

OPERATION LONGSTOP

48 Dakotas took aboard an airborne battalion - group, a good sprinkling of Arnhem veterans among them, at the beginning of a combined Army - R.A.F. manoeuvres, biggest operation of its kind since the war. A convincing demonstration of latest theories of airborne assault.

Observers at Netheravon Airfield, Wiltshire, included military attaches of all European countries except Russia. They soon saw the Dakotas approaching, ^{dead} ~~then~~ on schedule, and a few seconds later the parachutists began to bale out, watched by Monty, Lord Tedder and Air Minister Noel-Baker. In a breeze of eighteen miles an hour, considered the absolute safety limit, the attackers dropped from as low as five hundred feet.

(Monty)

On the tail of the parachutists Halifaxes of R.A.F. Transport Command dropped guns, gun teams and jeeps. In this way the assault troops were reinforced. When it is remembered that ^a jeeps weigh ^a ton it will be understood to what perfection parachuting has developed.

regret
The airfield was now clear for the huge Horsa and Hamilcar gliders, twenty one in all, some of them carrying eight tons of equipment. ~~They were followed by helicopters,~~ ^{capture!} ~~to pick up any important enemy commanders captured~~ and whisk them back to headquarters for interrogation, *came to helicopters.*

(Monty)

Our

The Commanders were gratified to see everything going according to plan. Heavy airborne reinforcements arrived by troop carriers, and before long the airfield was deemed taken to be ~~captured~~

*(Plane
cross)*

~~By sunset~~ ^{*by sunset*} the attackers' aircraft were operating from the captured field. The end of a perfect manoeuvre.