

# The Traitor Of Arnhem

**I** SAT in the lounge of the Palace Hotel at Brussels with my fingers anxiously upon the cold

**By Col. Oreste Pinto,**  
Former Chief of the Dutch Espionage Service

*This is the story of a Dutch traitor who sold the lives of thousands of British soldiers to the Germans and brought untold suffering on his own people.*

*Christian Lindemans—famous to the men and women who trusted him as "King Kong" of the Dutch Resistance Movement—betrayed the secret of the British airborne descent on Arnhem, and so prolonged the war through many bitter months.*

*He became a traitor for women and money, and he wrought destruction on a scale that no other spy in history ever attained. He was run to earth by the man who now tells his story, but, through one of the hundreds of women in his life, he was able to elude the fate that awaited him.*

handie of a loaded Wehrmacht pistol. I was waiting for a Dutch resistance leader named Christian Lindemans.

I suspected he was a German spy.

The date was in September of 1944, shortly before the invasion of Arnhem by British paratroops.

I had sent curt orders to Lindemans to report to me at 11 a.m. I had waited an hour. It was already noon.

But it was not to be expected that Lindemans would be punctual. He had for too long been swollen-headed with his own importance.

In the Dutch Interior Forces (the resistance fighters) he was a popular hero. He stood more than six feet tall, weighed nearly 19 solid stone. His right arm biceps were like a footballer's thigh muscles.

He could pick up grown men in his giant fist and crash them senseless against a wall. Admiringly, by his comrades he was called "King Kong." He revelled in the nickname, dressed in a big camouflage-painted jacket with pockets bulged by hand-grenades.

In his leather belt stuck two honed, dark-steel killing knives. A long barrelled Luger pistol with marksman's sights for 1,000 metres, was strapped to his right hip. A Schmeisser-gun was slung across his huge vat of a chest.

King Kong! No, he would not be punctual! Not even for a

King Kong! No, he would not be punctual! Not even for a superior officer. So I settled down in my chair, lit a cigarette, prepared to wait another hour.



**I** HAD first met this man Lindemans when he swaggered through my security camp at Antwerp with a radiant girl on each arm. He was surrounded by admiring Dutch youths, who patted his great arms, thick as fitches of bacon and blinked in awe at his armory.

The group had halted by one of the camp's pass-gates, and Lindemans was growling with good-humored contempt at one of my sentries. As I came up behind I heard him say:—"Ach, these two girls are both good Dutch patriots. Tell your Colonel that the great King Kong has vouched for them—they shall both be released to drink wine with me!"

The two girls giggled and squirmed happily. The sentry hesitated.

I smiled grimly. This camp I had constructed immediately after the liberation of Antwerp from the Nazis. I was Chief of the Netherlands Counter-Espionage Mission attached to SHAEP.

With similar groups we had a big job. We were responsible

with similar groups we had a big job. We were responsible to Gen. Eisenhower for the safety of all troops of the Normandy Invasion, as they advanced through Flanders into the Netherlands. These were the British Second Army, the US First and Third Armies, the Canadian First Army.

Behind them as they retreated the Germans were leaving booby-traps, saboteurs and spies, like jetsam after a retreating tide.

My job was to sort out the traitors from among homeless refugees, resistance fighters—all the bewildered turmoil of liberated Antwerp.

Into the big security camp ringed with barbed wire, protected like a prison by machine-gun nests, my security police had gathered all the wandering, bomb-dazed and dishevelled mob for thorough examination.

## "I Am King Kong"

**T**HE man Lindemans had not been brought in for such "screening." He had come of his own accord, apparently to pick himself a couple of girls, to strut and preen as a hero—and also, it seemed, to interfere. I called to him.

"Hey, you!"  
He turned surprised. "Me?"  
He tapped his bosom with a finger nearly as thick as my wrist. "You speak to me?"  
I waited. He disentangled himself from the girls and

I wanted me disentangled myself from the girls and youths. In three great strides he confronted me, drew a deep breath.

I pointed to three gold stars on his sleeve.

"Are you a captain—and if so, in what army?"

Lindemans expelled his breath in a growl.

"Now see here, Colonel, I wear these three stars by authority of the Dutch Interior Forces—the underground!"

"Really? And who are you?"

"Me?" He looked around to his group of supporters. They giggled loyally. "Who am I? Why everybody knows me! I live at Castle Wittouck, Colonel" — his voice boomed — "Castle Wittouck, headquarters of Dutch Intelligence of Dutch Resistance!" He glared impressively down at me. "I am King Kong!"

"The only King Kong I ever heard of," I said softly, "was a big stuffed monkey!"

One or two of the listeners grinned, and Lindemans's big face darkened.

"Also—if you do not hold the rank of captain in the Netherlands Army you must not wear this insignia," I said. With a quick wrench I ripped the cloth band with the three gold stars from his sleeve and put it in my pocket.

"It confuses my Security Police," I said. "They would hardly be to blame if they shot you as a spy."

His big jaw dropped. The blood ebbed from his cheeks.

"I shall complain of this tonight at Castle Wittouck, at dinner!" he threatened.

But his voice was uneasy. The boastfulness had dwindled out of it. With no further word he slipped through the sentry gate. The iris did not try to follow him.

I stood watching Lindemans's retreating bulk with a strange excitement growing inside me. Presumably I had won the little scene. But it was not important. What disturbed me now was something deeper.

### Dozens Of Girls

I HAD indeed heard of "King Kong," the great Resistance leader. Ordinarily I would have been glad to honor him. He was the "Scarlet Pimpernel" of Holland, in charge of the Netherlands escape routes through Occupied Europe for fugitives of the Gestapo, baled-out Allied airmen, into the neutral sanctuary of Portugal. He had fought bold skirmishes with Nazi Sicherheitsdienst (the treasured Security Police).

Yet, when I had looked into his eyes, as I spoke to Lindemans of mistaking him for a

spy, as I spoke to Lindemans of mistaking him for a spy, it had seemed to me that I had seen a guilty apprehension there. And my hackles had bristled.

I returned to my Intelligence HQ at SHAEF spoke to my assistant, a remarkable Dutchman who had been a sergeant with the French Foreign Legion, and a spy in Tangiers. "Tell me, Wilhelm," I said, "what do we know of this Resistance leader they call King Kong?" He turned up the files.

Correct name Christian Lindemans," he said. "Born in Rotterdam, son of a garage proprietor. Ex-boxer, wrestler. Reputed to have killed several men in tavern brawls. Dozens of girls listed as intimate friends. . . . Want their names?"

He grinned enquiringly. I shook my head. "Anything more about him?"

"Yes, sir—he's the eldest of four brothers—all Resistance men working on the escape line."

"Any killed?" I asked. Wilhelm turned a further page. "None—the youngest brother was captured by the Abwehr (German Counter-Intelligence), also a girl cabaret dancer named Veronica, shown here as intimate with Lindemans in the escape line. Both were later released."

"They were what?"

Wilhelm shrugged. "That's what it says here, they were later released. And here, sir—Lindemans himself captured by the Gestapo in a raid a few weeks later—I see he was shot through the lung—but his own Resistance Group rescued him from a prison hospital after a running gun-fight."

"Many killed?" I asked.

"Yes—one SS guard killed, two wounded. Lindemans escaped with three of his men—left 47 dead—ambushed as they withdrew from the hospital."

"Almost as if the Germans had known," I said, slowly.

"Yes, sir—almost as if they'd known."

### "A Charmed Life"

I N the bare, starkly-lit Record Room of SHAEF Intelligence HQ we could suddenly hear our wrist-watches ticking above the silence.

Wilhelm looked at me. I knew he could see what was in my mind. "I'm going to Brussels for two days," I said. "Give me that dossier—I'll get it completed!"

In Brussels, in the Cafe des Vedettes, a veteran resistance-fighter proudly peeled back his greasy black beret to show me the bullet-scar that glistened like a frosty cart-track across his scalp.

like a frosty cart-track across his scalp.

"No, Colonel, I was unfortunately not with the party that rescued King Kong from the Gestapo hospital. I got this little thing about a month afterwards."

"We had just placed our dynamite under a bridge station. I was bent, fixing the uses—bullets started to crack among us like cattle whips. The Nazis had discovered our plan, somehow — he shrugged. "I got away, as did King Kong, our leader—ah, he was magnificent! A charmed life!" His eyes shone in reminiscent adoration.

"What were they shooting with?" I asked. "Machine-guns?"

The honest little Belgian patriot replaced his black beret. "Strangely, no. It was not machine-guns, Colonel. They picked us off with snipers' rifles—eight of us—hit every man, except King Kong, that lucky one!"

"The biggest target of all," I said softly. He laughed.

"Oui-da! The biggest target of all—and they could not hit him, hein?"

He sipped his red wine. "Such a man for the ladies, his King Kong! I tell you, that big chateau on the hill beyond Laeken — its pretty heiress, they say, gave all her jewellery—her family heirlooms—for his Resistance Group war funds!"

He chuckled tolerantly. "They say he squandered the sparklers on other girls here in Brussels. Ah, they say—they say. Always such evil rumors about great men!"



I TURNED my khaki-camouflaged SHAEF staff car up toward the chateau. The lady of the castle was at home, repairing her troop-trampled rose gardens.

Lindemans, M'sieur? — a brave man! But he had his weakness —" she twitched her pretty white shoulders bravely. "His affairs—he tries to break all our hearts! True, yes, I save him my jewels for the Movement, you understand. He embezzled them, I think."

"What makes you think that, Countess?"

"It is not easy to say this, Colonel—but I saw one of my emerald pendants upon the neck of a girl in the town. It had been my mother's. I thought that perhaps the Resistance Men had sold my jewels to raise money, but when I asked



Christian Lindemans—the Traitor of Arnhem—  
 to sell it to me, without, lively Mia Zeist and the snow-  
 drop pale Margaretha Delden,  
 of course, telling her it had  
 been mine, she said King Kong  
 had given it to her, and would  
 strangle her if she sold it.”  
 “Did you discover her  
 name?”  
 The Countess sighed. “Ah—  
 if it had been only the one,  
 Colonel. No, there were two—  
 Mia Zeist and another, Mar-  
 garetha Delden, both notorious  
 tavern girls here—” she broke  
 off, laid her small hand in quick  
 concern upon my sleeve.  
 “But what is the matter,  
 Colonel? Surely you do not  
 know these women?”  
 I knew them, indeed! The  
 lively Mia Zeist and the snow-  
 drop pale Margaretha Delden,  
 I was too late. Mia Zeist,

the first address.  
 I was too late. Mia Zeist,  
 that lively traitress, had fled  
 to Vienna. I took my police  
 around to the apartments of  
 Margaretha Delden.

Here again, I was too late.  
 The door was heavily bolted.  
 It took us two minutes to  
 break it down. When I en-  
 tered her room it was to  
 find her lying crumpled upon  
 her bed. Her pale, pretty face  
 was mottled blue, her lips  
 deathly magenta. In prison  
 hospital she died that after-  
 noon, without uttering one  
 word.

Lindemans had not been  
 faithful to Margaretha Del-  
 den. But she had been faith-  
 ful to the death, to him. We  
 found the jewel. That was all.

I SPENT a further day and  
 night among the cafes, back  
 streets, cellars of Brussels,  
 learning details of King Kong.  
 He had owed money. At the  
 time his youngest brother was  
 taken by the Abwehr, King  
 Kong had been bitterly in debt.

Also the girl—the cabaret  
 dancer named Veronica—had  
 been Lindemans' sweetheart  
 since childhood. The Nazis  
 must have known this. Why  
 did they let her go free? Not  
 merely free, the sweetheart and  
 the youngest brother of a  
 notorious Resistance fighter,  
 but still uncrippled, sane and  
 able to walk! It was not typical  
 Nazi mercy.

Also, I discovered that there-  
 after, King Kong seemed to  
 have plenty of money, grew in-  
 creasingly reckless in his guer-  
 rilla skirmishes. Each raid he  
 led suffered heavy casualties.  
 Always with guns blazing, the  
 leader escaped, swore vengeance  
 upon the Judas who had once  
 again betrayed the Resistance  
 Men. Just as inevitably, his  
 comrades writhed and died all  
 around him.

Yet, before I condemned him  
 completely as a spy, there re-  
 mained one doubt in my mind.  
 He had been shot through the  
 lung when the Sicherheits-  
 dienst Police arrested him. I  
 could not believe even paunchy  
 Herr Strauch, of the Nazi Intel-  
 ligence in the Netherlands,  
 would have a valuable man shot  
 through the lung, just to make  
 an arrest look good!

Then a thought came to me.  
 When I had wanted the ad-  
 dresses in Brussels of the two  
 women spies Mia Zeist and  
 Margaretha Delden, I had found  
 it necessary to telephone my  
 own HQ in Antwerp. The local  
 Field Security had not known,  
 Dutch Intelligence in Brussels  
 had not known.

But SHAEF Intelligence had

had not known.

But SHAEF Intelligence had known. We were all on the same side. Yet we did not always pool our information. There was a little rivalry.

Would there not then be such rivalry between the three branches of the German Intelligence?—the Gestapo (Security Police of the SS), the Abwehr (Counter-Intelligence Service), and the Sicherheitsdienst (German Field Security Police)?

### Secret Of Arnhem

**I**F King Kong was a traitor in the pay of the Abwehr, as seemed likely—since both girls had belonged to it—the Gestapo and the SD Police might not have known! They would shoot him perhaps on sight, never discovering his traitor's credentials until the bullet struck him down.

What a perfect situation for a spy! The popular hero of Holland—the man who always escaped the Nazi death-traps that caught his comrades. But of course, he did!

No wonder we had been losing so many British and Belgian agents along the escape route still in Occupied Europe, so many valiant little resistance groups still behind the German lines!

I indicated my suspicions to the officers of Dutch Intelligence at Castle Wittouck, and gave orders that Christian Lindemans was to report to me at the Palace Hotel, Brussels, next morning at 11.

I proposed to submit him to careful interrogation. If he was a spy, I would soon know.

So I waited, in that tranquil golden morning of sunlit September, in one of the dusty arm-chairs of the hotel lounge. The bombs had shaken a white patina of plaster from the ceiling on to the carpet.

I had my Walther pistol cocked and sitting loose in its holster. My fingers touched it under shelter of the coffee table. Somebody once said that a gun makes up the difference between a big man and a little man.

Compared with Lindemans I was a little man. And I had a strong feeling that our talk would condemn him to death.

So it was as well to ensure that, when this became apparent, I did not die suddenly in his place!

It was nearly two hours beyond 11 a.m. when a Castle Wittouck staff car halted outside the hotel. I could see it from where I waited.

Two young Dutch captains stamped in. Boots, khaki shirts, staff armbands bright with the lustre-gloss of GHQ.

"You are waiting for King Kong, sir?"

"You are waiting for King Kong, sir?"

"I am."

"Well, he's not coming, sir. He's had other orders."

"Indeed? Whose orders—what orders?"

They hesitated. "Well, he left this morning on a very special mission."

My stomach went suddenly cold and my throat ached strangely as it had not done since I wept as a child.

"With the Interior Forces?" I could imagine another valiant band of resistance men falling into a Gestapo deathtrap.

The young staff captains shrugged. "Hardly think so, sir," said one. "Actually I think it's something to do with the Canadians."

They stood awkwardly for an instant. My eyes stared beyond them.

"Well—if you'll excuse us, sir—busy an' all that—got to get some stuff for the mess!"

Their big, deep-cushioned GHQ Mercedes whirred away from the hotel on its shopping tour. I sat motionless and watched them go. Then, feeling strangely weary and old, I roused myself and drove back to SHAEF to make my official report. It was all that was left for me to do. These things had to go through the "proper channels."

I did not know then, as I drove through the golden afternoon, that ten thousand red-bereted men of the British First Airborne Division were within three days of descending out of a dawn sky upon Arnhem—and the waiting Panzer guns!

### Monday: The Traitor Betrayed