

Lieutenant Herbert David EASTWOOD.
21st Independent Parachute Company. Platoon Commander, Number 1 Platoon.



Commissioned into the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in February 1940 he was posted to the 2nd Battalion (the 52nd) then in India. When the Germans invaded Holland, Belgium and France, it was recalled to the UK where it became part of the 31st Independent Brigade Group. In May 1940, David was sent to the HQ of the Brigade Group as a Liaison Officer and later was appointed as Staff Captain Q. Later when this unit became the 1st Airlanding Brigade and part of the 1st Airborne Division, General Hopkinson appointed him as GSO 3 (Air), a post he held during the invasion of Sicily where very serious lessons were learned, including the need for an enhanced Pathfinding capability. When news was received of the impending Italian surrender the Division was taken to Italy by the Royal Navy. Later the majority of the Division was withdrawn in preparation for D Day.

Arriving back in the UK, General Browning took David to brief the D Day planners near Grosvenor Square in London. When David heard of the vacancy of No. 1 Platoon Commander in the 21st Independent Parachute Company he applied and joined the Company in the rank of Lieutenant. He served with the them in Holland (Arnhem) and Norway.



For his actions at Arnhem he was awarded the **Military Cross** for:

“The above officer led his platoon with great gallantry throughout the action. On the evening of 18th September, he was detailed with his platoon to put out navigational aids on LZ 'L' for a supply drop. He found the enemy in occupation of this area in some strength. He immediately attacked them killing or capturing the lot.

On 19th September 1944 he again returned to the area to assist in the landing of the gliders. As soon as the gliders appeared the enemy put in an attack. This was driven off and the enemy held until all the gliders had been unloaded. Later he found that his route back to the Company area had been cut by the enemy, but he successfully led his platoon through the enemy positions.

On 20th September 1944 until the withdrawal on 25th September 1944 he held a position which was constantly exposed to murderous enemy fire, but regardless of personal danger he went constantly round his section positions encouraging his men.

His great example undoubtedly kept the spirits of his men at such a high level that in spite of numerous enemy attacks and heavy casualties they hung on to their positions until the end.”