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**BUMPER  
BIRTHDAY ISSUE**

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Summer 2019

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# EUROPE REMEMBERS

In the second part of our special feature on Europe Remembers, the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe, we focus on Liberation Route Europe, Operation Market Garden and have an exclusive interview with a 99-year-old veteran of the battle of Arnhem



The Liberation Route Europe (LRE) is an international remembrance trail that connects important milestones from modern European history. It forms a link between the main regions along the Western Allied Forces' advance from southern England, to the beaches of Normandy, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Hürtgen Forest and on to Berlin. The route continues to the Polish city of Gdańsk, where a democratic revolution for overcoming the division of Europe was launched nearly two generations later. In southern Europe, Italy has now joined the LRE, from Sicily to the Gustav and Gothic Lines, as has the Provence region in southern France and the city of Pilsen in the Czech Republic.

LRE also gives people the chance to discover and experience the route that the Allied Forces took during the final phase of the Second World War. It connects this history with life in modern day Europe, as well as other parts of the world, underscoring the role of international reconciliation and the promotion of reflection on the value of our hard-won freedoms. A new hiking trail, stretching 3,000 miles from London to Berlin, and passing through hundreds of points of interest, will be opened in 2020.

## Listening Spot Stories

More than 180 audio spots have been created across the Netherlands in the provinces of Zeeland, Noord-Brabant, Limburg and Gelderland en Overijssel, and in the German-Dutch border region.

At each audio spot a personal story is told about the experiences of someone in that area. For example, a 6-year-old, on seeing parachutists in September 1944, ran to her mother saying, "God is throwing people out of heaven". Her mother replied, "Do not worry my child, it is only confetti."

Another listening spot can be found in the grounds of a hotel at Molenbosweg, in the Netherlands. Under a lime tree in front of the hotel, you can hear the story of owner Marcel Hoogenboom's grandparents. His grandfather, Leendert, was part of the resistance group in Van Deest in Middelburg, but he was betrayed by a neighbour. He died in a camp just

before the end of the war. The hotel (a grand house at the time) was used to try and hide a large number of local Jewish people in a cubbyhole under the stairs. Sadly a crying baby gave away the hiding place - but it is these personal stories that help to bring, and keep alive, the memories of the Second World War.

The stories of the locations can be downloaded from [www.liberationroute.com](http://www.liberationroute.com) and there is also a LRE app. Available for iPhone and Android users the app offers easy access to historical events, sites, biographies, and audio stories. There will also be a new book, *Travel the Liberation Route Europe*, that will be published in July.



## A brand new WWII Museum in Groesbeek - The Netherlands -

## War and freedom in the Nijmegen region - The Netherlands -

Open September 2019



### The new Liberation museum

- The Liberation Museum is set in the beautiful landscape near Nijmegen, Arnhem and the German border.
- The new modern WWII museum will grow to 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> and will combine innovative and modern presentation techniques with authenticity, historical objects and personal stories.
- It is a unique location: it is the only WWII museum in the Netherlands that is located in the former battlefields of Operation Market Garden and the Rhineland Offensive.
- Focusing on these major points in history, the new Liberation Museum brings the historical events of the liberation by the American, British, Canadian and Polish troops back to life.
- Central to the museum will be the story of war and freedom without borders: multiperspective, critical, suspenseful, and inspiring and will make the connection to current themes of freedom, democracy and human rights.

### Get to know our history

- The best introduction to the stories, historic heritage and museums that the region has to offer in regards to the Second World War.
- Start off your visit with an experience of what the Second World War meant to Nijmegen and the surrounding towns
- Get a feel for the way in which this history is kept alive by the dozens of WW2 organisations.
- Being at the centre of Operation Market Garden and the Rhineland Offensive, the marks of this history are visible throughout the Nijmegen landscape.
- The Nijmegen region is filled with museums, monuments and landmarks.
- Find sights that match your fields of interest and plan your WW2 journey through the city and its surrounding towns.



## Liberation Museum

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T + 31 (0)24-3974404, E [info@bevrijdingsmuseum.nl](mailto:info@bevrijdingsmuseum.nl)  
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[www.infocentrumww2.com](http://www.infocentrumww2.com)





# HIGHLIGHT: OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

Operation Market Garden saw fierce fighting around the towns of Arnhem, Nijmegen and Oosterbeek as the allies sought to push up into Germany and end the war. Today these events are still remembered, nearly 75 years later, particularly for the hope of liberation that they brought to the Dutch people. By Alice Norman

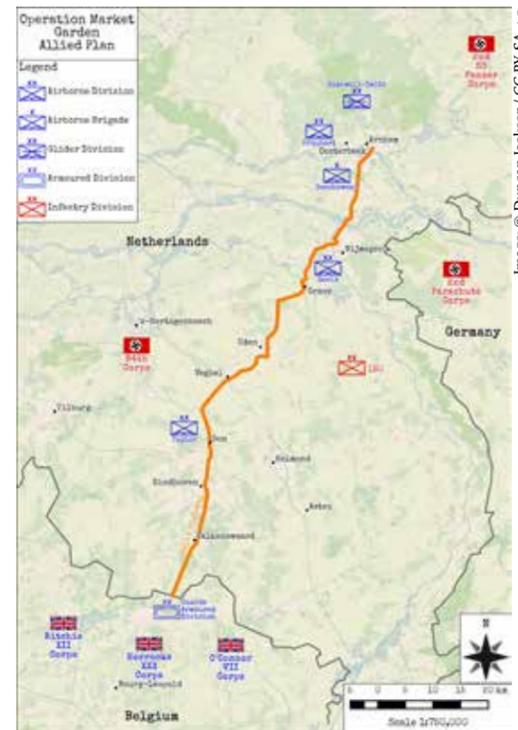


Above from left to right: Waves of paratroopers land in the Netherlands; The remains of Nijmegen after the battle; The bridge at Arnhem after the British paratroops had been driven back

Operation Market Garden was an important campaign during the latter stages of the Second World War and is known to many because of the film *A Bridge Too Far*. The campaign was a push designed to reach Berlin and end the war: the British, Poles and Canadians would land in Holland and take the northern route to Berlin while the Americans, already in France, would push upwards from there, avoiding the Siegfried Line. The 'Market' part of the operation was the thousands of troops who would land by air, and then meet up with the 'Garden' part, the troops who were already on the ground.

As often happens during war-time, things rarely go to plan, and in this instance, the British hierarchy were unaware that there were two SS Panzer divisions situated near Arnhem at the time. They were actually in the process of being recalled to Berlin, but had been delayed, so heard about the landing of the allied troops and rushed to secure the bridges in Arnhem and Nijmegen. In the end, only one British battalion reached the bridge in Arnhem and they bravely held out against the Germans, without reinforcements, for four days, before having to surrender.

Therefore this area in the Netherlands is very aware of its history, especially the towns of Nijmegen, Oosterbeek and Arnhem. There are several museums in the area commemorating its war history and each year in September a number of special events are organised. Last year I was invited to the commemorative events and for some reason I was surprised by the numbers who attended them. In England, besides the wreath laying each November, we don't have anything like this. But then we weren't occupied. And it is not just the older generation who attend here: there



Above: Operation Market Garden - Allied Plan

were many families with young children. It would seem that an important message is being handed down to the younger generation: freedom must not be taken for granted. It is so easy to forget, nearly 75 years on from the horrors of the Second World War, but it is essential to remember, so that history is not repeated. And the Dutch are very good at remembering.

One of the main events in September is the Airborne commemoration and parachute drop at Ginkel Heath. Thousands of people attend to see a recreation of the start of Operation Market Garden, when 100,000 parachutists landed in the area. While today only about 350 parachutists take to the skies (from all NATO countries), it gives a good idea of what it must have looked like and to imagine what the Dutch must have felt after four years of occupation, to suddenly see the skies filled with allied soldiers. After the airdrop there is an official commemoration and this is one of the events for this week that the veterans like to attend. Watching them throughout the ceremony, it was difficult to not be emotional thinking of the sacrifice



**An important message is being handed down to the younger generation: freedom must not be taken for granted**

these men had made. This year and next will probably be the last major celebrations that they will attend, and you can tell as they wipe their tears away, they are still remembering the friends and comrades that they lost.

A lot of attention is centred on the town of Arnhem, as this is famous from the film and for the fierce fighting to take the bridge. When walking around the town, Nico, my guide, kept pointing out British flags and saying how much the people of this area loved the British. When I asked why, he replied it was because of Operation Market Garden. "But it was a failure," I said. "Why should they like the British so much when they lost the battle here?" "Because it gave them hope of freedom," Nico said. "Before that, they had thought that no-one cared about them, had forgotten them: but the British gave them hope."

This remark gave me a whole new perspective, not only on the battle, but also the relationship between our countries. We are so lucky in England – we have not been conquered since the 11th century. As a nation we do not know what it is like to live without our freedom.

A new information centre has been built near the bridge at Arnhem (which had 15,000 visitors in the first



Image: © John Waddy



three months after it opened), and it includes a video which tells the story of the battle from a British, Dutch and German point of view. The town also holds a large concert, called *Bridge to Liberation*, with the concert platform built out onto the river and a big screen hanging on the bridge. The concert tells a story of war and freedom, again reflecting on the past to inform the future. There is music, readings, film and dance and it makes for a wonderful evening's experience.

There are many activities put on in September, including a reconstruction of an ambulance station complete with (fake) wounded soldiers, but there is one experience which you can actually attend every night of the year. This is the Sunset March over the river Waal in Nijmegen. In 2013, a new city bridge called the Crossing (Oversteek) was constructed, close to the area where the American 82nd Airborne crossed the river Waal on September 20, 1944, as part of Operation Market Garden. 48 Allied soldiers were killed during this attempt, and the bridge has 48 pairs of street lights. Every night at sunset, the lights are lit, pair by pair, at a slow marching pace. At the same time, two veterans are chosen to march across the bridge, while others line the route and salute as they go past. It is a daily tribute by veterans of any age to the Allied soldiers who lost their lives fighting for freedom in Holland and the public is invited to join in by walking behind the veterans.

The main museums in the area include The Liberation Museum at Groesbeek (reopening in September 2019), which tells the wider story of the area from September 1944 onwards, the Airborne Museum at Oosterbeek, which is dedicated to the story of Operation Market Garden, the Overloon War Museum which is the largest war museum in the Netherlands and the WWII Info Centre in Nijmegen. There are also a number of war cemeteries in the area including a Canadian one at Groesbeek and a German one at Ysselsteyn. The latter has over 30,000 graves and it is a truly sobering sight to see all the black crosses stretching as far as the eye can see.

The Airborne Museum, which was General Roy

Urquhart's HQ during the campaign, recreates the battle for Arnhem bridge in its basement, but the item which moved me most was a plaque that lies opposite the entrance to the house. Written by Colonel John Waddy, it is a thank you to the local people for helping the allied troops at great danger to themselves. John Waddy was wounded three times in the battle of Arnhem as a young captain, and he has often taken part in the commemorative events each September. One of those events is a service in the Oosterbeek War Cemetery which is usually attended by thousands of locals, veterans and their families. The children (mostly Dutch but some English) are asked to lay flowers on each grave - and there are more than 1,764 headstones there. Colonel Waddy is a great advocate of involving the children in the commemorative events as he believes very strongly in educating the younger generation about the war - as well as remembering it.

In today's turbulent times, it is good to reflect that we are stronger together and that our freedom shouldn't be taken for granted. Perhaps we should all take a moment to remember the past this September - as it should always inform our future. 📍

To find details of all Operation Market Garden events and 75 Years Battle of Arnhem, commemorations and festivities see [www.airborne-herdenkingen.nl/en/airborne-program-2019/](http://www.airborne-herdenkingen.nl/en/airborne-program-2019/) and [www.europemembers.com/events](http://www.europemembers.com/events)

Previous page from top to bottom: Commemorative ceremony at Ginkel Heath; Reconstruction of the Battle of Arnhem at The Airborne Museum at Oosterbeek and inside The Liberation Museum at Groesbeek

Above, left: The Canadian cemetery at Groesbeek

Above, right: Children lay flowers during the service in the Airborne Cemetery

Above: The sunset march



# PLACES TO VISIT: NETHERLANDS



## Camp Vught National Memorial

The Camp Vught Memorial is located on the former SS camp Konzentrationslager Herzogenbusch (Camp Vught). The combined memorial centre and museum features various exhibitions, a memorial room and wall of reflection. A children's memorial lists the names and ages of 1,269 Jewish children who were deported and murdered in June 1943. Between January 1943 and September 1944, 31,000 people were imprisoned in the camp, including 12,000 Jews who were sent on to extermination camps, Roma gypsies, Jehovah's witnesses, homosexuals, hostages, black market dealers, criminals and the homeless. Camp Vught was the only concentration camp outside Nazi-Germany. [www.nmkampvught.nl](http://www.nmkampvught.nl)



## Overloon War Museum

The Overloon War Museum is the largest war museum in the Netherlands. Based in a large hangar, there are over 150 vehicles, planes and guns from WWII, and personal stories give insight into the problems that both the local population, and occupier, had to deal with during the war. The battle of Overloon took place in the surrounding area and was a result of the failure of Operation Market Garden. [www.oorlogsmuseum.nl](http://www.oorlogsmuseum.nl)



## Windmill on the Frontline

The town of Eerde saw fierce fighting during Operation Market Garden and the Windmill at Eerde was used as a look-out post during the skirmishes. It was destroyed on 24 September 1944 and on the mill there are plaques with the names of the fallen. On 17 September 2014 a small museum was opened in the mill which includes belongings of the Americans who fought in Eerde. Next to the mill there is a memorial for the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment. This site is also featured on the Brabant Remembers app. [www.eerdsemolen.nl](http://www.eerdsemolen.nl)



## Info Centre WWII, Nijmegen

The Info Centre WWII aims to provide visitors of Nijmegen and its surrounding area, the best introduction to the stories, heritage, events, and museums linked to the Second World War in the vicinity. Visitors start with a 'vivid experience' that will give them a better understanding of what consequences WWII had for Nijmegen and its surroundings. There is also information about the different historical locations in the city and the centre also functions as a starting point for historical city walks and educational programmes. [www.infocentreww2.com](http://www.infocentreww2.com)



## German Cemetery, Ysselsteyn

The cemetery at Ysselsteyn contains the graves of 31,598 German war dead, most of whom who died in the Netherlands during World War II and it is the largest German war cemetery in the world. Those buried here also include Dutch, Poles and Russians who fought on the side of the German military. In a circle near the entrance are 85 German soldiers who fell in World War I. There are also 3,000 war dead from the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes and Hürtgen Forest, that were initially interred next to the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten. [www.jbs-ysselsteyn.de](http://www.jbs-ysselsteyn.de)

# THE KRÖLLER-MÜLLER MUSEUM DURING WORLD WAR II

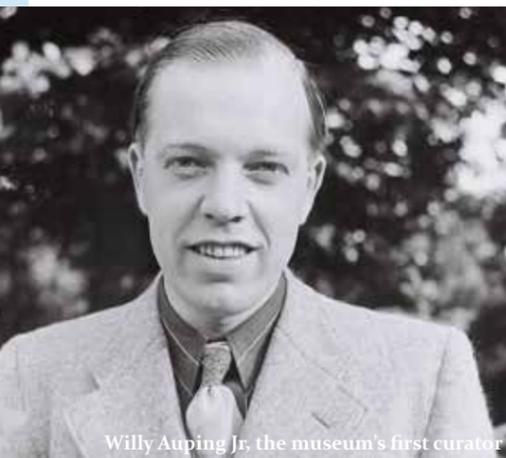
The Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo is one of the leading museums in the Netherlands for modern and contemporary art. It also has c.90 paintings and 180 drawings by Vincent van Gogh, making it the second largest Van Gogh collection in the world. During WWII the museum directors shared a heavy responsibility to protect their collection and the museum. Here is their story.

**H**ELENE KRÖLLER-MÜLLER was a leading European art patron of the early 20th century, and one of the first women in Europe to acquire a major art collection. Born in Germany in 1869, she married the Dutchman, Anton Kröller in 1888. Under the leadership of Anton, Müller and Co (the company founded by Helene's father), grew into a highly profitable company and with the acquired assets Helene was able to start her art collection in 1907. Guided by influential art critic and

advisor, HP Bremmer, Helene and her husband purchased some 12,000 works of art between 1907 and 1922, thereby building one of the largest private art collections of the twentieth century. They also acquired nearly 300 works by Van Gogh, making it the largest private Van Gogh collection in the world. It has been said that Helene was the first to recognise his talent. Her passion for his oeuvre and her exhibition of his work undoubtedly contributed to his international recognition and fame. [www.krollermuller.nl](http://www.krollermuller.nl)



“It took a week to transfer all the works of art [to the bunker], but once they were safe, the museum closed its doors to the public.”



Willy Auping Jr, the museum's first curator



Transferring the collection to the bunker in 1940



The reinstallation of the museum



Helene and Anton Kröller-Müller



The gallery restored after the war



Nurses from the emergency hospital based in the old museum cheer the first arriving Canadian troops, 15 April 1945

**H**elene Kröller-Müller was a passionate collector of works by Van Gogh, Picasso and Mondrian and her aim in life was to build a museum for her unique collection and donate it to the Dutch people. The Great Depression meant that her dream couldn't come true, so when she died in 1939, she left her collection to the State of the Netherlands, on the condition that they would build a museum to house it.

After her death, a new director Sam van Deventer and curator Willy Auping Jr shared the responsibility of protecting the museum and collection during the war.

Helene had started building a bomb shelter before her death, in a sand dune in the Veluwe National Park nearby. It was

not finished when the war began in 1939, but on 22 July 1940, the entire collection was moved there. The works of art were packed in order of value and transferred to the shelter in small groups. It took a week to transfer all the works of art, but once they were safe, the museum closed its doors to the public.

In the final years of the war, the museum served as a hospital for the Red Cross. It accommodated 310 adults and 40 children. The patients were housed in the Van de Velde wing and St Hubertus hunting lodge served as the nurses' accommodation.

On the 15 April 1945, the museum was liberated by the Canadians, who

also helped to reinstate the art so the museum could open quickly to the public once more. The museum was officially reopened on 6 October 1945.

After the war, the museum's first curator, Willy Auping Jr, bought the Van Gogh masterpiece, *The Potato Eaters*. This painting, along with those previously purchased by Helene, meant that 'the collection of works from his Dutch period' was now complete and was 'a crown on the collection'.

To see a timeline of stories about the museum, Helen Kröller-Müller, and the museum during the Second World War, see [www.krollermuller.nl/timeline](http://www.krollermuller.nl/timeline).



New opening of air-raid shelter

Later this year, the museum plans to open the 'bunker' which was used to store Helene's art during the war. Visitors in September and October 2019 and April and May 2020 will be able to visit the site for the first time.

For more information, see the museum website: [www.krollermuller.nl/](http://www.krollermuller.nl/)

## Helene's collection becomes accessible to the public

Helene first presented her art collection in 1913 in the building next to Anton's office of Müller & Co in The Hague. The collection could be viewed by appointment and the first floor was reserved for the 'ultramodern' works of Juan Gris, Auguste Herbin, Bart van der Leek and Piet Mondrian.

Helene had originally wanted to build her museum in The Hague, but after a visit to the Veluwe in Spring 1914, she decided to build it in The Hoge Veluwe National Park instead. By choosing this venue, she could present her collection outside the hustle and bustle of the big

city, in a place where art lovers could truly enjoy the unique combination of art and nature.

Her dream was finally materialised in 1938 when the museum opened its doors. The building was designed by the Belgian architect Henry van de Velde. In the 1970s, a new wing was added, designed by Dutch architect Wim Quist.





# INTERVIEW WITH...

## COLONEL JOHN WADDY

John Waddy was a Captain in the 1st Parachute Regiment when he was wounded taking part in Operation Market Garden. Here the 99-year-old veteran discusses the war, life as a POW and being an advisor to Richard Attenborough. Exclusive interview by Fiona Richards

Colonel John Waddy joined his family's regiment, The Somerset Light Infantry and was posted in July 1939 to the 2nd Battalion, then serving in India, at the age of 19. After nearly two years soldiering in the Raj, and keen for more adventure, he volunteered for the 151 British Parachute Battalion (later renumbered as 156) which was established in India in 1941.

As one of the founding officers, they trained in Egypt, Tunisia and Palestine before seeing action in Italy. In October 1943 he was promoted to Major and commanded B Coy 156 Bn at Arnhem, where he was wounded in fighting at Johanna Hoeve woods in September 1944. He was subsequently wounded twice more while at a Main Dressing Station and eventually taken prisoner. In Spring 1945 he was liberated by General Patton's army from Stalag VIIA in Bavaria.

He then spent nearly three years in Palestine combating the Jewish terrorist threat where he was wounded again in July 1947. After some routine postings in the UK, Libya and Egypt he rejoined The Somerset Light Infantry in Malaya in 1952. Lengthy spells patrolling in the Selangor Jungle earned him a Mention in Dispatches.

In 1958 the Parachute Regiment was allowed to have a permanent cadre of officers which he volunteered to rejoin, and was accepted and posted as Second in Command of 2 Para, serving with them in Cyprus, Jordan and the UK. He was awarded the OBE in 1962.

In 1964 he was appointed Colonel SAS and commander of the SAS Group (comprising all 3 SAS Regiments) and in 1976 he took 6 months' leave to act as a military adviser for the film *A Bridge Too Far* directed by Richard Attenborough.



John Waddy as a young officer in the desert during WWII

Colonel Waddy talks to Fiona about...

### The formation of The Parachute Regiment:

"In the spring of 1940, German parachute troops captured Belgium and Holland with the highly successful use of airborne forces, which fascinated a few officers in the War Office. They managed to get some items of parachute equipment from the Dutch, and brought them back to England, and then more or less, they started inventing a new parachute regiment at an RAF station outside Manchester as a private venture.

"They sent out a round robin to all interested battalions in England asking for volunteers and had the backing of Churchill who had just become Prime Minister. It was the sort of idea that interested him as he was intent on defending England but also looking further ahead to attacking occupied Europe. He wrote a famous memo saying

'I would like to see a force of 20,000 parachute troops - pray let me have them.' And it was amazing to set it up from scratch, we had nothing in England, just a gang of enthusiasts! But we ended the war with something like 30-40,000 parachute troops and it spread to America - they caught the bug as well.

### About his men of B company

"They were amusing characters, kept me in fits of laughter. A lot of them were Irish. In the early days when we were experimenting, this type of warfare was new and unheard of in the conservative British Army, and in fact we were looked down upon by the rest of the them - we were thought of as thugs who came out of aeroplanes, and not proper soldiers. Even though our standard of training was way above anyone else's, as we were allowed to select the men we wanted.

"As an officer you did quite a lot of jumps because in those days you were experimenting with different aircraft and different equipment and how to jump with your weapons and equipment on you instead of in containers. So, inevitably the officers had to be the guinea pigs - 'it wouldn't have been done, old boy, if you hadn't done it first'. We also had to demonstrate the equipment was OK. I remember once we were testing how to land with our weapons - hitherto we'd had to have them in containers that were dropped, but sometimes they didn't drop, or there were bushes on the landing zone and we couldn't find them.

"So it was important that everybody had to have a weapon and we had to experiment how to drop with a rifle or machine gun. I remember jumping with a light machine gun and a shovel and

my rifle in a bag attached to my leg, but somehow when I pulled my cord they became loose and spiralled to the ground, narrowly missing one of my soldiers who swore at me roundly. When I landed alongside him, however, he had the decency to salute and said 'sorry sir!'

### On the landings of Operation Market Garden

"We were dropped on the correct drop zone, but it was eight miles away from our objective. And this was a typical mistake of so many airborne operations - where do you drop the parachute troops? (Nowadays an operation is not on if you can't drop the troops close to the objective).

We were dropped on the second day and that was one of the mistakes of the campaign. I'm afraid our Divisional Commander, a good man, who was an experienced infantry soldier but not an airborne one, landed too many non-essential fighting troops on that first day; a lot of the glider troops and HQ troops

the bombs and shells were landing all around us. Suddenly there was a big crash and some German troops would rush through and then ours would rush back. Eventually the Germans took over and they established a firing position in the ruined window of the room I was in. I remember our Medical Officer shouting at them that this was contrary to the Geneva convention, as the Germans had set up a machine gun in the window with a Red Cross flag hanging over it.

"Afterwards when all the wounded were left behind, I was taken to a German-run Dutch hospital in Apeldoorn - it was quite comfortable actually - and I was just dumped on the bed with all I had, which was my battledress jacket and my khaki shirt. I had field dressings all around my head and there were some German SS troops in the ward all nattering away, and because I could speak German, I could understand what they were saying. They believed that we were cousins and we should be fighting together against the Russians.



**But there were two parachute brigades left in England, ours and the Polish brigade, and what he should have done is not land all the administrative and glider troops but do what the Americans did, and put all the parachute troops in first**

spent the first 24 hours sitting on their backsides on the landing zones. There were only two under-strength parachute regiments that were sent to the bridge, and only one got there.

"Whereas General Gavin, the American commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, to the south had about eight bridges to capture, and his tactic was to get what, he said, was the maximum number of bayonets to attack and hold the bridges. He used two parachute brigades together to attack each bridge and so they succeeded.

### On being wounded

"I thought, once or twice, I might not make it. The second and third times I was injured was when I was in the Medical Corp dressing station in Oosterbeek and we were literally in the midst of the fighting. I was in a Dutch house and

"Eventually I was put in another ward to the soldiers so I couldn't instruct them to escape, not that there was a lot of that going on, and in the ward of 18 beds opposite the door of my little room I could hear the German soldiers crying for their mothers in the night and the English soldiers telling them to shut up.

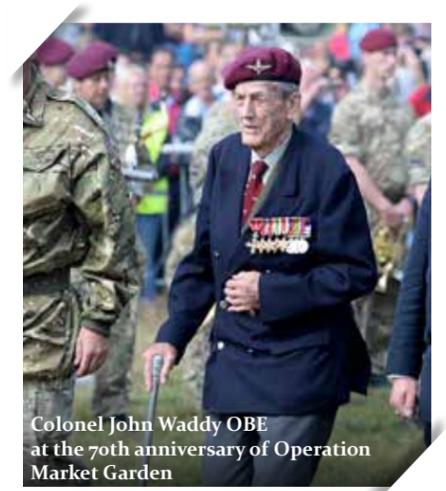
### Time in hospital

"I was in hospital for about six weeks and then sent to a 'hospital' in Bavaria: Stalag VIIA. It was called a hospital because it had wooden huts. About a week after arriving, a big, blonde German nurse came into my room and said 'your soldiers are being disrespectful to the Führer'. I found out there had been a big ward of 24 beds with both German and British soldiers together. One day, one of our soldiers got out of bed and turned over a picture of Hitler to the wall saying 'I can't stand

looking at that bastard any more', and some of the German soldiers clapped!

### Life in the POW camp

"Our Stalag was for other ranks of all nationalities, including 15,000 Russians, 5,000 French and 5,000 British and a small compound with 30 officers who had been captured in Greece and Yugoslavia during special operations. As the Germans retreated, they moved the prisoners further south as they wanted to use them as potential hostages, so our small bunch of ex-airborne officers now were joined by officers that had been captured at Dunkirk. While prisoners, they had been allowed to have their uniforms and clothes sent out. So they were in full service dress with shiny brass buttons and Sam Brownes while I had been captured with only my battle jacket and khaki shirt and wore scrounged trousers etc from the French and Americans. Our little hut of about 35 officers came under the command of a Colonel in the Welsh Guards who



Colonel John Waddy OBE at the 70th anniversary of Operation Market Garden

Colonel came over to us and said 'I am absolutely appalled at the standard of your turnout'. The New Zealand officer behind me just told him where to go.

"I was in camp for 3 months. As soon as I arrived in early December, the Swiss Red Cross interviewed me, took my particulars and told my parents I was alive. They received the message on Christmas Eve – they had previously been told I was dead.

"Conditions in the camp were very difficult and after the war the Camp Commandant was convicted of war crimes for killing Russian prisoners. The Russian prisoners were starving and they had stolen some meat and hidden it underneath the floor of their hut. One of the guard dogs found the meat so they killed the dog. In future, when 'testing' a new guard dog, the Commandant would take Russian prisoners out of the camp

(dressed in pink shorts, no idea why), when he saw the flag on the church clock tower and exclaimed 'kiss my naked ass!'

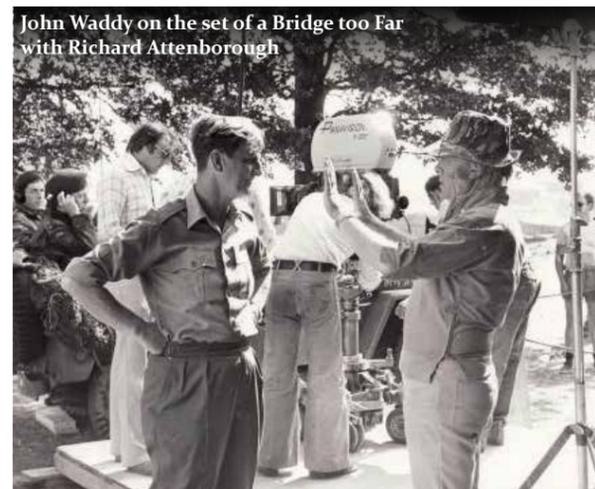
"When we were liberated, all the Dunkirk officers tried to take command and issued orders saying that no one could leave camp and if they did so they would be court-martialed.

"But we six Airborne officers found a little trolley that the Germans used to move potatoes about and walked out of the camp. A Dunkirk officer at the gate tried to stop us but we said we are airborne troops and we'd just got information on our secret wireless that the RAF are going to drop supplies over the hill. 'Oh good' he said and so off we went, dumping our little wagon about half a mile away and then we carried on to the local village and took over the pub, asking the woman running it for beer, bed and a bath.

the Dunkirk chaps they must see them but they weren't interested.

"We had been given such a tremendous reception by the Americans when they liberated us, but my friend predicted when we arrived in England we would be given a packet of Woodbines and a cup of stewed tea – and we were. But it was home.

"The British had set up camps to receive ex POWs and we all went to the camp cinema and the chap on the stage said 'we will send you out of here properly dressed, but you have to go through 18 stages first.' We were all dressed like gypsies and four hours later I came back with back pay, advance pay, battle dress and so forth. It was about 8pm at night when we finished, so my friend and I spent the night going around London. Every bar was full of Americans and British and the drink was flowing.



John Waddy on the set of a Bridge too Far with Richard Attenborough



Colonel Waddy with children at a commemorative event in the Netherlands

and let the dogs chase and kill them.

**On being liberated**

"Just before we were liberated, we knew that the Americans were nearby, as we'd heard on our secret radio and late one evening we could hear artillery fire a few miles away. The next morning the Germans were starting to relax, so we didn't have to go into the huts and we could hear the battle about five miles away.

"Therefore we were all outside to see the American tanks come over the hill and roar past our camp and about an hour later on the church tower in the nearby German village, we saw the American flag raised. I was standing behind an American Air Force officer at the time

"We were in pub for five or six days! The Russian prisoners were out looting and getting their own back. But eventually we heard we were leaving and were taken in American trucks to the American airfield where there were Dakotas waiting for us.

"We flew to Reims, and were dumped there, but the Americans looked after us, put up tents and gave us food and we were told that the RAF would come and get us the next day. But the next day was D-Day and so the whole of Bomber Command were drunk! So a day later 80-90 Lancaster bombers came to get us and we had to squash 30 people into the bombers. I sat in the mid-upper turret and it was a lovely May day. I saw the white cliffs and clambered down and told

**As an advisor on the film, A Bridge Too Far**

"I do NOT recommend that film - it turned out to be an American film for American audiences. I was military advisor, but neither I, nor Richard Attenborough, were allowed to alter one word of the script. I did try to change one big scene, the one with Robert Redford capturing Nijmegen bridge (rather than a sergeant in the Grenadier Guards). A message came back from New York: 'Tell the Colonel I make movies for money, not history. Besides I'm paying Redford three million bucks'. Redford was only with us for three days! Richard was very good to work with, although we disagreed about Gandhi..."



Upcoming events

For details of all events see: [www.europeremembers.com/events](http://www.europeremembers.com/events)



8-9 June 2019

Bomber Command Centre, Lincoln, UK

Two D-Day 75th anniversary outdoor concerts will include tributes to Vera Lynn, George Formby and Gracie Fields as well as sketches from *It Ain't Half Hot* and *Dad's Army*. Food available, but picnics welcome. Doors open 17.30 pm. See website for full details: [www.internationalbcc.co.uk](http://www.internationalbcc.co.uk)



21 September 2019

Airborne Memorial, Ede, Netherlands

The Airborne commemorations at Ginkel Heath, Ede, start at 9.30 am with the first parachute drop at 10.00 am and the commemoration service at 11.00 am. The day's activities end at 4.30 pm. [www.airborne-herdenkingen.nl/en/airborne-commemoration-edel/](http://www.airborne-herdenkingen.nl/en/airborne-commemoration-edel/)



31 August 2019

Liberation Ball, Mons Museum, Belgium

Immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere of the balls of the Liberation. Dress in vintage clothes and listen to the sound of Glen Miller and other post-war bands for a fantastic evening. [www.polemuseal.mons.be](http://www.polemuseal.mons.be)



20 September 2019

Bridge to Liberation, Arnhem, Netherlands

An experience in which music, special effects, film and dance intertwine to bring you personal stories at the time of the Battle of Arnhem. These moving stories are still very relevant today. [www.bridgetoliberation.nl](http://www.bridgetoliberation.nl)



7-8 September 2019

Antwerp Liberation Days, Belgium

Come and see the Liberation Parade with 100 historic and contemporary military and civilian vehicles, accompanied by marching bands and actors on 7 September and attend the commemorative ceremony in the Stadspark the next day. [www.visitantwerpen.be/en/bevrijdingsdagen2019](http://www.visitantwerpen.be/en/bevrijdingsdagen2019)

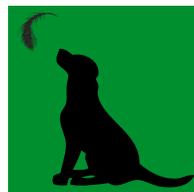


24 December 2019

Canadian War Cemetery, Holten, Netherlands

Every year, school children place a burning candle at each headstone. For many visitors, the flickering lights of the candles form an ambiance of silence and peace at a special time of year. [www.canadesebegraafplaatsholten.nl](http://www.canadesebegraafplaatsholten.nl)

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