**7 KOSB-OPERATION MARKET SEPTEMBER 1944**

At 1000 hrs on 17th September 1944 700 men of the 7th (Galloway) Bn King’s Own Scottish Borderers begin loading onto gliders at Down Ampney and Blakehill Farm Airfields. They are “off at last” as part of “Operation Market” in which 1st Airborne Division is to seize and hold the Arnhem Bridge.

In what would become a desperate battle for survival the original Bn mission was fairly straightforward- “7 KOSB will protect DZ Y until 4 Para Bde are clear then occupy a reserve position in Bde area and protect LZ L until Polish Para Bde are clear”.

By 1330 on the 17th the BN gliders were released two miles from their LZ and glide in, no flak. Under the piping of Lcpl Willie Ford who played “Blue Bunnets” at the BN RV, he had “won” the job as there was only one seat for a Piper and they all drew lots.

At 1500 the BN commenced its forward movement, quoted from the COs War diary:

“The LZ and RV drills were carried out with precision and despatch. There was no interruption from enemy fire. Information from local inhabitants indicates that there are few Germans in the immediate vicinity. The Dutch seem delighted to see us. Out of our original strength of 56 gliders, 8 have failed to arrive. One ATK gun is broken up in its glider and unserviceable”.

The BN would move out and “advance to contact” as ordered. By 1900 the BN dispositions to protect the DZ for the Parachute landing the next day had been completed according to plan and digging was well advanced. Information was gained that some 600 enemy were in barracks in EDE with possible reinforcements further North.

Vigorous patrolling was carried out by all Coys through the night. Communications would prove difficult now due to thick woods, they would not get any better during the whole operation. Line was laid however being assault cable it was unsatisfactory owing to distances and breakages.

A taste of what lay ahead was experienced through the night of 17/18 September as noted in the COs war diary:

“During the night the Pl of A Coy (under Lt Strang) which was on the main road was repeatedly attacked by a party of enemy which advanced with an armoured veh, carrying a Hispano type of gun firing explosive cannon-shell. Their tactics were to shine a searchlight on the Pl posn and then rain cannon-shell and MG fire into it whilst their Inf infiltrated round it. Lt Strang’s Pl withstood three such attacks but they were severely shaken by them”.

The Bn would fight hard for the next nine days against fierce German opposition, all Borderers would fight in the finest traditions of the Regiment. The situation would prove untenable, on 25 Sep at 1300 the CO would be informed by the Bde Comd that the ground forces from the South would no longer link up, subsequently the order was given for the 1st AB Div to withdraw. The Bn would withdraw in contact and finally arrive at NIMEGEN to be met by the “Seaborne Tail” under Maj Sellon, who had prepared food, clothing and shelter for the exhausted Borderers.

The roll call of 7 KOSB would muster 4 Officers and 72 ORs.