had fought for 88 hours without relief, the last twelve of them without food or water.

In the Oosterbeek pocket, Urquhart reorganized his defence, placing Hicks in charge of the western face against Kampfgruppe ‘von Tettau’, and Hackett in charge of the eastern face against SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Hohenstaufen’. At 0900 an attack by Kampfgruppe ‘von Tettau’ drove 1st Battalion of the Border Regiment back off the Westerbouwing hill (30m high), the crucial high ground that overlooked the Heevedorp ferry, and away from the ferry itself, which was destroyed in the fighting. From the Westerbouwing, German fire could dominate any attempted river crossing. In their confusion and exhaustion, neither side had appreciated the vital signifcance of this ground. Kampfgruppe ‘von Tettau’ pushed Hick’s troops back about 800m during the day, but Model’s orders to eliminate the British pocket could not be carried out with the available forces. Instead, the Germans set up loudspeakers to play music to the British, along with invitations to surrender, while the sniping and mortaring continued.

At Nijmegen, the way across the two bridges was finally cleared of German snipers by 1000. Two hours later, while the Grenadiers recovered, the Irish Guards led off northwards with the Welsh Guards following. The attack started just as SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Knaust’ was crossing Arnhem Bridge. Short of ammunition, artillery and air cover, the tanks of the Guards Armoured pushed up the exposed causeway road as far as Elst, and halted in the face of German fire. By 1600, SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Knaust’ had reached Elst from Arnhem to establish a firm block.

Meanwhile, 43rd Division, which was still waiting for its last brigade to get through Eindhoven, was busy clearing the remaining pockets of German resistance from Nijmegen. Huttons ordered the division, under Major General G. J. Thomas, to take over the lead from the spent Guards Armoured, advance through Driel and link up with 1st British Airborne at Heevedorp. Relieved of much of the responsibility for Nijmegen, 82nd Airborne began a general attack late in the afternoon with 504th Parachute Infantry and 508th Parachute Infantry, which cleared Corps ‘Feldt’ off the Groesbeek heights before establishing a solid defence.

During the afternoon, 1st British Airborne established firm radio contact with XX Corps through the Royal Artillery’s 64th Medium Regiment. The distance from Nijmegen to Arnhem is only 17km (eleven miles), and through this link Urquhart could call for fire support from the whole of XXX Corps’ artillery, drastically reducing the German advantage north of the Lower Rhine. Without this fire support the Oosterbeek pocket could not have been held, and after the battle Urquhart tried unsuccessfully to have 64th Medium Regiment awarded British Airborne insignia. In response to this stiffening resistance, Model ordered specialist troops and equipment for street fighting to be flown into Deelen by Junkers Ju 52 transport aircraft, and was promised 506th Heavy Tank Battalion, freshly equipped with 45 of the formidable PzKpfw VI Tiger tanks, from eastern Germany.

Back in England, 1st Polish Parachute Brigade’s three infantry battalions took off at 1400, flying on the northern route. Of its 114 Dakotas, 41 turned back in the bad weather (including virtually the whole of 1st Battalion) and three landed in Brussels. Over Driel more than 100 Luftwaffe fighters were
waiting for the Poles, of which 25 broke through and together with anti-aircraft fire claimed thirteen more Dakotas. At 1700, Major-General Sosobowski landed at Driel with 750 men and no heavy equipment, which had been lost in the gliders two days before.

To the Germans, the Polish landing, coinciding with the move south to Elst by SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Knaust’ to confront the Guards Armoured, appeared as an attempt to outflank them and capture Arnhem bridge once more from the south. Obersturmbahnführer Harzer rapidly organized 2,500 sailors, airmen, coastal defence troops, Dutch SS police and German infantry as a blocking force (known as ‘Sperrverband Harzer’) between the Poles and the bridge, west of the Nijmegen road. Flying resupply after the Poles, 115 transport aircraft of RAF 38 Group were intercepted by ten Fw 190s which broke through the fighter screen again. Some 23 resupply aircraft were shot down and 38 damaged by fighters or flak, and only 41 out of 300

A Sherman V tank of the Guards Armoured Division. This tank, ‘Monck’, is the command tank of Lieutenant Colonel R. F. S. Gooch, MC, 1st (Armoured) Battalion, Coldstream Guards, identifiable from the ‘All Seeing Eye’ formation sign of the Guards Division, the regimental number ‘52’, and the HQ squadron diamond, all on the storage box fitted to the nose of the tank, and the regimental flag displayed. The hull machine-gun has been removed to accommodate an extra radio operator, and there is an extra aerial fitted at the right hull position.

Paratroopers of 82nd Airborne Division watch as Cromwell tanks of the Guards Armoured Division, probably from 2nd (Armoured Reconnaissance) Battalion of the Welsh Guards, move across Nijmegen bridge northward towards Arnhem on the morning of Thursday 21 September. The low, flat ground of the ‘island’ can be seen in the distance on the right. (IWM photograph B10172)
THE NEW ALLIED PLAN

11 TO 12 SEPTEMBER

5000 (160 metres) above Driel at 1700 on Thursday 21 September, the leading paratroopers of 1st Polish Parachute Brigade prepared to leave the jump door of their C-47 Dakota. The Dakota had only one jump door, which some pilots preferred to leave open during the flight. It was known for the leading paratrooper of the ‘stick’ of fifteen men to become wedged in the door if the pilot manoeuvred suddenly to avoid enemy fire. After the jump signal was given, the actual moment of jumping was often left to the ‘stick’ leader, who would watch for obstacles.

-ton got through to the British at Oosterbeek. After nightfall, the Poles began planning to cross the Lower Rhine, but no boats arrived from XXX Corps before dawn.

Roughly level with the line of the Wilhelmina Canal, had come virtually to a halt. Lieutenant General Dempsey began to move Second Army Headquarters to St Oedenrode, and Field Marshal Montgomery established 21st Army Group Tactical Headquarters just south of Eindhoven to be in closer touch with the battle.

In response to General Eisenhower’s earlier message, Montgomery sent a signal to SHAEF demanding that Eisenhower make good his commitment to the northern thrust by halting Patton’s Third US Army and placing Hodges’ First US Army at least under some form of British control. On the same day, Patton arrived at Versailles with Bradley’s blessing, demanding more troops for his thrust across the Rhine. Eisenhower’s response was to summon a major conference of his Army Group and Army commanders—the first since before the D-Day landings on 6 June—for the next day.

Friday 22 September (D plus 5) was very misty, and there were no resupply flights from England, but the weather was beginning to lift. At 0900 General Student’s attack on Hell’s Highway began with Kampgruppe ‘Huber’ (part of 59th Infantry Division) from the west and Kampgruppe ‘Walther’ (now mainly 107th Panzer Brigade) from the east, breaking through to cut the largely undefended section of road between Uden and Grave. This also split 69th Brigade of British 50th Division, which was moving up to cover the gap between 101st Airborne and 82nd Airborne. In response, 101st Airborne, now under XXX Corps with its long familiarity with air support procedures, obtained 119 rocket-firing Typhoon sorties from RAF 83 Group along Hell’s Highway during the day.

Not far away over Kleve, completely divorced from the Arnhem battle, 9th Air Force fighters dominated the skies, while 8th Air Force and Bomber Command, whose bombers might have influenced the battle considerably, flew raids against German cities. Only at Arnhem and Nijmegen did the Germans continue to enjoy air superiority. Lieutenant General Dempsey’s chief of staff, attempting to reach Horrocks at Nijmegen by aircraft, was shot down but survived.

Major General Taylor received some warning of the German pincer attack through the PAN, and rushed 150 men of 506th Parachute Infantry to Uden by 1100, only minutes before the German tanks arrived. A limited attack north-west by 501st and 502nd Parachute Infantry had to be abandoned as Kampgruppe ‘Huber’ reached Vechel by 1400, putting the bridge under fire, and in the course of the fighting Colonel John H. Michaelis, commanding 501st Parachute Infantry, was seriously wounded. Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe, the division’s artillery commander, began with 2/501st Parachute Infantry defending Vechel and finished with eight battalions as American and British reinforcements arrived. Horrocks was forced to turn the whole of 32nd Guards Brigade (the Grenadiers and Coldstream) around to drive back south down Hell’s Highway from Grave to Uden, clearing the road of Germans. For a crucial day, supplies and equipment, above all river crossing equipment, could not travel beyond Vechel.

The renewed attempt by XXX Corps to reach 1st British Airborne began shortly after dawn with orders from Horrocks to take all risks. 43rd Division attacked north from Nijmegen, with 214th Brigade moving towards Driel, while 129th Brigade and the Irish Guards Group attacked at Elst. On the exposed ‘island’ movement within sight of the enemy was almost impossible for either side, and unsupported vehicles were open targets. But at 0830 a few armoured cars of the Household Cavalry found a route through to the Poles at Driel. Strictly, this completed the link between XXX Corps and 1st British Airborne, four days and eighteen hours since the start of ‘Market-Garden’. That afternoon Lieutenant Colonel Mackenzie crossed the Lower Rhine and used the Household’s radios to send a long signal to Horrocks and Browning before driving off to Nijmegen. By late afternoon a single infantry battalion, 5th Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry with some tanks, had reached the Poles.

At 2100 Sosabowski, acting on Horrocks’ orders, attempted a river crossing towards Horrerdorp with four rubber boats, all that were available. Under intense German fire, about 50 Poles crossed, of whom 35 survived to join the Border Regiment. A plan for 5th Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry to follow them later that night was called off as no further boats or DUKW amphibious craft had arrived. German attacks continued all around the Oosterbeek pocket, and at 2144 Urquhart signalled Browning that relief within 24 hours was vital. Bittrich meanwhile conferred with Harzer and von Tettau to plan the final destruction of 1st British Airborne next day.

The PAN (Dutch) resistance made a major contribution to ‘Market-Garden’, although they were shot by the Germans if caught fighting on the Allied side. Here two PAN men, wearing identifying orange armbands, pass information to officers on the Intelligence staff of 5th (Northumbrian) Division near Valkenswaard on Monday 25 September (note the Tyne-Tees’ shoulder flash of the two British officers). Failure to make proper use of PAN information contributed to 1st British Airborne Division’s problems at Arnhem. (IWM photograph B08135)
While the fighting raged all day from Veghel to Oosterbeek, Eisenhower’s Army Group and Army commanders assembled at Versailles. Even for this vital meeting, Montgomery stuck to his custom and sent Major General de Guingand to represent him, reportedly because he did not trust himself to speak to the American generals. This meeting began to repair the mistakes in the original ‘Market-Garden’ plan, as Eisenhower asserted the authority that had drifted for the last month. Instead of individual actions against a defeated enemy, Eisenhower now insisted on a coordinated advance to the Rhine by all his Armies, stressing the importance of First Canadian Army’s attack to clear the Scheldt and open Antwerp now that the war was going to last beyond September. Bradley was instructed to halt Patton (the formal order to Third US Army was issued next day), while First US Army was ordered to swing northwards towards Aachen, sending XIX Corps under Major General Charles H. Corlett (temporarily reduced by Bradley to two divisions) northwards to cooperate with British VIII Corps. In return, Second British Army would change its axis of advance, with VIII Corps leading north-east across country towards Venlo and Kleve, instead of XXX Corps heading north past Arnhem. Although First US Army remained under Bradley, Montgomery was allowed direct communication with it.

That afternoon Montgomery visited 3rd Division at Weert, the first of a series of visits to explain the new plan throughout Second British Army. Although a bridgehead at Arnhem might be useful, and there were humanitarian reasons for saving 1st British Airborne, from this point XIX Corps’ efforts north of Nijmegen became a secondary operation, and any idea of an advance past Arnhem was given up. It says much for Montgomery’s state of mind that he seems to have believed that this new plan was feasible, and that Lieutenant General O’Connor might yet rescue his battle for him.

Next day, Lieutenant General Dempsey placed 101st Airborne under VIII Corps, while 50th Division was reinforced by 131st Brigade of 7th Armoured from XII Corps, and – together with the Royal Netherlands Brigade ‘Prinses Irene’ – took over Nijmegen from 43rd Division. VIII Corps now had to fight on two fronts: while 101st Airborne and 50th Division defended against attacks from the west and north-west, 3rd Division and 11th Armoured Division were to drive north-east to the Rhine, keeping step with US XIX Corps. Horrocks’ XXX Corps was left with the troops north of Grave – 43rd Division, 82nd Airborne and the fragmented Guards Armoured – while I Airborne Corps continued to command the survivors of 1st British Airborne. After meetings between Montgomery, Dempsey, their Army Corps and divisional commanders, Second British Army signalled I Airborne Corps at 2020 that it had permission to withdraw 1st British Airborne if necessary, just over 24 hours after Urquhart’s appeal.

Saturday 23 September (D plus 6) produced the first good weather since the start of ‘Market-Garden’, despite the morning fog and the rain that night, and 2nd Tactical Air Force was heavily active over Oosterbeek. With artillery and air support, 1st British Airborne held on to its foxholes and houses, and once more Harzer and von Tettau could not break through the perimeter. In the afternoon, an angry Model visited II SS Panzer Corps Headquarters and gave Bittrich 24 more hours to wipe 1st British Airborne out. Model also changed Army Group B’s command structure, placing all forces west of the ‘Market-Garden’ salient under Fifteenth Army, and all those to the east under First Parachute Army, at last relieving Armed Forces Command Netherlands and Wehrkreis VI of their fighting responsibilities. So far, Model’s defensive scheme had largely succeeded, stopping ‘Market-Garden’ only two-thirds of the way to its objective on the Zuider Zee. Now, in the classic manner of German counterstrokes on the Eastern Front, he planned to destroy both I Airborne Corps and XXX Corps north of Nijmegen and regain the line of the Waal.

Farther south, the Germans renewed their attacks against Veghel in the morning with 6th Parachute Regiment (now part of Kampfgruppe ‘Chill’) from the west and Kampfgruppe ‘Walther’ from the east, but they were both driven off by noon. Three hours later, 50th Parachute Infantry with British armour linked with 32nd Guards Brigade at Uden, reopening Hell’s Highway.

At 1300, the delayed last wave of airborne reinforcements took off from England in the largest ‘Market-Garden’ airlift since its first day. Escorted by fighters of 8th Air Force, 654 troop carriers and 490 gliders flew on the northern route almost without incident to land at 1500. 82nd Airborne received 3,385 troops in 428 gliders, mainly the delayed 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, which

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A captain in the Royal Netherlands Brigade ‘Prinses Irene’, wearing British battledress and equipment with Dutch rank badges, including brigade shoulder flash, ‘Lion’ cap badge and Dutch national ‘Lion and Netherlands’ sash badge.
Major General Sosabowski, in Denison smock and paratrooper's uniform, at his head-quarters in the woods east of Driel with Major General G. I. Thomas commanding 43rd (Wessex) Division, probably on Saturday 23 September. Thomas is wearing an unusual uniform of pre-war style boots, puttees and breeches with a battledress blouse worn over a sleeveless sweater and motoring goggles around his general's cap. With a reputation for offering unwelcome advice, Thomas did not get on well with Sosabowski and was heavily criticized for his division's slowness during 'Market-Garden'.

Two British paratroops, one of them wearing the sleeveless 'jump jacket', fit a Mark I Weapons Container underneath an aircraft before take-off in England. Fitted with its own parachute, this container was used to carry a variety of stores and equipment. Other stores were dropped directly from the open doors of the cargo aircraft. (IWM photograph H57727)

Troops of 1st Airborne Division in the grounds of the Hartenstein Hotel displaying yellow parachutes as a guide to Allied aircraft dropping supplies, probably on Saturday 23 September. At this picture shows, even when the Allied pilots were aware of the intended supply drop zones, picking them out from among the trees and houses was extremely difficult. (IWM photograph BU1119)

The weather remained reasonable after some morning fog, and 2nd Tactical Air Force flew 22 close air support sorties for 1st British Airborne from mid-afternoon, despite problems in identifying targets in the shrinking Oosterbeek pocket. Through XXX Corps artillery support and its own fighting qualities, 1st British Airborne continued to hold the perimeter, although Brigadier Hackett was wounded by a shellburst that morning. Urquhart's men were now threatened with the same fate that had overwhelmed Frost, a collapse from exhaustion and lack of ammunition. At 1500 a medical truce came into force, carefully negotiated between 1st British Airborne and II SS Panzer Corps, which allowed the transfer of 700 wounded to the Germans, followed by 500 more next day. This left Urquhart with about 1,800 troops organized in small groups to defend the pocket.

Both sides at Arnhem had now been fighting for a week without rest, almost without sleep, and a single fresh formation might swing the battle. This
Top: German infantry in the Oosterbeek pocket, late in the fighting. The mixture of uniforms worn and weapons carried by these men tells its own story. The German ability to assemble improvised forces at short notice was much admired by the Allies, but although these could be strong in defence, they had great difficulty making coordinated attacks. (IWM photograph BU121)

A British ammunition truck explodes, scattering incendiaries on to the road, having been hit by fire from Parachute Battalion 'Jungwirth' near Kevering on 'Hell's Highway', on the evening of Sunday 24 September. Much of the road at this point was lined with trees, making ambush easier for the Germans. (IWM photograph B10124A)

Men of the Glider Pilot Regiment, carrying Sten submachine-guns and pistols, fight their way through the rubble of a building in Oosterbeek, Saturday 23 September. The 1,200 men of the Glider Pilot Regiment at Arnhem formed two 'Wings', each the equivalent of a battalion, and played a major part in the defence of the perimeter. (IWM photograph BU121)

Arrived on the German side in the form of the King Tigers of 506th Heavy Tank Battalion, of which two companies (30 tanks) were sent to the 'Frundsberg' near Elst and one company to the east side of the Oosterbeek pocket. Even before these tanks arrived, XXX Corps had made only slow progress north of Nijmegen against the German defence. The only success that day was the capture of Bemmel by 69th Brigade and the Welsh Guards.

At 0930 Horrocks, together with Thomas and Sosabowski, surveyed the far side of the Lower Rhine from the steeple of Driel church. Thomas came away believing that Horrocks had issued orders for the withdrawal of 1st British Airborne that night, and began planning a crossing to seize the Westerbouwing and help Urquhart. Horrocks, who later denied he had issued these orders, then went to Second British Army Headquarters to consult Dempsey. Who actually gave the order to withdraw from Arnhem cannot be established, but Montgomery notified London of the decision, and the forthcoming thrust north-east by VIII Corps, that evening. As news of the planned withdrawal spread there was a late flurry of activity from the airborne commanders. First Allied Airborne Army
tried to arrange for 8th Air Force fighters to drop belly tanks full of supplies to 1st British Airborne, while Browning now wanted 52nd (Lowland) Division flown in, a suggestion vetoed by Dempsey and Montgomery.

In response to Generalfeldmarschall von Rundstedt's suggestion that all German troops in Holland should fall back to the Maas in the face of Second British Army's offensive, Hitler demanded instead a renewed offensive at Nijmegen and Veghel. Model took full advantage of this by requesting even more reinforcements, including the full strength 363rd Volksgrenadier Division, which could not arrive until after the battle.

The renewed attack on Hell's Highway by Kampfgruppe 'Chill' began shortly after dawn, looking for weak spots in 101st Airborne's line. Most of the Germans were heavily repulsed, but as dusk fell the weak Parachute Battalion 'Jungwirth', reinforced by a company of Jagdpanthers of 559th Assault Battalion, cut the road once again at Koevering, just south of Veghel. Horrocks at St Oedenrode with Dempsey found that he was cut off from XXX Corps HQ for the day. No attack took place from KG 'Walther', which was finally forced to retreat by 11th Armoured Division's capture of Deurne, east of Helmond, opening the way for VIII Corps' advance. Nevertheless, with Hell's Highway closed to supply traffic once more, Dempsey ordered O'Connor to hold in place.

At 0200 on Monday 25 September (D plus 8), 43rd Division made its crossing of the Lower Rhine to help 1st British Airborne in darkness, heavy rain and strong winds. But there were boats and DUKW amphibious craft only for two companies, or 350 men, of 4th Battalion of the Dorsetshire Regiment, of whom 315 reached the far bank to be pinned down at once by German fire. Kampfgruppe 'von Littau' took 140 prisoners including the battalion commander, and although the Dorsets briefly held part of the Westerbouwing they achieved little else. At 0808 Urquhart signalled Thomas that the evacuation, codenamed Operation 'Berlin', must take place that night. As if to emphasize the point, SS-Kampfgruppe 'von Allwarden' with the new King Tigers of 506th Heavy Tank Battalion attacked that afternoon from the east, driving deep into Urquhart's position and threatening to encircle 1st British Airborne. Artillery and 81 close-support sorties from 2nd Tactical Air Force helped the British troops hold out for another day.

During the morning, as XXX Corps finally secured Elst as well as Boxmeer, Horrocks and Browning met at 1 Airborne Corps Headquarters to discuss 'Berlin', while Montgomery and Dempsey met at Eindhoven. With so many Germans concentrated at Oosterbeek, the Household Cavalry patrols revealed that the Lower Rhine west of Arnhem was almost undefended, and Horrocks briefly considered making another crossing. Instead,
43rd Division mounted a simulated crossing at Renkum, 6km (four miles) west of Oosterbeek, that night to help the withdrawal.

With assistance from British 50th Division and 7th Armoured, 506th and 502nd Parachute Infantry moved against Hoevering during the day, and at nightfall the surrounded Germans abandoned their position, having mined the road first. This was LXXXVIII Corps’ last effort, and next day 101st Airborne cleared the mines and re-opened Hell’s Highway for good.

Farther east, VIII Corps drove forward against the retreating Kampfgruppe ‘Walther’ and 180th Infantry Division. By nightfall, 11th Armoured had reached the Maas at Boxmeer, linking up with XXX Corps. But with only two divisions attacking northeastward, O’Connor was no longer completely over-extended. On the Willems Canal line, 3rd Division, already holding 35km (22 miles) of front, was faced with the prospect of holding 51km (32 miles) next day. It was only saved by the arrival of 7th US Armored Division, newly returned to Corlett’s US XIX Corps, which came into line beside it.

At 2100 on the Lower Rhine ‘Berlin’ began with a sustained bombardment by 43rd Division and XXX Corps artillery that lasted eleven hours. At 2140 two companies of Royal Canadian Engineers with 21 stormboats (each holding fourteen men) and two Royal Engineer companies with sixteen assault boats started to cross the river. Leaving behind their wounded with some volunteers, 1st British Airborne started to withdraw in the pouring rain through a gap barely 700m wide to the river bank. The Germans continued heavy mortaring and took 170 prisoners, but there was no attempt to rush the British troops, and by 0130 the withdrawal north of the Hartenstein Hotel was complete. At 0200 the division’s ammunition was blown up and its guns disabled, and at first light the ferrying ended. The survivors of 1st British Airborne marched from

A German officer (with cap) identified as Brigadefuehrer Heinrich Harnel, accompanied by some formidable-looking members of his SS-Kampfgruppe ‘Potsdamer’, talks to a Polish prisoner, probably in Arnhem on Tuesday 26 September. The Pole may be acting as an interpreter for the other prisoners visible in the building behind them. (IWM photograph HU2333).

Survivors of 1st British Airborne recovering from Operation ‘Berlin’ in the grounds of the Missionary College in Nijmegen on Tuesday 26 September. Between them these privates and NCOs represent almost every regiment of 1st British Airborne which fought at Arnhem, but most are from 1st Battalion of the Border Regiment. (IWM photograph HU3122).

A sergeant of 506th Parachute Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division, wearing the new M1943 field uniform, givn to the Airborne troops after Normandy to replace the light khaki M1942 paratrooper’s uniform. Note the ‘All American’ divisional sign on one sleeve and the American flag on the other. He wears jump boots and an M1C paratrooper’s helmet, and carries an M3 ‘Grease Gun’ submachine-gun. The AL-141 Signal Panel (white on one side, orange on the other) was used to mark drop and landing zones.
Driel to Nijmegen, where their divisional seaborne tail was waiting with clean uniforms and equipment. By 1400 the Germans had occupied the remains of the Oosterbeek pocket, capturing the wounded troops who could not be moved.

With the end of ‘Blen’ at 0550 on Tuesday 26 September (D plus 9), ‘Garden’ also ended. Since the start of the operation, First Allied Airborne Army had dispatched 4,852 troop-carrying aircraft successfully to their destinations, of which 1,293 delivered paratroops, 2,277 gliders, and 1,282 resupply. Altogether 164 aircraft and 132 gliders were lost. USA Performing IX Troop Carrier Command suffered 454 casualties, RAF 38 and 46 Groups a further 294 casualties. Some 39,620 troops were delivered by air to their targets (21,074 by parachute and 18,546 by glider) with 4,595 tons of stores. However, only 7.4 per cent of the stores intended for 1st British Airborne actually reached it.

A further 6,172 aircraft sorties were flown in support of ‘Market-Garden’, more than half of them by 8th Air Force, for the loss of 125 aircraft. It is significant that 2nd Tactical Air Force flew only 534 of these sorties, and 9th Air Force 209 sorties. Browning complained that 2nd Tactical Air Force had turned down 46 out of 95 requests for air support from US Air Corps Headquarters, chiefly on grounds of poor target identification. The Allied air forces claimed 160 enemy aircraft shot down, and rescued 205 men from the North Sea during the operation.

At Arnhem itself, 10,300 men of 1st British Airborne Division and 1st Polish Parachute Brigade landed from the air. Some 2,587 men escaped across the Rhine in Operation ‘Blen’ (1,741 of 1st British Airborne, 422 of the Glider Pilot Regiment, 160 Poles and 75 from the Dorsetshire Regiment), and 240 more returned later with the aid of the PAN. About 1,600 wounded were left behind in the Oosterbeek pocket, together with 204 medical officers and chaplains who volunteered to stay. The Germans claimed 6,450 prisoners taken, wounded or not, and 1st British Airborne therefore lost about 1,300 killed. The highest proportionate losses were suffered by the Glider Pilot Regiment and Major Gough’s Reconnaissance Squadron, each with more than one in five men killed. Three out of nine battalion commanders of 1st Airborne Division were killed, four more were wounded and taken prisoner, together with two out of three brigade commanders. Five Victoria Crosses were won at Arnhem, four of them posthumous including one to a resupply aircraft pilot.

In the course of the battle, 1st Polish Parachute Brigade lost 378 casualties. The two American airborne divisions lost 3,664 men together; 1,432 from 82nd Airborne, 2,110 from 101st Airborne and 122 glider pilots. One American battalion commander was killed, another was badly wounded, a regimental commander was also wounded, and two posthumous Medals of Honor were won.

By its own estimate, the total losses for 1st Airborne Corps were 6,858 men. Second British Army’s casualties for ‘Market-Garden’ alone are harder to calculate, but one estimate places them at 3,534 including 1,480 for XXX Corps, giving a total of 16,805 Allied casualties. German casualties, like their unit strengths, cannot be given accurately for this period of the war. General Feldmarschall Model estimated Army Group B casualties in ‘Market-Garden’ at 3,300, but other calculations place them as high as 2,000 dead and 6,000 wounded.

At 0200, as the last of his men were crossing the Lower Rhine, a soaked and exhausted Major General Urquhart reached 1 Airborne Corps Headquarters and demanded to see Lieutenant General Browning, who rose and dressed to see Urquhart for a brief conversation before directing him to bed. That evening Browning held a formal dinner party for tourquhart and Thomas, putting his chef to good use. Next morning, Wednesday 27 September, Urquhart went south to 21st Army Group Headquarters at Eindhoven to brief Dempsey and Montgomery himself on the battle.

In the ‘Market-Garden’ corridor, 21st Army Group was digging in. Its front, already 240 km (150 miles) long on 16 September, had been extended by a long thin finger of territory stretching up Hell’s Highway from Joe’s Bridge to Driel, and from Bockmeer to Oss where 7th Armoured Division of XII Corps had finally linked with the Guards Armoured, adding another 200 km (130 miles) to be defended. The fighting to hold this salient would continue, but the Battle of Arnhem was over.
THE AFTERMATH
OF THE BATTLE

The end of Operation ‘Market-Garden’ was no more tidy than its beginning. The new salient held by Second British Army threatened to cut off most of the German troops in western Holland once the attack to clear the Scheldt began, and on 27 September 712th Static Division of LXXXVIII Corps tried to escape through Grave, only to be repulsed by the Coldstream. Next morning two major Luftwaffe air attacks by more than 40 aircraft including Me 262 fighter-bombers damaged both bridges at Nijmegen. This was followed by a suicide attack that night on the bridges by twelve German frogmen, which closed them for 24 hours.

On 1 October Generalfeldmarschall Model began his counter-attack against XXX Corps on the ‘island’ with II SS Panzer Corps from the north, XII SS Corps from the west and II Parachute Corps from the east across the Groesbeek heights. In five days the German offensive over the open polder was heavily defeated by Allied firepower, and on 7 October II SS Panzer Corps gave up its attacks. On the same day USAAF and RAF bombing raids closed Arnhem bridge to traffic, and on 4 February 1945 the Germans themselves blew it into the Lower Rhine.

The survivors of 1st British Airborne returned to a heroes’ welcome in Britain within a week of their evacuation from Arnhem, and 1st Polish Parachute Brigade joined them shortly afterwards. But the German threat to the new salient made it

\[\text{Left to right. Lieutenant General Ritchie commanding XII Corps (smoking one of his famous cheroots), Lieutenant General O'Connor commanding VIII Corps, Major General D. A. H. Graham commanding 50th (Northumbrian) Division, Dempsey and Montgomery review the situation map at the end of Market-Garden at Graham's divisional headquarters near Best, Thursday 28 September. Major General Verne commanding 7th Armoured Division was also present. Despite the smiles for the camera, Montgomery would recommend O'Connor's replacement that night. (IWM photograph B10388).}\]
impossible to withdraw the two American airborne divisions. On 5 October, 101st Airborne took over 43rd Division’s position on the ‘island’, just in time to repel Model’s last attack, made by 363rd Volksgrenadier Division. Over Breton’s protests, Montgomery convinced Eisenhower to let him keep 82nd Airborne in line until 13 November and 101st Airborne until 27 November. The two divisions took more casualties in this period than during ‘Market-Garden’ itself. Major General Taylor was slightly wounded, and Colonel Howard Johnson, commanding 501st Parachute Infantry, was killed.

The Battle of Antwerp to clear the Scheldt estuary began almost simultaneously with the end of ‘Market-Garden’. It lasted until 28 November, when Antwerp was officially opened to cargo ships, and cost 21st Army Group 30,000 casualties. In response to the Dutch transport strike called to coincide with ‘Market-Garden’, the Germans halted all civilian transport in the country, and 18,000 Dutch civilians died in the ‘hunger winter’ that followed. Nevertheless, the PAN continued to help Allied soldiers on the run in northern Holland. Brigadier Lathbury with 142 men escaped to safety in October, and Brigadier Hackett the following February.

The failure at Arnhem and the need to open the Scheldt condemned the troops of both 21st Army Group and Army Group B to a miserable winter fighting in the flat and flooded terrain of Holland. In the spring, Allied attention turned to crossing the Rhine into Germany rather than clearing Holland, and Arnhem was not finally liberated by British troops of First Canadian Army until 14 April 1945.

The OB West report on ‘Market-Garden’, produced in October 1944, gave the decision to spread the airborne landings over more than one day as the main reason for the Allied failure. A Luftwaffe analysis added that the airborne landings were spread too thinly and made too far from the Allied front line. General Student regarded the Allied airborne landings as an immense success and blamed the final failure to reach Arnhem on XXX Corps’ slow progress. In this respect, General...

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*At the end of ‘Market-Garden’, an Intelligence officer of 1st Polish Parachute Brigade asks questions of his men while an officer of 1st British Airborne Division (with his back to the camera) listens. 1st British Airborne flew back to England on 30 September, followed by the Poles on 7 October, three days before Browning’s after-action report on the battle was submitted.*

*Brigadier Gerald Lathbury commanding 1st Parachute Brigade, taken in Britain after his remarkable escape from the Germans following ‘Market-Garden’. Recovering from his wounds under German guard in the St Elisabeth Hospital in Arnhem, Lathbury escaped with PAN help and led his party (including four American glider crew) back across the Lower Rhine on 22 October, being collected by storm boats of 56th Parachute Infantry Regiment. (IWM photograph H1640)*
keep touch with Third US Army, which resumed its own attacks eastward in November. On 16 December the Germans took advantage of this error in deployment to launch their offensive through the Ardennes. The direct legacy of the Battle of Arnhem was the Battle of the Bulge (described in Ardennes 1944, number 5 in this series). On 28 December, Lieutenant General Horrocks, whose XXX Corps was being committed to the battle to support the Americans, suffered another collapse. Montgomery continued to protect Horrocks, sending him home to rest before returning him to XXX Corps for the final victory.

The next major Allied airborne operation, and the last of the Second World War, sought to rectify the faults evident in ‘Market-Garden’. In Operation ‘Varsity’ on 24 March 1945, 1,096 aircraft and gliders landed 21,680 troops of US XVIII Airborne Corps under Lieutenant General Ridgway (17th US Airborne Division and 6th British Airborne Division), east of the Rhine as part of a river crossing by British XII Corps near Wesel. The whole airborne force landed in two hours barely 8km (five miles) ahead of XII Corps, which made contact on the same day. To the end of the war, ‘Market-Garden’ remained the only attempt by the Allies to use large airborne forces in deep penetration in Europe.

### Chronology

**1944**

13 August Montgomery suggests his ‘single thrust’ plan to Eisenhower.

16 August First Allied Airborne Army formed.

23 August Eisenhower gives priority to Montgomery’s northern thrust.

26 August XXX British Corps starts its drive from the Seine.

29 August Third US Army starts to run out of fuel.

1 September Eisenhower takes command of the ground battle from Montgomery.

2 September Eisenhower adopts the ‘two-thrust’ plan.

3 September Browning threatens resignation. Von Rundstedt recalled to OB West. XXX Corps liberates Brussels.

4 September XXX Corps liberates Antwerp and halts. German First Parachute Army created under Student.

5 September ‘Mad Tuesday’ in Holland.

10 September Brussels conference between Eisenhower and Montgomery approves ‘Market-Garden’. Guards Armoured Division captures ‘Joe’s Bridge’.

16 September First air attacks for ‘Market-Garden’ start after nightfall.

17 September D-Day for Operation ‘Market-Garden’, the start of the Battle of Arnhem. I British Airborne Corps, XXX Corps, XII Corps attacks start.

18 September Second airborne lift. VIII Corps attack starts.

19 September Third airborne lift. XXX Corps reaches Nijmegen.

20 September Assault crossing at Nijmegen. Main German attack on the Groesbeek heights.

21 September Fourth airborne lift. Germans recapture Arnhem bridge.

22 September Eisenhower abandons the ‘Market-Garden’ plan.

23 September Fifth airborne lift.

26 September Operation ‘Berlin’, the withdrawal of 1st British Airborne. END OF THE BATTLE OF ARNHEM.

5 October Last German attacks on the ‘Market-Garden’ corridor end.

7 October Allied air raids close Arnhem bridge.

27 November Last troops of First Allied Airborne Army leave the ‘Market-Garden’ corridor.

16 December The German Ardennes offensive (the Battle of the Bulge).

**1945**

4 February Germans destroy Arnhem bridge.

24 March Operation ‘Varsity’.

14 April Allied liberation of Arnhem.

8 May V-E Day, the unconditional surrender of Germany.
A GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Although the Battle of Arnhem was quite well known before 1974, it was largely Cornelius Ryan’s book, *A Bridge Too Far*, and the feature film based upon it that brought the battle to a wider audience. Since then, there has been a small flood of books of varying quality on ‘Market-Garden’, together with the publication of intelligence sources and higher commanders’ memoirs for both sides. Most of these books are not easily available outside specialist libraries, and a new full-length study of the battle is now needed.


WEIGHLEY, R. *Eisenhower’s Lieutenant*, Indiana and London, 1981. The higher strategy of the campaign in North-West Europe, with a good section on ‘Market-Garden’.

THE BATTLEFIELD TODAY

The ‘Market-Garden’ area has not changed greatly since the Second World War, although there are more major roads and built-up areas. The main A67/E34 road now runs west to east from Antwerp to Venlo just south of Eindhoven, which is significantly larger than in 1944. Nijmegen and Arnhem have also grown in size, and both have rebuilt their town centres, which were heavily damaged in the fighting.

The starting place for visiting the Arnhem battlefield is the Airborne Museum at the old Hartenstein Hotel in Oosterbeek. Commemorative marker columns, some with a ‘Pegasus’ symbol, identify important sites on the battlefield. The road and rail bridges at Arnhem were rebuilt after the war. A new road bridge was opened in 1977 just west of the original bridge, which was renamed the ‘John Frost Bridge’. The main A48 road now by-passes Arnhem to the east, also bridging the Lower Rhine, and leads eventually to Deventer, where the bridge over the Ijssel was used to represent Arnhem bridge for the motion picture *A Bridge Too Far*.

Along the Club Route, Joe’s Bridge and the bridges at Grave and Heumen are still intact. Among the memorials to the 101st Airborne and 82nd Airborne are those at Son, Best, Veghel, and at St Anthony’s Church at Breedeweg on the southern end of the Groesbeek heights. At Nijmegen a new road bridge has been built on the site of the old one, and the main features of the battle are easily identifiable.
WARGAMING ARNHEM

For the Second World War enthusiast, the attraction of ‘Market-Garden’ is that it has something almost of everything. It has high strategy, elite troops on both sides, airborne operations, assault river crossings, small-unit actions, armour v. armour battles, resistance fighters, supply convoys, weather factors, fighting on open ground, in wooded hills, and among houses, all within a self-contained battle lasting ten days. There is also much information available on the technical side, airborne forces and Waffen-SS being favourites with writers on uniforms and equipment, and with figure manufacturers. From this, and from several first-hand accounts, it is possible to discover or devise any number of challenging wargames scenarios.

Strategy Games

Starting at the top, the planning for ‘Market-Garden’ lends itself to the Committee Game, in which each player has his own personal role. This kind of game is often used in conjunction with a later operational game. All that is needed is a briefing sheet for each player, a table to sit round (and thump occasionally) and a set time-limit. For ‘Market-Garden’ the most interesting Committee Game is the meeting that never happened, between Eisenhower and his senior commanders after 1 September to thrash out strategy and supply problems, which may well result in the battle never taking place at all. As a more realistic alternative, try a meeting at 21st Army Group Headquarters on 9 September, with Browning and representatives from SHAPE and 2nd Tactical Air Force present. There are four options: to go on the offensive along the Albert Canal; to attack north-west towards Breda and Rotterdam clearing the Scheldt; to attack north-east towards Venlo and Wesel; or to carry out the historical plan. All have points both for and against them.

A variation on this is the ‘Hidden Agenda Game’ in which a player’s main effort goes into fighting his own side while the battle goes on around him (perhaps a little unfair to the historical figures, but good fun). Montgomery wins if he gets Eisenhower to swing First US Army north of Aachen, no matter how badly his attack goes; or Model wins if he frightens Hitler enough to give him all the extra troops he wants. The Committee Game often leads to a Strategy Map Game, which can also be played by itself with at least one player a side, an umpire, and three identical maps of the area. Both players draw their dispositions and intentions, and the umpire tries to reconcile the results.

The Computer Wargame, which promised so much for the solo player a few years ago, has all but vanished as manufacturers have gone for graphics rather than realism. Arnhem, produced by Case Computer Simulations in 1985, is a solo game down to battalion level for the Allied player, and one of the best computer wargames ever marketed. There is also a ‘Market-Garden’ scenario in Crusade in Europe, produced by Microprose in 1985 as a solo/dual game at divisional level. Although issues of supply, weather and airpower have been left out, this is actually good, as it allows you to explore what should have happened by switching all your air support to 1st British Airborne at Arnhem and attacking vigorously with XII and VIII Corps to open up alternate axes. I usually manage to win by capturing ’s Hertogenbosch and Utrecht before swinging east.

Operational Games

The classic approach to Arnhem at the operational level is the Megagame, a giant version of the Map Game with as many players as possible taking part, each representing a specific headquarters staff and ideally in a separate room. This gives ample opportunity for the representation of communications difficulties, particularly by using commercial baby alarms as radios – they have the right sort of unpredictability! A particularly fiendish game designer could construct an entire game for players representing the staff of I Airborne Corps switching radio channels and trying to establish what is going on.

In the only Megagame of Arnhem I have tried, Horrocks and Browning (admirably played by a former Parachute Regiment officer) won handsomely by keeping the Heart Route to Helmond open until the Germans collapsed, by taking the risk of dropping a brigade due south of Arnhem bridge in the first attack, and by holding back a reserve of one regiment/brigade for each airborne division in England with Browning himself until he could see where the enemy was. The conclusion on the historical plan, to quote the winner, was: ‘It’s not so much A Bridge Too Far, as Too Far From the Bridge!’

At the other extreme, it is possible to mount a very simple ‘scissors cut paper’ style game with three players, representing First Allied Airborne Army in England, 2nd Tactical Air Force, and the Luftwaffe, together with an umpire who decides the weather. The players draw up programmes for the day and announce them simultaneously, with the umpire moderating the results. If the two Allied plans do not conflict, the weather is not bad, and the Luftwaffe does not stop them, then the next drop takes place or XXX Corps advances with air support. The two Allied players are allowed to consult if they miss a day to do so.

Tactical Games

Most good commercial rules, such as WRG’s Wargames Rules 1952–1950 or the Firefly rules, have ways of simulating airborne assault, particularly at the common 5mm (1/300th) scale. The easiest way to mount a paratroop drop is to fly in a model Dakota (available commercially) on a stand and drop paper disks representing each figure or element from a determined height. Remember to allow for the effects of enemy fighters and anti-aircraft fire. A glider can be represented by a similar paper disk, or by a paper dart thrown by the player, to be replaced on the table by a model. Allied paratroops landed with their personal weapons, but it took time for them to recover. Properly trained troops could drop their parachutes or evacuate a glider in less than 30 seconds, but a bad landing would knock them unconscious (at least) and a battalion needed about an hour from landing to making a formed attack.

A major attraction of ‘Market-Garden’ is the unusual mix of forces fighting on both sides, especially along Hell’s Highway. Try Battalion ‘Jungwirth’s’ action at Koevering with German paratroops and assault guns on one side, American paratroops and British armour on the other. The Germans win if they can hold any section of the road long enough to mine it properly. Particularly for the wargamer who likes unusual figures, Arnhem is one battle in which small fire-fights using larger 25mm (1/72nd) scale figures together with aircraft models can be very interesting. One scenario is a fight over a crashed glider (either scratch-built, or a deliberately sacrificed kit) with the player dicing for each occupant as he emerges.

On the ground, airborne troops have the worst of both worlds, with little firepower and not much mobility. The idea is to land where the enemy are not, advance to seize an objective, and hang on to it. One of the features of ‘Market-Garden’ was that, although both sides could be suppressed by heavy firepower, it was extremely difficult to move even small units physically off an obstacle. With figures, the defence of Arnhem bridge and the Oosterbeek pocket, or the assault crossings at Nijmegen and Heveadorp, are best wargamed as small unit actions rather than the whole battle (or you might try 2mm scale instead). Remember that, at 1/300th scale, Arnhem bridge, which was 650m long, would be more than six feet not counting the approach ramps! For boardgamers, the Squad Leader rules provide the basis for the game. Otherwise, as close and mixed a terrain as possible, with houses, rubble and trees, should provide a good game. A King Tiger tank should not be able to manoeuvre too freely, as the airborne troops have nothing that will stop it except at point-blank range. A reverse periscope, allowing the player to see from ground level, is useful for this kind of game.

Other characteristic features of ‘Market-
Garden' are all-round fighting, and reinforcements for one side or the other arriving at unpredictable intervals. The best example of this is the Polish parachute drop at Driel – what would have happened if Sosabowski really had tried for Arnhem bridge again? Generally, any scenario should aim for a high level of uncertainty and confusion on both sides, with artillery and air support suppressing rather than destroying targets, and coordinated attacks being very hard to mount.

'Market Garden' was one of the most audacious, and ultimately controversial, operations of the Second World War – a joint penetration, by an armoured column and a large-scale airborne drop, to secure key waterways and railheads and punch a decisive hole in the German defences. If it had succeeded, it could have ended in war in 1944. Just why it failed is described and illustrated in detail in this authoritative and absorbing narrative by Sandhurst historian Stephen Badsey.

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THE GENERAL EDITOR, David Chandler, is head of the Department of War Studies at Sandhurst, Britain's Royal Military Academy, and a military historian of international renown. For the Osprey Campaign Series he has assembled a team of expert writers from both sides of the Atlantic.

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