

1st Airborne Division ⁽¹⁾

Headquarters, 1st Airborne Division

1st Parachute Brigade ⁽²⁾

Headquarters, 1st Parachute Brigade & Signal Section

1st Bn. The Parachute Regiment

2nd Bn. The Parachute Regiment

3rd Bn. The Parachute Regiment

2nd Parachute Brigade ⁽³⁾

Headquarters, 2nd Parachute Brigade & Signal Section

4th Bn. The Parachute Regiment

5th Bn. The Parachute Regiment

6th Bn. The Parachute Regiment

4th Parachute Brigade ⁽⁴⁾

Headquarters, 4th Parachute Brigade & Signal Section

10th Bn. The Parachute Regiment

11th Bn. The Parachute Regiment

156th Bn. The Parachute Regiment

1st Airlanding Brigade ⁽⁵⁾

Headquarters, 1st Airlanding Brigade & Signal Section

1st Bn. The Border Regiment

2nd Bn. The South Staffordshire Regiment

Divisional Troops

1st Airborne Armoured Reconnaissance Squadron, Royal Armoured Corps

21st Independent Parachute Company (Pathfinders), The Parachute Regiment

Headquarters, 1st Airborne Divisional Royal Artillery
1st Airlanding Light Regiment, Royal Artillery
1st Airlanding Anti-Tank Battery, Royal Artillery
2nd Airlanding Anti-Tank Battery, Royal Artillery
1st Airlanding Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (City of London Yeomanry), Royal Artillery

Headquarters, 1st Airborne Divisional Royal Engineers
1st Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers
4th Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers
9th Airborne Field Company, Royal Engineers
261st Airborne Field Park Company, Royal Engineers

1st Airborne Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

Headquarters, 1st Airborne Divisional Royal Army Service Corps
93rd Airborne Light Company, Royal Army Service Corps
250th Airborne Light Company, Royal Army Service Corps
253rd Airborne Light Company, Royal Army Service Corps

Headquarters, 1st Airborne Divisional Royal Army Medical Corps
16th Parachute Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps
133rd Parachute Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps
181st Airlanding Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

1st Airborne Divisional Ordnance Field Park, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

1st Airborne Divisional Provost Company, Corps of Military Police

89th Field Security Section, Intelligence Corps

NOTES:

1. The divisional headquarters of the U.K.'s first airborne division was formed with effect from 1 November 1941. The divisional commander assumed command of the new formation on 4 November. The divisional headquarters went by sea from the United Kingdom to North Africa, arriving there on 26 April 1943. The division was deployed in the invasion of Sicily, landing there on 10 July 1943. Its task was to capture the Primosole Bridge. Several of the aircraft were hit by anti-aircraft fire and some were lost. The brigade left Sicily on 16 July to return to North Africa to regroup, and from there was sent to Italy landing on 9 September 1943 at Taranto. The division left Italy on 22 November 1943 to return to the United Kingdom, where it landed on 10 December 1943. The division became famous for its role in Operation Market Garden, landing at Arnhem on 17 September 1944. It fought in the battle for Arnhem for ten days, before the survivors were evacuated over the River Rhine. The division returned to the United Kingdom having suffered heavy casualties. On 10 May 1945, following the surrender of the German Army in Europe, the division was sent to Norway to administer the surrender of the German Army in that country. On 21 May 1945, the divisional headquarters was redesignated as Headquarters Norway Command. The division returned to the United Kingdom on 24 August 1945, and was disbanded shortly afterwards.
2. This brigade was the original parachute brigade which had been formed in the United Kingdom on 5 September 1941. The brigade served in North Africa as an independent formation between 12 November 1942 and 6 May 1943. The rest of the division had joined this brigade in North Africa on 7 May 1943. The brigade landed in Sicily on 13 July 1943 and fought there until 16 July. The brigade returned to the United Kingdom on 9 December 1943 in preparation for the forthcoming invasion of France. The brigade landed at Arnhem on 17 September 1944 with the 2nd Battalion reaching the bridge. During the battle, the brigade suffered very heavy casualties and for a time was amalgamated with the 4th Parachute Brigade. It was reconstituted in November 1944, and was used to assist in liberating Denmark on 8 May 1945 at the end of the war in Europe. The brigade returned to the United Kingdom on 30 July 1945.
3. This brigade was prepared for operations in Sicily, but the operation was cancelled.
4. This brigade did not participate in the campaign in Sicily.
5. This brigade was formed in the United Kingdom on 10 December 1941 by the reorganisation and redesignation of the 31st Independent Infantry Brigade. It originally comprised four battalions, but two had left on 15 May 1943 to form the new 6th Airlanding Brigade. The brigade left the United Kingdom by sea on 16 May 1943, and reached Tunisia on 26 May 1943. The brigade then prepared for the invasion of Sicily, and landed on the island on 9 July 1943. The aim was to capture the Ponte Grande bridge. Many gliders came down into the sea, and others landed in a dispersed manner around area. A small number of men from the South Staffordshire Regiment did manage to capture the bridge and hold it for a short time. They were eventually driven off, but the bridge was recaptured shortly afterwards by ground troops. The brigade left Sicily on 13 July 1943 to return to Tunisia, and then landed in Italy on 12 September 1943. The brigade returned to the United Kingdom on 10 December 1943. Elements of the brigade landed at Arnhem on 17 September 1944, with the rest landing the following day. The survivors were transported back to the United Kingdom after evacuation from Arnhem, where the brigade was rebuilt. With the surrender of German Armed Forces on 9 May 1945, the brigade was sent Norway to assist in the liberation of that country.

SOURCES:

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By: Claude SMITH

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