

going on to their left (the west). Major Ginder asked the British squadron commander to send some tanks with him so that he could rush the Germans and halt the standoff. The British officer said that his orders were to go north up the road and unless he got orders from the British HQ to their rear, he couldn't help us. Major Ginder took out his .45 pistol and told the British officer, "This is your order." The officer took his squadron and followed Ginder back to the Best bridge. About 2:15 in the afternoon, we suddenly heard the rumble of tanks and a few minutes later, we saw some British tanks and troops coming through the pine tree lanes from the west, moving past us into a small clearing, and then turned south toward the German lines. They were mainly Cromwell tanks, and with attached British infantry, disappeared through the trees. Suddenly there was the most terrific rifle and MG fire, interspersed with the dull thuds of the tank guns for what seemed like a long time. It was a good thing that we were well dug-in because it sounded like a heavy rainstorm with the bullets and shells whistling through the trees; leaves and trees fell as if cut by a scythe.

Suddenly, one of the tanks came roaring back with its gun turret completely shot off. The MG fire was so heavy at times, that it sounded like the rushing of the wind. The Germans were trying to stop the 5 tanks which were roaring down on them through the pine woods. Now the MG fire seemed to be coming from further to the south and west. About this time, C-47's were bringing in more glider resupply, and they were still receiving heavy German 20mm AA and MG fire, and even mortar fire on their LZ. Our troops moved forward to clean out the Germans and noticed that our uniforms (M43) acted well as camouflage.

About 3:45, firing was still going on further away, but we didn't see the British tanks aside from the damaged one, which had come back earlier. Once the firing stopped, the Germans came-in by the hundreds, their hands raised, walking down the sandy road, going east to the DZ. We didn't leave our trenches, so that they wouldn't notice that they outnumbered us by far. Some Military Police came up about this time and the team guided them to an empty corner of the DZ where I remembered some of my earlier teaching at Camp Ritchie. If you capture a large number of PWs, first separate the officers from the men and put them under special heavy guard, so they can't give orders to their men. Then ask for the "Dienst Alteste Unteroffizier" to come forward. (oldest in rank NCO). An old, grizzled Sgt came forward, jumped to attention and saluted, and reported his name and rank. As previously taught, I ordered him to assemble the men according to unit and rank on the field. He roared out the commands, and suddenly there was silence and quick assembling of the Germans into orderly groups, lined-up by rank and file. Then he told them to have them sound off and report to him, one unit at a time, as to unit, and number of NCOs and EM. I couldn't believe how beautifully it went, and in a matter of minutes, as they reported, I wrote down the whole group. The PWs were then marched back toward Zon; almost 1,500 PWs were taken that afternoon."



Above is a single frame from a 16mm color movie shot by Captain Frank Lillyman on 18 September, 1944, as members of RHQ and Service Companies of the 502 marched an estimated 12-1500 German POWs east

toward Zon from the Best battleground. Note that all the visible prisoners are wounded. Len Swartz and Rusty Quirici were among the guards. Len told me that P-47 fighters made a couple of strafing passes at the marching prisoners, causing some deaths and much panic and near catastrophe, as the cooperative and organized group of prisoners threatened to scatter. But order was maintained. Dick Ladd of S-2 recalled in his account of this battle that two of the British tanks which entered the woods earlier, were equipped with flamethrowers.



Above is another view of a small percentage of the prisoners taken on 18 September, 1944 near Best, Holland. Thanks to Joe Pangerl, Len Swartz, Oreste Quirici, and Dick Ladd for contributing to this story. (Copied from website of Mark Bando. <http://www.101airborneww2.com/warstories2.html>)

Paratrooper's Prayer

Kind Heavenly Father, our Great God who invites --- "Follows Me" May we with Stalwart hearts declare Thee Lord of all. We ask Thy Holy blessing to rest upon all paratroopers who are on the path to secure and sustain peace. May we be ready at all times to boldly stand up for thy truth and ways and be steadfastly hooked up to Thy Law and Gospel. May a primary part of our equipment be a confident faith in Thee as we stand in the door of all missions in life. May the canopy of Thy love shield and keep us now and forever. We go in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

(Prayer copied from website of 173rd Airborne.)

Correction of the names of the people in this picture from the Snowbird Reunion, February 2006.



L - R: Joan Nivens, Harry Nivens, Jacob Brusse, Ed Mobley, George Koskimaki, June Hennessey, Joe Hennessey, Betty Hill, Peter van de Wal, Trudy van Zelderen, Hank van Zelderen, Dueike Brusse, and Warren Shook.

Adams

HANK PHIL

Neil Sweeney

Sid ATKINS

Hugh O. Roberts
S-1

Plitt
S-3

JORDAN
RAYMOND Hunter
E. Co.

WAGSTAFF
EARL Hendricks
E Co

Shepard
Gayden

Hughes
RHA DEMO

Campbell
White

Sweeney
COLT

ATKINS

Thorn
RHA
RAY
S

CARL W. HARRIS

TRIMBLE
D Co.
S-4

RAINEY
D Co.

B. McKernan
E Co.

BUCK DICKSON
2D BN

LONG

John P. Stopka
KIA

Neslo



Rodriguez

Whispering
Nickels

Combs

DELUERY

Rogers

VAN

SEXTON

Deleo

Pierson

Sigfried

CAUGHAN

Rance
COTTON
2D BN
815

CAHILL

KATZ

Combs
KIA

Rogers

Harshner
Co. I

Dahlin

HANCOCK
CEO

Nickels
A Co.

Agce

Ruggins
2D
BN

JR
MARTIN
2D BN

Bob
JONES
F&H

HAIRE
H Co.

McIntyre

JW
RUGHAN
KIA

Ginder
"Pinkay"

Sutcliffe
XO
1st & 2D
BNS

Robert
COLE
C/MH
3RD BN

CHAPPLIN
2D BN

McEntee

Moscler

Michaelis

SHIPLEY

Doug
DAVIDSON
surgeon



CARP

oliver

Barrett
"poop"

Borden

STRASSER

HANN

WAX

SIMMONS
H co.
2D
BN
C.O.

Kindernecht

CARP
B Co.

WALTER
RICE

DENNY

Archer

CRAIG
H co.

Cleveland

Ramey

Woodwin

HANBURY

McNeely

MANNING

BRILL
F Co.

Stoner

LAWS

Clements
G co.
S-2

BOH

BOLAND
1961