The Other Side

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The back garden of the Hartenstein Hotel in Oosterbeek, which was used as headquarters for British and Polish airborne forces at Arnhem.

Just behind these British soldiers are the hotel tennis courts, where German prisoners were kept.

“When we were south of El St, approaching the Nijmegen bridge, we came to an isolated house. The whole family, about 15 to 18 children and adults, were hiding in the cellar. Our company commander, a 26-28 year-old lieutenant, the same who had commanded us in Arnhem, was a man without feelings, very cold, very hard, but weak - not strong. We all disliked him.

“47 The worst sight was the Hartenstein Hotel. It looked terribly bleak and desolate. The ground around it was ploughed up. This made a very strong impression on me. There were so many things

I had an experience I shall never forget. I suddenly saw a head duck down a cellar. It wore an English steel helmet with camouflage on it. My immediate reaction was to toss a hand

“I raised my head over the trench and got shot in the cheek. Then I was hit by shrapnel in the shoulder. In the dressing station there was an English paratrooper a POW still wearing his Red Beret. The orderly said, ‘You’re going back to the rear. Take this Britisher...
"I heard a spine-chilling cry from someone yelling 'Gliders!' At this moment we were all looking toward the east. The gliders were coming down behind us. I turned around and to my amazement I saw just over the tree tops planes releasing gliders which then sighed and whistled down on the heath. I felt sick to my stomach. I unbuckled my belt and went behind the bushes. I did a very human thing. While crouching, relieving myself, I reflected on the situation."

Major Sepp Kraffi,
SS Panzer Grenadier Training Battalion
"When we were south of El St, approaching the Nijmegen bridge, we came to an isolated house. The whole family, about 15 to 18 children and adults, were hiding in the cellar. Our company commander, a 26-28 year-old lieutenant, the same who had commanded us in Arnhem, was a man without feelings, very cold, very hard, but weak - not strong. We all disliked him. He ordered me to shoot this Dutch family, saying, 'These pigs will betray us and tomorrow we'll be dead. Why? Because they'll run over to the British and tell them where we are. Then the British will turn their artillery on us. Take care of them so that they can't talk.'

"So I ordered these people out of the cellar and marched them to the edge of the woods. Then I told them to scam, to wait in the woods because Montgomery was coming and the Germans would not be sticking around for long. I did not make a report to my commander and he did not ask me whether I had carried out his orders. I think he may not really have meant me to kill them and was hoping that I hadn't. We had all been under a strain for days and people do strange things in such circumstances."

Private Horst Weber, JOth SS
Panzer Div
"Worrowski's battalion lost all officers but one lieutenant and half his troops in the attack on Oosterbeek. These insanely high loses are caused by a Colonel Schremm who was in charge there and prevented the use of the few heavy weapons in order not to endanger a few people. The idiot prefers to have hundreds of soldiers shot."

Colonel Fuliriede,
Commander of Replacement and Training Parachute Brigade
"Hermann Goering"
"I raised my head over the trench and got shot in the cheek. Then I was hit by shrapnel in the shoulder. In the dressing station there was an English paratrooper a POW still wearing his Red Beret. The orderly said, 'You're going back to the rear. Take this Britisher with you.'

"Although I had abandoned everything in the trench, I still had the British pistol in my belt. With the Britisher in front of me, I set out with the pistol at his back. But on the way I became weaker and weaker from the loss of blood. The Tommy picked me up in his arms and, half fainting, I kept my pistol at his chest all the way back. We both laughed it was so silly."

*Private Helmut Bang, 1st Independent Engineering Battalion*
"I personally witnessed the fighting in Oosterbeek when I paid a visit to Kampfgruppe Spindler one morning. I stayed the whole morning and at the end of the morning I was convinced that I had never seen such tough fighting in my whole career as a soldier. Urquhart's division was the best division I have ever fought. It had excellent NCOs. As for Frost's battalion, I would say it was almost abnormal, it fought so hard but also very fair. It was a hard fight and a very bloody one.

*Lieutenant General Wilhelm Bittrech, 2nd SS Panzer Div.*
"At first we thought the Dutch had betrayed us and revealed our headquarters. We were convinced that the attack was to capture Model. We were terribly unprepared. But we were also shocked at the tactical error of the British 1st Airborne. On Sunday evening Model and the HQ realized the objective of the attack. On the basis of reports we knew that Model was not the objective and we saw the whole plan."

Oberleutnant Gustav Sedeihaus; Army Group B
The back garden of the Hartenstein Hotel in Oosterbeek, which was used as headquarters for British and Polish airborne forces at Arnhem.

Just behind these British soldiers are the hotel tennis courts, where German prisoners were kept.
"The worst sight was the Hartenstein FHHotel]. It looked terribly bleak and desolate. The ground around it was ploughed up. This made a very strong impression on me. There were so many things scattered around. Abandoned bits of equipment. I went inside where things looked even worse. In the cellar, in this low room, were still bodies. The place stank of carbon and medicine. The remains of medical supplies still lay there. There was so much debris, broken glass, splintered beams, etc.

"I went out behind the Hartenstein to the tennis courts. That was where the German prisoners had been kept. There were not many, fewer than a hundred. They had not been given spades by the British to dig trenches and had dug miserable holes with spoons, hands, whatever they could think of. Some had been wounded and a couple killed.

_Lieutenant Colonel Walter Harzei; 9th SS Panzer Div._
I had an experience I shall never forget. I suddenly saw a head duck down a cellar. It wore an English steel helmet with camouflage on it. My immediate reaction was to toss a hand grenade through the cellar window. Then I heard a voice yelling, "No, no!" and the sound of moans. I had pulled the pin on my grenade so I tossed it in the direction of another building which I knew to be occupied by the enemy. Then I went down into this cellar, alert for any trap, and entered saying, "Hands up!" The cellar was full of wounded English soldiers. They were all very frightened and excited so I said, "It's okay, it's good." I took them prisoner and had them taken back of the lines to be tended. I was very glad that I had not thrown that grenade in there. These wounded men were quite helpless and many had to be carried away.

_Private Alfred Ringsdoif 10th SS Panzer Div._
"I could see the strategic implications immediately. The point of the operation was simply they had to grab the bridges before they were destroyed. My first operation in Holland was the same thing:
I had to get the bridges and intact. It's part of a classical airborne operation that when you take a bridge you must land on it or near it. If I had been [U.S. Gen.] Brereton, I would not have divided the airborne troops. I would have placed the greater proportion of troops on Arnhem: 1 1/2 divisions at Arnhem and the remainder at Nijmegen. Urquhart took my experience in Crete too seriously. Brereton should have ordered one battalion south of Arnhem: they were dropped too far away. Then, I would never have withdrawn. I would have fought on with all the losses already.

"I would have taken 200 tanks and smashed through between Liege and the north coast. There was no need to go by air. We had nothing from 4/17 there was nothing in the gap. They could have gotten right through. The war would have been over by December."

Colonel General Kurt Student, 1st Parachute Army