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A GRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION

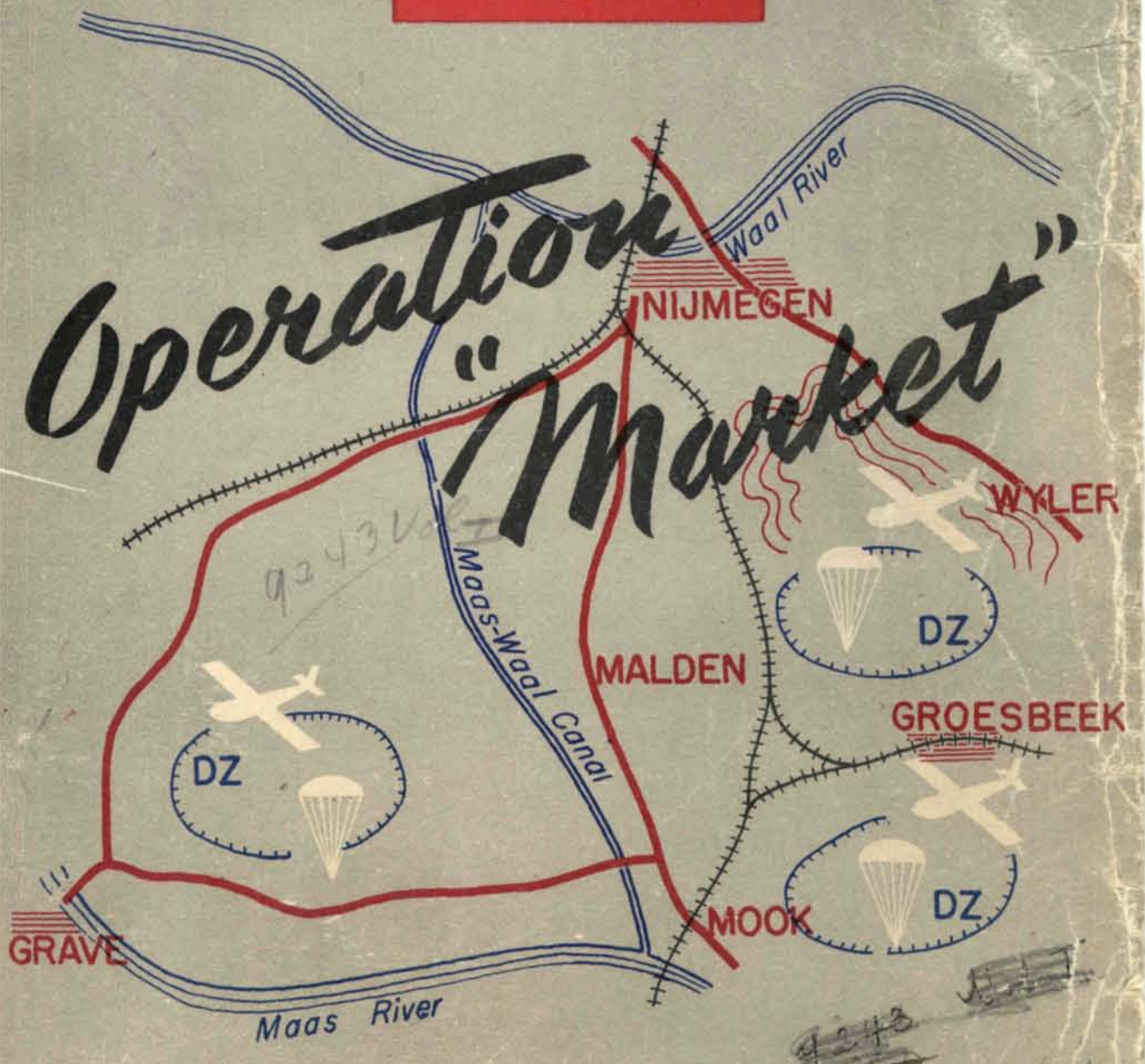
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Operation
"Market"

2012

HOLLAND, 1944

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MASTER

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82D AIRBORNE DIVISION

OPERATION MARKET

HISTORICAL DATA

- PART I - NARRATIVE
- PART II - GRAPHIC PLATES
- PART III - MAPS OF LANDINGS
- PART IV - STATISTICS

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James M. Gavin
JAMES M. GAVIN,
Major General, U. S. A.,
Commanding

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NARRATIVE

Upon its return from Normandy on 19 July 1944 this Division was located in the Nottingham-Leicester-Market Harboro area. There it remained and trained until its participation in operation MARKET on 17 September 1944. Twenty-four hours prior to take-off, all airborne elements of the Division were closed at seven airfields in the Grantham-Cottesmore-Langar area. Briefings were conducted, loading plans formulated, all final checks made, and the Division took off for the Netherlands commencing at 170950 September 1944.

The mission of the Division in this operation was as follows:

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

The first lift consisted of:

	<u>Prcht</u>	<u>Glider</u>
Hq & Hq Co 82d A/B Div	9	20
Hq & Hq Btry Div Arty	3	2
82d A/B Sig Co		6
Btry A 80th A/B AA Bn		22
307 A/B Engr Bn	27	
504 Prcht Inf	137	
505 Prcht Inf	126	
508 Prcht Inf	130	
325 Glider Inf	2	
376 Prcht FA Bn	48	
Total	482	50

All units dropped as planned except two serials of the 505 Parachute Infantry. A mixup in marshalling caused the 2d Battalion serial to drop before the 3d Battalion serial, and as a consequence the 2d Battalion serial was dropped two thousand yards Northeast of its scheduled drop zone.

The entire flight was preceded by a pathfinder team, which landed on DZ "O" ten minutes prior to the arrival of the first elements of the main body. With the exception in the 505 Parachute Infantry indicated above, all units landed on the drop zones, or in the immediate vicinity thereof, on schedule. Flak enroute was spotty and light. Flak coming from DZ "O" was initially heavy but inaccurate. The first parachutists to land destroyed all flak crews and took over their weapons. Enemy dispositions along the Maas-Waal Canal in the vicinity of all bridges and in the wooded country around the Nijmegen heights and in the Reichswald were, as anticipated, well organized and of about a strength of eight battalions. Harassing fire continued to come from the edges of the drop zones throughout all of the landings until overcome. Enemy reaction was prompt and appeared to follow a definite pattern. All local troops were committed immediately in piece meal fashion. Nearby "homeguard" type troops were thrown in as quickly as they could be rushed to the operational area. This piece meal build up increased until a coordinated attack was made by the German 6th Para Division on D+4.

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Local enemy units were initially overcome and destroyed or, except for those in the city of Nijmegen proper, they dispersed in the first several hours after landing.

A day by day summary of the activities of each unit of the Division follows:

D DAY, 17 SEPTEMBER

Division parachute elements in four hundred and eighty-two C-47's and a serial of fifty gliders left airports in the area of Grantham, England, between 0950 and 1040. All serials except those of 504 Parachute Infantry landed North, East, and South of Groesbeek, Holland, between 1250 and 1400. The 504 Parachute Infantry landed West of the Maas-Waal Canal and North of the Maas River. All drop patterns were excellent. Personnel and equipment losses enroute and during the drop were light, and assembly was the best in the history of the Division.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company 82d A/B Division
Parachute elements dropped 1306; glider elements landed 1350 on zone South of Groesbeek, moved North through woods, and established Division Command Post at predesignated location 1000 yards West of Groesbeek at 1700.

505 Parachute Infantry

Dropped after the Pathfinders at 1300, seized Groesbeek, occupied its area of defensive responsibility from Kamp Southeast to Mook, cleared its area of enemy, and contacted 504 Parachute Infantry at the Maas-Waal Canal bridge near Heuman. All initial missions were accomplished by 2000.

504 Parachute Infantry

Dropped beginning 1313 West of the Maas-Waal Canal on three drop zones, two North and one South of the Maas River. One battalion dropped Northeast of Overasselt and at 1600, after overcoming strong enemy resistance, captured intact the Maas-Waal Canal bridge at Heuman. The sites of the Canal bridges near Blankenberg and Hatert, both of which had been destroyed by the enemy upon the approach of the battalion, were captured before dark. One battalion dropped West of Overasselt, blocked all Southward movement along the Grave-Nijmegen highway, and cleared the enemy from the Western portion of the Division area. One battalion dropped one rifle company South of the Maas at Grave and the balance of the battalion North of the river and West of Overasselt. Both forces moved against the bridge at Grave immediately. Surprise was complete and the bridge captured at 1430. The town of Grave was occupied at 2300 after having been abandoned by 400 enemy. All initial missions of 504 were accomplished by 1930.

508 Parachute Infantry

Dropped Northeast of Groesbeek at 1328. Based on a report from the Dutch that the town and bridges were lightly held, immediately moved into Nijmegen to take the Waal River bridges. At 2000 the attack met heavy enemy resistance about 400 yards from the highway bridge and was stopped. The regiment occupied the area immediately East of the Maas-Waal Canal and established road blocks to prevent enemy movement South of a line running East and West through Hatert. One company moved to clear the glider landing zone Northeast of Groesbeek and met considerable enemy resistance. One battalion, less a company, occupied the important high ground in the vicinity of Berg en Dal without too heavy an opposition. One company advanced on the Nijmegen Bridges from the Southeast and at 2400 had reached Hill 64.4 Northeast of Ubbergen. All initial missions of 508 were accomplished by 2030.

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376 Parachute Field Artillery Battalion

Dropped 1335 on drop zone South of Groesbeek, assembled the battalion with ten howitzers, and displaced 1000 yards to the position area. The battalion, initially in support of 505 Parachute Infantry, fired its first mission on call from the regiment at 1800.

307 A/B Engineer Battalion

Companies B, C, and D, all parachute, dropped South of Groesbeek at 1320. Companies B and D furnished cover on route march to elements of Division Headquarters and protected Division Command Post when it was established at 1715. Company C moved out to contact 504 Parachute Infantry West of Maas-Waal Canal.

Battery A, 80th A/B Antiaircraft Battalion

Eight 57mm AT guns allotted as follows: Two, 505 Parachute Infantry; Two, 508 Parachute Infantry; Two, 504 Parachute Infantry upon making contact; Two, Division reserve in vicinity of Division Command Post.

D PLUS 1, 18 SEPTEMBER

504 Parachute Infantry

Continued to hold the Maas River bridge at Grave and the Maas-Waal Canal bridge at Heuman. Vigorous patrolling was continued on the West and Northwest of the regimental area along the Grave-Nijmegen highway. At 1200 one platoon moved North along the West bank of the Maas-Waal Canal and assisted in the capture of the bridge on the Grave-Nijmegen highway near Honinghutle.

505 Parachute Infantry

Maintained its area of defensive responsibility; repelled enemy attacks at Horst, Grafwegen, and Riethorst; captured an enemy patrol trying to work its way North to the Maas-Waal bridge at Heuman, and captured a train attempting to escape into Germany. At 1240 the regiment attacked and cleared the glider landing zone South and Southeast of Groesbeek,

508 Parachute Infantry

Withdrawn battalion in Nijmegen and attacked to clear the glider landing zone Northeast and East of Groesbeek. The attack crossed the scheduled line of departure at 1310, completely surprised the enemy, and the landing area was swept by 1400. Sixteen anti-aircraft guns and 149 prisoners of war were captured. Maintained its defensive sector throughout the 18th. At 181200 a platoon, with the assistance of 504 Parachute Infantry which advanced up the Maas-Waal Canal from the West, captured the Maas-Waal Canal bridge at Honinghutle. Regiment held the high ground vicinity Berg en Dal throughout the 18th against enemy patrols and sporadic enemy artillery action. One company moved into Nijmegen at 0900, advanced to the same spot to which the regiment had reached on the 17th, fought against a strong enemy force through the entire day, and at 1500 was withdrawn into the sector near Berg en Dal.

Glider Elements

Between 1000 and 1100 a lift of 450 gliders carrying an anti-tank battery of the 80th A/B antiaircraft Battalion, 319 Glider Field Artillery Battalion, 320 Glider Field Artillery Battalion, 456 Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, and 307 Airborne Medical

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Company departed from fields in the United Kingdom and flew the same route as the lift of the previous day. Gliders landed in zones cleared by the 505 Parachute Infantry and 508 Parachute Infantry in the vicinity of Groesbeek. Several gliders overshot the landing zone and landed beyond the Dutch-German border, but a substantial number of personnel made their way back to the Division area. The overall glider recovery was very satisfactory. After landing and assembling, 319 Glider Field Artillery Battalion was put in direct support of 508 Parachute Infantry, 456 Parachute Field Artillery Battalion in direct support of 505 Parachute Infantry, and 320 Glider Field Artillery Battalion in general support of the Division.

Resupply

Following the glider lift by 20 minutes, a flight of 135 B-24 bombers dropped resupply on drop zone South of Groesbeek. Drop pattern was good. Recovery was estimated to be at 80%.

D. PLUS 1, 19 SEPTEMBER

Guards Armored Division reached Grave and the 504 Parachute Infantry at 0820.

504 Parachute Infantry

Regiment, less one company left to guard the bridge at Grave, one company left to guard each of the Maas-Waal Canal bridges at Heuman and Honinghutie, and one company left to patrol and guard the highway from Grave to the Honinghutie bridge, was moved East of the Maas-Waal Canal, relieved 2d Battalion 508 Parachute Infantry, and occupied the Jonker Bosch Woods. 3d Battalion was moved to vicinity Malden as Division reserve.

505 Parachute Infantry

Regiment, less 2d Battalion, maintained its sector of responsibility on the South of the Division area throughout the 19th.

2d Battalion 505 Parachute Infantry

Attached to Guards Armored Division at 191100 and moved North to assault the Nijmegen bridges. The battalion reached the edge of Nijmegen without incident and, in moving through the outskirts of the town, received only artillery fire. When the battalion reached the center of the town, one company supported by seven tanks turned Northwest and moved against the railroad bridge. The balance of the battalion, the remainder of the tanks of the 2d Battalion Grenadier Guards, and one company of British Armored Infantry advanced against the highway bridge. The assault was stopped at the Maria Ploin, about 400 yards South of the bridge. Violent engagement lasting throughout the evening and night of the 19th failed to break the strong enemy defensive arc, and at midnight activity consisted of patrolling into the strong point and mortaring it from the cemetery South of the friendly positions.

508 Parachute Infantry

Held landing zone East of Groesbeek until 1800. Cleared enemy from and occupied high ground along Nijmegen-Cleve highway between Ubbergen and Wyler. Established road blocks at Wyler, Beek, and Im Thal. Relieved by 504 Parachute Infantry in Jonker Bosch and occupied sector between Kamp and Voxhill. Reinforced Beek road block with platoon of Company D, 307 A/B Engineer Battalion; repelled counterattacks against Teufels Berg throughout entire day.

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✓ Attached Units

1st Coldstream Guards, Armored, and 5th Coldstream Guards, Infantry attached to Division and moved to Dekkerswald in Division Reserve.

Resupply

Dropped at 1500, approximately 30 C-47's from excessively high altitude, recovery negligible.

D PLUS 3, 20 SEPTEMBER

✓ 504 Parachute Infantry

With 2d Irish Guards attached, cleared area between Jonker Bosch and Waal River. 3d Battalion relieved as Division Reserve. Regiment at 1500 effected crossing of Waal River East of Maas; at 1800 captured North end of railroad bridge over the Waal River, seized and cleared bridgehead North of Waal insuring passage of Guards Armored Division. Mopped up Western outskirts of Nijmegen and area South of railroad bridge.

505 Parachute Infantry

Regiment, less 2d Battalion, repelled sharp enemy attack at Horst and Heikant during morning. From 1300 to 2000 repelled at Mook enemy attack of an infantry regiment strongly supported by artillery after attack had penetrated Division perimeter to depth of 1000 yards on a 1000 yard front. Division perimeter restored at 2000. Regiment reinforced with attachment of 185 glider pilots.

2d Battalion 505 Parachute Infantry

Attacked enemy strong points at Southern ends of Nijmegen bridges during morning. At 1400 stormed strong point South of highway bridge cleared area of enemy, and reached bridge by 1700. First tank of Grenadier Guards crossed 1830.

508 Parachute Infantry

Attacked at 1000 at Wyler by one company of enemy infantry moving North and two companies of enemy infantry moving South, all supported by artillery and armor. Forced to withdraw to high ground to West. Enemy immediately occupied Im Thal and Lagewald. Attacked at Beek at 1200 by 2 battalions of enemy parachutists supported by armored vehicles, and forced to withdraw 1000 yards to high ground to Southwest. By counterattack drove enemy from and reoccupied Beek at 2140. Attacked again at Beek 2300 by enemy now reinforced and compelled to withdraw, leaving a detachment surrounded by the enemy in the town. Captured document from prisoner of war which revealed that enemy attacks at Mook, Beek, and Wyler were part of a coordinated Division attack intended to split Division area and sever the Grave-Nijmegen highway.

✓ Attached Units

Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry and one squadron of the Royals, its reconnaissance unit, attached to Division at 1700 and moved into Dekkerswald.

D PLUS 4, 21 SEPTEMBER

504 Parachute Infantry

Continued defense of bridgehead over Waal and on mission of mopping up South bank of Waal from outskirts of Nijmegen to Maas-Waal Canal.

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505 Parachute Infantry (less 2d Battalion)

Continued to hold defensive sector on South of Division area from Kamp to Mook.

2d Battalion 505 Parachute Infantry

Relieved of mission of close in defense of Nijmegen Bridges and assumed defense of line from Eastern exits of Nijmegen to Ubbergen.

508 Parachute Infantry

Counterattacked Beek at first light from Northeast, East and Southeast. Initial attack failed, and enemy, pressing his temporary advantage, penetrated to within 200 yards of Berg en Dal, but was held there. Attack renewed at 1300, and at 1800 Beek cleared of enemy and all defenses reestablished.

Resupply

At 1500 supplies dropped from approximately 400 C-47's on drop zone West of the Maas-Waal Canal. Drop pattern was six miles in length by two miles in width. Recovery estimated at 60% was accomplished with assistance of Dutch civilians.

D PLUS 5, 22 SEPTEMBER

504 Parachute Infantry (less 2d Battalion)

Relieved of mission to Nijmegen bridgehead and displaced to Dekkerswald as Division Reserve.

2d Battalion 504 Parachute Infantry

Relieved 2d Battalion 505 Parachute Infantry in sector between Nijmegen and Ubbergen and, upon Division order, with Royals, cleared by 1700 area between Nijmegen-Cleve highway and Waal River East to line Ubbergen - Pals.

505 Parachute Infantry (less 2d Battalion)

Reestablished road block at Mook. With Royals, reconnoitered to Riethorst and found road clear of enemy.

2d Battalion 505 Parachute Infantry

Relieved in Nijmegen - Ubbergen sector by 2d Battalion 504 Parachute Infantry, reverted to regimental control, and relieved Coldstream Guards at Heuman Bridge.

508 Parachute Infantry

Held Wyler Berg throughout day and night against persistent enemy counterattacks. With one company Royals attached, effected a reconnaissance in force to Wercheren and high ground West of Erlekom. Met strong resistance and withdrew to high ground vicinity Berg en Dal.

✓ Attached Units

Coldstream Guards relieved to attached to this Division and moved South to Vegel to restore line of communication of Second British Army.

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D PLUS 6, 23 SEPTEMBER

On this date the third glider lift of the Division took off from six airfields in the Grantham-Cottesmore-Langer area bearing 325 Glider Infantry; 80th A/B Antiaircraft Battalion, less Batteries A and B; Company A 307 A/B Engineer Battalion; and elements of Division Special Troops, and landed on and in the vicinity of LZ "O". A number of gliders did not land on the proper landing zone; two landed in England, and forty-three were released between the coast and the LZ. Ten gliders are still unaccounted for. Immediately upon landing, the 325 Glider Infantry was closed in the woods West of Groesbeek preparatory to taking up a sector on the front.

D PLUS 7 to D PLUS 30

The Division continued on its mission assigned by 30 Corps of holding the area between the West River and the Meas River, with its front generally that of D plus 6. The 325 Glider Infantry cleaned out the larger portion of the Kiekberg Woods and advanced the right flank of the Division.

SUMMARY OF PERIOD 17 SEPTEMBER TO 16 OCTOBER

<u>a.</u>	<u>Parachute Lift</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
	Planes committed	482	
	Dropped on or within 1000 yards of DZ	430	89.2
	Failed to drop on or within 1000 yards of DZ	52	10.8
	Unaccounted for	0	0
<u>b.</u>	<u>Glider Lifts</u>		
	Gliders committed	902	
	Landed on or within 1000 yards of LZ	763	84.6
	Failed to land on or within 1000 yards of LZ	102	11.3
	Unaccounted for	37	4.1
<u>c.</u>	<u>Our losses</u>		
	Killed	469	3.4
	Wounded	1933	14.0
	Missing	640	4.7
<u>d.</u>	<u>Enemy Losses</u>		
	Killed	2490	
	Prisoners of War	2977	
<u>e.</u>	<u>Results of Operations</u>		
	All missions accomplished		