

# 65 YEARS OF LIBERATION

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Those who look in the history of World War II will recognize the battle of Arnhem as one of the most difficult moments for allied forces after the successful invasion in Normandy. In the absolute need to end the German resistance quickly and to reach the heart of the enemy and everyone would agreed this was Berlin, strategies were developed to reach this goal. General Montgomery pushed his plan for an acceleration called 'Market Garden' through the higher commands and received green light from 'Ike'. General Eisenhower gave Montgomery his thrust but the operation turned out to be a miscalculation. This was not because of the man, they showed absolute bravery but maybe you could say in complex processes you have some luck and you have some bad luck. When the balance gets trough to the latter, you loose like in a football game. Nevertheless, those who died in action are very much worth to be remembered.

### A bridge to far

On the ground the situation was complex. Many bridges over canals and rivers had to be conquered. The allied army, especially the Americans penetrated with heavy material from the southern border of the Netherlands into occupied territory but encountered the German Army resulting in fierce battles. From England an armada of airplanes conducted massive paratrooper droppings above specific landing spots with British, American and Polish soldiers. Other airplanes towed engineless wooden airplanes loaded with soldiers and more heavy equipment into the area. The operation 'Market' was the codename of the airborne offensive part and operation 'Garden' the codename of the ground actions. Some aspects were probably well thought. When succeeded the allied force would not have to fight through the Siegfriedlinie.

On the other hand some actions relied on the success of others an especially General Frost was in Arnhem with his airborne soldiers in a very vulnerable position. The German forces with waffen SS units were much larger in the area as presumed. He could hold his position just for a limited time and was depending on reinforcements of the American forces from the south. But they arrived too late because the resistance of the Germany army was very tough and daily progress was not enough to arrive in time. The US forces did their job well and they even described the capturing of the bridge in Nijmegen as one of the best attacks in history. You could say Arnhem was a weakness in the strategy and the potential forces needed to establish power was misunderstood. Finally the bridge in Arnhem across the river Rhine could not be taken, which had serious consequences for the region. North of the Rhine the North and Western part of the Netherlands stayed occupied territory and during the winter of 1944 many people died of starvation while the Germans with feelings of retaliation did nothing for the people. The Germans took the chance to regroup their army elements since the Allies force lost their offensive and needed time to re-stabilise. No fast access to Berlin, but instead a new German offensive

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action in the Ardennes mountains was the outcome. Ironically a famous movie about the heroic actions of the soldiers in this operation was called a bridge too far.

### **Festivities of honour**

To describe this part of the war completely is far too complex and would take pages. Instead this article is about remembering and honour for those who sacrificed. Since it was 65 years of liberation this year there was an effort made, and maybe for the last time, to organize a big event with a massive contribution of airborne troops above the Ginkels Heide which was a dropping zone in operation 'Market Garden'. Ten C-130 Hercules aircraft of the Royal Air Force and the USAF and some C-47 aircraft dropped parachutists in two waves. The Polish parachutists were dropped in Driel, just like in World War II. The Polish input in the operation was extremely important but not good recognized by the British command. They did very important work with the recapturing of many British soldiers back over the Rhine. Their leader General Major Sosabowski who criticised the operation with the High Command before the operation started was not honoured in a way he should be after the war. However the people in the Netherlands living in the areas where the Polish soldiers did their operations think differently and locally you can find monuments dedicated to the Polish soldiers who died in combat. General Major Sosabowski dared to disagree with General Major Montgomery, called the operation a suicide and finally he was right but no one supported him after the failure of Market Garden.

Our reporters team assisted by Henny Otten and Ronald Stark looked around in the area to gather impressions at the many festivities. Not only on actions in the air but also on the ground which varied from historical acts for the public, the input of the 'keep them rolling' organisation with World War II trucks and tanks, US, British and Polish soldiers and even jumps of veterans. Some phrases about what happened during the war, described by Wim Das will accentuate the photographs.

*Special thanks we would like to dedicate for their splendid help and friendship:  
to Hennie Otten and Ronald Stark.*

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Kees Otten & Wim Das

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One person who played a very important role was General major Sosabowski.

### GENERAL-MAJOR STANISLAW SOSABOWSKI

In 1910 he succeeded and graduated at gymnasium and studied after that on the Higher Trade School at Krakow. From 1909 he is active in Polish liberation organisations in Galicia. In 1913 he was drafted for the Austrian Army. In the first World War he fought in the Austrian Army and was promoted in 1917 to Lieutenant.

On 1 november 1918 Sosabowski got in the Polish army where he was promoted to Captain. In the years 1918-1921 he fulfilled the function of Head of the I Ve Dept. On the Ministry of



War. In 1922-1923 he studied the Higher Army School and on January 1st 1927 Sosabowski was promoted to Lt. Colonel and he became Commander of the 2nd battalion of the 75th Infantry Regiment in Rybnik in Silesia.



(1892-1967)

**Stanislaw Sosabowski: Born 8 mai 1892 in Stanislawow.**

Soon he became the Commander of the Garrison. From 1930 to 1936 he taught on the Higher Army School. He wrote articles and books about educating and affirming soldiers. From 1937 to 1939 he was commander of the 9th Infantry Regiment. March 1939 Sosabowski became Colonel of the 21st Infantry Regiment "Dzieci Warszawy" (Children of Warsaw). His regiment occupied the Grochow sector in September 1939 as part of the defence zone around Warsaw. After the capitulation of the Polish Army he fled with his son to Lodz. There he started the resistance under the name of "Sluzba Zwyciestwu Poiski" meaning he was the subservient to the Polish victory. In December 1939 he fled to Hungary and from there to France. From January to June 1940 he was commander of the 1st Infantry Division in Coetquidan (France). After the defeat of France he went to England where he became commander of the 4th 'Cadre Infantry Brigade'

After agreement was reached between General Colonel Sosabowski and T. Klimecki, Chief of Staff of the Polish commander Colonel Sosabowski put a training for volunteers as parachutist who would be dropped over occupied Poland. On September 23, 1941, General Sikorski changed the name of the 4th Infantry Brigade to 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade. The brigade was intended for a general uprising in Poland to support. On June 6, 1944, General Sosabowski (the then commander of the Polish Armed Forces) has, under pressure from the British and by decision of the Polish Government, compelled the brigade at the disposal of the Supreme Command of the Allied forces in the West. Sosabowski was promoted to brigadier-general on June 14, 1944, he vigorously opposed this decision. From September 18 to 26 the brigade commanded by Major General Sosabowski took part in Operation Market Garden ". The brigade distinguished itself in battle in the Netherlands around Oosterbeek and Driel. On December 9, 1944 Sosabowski was under pressure from

the British, relieved of his duties as a brigade commander and appointed inspector of the units. After the war Sosabowski settled in London, where he worked among others as Inspector of Guarding units. Major General Sosabowski was awarded the Military Order Virtuti Militari 4th class, the Valor Cross, the Knight's Cross of the Order Polonia Restituta the Golden Cross of Merit and numerous foreign decorations. Stanislaw Sosabowski died on September 25, 1967. The urn with his ashes were transferred to Poland and on October 14, 1967 buried with military honors at the military cemetery in Warsaw Powazk.

**Major Sosabowski's grandson was in The Netherlands during the memorial days IN 2009 and jumped as parachutist in the waves of paratroopers to honour his grandfather.**

(Source internet)

