The „All American"

★★ PARAGLIDE

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INVADES HOLLAND!

17 SEPTEMBER

By Vernon L. Havener.

With „All-American" Airborne Division in Holland. Paratroopers and glidermen of the 82nd Airborne Division — battle-seasoned veterans of Sicily, Italy and Normandy — dropped out of the peaceful Sunday afternoon skies over Holland September 17 to liberate the key Nijmegen sector and pave the way for the sweep of powerful British units northward from Belgium through Holland to the threshold of Germany itself.

The landings — intricately co-ordinated with those of other American, British and Polish units — were a part of the greatest airborne operation in history, and were on an incomparably larger scale than any other all-daylight airborne invasion ever attempted.

Wave upon wave of 82nd Division sky troops from English airfields passed over the North Sea and the flooded lowlands of western Holland and dropped on the Nijmegen sector.

Brigadier General James M. Gavin, commander of the 82nd, was the first to jump in his serial.

The 82nd troops quickly swept aside German ground opposition, had accomplished a substantial portion of their mission and entered the outskirts of Nijmegen by dusk.

Landing of the airborne troops was the signal for the uprising of Dutch partisan forces—including an organised underground army 400 strong. The partisans were credited by General Gavin with giving „extremely valuable" assistance to the Allies. They played a vital role in preventing the Germans from blowing the Nijmegen bridges and gave the Allies much valuable information.

The paratroopers fought for nearly 48 hours without contact with ground forces against hastily-committed German troops who put up a stiff fight as the campaign progressed. The Americans linked with leading elements of the advancing British Second Army on D Plus Two.

Additional glider landings in force were made on D Plus Six, when the 325th Glider Infantry, which had been held up by bad weather, landed with re-enforcing troops, anti-tank guns, jeeps, medical and other supplies.

Supplies for the airborne troops were dropped by parachute, and flown in by transports and bombers until contact was made with British forces.

Despite growing enemy aggressiveness after the initial landings, the division accomplished its mission completely. With supporting British armor, the division seized and held the vital highway and railway bridges over the Waal River (a continuation of the Rhine) in Nijmegen, thus holding open a communications corridor to the north and enabling British units to relieve beleaguered British airborne troops who dropped in the Arnhem area.

The division took strategic commanding ground south of Nijmegen and played an important part in the final freeing of the city after fierce fighting in the river area. The division took the Grave bridge over the Maas River and two bridges over the Maas-Waal Canal south and southwest of Nijmegen and freed several villages.

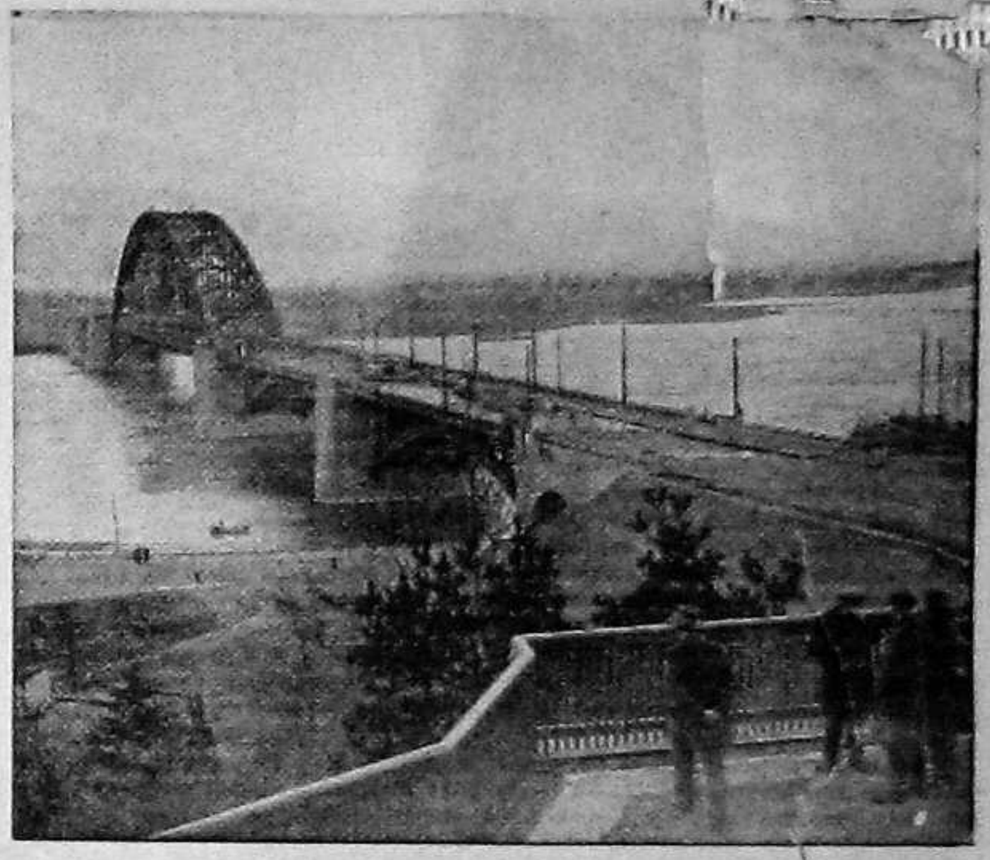
Elements of the division penetrated into and held a portion of Germany northwest of Wyler.

Despite several severe German counter-attacks on narrow fronts, the division never relinquished any ground which it covered in force. It inflicted severe casualties on the Nazis and took many (2889 as of 5 October) prisoners.

Orange Above

Dutch Patriots give brochure to „All American" Liberators. This paper is made available to troops of the 82nd „All American" Airborne Division and their families through the generosity of the citizens in Nijmegen, Netherlands. As far as we know it's the only paper of its kind in Holland. We express our gratitude and thanks to the Dutch people whose assistance in this campaign has been immeasurable.

The 82nd Div.



The famous Nijmegen Bridge, one of the main objectives of the Dutch Invasion (Photo, 1936).

Division Artillery makes history in Holland on D-Day

The 82d A/B "All-American" Division Artillery made airborne history on September 17-18, when the gunners dropped by parachute and landed by glider near Nijmegen, Holland, on D and D plus 1-Day, successfully getting 41 of their 48 howitzers into action. Leading the way, the 376th Parachute F.A. Battalion dropped howitzers on the tail of the parachute infantry, having its first piece assembled and ready to fire in twenty minutes after the green light. Eight howitzers were in position and firing four hours after the drop, the other four having been lost during the flight or damaged in the drop. The battalion supported the attack on Groesbeek on D-Day, and covered the glider landing fields on D plus one, one battery being moved by hand 1000 yards and another over two miles to accomplish their missions. Elements of the Division Artillery Headquarters, the 319th Glider F.A. Battalion, the 320th Glider F.A. Battalion, and the 456th Parachute F.A. Battalion, under the direction of Colonel Francis A. March, Division Artillery Commander, also came in by parachute and glider on D-Day, the remainder landing by glider on D plus 1. By the afternoon of D plus one, the forty-one howitzers had been recovered and were in position supporting the infantry. It was several days before loads, landed in German territory and pinned down by hostile fire, could fight their way to our lines, but fight they did, to join their batteries and assist in pumping thousands of high explosive shells back at the surprised Germans.

With the division entirely surrounded by German troops, the 376th Parachute Battalion set up a perimeter front of 360 degrees, which was strengthened on D plus 1 by the arrival of the 319th, 320th and 456th. Moving from position to position, as the infantry moved to capture bridges, towns, and controlling heights, continuous artillery support was provided for every mission. With little or no sleep during the first 72 hours of action, the gunners brought in ammunition from parachute containers, and gliders, only to fire it as fast as possible as the Germans attacked our front. Due to their tireless efforts and alertness several counter attacks were stopped before they reached the outpost lines. The veterans of Sicily, Maiori, Volturno, Anzio, and Normandy, accustommed to arriving in battle with only the clothing on their back, and the necessity of hauling howitzers and ammunition into position by hand, only worked harder, as they fulfilled a long awaited desire to see their shells leave for Germany. It was only with the arrival of the British armor and artillery from the South that they permitted themselves to rest.

As is usual with artillery, observation and communications were a problem. However, heroic action by forward observers, radio operators, telephone operators and linemen kept our communications in almost continual operation. In many cases, forward observers with their parties were actually surrounded in their positions, but continued to adjust the artillery fire on the Germans. Wires

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82ND CAPTURES VITAL NIJMEGEN BRIDGE IN HISTORIC 3 DAY BATTLE

504 MAKES HISTORIC RIVER CROSSING

By David H. Whittier.

The 504th Parachute Infantry dropped near Grave early on the afternoon of September 17 after encountering only light flak during its flight over enemy-occupied territory.

The paratroopers, battle-wise from an airborne invasion of Sicily and hard ground fighting near Anzio in Italy, organized speedily, and had accomplished almost their entire mission before dusk of the first day.

Principal objective of the unit was the Grave road bridge over the Maas River, which was taken after a sharp fire fight lasting several hours.

The parachute regiment also captured a strategically-important bridge over the Maas-Waal Canal and seized commanding ground overlooking another Maas-Waal bridge which the Germans had destroyed.

Like other airborne elements, the 504th was resupplied by air during the early phases of the campaign. The unit made contact with the advance elements of strong British forces on September 19.

With the 307th Engineers, the 504th played a vital role in seizing and holding the railway and highway bridges over the Waal River in Nijmegen.

Under the supporting muzzles of British tanks, the 504th crossed the river downstream from the railroad bridge under heavy fire and knocked out stubborn German defenses on the north bank and on the bridges. The engineers, carrying on heroically in the face of withering fire, moved wave after wave of paratroopers across the river in canvas assault boats.

Once across the river, the troopers flanked the Nijmegen bridges and assaulted and took medieval Fort Lent. Three hours later, members of the 504th were fighting 1000 yards north of the river. Hundreds of prisoners had been taken and hundreds more Germans had been killed. Two hundred and sixty-seven German dead were counted on the railway bridge alone. Capture of the bridges permitted British units to pass northward to relieve hard-pressed British airborne forces near Arnhem.

Since these assaults, the 504th has held a wide front against frequent vigorous German counter-attacks and conducted numerous strong combat-reconnaissance patrols.

505 CRACKS THROUGH NIJMEGEN TO REACH NEAR SIDE

By Robert M. Piper.

On 17 September 1944, the 505th Parachute Infantry jumped in the initial attacking force into German occupied Holland. The unit then stormed the town of Groesbeek and aided in seizing the important crossings of the Maas-Waal Canal. Upon completion of their initial missions two battalions of the Regiment organized the south-eastern defense of the Airborne Sector, which was some 11,000 yards in length.

The reserve battalion of this Regiment moved North with British Armored forces toward the important Nijmegen Bridge, focal point of all roads leading north into Germany. This battalion, the only infantry unit with this armored column, smashed its way into the city of Nijmegen in bitter house to house and hand to hand combat. It drove a numerically superior German force out of pill-boxes, fox-holes and prepared trenches. They sought out snipers in houses and soldiers hiding in cellers, clearing the town as they moved on despite the fact they were constantly under heavy artillery fire. This force seized and held the south end of the railroad bridge and the all-important Nijmegen road bridge.

German armor and infantry forces attempting to break through the southern defenses, launched fierce attacks at both Reithorst and Mook, Holland. In bitter hand-to-hand fighting, and with bullets, and cold steel, these combat-seasoned men drove the enemy force back, capturing many and leaving the town strewn with burned vehicles and dead Germans. A captured German parachute officer said, „That is the worst hell I've ever been in." On other parts of this broad front the enemy attempted to seek out front lines in search of a weak sector through which he could attack. He shelled the defenses day and night, attempting to discourage and weaken our forces, but the defenses were held intact, screening the Allied move north.

The Regiment was relieved in the Groesbeek area on the 24th of September, 1944, and moved to Nijmegen. Here they assumed the responsibility of protecting both bridges over the Waal river and protecting the north bank bridgehead. Although under constant shelling and repeated enemy air attacks, the enemy was unable to regain the vital crossing.