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Of Market-Garden and Melanie

The Dutch Resistance and the OSS (U)

Maj. Stewart Bentley

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Maj. Stewart Bentley is a US Army military intelligence officer.

On 10 May 1940, the German 10th Army, spearheaded by airborne troops, invaded the Netherlands. The rest of the *Wehrmacht* force committed to "the overrunning of the West"[1] executed the Manstein Plan through Belgium and the Ardennes Forest. On 14 May 1940, the Dutch commander ordered a cease-fire. Three days later, the entire Netherlands was occupied by Nazi Germany.[2]

The Dutch royal family, led by Queen Wilhelmina, along with some 4,600 Dutch officers, sailors, soldiers, and policemen, staged a Dutch Dunkirk, assisted by remnants of the Dutch Navy and the entire merchant marine. This evacuation operation to Britain of the royal family and a cadre of the Dutch Government was critical in establishing a government-in-exile and the initial intelligence networks in Holland. Additionally, the emigration to England of Dutch civilians and members of the Dutch armed forces from all over the Continent and from overseas Dutch possessions helped form the core of a reconstituted Dutch Royal Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Stirrings of Resistance

The initial years of the German occupation of Holland were characterized by the removal of Dutch Jews from their homeland and harsh economic and political measures. The Nazis established their own puppet government at The Hague headed by Dr. Seyss-Inquart and established a Dutch National Socialist Party.

Some Dutch citizens eagerly joined the new party and took positions in the government. Others, however, joined with the purpose of pretending to collaborate while remaining loyal to the government-in-exile, allowing them to keep an eye on Dutch collaborators and steer policy and its implementation. The Leegsma family was a good example of this tactic. Agardus Leegsma, his brother, and their father joined the Nazi organized Dutch National Police. The father had been a professional soldier in the Guards Regiment of the Royal Dutch Army during the interwar years. The Leegsma family assisted various Resistance organizations during the Nazi occupation. During the liberation of Holland, Leegsma and his brother joined different Allied units, serving as guides and combatants.

As the harshness of the occupation grew, so did native Dutch unrest and resentment toward the Germans. Individual Dutchmen took it upon themselves to strike back. With no central command, these brave individuals began recruiting relatives, friends, and neighbors into the first Resistance organizations. The dangers were exceptionally high: captured members of the Resistance were usually shot or sent to concentration camps. The primary opposition initially came from the Social Democrats and Catholic youth leagues. The Dutch Communists began actively resisting after the Germans invaded the USSR.

Members of the Dutch royal armed forces who had not escaped to Britain

Netherlands, 1944 (U)

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and successfully evaded German capture secretly banded together and began collecting information. Under the leadership of Dr. Johan Stijkel, a Rotterdam lawyer, Maj. Gen. H. D. S. Husselman and Col. J. P. Bolton organized a Resistance group of young Dutch citizens. With the help of radio expert Cornelius Drupsteen, they established a wireless link with the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and began passing information to the Allies.

Resistance operations were primarily limited to organizational and networking functions, as well as gathering intelligence on the occupation forces. Probably the most heroic and dangerous aspect of resistance was the hiding and sheltering of Dutch Jews and young draft-age Dutch men and women by other Dutch, collectively known as *onkerduikers* ("underdivers"). The best known story is that of Anne Frank.

Individual Dutch were horrified and appalled at the spectacle of their neighbors and friends being rounded up and taken away to an unknown fate. Most Dutch Jews who escaped capture were smuggled out of Holland to England via Belgium through France and then to Spain, or from Belgium to France, and then to Switzerland. Smuggling someone out via the Dutch coast was extremely dangerous, as the Germans increasingly fortified the coast in anticipation of an Allied invasion. Some young men and women as well as Dutch Jews hid throughout the war, participating in underground activities. The underground networks established in this manner later were instrumental in hiding and exfiltrating Allied airmen shot down over Holland.

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MI-9 and the Evaders

The British Military Intelligence Section 9 (MI-9) was set up to exploit available European Resistance networks and assist Allied airmen shot down over Europe in returning to England. MI-9, also known as IS-9, infiltrated agents, usually by parachute, into occupied Europe. These agents would link up with a Resistance cell and organize the escape-and-evasion efforts in a particular area, usually after being notified by the Resistance of the presence of downed airmen. The agents brought money, maps, and false papers to assist these airmen. The usual route was either south to Switzerland or west to southern France and then to Spain and Portugal.

One such MI-9 agent was Dick Kragt, who parachuted into Holland in 1943. He lost his equipment, including his radio, but continued on armed only with a Colt.45. He managed to link up with a Dutch Jew named Joop Piller, living in the town of Emst, and they built a network designed to hide, protect, and eventually smuggle downed airmen out of Holland.

Initial Operations

By operating covertly and passively, members of the Resistance were able to function without attracting too much attention. This allowed them to organize their cells, gauge the level of the German counterintelligence threat, and establish information networks. The telephone was their primary means of communications, and they always used nicknames. In face-to-face meetings, masks were often worn to ensure security.

The Dutch Resistance command and control hierarchy was decentralized and compartmented. Additionally, the creation of small groups by individual Dutchmen with no outside links were widespread. Some of these groups' activities will never be known, as many were captured and executed by the Germans. Initially, they used leaflets and underground newspapers as means to enlist new members and raise money.

The Underground Press

Underground newspapers were helpful, especially in areas where the telephone lines were monitored and use of radiotransmitters was too dangerous because of direction-finding operations. These newspapers helped counterbalance Nazi propaganda and the German-controlled media. Almost as soon as the occupation began, anti-Nazi leaflets began to circulate.[3] Period photographs show such newspapers as *DeUnion* being openly distributed on city streets despite the obvious danger.[4] By 1943, underground newspapers had attained a collective circulation of nearly 500,000. Although some were amateurish, they were effective. One such paper was produced by the Leegsma brothers working at The Hague. It was a translation and transcription of daily BBC broadcasts.[5]

Another newspaper was also a two-man effort. Working out of a hotel room in Grave, Gerald Peijnenburg and a Dutch Jew in hiding wrote and copied *Young Netherlands*.

Peijnenburg handled the distribution, and most of his copies were passed from person to person, ensuring some degree of security.[6]

Slow Growth

The Resistance developed slowly for several reasons. Because of Holland's geographic proximity and cultural ties with Germany, many Dutch were sympathetic to the ideas of German nationalism, and a significant portion of the population joined the Dutch Nazi Party and even the *Wehrmacht*. There were also Dutch civilians who informed on their neighbors.

The swift German victory, combined with Queen Wilhelmina's seeming abandonment of the Dutch population, disillusioned and embittered much of Holland. Many who collaborated really believed that the Germans represented the future and felt that the Nazis success was inevitable. For these citizens, occupation was something merely to be accepted. Ruthless German countermeasures towards any anti-Nazi activity further discouraged active resistance. As the occupation grew more repressive, a backlash against the Germans grew, which was fanned by the government-in-exile.

The government-in-exile-made its presence known through the judicious use of BBC broadcasts, listened to covertly by the Dutch population. Queen Wilhelmina became a symbol of hope to occupied Holland, and Crown Prince Bernhard took an active role in Allied planning for military operations in the Netherlands.

Geography also contributed to the slow growth of the Resistance. The lack of mountainous and forested terrain prevented the establishment of hiding areas for large groups of *maquis*, as was the case in France and Yugoslavia. Moreover, the flat terrain, interdicted by many bodies of water, large and small, restricted movement to the established railroads, road networks, and bridges. These were easily controlled by the Germans, who established checkpoints to prevent complete freedom of movement. Gasoline was scarce, and many Dutch used bicycles for transportation, sometimes riding on the rims because of a shortage of rubber for tires. On the other hand, the Germans were plagued by the incessant sabotage of telephone lines and by damage to the railroads.

> **“By the middle of 1944, there were four major Resistance organizations in Holland.”**

Major Resistance Organizations

By the middle of 1944, there were four major Resistance organizations in Holland. They did not coordinate their activities unless another group's help was absolutely necessary; most of these groups did not answer to a central headquarters. They conducted their operations as they saw fit, and members of these groups often did not realize to which group they belonged. Veterans often did not know the identity of their particular group until after the war. After the Allied landings in France on 6 June 1944, many groups adopted an aggressive Resistance role.

"Central Government Organizations For Help To People In Hiding" (LO) was the most important organization. Its primary goal was the protection and exfiltration of *onkerduikers*. Another activity centered around the coupons used by the Germans and the Dutch Nazi government to ration food and keep tabs on the population. The LO made counterfeit coupons, and it also obtained authentic coupons from loyal Dutch citizens in the employ of the Dutch Nazis. Other groups conducted raids and robberies to steal authentic coupons from government agencies. And some Dutch civilians gave up their own coupons to the LO.

Besides keeping an eye on Dutch collaborators, local LO groups engaged in whatever resistance they could without endangering themselves. Occasionally, the Leegsma family at The Hague was able to use its position in the police force to tip off the LO before the impending arrest of an *onkerduiker* would occur. It was also able to funnel genuine food coupons to the LO.

While the LO maintained a low profile, the "Central Government Fighting Group" (KP) carried out sabotage operations at the local level. Its estimated strength was 550 members nationally, but this figure is probably low. Without central direction, the KP attacked targets of opportunity in and around the hometowns. Sometimes this included the killing of individual German soldiers and Dutch collaborators. But such activities were dangerous. The Germans would crack down on the local population in the locale where the murder occurred; sometimes, they exacted a tit-for-tat retribution. The Germans would also step up their counterintelligence efforts in the area in an attempt to eradicate any underground cells. As a result, the Resistance tended to target railroad tracks, telegraph or telephone lines, German supply points, and motor pools.

The "Council of Resistance" (RVV) was a third organization which engaged in both communications sabotage and protection of *onkerduikers.* Allied planners regarded this group as "sound from the security point of view." With several thousand members, the RVV was in radio contact with the *Bureau Inlichtingen*[7] (BI), the government-in-exile's intelligence service, and had demanded arms and ammunition.

A fourth organization, the "Order of Service" (OD), focused on preparing for the return of a Dutch Government following Holland's liberation. The OD was made up primarily of former Dutch officers and government officials who found themselves supplanted by the Nazis and by Dutch collaborators.[8] Their two main missions were to collect intelligence and develop "plans for the maintenance of administrative services and civil order on the liberation of Holland." Although the OD was thought to have been penetrated, Allied intelligence estimated that most OD cells were still loyal and could be depended on to provide assistance during the liberation of Holland.

A subgroup of the OD, the "Dutch Secret Service" (GDN) functioned as an intelligence agency for the OD. There were also some 20 other intelligence agencies in wartime Holland.[9] Most groups conducted some level of intelligence operations, even if it was only counterintelligence for security purposes. When these groups were organized at the national level, they were divided into regional geographic areas of administration.

At the national level, the National Steunfonds (NSV) was an umbrella financial organization which received money from the government-in-exile

> **"After D-Day, many of the Dutch in the underground grew impatient and wanted to conduct more aggressive operations against the Germans."**

and conducted covert fundraising to finance KP and LO operations.[10] There was some overlap in the personal responsibilities among member of both the local and regional groups. For example, in the Nijmegen district, the LO commander was also the chief of staff of the district OD.[11]

Almost every town of any size had one or more of these groups. It was also possible for one person to belong to more than one group. In some groups, members simply were referred to by nicknames, and their true identities will never be known. Many were named after their group's leader.

The Eindhoven and Nijmegen Undergrounds

There were also other groups, established locally by individual Dutchmen operating with no formal, structured links to other groups. In Eindhoven, there was a group known as the "Partisan Action Nederlands" (PAN). Although it functioned along the lines of the KP, it did not consider itself part of the KP.

PAN was founded by Hoynck van Papendrecnt. He studied engineering at the Technical University in Delft until April 1943, when the Germans closed the Dutch universities and began forcibly relocating Dutch students to Germany, both as a manpower and professional talent pool. Van Papendrecht went into hiding, and he eventually returned to Eindhoven and established the PAN. In June 1944, PAN had reached its full strength of 80 to 100 young men and women. The PAN had reached several small cells operating in the small towns around Eindhoven, including the Group Sander, which worked as a KP and an LO group and was named after its leader.[12]

Margarethe Kelder and her sister were members of this group. They smuggled downed Allied airmen and Dutch *onkerduikers* to a crossing site on the Belgium border, coordinating their activities with a Belgian Resistance group. The female members of the PAN were primarily couriers, but they were also valued intelligence collectors. In early September 1944, Kelder and another female Resistance member were asked to go into the woods near Eindhoven to confirm the presence of a German antiaircraft battery. On the pretext of gathering mushrooms, they conducted their reconnaissance and, when confronted by German guards near the battery, were able to convince them of their innocence.

Another PAN group in a town north of Eindhoven conducted sabotage operations. It put salt in gas and oil tanks of German vehicles and blew up railroad tracks using smuggled explosives provided by mining engineers.[13]

After D-Day, many of the Dutch in the underground grew impatient and wanted to conduct more aggressive operations against the Germans. The PAN did so by conducting raids against, among other targets, the 20- to 30-man German garrison at the Eindhoven airport on 5 September 1944[14]. It also began conducting

a form of psychological warfare; PAN members would approach German soldiers they knew and try to persuade them of the hopelessness of Germany's situation and to surrender. Some PAN members were reported by German soldiers and arrested. The punishment for belonging to a Resistance organization was summary execution.

In June 1944, the PAN set up its headquarters in a house in Eindhoven. Van Papendrecht had little contact with the other groups in the Eindhoven area, including the RVV, which only numbered three of four members, but he was aware of their existence. The PAN leader did conduct some joint activities with them when he felt the operational need for outside assistance. One of his outside contacts was the KP leader in Rotterdam, Jan van Bijnen, whose *non de guerre* was "Frank." "Frank" was his periodic source of weapons and explosives, couriered by such women as Margerethe Kelder and her sister.

To the east of Eindhoven, in the small town of Helmond, there was a KP Resistance group led by Johan Raaymaerkers, a former Dutch artillery captain who was a technical engineer and owned his own factory. One of his members was Hans Bertels, who began distributing an underground newspaper in 1941 in the Helmond area. Bertels's contact was a man named Knaapen, who provided him with the newspapers and occasional operations orders.

South of Eindhoven, in the town of Roermond, was a small LO group consisting of only 15 members. Their headquarters was in a vault in the local cemetery. Anya van Lyssens, later awarded the Military Order of William for her actions in the Resistance, was a member of this group. The group had a radio with which it maintained contact with a Belgian Resistance group and smuggled downed Allied airmen over the border. By September 1944, it was credited with saving the lives of 29 airmen.

> **"The Resistance organizations were part of the largely unknown story of the strategic OSS mission into occupied Holland."**

The Resistance groups in the Eindhoven area had a total of several hundred members. The local GDN was led by Arie Tromp, a director for the Phillips electrical firm office in Eindhoven. His *nom de guerre* was "Harry." By placing their headquarters in the Eindhoven Museum, GDN members were able to come and go without arousing German suspicions. The GDN began receiving taskings and orders from the BI following its establishment in November 1942. Tromp and his agents used the underground electrical cables in the Phillips factory, which also had telephone lines, as their primary means of communications.[15]

There were several underground groups in the Nijmegen area. In the city itself, part of the Resistance activities apparently were centered around the Saint Canisius College. Jules Jansen was an engineering professor at the college and one of the leaders of the local KP. He set up a laboratory in his house for the manufacture of explosives and an indoor firing range in his basement to teach KP members the basics of markmanship.

OSS Involvement

The Resistance organizations were part of the largely unknown story of the strategic OSS mission into occupied Holland. This story essentially began in May 1944, when Lt. Jan Laverge constituted the one-man Netherlands Section of Special Intelligence (SI) of the OSS in London. The American-born son of Dutch émigrés, he had been personally recruited for the job by Col. William Donovan. As planning progressed for the invasion of Europe, Lieutenant Colonel De Vries, the chief of SI, asked Laverge to develop a plan for using an OSS team to assist in the liberation of Holland. On 25 May 1944, Laverge submitted his preliminary plan, which called for two officers and three enlisted men with associated vehicles and communications equipment.

Following the Allied invasion of France, Laverge looked forward to having a chance to operate an OSS mission in Holland similar to the OSS mission codenamed Sussex which had operated in France. In July 1944, the Netherlands Section came under the control of SI's Continental Division. De Vries ordered a resubmission of plans for the liberation of occupied countries, and Laverge reviewed the initial work. The OSS team designated for Holland would come under the control of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) military mission to Holland. The OSS team grew to six officers and eight to 10 enlisted men.

Later that same month, Laverge consulted with the BI and used its contributions for the final plan, submitted on 5 August 1944. Both the BI and OSS approved the mission, which was given the codename Melanie. The Dutch Minister of War also approved the mission, which was to gather intelligence and focus on "transmitting information obtained from the Dutch intelligence nets, trying to recruit agents, and to extending Dutch nets into Germany."[16]

After Laverge got the green light for the mission, he began recruiting soldiers for the team, choosing men he had worked with before in England. The lieutenant also began building up his team to ensure maximum self-sufficiency. In addition to his radio operators and two Dutch BI analysts, he recruited an American Army mechanic, a radio repairman, and a Dutch-American major with no previous intelligence experience. The presence of a major on the team would provide Laverge with enough rank necessary to obtain resources.

Melanie Moves Ahead

As operations on the Continent speeded up, so did Laverge's preparations. The target date for the start of the mission kept getting moved forward, and Laverge began to feel that he would not have enough time to prepare properly. The decision was finally made to deploy an advance team of two Dutch and two American officers not later than 7 September 1944, with the remainder of the team to follow as quickly as possible.

When the advance team arrived in Normandy, it reported to the SHAEF G2 Forward. On 9 September, 1944 Lieutenant Laverge met with a Major Krick of the SHAEF G2. Krick apparently offered little or no guidance to Laverge as to Melanie's intended intelligence gathering priorities and requirements. According to Laverge's report to his OSS superior, Krick only made suggestions, which Laverge developed into the following requirements:

- German unit composition and positions behind the Siegfried Line.
- Location of enemy headquarters of any kind and names of Germans located there.
- Locations of the planning and archival sections of German industrial interests.
- Information on "controlling personalities" at all levels of the Reich.
- Locations of command, control, and communications nodes.

The OSS team was attached and ordered to report to Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery's 21st Army Group. In early September, Laverge moved his team to the Palace Hotel in Brussels, in preparation for deployment into Holland. He also reported in at Montgomery's headquarters.

Operation Market-Garden

In early September 1944, Montgomery, seeking to maintain the momentum of the Allied breakout from Normandy, conceived an operation to outflank the German "West Wall" defensive line. Encouraged by Ultra SIGINT intercepts which portrayed a disintegrating German Army, Montgomery persuaded Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower that his bold plan of forcing a narrow corridor through Holland and establishing a bridgehead across the Rhine River into northern Germany's Ruhr Valley industrial complex held the promise of a German collapse by the end of 1944.

Montgomery's Operation Market-Garden had two parts. He proposed dropping the First Allied Airborne Army to seize seven canal and river bridges in Holland as well as the bridge across the lower Rhine at the Dutch town of Arnhem (Market). Simultaneously, the British XXX Armored Corps would rapidly advance the 60 miles along a narrow road corridor crossing the captured bridges to link up with the airborne forces in Arnhem (Garden). The operation began on 17 September.

The Melanie mission, with no prior coordination with the British XXX Armored Corps, deployed into Holland over the Albert Canal and reached Eindhoven on 21 September 1944. The team established its base of operations in a house at No. 2 Vestdijk Street.

The Dutch telephone network was an extremely vital communications link between Melanie and the Dutch Resistance cells scattered throughout Holland. Using a TR-4 wireless telegraph radio set, the team's radio operators established contact with the OSS SI section in Paris. In addition to the TR-4, the team used a TR-1 for local communications with the Dutch Resistance groups in the Market-Garden area of operations. Even though the team was attached to the 21st Army Group, it apparently did not provide intelligence to Montgomery's G2. Instead, its reporting channel was directly to Paris and the OSS Continental Division of SI. The exclusion of the 21st Army Group G2 from the intelligence reporting chain probably was due to the sensitive,

Members of the Eindhoven Resistance with troops of the 101st Airborne in front of the Eindhoven cathedral. Photo courtesy of the author. (U)

compartmented nature of all OSS missions. The team had no contact with the 101st Airborne Division, whose Market-Garden objective was the seizure of Eindhoven and vital bridges nearby. The only American paratrooper the OSS team saw was a lone GI who wandered past the house one day and asked for a cigarette.

Laverge quickly made contact with Arie Tromp, the chief of the Eindhoven Resistance. With Tromp's assistance, Laverge recruited four Dutch civilians to work as interpreters and telephone operators. A Resistance member named A. Jongbloed was employed as the mission's intelligence and liaison officer with Dutch civilian authorities in Eindhoven. The OSS team used the operational Dutch telephone system to make contact with various Resistance groups throughout Holland. This reporting network began yielding excellent information almost immediately.

The team's first message to SI in Paris, on 21 September 1944, reported that it had begun recruiting possible agents for work behind the German lines.[17] As the Market-Garden battle raged up and down the corridor along "Hell's Highway,"[18] the OSS team continued its intelligence-gathering mission. On 22 September 1944, the team reported the location of the Gestapo headquarters in Kleve, Germany, a border town just east of Nijmegen, and the location of the telephone exchange there. This information was passed via the telephone network by Resistance members. A report dated 24 September 1944 from a

PAN Resistance members escorting German POWs during Market-Garden. Photo courtesy of the author. (U)

"reliable source" stated that, as of 22 September, all "troops leaving Rotterdam, except demolitions squads." It also reported on other concentrations of enemy troops and artillery.[19]

In addition to the Melanie operation, which was to provide strategic intelligence on the situation throughout Holland, OSS/SOE Jedburgh[20] teams deployed with each Allied airborne division during Market-Garden. The Jedburghs worked closely with their respective division commanders and staff. These teams performed combined civil affairs and unconventional warfare missions in much the same manner as latter-day special forces units do, but they were primarily concerned with obtaining tactical intelligence provided by Resistance members.

During Market-Garden, intelligence supplied by the various Resistance networks, because of its noncompartmented nature, was passed through the Jedburgh teams to the various tactical commanders. They obtained information on the composition and disposition of German forces, as well as information on terrain and the conditions of the bridges. Once the paratroopers were on the ground, this information flow continued. Some of the Resistance cells were aware in some form of Market-Garden before its execution, but the decentralized nature of the underground network guaranteed that not everyone would know the time and place of the attack. As Allied parachutes began blossoming, those previously unaware of the operation reacted by mobilizing their cells and recovering arms caches.

During the operation, some Resistance members carried out independent actions. Others actively sought out airborne soldiers and attached themselves to any unit that would take them. In cases where their loyalties were suspect, Resistance members were presented to the Jedburgh teams for vetting. Once this was done, the Dutch were farmed out to different units as the need arose.

Resistance members and 101st Airborne troops consulting over a map near Eindhoven. Photo courtesy of the author. (U)

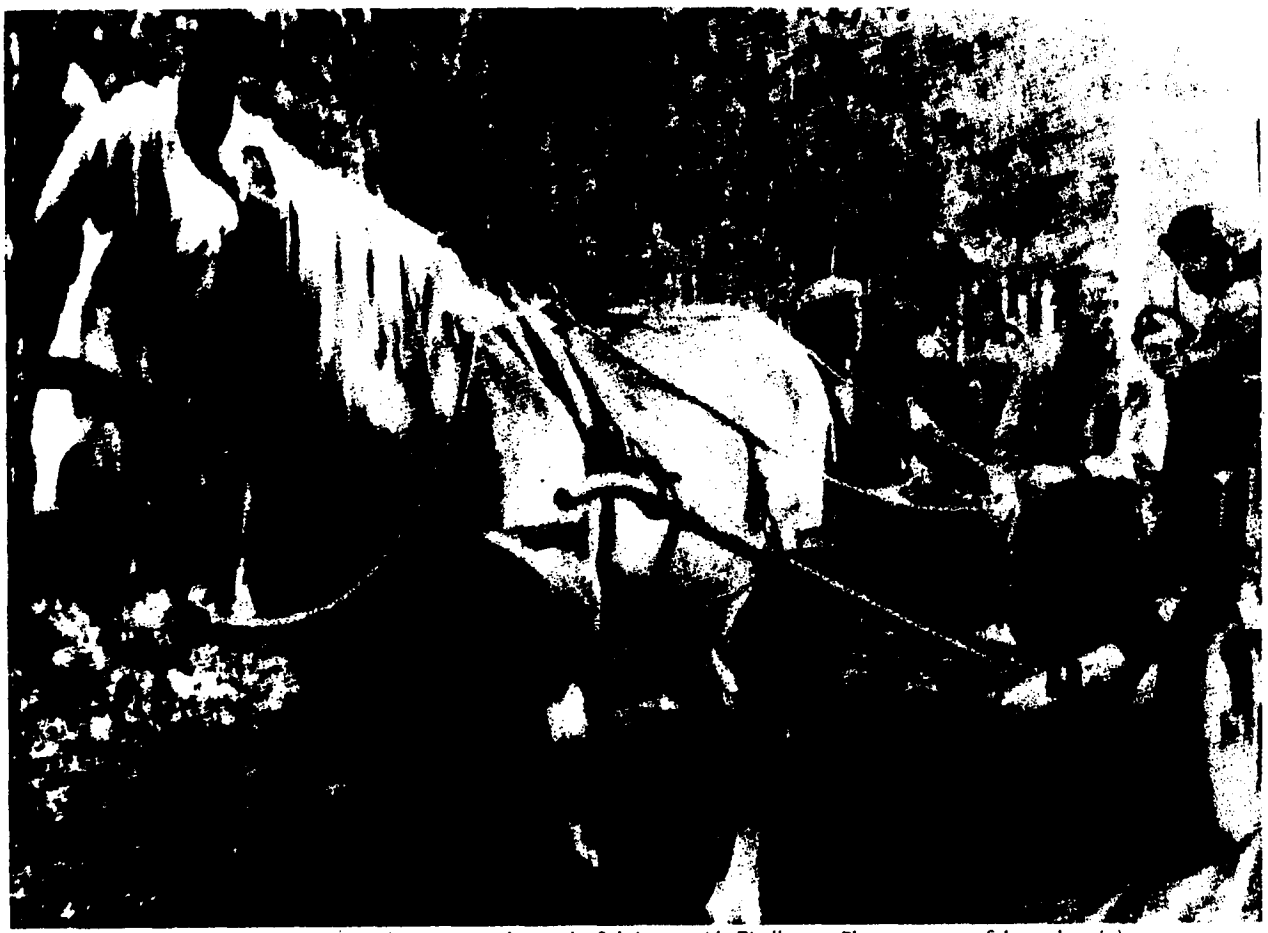
Jedburgh Team Claude, attached to the British 1st Airborne Division, was too small to conduct effective operations. One four-man team per brigade would have been enough, but not one team for the entire division. The splitting of the team had disastrous consequences, placing the entire responsibility for the vetting and administration of the available Resistance on the junior member of Team Claude, Lieutenant Knottenbelt

The British plan for using the Resistance fell apart after Colonel Barlow, the officer in charge of civil affairs and use of the Resistance in the Arnhem area, was killed. Dutch naval commander Wolters was attached to the British division, but his stated mission was focused on Dutch civil affairs after the liberation of Arnhem. Nothing was ever planned about his actions or responsibilities during the battle. His ad hoc actions during the battle demonstrated his abilities. If Wolters's responsibilities had been broadened before D-Day, he could have been even more effective.

The communications failures suffered by Market forces, especially the 1st Airborne Division, are legendary. Team Claude's loss of communications occurred because the team carried only one radio on the operation, which was lost during the initial drop on D-Day. Team Edward's inability to communicate with Team Claude and the physical isolation of the two teams prevented a clear assessment of the situation at Arnhem.

Intelligence Failure

Market-Garden ranks among the most serious intelligence failures of the war. Critiques of the operation have focused on the overly optimistic interpretations of SIGINT as well as



A Dutch commando transporting 101st Airborne troops during the fighting outside Eindhoven. Photo courtesy of the author. (U)

on the failure of planners to credit airborne reconnaissance indications of recent German armored reinforcements in the Arnhem area.

Similarly, the operational planners, in their haste to meet Montgomery's deadlines, paid too little attention to route, terrain, and weather assessments; even these assessments suffered from insufficient basic intelligence information. Drop zones, especially at Arnhem, were ill considered, and estimates of the road systems' ability to support the armored column were critically flawed, though this latter shortcoming was as much a planning failure as it was an intelligence failure.

The Dutch Resistance was not alerted to the Arnhem drop because British intelligence believed the Germans had penetrated their Dutch networks. If the British had heeded word from their agents in Arnhem, they would have been alerted to the presence of the two panzer divisions.

Carrying On

After Market-Garden, the Melanie mission continued to collect military, economic, and industrial intelligence. A detailed report dated 14 December 1944 provided the specifications on a Mauser small-arms factory in the town of Oberndorf, Germany. The team also provided reports regarding German atrocities committed against Allied prisoners and Dutch civilians.

The unleashing of German secret weapons such as jet aircraft and the V-2 rocket made information about these weapons extremely critical. Melanie responded by providing information on the location of V-2 launching sites with detailed

A Bridge Too Far

Operation Market-Garden quickly turned into a military disaster. Although the American airborne divisions eventually achieved their objectives—the 82nd Airborne parachuted into Grave and Groesbeek and controlled the strategic river crossings while the 101st Airborne seized the bridges at Eindhoven and Veghel, but not before the Germans were able to demolish one. The British lst Airborne Division, reinforced by a Polish airborne unit, dropped too far from its target, the Arnhem bridge. Furthermore, German strength in Arnhem was substantially greater than anticipated in the intelligence estimates. The lightly armed paratroopers found themselves up against two SS panzer divisions recently refitting in the area. Suffering from the loss in the airdrop of critical vehicles, artillery, and communications, the British/Polish force failed to seize the bridge despite a heroic fight.

The situation in Arnhem became increasingly perilous. The British armored column which was to break through to relieve the airborne forces fell behind its overly optimistic schedule as the tanks crawled along the narrow, congested roadway. The operation ended less than 10 days later, with the British and Polish airborne troops surrounded in Arnhem and the armored column stalled 10 miles away.

The British were able to pull back some of their forces, but not before the Germans killed or captured more than 7,000 paratroopers; the two American airborne divisions fighting along the corridor lost more than 3,500. With the debacle in Arnhem, hopes of an early end to the war quickly faded. In the words of the British airborne Commander General Boy Browning, Market-Garden was "a bridge too far."

sketches. Information on industrial infrastructure was also provided. A 3 March 1945 report stated that V-2 parts were being manufactured in the Croecke textile factory in Hohenlimburg, Germany.

In late December, coinciding with the German attack through the Ardennes, Melanie developed intelligence indicating a secondary, supplementary German attack across the Maas River. Major Van der Gracht reported to his superior, Philip Horton, that in the period of a few days more than 30 German commandos wearing British uniforms had been captured in Eindhoven, some only a few blocks from the team's quarters. Van der Gracht also reported that Eindhoven had received numerous V-2 attacks "with some accuracy." The threat became so ominous that Van der Gracht made plans for the destruction of those files which could not be evacuated.

On 8 February 1945, Melanie reported that Field Marshal Goering had established his headquarters in a train with three coaches at the Niederaula train station and that he had been there for several months. Dutch intelligence agents were routinely able to report the locations of regimental and higher headquarters along with descriptions of vehicle and uniform markings. Reports on German units were usually able to identify the name of the commander and sometimes what decorations he wore. This type of information came

from underground sources living in the occupied towns and villages.

SI also tasked Melanie to conduct battle damage assessment reports which were forwarded on the results of Allied bombing raids in the Netherlands. Again, such reports could only be obtained through eyewitness accounts provided by Dutch Resistance members and Melanie agents.

A 24 December 1944 memorandum from Lieutenant Laverge states that the team had recruited nine Dutch citizens—five observers and four wireless telegraph operators—and was training them in Eindhoven to penetrate German lines and collect information.[21] Armed with only their wits and the TR-1 radio, these Dutch tried, with varying degrees of success, to accomplish their assigned missions. From September 1944 until May 1945, there were several secondary missions, involving at least one agent. These missions involved contacting various Resistance groups and establishing radio contact between the groups and Melanie for intelligence-gathering purposes. Some of the agents did not survive.

Operations in occupied Holland were extremely difficult and dangerous for Melanie's Dutch agents. After an OSS bureaucrat had recommended shutting down the operation because of a perceived lack of results, Laverge responded angrily: "Frankly, if you knew about conditions in Holland like we do here, you don't see how the hell those people [Dutch agents] can accomplish what we are asking."[22] The lack of archival reports on the success or failure of these missions makes it impossible to evaluate them.

Melanie remained in Eindhoven for the duration of war. Besides obtaining intelligence on the strategic and tactical military situation, the team provided economic, political, and social intelligence on large and small urban areas and on rural communities. Melanie was also able to put together a database on Dutch collaborators.

From 25 to 31 March 1945, Melanie sent 251 reports, messages, and maps/sketches to the OSS/ETO SI section. From September 1944 to April 1945, Melanie sent approximately 3,200 courier reports and 750 cable messages to the OSS SI section in Paris. According to an afteraction report written by the SHAEF G-2 in 1945 evaluating Dutch intelligence production and reporting, the Melanie mission "supplied more reports for *SHAEF's Daily Digest* than any other OSS mission from September 1944 to May 1945.[23]

Undeserved Obscurity

Despite its achievements, Melanie has hardly been mentioned in most OSS histories. The only sources on Melanie are surviving participants and the declassified OSS records at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. The records include daily situation reports, financial accounting records, operational reports, financial accounting records, operational reports, and debriefs of Dutch agents sent behind the lines. But there are important gaps in the records, as some documents have been pulled from the files and reclassified.

But at least the SHAFE G2 gave some credit where it was justly due, when he reported that Melanie provided the most accurate and complete intelligence picture for its assigned area of any intelligence operation during the war.[24] As he indicated, Melanie's efforts and the cooperation and sacrifices of its Dutch Resistance agents contributed substantially to Allied intelligence operations in Holland at a crucial stage.

NOTES

1. B. H. Liddell-Hart, *History of the Second World War* (New York; G. P. Putnam's Sons; 1970), p.65.

2. E. H. Lockridge, *Set Europe Ablaze* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1967), p. 247.

3. Gordon Wright, *The Ordeal of Total War, 1939-1945* (New York: Harper Torchbook ed.; 1968), p. 145.

4. Photographic displays in the National War and Resistance Museum, Overloon, Holland.

5. The BBC also broadcast messages and codewords targeted at various underground groups. Some messages would be orders to conduct certain operations. Others were for the purpose of notifying particular groups that arms and supply airdrops would occur at a predetermined location.

6. Author's interview of Gerard H. J. M. Peijnenburg, Dutch Secretary of the Army and Resistance member; Wassenaar, Holland, 18 June 1996.

7. Ultimately, the BI was responsible for establishing a network of intelligence agents inside occupied Holland. The BI also maintained communications with the Dutch Resistance, providing the Allies with valuable HUMINT.

8. Author's interview of Hoynck van Papendrecht, PAN founder and Stoottrophen veteran; Eindhoven,

Holland; 14 June 1996. John W. Hackett, *I Was a Stranger*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.; 1978); p. 53. Sjors DeKruijff, "We Had Spread a Bed for the Allies." Unpublished monograph, obtained from the Hartenstein Airborne Museum, Arnhem, Holland, 1996. DeKruijff's monograph details Resistance activities in the Arnhem area before and during Market-Garden. Much of his material is drawn from veterans' first-hand accounts on file at the State Archives in Arnhem.

9. Authors's interview of Gerard H.J.M. Peijnenburg, Dutch Secretary of the Army and LO member; Wassenaar, Holland, 18 June 1996.

10. Author's interview of Leo Heinsman, LO member; Beek-Ubbergen, Holland, 18 June 1996.

11. Author's interview of Gerard H.J.M. Peininenburg, 18 June 1996.

12. Author's interview of Hoynck van Papendrecht; Eindhoven, Holland, 14 June 1996.

13. Author's interview of Margarethe Kelder-Groom; Eindhoven, Holland; 14-15 June 1996.

14. Van Papendrecht was against the random killing of lone German soldiers. He seems to have regarded this as ungentlemanly and serving no purpose.

15. Author's interview of Jan Laverge, Captain, USA (Retired); OSS veteran; Richmond, VA., 2 November 1995.

16. NARA RG 226, Entry 190, Box 214, Folder 162. Deployment Order, Melanie Mission, undated.

17. NJARA RG 226, Entry # 148, Box 26, Folder 378, Melanie Weekly Report.

18. XXX Corps' advance (the Garden portion of the operation) to link up with the three airborne divisions at Eindhoven, Nijmegen, and Arnhem was restricted to a narrow two-lane highway and the areas the paratroop units had secured. This road won the nickname "Hell's Highway" for the ferocious fighting between the *Wehrmacht* and Allied units.

19. NARA RG 226, Entry # 148, Box 26, Folder 378, Melanie Daily Report, dated 24 Sept. 1944.

20. OSS/SOE Jedburgh teams were joint Allied special operations teams which infiltrated into occupied territory to recruit and train local Resistance organizations for strategic intelligence operations and sabotage.

21. NARA RG 226, Entry # 146, Box 26, Folder 384, Memorandum dated 24 December 1944, Subject: Agent Recruitment, Melanie Mission.

22. Letter from Capt. Jan Laverge to Captain Alden, SI Staff, 27 January 1945, NARA RG 226, Entry # 190, Box 214, Folder 162.

23. Memorandum from Capt. Harry A. Rositzke, deputy chief, Steering Division; to Philip Horton, chief, Steering Division; "Evaluation of Dutch Intelligence Production," Sept. 1944-May 1945, dated 9 June 1945.

24. *Ibid.*