



John Galey 4th Battln. Lincolnshire Regiment

**John Galey, raised in Tooting, moved to Lincolnshire, No 14773151
4th Lincolnshire Regiment, Polar Bears**



My father died at 34 from First World War gas. It was 1930 and I was five. We went to visit him in hospital. There were men in red dressing-gowns, all dying from gas years after the war ended. So my mother had to bring us up on her own, three of us. At eighteen I was called up and left home. I suppose she was upset but at that age you don't think about it. I was working for Geest as a welder in Boston. My sister was in Leicester soldering and repairing Spitfire and Hurricane radiators at the Victory Works. It was near the end of the war. I wanted to go into the Navy but didn't get in. We did six weeks basic infantry training, then ten weeks corps training, then six weeks intensive

with live ammo in the Cheviot Hills – the hardest six weeks of my life; they allowed 30% casualties in that. We had to find our way up to the Scottish border and back again.

Then we went from Newcastle down to the boat at Southampton, then Ostend. It was very wet and very cold. I lost my best mate, Charlie Yarnell, in Belgium. He was with another regiment and got killed near Arnhem on February 8th; he was only 18. We did our training together. Charlie was a fisherman from Boston in Lincolnshire.

The Germans were up on the Arnhem Ridge. We couldn't dig trenches because they would flood. We stayed in attics and upstairs rooms of houses. Our food wasn't too bad. The Dutch were starving. After the war we heard they ate tulip bulbs and stole potato peelings from the Germans, they were so desperate.



From April 4th we began clearing "The Island" between the Rhine and IJssel and finished by April 14th. Our main battles were round the factories. The Nazis took them over in 1940. There were some big ones like the silk factory. The Germans forced the Dutch to work for them so they were glad when we got the Nazis out. It wasn't

easy. We would go round one side and the Germans would be hiding round the other, like a roundabout. Then the next night we'd try again. There weren't enough men to cover everything. The factories were very grateful for what we did. They've been good to us since, giving us a good time, a reception laid on, a pleasure boat cruise on the 50th anniversary, 1994. They appreciate us.





British infantry at Westervoort bridge



Operation Anger by Lincoln Regt. of the Polar Bears



April 1945 infantry vehicles prior to crossing the Ussel



Rayon factory April 8th 1945



Polar Bears prepare to attack April 10th 1945

Every now and again the Salvation Army or Lincolnshire Poacher came round. They had rock cakes, a luxury then. We stopped at a village and shared them out with the hungry kids. Everyone seemed to be starving. One day we stopped at a village near Velp. It was called Rheden. A girl came out and said: "Come with me". I thought my luck was in. She took me upstairs. The smell was terrible. Her mother had just had a baby. They had nothing, no soap, no nothing. The baby seemed alright. I got them some soap and chocolate, what I could. We had to move on.



I've often wondered what

happened to them. She was going to call the baby Tommy. Velp was a fair size then but Rheden is now bigger. The people had nothing, nothing at all those days.

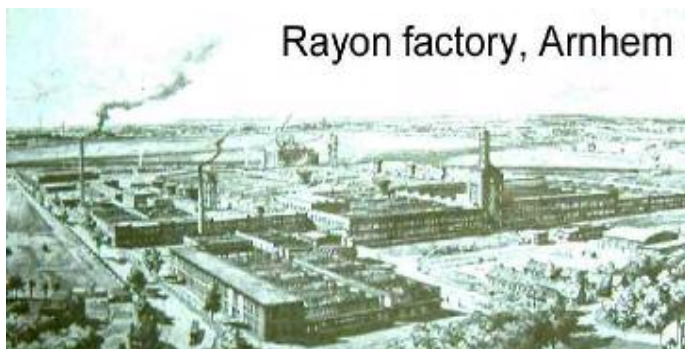


The Dutch SS, the Sudaten, had the worst time. They had nowhere to go; they were desperate. The Dutch were going to shoot them. After they capitulated we let them keep their weapons to defend themselves.

We moved on to Germany, and you had to admire them. It was only a few days after the war ended and they were already busy rebuilding as we went through. At Utrecht the Germans presented arms. I'll never forget that.

After duties in Cyprus and Palestine I was demobbed late 1947 and went back to work January First 1948.

Rayon factory, Arnhem



50th Anniversary

RETURN TO THE ISLAND

A PICTORIAL RECORD OF THE ANNIVERSARY VISIT TO HOLLAND MADE BY THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE 49th DIVISION



49th Division

HERE ARE TWO TYPICAL SCENES TAKEN DURING THE BATTLE FOR ARNHEM



These scenes are being taken during the anniversary visit to Holland. The soldiers are seen in the foreground, and the buildings in the background are the remnants of the city after the battle.



ARNHEM - JUST OVER THE RIVER

ADVANCE TOWARDS BREDA

The famous "Phasant Drive"

At present that we do like to recall happened on the advance to Breda. At this time we were the only Infantry Battalion in a Cavalry Armoured Brigade, due to a reorganization that had taken place some days before. We had tanks, jeeps, and other vehicles, which were used in the advance towards Breda.

The capture of Arnhem was the last operation of the campaign. After weeks of fighting, the British had been just over the river. The soldiers were exhausted and the weather was harsh.

Not a Restful Night

The night was not restful. The soldiers were on high alert, ready for any attack. The sound of gunfire was heard in the distance, and the soldiers were unable to get any sleep.

Like Mathematics

Like mathematics, the battle for Arnhem was a complex and difficult task. The soldiers had to calculate their movements and positions, and they had to be precise in their actions.

Brigade Got over

The brigade had finally got over the river. The soldiers were exhausted but they were relieved. They had achieved their objective and they were now in a more secure position.

One of the Key Points

One of the key points in the battle was the capture of the bridge over the river. This was a crucial moment, and it was the result of the bravery and sacrifice of the soldiers.

Honours and Awards

- Decorated Service Crew**
 - 1017 Lt. Col. P. F. ...
 - 1018 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1019 Lt. Col. ...
- Decorated Squad**
 - 1020 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1021 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1022 Lt. Col. ...
- Decorated Platoon**
 - 1023 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1024 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1025 Lt. Col. ...
- Decorated Company**
 - 1026 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1027 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1028 Lt. Col. ...
- Decorated Battalion**
 - 1029 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1030 Lt. Col. ...
 - 1031 Lt. Col. ...