

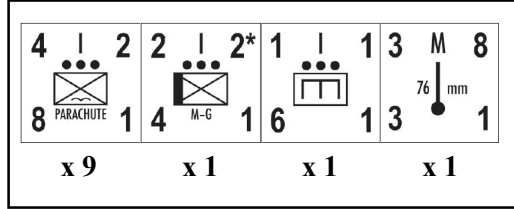


# British 1st Airborne Division

September, 1944

1st Parachute Brigade

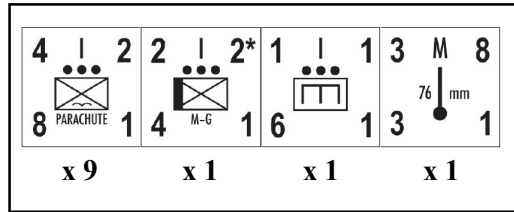
Parachute Battalion x 3



1st, 2nd, and 3rd Parachute Btns.

4th Parachute Brigade

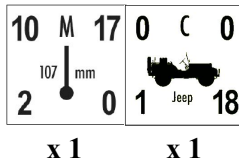
Parachute Battalion x 3



10th, 11th, and 156th Parachute Btns.

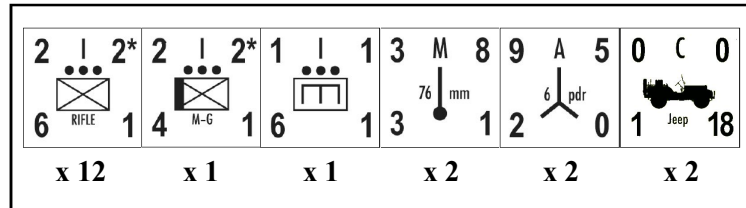
Landed on day 2.

1st Airlanding Brigade

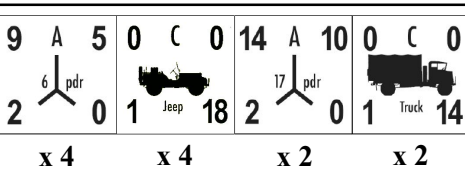


1st Btn Border Rgt, 7th Btn King's Own Scottish Borderers, 2nd Btn South Staffordshires.

Airlanding Battalion x 3

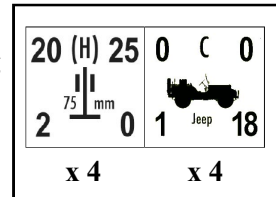


1st Airlanding Anti-Tank Battery

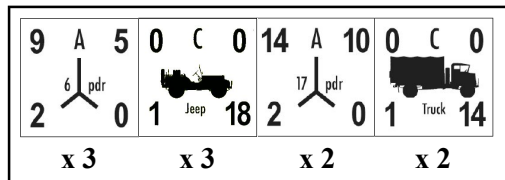


Trucks represent stripped down Morris Quads airlanded in gliders to tow the 17 pdr guns.

1st Airlanding Light Artillery Regiment

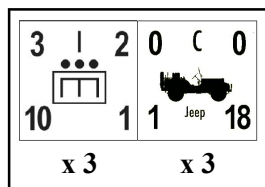


2nd Airlanding Anti-Tank Battery



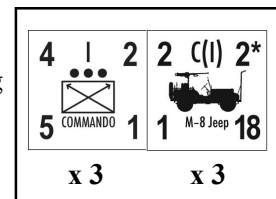
Trucks represent stripped down Morris Quads airlanded in gliders to tow the 17 pdr guns.

9th Airborne Field Engineers

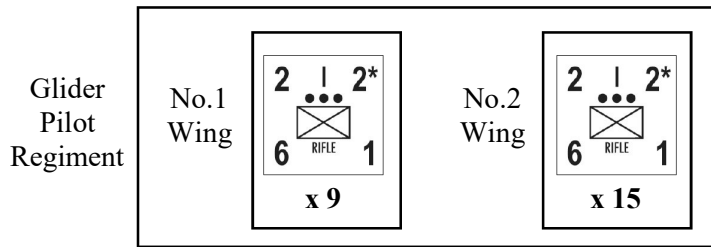


These guys supposed to accompany the Reece Squadron in the race to Arnhem but somehow got left behind.

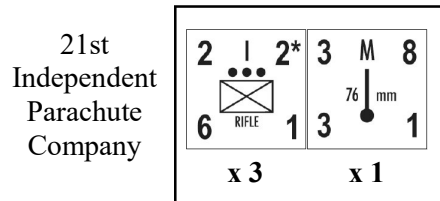
1st Airlanding Reece Squadron



Hand-picked elite squadron with experience at special operations.



British glider pilots trained as infantry and organized into their own regiment. Though usually kept out of harm's way due to their valuable pilot skills, these guys were pressed into front line service in the Oosterbeek perimeter.



For their part of Operation Market, the British 1st Airborne Division was given the primary task of capturing the road bridge across the Lower Rhine at the south end of Arnhem. If all went according to plan, XXX Corps would arrive to relieve them within 4 days.

The only nearby ground deemed solid enough for a major glider landing was nearly 8 miles west of Arnhem, north of the Lower Rhine. Due to a shortage of aircraft, only 2 brigades out of 3 could be landed on the first day, with the other brigade landing on day 2, and the Polish Brigade landing on day 3. The 1st Airlanding Brigade (in gliders) was tasked with defending the drop zones so that the following drops, including the other parachute brigade and additional supplies, could land safely. The 1st Airlanding Recce Squadron, a special company of jeeps with machine guns, with a company of engineers attached, was to immediately race to Arnhem and seize the bridge before it could be blown and begin removing the explosives. Meanwhile the 3 battalions of the 1st Parachute Brigade were to march on 3 different parallel routes to Arnhem and strengthen the hold on it. The 1st Battalion was to advance on the main road in the middle behind the jeep squadron straight into Arnhem. On the southern route, the river road, John Frost's 2nd Battalion was assigned the additional objective of securing the rail bridge at Oosterbeek, 2 1/2 miles west of Arnhem. A company was then expected to cross to the south side of the river and march west to the south end of the Arnhem bridge, and help to secure it. The 3rd Brigade was to advance on the northerly route and capture the northern part of Arnhem and the high ground to the north of it. This would overlook the main route for German reinforcements and possibly allow the capture of the nearby airfield so that the 52nd Lowland Division could be flown in and deployed to help expand the perimeter.

The plan immediately began to unravel as the jeep squadron was ambushed and halted before reaching Arnhem. The two northern battalions ran into a hastily organized German defensive line and were also halted. Only Frost's battalion in the south was able to continue its advance as it easily brushed past light resistance. At Oosterbeek, Frost sent a company to secure the railroad bridge there but it was blown as soon as they approached it. This company ran into heavy German resistance shortly after and never did return to the battalion. The rest of the 2nd Battalion marched on and into Arnhem, arriving by the end of the day, and occupied the houses overlooking the northern end of the bridge. They had caught the Germans flat-footed and troops on their way to Nijmegen had still been using the bridge. Stubborn German defenders south of the river, however, prevented Frost's under-strength battalion from actually capturing the bridge.

As German resistance stiffened, it became impossible for the rest of the 1st Airborne to push west into Arnhem. They eventually retreated all their elements into a pocket around Oosterbeek and were forced to hang on for their lives against increasing German attacks. Frost's group, reinforced by only a few small fragments that somehow got through, was never more than 700 men and were unable to hold their position in Arnhem without major help. After a heroic 4 day stand, and with most of them becoming casualties, they were finally overwhelmed, thus ending any chance the 1st Airborne had of capturing the bridge at Arnhem. On the night of Day 9/10 of the 4 day operation, over 2000 survivors of the 1st Airborne were evacuated across the river at Oosterbeek by the 43rd Infantry, assisted by Canadian engineers, with the rest (mostly wounded and medical personnel) surrendering to the Germans.