



Airborne Forces Heritage Trail

A Feasibility Study produced for
South Kesteven District Council



South Kesteven Airborne Forces Trail

Introduction

Our study has assessed how feasible it is to create a new airborne forces heritage trail, bringing to life the largely untold WW2 story of South Kesteven's unique role in the iconic 1944 military milestones of both Operation Overlord (D-Day) and Operation Market Garden (the battle for the bridges to Arnhem).

Both were major events in the allied liberation of Western Europe and the study examines how to tell the story of South Kesteven as the place where so many Allied airborne soldiers trained for action and departed from local airfields.

It includes the linked heritage surrounding the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade, US 82nd Airborne Division and IX Troop Carrier Command of the United States 9th Army Air Force, whose men and aircraft transported airborne troops from airfields around Grantham - yet remain America's unsung heroes.

The study has assessed remaining heritage assets, flagship airfields, the related accommodation network, the potential beneficial impact on the visitor economy and costs of the physical and virtual trail.

It includes analysis, relevance and opportunities offered by the following;

- Heritage assets and importance
- Accommodation providers network
- Flagship airfield; RAF Saltby
- Flagship airfield – RAF North Witham
- St Vincent's Church, Caythorpe
- Grantham Station
- Grantham Museum
- Harlaxton Manor
- Liberation Route Europe Foundation
- Specialist Heritage Contacts
- Multi media proposals
- Trail Costings

Appendix One: Allied Airborne Forces' connections within South Kesteven

Appendix Two: British 1st Airborne Division in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands 1944-45

Appendix Three: 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands 1944-45

Appendix Four: US Airborne Forces in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands 1943-45

Front page image: British 1st Airborne departing from RAF Barkston Heath for Arnhem on American Troop carrier Command C47 aircraft.

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Airborne Forces Trail

Assets within South Kesteven

Relevance and Opportunities

June 1944. D-Day represented a turning point in the war, when Allied forces launched a combined naval, air and land assault to gain a foothold on Nazi-occupied France on June 6, 1944.

A top-secret mission launched from South Kesteven saw elite American Pathfinder troops dropped behind enemy lines on the eve of D Day to set markers for the incoming airborne invasion.

Airborne forces departing from airfields in South Kesteven parachuted into drop zones across Normandy, backed by ground troops. By the end of the day, the Allies had established a foothold along the coast and could begin their advance into France.

September 1944. Operation Market Garden, the largest airborne invasion in military history, involved British, American and Polish airborne troops in an effort to capture key bridges over several key rivers and canals in Holland and open a path to Berlin.

The British 1st Airborne Division landed at Arnhem and fought for nine days in the city and surrounding towns and countryside, but the British 2nd Army's advance failed to reach them in time.

Market Garden was deemed to be a military failure. It is still recognised, however, as one of the biggest feats of heroism ever seen.

Building Blocks for the Airborne Forces Trail

The study has examined key assets listed below to assess the role they can play in the Airborne Forces Trail.

American links

In South Kesteven, airfields were operational at North Witham, Barkston Heath, Fulbeck, Saltby and Folkingham, housing C-47 Dakota aircraft flown by the 9th Troop Carrier Command, with its 1944 HQ at St Vincent's Hall in Grantham. Key assets are:

- RAF Saltby. IX Troop Carrier Command flew US paratroopers to Normandy for D-Day in June 1944 and flew British and Polish paratroopers to Arnhem in September 1944.
- RAF Barkston Heath. IX Troop Carrier Command flew American paratroops to Normandy in June 1944; and British and American paratroops, and American glider troops, to the Netherlands in September 1944.

- RAF North Witham. This was a major maintenance and repairs centre for Troop Carrier Command. It also housed US Airborne Pathfinder aircrew and paratroopers who carried out a top-secret Pathfinder mission on the eve of D-Day, dropping elite paratroopers behind German lines to set up beacons for the main US airborne invasion force.

British 1st Airborne Division Links

- Fulbeck, to the north of Grantham, featured significantly, with the British 1st Airborne Divisional HQ and associated accommodation housed at Fulbeck Hall and nearby Fulbeck Manor.
- 1st Airborne Division troops practised both parachute jumps at key sites within South Kesteven and recorded night training marches.
- Stoke Rochford Hall, Harlaxton Manor, Easton Hall and most significant large houses were all requisitioned for military occupation.
- Easton Hall and Stoke Rochford Hall were where Lt Col John Frost and many of his men, who famously held the bridge at Arnhem for four days against overwhelming odds, were billeted and trained.
- St Vincent's Church, Caythorpe, is recognized by the current 216 (Parachute) Squadron, Royal Signals, as its spiritual 'home' in commemoration of the wartime activities of 1st Airborne Divisional Signals' units in the village.

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade

- Rock House in Stamford was requisitioned to accommodate Polish officers, including its commander General Stanislaw Sosabowski
- Polish forces flew to Arnhem from Saltby airfield and Spanhoe airfield (Northants)
- A walking trail tracing points of Polish military relevance has been established in Stamford
- The Polish Consulate in Manchester has stated its support for the project

Airborne Forces Trail

Assets within South Kesteven

Flagship airfields

- The former RAF Saltby is now home to the Buckminster Gliding Club, with commemorative information board and British, American and Polish flags flying
- The former RAF North Witham, near Colsterworth, is owned and managed by Forestry England. It is open to the public and many of the original runways remain, together with the remains of the control tower

Grantham Station

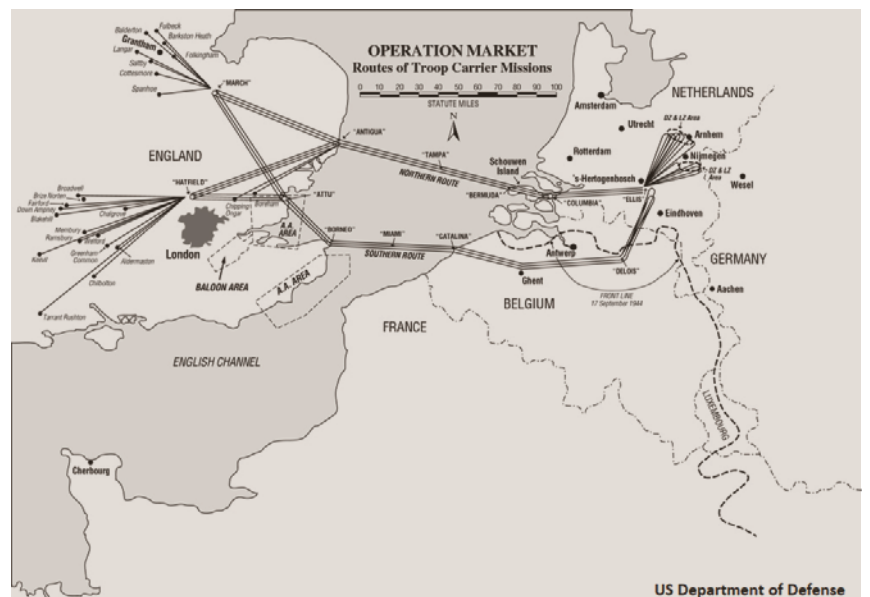
- Thousands of troops passed through the station during the war, and it is seen as a valuable promotional showcase for the Trail

Grantham Museum

- Sited in the historic core of Grantham, the Museum hosts military and aviation heritage exhibits but NOT, as yet, anything on the local story of airborne forces.



Paratroopers descending.



Flight routes from Lincolnshire to the Netherlands.

Airborne Forces Trail Accommodation Network

Relevance and opportunities

During World War II, country houses across South Kesteven were requisitioned by the War Office to accommodate troops.

Many are still accommodation providers, offering unique opportunities to stay at locations that resonate with the Airborne Forces trail.

All locations listed below have proven links with the 1944 build-up to D-Day and Arnhem.

Owners are keen to be part of the Airborne Forces trail, find a new 'story' to promote, host information boards and information and back up with their own web and promotional resources as an attraction for a new international audience.

SKDC's Discover South Kesteven tourism website promotes a wide range of accommodation, all of which would be in a position to promote the trail on their websites and benefit from a new visitor offer.

<https://www.discoversouthkesteven.com/>

It already has an aviation heritage section on the website which can be expanded.

<https://www.discoversouthkesteven.com/aviationheritage/>

The network of airborne trail related sites includes:

Angel and Royal Hotel, Grantham

American forces were billeted here in 1944. The owner is enthusiastic about engaging with a new target market as part of the recognised American presence in Grantham in 1944. Information board location.

Marston Hall

The Commander of the United States' IV Troop Carrier Command, Gen Paul Williams, was billeted here with his aide-de-camp during 1944. Photos of Gen Williams at the Hall show how little has changed since he stayed there.

It offers one letting bedroom in a historic house whose roots go back to Cromwell days and will be incredibly popular with American visitors. Info board siting

Gregory Arms Harlaxton

The Gregory Arms sits at the top of the long drive to Harlaxton Manor. Military personnel frequented the pub in 1943/1944. The pub has three letting rooms in a popular roadside pub. Information board location.

Hare and Hounds, Fulbeck

This popular pub would have seen military personnel when both Fulbeck Hall (British 1st Airborne Division HQ) and Fulbeck Manor (also used by 1st Airborne Division) were a major presence in the village and offers B & B accommodation. Information boards location.

Easton Walled Gardens

Easton Hall featured significantly as accommodation for troops from 2nd Parachute Battalion, who served under Lt Col John Frost - many of whom held the bridge at Arnhem for four days.

It is an extremely popular visitor location with gardens, tea shop and visitor accommodation

It has three letting units, including a Reading Room used by the 2nd Parachute Battalion.

Information boards location.

Fulbeck Manor

Maj Gen Roy Urquhart, Commander of British 1st Airborne Division, stayed here while in charge of Divisional HQ at nearby Fulbeck Hall. Records show planning for Op Market Garden happened at the Manor.. Fulbeck Stables Craft Centre is located in the Manor's former stables, employing 18 people. Visitor accommodation is planned Information board location.

Stoke Rochford Hall

The country house to the south of Grantham was requisitioned for military accommodation.

Lt Col John Frost, Commander 2nd Parachute Battalion, was based here, with operation planning undertaken in the library. The building still has an 'Arnhem Corner' with a monument to airborne forces in the grounds.

It is currently used to house asylum seekers

Saltby airfield

... a flagship heritage site

Relevance and opportunities

RAF Saltby is a key trail asset to illustrate the combined endeavours of British, American and Polish Airborne Forces and the US IX Troop Carrier Command.

It was from Saltby that Lt Col John Frost, commander of the British 2nd Parachute Battalion, flew with his men to Arnhem on September 17 1944. They had been billeted and trained in South Kesteven. They captured the main road bridge at Arnhem and together with troops from other units, they held it for four days, double the planned time.

The 156 Parachute Battalion Association hold an annual commemoration each year at Saltby attended by relatives of the Arnhem soldiers and lay a wreath at the Saltby memorial.

As a flagship location on the airborne trail, Saltby airfield offers

- glider flights to recreate the wartime glider experience
- access to the public
- site for trail infoboard
- existing heritage commemorations in flags and dedicated memorabilia
- preservation of the importance of this airfield for future generations
- educational opportunities
- revenue for local establishments (including the gliding club)

The airfield is occupied by the Buckminster Gliding Club and owned by the Buckminster estate. The club and its owners have welcomed inclusion of the airfield within the trail with visitor access to the clubhouse (if required) during club opening times.

There is also the unique opportunity to be towed into the sky from the very airfield where paratroopers left for Normandy and the Netherlands in 1944.

The airfield has one information board taking account of American Troop Carrier Command, British, American and Polish airborne forces.

Background

In late February, 1944, RAF Saltby became home for the 1,400 men and their C-47 and C-53 aircraft of the United States Army Air Force's 314th Troop Carrier Group (TCG).

At peak time, about 80 C-47 and C-53 aircraft were based at Saltby for carrying paratroops and cargo, and for towing gliders. Around 50 gliders – British Horsa and US CG-4A types – were also stored at Saltby; these were towed to airfields further south before being flown into battle.

The airfield played a key role in both the D-Day and Arnhem milestone operations, with American aircraft transporting airborne forces and equipment to Europe, plus re-supply and repatriation of troops.

On September 17 1944 the Allies launched Operation Market with the 314th TCG launching 72 aircraft loaded with British paratroopers. The drop was highly successful and all 314th aircraft returned safely from the mission.



Airborne Forces boarding an aircraft at RAF Saltby.

Saltby airfield

... a flagship heritage site

The next day, another 72 aircraft from the 314th TCG departed RAF Saltby again carrying units of the British 1st Airborne Division. This mission proved much more deadly than the previous one and the 314th TCG lost four aircraft on this mission.

Poor weather over England delayed the next planned drop of the Polish Airborne Brigade for three days until September 21, when 60 aircraft departed RAF Saltby carrying men of the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade led by Maj Gen Stanislaw Sosabowski.

The Polish were dropped on the opposite side of the River Rhine near Driel with the intention of them crossing the river into the Oosterbeek perimeter to support the beleaguered British paras. Unfortunately, the ferry over the Rhine had been destroyed and there were no boats available to facilitate their transfer.

British 2nd Army had been held up by the delays in capturing the bridges at Nijmegen and by the time the link was finally made with the airborne forces the small perimeter that remained in British hands was of no military value and the key road bridge was back in the hands of the Germans.

On 26 September, 29 aircraft from the 314th TCG led a force of 200 US C-47s landing at a grass strip near Grave, Holland. The aircraft brought in much needed reinforcements and supplies, evacuated wounded personnel and carried glider pilots back to England.

On two occasions since the war, the modern descendant of the 314th Troop Carrier Group – the 314th Tactical Airlift Wing - has returned to Saltby, landing a C-130 aircraft in 1970 and a reunion party visiting in 1984 as part of Operation Sentimental Journey.



Information board on the airfield commemorates its WW2 heritage.



Inscribed stones and national flags denote the Polish, British and American occupation of the airfield during WW2.

RAF North Witham

... a flagship airfield for American forces

Relevance and Opportunities

RAF North Witham is enshrined in American military history as the launchpad for a daring and top-secret mission on the eve of D-Day 1944. The mission was to drop specially trained pathfinder troops from the US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions to secure landing areas and set up navigational aids for the main Airborne invasion force.

In 2019, the Commemorative Air Force – a private American aviation heritage organisation - co-ordinated a 'Daks Over Normandy' programme which saw historic restored C-47 aircraft return to the UK to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Lt Col David Hamilton, the last surviving Pathfinder pilot, returned to RAF North Witham, attracting international media attention. The plan is to re-run the D-Day Squadron project in 2024 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, with the possibility of Lt Col Hamilton returning.

The airfield still has intact runways, albeit with parts reclaimed by nature and remains an iconic site for visitors. Owned by Forestry England and known as Twyford Wood, it offers

- access to the public
- An existing infoboard
- An opportunity to be part of the D-Day Squadron programme for 2024

Background

Each of the 20 Douglas C47 Skytrain aircraft that took off at 21.54 hours on June 5 1944 was packed with specially trained US Army Pathfinder troops.

Flying low over the Channel to dodge the radar, their mission was to drop behind enemy lines in Normandy, secure landing areas and set up navigational aids to guide in the main Airborne invasion force of C47s carrying paratroops and towing gliders.

The D-Day airborne invasion of Normandy was underway the moment the wheels of the first C-47 left RAF North Witham on the night of 5 June 1944.

In 2019 Lt Col Hamilton, just 21 when he flew across the Channel, was taken to the former airfield at North Witham. His visit was marked by a special flyover of an original WWII Douglas C47 Skytrain.



Lt Col David Hamilton honoured with a flypast.



American Pathfinder troops ready for June 5 mission.

St Vincent's Church, Caythorpe

... a perpetual shrine to Airborne Forces

Relevance and opportunities

St Vincent's Church has a lasting bond with 216 (Parachute) Squadron, Royal Signals, thanks to bonds formed in the build up to the Arnhem battle in 1944. It is a key trail asset, offering:

- Daily opening for visitors
- A carpeted aisle dedicated to the battle for Arnhem with two stained glass windows dedicated to the Royal Signals' elements of 1st Airborne Division.
- Memorabilia including the last battle orders from Oosterbeek Church
- Siting of new Trail info board
- An annual commemoration with the Army's present-day Airborne signallers – 216 (Parachute) Squadron, Royal Signals – which includes a march through the village and attendance at a memorial service in St Vincent's Church.

Background

1st Airborne Divisional Signals was the Royal Signals' unit supporting the HQ 1st Airborne Division.

On 17 September 1944, men of 1st Airborne Divisional Signals flew to Arnhem in gliders and by parachute.

The Squadron came into existence with some of the earliest Airborne units and was based in and around Caythorpe for training prior to Operation Market Garden (Arnhem). Holy Cross House (now Holy Cross Gardens) was their HQ. The village hall was a billet and workshops for the blacksmith and boot repairer with the NAAFI in the upstairs room at the back. Troops were billeted throughout the village.

They remained with the Divisional HQ throughout the battle, although unrelenting efforts to establish effective signals communications with Divisional troops were continually hampered by damaged or missing equipment, difficult terrain conditions, the intensity of the fighting around the Divisional HQ and the confusion of battle.

By the end of the battle, almost all of their signals equipment was unserviceable. Despite this, a rear party (many of whom were injured and could not be evacuated) maintained communications to assist in the overnight evacuation of Arnhem - Operation Berlin (25-26 Sept 1944).

The remainder of the 1st Airborne Divisional Signals made it to Nijmegen and were able to reform at Caythorpe shortly afterwards. After the war a few survivors started visiting Caythorpe on the Arnhem anniversary to visit the Church and remember comrades. The event has now become official with serving soldiers spending the weekend in Caythorpe and attending the St Vincent's Church service.

During the Squadron's service in Aden, their camp was called St Vincent's, and the tradition has been carried on in other conflicts. The Squadron now considers Caythorpe as its spiritual home.

As the war drew to a close, the Divisional Signals were dispatched to Norway and played a vital role in helping to organize the administrative functions for internal security and effective civilian government, and the return from exile of King Haakon VII..



Display panels tell the story of 216 (Parachute) Squadron, Royal Signals.



Caythorpe commemorates Operation Market Garden every September.

Grantham Station

... a showcase for the trail

Relevance and Opportunities

The station is little changed from 1944 and offers an opportunity to promote the Airborne Trail to millions of rail passengers. LNER data confirms more than 23 million passenger journeys were made on its services between March 2022 and the beginning of February 2023.

Some 1.2 million people pass through the station itself every year.

LNER station manager confirms opportunities to:

- Use vacant advertising locations for impactful info-boards and imagery to promote the trail on north and southbound platforms
- Use large waiting room on Platform One for heritage displays – effectively a welcome ‘museum’
- Link with Kings Cross for 2024 commemoration promotion

Background

During 1943 and into 1944 countless thousands of Allied troops used Grantham Station as their main rail access to key military sites across the district

The feasibility study has obtained typical photographic records of, in this case, American troops heading to London for a weekend furlough – all adding to the heritage assets list.

NOTE: 1944 is hailed as the height of the age of steam. Arguably the most famous steam train ever to grace the track, the Flying Scotsman, was a pioneer of its time and put Great Britain on the map in terms of engineering. During its heyday, the Flying Scotsman would shoot up the East Coast Main Line connecting London Kings Cross with Edinburgh Waverley station. It's expected to be running in 2024

British-built steam engines played their own part in WW2, shipped to Europe to back up supply lines.

Grantham Railway Station traveller data from the Office of Road and Rail.

- April 2019 - March 2020. 1.391 million
- April 2020 - March 2021. 348,048
- April 2021 - March 2022. 1.192 million



Then and Now, American Troop Carrier Command officers departing Grantham Station in 1944 and the station today.



Typical advertising space available at Grantham Station.

Grantham Museum

... town centre exhibition location

Relevance and Opportunities

Grantham Museum already houses heritage material relating to World War II, notably the Tip of the Spear exhibition about the US Pathfinders who flew from RAF North Witham on the eve of D Day, D-Day itself and the Dams Raid on the Ruhr reservoirs by the RAF's 617 Squadron in May 1943.

It currently has nothing on the role of Airborne forces locally.

The museum, situated in the historic heart of Grantham, is poised to play a key role in the Airborne Forces Trail. We have discussed creation of an Airborne Forces Exhibition, and been offered 25 sqm of space - allowing 12 sqm for walkways with 13sqm available for exhibits and artefacts.

The museum proposal is to use students from Grantham College to participate.

Background

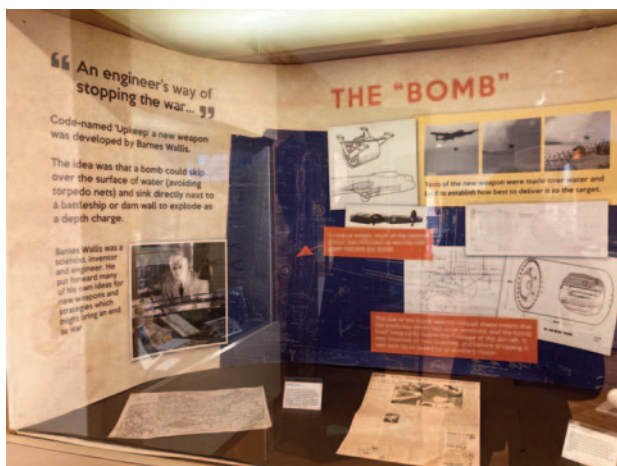
The Tip of the Spear exhibition brings to life what happened on June 5, 1944, as aircraft of the United States IX Troop Carrier Command Pathfinder School spearheaded the invasion of Normandy, carrying specially trained paratroopers from the US Army's 101st and 82 Airborne Divisions.

It tells how pilots and an elite unit of 200 paratroopers came together, flying low over the Channel at night to drop paratroopers behind enemy lines to set up radio signalling equipment and markers to guide in the oncoming airborne invasion.

With secrecy strictly observed before the operation, the exhibition tells how one American serviceman in Nottingham broke a leg and would not allow treatment until another member of the Pathfinder force was there -for fear of divulging information under anaesthetic.

Clothing, equipment, and descriptions of the 'rodeo' organised to attract the best pilots are all on display.

Grantham Museum's Dambusters exhibition commemorates the iconic Dams Raid when St Vincent's Hall in Grantham was 5 Group Bomber Command HQ. Barnes Wallis Barnes Wallis, inventor of the bouncing bomb used in the raid, and Air Chief Marshal Arthur Harris, chief of RAF Bomber Command, were there on the night of the raid, awaiting news of the outcome.



Dambusters exhibition at Grantham Museum.



The Tip of the Spear exhibit tells the story of RAF North Witham.

Harlaxton Manor

... telling the American story

Relevance and Opportunities

Harlaxton Manor is the British study centre for the University of Evansville and uniquely positioned as central to the web of American occupied airfields surrounding Grantham in 1944.

During the regular academic year, the College hosts over 300 students from the University of Evansville and many other colleges and universities from across the USA.

University management is keen to be involved in promoting the Airborne Trail, notably the role that American forces played in 1944.

Discussions have confirmed readiness to

- Promote local American military heritage in its new walled garden community and education centre - a £18m development expected to draw 60/70K visitors a year with completion expected 2024 and committed to illustrate its own heritage <https://harlaxton.co.uk/walled-garden/>
- Engagement of students in both UK and America: researching stories of troops based in South Kesteven
- Develop student educational material and update archive
- Consider a funding proposal to its Indiana-based sponsorship team to back the project with a specific focus on the American contribution in 1944



Harlaxton Manor, University of Evansville campus.

Background

Harlaxton College is the overseas study site of the University of Evansville in Indiana, USA and one of England's finest Grade I listed country houses.

The Manor was requisitioned and used as the Officers' Mess for RAF Harlaxton nearby. In 1944-45, units of the 1st British Airborne Division used the Manor.

The property was requisitioned during WW2 for military accommodation and training.

It is well placed to highlight and champion the largely untold story of the huge USAAF IV Troop Carrier Command airfields around Grantham in 1944.

Meetings have also revealed the University's own military heritage links.

Evansville president and US Army veteran Wally Graves was instrumental in the decision to take the lease on the property when it became available in the late 1960s – attracted by his love of the UK when he served in the UK in 1944.

In 1971, he led the foundation of what is known today as the British Campus for the University of Evansville.

The University is highly ranked in the States for its performance on veteran affairs.



Annual Market Garden commemorations at Harlaxton Manor.

Liberation Route Europe Foundation

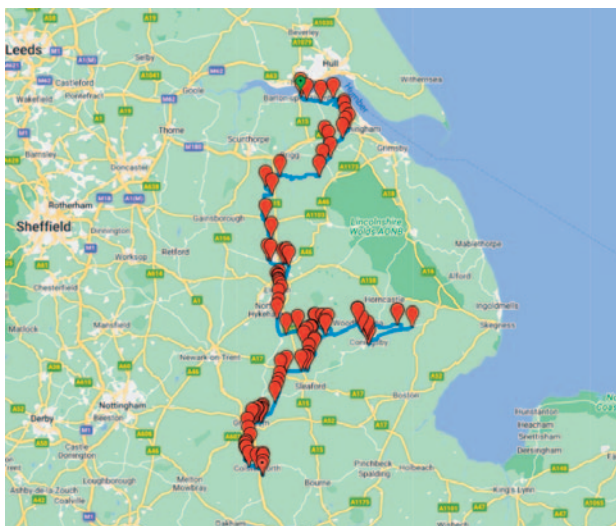
... linking the trail to Europe's commemoration network

Relevance and Opportunities

The Liberation Route Europe Foundation (LREF) is an established and growing international commemoration network connecting people and organisations dedicated to preserving and promoting cultural heritage related to WW2. www.liberationroute.com

Its markers help to create trails that combine to form a route as a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe and links the main regions along the advance of the Allied Forces in western Europe during 1943-1945. Our liaison confirms:

- LRE is keen to highlight Lincolnshire's contribution to both D-Day and Arnhem, offering promotion of the Airborne Trail through its website
- Possible establishment of suitable 'Vectors of Memory' commemoration markers at relevant points
- A separate LRE hiking trails project could mark routes taken by British troops while training before Operation Market Garden - identified from war diaries
- The airborne trail sits midway on the route between two major LREF official partners, the Imperial War Museum at Duxford and the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln



Liberation Route Europe planned extension through Lincolnshire.

Background

In 2022, LREF began creating trails in Britain to highlight preparations made for the liberation of north-west Europe. Its initial focus was on Hampshire (D-Day seaborne assault preparations) and Lincolnshire (Bomber Command's efforts to weaken enemy war capacity).

Milestone commemoration events will take place in Sicily to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings in July 1943. These are generally seen as the start of the liberation of western Europe, and similar anniversary commemorations will take place throughout Europe until 2025, the 80th anniversary of the end of the war.

LREF is working with local partners and plans for the 80th anniversaries of D-Day (June 2024) and Arnhem/Operation MARKET GARDEN (September 2024). These would have direct relevance to a South Kesteven Airborne Trail because thousands of Allied paratroopers were based around the area and flew into battle from local airfields.



Training night march route used by British Paratroopers in April 1944.

Specialist Heritage Contacts

Strenuous efforts have been made to reach out to relevant organisations and individuals in those nations whose Airborne Forces served in South Kesteven during the Second World War. These efforts aim to:

- Create an opportunity for the promotion of the South Kesteven Airborne Trail project through organisations and individuals commemorating the service and sacrifice of Allied Airborne personnel in the liberation of Europe.
- Share information about the project, when it is publicly released, through the existing media networks of the museums and individuals involved.
- Establish links to existing online resources that are accessible to the public, in order to avoid duplication of effort within the South Kesteven Airborne Trail project.
- Identify sources of information and images that could be used in the South Kesteven Airborne Trail project.

In summary

United Kingdom

Arnhem 1944 Fellowship

The Arnhem 1944 Fellowship has strong links with the Municipalities of Arnhem, Ede, Overbetuwe and Renkum Municipalities and with many of the institutions and organisers of the commemorative events in the province of Gelderland including the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity and the Airborne Museum.

The Arnhem Fellowship is an active member of the Airborne Commemoration Foundation, the coordinating body for events during the commemorative period. The Arnhem Fellowship similarly has strong links in the UK with the Parachute Regiment Headquarters, the airborne forces charity Support Our Paras and the Airborne Assault Museum at Duxford.

The Fellowship commemorates the service and sacrifice of those involved in the battle of Arnhem, maintaining bonds of friendship between veterans of the battle and citizens of the city. It educates the public about the battle and assists in the preservation of heritage connected with it.

The Fellowship issues six bi-monthly newsletters, runs battlefield walks around Arnhem and surrounding areas, and in 2019 published a 75th Anniversary Commemorative book providing ten walks around the

battlefield. The Fellowship members include a number of authors of specialist Arnhem publications.

Airborne Assault Museum, Duxford airfield and 'Paradata' online research database

The Airborne Assault Museum traces the history of the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces from its inception to the present day. It has extensive physical archives and an online database 'Paradata'.

Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, London

This is the largest archival and museum institution in Western Europe that is focused on Polish history, predominantly covering the first half of the 20th century. It houses the archives of the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade.

The Pegasus Archive (online)

An online resource containing historical material about British Airborne Forces during 1940-45, including transcripts of unit War Diaries and other official documents.

Saltby Airfield Heritage Group

A small local group dedicated to researching the history of RAF Saltby, home of the US 314th Troop Carrier Group during 1944-45.

Adam Berry - Author

Adam Berry is an acknowledged expert on the history of the US IX Troop Carrier Command in England during 1943-45, and of the US 82nd Airborne Division during its time in England in 1944. He is the author of:

And Suddenly They Were Gone: An Oral and Pictorial history of the 82nd Airborne Division in England, February-September 1944 (Overlord Publishing, 2015)

A Breathtaking Spectacle: A Written and Pictorial History of IX Troop Carrier Command in England during WWII (Overlord Publishing, 2019)

Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire

Internationally renowned, Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire (AHL) is a partnership of volunteer and commercial visitor sites, local authorities, Royal Air Force stations, local businesses, other organisations and groups, or individuals, promoting or providing aviation heritage and related activities for or within the county. Through AHL, the Aviation Trail project has access to the national Military Aviation Heritage Networks organisation, which is supported by Historic England.

Specialist Heritage Contacts

Pan-European

Liberation Route Europe Foundation, Brussels

Liberation Route Europe is a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe that links the main regions along the advance of the Allied Forces in 1943-1945, with trails connecting hundreds of sites through nine European countries.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) is active both at home and abroad to commemorate the men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars, ensuring they will never be forgotten.

Netherlands

Airborne Commemoration Foundation, Doorwerth

Co-ordinator of the official commemorative events in the Arnhem region.

Airborne Museums, Arnhem

Two museums in Arnhem – one in the former HQ of 1st Airborne Division in Oosterbeek and one by the John Frost Bridge in Arnhem – are the primary museums dedicated to the Battle of Arnhem.

Bridge to Freedom Foundation, Arnhem

Organizer of a public multimedia event held by the John Frost Bridge in Arnhem as part of annual commemorations of the battle.

Freedom Museum, Groesbeek

This museum is located near Nijmegen, close to the September 1944 landing zones of the US 82nd Airborne Division. There are permanent and temporary exhibitions on the Second World War, and an activity programme including battlefield tours, film screenings and children's programmes.

Study Group Air War 1939-1945

Founded in 1975, the Group researches the air war over The Netherlands during the Second World War. It provides the Dutch Ministry of Defence with expert historical knowledge for excavations of crashed wartime aircraft.

France

Airborne Museum, Ste Mère Église

This is the largest museum in Europe dedicated to the activities of the US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions in the assault on Normandy in 1944.

United States

D-Day Squadron, Oxford, Connecticut, USA

The Squadron promotes DC-3 type aircraft airworthiness and static and flying displays for future generations. In 2019, the Squadron led an American fleet of 15 historic, restored C-47 military aircraft to the UK. They later took part in a flyover of more than 30 international aircraft to drop over 200 paratroopers over the original 1944 drop zones in Normandy commemorating the 75th anniversary of D-Day. They are planning a similar European trip for the 80th anniversary in 2024.

Commemorative Air Force, Dallas, Texas, USA

The Commemorative Air Force restores and preserves in flying condition combat aircraft flown by US and other nations. Two of their transport aircraft flew to Europe in 2019 with the D-Day Squadron.

Colonel Mark Vlahos USAF (Retd)

Col Vlahos is an expert on the history of the US 314th Troop Carrier Group and RAF Saltby 1942-45, and is the author of:

Men Will Come: A History of the 314th Troop Carrier Group, 1942-1945 (Merriam Press, 2019)

Sue and Jack Talley PhD

Sue Talley is the daughter of 1st Lt George Gurwell, who served in the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the US 82nd Airborne Division and flew from RAF Saltby on the D-Day and Operation MARKET GARDEN missions.

Sue and her husband, Jack, are the authors of:

Never Give Up The Jump: Combat, Resilience, and the Legacy of World War II through the Eyes and Voices of the Paratroopers, Wives, and Families of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment (Knox Press, 2023)

US National Infantry Museum Foundation and Museum.

1775 Legacy Way, Columbus, Georgia.
Chris Lewis CLewis@nationalinfantryfoundation.org

Poland

Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Manchester

The Polish Consulate in Manchester has responsibility for supporting Polish heritage and culture events in northern England, the Isle of Man and Wales. Lincolnshire is included in this area, where it already supports the RAF Ingham Heritage Centre. In 2022, it supported an exhibition in Stamford about the Polish Parachute Brigade based in the area in 1944-45.


Airborne Forces Heritage Trail promotional avenues

Multimedia

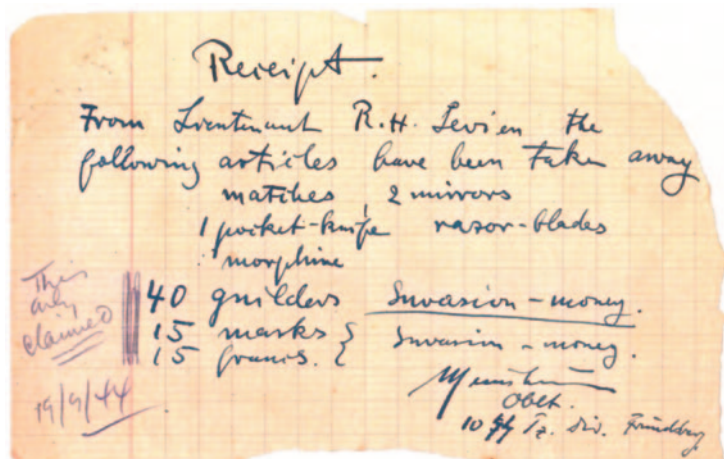
- Website – ‘parent and child’ model to link to key sites including Discover South Kesteven, Visit Lincolnshire and Visit Britain
- Printed trail leaflet with map, visitor sites, accommodation, information and web links
- Trail app
- Drone footage of flagship airfields
- Voiced video, interior C-47 / what did paratroopers jump with
- Audio: first person account Lt Robert Levien (2 Para, survived the battle)
- Augmented reality: recreating events at RAF North Witham and RAF Saltby
- ‘Then and Now’ site graphics
- Information boards
- Associated PR, local, regional and national

Available resources:

- Levien family archive (2 Para battalion commander served with Col John Frost) + imagery
- Perry family history (Lt Perry was at the Bridge with Col Frost) + imagery
- Potential access to Battle of Britain Memorial Flight for interview of Dakota aircrew
- Access to RAF Metheringham for video of C-47 with reenactors portraying British and US paratroops
- Specialist authors contributing imagery and factual content
- Links to material on websites of supportive military museums, e.g. Airborne Assault Museum, Duxford; Airborne Museum Oosterbeek, Netherlands; Airborne Museum, Ste Mère Église, France.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Kriegsgefangenenlager (bzw. Internierlager)												Beschriftung der Lager-Erkennungsmarke:										Buchstabe: (Zusatzbuchstabe bei Bedarf)		
4												554 / 02ag 511 B												
Name: Levien												Gefangenen-Nr.:												
Vorname(n): Robert Hugh												Geb.-Ort: Großen 6'11"												
Staatsangehörigkeit: Brit												Anst.-Nr.: keine dunkel												
Vollname:												Geb.-D.: geb. 6. 4. 14												
Dienstgrad: Oberleutnant												Lager:												
Truppenteil: Airborne												Ereignis in:												
																								

Lieut. Hugh 'Loopy' Levien, platoon commander with 2nd Parachute Battalion, who fought at Arnhem before being taken prisoner.



POW receipt for Hugh Levien's possessions when captured.

Feasibility study - indicative costings

Multi media assets

Trail Visual identity – logo and print assets	£8,512
Website (microsite) online Augmented Reality only	£19,912
Augmented reality models (Dakota etc)	£11,856
Video content creation	£28,736
3D Video recreation	£13,072
App creation	£41,664
Online media	£ 5,000

As supplied by Energy Cell - www.energycell.co.uk/

Signage

Station signposting	
3 metre paratrooper image - laminated	
Alcom cut outs 1500mm x 3000mm (3)	@ £400
Large info boards (bridge panels)2000 x 1470 (x3)	@ £260
Plus	
Information board (internal) 400 x 600 (x15)	@ £ 31.16
Information board (ext) QR code1000mm x 1000m (x4)	@ £112.50
Post mounted external lectern noticeboard (x2)	@ £625
Promotional pull-up display banners (x4)	@ £ 78

VAT to be added -as supplied by Viking Signs www.safetysignsupplied.co.uk

Design Costs

Leaflet Design	£497
Information Board Design: three variations	£795

As supplied by Design Counsell. www.designcounsell.com

Leaflet print - 15,000 fliers (A3 folded as per AHL design)	£1,450
Museum exhibit costs (approx)	£2,500
Event launches	£4,000
Website content preparation	£5,000
Project co-ordinator (2023-2025) £16,000 per year	£32,000

Art and Remembrance .. the opportunities

Military heritage has long been commemorated in art and through acts of remembrance. The Airborne Forces trail offers opportunities to develop:

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) is internationally renowned for its commitment to commemoration and Remembrance and will be able to offer advice and assistance with trail-related activities for remembering the Fallen. Links have been established with CWGC's Public Engagement Coordinator (East), who is very keen to support the project as much as possible and explore opportunities to contribute.

Additionally the Airborne Forces Heritage Trail offers opportunities to develop:

- Remembrance commemorations every November to pay specific homage to the sacrifice of Allied airborne forces. One specific opportunity involves forging international links with families and children from America, Poland and Holland joining for a UK commemoration at a key wartime site, possibly Saltby airfield. Poppies painted on stones on behalf of allied soldiers would represent virtual headstones - with rows of poppies as far as the eye can see

denoting the losses of Airborne troops during the war. This could be replicated locally in schools and related sites, encouraging research on local stories.

- Floral planting of maroon coloured tulips as a colourful link with the Netherlands – famed for its tulips - can be encouraged at airborne related sites across the district, notably using a particular colour variety planted in Arnhem and Oosterbeek this year.
- Autumn commemoration could be represented by ceramic versions of the tulip, to go on display every September.
- Artistically the distinctive shape of a fully-laden paratrooper can be more widely celebrated in art and physical entities - continuing the theme of the 'There But Not There' shapes of WW1 Tommies.
- Engage with the Bridge to Liberation in artistic terms, involving youth theatre that can be celebrated and replicated within Lincolnshire.
- Schools' art-history projects to educate young people on the history of South Kesteven's airborne heritage, culminating in a series of public art installations at key sites across the district in the shape of word-walks. Harlaxton Manor's extensive grounds would be a key location for a significant installation.



In Summary ...

The Arnhem 1944 Fellowship has carried out extensive research into key elements of a proposed Airborne Forces Heritage Trail and concludes that it is feasible to create a significant new trail with the potential to attract visitors from home and abroad.

Research has confirmed:

- Key trail assets, stories and sites relating to British, American and Polish forces
- A network of related accommodation providers
- International alliances as a foundation
- Extensive accessible wartime records
- Specialist contacts to help trail development

All the above would create a lasting airborne forces legacy. In particular it will complement the enduring commemorations hosted annually within the town of Arnhem, its surrounding villages and keenly supported by the people of the Netherlands - today celebrating the themes of freedom and liberation.

The recommendation is to seek funding to bring the trail to life in time to celebrate the 80th anniversaries of both Operation Overlord and Operation Market Garden in June and September 2024 respectively.

Appendix One:

British 1st Airborne Division

Potential Inclusion In Arnhem / Airborne Forces Trail

Colour Code

Historic significance | **Accommodation** | **Pubs / visitor sites** | **Online or Information boards**

Unit	Location	How to Commemorate
1ST AIRBORNE DIVISIONAL UNITS		
HQ 1st Airborne Div	Fulbeck Hall	Arnhem Divisional HQ for Maj Gen Robert Urquhart, Commander 1st Airborne Online evidence of the Hall's use for website
HQ Royal Engineers, 1st Airborne Div	Fulbeck Hall	ditto
HQ Royal Artillery, 1st Airborne Div	Fulbeck Hall	ditto
HQ Royal Army Ordnance Corps, 1st Airborne Div	Fulbeck Manor	Billet for senior officers 1st Airborne. Manor runs pre-organised tours. Visitor accommodation planned. Original stables house popular craft centre / tearoom / restaurant Infoboard Hare and Hounds pub
HQ Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, 1st Airborne Div	Fulbeck Manor	QR code infoboard + literature
1st Airborne Divisional Signals	Caythorpe	St Vincent's Church. Shrine to airborne forces QR code infoboard plus literature plus pull up displays
1st Airborne Division Provost Company	Harlaxton Manor requisitioned for military use	Major partner QR code infoboard Promotion via new Walled Garden visitor centre Gregory Arms pub accommodation + infoboard
No 1 Forward Observer Unit, R.A. (Airborne)	Harlaxton Manor (from Jul 44)	See above
1ST PARACHUTE BRIGADE		
HQ, 1st Parachute Brigade	Syston Old Hall	Connection to Brigadier Lathbury at Arnhem Syston Park Fruit Farm QR code infoboard + literature
1 Parachute Brigade Headquarters, Defence Platoon	Syston Old Hall (until May 1944) Belton House (from May 44)	ditto

Appendix One:

British 1st Airborne Division

Potential Inclusion In Arnhem / Airborne Forces Trail

Unit	Location	How to Commemorate
1ST PARACHUTE BATTALION		
HQ 1st Parachute Battalion	Grimsthorpe Castle	Requisitioned for military accommodation
		New bomber airfield planned on site
		QR code infoboard + literature
S Company, 1st Parachute Battalion	Behind the Nag's Head Hotel, Bourne	Infoboard
T Company, 1st Parachute Battalion	9 and 11 Platoons: behind the Angel Hotel, North Street, Bourne	'Don't Lose Hope' infoboard in the Wellhead community garden and shed space – veteran audience
	10 Platoon: above the local Co-Op Shop, Burghley Centre, Hereward Street, Bourne	
2ND PARACHUTE BATTALION		
HQ 2nd Parachute Battalion	Stoke Rochford Hall	Col John Frost pre-Arnhem planning QR code infoboard
		Easton Hall
A Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion	Easton Hall	2 Para (Col Frost's troops) Former 2 Para Reading Room within Easton Walled Gardens accommodation Tearoom and open gardens. QR code infoboard / literature
B Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion	Millfield House, Colsterworth	Now private educational Centre. The White Horse pub RAF North Witham infoboard
C Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion	Hungerton Hall (until Jul 44, then Mortar Platoon and Bren Carrier Section)	Hungerton Hall: online
	'New Camp' south of Harlaxton (from Jul 44)	'New Camp': ?

Polish Independent Parachute Brigade

Unit	Location	How to Commemorate
HQ Polish Ind Para Bde	Rock House, Stamford	Hotel planned
10th Polish Parachute Field Ambulance	Stamford School and grounds	Walking trail + QR code infoboard / literature in Town Hall

Appendix One:

British 1st Airborne Division

Potential Inclusion In Arnhem / Airborne Forces Trail

Unit	Location/Airfield	How to Commemorate
HQ IX Troop Carrier Command	St Vincent's House, Grantham	Online resource
Gen Paul Williams' billet	Marston Hall	B & B accommodation QR code infoboards plus literature
IX TCC Pathfinder School/Pathfinder Group (Provisional)	North Witham	FLAGSHIP SITE
		QR Infoboard on site
61st Troop Carrier Group	RAF Barkston Heath	QR code info board local pub The Stag. Plus local church
313th Troop Carrier Group	RAF Folkingham	QR code info board The New Inn pub
314th Troop Carrier Group	RAF Saltby	FLAGSHIP SITE Buckminster Gliding Club centre. QR code info boards. Augmented reality
349th Troop Carrier Group	Barkston Heath (+ during DOOMSDAY, May 45, surrender of German forces in Norway)	Additional info for QR code info board
440th Troop Carrier Group	Fulbeck (during MARKET GARDEN, Sep 44)	Airfield in private ownership. QR code info board at Hare and Hounds plus literature
442nd Troop Carrier Group	Fulbeck (during NEPTUNE, Jun 44)	ditto

Dropzones

Dropzone	Location	How to Commemorate
Ropsley Heath	Ropsley, east of Grantham Plus site of night training march	QR code info board Ropsley Fox

Miscellaneous

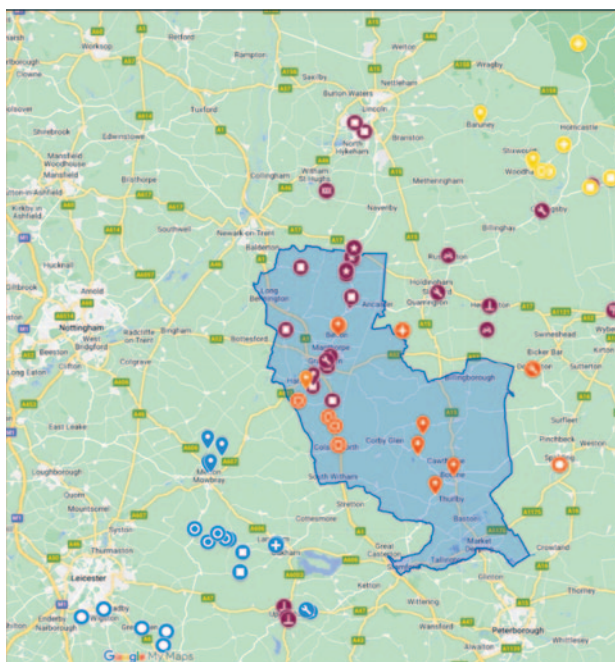
Dropzone	Location	How to Commemorate
Little Ponton Churchyard	Grave of Richard Todd, veteran of 7 (LI) Bn, Parachute Regiment	Church QR code infoboard / plaque
Tinwell (Rutland)	C-47 crash-site: Polish paratroopers	Online resource
Saltby	The Crown pub, Sproxton, and church memorial	Infoboards

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45



This document provides an historical note regarding the British 1st Airborne Division, which was based in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands during 1944-45.



The coloured icons illustrate the spread of 1st Airborne Division units

through Lincolnshire, the East Midlands and South Kesteven (in blue).

Overview Of Allied Airborne Forces In The East Midlands, 1944-45

Over the years, Lincolnshire has gained the nickname of 'Bomber County' because of its association with RAF Bomber Command during the Second World War and the Cold War. Yet there is far less public awareness of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands as a base for British, US and Polish Airborne Forces during the Second World War. For many of those who flew from the local area, this part of England would be the last friendly soil on which they would ever set foot.

In 1944, two major Airborne combat operations involved Allied troops based in the East Midlands:

- **Operation NEPTUNE** (D-Day, June 1944): US aircraft flying from local airfields dropped approximately **6,350** US paratroopers of the US 82nd Airborne Division in Normandy .

- **Operation MARKET GARDEN** (Netherlands, 17-25 September 1944): US aircraft flying from local airfields dropped **8,663** US, British and Polish paratroopers, and towed **3,086** US glider troops to their landing zones

In May 1945 - immediately after German forces in Europe had formally surrendered to the Allies - US aircraft flew British Airborne troops from Lincolnshire to Norway on **Operation DOOMSDAY**. The mission was to maintain peace and oversee the surrender of German forces in Norway.

The US Airborne contribution in the region – both in Airborne troops and in troop carrier aircraft - was a very large part of the multinational Airborne heritage of the region, which also included the British 1st Airborne Division and the 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade. These were the only three nations among the Allies in western Europe that possessed large Airborne formations.

Early History Of The British 1st Airborne Division

In 1918, the Americans considered dropping troops by parachute around the fortress of Metz but the war ended before this was needed. Little happened to develop the idea of inserting troops by air behind enemy lines until the 1930s, when Soviet, German, Italian, Polish and French military units were set up to test concepts and equipment. In Britain, military commanders did not embrace the concept and so, when war broke out in 1939, the British had no Airborne units or experience.

In 1940, when German victory in France seemed inevitable, the British considered less conventional ways of taking the war to the enemy. In June 1940, the first British parachute training unit was set up to train small numbers of parachute commandos for raiding and guerrilla activities behind enemy lines. Small operations followed:

- February 1941: 38 parachute troops damaged the Tragino aqueduct in southern Italy.
- February 1942: 119 troops landed at Bruneval on the coast of northern France and captured equipment and personnel from a German cliff-top radar site.
- November 1942: two gliders containing Royal Engineers were towed to Norway to attack a German plant supplying 'heavy water' to the German atomic weapon programme; they crashed (as did

¹Warren, Dr. John C. Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater (Illustrated Edition) (p. 534). Tannenber Publishing. Kindle Edition.

²Figures kindly supplied by Adam Berry author of A Breathtaking Spectacle, a history of the US IX Troop Carrier Command in England in World War II.

Greenacre, Dr John W. Churchill's Spearhead: The Development of Britain's Airborne Forces during the Second World War (Kindle Locations 443-445), Pen & Sword Aviation.
Otway, Lt Col Terence BH, DSO, Airborne Forces of the Second World War 1939-45, Official History of the Second World War – Army, Naval & Military Press Ltd.

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

one towing aircraft) and the mission failed.

The impetus for expanding British Airborne capabilities beyond small raids came from Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who had been impressed by the German use of parachute and glider troops in their invasions of Norway, Denmark, Netherlands and Belgium in April/May 1940. In June 1940, Churchill declared that 'We ought to have a corps of at least 5,000 parachute troops, including a proportion of Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians, together with some trustworthy people from Norway and France.'

Britain's Airborne forces gradually developed. In September 1941, the 1st Parachute Brigade was formed, followed by the 1st Airlanding Brigade (glider troops) in October 1941. To coordinate the growing development and training of Airborne forces, and to command them, Headquarters 1st Airborne Division was formed in November 1941. Over the next few months, the Glider Pilot Regiment and Parachute Regiment were formed, the latter bringing together all troops who had already volunteered for parachute infantry duties but were on detachment from their parent regiments. In July 1942, the 2nd Parachute Brigade was formed but the Division was still not at its full war strength by the end 1942, despite the progress made towards it.

As well as the Army's need to create new procedures for this novel type of warfare, the RAF also had to develop its structure, equipment and procedures to support the growing Airborne forces. In January 1942, the RAF formed No 38 Wing (later No 38 Group) as its specialized organisation to support Airborne operations. There were difficulties between the RAF and the Army over the priorities for the use of aircraft and these affected the speed of the development of 1st Airborne Division and the future of British Airborne forces. These difficulties were eventually overcome and the scale of Britain's Airborne forces by the war's end was a significant achievement: a British airborne corps of two complete divisions, one independent parachute brigade group and a special air service brigade, with one Polish Independent Parachute Brigade group and units of parachutists from Belgium, France, Holland and Norway.

Operations Of The British 1st Airborne Division

North Africa

In November 1942, 1st Parachute Brigade was deployed independently to North Africa as part of the Allied forces engaged in Operation TORCH. It fought hard in

Tunisia until enemy resistance in North Africa ceased in May 1943, undertaking three parachute drops and operating as elite infantry alongside non-Airborne units. The paratroops' toughness in combat, together with the appearance of the 'tail' of their Airborne smocks caked in red earth, earned them the nickname 'Red Devils' from the Germans. By June 1943, the whole of 1st Airborne Division – comprising the 1st, 2nd and 4th Parachute Brigades, 1st Airlanding Brigade and supporting units - was in North Africa and had begun preparing for the invasion of Sicily.

Sicily

The British 1st Airborne and US 82nd Airborne Divisions would land in Sicily to secure vital bridges and high ground inland of the seaborne assault forces.

On the night of 9/10 July 1943, 1st Air Landing Brigade's 2,000 soldiers were towed in over 144 gliders by 109 American C-47 Dakotas and 35 RAF tugs. A variety of problems, including inexperienced American aircrew, poor weather, enemy and 'friendly' fire, resulted in significant Airborne casualties. Many of the gliders were cast off too soon, with 78 landing in the sea and 252 soldiers drowning. Despite being understrength, the glider troops captured the Ponte Grande bridge but were pushed off the following day before British seaborne troops arrived and recaptured it. The 1st Airborne Division was then withdrawn into reserve in North Africa.

On 9 September 1943, 1st Airborne Division landed by ship in Taranto harbour in southern Italy. It then fought as light infantry with the Allied forces clawing their way northwards from Italy's south coast.

In November 1943, 1st Airborne Division returned to the UK to prepare for the invasion of north-west Europe, taking up home at bases in the East Midlands.

Operation MARKET GARDEN: Arnhem

When the Allies landed in Normandy in June 1944, the British 6th Airborne Division - sister unit to 1st Airborne Division - dropped into Normandy on D-Day to help secure the eastern flanks of the landing beaches. The 1st Airborne Division was held in high-readiness reserve to reinforce or exploit ground situations as necessary and, in August 1944, the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade was placed under the command of the British 1st Airborne Division.

³ Greenacre, Dr John W. Churchill's Spearhead: The Development of Britain's Airborne Forces during the Second World War (Kindle Locations 443-445), Pen & Sword Aviation.

⁴ Otway, Lt Col Terence BH, DSO, Airborne Forces of the Second World War 1939-45, Official History of the Second World War – Army, Naval & Military Press Ltd.

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

After a slow start, Allied troops advanced rapidly through France and Belgium and 16 operations involving 1st Airborne Division were planned and cancelled because the Allies had captured the ground involved. Finally, on 17 September 1944, the 1st Airborne Division – together with the US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions – were launched into action around Arnhem, Nijmegen and Eindhoven to capture and hold key river bridges while Allied ground forces advanced to meet them.

Apart from 186 Pathfinders who flew from Fairford in Gloucestershire on the first day, all of the parachute troops of the 1st Airborne Division flew to Arnhem in American C-47 aircraft from Barkston Heath, Saltby and Spanhoe airfields.



The airfields of Barkston Heath, Saltby and Spanhoe are shown in green;

the South Kesteven District of Lincolnshire is shown in blue.

Although the American objectives around Nijmegen and Eindhoven were captured and held, the road bridge over the Neder Rijn river at Arnhem proved ‘a bridge too far’. Units of 1st Airborne Division captured the bridge and held it beyond the two days planned, but they and their colleagues fighting in the western

suburbs of Arnhem were eventually overwhelmed by German forces. Those Airborne troops who could withdrew across the river on the night of 25/26 September 1944: of the 10,095 members of the Division who had landed, fewer than 3,000 escaped across the river.

Operation DOOMSDAY

The 1st Airborne Division was decimated at Arnhem. After it returned to its bases in the East Midlands, replacements gradually filtered into its component units, many of which only existed in name. The Division was not fit to mount another Airborne operation before the war’s end in May 1945, but it was used in one final operation.

The surrender of all German forces in Europe took effect on 8 May 1945. Allied troops needed to oversee and disarm the surrendering Germans and it was decided that 1st Airborne Division would be sent to Norway to carry out those tasks. The Division helped recover Allied prisoners of war, arrested war criminals, allocated German units to specific areas and oversaw their disarming of minefields. In June 1945, it conducted the welcoming ceremony for the return of the King of Norway from exile.

In November 1945, the British 1st Airborne Division was disbanded.

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

1st Airborne Division Units In Lincolnshire and The East Midlands

Sources:

- Arnhem in Lincolnshire, Dennis Burt, Lancfile Publishing, 2006
- Appendix 'A' To HQ 1 Airborne Div War Diary for 13 March 44 (transcribed by Bob Hilton of Paradata)

NB. Some units moved their locations between 13 March 1944 (date of the War Diary entries) and their deployment on Operation MARKET GARDEN.

Where the two sources differ, all locations mentioned by them are shown.

Abbreviations

RA	Royal Artillery
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
RAOC	Royal Army Ordnance Corps
RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
RE	Royal Engineers
REME Engineers	Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Headquarters 1st British Airborne Division

Unit	Arnhem in Lincolnshire Location	War Diary Location	Comments
Divisional Headquarters and Defence Platoon	Fulbeck Hall	Defence Platoon at Leadenham High House	
Headquarters, RA	Fulbeck Hall		
Headquarters, RE	Fulbeck Hall		
Headquarters, RASC	Leadenham House		
Headquarters, RAOC	Fulbeck Manor		
Headquarters, Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers	Fulbeck Manor		

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

1st Parachute Brigade

Unit	Arnhem in Lincolnshire Location	War Diary Location	Comments
Brigade Headquarters and Defence Platoon	Syston Old Hall		
1st Parachute Battalion	Headquarters, Grimsthorpe Castle	HQ Grimsthorpe Castle	
		Bulby Hall	
		Fairways, Bourne	
		Liberal Club, Bourne	
2nd Parachute Battalion	Headquarters, Stoke Rochford Hall	HQ Stoke Rochford Hall	
		A Coy: Hungerton Hall, Grantham	
		B Coy: Millfield House, Colsterworth	
		C Coy: Easton Hall, Grantham	
3rd Parachute Battalion	Headquarters, Limehurst House, Spalding	Limehurst, Spalding	Limehurst House is at 41 London Rd, Spalding Coys accommodated on Spalding Grammar School playing-fields behind House
Headquarters, 1st Airlanding Anti-tank Battery, RA	Heckington and Helpringham		
Headquarters, 1st Parachute Squadron, RE	Komani House, Donington		
16 Parachute Field Ambulance, RAMC	Culverthorpe Hall and grounds, Sleaford		

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

1st Air Landing Brigade

Unit	Arnhem in Lincolnshire Location	War Diary Location	Comments
1st Airlanding Brigade			
Brigade Headquarters, Defence Platoon and Signals Section	Revesby Abbey		
Brigade Headquarters Light Aid Detachment, REME	Sinclair's House, Mareham-le-Fen		
Headquarters, 7th (Galloway) Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers	Dower House, Woodhall Spa		
7th (Galloway) Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers	Kirkby Moor Camp, Woodhall Spa		
Headquarters, 1st Battalion, Border Regiment	Hartington House, Woodhall Spa		
1st Battalion, Border Regiment	Based around Woodhall Spa	(a) Moor House, Woodhall Spa	
		(b) Golf Hotel, Woodhall Spa	
		(c) Riveen, Woodhall Spa	
		(d) Bardney	
Headquarters, 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment	Golf Club House, Woodhall Spa		
2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment	Roughton Moor Camp, Woodhall Spa		
181 Airlanding Field Ambulance, RAMC	Stenigot House and grounds and Martin Manor	Stenigot House	
13 Airlanding Light Aid Detachment, Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers	Hartsholme Hall, Lincoln		

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

4th Parachute Brigade

Unit	Arnhem in Lincolnshire Location	War Diary Location	Comments
Brigade Headquarters and Defence Platoon	Knossington Grange, near Oakham		
Brigade Headquarters Signals and Postal Sections		Withcote Hall	
Headquarters, 156th Parachute Battalion	Staveley Lodge, Melton Mowbray		
156th Parachute Battalion	Melton Mowbray area	A Coy: Scalford Hall, Melton Mowbray	
		B and C Coys: Newport Lodge, Melton Mowbray.	
		Spt Coy: The Spinneys, Melton Mowbray	
Headquarters, 10th Parachute Battalion	Somerby Village Hall	Somerby House	
10th Parachute Battalion	Somerby area	A Coy: Somerby Grove	
		B Coy: Thorpe Satchville	
		1 Pl S Coy: Burough Court	
		D Coy and remainder S Coy: Borough Hill House	
		HQ Coy: Somerby Hall	
Headquarters, 11th Parachute Battalion	The Lodge, Manor House, Great Glen		
11th Parachute Battalion	Based in the Great Glen area	A Coy: Carlton Curlieu	
		B Coy: Kibworth Hall	
		C Coy: Glen Parva Grange	
		S Coy: Wigston Fields	
Headquarters, 2nd (Oban) Airlanding Anti-tank Battery, RA	Ayston Hall, Uppingham		
2nd (Oban) Airlanding Anti-tank Battery, RAS	Ayston area		
Headquarters, 4th Parachute Squadron, RE	Glaston Hall		
4th Parachute Squadron, RE	Glaston area	HQ and No 1 Troop: Glaston	
		Nos 2 and 3 Troops: Bisbrook Hall	
133rd Parachute Field Ambulance	Barleythorpe Hall	Barleythorpe Hall Stables	

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

Divisional Units

Unit	Arnhem in Lincolnshire Location	War Diary Location	Comments
1st Airlanding Light Regiment, RA			
Headquarters, 1st Airlanding Light Regiment, RA	Westfields House, Sleaford Road, Boston		
Headquarters, 1 Forward (Airborne) Observation Unit, RA	Hartsholme Hall, Lincoln		
1 Forward (Airborne) Observation Unit, RA	Hartsholme Park, Lincoln		
1st (Airborne) Divisional Signals			
Headquarters, 1st (Airborne) Divisional Signals	Holycross House, Caythorpe		
1st (Airborne) Divisional Signals	Based in Caythorpe	Caythorpe Hall,	
		Caythorpe Court Stables	
1 Airborne Div Postal Unit	Leadenham High House		
89th (Parachute) Field Security Section, Intelligence Corps	Headquarters at Wellingore Hall rest based in Wellingore	Gregory Arms, Harlaxton	
Headquarters, 9th (Airborne) Field Company, RE	Tattershall Lodge		
9th (Airborne) Field Company, RE	Based in the Tattershall and Coningsby area		
Headquarters, 261 (Airborne) Field Park Company, RE	Hubbard's Camp, Mareham-le-Fen		
Headquarters, 21st Independent Parachute Company	Bassingham Hall		
21st Independent Parachute Company	Based in the Bassingham area		Moved to Hawton Road Camp, Newark in Aug 44, from billets in Thurlby, Bassingham and Aubourn (Source: Newark Advertiser, 11 May 2017)
1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron	Based at Ruskington and Helpringham		

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

Divisional Units

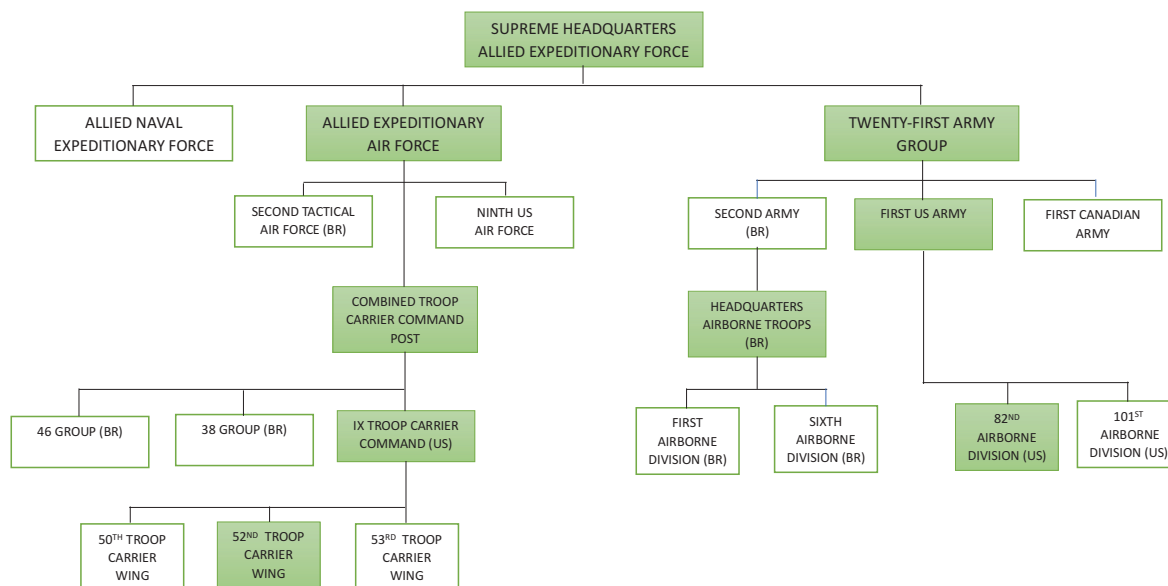
Unit	Arnhem in Lincolnshire Location	War Diary Location	Comments
Headquarters, 250 (Airborne) Light Composite Company, RASC	Moorlands Hotel, Newark Road Lincoln		
250 (Airborne) Light Composite Company, RASC	Based at Longhills Hall, Branston, and Lincoln		
Headquarters, 1st (Airborne) Divisional Field Park, (RAOC)	Spitalgate School, Grantham		
1st (Airborne) Divisional Field Park, (RAOC)	Based around Grantham		
Headquarters, 1st (Airborne) Divisional Workshops, REME	Corn Exchange, Sleaford		
Headquarters, 1st (Airborne) Divisional Provost Company, Corps of Military Police	Stubton Hall		
Headquarters, 253rd Composite Company, RASC	Harlaxton Manor		
253rd Composite Company, RASC	Based around Harlaxton	a. No 1 Detachment: Allington House, Allington, Nr Grantham.	
		b. Composite Pl: Carlton Scroope House, Nr Grantham.	
		c. Workshops Pl: North Road Garage, Great Ponton	
1st Airborne Division Postal Unit	Leadenham High House		
6 Light Aid Detachment, REME	The Kennels, Barleythorpe		

Appendix Two:

British 1st Airborne Division In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

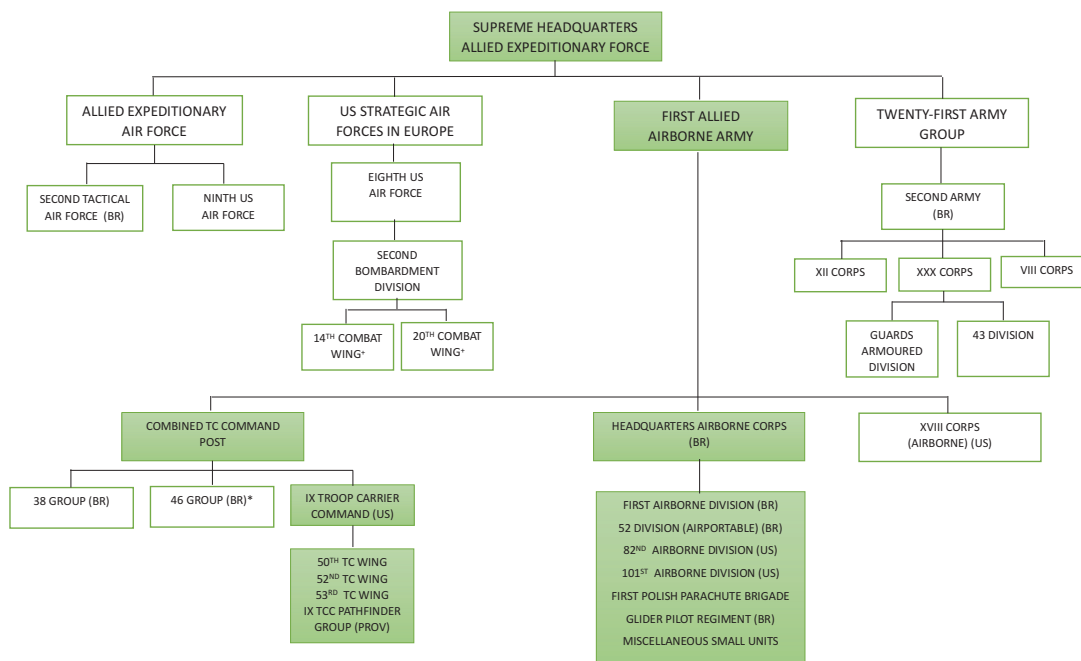
AIRBORNE CHAIN OF COMMAND FOR OPERATION OVERLORD, JUNE 1944

(Chain of Command for Airborne Units in the East Midlands shown in green)



AIRBORNE CHAIN OF COMMAND FOR OPERATION MARKET GARDEN, SEPTEMBER 1944

(Chain of Command for Airborne Units in the East Midlands shown in green)



*Under temporary operational control of Airborne Army for employment in Market
 *Bomber resupply missions in Market Garden coordinated with Airborne Army G-3



Appendix Three:

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

This is a brief history of the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade, whose Headquarters during 1944-45 was in Stamford, Lincolnshire. Most of the Brigade's units were based within the triangle bounded by Stamford – Corby – Peterborough.



The coloured icons represent 1st Polish Ind Para Bde units;
South Kesteven District of Lincolnshire shown in blue.

OVERVIEW OF ALLIED AIRBORNE FORCES IN THE EAST MIDLANDS 1944-45

Over the years, Lincolnshire has gained the nickname of 'Bomber County' because of its association with RAF Bomber Command during the Second World War and the Cold War. Yet there is far less public awareness of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands as a base for British, US and Polish Airborne Forces during the Second World War. For many of those who flew from the local area, this part of England would be the last friendly soil on which they would ever set foot.

In 1944, two major Airborne combat operations involved Allied troops based in the East Midlands:

- **Operation NEPTUNE** (D-Day, June 1944): US aircraft flying from local airfields dropped approximately **6,350** US paratroopers of the US 82nd Airborne Division in Normandy .

- **Operation MARKET GARDEN** (Netherlands, 17-25 September 1944): US aircraft flying from local airfields dropped **8,663** US, British and Polish paratroopers, and towed **3,086** US glider troops to their landing zones

In May 1945 - immediately after German forces in Europe had formally surrendered to the Allies - US aircraft flew British Airborne troops from Lincolnshire to Norway on Operation DOOMSDAY. The mission was to maintain peace and oversee the surrender of German forces in Norway.

The US Airborne contribution in the region – both in Airborne troops and in troop carrier aircraft - was a very large part of the multinational Airborne heritage of the region, which also included the British 1st Airborne Division and the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade. These were the only three nations among the Allies in western Europe that possessed large Airborne formations.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF 1ST POLISH INDEPENDENT PARACHUTE BRIGADE

In 1918, the Americans considered dropping troops by parachute around the fortress of Metz but the war ended before this was needed. Little happened to develop the idea of inserting troops by air behind enemy lines until the 1930s, when Soviet, German, Italian, French and Polish military units were set up to test concepts and equipment.

In Poland, studies into military parachuting began in 1936. A Military Parachute Centre was set up at Bydgoszcz in May 1939 and the first Army trainees began a two-month course. The second course was running when the Germans invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. After the fall of Poland, many Polish troops escaped to France to help continue the fight against the Germans; some of these - including a few trained as parachutists - managed to escape to Britain after the fall of France.

Colonel Stanislaw Sosabowski had been the Deputy Commander of the 4th Polish Infantry Division in France at the time of his evacuation to Britain in June 1940. In October 1940, he was given command of the 4th Polish Rifle Brigade, based in Scotland and charged with coastal defence.

Some of Sosabowski's men volunteered for commando and parachute training in preparation for returning to

¹Warren, Dr. John C. Airborne Operations in World War II, European Theater (Illustrated Edition) (p. 534). Tannenber Publishing. Kindle Edition.

²Figures kindly supplied by Adam Berry author of A Breathtaking Spectacle, a history of the US IX Troop Carrier Command in England in World War II.

Appendix Three:

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

Poland to help the underground army. On their return from parachute training, the volunteers' enthusiasm for it was infectious, spreading to Sosabowski himself, who decided to form a Polish Parachute Brigade that could eventually be dropped direct into Poland. He began unofficially organizing and training his men as paratroops: unlike the British, he did not give them the choice of volunteering but decided that everyone fit enough would become a paratrooper.



Colonel Stanislaw Sosabowski

In September 1941, Sosabowski's brigade officially became the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade and was to be used specially for operations in Poland. The independence of the Brigade - which was initially outside Allied military command structures and whose primary aim was to operate in Poland - became a political problem between the Polish and British leaders. This was finally resolved in June 1944, when the Polish government-in-exile placed the Brigade at the disposal of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces.

On 14 June 1944, Sosabowski was promoted to Major General and in July 1944, the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade moved from Leven in Scotland to the Stamford-Peterborough area of the East Midlands to be closer to the British 1st Airborne Division. In August, the Polish Parachute Brigade - together with the British 1st Airborne Division - came under the command of General Browning in the 1st British Airborne Corps.

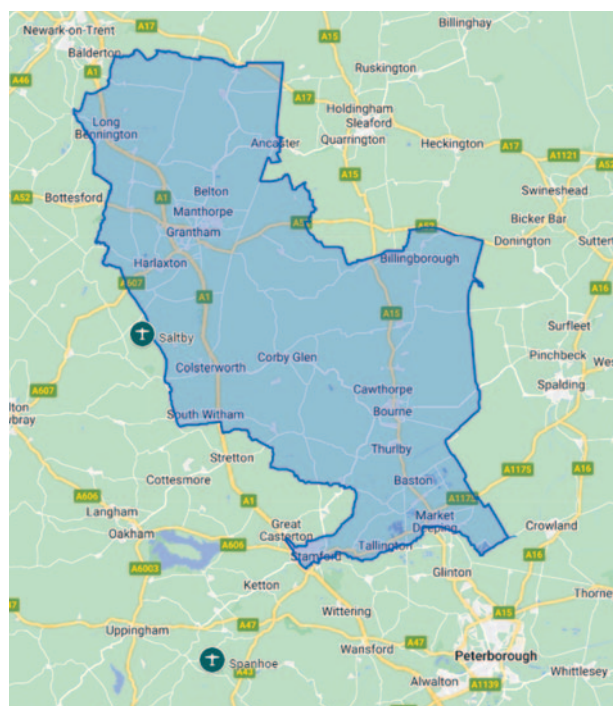
After breaking out of the Normandy beachhead in August 1944, Allied troops advanced rapidly through France and Belgium. Many planned Allied Airborne operations were cancelled before they were launched because Allied ground forces had already captured the target areas.

On 17 September 1944, the British 1st Airborne Division and the US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were finally launched into action in Operation MARKET GARDEN. The British were to capture key river bridges

at Arnhem, and the Americans those around Nijmegen and Eindhoven, and hold them until Allied ground forces advanced to meet them.

The plan for capturing the Arnhem bridges called for part of the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade to land by glider on 18 September, bringing in artillery reinforcements. The bulk of the Brigade was to parachute on the southern bank of the Neder Rijn river on 19 September to reinforce the southern flank of the British troops, who should have by then captured the bridges.

Unfortunately, events did not go according to plan. Although the Polish glider troops landed as planned on 19 September, their parachuting comrades - flying from Saltby and Spanhoe airfields - were prevented by bad weather throughout the East Midlands from taking off and heading into battle until 21 and 23 September.



The airfields of Saltby and Spanhoe are shown in green; the South Kesteven District of Lincolnshire is shown in blue.

The delayed Polish parachute landings diverted German troops away from attacking the British troops trapped in

³ Sosabowski, Stanislaw. *Freely I Served: The Memoir of the Commander, 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade 1941-1944* (p. 238). Pen & Sword Books. Kindle Edition.
⁴ Paradata - A Living History of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces, <https://www.paradata.org.uk/unit/1st-polish-independent-parachute-brigade> [accessed 7 April 2023]

Appendix Three:

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade In Lincolnshire And The East Midlands, 1944-45

Oosterbeek on the north of the river and bought more time for the 1st Airborne Division. Using small assault boats at night, 200 Polish paratroops managed to cross the river and join the British in Oosterbeek. However, despite their vigorous efforts, the Polish contribution was too late to alter the course of the battle. Their final contribution was to cover the withdrawal of 1st Airborne Division survivors south across the river during the night of 25/26 September 1944.

The Poles had suffered heavy casualties for little gain: 'One thousand seven hundred Polish troops parachuted or glided into Holland; 1,310 marched out.' Major General Sosabowski later suffered a further blow when he was '...controversially removed from command in

December 1944, following sustained criticism by Lt Gen Browning, with whom Sosabowski had an acrimonious relationship. This treatment of Sosabowski, and by implication 1st Polish Independent Para Brigade, was considered to be an injustice by many of the British airborne veterans who served and fought alongside the Poles in World War II.'

The 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade was not used in an Airborne operation again. In 1945, the Brigade was attached to the Polish 1st Armoured Division and carried out occupation duties in northern Germany until June 1947, when it was disbanded. Many of its members remained in exile after the war, not wishing to return to a Poland under communist rule.

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade Units In The East Midlands

Unit	Location	County
HQ Polish Independent Parachute Brigade	Rock House, Stamford	Lincolnshire
1st Parachute Battalion	Easton-on-the-Hill	Northamptonshire
2nd Parachute Battalion	Wansford	Cambridgeshire
3rd Parachute Battalion	Peterborough	Cambridgeshire
Anti-Tank Battery	Blatherwycke	Northamptonshire
Engineer Company	Wansford	Cambridgeshire
Signals Company	Easton-on-the-Hill	Northamptonshire
Medical Company	Stamford	Lincolnshire
	Blatherwycke	Northamptonshire

Appendix Four:

US Airborne Forces in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands, 1943-45



GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT



(South Kesteven District shown in blue)

This document provides an overview of the US Airborne Forces based in the East Midlands region of central England during 1943-45. This region consists of six counties, one of which is Lincolnshire.

Harlaxton Manor, the overseas study centre of the University of Evansville, Indiana, lies in the South Kesteven district of Lincolnshire, and forms an enduring link between this part of England and the United States.

AIRBORNE FORCES IN THE EAST MIDLANDS DURING WORLD WAR II

Over the years, Lincolnshire has gained the nickname of 'Bomber County' because of its association with RAF Bomber Command during the Second World War and the Cold War. Yet there is far less public awareness of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands as a base for British, US and Polish Airborne Forces during the Second World War. For many of those who flew from the local area, this part of England would be the last friendly soil on which they would ever set foot.

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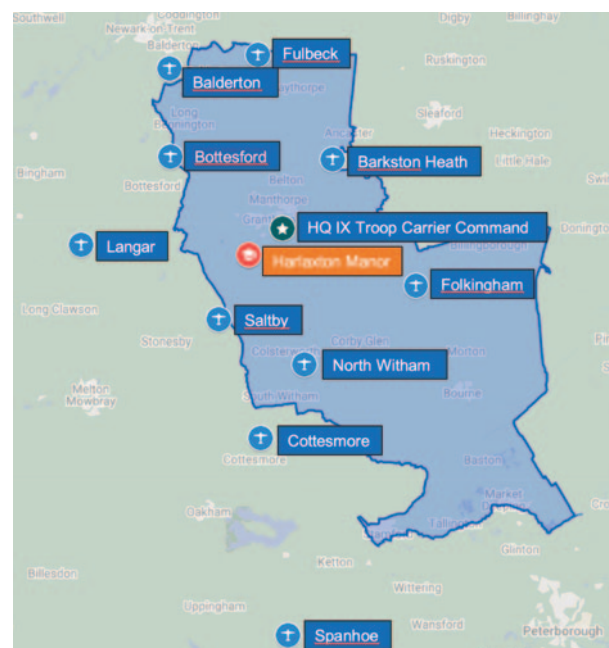
The vital contribution to these operations of the locally based US 52nd Troop Carrier Wing (badge shown here) - together with aircraft attached from the 50th Troop Carrier Wing - is not widely appreciated. Many members of the public probably do not realize that almost all British paratroopers dropped at Arnhem were flown there in C-47 aircraft of the 52nd Troop Carrier Wing.



Although this document focuses on the US Airborne Forces' presence in the East Midlands during 1943-45, it is important to remember that the British 1st Airborne Division and the 1st

Independent Polish Parachute Brigade were also based in the East Midlands during this time. These were the only three nations among the Allies in western Europe that possessed large Airborne formations. **The US Airborne presence therefore forms an important part of the significant multinational Airborne heritage of the region.**

THE AIR ELEMENT



Harlaxton Manor is surrounded by sites used by US IX Troop Carrier Command, 1943-45 (South Kesteven District shown in blue)

¹ Airborne Operations in World War II, *European Theater*, USAF Historical Studies No 97, (Warren, 1956).

² Figures kindly supplied by Adam Berry author of *A Breathtaking Spectacle*, a history of the US IX Troop Carrier Command in England in World War II.

Appendix Four:

Us Airborne Forces in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands, 1943-45



US NINTH AIR FORCE

The US Ninth Air Force was a tactical organisation, meaning that its role was to provide offensive and defensive support for ground forces. This support included the delivery of paratroopers

and gliders into combat areas.

The Ninth Air Force had been formed in the United States in April 1942 and had begun operations in the Mediterranean theatre in November 1942. It subsequently fought in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Sicily and Italy before re-forming in Britain in October 1943.

While the Headquarters of the Ninth Air Force was at Ascot in southern England, the Headquarters of one of its key components was at Grantham from December 1943 to September 1944 : IX Troop Carrier Command.



US IX TROOP CARRIER COMMAND

IX Troop Carrier Command (IX TCC) within the Ninth Air Force was activated in England on 16 October 1943. Its role was to provide aircraft and gliders to convey troops and cargo into combat

within the European Theatre of Operations. It was equipped primarily with Douglas C-47 Skytrain and C-53 Skytrooper aircraft, with small numbers of Curtiss C-46 Commandos joining in 1945. It had a fleet of small CG-4A Waco gliders, supplemented by larger, British-made Horsa gliders.

As Troop Carrier units were classed as combat units, they were also used to fly in supplies close to the frontlines - delivering essential items such as fuel, whole and dried blood supplies, rations and ammunition - and to evacuate injured personnel from airfields and landing strips close to the fighting.

The work of these units should not be underestimated. Their transport aircraft and gliders were unarmed and unarmoured and they often flew deep into enemy territory at less than 1,000 feet to deliver their troops and equipment. The glider pilots often fought as infantry after landing, helping the Airborne troops secure the landing and drop-zones.

IX Troop Carrier Command would eventually consist of the 50th, 52nd and 53rd Troop Carrier Wings, each made up of Troop Carrier Groups that were based in the East Midlands, South and South-West England.

IX TROOP CARRIER COMMAND HEADQUARTERS IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

Dates	Dates	County	Commander
16 Oct 43 – 30 Nov 43	Cottesmore airfield	Rutland	Brig Gen B F Giles
1 Dec 43 – 19 Sep 44	St Vincent's House, Grantham	Lincolnshire	Maj Gen P L Williams

Appendix Four:

Us Airborne Forces in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands, 1943-45

IX TROOP CARRIER COMMAND FLYING UNITS IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

Troop Carrier Wing	Troop Carrier Group	Airfield	County	Dates
50th	439th	Balderton	Nottinghamshire	21 Feb 44 - 26 Apr 44
	440th	Bottesford	Nottinghamshire	11 Mar 44 - 18 Apr 44
	441st	Langar	Nottinghamshire	17 Mar 44 - 25 Apr 44
	442nd	Fulbeck	Lincolnshire	29 Mar 44 - 12 Jun 44
52nd	61st	Barkston Heath	Lincolnshire	18 Feb 44 - 13 Mar 45
	313rd	Folkingham	Lincolnshire	4 Feb 44 - 26 Feb 45
	314th	Saltby	Leicestershire	20 Feb 44 - 28 Feb 45
	315th	Spanhoe	Northamptonshire	7 Feb 44 – 6 Apr 45
	316th	Cottesmore	Rutland	15 Feb 44 - May 45



IX TROOP CARRIER COMMAND PATHFINDER SCHOOL

In addition to the above units, IV Troop Carrier Command established its own Pathfinder School at RAF Cottesmore, Rutland, on 28 February 1944; it moved to RAF North Witham, Lincolnshire, on 22 March 1944.

Suitable aircrew candidates for Pathfinder training were selected from all three Troop Carrier Wings and trainee Pathfinder paratroopers were drawn from the US 82nd

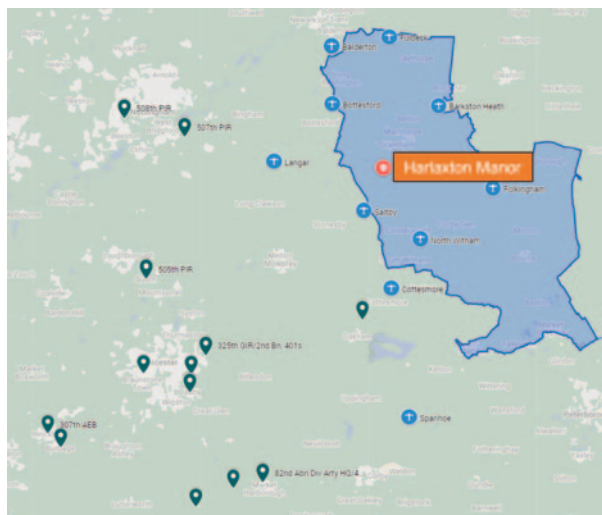
and 101st Airborne Divisions.

Pathfinders from North Witham led the US parachute and glider assault on Normandy on 6 June 1944 (D-Day) and a detachment of 12 Pathfinder aircraft were sent to Italy to lead the Allied airborne landings of Operation DRAGOON on 15 August 1944. The Pathfinders moved from North Witham to Chalgrove in Oxfordshire on 14 September 1944, just three days before they led US Airborne landings in the Netherlands during Operation MARKET GARDEN.

Appendix Four:

Us Airborne Forces in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands, 1943-45

THE GROUND ELEMENT



82nd Airborne units (icons in green) were based west of South Kesteven but many troops flew into combat from East Midlands' airfields (icons in blue) (South Kesteven District shown in blue)

US 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION



The 82nd Division was formed in August 1917 following the United States' entry into World War I.

The Division's personnel were very diverse, including many immigrants who spoke little or no English. Uniquely for the time, its men were drawn from all 48 states, and it was nicknamed 'All American' as a result. This name is represented by the 'AA' letters on its Divisional badge.

The Division fought in France during the war and demobilized in May 1919 in New York. Two members of the Division won Medals of Honor for their bravery in action: LTC Emory J Pike and Corporal Alvin C York. In 1921, the Division was reconstituted in the Reserves.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 led to the Division being ordered into active service in March 1942 at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana.

In August 1942, the Division was reorganized and designated the 82nd Airborne Division. With Major General Matthew Ridgway in command, the Division went to North Africa in May 1943 and undertook training for the airborne assault on Sicily during Operation HUSKY in July 1943.

In September 1943, the Division's 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment dropped into the Allied beachhead at Salerno to help strengthen the foothold. Following this, the 504th carried out a successful seaborne assault nearby. The 504th stayed on operations in Italy while the rest of the 82nd went to the East Midlands region of England in preparation for **Operation NEPTUNE**, the Allied assault on Normandy.

Although units of the 82nd Airborne were based outside Lincolnshire, many of them flew on combat operations from airfields in the county and nearby. For Operation NEPTUNE (**D-Day, 6 June 1944**) around 12,000 paratroopers and glider troops of the 82nd landed in Normandy as part of the Allied invasion forces. **Brigadier-General Gavin**, Assistant Division Commander, 82nd Airborne Division, flew from **Saltby airfield** to Normandy on D-Day, 6 June 1944. Gavin had literally written the US Army's first Airborne tactics' manual (FM 31-30, *Tactics and Technique of Air-Borne Troops*).

The mission of the 82ND was to destroy bridges to deny mobility to German reinforcements and to capture causeways leading inland across the flooded areas behind the Normandy beaches so that Allied seaborne forces could rapidly move inland. The 82nd carried out its mission successfully and fought for 33 days without relief or replacements before returning to England.

Private Joe Gandara (D Company, 2nd Battalion, 507th PIR) flew into Normandy from **Barkston Heath airfield**. He was killed while attacking enemy machine-gun positions and was posthumously awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery; this was upgraded to a **Medal of Honor** in 2014.

in **September 1944**, the 82nd Airborne Division carried out its final airborne assault of the war when it was flown from airfields in the East Midlands to land near Nijmegen in the Netherlands, as part of **Operation MARKET GARDEN**. The Division's mission was to capture and hold a number of bridges at Grave and Nijmegen so that British ground forces could pass northwards to Arnhem.

The 82nd captured the bridges at Grave and worked with British ground units to capture the huge road bridge at Nijmegen. During this action, 200 men of the 82nd carried out a very successful assault crossing of the river in daylight using small boats.

³ Private Gandara was a Latin American and the upgrade followed a review of veteran records to ensure those deserving the Medal of Honor were not denied because of ethnic prejudice. See 'Valor 24' in *Medal of Honor: History and Issues*, Congressional Research Service, Updated August 18, 2015, p16.

Appendix Four:

Us Airborne Forces in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands, 1943-45

After much-needed rest following MARKET GARDEN, the 82nd was caught up in defending against the German offensive in the Belgian Ardennes in December 1944, the so-called 'Battle of the Bulge'. After rushing into combat with little food, ammunition, and winter clothing, the 82nd endured the German attacks and eventually went on the offensive; by February 1945, the Division was pushing into Germany. During the final months of the war, the Division liberated a forced-labour camp and accepted the unconditional surrender of 146,000 men of the German 21st Army.

82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION CHRONOLOGY

- **1942:** 82nd Infantry Division re-formed and converted to Airborne role
- **May 1943:** Arrived North Africa (after Axis surrender) to prepare for invasion of Sicily
- **Jul 1943:** Operation HUSKY (Sicily)
- **Sep 1943:** Operation AVALANCHE (Salerno)
- **Dec 1943:** moved to UK
- **Jun - Jul 1944:** Normandy
- **Sep 1944:** Operation MARKET
- **Dec-Jan 1944:** Ardennes
- **Feb - May 1945:** Germany

82nd Airborne Division Units in the East Midlands

Unit	Location	County
82nd Airborne Division Headquarters	Braunstone Park and Glebe Mount, Leicester	Leicestershire
504TH Parachute Infantry Regiment	Evington	Leicestershire
505TH Parachute Infantry Regiment	Quorn	Leicestershire
507TH Parachute Infantry Regiment	Tollerton Hall, Nottingham	Nottinghamshire
508TH Parachute Infantry Regiment	Wollaton Park, Nottingham	Nottinghamshire
325th Glider Infantry Regiment	Scraptoft	Leicestershire
2nd Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry Regiment	Scraptoft	Leicestershire
82nd Airborne Division Artillery HQ	Park House, Market Harborough	Leicestershire
320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion	Highfields House, Husbands Bosworth	Leicestershire

Appendix Four:

Us Airborne Forces in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands, 1943-45

82nd Airborne Division Units in the East Midlands

Unit	Location	County
456th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion	Highfields House, Husbands Bosworth, and Park House, Market Harborough	Leicestershire
319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion	Papillon Hall, Lubenham	Leicestershire
376th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion	Burbage	Leicestershire
307th Airborne Engineer Battalion	Hinckley	Leicestershire
Parachute School	Camp Ashwell, Ashwell	Leicestershire
82nd Parachute Maintenance Company	Camp Ashwell, Ashwell	Leicestershire
80th Airborne Anti-Aircraft and Anti-Tank Battalion	Oadby	Leicestershire
782nd Airborne Ordnance Maintenance Company	Oadby	Leicestershire