

Prinses Irene Brigade Group ⁽¹⁾

Headquarters Company

1st Independent Motorised Infantry Company (2)

2nd Independent Motorised Infantry Company (2)

3rd Independent Motorised Infantry Company (2)

Reconnaissance Squadron (3)

Field Artillery Battery (4)

Brigade Signals Section

Brigade Maintenance Section

NOTES:

1. The Royal Netherlands Independent Brigade was formed in 1941 from a nucleus of about 1,500 Dutch military personnel evacuated from The Netherlands following the German invasion in May 1940. The recruiting base was small but some Dutch nationals from overseas joined the formation. Although designated a 'Brigade', the formation was in effect a reinforced infantry battalion. It was equipped on an all arms basis, in anticipation of expansion once The Netherlands had been liberated and addition recruits could be enlisted. It was formally re-designated as the 'Prinses Irene Brigade' on 11 February 1941 by approval of Queen Wilhelmina. The first units of the Brigade landed at Normandy on 6 August 1944 and came under command of the 6th Airborne Division within I Corps. When the 6th Airborne Division was withdrawn back to the United Kingdom, the formation came under command of the 49th (West Riding) Infantry Division. It was designated to take part in the taking of Le Havre, but instead was transferred to the Guards Armoured Division and XXX Corps for the advance across France and into Belgium. It remained with XXX Corps during Operation 'Market Garden', being engaged in fighting at Beeringen, and crossing into Dutch territory at Borkel and Schaft on 20 September 1944. At this time, it was involved in fighting with elements of the Dutch volunteer SS formation, 'Landstorm Nederland'. Following 'Market Garden', the Brigade stayed with XXX Corps and moved south, and on 24 October, it was ordered to attack Tilberg in concert with the 51st (Highland) Infantry Division. During the winter of 1944/45, the formation was stationed in Walcheren and North Beveland. On 2 March, the Brigade came under the command of the Netherlands District, commanded by Major General GALLOWAY. In April 1945, the Brigade took part in heavy fighting on the River Maas near the town of Hedel, together with the 116th Infantry Brigade, Royal Marines. It lost twelve men killed, and about thirty injured, as the attack was contained by the German forces. The Brigade was left isolated on the far bank of the Maas, so was withdrawn at 23.30 hours on 25 April 1945. The Brigade finally entered The Hague on 9 May 1945, later to be absorbed into the reconstituted Netherlands Army.
2. The Independent Motorised Infantry Companies each comprised a Machine Gun Platoon as well as the infantry platoons. At the end of March 1945, three platoons of Marines from II Independent Company were sent to the United States to join the Royal Netherlands Marines Brigade for operations in the Far East. They were replaced by volunteers from the liberated areas of The Netherlands, who had been trained within a Training and Reserve Company located at Bergan-Op-Zoom.
3. The Reconnaissance Squadron was equipped with Humber armoured cars, scout cars (Daimler Dingo's) and carriers. It comprised two armoured car troops, two carrier troops and an anti-tank troop. The Squadron was disbanded on 31 March 1945.
4. The Field Artillery Battery was equipped with six, 25 pounder, field guns in three troops.