

OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

BY SUSIE WOOD

It was called Operation Market Garden during WWII, when the United States and its allies attempted to take back much of the Netherlands that the Nazi had inhabited for two years. Those two years were a frightening time for the Hollanders that lived there, one particular seminary student, but I am sure he was not alone. It was also a frightening time for the men of the 101st Airborne, which included my dad.

My dad was trained at Fort Benning, Georgia. This is where the 101st and 82nd Airborne are trained. We now know them by Rangers and Green Beret. It wasn't my dad's first dream. Dad wanted to be a pilot. An opportunity came up when boot camp was over. Where most of the 101st were sent to Normandy, Dad went to flight training. His idea was that it made much more sense to sit in the pilot's seat of the cockpit, then jump out an open door into enemy territory. Or anytime for that matter. Dad told me that "you've got to be crazy to jump out of a perfectly good airplane."



ALLAN WOOD IS BACK CENTER, TALLEST, WITH SKEWED HELMET

D-day proved a hardship on the 101st. Dad's desires were rerouted from flight school back to the 101st and on his way to Nijmegen, Holland.

Operation Market Garden is the largest military airborne operation to date, with more than 34,000 paratroopers conducting static line paradrops and glider landings into the Netherlands to seize and secure key bridges and terrain that would allow for entrance into Germany.

One man, a seminary student, believed he was living in the last days of his life when he came out to witness hope. They sky was raining paratroopers. There was hope for tomorrow.



Dad told me that once on the ground, they went door to door clearing out German soldiers. These men in Nazi uniforms were now POW's. Dad didn't speak of these days easily, but he did share a special memory of one man. He was a German soldier who had gotten in the way of a bullet. It was too late to take him to the POW camp, so dad took him up to the room where he was sleeping that night. Dad dressed the wound and got 'wasser', the glass of water asked for by his ward. Dad spoke German, so he was able to easily communicate with his captive. What felt special to me was the fact that these two young soldiers slept on the floor next to each other, 's rifle

leaned up against the wall, one German and one American, knowing that they had survived another day of war together. said he didn't know what happened to this man, but I know that always carried him in a very special place in his heart.

instilled in me that he was fighting in an uniform and the ideals it stood for, not the person in the uniform. His work wasn't done. There was another battle yet to be fought for . It was known as the Battle of the Bulge. received a bronze star and purple heart from this battle, but that is another story.



**ALLAN WOOD (1921-2017) AND FATHER ARNOLD
SCHOFFELMEER (1922-2011)**

Many years had passed, and much life lived when at 89 dad found himself with some heart trouble that took him to Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, WA. He was in a double room and there was a man in the bed next to his. Dad introduced himself. When Father Arnold Schoffelmeer introduced himself in return, Dad sensed a Dutch accent and asked him where he was from. When Father told him Nijmegen Holland, Dad clicked his tongue and pulled back his cheek in amazement. "I jumped into Nijmegen during the war.

The tight connection was made. You see Father Schoffelmeer was a seminary student that was sure it had come to the end of his life when he saw the 101st glide from the sky.

Dad visited with Father many times in the next few months of Father's life.

It was only a short time later that Father Arnold Schoffelmeer died in March of 2011. They had shared a very tight bond in a short period of time. I don't know all the stories that Dad and Father shared, but Dad was honored to speak at his memorial service. A very special moment in time for my dad.