



OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

DATE: SEPTEMBER 17 – SEPTEMBER 25 1944

Belligerents	
 United Kingdom	 Germany
 United States	
 Canada	
 Polish forces in the West	
 Free Dutch forces and Dutch resistance	

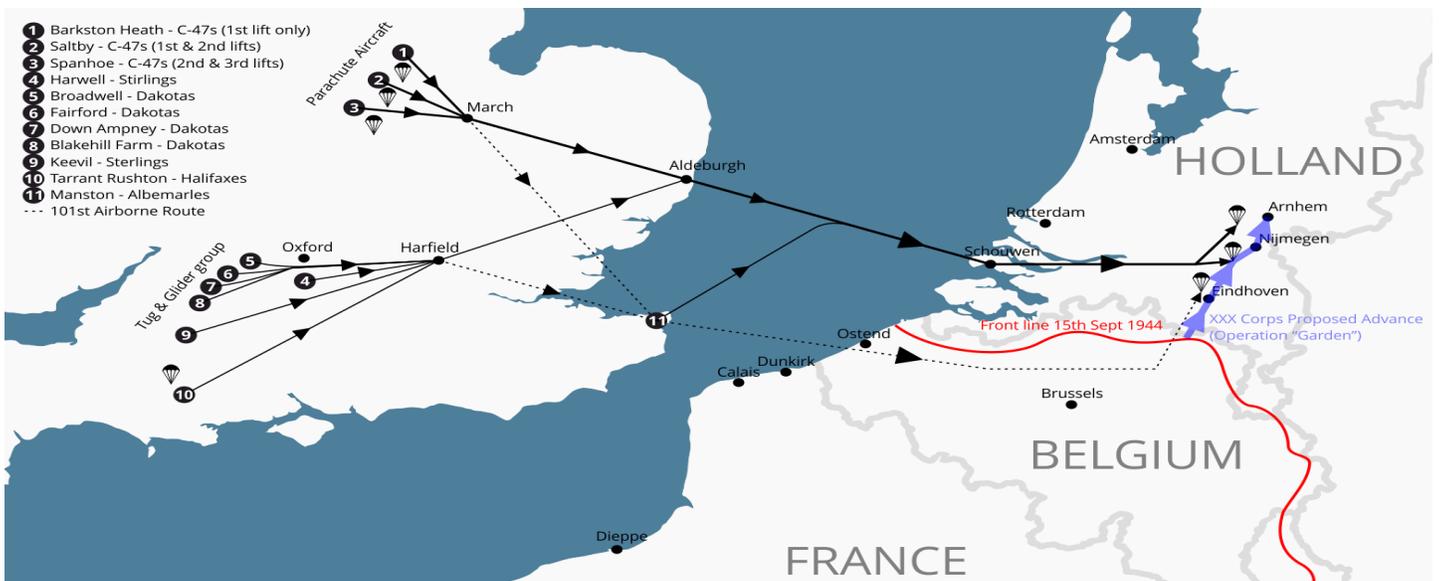
Having seen paratroopers and glider troops achieve their objectives during the Normandy invasion in France in June 1944, senior Allied commanders wasted little time planning to deploy airborne forces again immediately. However, whenever a new plan was formulated, troops on the ground reached the planned drop zones before the airborne operations could take place. American troops of Courtney Hodges' 1st Army, George Patton's 3rd Army, and Omar Bradley's 12th Army were advancing in France in the first months much faster than expected.

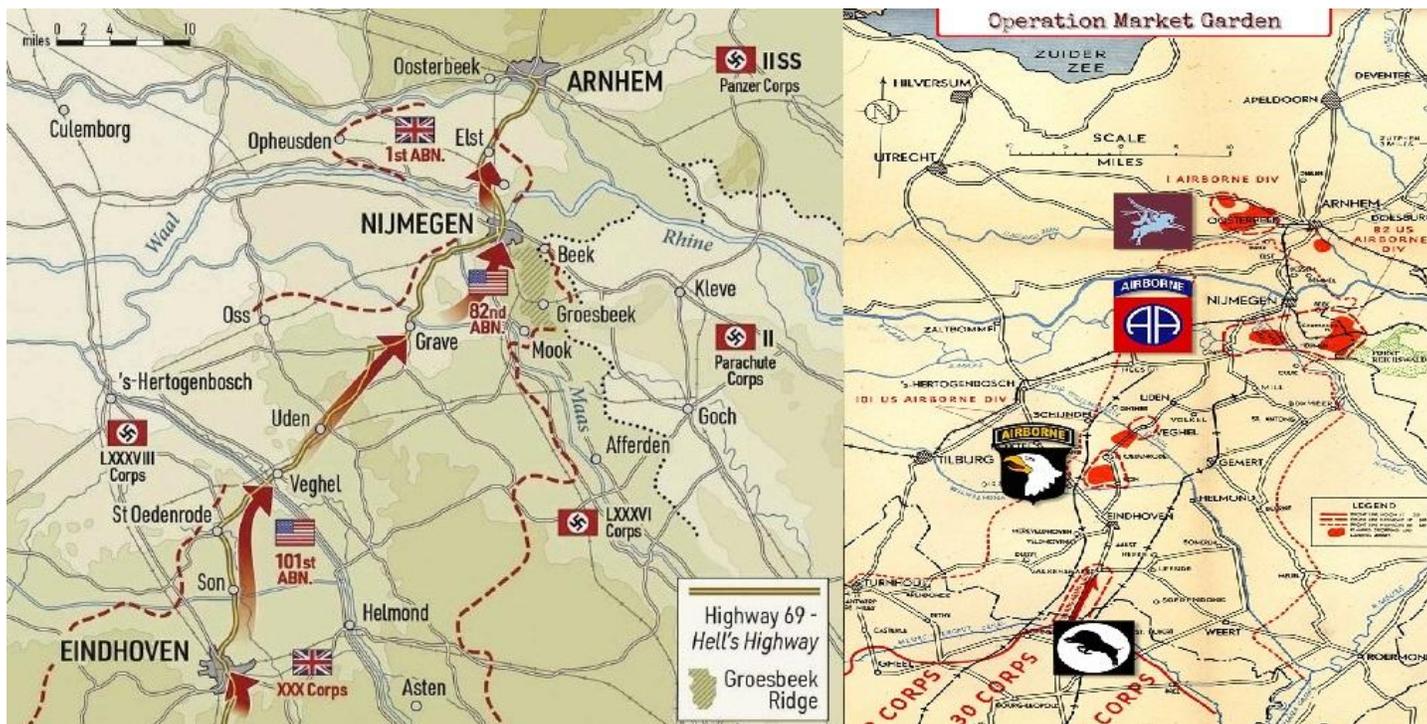
Operation Market Garden would become the next operation where the airborne troops would be put to use. It was British General Bernard Montgomery's plan to get the British Second Army and the British Guards Armoured Division into the lower Rhine River region in the Netherlands. Once this region was under control, the northern German plains would become vulnerable to Allied armored units, which could move deep into the heart of Germany. To establish the ground work for the British advance, the British First Airborne Division, the Polish First Parachute Brigade, the US 82nd Airborne Division, and the US 101st Airborne Division would be dropped into designated areas along a line marked by Eindhoven in the south and Arnhem in the north, both of which are cities in the Netherlands.



The airborne troops would be tasked with making a daylight jump to surprise the enemy and to take control of key bridges for British tanks to cross. To make this operation possible, Dwight Eisenhower halted Patton's advance so that fuel could be made available for a ground offensive consisting of British forces. Troops and supplies were also reassigned from a potential assault on the important port city of Antwerp to Operation Market Garden. Antwerp was a key Belgian port that the Allies could potentially make use of (despite continued German control of the Scheldt Estuary), and to possibly bring a greater amount of supplies closer to the front lines. Thus, the cost of a failed Operation Market Garden would be fairly high. Eisenhower's decision to adopt Montgomery's strategy was influenced by two external factors. Firstly, it was pressure from his superior in the United States to make use of the highly trained paratroopers. Secondly, Montgomery had long been advising Eisenhower on the folly of a broad-front strategy; many military leaders throughout history had lost their hard-earned initiative by failing to concentrate their forces.

The Market portion of the operation was made up of the airborne attacks. The Allies were able to achieve a high degree of surprise. No Luftwaffe fighters were alerted to the C-47 transport aircraft making delivery of their human cargoes; some anti-aircraft fire shook the planes, but it was generally ineffective. The US 101st Airborne Division's official history recorded that this was the most successful jump in their history to date, even if training missions were considered. After the airborne troops landed, additional equipment was dropped by parachute or glider to the ground. The US 101st Airborne Division paratroopers captured the bridge at Veghel with little resistance, although an artillery attack by the Germans delayed the Allied advance long enough that the bridge at Son was blown up before it could be captured by the Allies. Engineers attached to the paratroopers improvised by placing barn doors across the remains of the bridge to allow light foot traffic to cross. In the north, the US 82nd Airborne Division took the bridge at Grave quickly, but the Americans met heavy resistance near Nijmegen; this bridge objective would eventually be abandoned. The British First Airborne Division, tasked with capturing the bridge at Arnhem, met heavy resistance from units of a German training battalion. Nijmegen's and Arnhem's bridges crossed wide portions of water, so they were considered critical to the operation; failure to capture them would prevent the effective movement of British tanks.





British tanks made up the main force of the Garden portion of the operation. The vehicular column, under General Brian Horrocks, drove along Highway 69, which was later nicknamed "Hell's Highway" by the surviving US paratroopers. The road, like many roads in the region, was about a meter above surrounding ground, meaning that the traffic along it presented itself as an easy target for everything from snipers to full-fledged counterattacks.

While the Germans were caught by surprise at the onset, German armored divisions quickly gathered to counterattack. These attacks were effective, especially considering that the Allies had few anti-tank weapons. The Germans also enjoyed an advantage derived purely from luck that came from Field Marshal Walther Model's decision, made without any prior intelligence of this Allied operation, to move the 9,000-strong German 2nd SS Panzer Corps to Arnhem for rest and recuperation.

By the third day of the operation, Tuesday 19 Sept, the situation at the destroyed Son Bridge had been resolved by calling in a temporary Bailey bridge to be set up. However, neither of the two major bridges at Nijmegen nor Arnhem was secured. The German 9th SS Panzer Division saw that it was not needed at Nijmegen, and was ordered to move back toward Arnhem. In the south, the US 101st Airborne Division took control of the bridge near Best to widen the corridor for the British tanks, and generous hospitality from local Dutch civilians maintained Allied morale.





On the fourth day, the British XXX Corps was stalled in front of the Nijmegen Bridge while German forces still had complete control of the bridge at Arnhem. Realizing that Nijmegen must be secured, the Allies made a daring daylight attack, crossing the river with rowboats, successfully pushing the Germans back and securing the bridge by the end of the day. On Sept 21, British tanks began moving across the bridge at Nijmegen. But before noon that day, bad news came from the north: Allied forces, low on ammunition and driven out of defensive positions, surrendered. On Sept 22, German tanks successfully cut off the line between Veghel and Grave, preventing the Allies from organizing an assault at Arnhem.

Meanwhile, drop zones for Polish paratroopers were established too far to the south for them to play a meaningful role in the operation.

With the front lines swinging back and forth over the next several days, the Allies lost all initiative they had briefly enjoyed in the early days of the operation. Eisenhower's headquarters ordered the operation to be abandoned. Over 18,000 Allied personnel were killed or captured, while the Germans suffered 13,000 casualties.

During the 1960s, Eisenhower noted to historians that he did not regret the decision to embark on Operation Market Garden. He believed it was a risk worth taking at that moment, and stated that he would attempt it again if same situation existed. "I am certain that Field Marshal Montgomery, in the light of later events, would agree that this [operation] was a mistaken one", Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs.

Historian Stephen E. Ambrose believes that the major reasons for the failure of Operation Market Garden were:

- ♣ German opposition out-manned and out-gunned Allied paratroopers
- ♣ Allied paratroopers lacked the necessary weaponry to take out German tanks
- ♣ Allied intelligence failed to detect the presence of the experienced German 2nd SS Panzer Corps
- ♣ American infantry and British armor failed to coordinate
- ♣ The Allies failed to adequately protect its 80-mile long supply line



MEMOIR '44

M'44 SCENARIOS FOR OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

Operation Market Garden includes 15 scenarios, including 1 Breakthrough (BT) scenario and 2 Overlord (OL) maps. These scenarios chronicle the major engagements of Market Garden, and include only the best available in the Scenarios from the Front (SFTF) files section on the DoW website, as well as 4 official scenarios by Richard Borg.

No campaign rules are included; not all M'44 players have access to the Campaign books. Instead, simply tally up the number of medals won in each scenario after playing both sides. A medal tally table for all scenarios is included below.

OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

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| 1. SEPT 17: Valkenswaard | 9. SEPT 18 – SEPT 21: Hell's Highway 1 |
| 2. SEPT 17 – SEPT 19: Arnhem Bridge | 10. SEPT 19: Combat in Utrechtseweg |
| 3. SEPT 17 – SEPT 25: Battle of Arnhem | 11. SEPT 20: Nijmegen Bridges |
| 4. SEPT 17 – SEPT 25: Operation Market Garden OL ** | 12. SEPT 20: Lonsdale Force |
| 5. SEPT 17 – SEPT 25: Battle at Nijmegen and Arnhem OL | 13. SEPT 20 – SEPT 26: The Oosterbeek Perimeter |
| 6. SEPT 18: The Screaming Eagles Assault | 14. SEPT 21 – SEPT 23: Oosterbeek Perimeter BT ** |
| 7. SEPT 18 – SEPT 20: Arnhem Bridge Fight | 15. SEPT 24 – SEPT 26: Hell's Highway 2 |
| 8. SEPT 18 – SEPT 21: Frost's Amazing Defense | |

** Scenario notes:

1. Operation Market Garden OL: although this is an official scenario, there is no stated medal count under the Conditions of Victory. I have set the number at 13 medals for both sides. However, you may choose to set your own Conditions of Victory.
2. Oosterbeek Perimeter BT: in the event of a Sudden Death victory as the German player, score the full 8 medals.





MEDAL TALLY TABLE

There are a total of 218 medals if all scenarios are played, 162 medals without the 2 Overlord maps, and 144 medals if only the standard scenarios are played.

SCENARIO (+ total medal count)	P1	P2
1. Valkenswaard (12)		
2. Arnhem Bridge (10)		
3. Battle of Arnhem (16)		
4. Operation Market Garden (OL) (26)		
5. Battle Nijmegen & Arnhem (OL) (30)		
6. The Screaming Eagles Assault (12)		
7. Arnhem Bridge Fight (10)		
8. Frost's Amazing Defense (12)		
9. Hell's Highway 1 (12)		
10. Combat in Utrechtseweg (12)		
11. Nijmegen Bridges (12)		
12. Lonsdale Force (12)		
13. The Oosterbeek Perimeter (12)		
14. Oosterbeek Perimeter (BT) (18)		
15. Hell's Highway 2 (12)		
TOTAL MEDAL TALLY		

Acknowledgments to the authors of the scenarios that make up this Operation Market Garden compilation:

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FFM44
Burdie Smith

Ubergeek
Timmuiwijk
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