

19 Eusebiusbuitensingel

An Airborne pillar on the stretch of grass beside Eusebiusbuitensingel, close to the northern ramp of the John Frostbrug, commemorates the defence of the Van Limburg Stirum School by a group of Royal Engineers in September 1944.

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Situation sketch

At the time of the battle three properties stood on the site, running from the pillar down to the present-day Airborneplein (Airborne Square). The house fronts faced Eusebiusbuitensingel. Closest to the Airborneplein was the villa of Countess Cornelia van Limburg Stirum, Eusebiusbuitensingel 67.

Adjacent to the villa was the 'Rode School' (Eusebiusbuitensingel 68) which, from 1897 to 1938 housed the U.L.O (Secondary Education) school of the Vereeniging tot Oprichting en Instandhouding van Scholen met den Bijbel voor L.O. (Lager Onderwijs) (Association for the Establishment and Maintenance of Schools with the Bible for Primary Education). Thereafter it served as the office of the Municipal Tram Company until 17 September 1944. The building was built in 1856 for Mr B. Bleckmann, a merchant. Many Arnhem inhabitants nicknamed it the 'Red School' because of the red bricks used in its construction. A path which ran from the back garden of number 68 up to the northern bridge ramp was given the name "Bleckmann's little path" at the same time.

The above-mentioned Van Limburg Stirum School stood at the corner of Marktstraat and Eusebiusbuitensingel. Countess Van Limburg Stirum bought the building in 1911, and in 1944 it was being used by the Vereeniging tot Oprichting en Instandhouding van een School met den Bijbel voor uitgebreid (secondary education) L.O. voor Meisjes (for girls).[1] The Airborne pillar stands approximately on the site of the school.



Marinus Goedhart

47-year-old Marinus Goedhart died on the night of 17/18 September 1944 during the fighting in the souterrain of the 'Red School' in Eusebiusbuitensingel. (Photo via Jacob Goedhart. Freedom Trail Arnhem collection, Gelders Archive)

On Sunday 17 September 1944 two Dutchmen of the PIKA, a department of the provincial food provision, were in the cellar of the 'Red School', their job being to guard the food stored there. The foodstuffs had been collected on the orders of the provincial food commissioner and were scheduled for the central kitchen. The men also had to keep a fire-watch on the building. One of the wardens was the 48 year-old Arnhemmer Marinus A. Goedhart. He and his colleague were on duty that Sunday morning when various targets in the city were bombed by allied aircraft.

After hearing that his colleague's wife (colleague's name unknown) had been injured during the bombing Goedhart sent him home, telling him he, Goedhart, would contact their boss. When Goedhart had fetched a pan of food that morning he had told his family that the liberation was at hand.

His son Jacob can still remember that he, then 17, and his brother were occasionally sent out to deliver small notes for their father. These often contained detailed drawings of buildings. Goedhart also drew the small bunkers that had been built on the northern ramp of the Rhine Bridge. His work at the 'Red School' put him in an excellent position to learn all about the bridge itself and about the German guards present. [2] Goedhart was possibly a member of the Orde Dienst (O.D., the Policing Service of the underground movement, but so far there is no proof of this.

Late in the evening of 17 September 1944 Goedhart managed to ring his boss Mr Tukker from the school. He told him that some thirty British parachutists had arrived in the building and were preparing it for defence. Goedhart told him that he was in the cellar. There was no chance of leaving the premises because of the fighting going on outside.

Who were these British parachutists?

The orders of the Royal Engineers

The British 1st Parachute Brigade had been ordered to enter Arnhem on 17 September 1944 and, besides its own three battalions, had been allotted various smaller units; for example the 1st Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers. This was commanded by 31 year-old Major Douglas Murray, with orders to render harmless any demolition charges found under the railway bridge at Oosterbeek, and the ship bridge and road bridge in Arnhem. Murray's company was split into smaller groups and attached to others, so that more units would have engineers at their disposal during the advance.

While the deputy commander Captain S. George remained on the landing zone at Renkum with half of 'C' Troop (about twenty men) to collect supplies and engineers' materials, the other elements reported to the battalions to which they were temporarily attached. Captain W. Cox and the other half of 'C' Troop joined up with the 3rd Parachute Battalion. [3] They would advance to the centre of Arnhem along Utrechtseweg. Meanwhile, half of 'B' Troop, commanded by Captain Tom J. Livesey and Lieutenant Peter T. Stainforth (21), reported to the 2nd Parachute Battalion of Lieutenant Colonel John D. Frost. This unit would be taking the most southerly route to Arnhem. Lieutenant Stainforth and four sappers would go with 'C' Company, commanded by Major Victor Dover, in order to neutralize any explosive charges found under the railway bridge at Oosterbeek after it was captured. [4] Seeing that this southern route ran close to all the bridges, the other part of the 1st Parachute Squadron linked up with brigade headquarters of the 1st Parachute Brigade which was following the 2nd Parachute Battalion. A second sapper unit, 2 Platoon of the 9th Airborne Field Company under Captain Eric C. O'Callaghan, also accompanied the headquarters. This platoon, together with a platoon from 'C' Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion, had the job of capturing the railway bridge and then checking it for explosives. If the bridge was captured intact O'Callaghan and his platoon would defend the railway bridge while 'C' Company continued along the south bank to the road bridge. [5]

The wanderings of sapper officer Peter Stainforth

Lieutenant Peter Stainforth of the 1st Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers in 1942. (Photo via Peter Stainforth. Freedom Trail Arnhem collection, Gelders Archive)



The 2nd Parachute Battalion reached the reformed church in Oosterbeek-Laag towards six o'clock in the evening. At this point Major Dover's 'C' Company, including Lt. Stainforth's small group and 2 Platoon under Captain O'Callaghan, left the column to carry out the assault on the railway bridge. Oddly enough, Major Dover's official account contains nothing about the part played by Captain O'Callaghan's platoon, which made a frontal attack on the bridge over the railway embankment. [6] 'C' Company's attack, described in point 5 of the Freedom Trail, was launched via Polderweg. Lieutenant Stainforth was with the headquarters and later recalled:

"The leading platoon, 9 Platoon, C Company, was now on the bridge and had already reached the third section of its span while our group approached the river bank. Suddenly rifle shots rang out from buildings on the other side and two of our infantry fell. The others dropped down and crawled to a safer spot. The bridge was then blown up with a thunderous explosion. (.....) The explosion and pressure wave hit us in a split second and we were simply thrown to the ground." [7]

The railway bridge had been blown up by the Germans, putting an end to the task of Stainforth's small group. It was now evening and dusk was falling. 'C' Company resumed the advance to Arnhem while 2 Platoon of the 9th Airborne Field Company nevertheless received the order from Lieutenant Colonel Frost to check the bridge for explosives. He wanted to prevent any further damage to the bridge. Nothing was found and the platoon radio operator was unable to make contact with any other unit. Therefore O'Callaghan decided to head for the ship bridge. His group would eventually reach the road bridge during the night of 17/18 September. [8]

Frost heard nothing more from O'Callaghan and was concerned. At about 9 o'clock in the evening he sent a runner back to 'C' Company with a message telling Major Dover to have Lieutenant Stainforth return to the railway bridge at once to check for further explosives. One of the two arches had been blown up but the rest was still undamaged. Stainforth wrote about this order:

"Checking the bridge took much longer than expected. We crawled about on hands and knees, lay on our bellies and reached out for the cross beams under the tracks, and crept like monkeys over the pillars." [9]

The bridge had been checked by about 23.30 hours and, again, no explosives had been found. It took them an hour to get back to Benedendorpsweg. Lieutenant Stainforth decided that he and his men would rest up for the night in a nearby shed and await daylight.

Early the following morning they got under way again and near Oosterbeek-Laag Station they met a corporal and two privates from the 2nd Parachute Battalion, and a medic. They had become separated from their unit during the night. [10] They decided to join these men and continued on, when they heard the sound of heavy fighting coming from the direction of the Rhine Bridge. By way of back gardens they arrived at St. Elisabeths Gasthuis, where Stainforth knew 16th Parachute Field Ambulance was located.

In the hospital the lieutenant learnt from a British officer that the Germans had blocked the road to the 2nd Parachute Battalion. Stainforth therefore decided to go back via Utrechtseweg and link up with the 3rd Parachute Battalion which had not yet got as far as St. Elisabeths Gasthuis. The mottled group went through the streets of the Lombok district towards Oosterbeek, passing the Koepelgevangenis (Koepel gaol) on the way.

At the Den Brink estate the group was fired at by SS panzer grenadiers. Bill Madden, Stainforth's batman, and the corporal from the 2nd Parachute Battalion were mortally wounded. Lieutenant Stainforth was hit in the chest and ordered his men to withdraw. On Utrechtseweg they met a platoon from the 3rd Parachute Battalion that was on its way to the Rhine Bridge. Stainforth told his men to join them." [11] The medic remained with him and, with the help of Dutch civilians, took him to the Hoogstede nursing home.

None of the men in Stainforth's group would ever reach the centre of Arnhem. Stainforth himself was taken prisoner in Hoogstede.

The advance of the 1st Parachute Squadron

Meanwhile, how had things gone with the rest of the 1st Parachute Squadron? Neither of the two elements of 'C' Troop (at the landing zone and with the 3rd Parachute Battalion) would reach the centre of Arnhem. Other elements of the company would indeed get to the road bridge. First to arrive was the half of 'B' Troop under Captain Livesey, which had 'travelled' with HQ Company and 'A' Company of the 2nd Parachute Battalion. This group arrived at about 20.15 hours on 17 September and took up positions in a house in Marktstraat. They came under the command of Major Tatham-Warter, the commander of 'A' Company.

During the advance to the bridge the majority of the 1st Parachute Squadron was with 1st Parachute Brigade HQ. Captain Eric Mackay and his 'A' Troop reached the ship bridge at approximately 9.30 in the evening. At this point his platoon had to deal with a German counter attack from the south bank in which two of the ship bridges small pontoon boats were badly damaged and sank. The company report notes that "two boats sank and the Germans withdrew with heavy losses. No R.E. [Royal Engineers] losses." [12]

Now that the ship bridge was unusable the advance to the Rhine Bridge was resumed. However, getting across Eusebiusplein was not so simple. Captain Mackay wrote about this short skirmish a year after the Battle of Arnhem:

"The enemy was now interposed between my small troop and the force at the bridge. They were in a plaza which lay directly in our path. My first attempt to cross this 'trap' failed, but we succeeded in driving them into a side street.

They now set up two machineguns in a couple of ground floor windows from where they could cover the entire square. But it was essential that we reached the bridge, so I gathered my troop, with handcarts, at the edge of the square. When everything was ready we crossed the 40 metres of open terrain at a jog-trot. It was a gamble, but it paid off and there were no more casualties.

We pressed on and arrived at the bridge a few minutes later. The situation there was not good. The force consisted of the two remaining companies of the assault battalion, approximately one hundred men of the squadron to which my troop belonged, a few R.A.S.C. and the bulk of brigade HQ staff. (.....) The enemy was still on the bridge, encamped in a bunker and supported by an armoured vehicle: the entire battle area was under fire from 88 mm guns shooting from the other bank.

Shortly after arriving we went over on to the attack, supported by our R.E. with flame-throwers. A bloody fight ensued with heavy losses on both sides." [13]

The attempt by a platoon of the 2nd Parachute Battalion to capture the southern ramp failed. The assault was led by Lieutenant Andy McDermont. The fire from a flame-thrower manned by two recently-arrived sappers accidentally hit a wooden hut containing munitions next to one of the two bunkers on the bridge. The resulting explosion set fire to the bridge paintwork.

On arrival, the 1st Parachute Squadron was deployed to various positions around the bridge to reinforce the perimeter and to fulfil their role as sappers if and when required. Major Douglas Murray probably remained in and around Frost's battalion HQ in Eusebiusbinnensingel, while Lieutenant Donald Hindley and his ten men from the 1st Parachute Squadron HQ took up positions at the corner of Eusebiusbuitensingel and Westervoortsedijk. There he came under the command of Captain Bernard Briggs who was occupying the adjacent premises with 20 brigade headquarters' radio-telegraphists. [14]

The battle for the 'Red School'

Captain Mackay moved into the 'Red School' with his 'A' Troop. Earlier, Lieutenant Dennis Simpson and half of 'B' Troop had occupied the Van Limburg Stirum School. Around midnight Simpson's group was reinforced with the arrival of Major Peter Lewis and fourteen officers and men of 'C' Company, 3rd Parachute Battalion. Shortly after reaching the British perimeter Lewis' company was attacked and suffered heavy losses. Besides his own group in the school only 8 Platoon was left, and that had occupied positions in the Camiz dairy factory in Westervoortsedijk and the Jos Pé picture post card business at the corner of Badhuisstraat and Nieuwe Kade (see point 36).

At a quarter past twelve that night 'C' company's 7 and 9 Platoons were attacked. Simultaneously, 'A' Troop, in the building to the north of the Van Limburg Stirum School, came under heavy machinegun fire. Mackay wrote about this attack:

"The enemy crept up to us through the shrubbery before we realized what was happening. They threw hand grenades through the windows of the ground and first floors. Almost at once they established a foothold in the souterrain, but a violent man-to-man fight with fists, boots, rifle-butts and bayonets drove them out again.

But our position had suddenly worsened. The Germans now brought up a machinegun and by pushing it through a window opening could cover everyone in the room. Luckily I was standing close to the window and shot the gunner: I then turned the machinegun on the enemy outside. Now hand grenades rained in through all the windows and a hellish racket began. It was obvious that if we stayed here much longer we would all be killed or wounded: half of the group was wounded." [15]

The death of Marinus Goedhart

Watchman Marinus Goedhart, who was in the cellar, was probably killed during this exchange of fire. Next evening the family received a visit from a policeman. Jacob Goedhart later wrote:

"During the evening of 18 September 1944 a policeman from the Arnhem constabulary came to our house at Valckenierstraat 24 to say that father had been killed in the fighting. His remains had been found at the corner of Eusebiusbuitensingel and Vlijtstraat in Arnhem on 18 September 1944. His identity had been established there and then by the identity papers found on him. Also found at the time was his black Dutch army helmet, which had been packed out with paper. This confirmed matters because this black-coloured helmet had been too big for my father's head.

The policeman continued by saying that father probably died as the result of an act of terror on the part of the German soldiers already fighting there. In those days there was a machinegun nest manned by German soldiers in Vlijtstraat. (.....) It was impossible for us dependants to approach the burial site because of the fighting that was going on there." [16]

It is not absolutely certain that Goedhart was killed by German gunfire. After the war Jacob sent a letter containing a photo of his father to Captain Eric Mackay, asking him if he had seen anything of his father at the time. He never received a reply. Therefore, it could also be that he was killed by the British, who might have mistaken his helmet for a German one. Marinus Goedhart's body was exhumed in spring 1945 by members of the Luchtbeschermingsdienst (Air Defence Service). In December 1945 acting leader of the service in Arnhem, B. van Brussel, wrote about the identification of Goedhart:

"Near the Van Limburg Stirum School was a small plate on a grave with the name 'Goedhart' written on it. The family asked if we would exhume Mr Goedhart's remains. What happened? To our amazement we came across a German; what now? Fortunately I asked the men to dig deeper and, yes, we found Mr Goedhart, who was recognised by his brother-in-law who happened to be passing. Goedhart's wife doubted if it was her husband, although we examined every corpse for identification by clothing, papers, keys etc. In this way we found a broken-off tooth in Mr Goedhart's wallet. Only when I showed the lady the tooth was she reassured that this was her husband." [17]

The remains were buried in the Moscawa cemetery in Arnhem, next to the grave of Doctor Jan Zwolle. On 23 June 1945 the remains were re-exhumed at the request of the widow and reinterred in a private plot in the same cemetery, grave number 1564. [18]

The defence of the Van Limburg Stirum School

Several sappers were wounded in the fighting around the 'Red School'. Half an hour later, at about 00.45 hours, Captain Mackay decided to abandon his position and withdraw to the nearby Van Limburg Stirum School. He and five men cleared the garden of Germans using hand grenades and with semi-automatic Sten gun fire. The wounded were brought out and the whole group joined the remaining half of 'B' Troop.

Mackay, being of higher rank than Lieutenant Simpson, took over command shortly after 1 am. [19] In his report written after the battle, and in an article written later for Blackwood's Magazine, he made no mention of Major Lewis, Captain Robinson, Lieutenant Wright and thirteen other ranks from 'C' Company, 3rd Parachute Battalion.

Corporal Roberts from 'C' Company, assisted by sapper 'Pinky' White, cared for the wounded British parachutists in the school cellar. Captain Mackay wrote about the strength of his group in the building:

"First of all I took a quick look around the school. It consisted of a basement, two storeys and an attic. I decided to continue the fight from the first floor, defend only the ground floor, and use the attic as a lookout post. I had fifty men (including seven wounded and one lieutenant), six Bren guns, plenty of ammunition, hand grenades and some explosive materials; no anti-tank guns, very little food and just the water in our canteens; no medicines except morphine, and some emergency dressings." [20]

There were two more German attacks during the night, both of which were beaten back. As soon as it began to get light, German machine-gunners opened fire from the 'Red School', shooting at the north side of the Van Limburg Stirum School. The British managed to kill them and prevent others from taking over the weapons. However, Mackay's opinion after the war was that the main thrust of the German attack had been aimed at the group of Lieutenant Hindley and Captain Briggs at the corner of Eusebiusbuitensingel and Westervoortsedijk.

From his position at a south facing dormer in the school, Lieutenant Len Wright from 'C' Company observed all German movements on that side. He also tried to keep an eye on the area defended by 8 Platoon. Now and then he chanced hitting German soldiers in the street with the odd shot with a sniper's rifle. The window was reinforced with a table and some mattresses propped against the frame. [21] There was no radio contact between the commander of 8 Platoon, Lieutenant Gerald Infield, and his commander Major Lewis. [22]

The attack by SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs Abteilung 9

Shortly after 9 am a German reconnaissance unit, SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs Abteilung 9 from 9. SS-Panzer-Division 'Hohenstaufen', led by Hauptsturmführer Viktor-Eberhard Gräbner, drove across the bridge from the south. Gräbner had received orders by radio to attack and eliminate the British parachutists, after which he was to set up a defence line to the west of the bridge to prevent more British from reaching the crossing. [23]

But it didn't get that far: Gräbner was killed by a bullet in the chest. His body was never found. [24] Hauptsturmbannführer Karl-Heinz Recke took over command. Two German half-tracks came to a halt on 'Bleckmann's little path' at Eusebiusbuitensingel 68. The occupants were riddled with British bullets and none survived. [25] This eventual successful stopping of the German reconnaissance unit was one of the last victories the British parachutists had at the Rhine Bridge. Captain Mackay recalled the attack:

"Suddenly I heard a rumble from just under the window. When I looked outside I saw one of them immediately below me. It was only a metre and a half away from me and I looked the driver straight in the face. I don't know who was more surprised. The vehicle must have come down the narrow path between the ramp and the school. He reacted quicker than me because, with a dirty great grin, he loosed off three shots at me. The only shot to hit me splintered the field glasses that were hanging around my neck. The lads quickly arrived at my side and within seconds he and his men were no more." [26]

German counter-attacks from the east

At 9.30 am 'C' Company's radio operator re-established contact with the headquarters of the 3rd Parachute Battalion, which at that time was west of St. Elisabeths Gasthuis. Major Lewis then spoke to Lieutenant Colonel Fitch and understood from him that the rest of the battalion would be making an attempt to reach the bridge that afternoon. Radio contact was then broken, apart from a few signals which were received but could not be answered. [27]

The rest of the day saw German attacks from the north and east being beaten off. Around 6 pm enemy activity at Westervoortsedijk and Nieuwe Kade increased, in view of the fact that the positions of 8 Platoon were overrun after almost eighteen hours of steadfast resistance. Meanwhile German soldiers had occupied the Public Works building at Nieuwe Kade, just a stone's throw from the bridge. From there this group was able to fire on the building of the Municipal Electricity and Tram Companies at the corner of Marktstraat and Ooststraat. This building was being defended by 3 Platoon of 'A' Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Andy McDermont. The Germans were also installing themselves in a house to the west of the northern bridge ramp, Rijnkade 119.

Only then did Lieutenant Colonel Frost decide to commit his reserve: 6 Platoon from his 'B' Company under the command of Lieutenant James Flavell. If they had been moved from their reserve position on the west side of the bridge to the east side earlier in the day, perhaps 8 Platoon of the 3rd Parachute Battalion could have held out a bit longer. Flavell's platoon re-took Rijnkade 119 as well as the Public Works building, but this building had to be abandoned a few hours later when the Germans set it on fire with phosphorus shells. [28]

The German Kampfgruppe Knaust brought up heavy mortars and began bombarding the roof of the Van Limburg Stirum School. The 'Red School' was deliberately set on fire by them and burning debris fell on the wooden roof of the adjacent building. This caught fire at around midnight but the fire was eventually put out. Infantry attacks were repulsed. That night the British defenders began to suffer from an acute shortage of ammunition. There was already insufficient food to go round, while in the burning 'Red School' there was food aplenty: but the British couldn't get to it. Therefore, Major Lewis and Captain Mackay gave the order to hold fire.

The Germans concluded that the British defenders had been eliminated and a large group of about sixty soldiers went out onto the grass strip by the Van Limburg Stirum School to have a smoke. Major Lewis and Captain Mackay ordered their men, on a given signal, to open fire and throw grenades. The result of this sudden hail of bullets and grenades was devastating. Some 40 or so Germans lay dead or dying on the ground. Only a few escaped. Lieutenant Wright wrote later that a laughing Major Lewis went from room to room, shouting that he had never had such a good time. [29]

Tuesday 19 september

SS-Unterscharführer Alfred Ringsdorf of 21. SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment took part in the fierce fighting around the Van Limburg Stirum School. (Photo via Alfred Ringsdorf. Freedom Trail Arnhem collection, Gelders Archive)



Lack of sleep began to affect the parachutists on Tuesday. Some had managed a few hours sleep since Sunday but most of the British had been on the go for more than 36 hours. And British 2nd Army XXX Corps was still keeping them waiting. The Germans deployed tanks and began shelling the south wall of the school. The corner house at the other side of Marktstraat, defended by Lieutenant McDermont's platoon of the 2nd Parachute Battalion, was also attacked. This group was forced to withdraw. A counter-attack led by McDermont failed and he was badly wounded in the attempt. Two days later he died of his wounds in the Municipal Hospital. The only other house still in British hands on the east side of the bridge was the building occupied by Captain Briggs and Lieutenant Hindley.

On Thursday night a Dutch couple knocked at the school door and asked if they could stay there the night. Major Lewis described them as terrified civilians who left again the following morning. [30] The Bensedrine tablets – a stimulant – dealt out by Captain Mackay did not have the desired affect. Many soldiers began to hallucinate and others began to suffer from double vision.

Wednesday 20 September

During Wednesday afternoon the British in the Van Limburg Stirum School heard the sound of heavy fighting from under the Rhine Bridge. 'A' Company of the 2nd Parachute Battalion was driven back to the west side of the bridge: Lieutenant John Grayburn was killed during this withdrawal. After the battle he was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross, the highest British military decoration, and was posthumously promoted to captain. [31] A German Tiger tank began a systematic shelling of the building and one shell after the other drilled through the walls. Fire broke out in three places, probably caused by the German use of phosphorous shells. The water supply had been cut off so the fires could not be extinguished. [32]

Captain Wilfred Robinson was one of the few officers not wounded during this shelling:

"When I relieved Lieutenant Wright in the observation post in the school attic I could see a German gun in the road just to the north and east of the bridge. It fired at the school. Suddenly I saw an explosion near the gun and I thought it had been hit by one of our own shells. It dawned on me later that of course we had no supporting guns of that calibre with us.

The explosion I saw was the gun being fired, and virtually simultaneously a shell struck the attic roof, just to the right of my observation point. The roof had caught fire. I thought at the time that it was a phosphorous shell, but I'm not sure that the Germans were using them. [33] I left the attic immediately.

This shell had wounded Major Lewis and Lieutenant Wright who were having a sleep on the first floor. By the time I reached the first floor where Major Lewis and Lieutenant Wright had been I heard that he, Lewis, had given the order to evacuate the building. I was last to leave the school because there were many wounded on stretchers and I had to make sure that they were all brought out.

When I came outside I realized that the Germans had us pinned down from a position north of the school. There was nothing we could do. The increasing losses forced Major Lewis to surrender. As I was not wounded I felt it was my duty to try to escape, but I also felt guilty at leaving the wounded. I asked Major Lewis if I could leave and he yelled to one and all that everyone who was capable of doing so must attempt to escape. He did not order us to escape, as Lieutenant Wright wrote in his account.

We crossed the road to the east side of the school and hid among the shrubs in a garden. I hoped that when it became darker we could possibly join Lieutenant Colonel Frost's force to the west of the school on the north side of the bridge. I can't remember how many of us were in the garden. I would say between five and nine men. I recall that Captain Mackay of the 1st Parachute Squadron RE was one of the group.

I peeked around the corner of the fence on the east side of the garden we had entered and saw that the street was full of German soldiers who seemed to be taking a break and were unaware of our presence. But they must have seen us crossing the road because they began searching the garden. We were well hidden in the shrubs in our camouflaged uniforms, but sadly enough a young German trod on someone's arm or leg, and he gave a shout.

Suddenly several Germans stormed into the garden and I thought they were going to shoot us. They took us prisoner and next day we were taken by lorry to a POW transit camp in Emmerich, Germany." [34]

The escape of Captains Mackay and Robinson

The badly wounded Major Lewis and the other defenders of the Van Limburg Stirum School were taken prisoner, too. A few days later Captain Mackay, Lieutenant Simpson and two corporals succeeded in escaping from the provisional prison camp in Emmerich, stealing a boat and rowing down the Rhine and Waal to Nijmegen. There they rejoined the remains of the 1st Parachute Squadron which had crossed back over the Rhine from Oosterbeek.

Later that evening Captain Robinson escaped from the same camp with two Americans. They decided to walk to the Netherlands, where they contacted the resistance. They were hidden by the resistance until the mass escape operation for 'in-hiding' servicemen, Operation Pegasus I, during the night of 22/23 October 1944 at Renkum. They were picked up by an American fighting patrol and taken back to the liberated area.

- [1] Marcel Zwarts, 'SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9 en de Arnhemse verkeersbrug', Ministry No. 78, in Newsletter of the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum No. 90 (Oosterbeek, June 2003), pages 8-9.
- [2] Telephone conversation between Frank van Lunteren and Jacob Goedhart, 16 April 2007.
- [3] War Diary 1st Parachute Squadron, R.E. 17 September 1944. Gelders Archive, Documentation collection Second World War, inventory number 93.
- [4] P. T. Stainforth, Wings of the Wind (London, 1954), 200.
V. Dover, The Silken Canopy (London 1979), 90.
- [5] P. Pronk, Airborne Engineers. The shiny 9th (Renkum, 2001), 45.
- [6] Major Victor Dover, 'Arnhem Airborne Operation. Battle report by Major Victor Dover, M.C., i/c "C" Company, 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (1945). Gelders Archive, Boeree Collection, inventory number 18b.
- [7] Stainforth, Wings of the Wind, 207.
- [8] Pronk, Airborne Engineers, 53-56.
- [9] Stainforth, Wings of the Wind, 209.
- [10] Who these were is not known. Possibly from C Company.
- [11] 'Lieutenant Peter Stainforth wounded at the Battle of Arnhem, 1944' <http://www.stainforth-history.co.uk/excerpts/arnhem.html> Consulted on 2 February 2007.
- [12] War Diary 1st Parachute Squadron, RE.
- [13] E. Mackay, Whoa Mahomet. De strijd om de Rijnbrug (Aalten, 1947), 12.
- [14] War Diary 1st Parachute Squadron, RE.
- [15] Mackay, Whoa Mahomet. De strijd om de Rijnbrug, 14.
- [16] Letter from Jacob Goedhart to the War Graves Foundation in Den Haag, 18 April 1985. Gelders Archive, Municipal Archive Renkum collection, Dossier Civilian victims, Marinus A. Goedhart.
- [17] B. van Brussel, Report by the deputy leader of the Luchtbeschermingsdienst (Arnhem, 1945), 2. Gelders Archive, Documentation collection Second World War, inventory number 4.
- [18] Letter from Jacob Goedhart to Geert Maassen, Renkum archivist, 18 March 1992. Gelders Archive, Municipal Archive Renkum collection, Dossier Civilian victims, Marinus A. Goedhart.
- [19] War Diary 1st Parachute Squadron, RE. The British used BST and so their time differs by one hour from Dutch/German time. I have used Dutch time throughout and transposed British times to Dutch times.
- [20] Mackay, Whoa Mahomet. De strijd om de Rijnbrug, 15.
- [21] Len Wright, Draft Account 3rd Parachute Battalion, "C" Company, 14. Gelders Archive, Documentation collection Second World War, inventory number 1378.
- [22] Letter from Sir Wilfred Robinson Bt. to Frank van Lunteren, 25 April 2007.
- [23] Zwarts, 'SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9 en de Arnhemse verkeersbrug', 5-6.
- [24] Ditto, 11.
- [25] Ditto, 10.

- [26] Mackay, Whoa Mahomet. De strijd om de Rijnbrug, 18.
- [27] Wright, Draft Account 3rd Parachute Battalion, "C" Company, 15.
- [28] D.G. van Buggenum, B Company Arrived. The story of B Company of the 2nd Parachute Battalion at Arnhem, September 1944 (Renkum, 2003), 89-95.
- [29] Wright, Draft Account 3rd Parachute Battalion, "C" Company, 16.
- [30] Questionnaire to Major R. "Pongo" Lewis, 8 January 1968. The original is in the Cornelius Ryan Collection, Vernon R. Aldan Library, Ohio. The copy of this document consulted by the author is in the Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek.
- [31] Telephone conversation between Frank van Lunteren and Private Sid G. Blackmore, veteran of A Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion. Monday 7 May 2007.
- [32] Telephone conversation between Frank van Lunteren and sapper Robert Hepburn, veteran of B Troop, 1st Parachute Squadron, RE. Wednesday 9 May 2007.
- [33] Phosphorous shells were shells which ignited on impact, causing fires, and were difficult to extinguish. The Germans did indeed use this type of shell.