

THE "RED DEVILS" OF ARNHEM.

This is the story of "that glorious yet tragic operation" which, in Mr. Churchill's words "will take a lasting place in our Military annals and will, in succeeding generations, inspire our youth with the highest ideals of duty and daring". Airborne troops arrive by glider to take part in the toughest job of the war. Losses are not light; crashed and burning aircraft are but a fraction of the price to be paid. But the Red Devils of the Skies do not count the cost; they proudly offer life itself in their bold attempt to strike the short route to Berlin.

Back on the road from Hindhoven, men of the Second Army go forward towards Nijmegen, and that vital bridge across the wider stream of the Rhine, whose capture intact was the most dazzling achievement of our Airborne forces. That was the first objective of the operation, and it was triumphantly accomplished after a brilliant pitched battle. The second objective, the town of Grave, was swiftly secured, by the Guards Armoured Division. Soon our armour had passed through and was rolling northward.

The famous Nijmegen Bridge, photographed by our cameraman Kenneth Gordon. In their anxiety to deny us the use of it, the Germans had placed demolition charges, but the sudden sweep of the skyman took them unawares and the charges were left unexploded, to be removed by British Engineers. The Germans tried to make a stand, and after a violent struggle they were forced out, leaving many dead. The Nazis would have given a great deal to get the bridge back but their troops to the North were being held in a grim struggle by the heroic men of Arnhem.

During eight days and nights of hell those magnificent troops of the First Airborne Division hung on, weary from fighting without sleep, getting reinforcements and supplies by air, knowing that the main Allied forces only a few miles to the South were battering at the Germans in an attempt to force a corridor.

Pounded by everything the enemy can bring to bear, General Urquhart's men defend themselves from slit trenches. Their only contact with the outside world is by radio, but they know their bitter struggle has not been in vain. While they hold the Germans our two first objectives had been captured and consolidated.

A few German prisoners are brought in, and there are many wounded to care for, friend and foe alike. The cost has been heavy for both sides in this Hell spot in Arnhem. Further South, the Second Army has taken a large haul of enemy prisoners, but in spite of their successes the British have been unable to force a way through. As Secondary men went on to consolidate the considerable gains already won, the men of Arnhem got the order to retire across the Rhine. Only about a third came back. It is fitting to end with Mr. Churchill's moving tribute "The cost has been heavy. Casualties in a single division have been grievous. But 'not in vain' may be the pride of those who survived and the epitaph of those who fell".