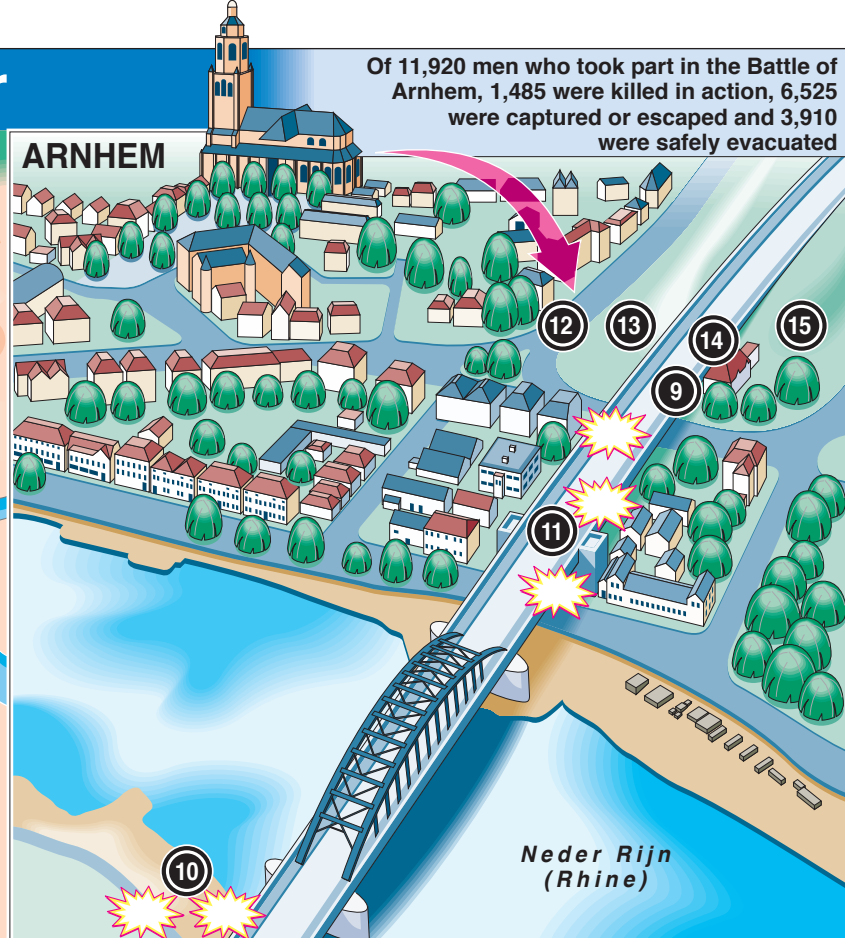
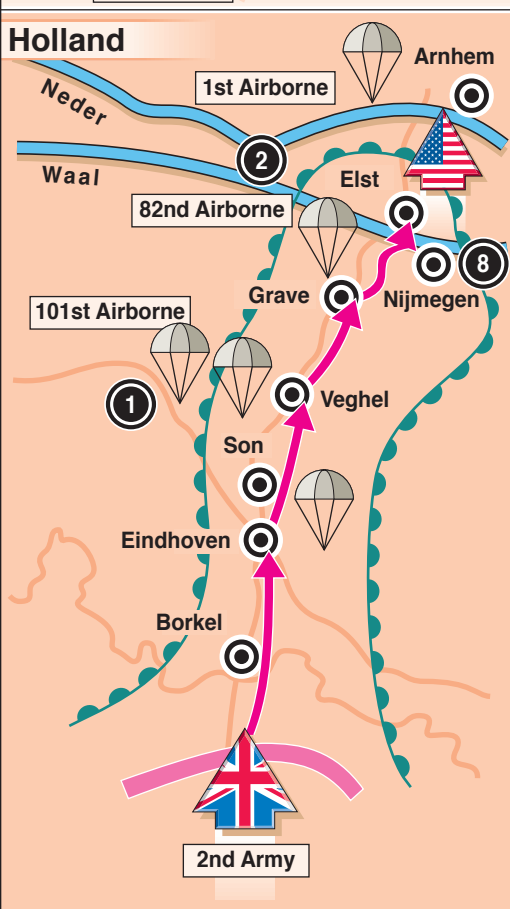
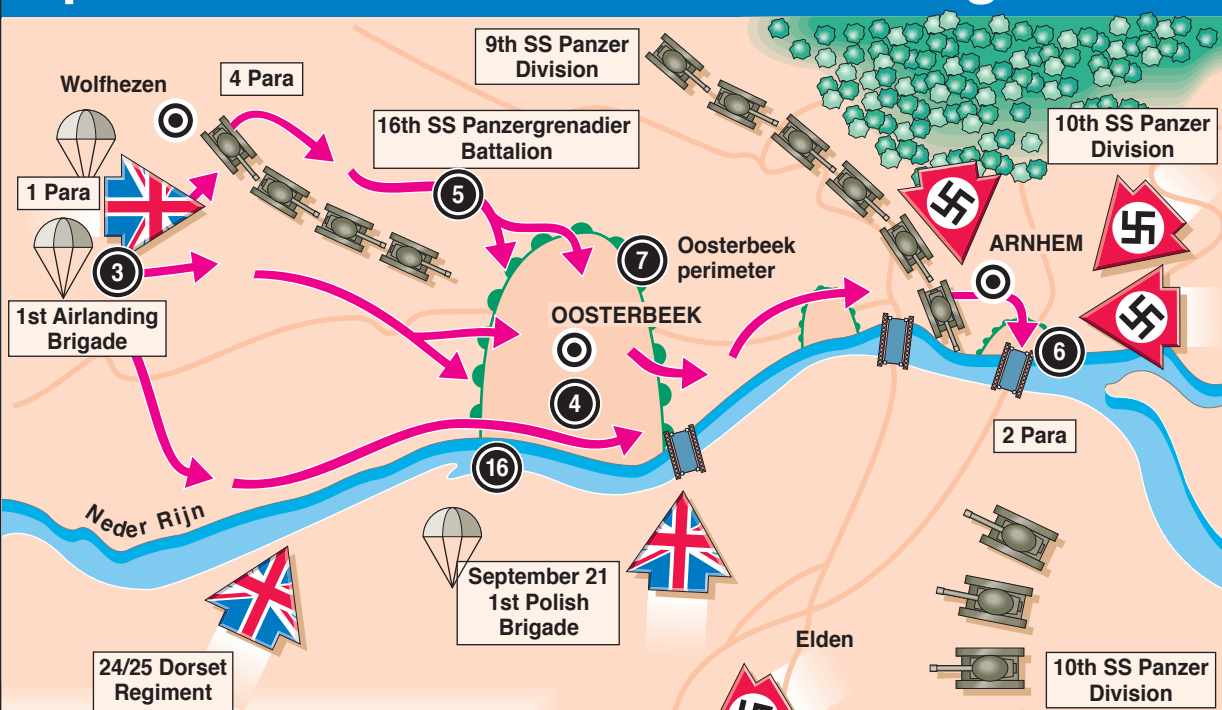


Operation 'Market Garden' – a bridge too far



Of 11,920 men who took part in the Battle of Arnheim, 1,485 were killed in action, 6,525 were captured or escaped and 3,910 were safely evacuated

Seventy years on, the failure of Operation 'Market Garden' is seen as one of history's most far-reaching disasters. The plan – to establish a bridgehead over the Rhine for an Allied invasion of Germany to end the war – was riddled with muddle and misjudgement. Poor radio communications, confusion about German strengths, landing zones up to six miles from the target and inability to land troops on the same day meant the vital element of surprise was lost. If the Allies had reached Berlin before the Russians, the history of Europe and the Cold War could have been very different

- 1. Sunday, Sep 17:** 101st U.S. Airborne Division land with little opposition and captures bridges across the Vaart Canal at Veghel
- 2.** 82nd U.S. Airborne Division drop around Grave and Nijmegen. Enemy positions quickly overrun at Grave but stiff resistance at Nijmegen
- 13:00-15:00 hrs:** 1st Airlanding Brigade and 1st Parachute Brigade land at zone marked out by Major 'Boy' Wilson's pathfinders
- Field Marshal Walter Model, commander of Army Group 'B', witnesses first landings during lunch. Model orders his forces to defend bridges at Nijmegen and Arnheim
- 16th SS Panzergrenadier Battalion attempt to stop advance of paratroopers.
- 2nd Para, led by Lt. Col. Johnny Frost, race for bridge
- Sep 17-24:** 1st Airborne Division – with Brigadier John Hackett's 4th Parachute Brigade and the King's Own Scottish

Borderers – are forced into a small perimeter around Oosterbeek

- 8. Monday, Sep 18:** British 2nd Army join 101st and mount joint assault on Nijmegen. Bad weather and inability to manoeuvre in the flooded countryside hampers planned advance to link up with 1st Airborne Division at Oosterbeek

The bridge at Arnheim

- 9. September 17, 21:00 hrs.** Frost and A Company take up positions at north end of bridge.

- 10.** A Company make two unsuccessful attempts to secure southern end of bridge. On third attack, sappers use flamethrower to destroy ammunition dump and pillbox – four trucks carrying German infantry are destroyed as they try to cross bridge

- 11. Monday, Sep 18, Dawn:** Ten armoured vehicles from 9th SS Panzer Division are destroyed as they race over bridge towards Frost's defences. German infantry, backed by two Tiger tanks, wage a two-hour close-quarter battle, firing point-blank into Frost's positions

- 12. Dusk:** C Company fight their way along railway line to join up with 2nd Para, swelling Frost's force to over 600 men. Most of 3rd Parachute Battalion are held up by 9th and 16th SS divisions outside Oosterbeek

- 13. Tuesday, Sep 19:** Surrounded, 2nd Para hold the bridge under heavy fire. Repeated attacks by enemy infantry repulsed during hand-to-hand fighting

- 14. Wednesday, Sep 20, nightfall:** 200 men of 2nd Para wounded in fierce fighting. Frost orders able troops to move to new positions. Casualties evacuated by SS troops under a flag of truce

- 15. Thursday, Sep 21, Dawn:** 2nd Para reduced to 150 men, with only a few rounds of ammunition each. By 09:00 remnants of the Battalion are overrun – having held the bridge for six days

- 16. Monday, Sep 25:** With food and ammunition exhausted, the 1st Airborne Division, reduced to 2,500 men, withdraw over the river