

## 1<sup>st</sup> Belgian Independent Brigade Group <sup>(1)</sup>

Headquarters

1<sup>st</sup> Motorised Unit (2)

2<sup>nd</sup> Motorised Unit (2)

3<sup>rd</sup> Motorised Unit (2)

Armoured Squadron (3)

Field Artillery Battery (4)

Anti-Aircraft Platoon (5)

Engineer Company

## NOTES:

1. The Belgium Independent Brigade was formed in the United Kingdom in 1941. It comprised a nucleus of military personnel evacuated from Belgium during May 1940 and was established as an all arms formation to allow expansion to form the reconstituted Belgium Army following the liberation of that country. This brigade became known by an alternative title as 'Brigade Piron' after the name of its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jean-Baptiste PIRON. It landed in Normandy in August 1944, and came under command of the 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division within I Corps. Following the withdrawal of that division, it came under command of the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Infantry Division and then the Guards Armoured Division during the liberation of Belgium. During September 1944, the formation was used to occupy Belgium, but took part in Operation 'Market Garden' under command of VIII Corps. It was withdrawn from The Netherlands on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, and moved back to Belgium to absorb new recruits, many from the Belgian 'White Brigade' of partisans, and to re-equip and train. It re-entered the line in April 1945 now established as a full brigade (with PIRON promoted to Brigadier) to take part in the last battles of the campaign in The Netherlands. After the cessation of hostilities, the brigade returned to Belgium.
2. The motorised units (Unite Motorisee) originally company sized units comprising three infantry platoons and one machine gun platoon. They were expanded into battalion sized units during early 1945.
3. The armoured car squadron comprised four reconnaissance troops equipped with Daimler armoured cars and one troop equipped with carriers.
4. The artillery battery was expanded to a full regiment in early 1945.
5. It appears the anti-aircraft platoon may have disbanded during the campaign.